

USSOCOM Research Topics 2012



Joint Special Operations University
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USSOCOM Research Topics 2012



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Joint Special Operations University and the Strategic Studies Department

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) provides its publications to contribute toward expanding the body of knowledge about joint special operations. JSOU publications advance the insights and recommendations of national security professionals and the Special Operations Forces (SOF) students and leaders for consideration by the SOF community and defense leadership.

JSOU is the educational component of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The JSOU mission is to educate SOF executive, senior, and intermediate leaders and selected other national and international security decision makers, both military and civilian, through teaching, outreach, and research in the science and art of joint special operations. JSOU provides education to the men and women of SOF and to those who enable the SOF mission in a joint and interagency environment.

JSOU conducts research through its Strategic Studies Department where effort centers upon the USSOCOM and United States SOF missions:

USSOCOM mission. USSOCOM provides fully capable and enabled SOF to defend the nation's interests in an environment characterized by irregular warfare.

USSOF mission. USSOF conducts special operations to prepare the operational environment, prevent crisis, and respond with speed, aggression, and lethality to achieve tactical through strategic effect.

The Strategic Studies Department also provides teaching and curriculum support to Professional Military Education institutions—the staff colleges and war colleges. It advances SOF strategic influence by its interaction in academic, interagency, and United States military communities.

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On the cover

Top left. Night training mission, two CV-22 Osprey aircraft, assigned to the 58th Special Operations Wing, at Kirtland AFB.

Top right. A U.S. Army Special Operations soldier scans for insurgents during an engagement in the Sangin District area, Helmand Province, Southern Afghanistan.

Bottom left. Marines from the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion discuss their imminent jump 2,500 feet above Camp Pendleton, California.

Bottom right. Naval Special Warfare combatant-craft crewmen operate a Rigid Inflatable Boat from a forward location.

USSOCOM
Research Topics
2012

Comments about this publication are invited and should be forwarded to Director, Strategic Studies Department, Joint Special Operations University, 7701 Tampa Point Blvd., MacDill AFB, Florida 33621.

The Strategic Studies Department, JSOU is currently accepting written works relevant to special operations for potential publication. For more information or to obtain copies of this publication, please contact the JSOU Director of Research at 813-826-3674, jsou_research@socom.mil. Thank you for your interest in the JSOU Press.

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Foreword

The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) 2012 Research Topics list is intended to guide research projects for Professional Military Education (PME) students, JSOU faculty, research fellows, and others writing about special operations during this academic year. Research is one of the cornerstones of JSOU's academic mission and focuses on publishing in areas that contribute to understanding policy and strategy issues affecting the operational and planning needs of the Special Operations Forces (SOF). Each year, representatives from USSOCOM, SOF chairs from the war colleges, and JSOU senior fellows participate in a two-day workshop. Participants discuss and develop a comprehensive list of issues and challenges that are of concern to the greater SOF community. The list is then reviewed by the Headquarters USSOCOM staff, service components, and Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) to confirm the suggested research topics best advance SOF missions and support SOF interests. The USSOCOM commander reviews and approves the final list, which includes his priority topics. The final Topics List is distributed to PME institutions in time for the incoming classes. It is also provided to academic researchers to guide their research efforts leading to published monographs. The research resulting from these topics is made available to the SOF community, members of the larger military profession, policymakers and strategists, and other members of the public. This research is distributed through JSOU Press publications, the publications produced at the various service schools and colleges, the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), and other online media. Ultimately, the research, study, and debate of these topics will inform decision makers and better prepare the profession of arms for our current conflicts and future challenges. If you have any questions about this document, JSOU Press in general, or how JSOU can assist you in your academic research, contact the director of research by email at jsou_research@socom.mil.

Kenneth H. Poole, Ed.D.
Director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department

Preface

The *USSOCOM Research Topics 2012* list represents an effort to identify, categorize, and list SOF-related research topics for research by PME students, JSOU senior fellows, and other SOF researchers who desire to make timely and meaningful contributions to SOF issues and challenges. The USSOCOM commander places great emphasis and value on SOF PME students research and writing on timely, relevant, SOF-related topics. Such activity develops the individual's intellect and provides a professional and practical perspective that broadens and frames the insights of other analysts and researchers in regard to these topics. This list and the accompanying topic descriptions are a guide to stimulate interest and thinking; topics may be narrowed, broadened, or otherwise modified as deemed necessary (e.g., to suit school writing requirements or maximize individual interests and experiences).

Sections A through G contain new topic categories with major ideas/concepts for 2012 from which topics can be derived, depending on the interest/experience of the researcher and the desired level of detail. Section A (Priority Topics) identifies those topics of particular importance that the USSOCOM commander has identified for special emphasis. All of the topics seek to expand SOF understanding of specific challenges and issues and promote thinking in regard to understanding them and identifying doctrine, capabilities, techniques, and procedures to increase SOF efficacy in addressing them. At the same time, the research is also intended to inform policymakers, the larger military profession, and the public of the issues and challenges of concern to the SOF community and what might be undertaken in support of them. The topics reflect a consensus of those participating in the topics project — that is, the topics are deemed particularly worthwhile in addressing immediate SOF needs and in building future capacity for emerging challenges. Topics are unique but share a focus on the following:

- a. Terrorist networks and how to counter them
- b. Implications of irregular warfare and strategies and operations to win

- c. SOF in whole-of-government and comprehensive operational environments
- d. Importance of regional and cultural emphases
- e. Future SOF operating environments
- f. SOF missions and functions, organization, force structure, and professional development and training.
- g. Miscellaneous Topics

Section H is a list of topics submitted by PME and other military organizations throughout the year, and **Section I** is a list of topics retained from previous years.

Limited TDY funding may be available from JSOU for researchers (to include PME students) to support their projects (e.g., to conduct interviews, visit USSOCOM, or visit component headquarters). These research “grants” are subject to approval by the director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department, contingent on the topic selected and the value added to the project.

Please share this reference with fellow researchers, thesis advisors, and other colleagues. Feel free to submit additional topics for possible inclusion in the next USSOCOM Research Topics publication. Also visit the JSOU Press online publications library, <https://jsou.socom.mil> to see whether JSOU has a publication that relates to your topic of interest.

A. Priority Topics

Topic Titles

- A1. Whither terrorism? Where do terrorist adversaries go next and how does terrorism end?
- A2. Innovation in SOF thinking — irregular strategies in combating terrorism and irregular warfare
- A3. Strategic *profiling* in identifying terrorists and terrorist networks
- A4. Leadership and the interagency process
- A5. SOF roles in unlit spaces
- A6. Return on Investment (ROI) of using SOCOM as the global synchronizer against terrorists and their networks?
- A7. Countering the nexus of terrorist and criminal organizations
- A8. Prosecuting the counterterrorism mission without alienating the local populace
- A9. Assessing the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) Program
- A10. Role of mass communication strategies and strategic communication in combating terrorist group ideology
- A11. Preventing and mitigating violent extremism
- A12. Hearts and minds: human influence operations in irregular warfare

Topic Descriptions

A1. **Whither terrorism? Where do terrorist adversaries go next and how does terrorism end?**

The United States and its partners around the globe have made significant progress in countering terrorism. Yet terrorist adversaries have proven exceedingly adaptable and continue to pose a formidable security threat. What direction(s) will terrorist adversaries take as we and our allies get better? How might terrorism evolve or end? What challenges are posed for global security and counterterrorism forces? How does the United States and its partners put and end to terrorist networks' adaptability? This study should develop a "Red Team" concept to examine plausible scenarios on how terrorists may continue to

adapt, evolve, and develop their tactics and strategies with the implications on our counterterrorism strategy and operations. Implied are the questions how does terrorism end, and what happens to the terrorists afterward? Given the range of scenarios, what should SOCOM be doing now to stifle terrorist adaptability?

A2. Innovation in SOF thinking—irregular strategies in combating terrorism and irregular warfare

The adaptability of terrorists and terrorist networks is widely discussed. However, greater adaptability and flexibility has occurred with conventional counterterrorism. While there is much still to be learned and improvements in capabilities and capacity to be achieved, the significant knowledge gained and changes made suggest that bigger steps in innovation are required. Terrorism is only one form of irregular warfare. What is the status of the war on terrorism? What irregular threats loom before us? How do we continue to improve and foster innovation, creativity, and agility within SOF? What do we know about the strategic nature of our irregular adversaries and where their continuous adaptation may take them?

A3. Strategic profiling in identifying terrorists and terrorist networks

Profiling at the individual level within the United States is often perceived as a civil rights or privacy issue and a politically sensitive issue. Nonetheless, terrorist groups, terrorist networks, and individual members and potential recruits have characteristics and established patterns of operations that are discernible and can help distinguish terrorist groups, networks, supporters, and individuals from the normalcy of everyday life and activities. This research examines the many ways terrorists have integrated themselves into normal society, such as religion, social clubs, charities, business, and finance, and the individual and group characteristics. The focus is to answer some broad questions:

- a. From a strategic perspective, how should we think about profiling, and what are the implications for policy and operations?
- b. How many ways can the threat be profiled?
- c. What profiling is currently in practice, and where might future profiling be appropriate?
- d. What are the issues with profiling?
- e. What are the risks versus gains?
- f. What are the disciplines of study or practice that may apply or assist in profiling (for example: criminal justice, economics, and anthropology), and how can they be applied?

A4. Leadership and the interagency process

The U.S. interagency process has been severely criticized for perceived failures in policy decisions and actions regarding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as other domestic and international challenges. Congressional interest in how the executive department functions has been renewed, and numerous studies and articles have addressed the shortcomings. The nature of 21st century challenges has also resulted in a much broader involvement of U.S. military in the various levels of the interagency processes and opened the military to its share of criticism for the shortcomings. This research seeks a synthesis of the extensive analysis of the interagency and the most viable recommendations for improving the interagency process from the SOF perspective. What is the role of leadership at the various levels? Who should be in charge, and when and where? What are the essential military roles, and how can the military best pursue them? How can USSOCOM best engage with our international allies and partners? How can the military make the current or any new process or organizational structure more effective? What can SOF do to better prepare its leaders for the interagency environment? Does organizational culture play a role in creating barriers to communication and coordination?

A5. SOF roles in unlit spaces (fragile and failing states)

Fragile, failing, and failed states are at the root of many of the 21st century's security problems. Their shortcomings trigger local, regional, and global instability as governance fails in providing essential human security. Their problems are exported elsewhere through migration, disease, humanitarian concerns, crime, and terrorism. SOF may be the most competent organization in the U.S. military to do the sort of hearts and mind things that prevent a state from collapsing and enable it to restore stability. This research examines SOF's roles in preventing fragile and failing states from becoming failed states. What are the characteristics of fragile and failing states? Why should the U.S. be concerned? How should the U.S. prioritize interests in these states? When and on what levels should the U.S. intervene? What capacity does SOF have for dealing with these states and issues? What is the value of developing "micro-regional" expertise within SOF? What would be the types of roles for SOF in these missions? When should SOF become involved? How can SOF improve coordination with other U.S. government elements, local authorities, nongovernmental organizations, and partner states to stabilize a failing state?

What are the implications for SOF capabilities, training, education, professional development, and deployment?

A6. Return on Investment (ROI) of using SOCOM as the global synchronizer against terrorists and their networks?

In 2003, then Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld made SOCOM a war-fighting combatant command and effectively made SOCOM the global synchronizer for the war on terrorism — a planning and coordinating function as opposed to direct command. As a result, SOCOM's responsibilities and influence grew significantly. The headquarters were reorganized and enlarged, new facilities were constructed, liaison activities in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere around the globe were expanded, and additional funding was provided for programs, activities, and resources that were SOF inspired, if not always SOCOM managed and controlled. Equally important, SOF field forces took on increasing responsibilities, missions, and taskings globally and in the primary theaters of conflict. This research seeks to determine the costs, benefits, advantages, and disadvantages of having SOCOM as the global synchronizer in an evolving financially-constrained environment. The research should consider the basis of the decisions and the objectives given the command over time. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis can be used. Budget analysis and development or discovery of measures of effectiveness are both appropriate and may lead to useful insights. How can a new SOF Force Generation system best match SOF capabilities with existing and evolving Service systems? What measures are appropriate to determine if we are winning or how efforts should change? What do these measures tell us about synchronizing versus other methods of obtaining unity of effort (such as “coordinating or directing”)? What have been the issues in the relationships between SOCOM and other military and civilian organizations and agencies? What have been the gains? What has SOCOM learned about the nation's cost threshold or pain level to sustain a protracted campaign to defeat terrorist networks? What characterizes SOCOM's approach (for example: stability operations, nation building, punitive warfare, Counterinsurgency (COIN), or some hybrid)?

A7. Countering the nexus of terrorist and criminal organizations

A major and growing concern among intelligence agencies and counterterrorism strategists is the growing nexus of terrorist and criminal organizations. While a significant body of literature has evolved

over the last few years that examine the nature and reasons for this convergence, little research has been done on how this threat should be countered. This study briefly examines the emerging nexus and its characteristics, but focuses on how this threat can be averted or countered. What are the objectives of the convergence, and how does it occur? What are its strengths and weaknesses? How can these be mitigated or exploited? What are the potential counter strategies, and what best promises success? What are the SOF roles in countering this hybrid threat? What types of operations are inherent to the strategy, and what changes in organization, doctrine, and training should SOCOM consider? Who are the logical SOF partners at home and abroad in countering this threat? Discuss SOF interface with, support to, and collaboration with other members of the interagency community and suggest ideas to improve the relationship.

A8. Prosecuting the counterterrorism mission without alienating the local populace

The United States has made massive investments in winning the *hearts and minds* of local populations, but the populations in these regions often continue to be alienated or become re-alienated independent of security progress. David Kilcullen's *The Accidental Guerrilla* suggests that much of today's conflict is a hybrid mixture of insurgency, terrorism, criminality, and civil conflict. In the subsequent operational environments, outside military forces represent impositions on local population that are increasingly resented as security returns. He, like many others, suggests that a key to success for any modern counterterrorism effort lies in avoiding driving members of the local population into the passive or active ranks of insurgents and terrorists. Can a useful distinction be made between winning hearts and minds and the alienation of local populations that provides insights into this dynamic? If so, what is the difference and what are the implications for counterterrorism operations? How does the U.S. best assist the host nation in preparing a Hearts and Minds campaign? What is the relationship between kinetic and nonkinetic operations? What have we learned or know about the alienation of populations and how it can be avoided or mitigated? Are there specific instigators for it? What is the relationship between kinetic and nonkinetic operations and alienation and support? Can it be managed or shaped in more constructive ways? What policies, doctrine, tools, and practices should U.S. military leaders and forces adopt to limit or avoid alienation in how we train, deploy, and conduct operations? Are

other agency models, such as the Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework (TCAPF) model from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), applicable to SOF operations? What policies, doctrine, tools, and practices contribute to encouraging or strengthening local population identification with U.S. presence and operations?

A9. Assessing the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) Program

Any objective assessment of the 21st century security environment results in a conclusion that instability, particularly caused by issues inherent to failing and fragile states, will constitute the highest probability of a security threat to U.S. interests. SOF is a critical instrument of U.S. policy in preempting or mitigating these issues and their consequences. However, finding and developing sufficient SOF personnel with advanced language and cultural awareness skills to recognize potential political or other social threats to failing and fragile states is a major impediment to its use. Assess the value of the MAVNI Program in identifying and acquiring advance language-qualified and culturally astute personnel as a potential solution to the current shortcoming. What is a MAVNI? Should MAVNI recruitment efforts be considered the same as a diversity recruitment program? How successful has the program been in recruiting qualified personnel into SOF? Discuss what, if any, impediments to success exist in the recruitment process. What has been the experience of those personnel who have made it into SOF? How are they being used to advance the mission? How can SOF better leverage the program to increase the numbers of candidates? What should a SOF utilization program for MAVNI-recruited personnel look like, and how would it work (for example: acquisition, training, professional development, and deployment)? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Is it a viable long-term solution for SOF? Compare and contrast this effort to previous similar efforts such as the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in WWII to rapidly recruit specialized talent.

A10. Role of mass communication strategies and strategic communications in combating terrorist group ideology

Some argue the war on terrorism is ultimately a war of ideas, mindsets, and worldview. From this perspective, the way to win the war is to challenge the ideas that gain terrorists their active and passive support and influence the hearts and minds of the populations in which

they subsist so that there is no longer any moral or physical support. Challenging and changing the ideas of the multiple audiences involves mass communication strategies to transform beliefs and attitudes that subsequently lead to behavior change. How should SOF advocate for and employ communications in the 21st century at the strategic and operational levels of war? Who is winning the war of ideas and why? How is the initiative gained and retained in this aspect of the struggle? Analyze the role of Military Information Support Operations (MISO) in combating terrorist networks, and identify its strengths and weaknesses. How have media and the flow of information changed? What changes need to be made in friendly practices to adapt to new media? How do we best use the rapidly adapting mass communications networks derived from the Internet? How do we improve Information Operations (IO)? What long-term change in practices and procedures will be necessitated by the new freer flow of information?

A11. Preventing and mitigating violent extremism

In the face of violent extremism and crime rates that threaten the stability of the state, USAID and other donors have promoted approaches based on prevention and mitigation. These approaches rely on development interventions to address the underlying political, social, and economic conditions that leave communities vulnerable to violent extremism. The approaches are generally community based, drawing together stakeholders such as at-risk communities and populations, especially youth, local and national civil society groups, municipal and national governments, security forces, and the private sector, who collectively work to identify and address the root causes of violent extremism. In some country situations, this prevention approach has been utilized as part of civilian-military collaboration to mitigate the drivers of instability. An approach based on prevention is consistent the National Security Strategy (NSS), which provides: “[W]e must address the underlying political and economic deficits that foster instability, enable radicalization and extremism, and ultimately undermine the ability of governments to manage threats within their borders.” NSS, at p. 26. This Study will collect and evaluate experiences with countering violent extremism based on a prevention approach, taking into consideration factors such as effectiveness of the approach relative to law enforcement and institution-building, cost of the approach, and sustainability. The Study will focus in particular on countries where there has been a close collaboration between civilian and military efforts, and consider how SOF and the development

community can work together to achieve the shared goal of preventing violent extremism.

A12. Hearts and minds: human influence operations in irregular warfare

At the core of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and the indirect approach lies the concept of hearts and minds. SOF is deeply engaged in both counterinsurgency (COIN) and the indirect approach; therefore, winning the hearts and minds of indigenous populations is central to SOF missions. Despite the significance of hearts and minds to SOF, the concept is often treated as a buzzword — a phrase that is taken at face value with little analysis, historical grounding, or precise understanding of what it entails. Its application also differs in recent history and in different theaters. This study looks at the concept of hearts and minds from a fresh perspective with the goal of deepening understanding of the concept and its relevance to the struggle against terrorism. Is winning the compliance and cooperation of the population a more relevant understanding of the task? After all, populations need to see good reasons to support government efforts, though not necessarily to like their government. Has the emphasis on kinetic operations produced negative consequences for the hearts-and-minds efforts because of friendly fire/collateral damage incidents, or because SOF are seen as supporting an unpopular government? How do we address religion (hearts and souls) as a component of the hearts-and-minds challenge? This research should capture the techniques and best practices as we know them from irregular warfare experiences. Are we changing the minds/opinions, or are we simply seeking common ground where interests match? What steps do we need to take to at least keep the population neutral? Are the hearts-and-minds efforts a method or line of operation rather than an objective?

B. Combating Terrorist Networks (CbTNs)

Topic Titles

- B1. Working with partner nations in counterterrorism (CT) operations
- B2. Defining *terrorist networks* and understanding the differences
- B3. Strategic intelligence and combating terrorism
- B4. SOF counterterrorism activities against terrorist networks in developing countries (other than Iraq and Afghanistan)
- B5. Nesting of nonkinetic stability operations and kinetic kill/capture operations in a shared battle space when combating terrorists and/or insurgent networks
- B6. Use of SOF airpower in combating terrorist networks
- B7. Influencing *why* individuals and groups resort to terrorism
- B8. Scalable strategies for effects against a long-term terrorist threat
- B9. Leveraging internal dissent in combating international terrorist networks
- B10. Deploying a leaner and more lethal force to combat terrorists
- B11. Terrorist exploitation of *seams* in the 21st century global order
- B12. National cost threshold when defeating terrorist networks
- B13. The *specialness* of SOF in countering the terrorist network threat
- B14. SOF's role in countering the terrorist network in the cyber realm
- B15. Implications of using contractors for Combating Terrorism (CbT) missions

Topic Descriptions

B1. Working with partner nations in counterterrorism (CT) operations

Over the past decade the United States and its military forces have worked with numerous state partners in differing counterterrorism operations around the world. All seem to agree that partnerships are a good thing, but little actual research has addressed this aspect of counterterrorism. Partnerships can be established through bilateral or multilateral agreements. Partnership implies mutual benefits for both or all partners. Given this decade of experience, what have we learned

(or should have learned) about such partnerships? Why, how, and when should the United States engage in partnerships in CT operations? What potential advantages are gained and what costs and risks may be incurred? Are there tenets of effective partnerships that suggest when a partnership is appropriate and how it should be practiced? How can effective partnerships bolster U.S. capacity and capabilities? How can the United States bolster the capacity and capabilities of its partners? Can these be quantified, qualified, or categorized? What pitfalls in partnership must the United States seek to avoid? This study should define partnership in regard to CT operations and discuss what the U.S. focus should be in acquiring and building effective partnerships.

B2. Defining terrorist networks and understanding the differences

Generally, modern terrorism has been addressed in research and policy as a single monolithic threat — sometimes referred to as the *fourth wave* (religion). Yet in practice, we recognize that individual terrorist groups do not fit conveniently into any broad general category. Partially as a result of counterterrorism successes, greater discrimination is now required to weaken or break the remaining bonds of the global network and find methods and techniques that destroy the network's remaining capacity and is acceptable to fatiguing populations. This research reexamines the root causes and motivations of individual groups and provides an analysis of the driving factors of groups and their attractiveness to individual members. From the analysis, groups will be classified into categories and subcategories and points or factors of agreement and potential disagreement or friction identified. The latter analysis should lead to recommendations for counterterrorism policy and operations that drive wedges between various groups in order to defeat them individually. The research should include special considerations of hybrid terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. It should address the question: What specific methods and capabilities does SOF need to adopt to more effectively counter or destroy these threats?

B3. Strategic intelligence and combating terrorism

Intelligence and information sharing is a major emerging strategic issue. There is an evident pattern within the international community, between coalition states, and among the members of the U.S. inter-agency and military that suggests that existing barriers to sharing are affecting success in combating terrorism. Logically, nation states

have legitimate sovereign reasons for limiting some intelligence and information. However, the patterns suggest that bureaucratic obstacles, agency rivalry, unwarranted concerns, and changing information paradigms may be the real culprits. How should intelligence and information sharing for counterterrorism be designed to deal with how terrorists operate and changing information and communications patterns? What are the issues and obstacles? What new concepts or principles might apply to intelligence development, collaboration, and information sharing? How should SOCOM change its practices? What policy changes should SOCOM advocate?

B4. SOF counterterrorism activities against terrorist networks in developing countries (other than Iraq and Afghanistan)

As a result of more and more effective counterterrorism collaboration, terrorist organizations have shown a preference for acting in and basing from developing states and ungoverned territories/spaces. U.S. SOF have vigorously prosecuted the terrorist networks in Iraq and Afghanistan, and these wars have dominated our collective attention. However, U.S. and other nations' SOF have also been conducting counterterrorism operations around the globe in other developing states. What are these non-Iraq and non-Afghan experiences telling us about counterterrorism and how to conduct it? What are lessons learned and insights gained? What do these tell us about doctrine and how to operate? What do they tell us about the evolution of terrorism and effective countermeasures?

B5. Nesting of nonkinetic stability operations and kinetic kill/capture operations in a shared battle space when combating terrorists and/or insurgent networks

A consensus has emerged that kinetic kill/capture operations in combating terrorists and insurgent networks is essential but not sufficient. In Iraq and Afghanistan, COIN has become dominant; however, kinetic operations continue and sometimes conflict with the other objectives of stability operations. How should commanders integrate nonkinetic stability operations and kinetic kill/capture operations in a shared battle space when combating terrorists and/or insurgent networks? What have we learned in Iraq and Afghanistan that SOF can apply to CT operations in other countries or areas? What have others learned elsewhere? Are doctrinal premises or models to help our understanding? What is the role of planning and training? What guidance must commanders provide?

B6. Use of SOF airpower in combating terrorist networks

Organic SOF airpower has been built around moving SOF forces (tilt-rotor, helicopter, and fixed wing), close air support armed oversight (AC-130, MH-60 DAP, AH-6), and more recently, unmanned aerial vehicles. Is there a coherent SOF airpower strategy? How does or should such a strategy accommodate counterterrorism? Should SOF airpower evolve into a multimission force, allowing for all varieties of air missions (for example: nonkinetic and kinetic support)? Are SOF air assets better able to perform both kinetic and nonkinetic effects against CT targets? Are SOCOM and the services fielding/employing the right types of aircraft? Is adapting available airframes still sufficient, or do the requirements justify unique designs? How do new technologies such as remotely piloted aircraft for combating terrorist networks fit into SOF airpower strategy? Will development of needed new capabilities in SOF create too much redundancy with conventional forces? What specifically needs to be SOF?

B7. Influencing *why* individuals and groups use terrorism

Know thy enemy is a premise of successful warfare. Much study has been devoted to why individuals join terrorist organizations and how these organizations get their members to commit terrorist acts, but less has been done to understand why the terrorist network chooses and persists in terrorism. Is there root reasoning beyond the clichés of “it works” or “the poor man’s weapon” that explain its appeal and persistence to the leaders? Is it more than a tactic? If so, what are the implications? What do they do different, and how do you counter it as opposed to a more Maoist approach where terror is a tactic to build strength? How can such appeal and persistence be influenced or affected within or across the groups? The United States and other nations are heavily engaged in current activities and operations in combating terrorism. How do we know that those activities are both an effective and efficient use of limited resources? How would a focused strategy address the root logic? Discuss root causes of terrorism — that is, What causes some people to resort to acting out their apparent frustrations and discontent using terrorist acts while others from the same group and exposed to the same irritants do not? How do you recognize the signs that someone may be proceeding along the path to committing a terrorist act? How can you preempt the terrorism act from being committed? Are there SOF tools available to influence a person or group from carrying out a terrorist act?

B8. Scalable strategies for effects against a long-term terrorist threat

Terrorist networks pose short- and long-term threats to the international order and the interests of the United States, the community of nations, and other legitimate international and local actors (for example: nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, civic organizations, and businesses). Who or what are the other entities that share a potential common interest in the defeat of terrorist organizations and networks? How can these be categorized? What are their interests and motivations, and where do they overlap? What capacity and capabilities (assets) do they possess, and how can they contribute? Given an understanding of the above, how can these be integrated to counter both global and specific terrorist threats? Given the inherent complexity created by limitations on levels of commitment and available resources of these potential partners and assets, how should SOCOM think about creating scalable strategies that deal with different terrorist threats that vary in scope, scale, proximity, and consequence?

B9. Leveraging and Exploiting Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) internal dissent in combating international terrorist networks

The individual terrorist groups, auxiliaries, passive supporters, and partners of convenience that make up the terrorist network are not a monolithic threat. They may share common or mutually supporting interests and motivations, but interests and motivations vary in interpretation and intensity and can be widely dissimilar, competitive, and even conflictive. How can we divide our enemies among themselves and from their supporters and allies? What challenges their legitimacy and appeal to others? Which interests and motivations can be addressed through non-conflict mechanisms, and what are these mechanisms? How do we divide and restore stability?

B10. Deploying a leaner and more lethal force to combat terrorists

Nonkinetic operations may provide the resolution to the conditions that allow terrorists and terrorist networks to flourish; however, if the past is any indicator of the future, SOF will still need a lethal capability. How can SOCOM create force packages that can accomplish the diverse missions and meet an increasing demand for a smaller footprint? What has our experience taught us to date about the deployment of SOF in counterterrorism? What are the types of requirements, and how should forces be tailored? What are the constraints on deploying SOF force packages, and how can these forces

be tailored to reduce their footprint? How does SOCOM develop host nation forces to conduct these operations? How does SOF fit into, and support a larger “whole of government” approach? How should USSOCOM and SOF support a larger effort lead by a civilian agency?

B11. Terrorist exploitation of seams in the 21st century global order

Multiple studies on modern terrorism argue that the terrorist network is better able to take advantage of the changes wrought by globalization. They, along with others, profit by acting through the new seams in the international order created by new technology, new means of communication and travel, rising expectations of populations, changing economic patterns, and inadequate governance. How can these seams be categorized? What are their characteristics? How can they be addressed? What counterterrorism policies and strategies best address the advantages enjoyed by the terrorist network? What is the SOF role in these?

B12. National cost threshold when defeating terrorist networks

One of the objectives attributable to Al Qaeda is the desire to economically bankrupt the United States. If this is true, it is an objective that has not yet been achieved. Nonetheless, the United States and its allies have suffered losses of blood and treasure and have made vast expenditures in security precautions and counterterrorism activities to defeat the terrorism network. Expenditures have been made by both the public and private sectors. Various estimates of a “true cost” have been postulated in terms of actual dollar and opportunity costs, but single analysis has brought together the qualitative and quantitative metrics to provide a basis for judging a cost threshold of where the objective might be realized. Moreover, national will is another cost threshold; it is not just about dollars.

What are the costs currently attributed to the current level of efforts in counterterrorism security and operations worldwide? How is or should this burden be shared? What does the U.S. spend? Which of these costs are sunk costs — that is, would be expended anyway as a part of any security paradigm? How much effort and money can the United States afford to expend over what timeframe for successful counterterrorism? How are U.S. funds and efforts best used? What should the U.S. spend to support partner nations in establishing/improving their counterterrorism organizations and efforts?

B13. The *specialness* of SOF in countering the terrorist network threat

Following the attacks on 9/11, the United States has sought to bring all of its instruments of power to bear on the threat posed by evolving terrorist networks. SOF has been an integral part of the counterterrorism effort and the war on terrorism. New SOF capabilities and missions have evolved and old ones have been adapted and integrated into new operational patterns. Conventional military forces, other agencies, and local law enforcement have also adapted and evolved. Much of the change has been ad hoc, driven by pressing needs. This research analyzes what missions and operations SOF is currently involved in, categorizes them, and compares them to what others have undertaken or are developing. From this understanding, it seeks to answer the question what is special about SOF in regard to countering the terrorist network threat? What is SOF doing that could be done better by others? What is SOF doing that it is uniquely qualified for and prepared to undertake? What is inherent to SOF capabilities even when others have proficiency? What is SOF not doing that it should be doing? What are the implications of the answers to these questions for SOF capabilities, organizational structure, and doctrine?

B14. SOF's role in countering the terrorist network in the cyber realm

Terrorists have been early adapters in regard to the Internet and cyber operations. Terrorist networks have capitalized on this talent, and expectations are that their activities will increase in this realm across a broad spectrum ranging from recruitment to cyber attacks. What is the nature of this threat? What role should SOF play in countering this threat? What unique capabilities does SOF have that are applicable? What capabilities should SOF develop?

B15. Implications of using contractors for combat terrorism (CbT) missions

Contractors have been an integral part of CbT network missions and have made significant contributions to national security. However, the extensive use of contractors has also created issues at the national policy, strategic, operational, and tactical levels. How are contractors being used in counterterrorism missions? Can these uses be categorized? In what roles and missions have contractors been particularly successful and what are the measures of success? In what roles and missions have contractors been problematic and what are the specific types of issues caused? What are the implications of using contractors for CbT missions — when and how should they be used and when

should they not been considered for use? What is the value-added from using civilian contractors in the fight against terrorism? Does use of contractors enhance, detract from, or seriously impede SOF capabilities in the fight against terrorism? What measures, restrictions, or guidelines (if any) should be put in place to guard against potential disaster or misuse of civilians, including contractors, in a purely combat role?

C. Irregular Warfare Strategy and Operations

Topic Titles

- C1. “Irregular warfare?”—if so, how and why
- C2. SOF and Security Force Assistance (SFA) in the 21st Century
- C3. SOCOM as Lead combatant command in fighting Irregular Warfare
- C4. Combating Terrorist Networks (CbTNs) vs. the acceptability of punitive warfare
- C5. Targeting adversarial irregular forces
- C6. Assessment of irregular warfare education/training in U.S. military services
- C7. Force structure and missions in an irregular warfare world
- C8. Role of civil society in irregular warfare
- C9. Using “irregular” resources to achieve irregular war objectives
- C10. Partnership in irregular warfare environments
- C11. Unconventional Warfare in the 21st Century
- C12. IW in the Littorals

Topic Descriptions

C1. “Irregular warfare?”—if so, how and why

Irregular warfare is a term that has been well debated among the services in the joint arena. It has utility and has been adopted into the military lexicon. Yet, understanding is not yet sufficient and it is not universally accepted. There is a need for a good intellectual synthesis of knowledge in regard to irregular warfare and its utility as a concept relative to spectrum of conflict. What is the definition of irregular warfare, and what is its utility as a model or as a concept for understanding types of threats and war? How do our adversaries perceive what we call irregular warfare? Is it conventional for them? How do our adversaries view their strategy as IW? What gaps exist in our conceptualizations of our adversaries’ thinking? How important is it relative to regular warfare? Is it more or less important in the 21st century versus other eras? What is the new norm for “irregular”? What is the

relationship and balance between irregular and traditional warfare?
 What are the implications for SOF force structure and missions?

C2. SOF and Security Force Assistance (SFA) in the 21st Century

Security Force Assistance is a security policy instrument, but is often problematic in execution, politically sensitive at home and abroad, and in the aggregate resource demanding. Using important historical engagements (e.g., Vietnam, the Philippines, Colombia, Afghanistan), is there evidence that SFA has been effective? Is the usefulness of SFA exaggerated? How does SFA fit into our regional strategies? How does it work within a given country? Who is in charge? What are the most likely demands that might be placed on SOF? Who should be in charge, and how should the chain of command work? How should funding and accountability work? What capabilities and capacity does SOF bring to SFA? What should be SOF's role in SFA? Is SFA an effective tool in strategy, or a tool for force development? Should USSOCOM be the executive agent for SFA?

C3. SOCOM as Lead combatant command in fighting Irregular Warfare

The Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) are best prepared to deal with conflict in their geographic regions. However, the seams created by geographic organization and the global or functional nature of much irregular warfare are inherently problematic for the GCCs. Discuss how difficult it is for a geographic command to deal with a global, massive cyber-attack or a global war on terror outside their areas of responsibility. U.S. Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) would be the more logical lead in the former scenario as USSOCOM's integrator role was in the latter. What forms of irregular warfare necessitate a SOF lead? Should USSOCOM be a combatant command for certain types of irregular warfare? If so, which? If not, what lead roles might SOCOM be called upon to play, and how will the command lead (for example, doctrine development, training, education, and C2 of operations)? What recommendations in regard to SOCOM are justified by the analysis — what roles should SOCOM seek, and how should SOCOM prepare itself for such roles?

C4. Combating terrorist networks (CbTNs) vs. the acceptability of punitive warfare

The costs in dollars, lives, opportunity, and time spent in combating terrorist networks through strategies of development and COIN are beginning to wear on the American people's patience. Irregular

warfare, such as piracy and state-sponsored or tolerated terrorism, raises serious questions in their minds about how security is being pursued. Military force can be used in differing ways, and military operations to impose will or have a punitive effect to deter others may well be the way of the future. If the results of actions against the United States are preemptive in nature, the use of kinetic military force is justified. Such use is consistent with America's values and history. What is the value of preemptive or punitive strikes in irregular warfare? Are they readily usable instruments of policy? What issues and problems do they pose? Are they acceptable at home and abroad, and do they communicate more meaningfully than winning hearts and minds — if so, how and under what conditions? What metrics or models are available to help us understand when these methods are preferable or more beneficial? How can we better think about the multiple choices available in the use of the military in irregular warfare?

C5. Targeting adversarial irregular forces

Irregular warfare postulates a range of warfare that is distinct from traditional warfare. Accepting the joint definition of irregular warfare, what does targeting look like in these environments? What constitutes legitimate targets? Can these be categorized? How might these targets be acquired? How might these targets be engaged? Research and analyze SOF doctrine, training, and organic or supporting capabilities for determining, identifying, and engaging the range of “irregular targets. What capacity does SOF have now? How should SOF invest now for the future — capabilities, training, and doctrine?

C6. Assessment of irregular warfare education/training in U.S. military services

A primary responsibility for preparation for war is accomplished through the training and education programs of the different services. Given the complexity of modern warfare and its instruments, significant challenges exist for training/education time and resources. This research seeks to assess the state of training and education for irregular warfare within the different services. How should each of the services train and educate in regard to irregular warfare? What do other militaries do? Do the U.S. military services provide the right and sufficient irregular warfare education/training? What training is conducted, and when does it occur? Is it appropriate and sufficient? What is SOCOM's role, if any? What changes to current practices need to be

made? Which institution is responsible to ensure training on irregular warfare is conducted and to what standard?

C7. Force structure and missions in an irregular warfare world

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan challenged the U.S. military's pre-war perspectives and capabilities. General Purpose Forces (GPF) have adapted by becoming less conventional and more SOF-like, focusing on COIN and stability operations. SOF, meanwhile, shifted to a more kinetic focus — direct approach. Analysts predict a high probability of more irregular warfare in the future, but also the rise of potential traditional peer competitors requiring the capacity to deter or defend by conventional means. Greater budget restraints also loom in the near future. Are the U.S. military force structure and capabilities out of balance because SOF has moved too far toward kinetic capabilities versus other SOF skill sets? Are the GPF too SOF-like and losing their conventional skills or conventional capabilities and expertise? What should happen to GPF and SOF force structure and roles when the current wars end? Is SOF adequately manned, trained, and equipped to counter irregular threats of the future? How might GPF and SOF combine efforts during irregular warfare operations? What are the roles and responsibilities of each? Will GPF assume some of the more routine missions, such as in Foreign Internal Defense (FID), or will SOF grow even further to accommodate the continuing increase in missions? Does SFA have a role in the development of the force structure deployed overseas?

C8. Role of civil society in irregular warfare

Civil society has always been important within democratic nations, but globalism has universally empowered civil society, and its presence and power as a non-state actor has increased exponentially since the end of the Cold War. What are the distinctions between international civil societies and domestic civil societies, and why are the distinctions important? What are the multiple roles of the different civil society actors in irregular warfare? How can they be integrated, facilitated, and influenced to take advantage of their positive effects or mitigate the negative? Can their concerns be integrated within the framework of U.S. objectives/interests? When, if ever, must we modify U.S. objectives to counter civil society's aims? How can they assist or hamper the struggle to win the hearts and minds of the population? How do they legitimize or disparage our efforts? How should SOF

“frame” the rise of civil society in strategy, planning, and doctrine?
How can SOF mobilize or leverage these assets in IW campaigns?

C9. Using “irregular” resources to achieve irregular war objectives

Irregular warfare encompasses a significant part of the spectrum of conflict and differs significantly from traditional warfare. Historically, its logic is nothing new, but its grammar reemerges from the circumstances of the 21st century. Military audiences often think of irregular warfare as “new” and requiring “new” resources. Examine current theory and doctrine in regard to irregular warfare. What resources are implied? Analyze what is actually “new”? Which of these can be garnered from existing military or be provided by nonmilitary resources? For example, the presence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international and local, in the battle space is generally accepted, but exactly how to deal with this presence in military operations has only recently been addressed in doctrine and is still being negotiated at the operational and tactical levels. The strategic relevance as international actors or internal forces has yet to be comprehended. Many NGOs have resources but lack security and planning capabilities. Discuss the way forward for resourcing irregular warfare.

C10. Partnership in irregular warfare environments

Historically, the U.S. military has conceptualized “partnerships” as political and military alliances, coalitions, and ad hoc military to military arrangements. The strategic and operational environments of the 21st century challenge by the limitations of these concepts. The challenges are most evident in the modern practice of irregular warfare. Consider irregular warfare as it is explained in current doctrine and practice. Who should the U.S. military logically seek to “partner” with on various levels: strategic, operational, and tactical? Categorize these partner relationships and develop the precepts that should guide such partnerships. How can we leverage the individual partners’ capabilities while recognizing their limitations or constraints?

C11. Unconventional Warfare in the 21st Century

Unconventional Warfare (UW) by its traditional definition consists of Guerilla Warfare (GW), sabotage, subversion, intelligence activities, and escape and evasion (E&E) support. Because of its legacy heritage most have interpreted UW through a GW lens, and more importantly that UW is waged against an enemy state or government. This requires an analysis and comparison of UW, how it was conducted in the past, how it is perceived, and how it is conducted in the present.

Refine or define how it should be conducted in the future. How should SOF apply, or should SOF re-define the aspects of UW against non-state actors? Do we need new nomenclature?

C12. IW in the Littorals

With 70 percent of the earth's surface covered by water, 80 percent of the world's population living within 100 miles of an ocean, and more than 90 percent of the global commerce moving across the world's oceans, the global littorals figure predominantly in national, regional, and global security. Key to legitimate trade, the littorals are increasingly exploited by those engaged in irregular activities such as trafficking people, contraband, and a myriad of IW threats. Irregular challenges — and how to confront them in the global littorals — is a growing concern, particularly as terrorist/insurgent/criminal nexuses expand and grow more sophisticated. Compounding the challenge of confronting IW in the littorals are that the threat crosses theater boundaries, is not viewed as high a DoD priority as more traditional threats, and is relegated to law enforcement vice being addressed as a whole of government issue. Strategies to develop a better understanding of the problem set, integrate U.S. and partner efforts to confront it, and clarify the role and priority of SOF are critical to reducing both the breadth and depth of this threat. Specific areas of analysis will include determining SOCOM perspectives regarding irregular challenges in their respective littorals, both within and across areas of operation, with specific emphasis on how irregular threat impacts the geopolitical balance (national and regional), economic security, and defense of the global commons. Given geopolitical realities, other regional influences, and U.S. and partner nation fiscal constraints, identify the top two or three countries that influence maritime regional security within each theater, the five countries most likely to be the source of destabilization, and the impact of littorals on each. Make recommendations regarding the integration of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and SOF programs to achieve efficiencies in developing and sustaining joint programs to improve partner nation and regional security littorals critical to U.S. national interests.

D. Interagency Operations

Topic Titles

- D1. Improving interagency-military relationship
- D2. Comprehensive approaches — sharing the security burden globally
- D3. Comprehensive approaches — developing better national strategies
- D4. Geographic combatant commanders and embassies in security assistance
- D5. Lessons learned from SOF experience in the interagency
- D6. Building a comprehensive host nation perspective of U.S. support – Effective Strategic Communications
- D7. Reconsideration of the 1997 DoD/DoS MOA on AT/FP issues
- D8. Bridging the DoD nongovernmental organization (NGO) divide
- D9. Embedding full-time SOCOM LNOs in select embassies
- D10. Success factors in Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

Topic Descriptions

D1. Improving interagency-military relationship

Solutions to 21st century U.S. security problems lie in whole of government (interagency) approaches. What is the state of the military and SOF's ability to work with other departments and agencies of government? What are the strengths and weaknesses? What are the obstacles? At what levels does interagency or whole of government coordination occur? Is this sufficient? If not, what other forums are required, and what changes need to be made at each level? Should the interagency-military relationship be more formalized? Why and how? How do we improve interagency information sharing while simultaneously maintaining adequate security/compartimentalization? Does whole of government need to be rehearsed? If so, who should conduct the exercises and at what levels? What are the implications of a more seamless interagency-military relationship for SOF operations? What are the implications for SOF professional development? How can the relationship leverage each others' capabilities?

D2. Comprehensive approaches—sharing the security burden globally

Iraq and Afghanistan, threats of potential conflicts, and increased instability exceed the costs of what American taxpayers can reasonably be expected to support. Contributions of friends and allies in Afghanistan in a comprehensive approach have helped. Nonetheless, United States security capacity is strained by increasing commitments. Is a new global security paradigm possible based on a comprehensive approach? What is a comprehensive approach, and what are the scenarios it may support? For example, from a U.S. perspective, can we delegate more of the counterterrorism, nation building/peacekeeping/FID operations to others? Can the North Atlantic treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations take more of the security burden in various regions/states? If so, what are the plausible scenario implications for SOF? What are the measures of capability on the host nation to assume the responsibility?

D3. Comprehensive Approaches—developing better national strategies

Many countries struggle in the development of their national strategies. Yet, legitimate state actors that have evolved good processes for strategic appraisals and strategy formulation invariably pursue strategies that complement U.S. interests rather than oppose them. How can the SOF community help other nations understand strategy formulation better and gain a better appreciation for whole of government and comprehensive approaches to local, regional, and global security and stability issues? Do SOF warriors understand national strategy and strategy development? Do SOF warriors know and understand the concepts of Internal Defense and Development (IDAD)? Where does SOF teach our Captains how to appreciate and develop strategy? Does the interagency and military leadership (not just SOF) understand IDAD? Should there be a national executive agent for IDAD? Where does SOF fit best as a tool to support IDAD?

D4. Geographic combatant commanders and embassies in security assistance

Security Force Assistance (SFA) is a complex and challenging instrument of national policy and security. It will become increasingly important as the United States seeks more and more to deal with regional instability through regional actors. Not surprising, U.S. ambassadors and geographic combatant commanders (GCC)

sometimes differ on Security Assistance (SA) priorities and issues. How are SA policy and requirements identified, developed, prioritized, and disseminated among the various levels: ambassadors, GCCs, DoS, DoD, the National Security Council (NSC), and presidential level? What is the big picture? Are the relationships and collaboration processes among the GCCs and various U.S. embassy staffs clearly established and defined? How do they differ among the regions? Do some more successfully identify, prioritize, and implement security assistance requirements and support? Why? What drives prioritization? How are differences in DoD and DoS perspectives resolved? Are GCC concerns appropriately represented in the country team model? How can SFA identification, development, prioritization, and implementation be improved? How does SOF fit into this process? Should SOF have a permanent presence in an embassy security cooperation role? What are the differences between SFA and SA?

D5. Lessons learned in SOF experience in the interagency

The interagency is composed of differing organizational cultures, members with diverse educational and experiential backgrounds, and often conflicting interests and priorities. SOF culture is specifically developed to appreciate these types of differences in foreign populations. In addition, SOF has developed a near continuous relationship with much of the interagency over the past decade. How can USSOCOM's past experiences in supporting interagency efforts be used to improve overall whole of government efforts in engagement with other nations? What insights does the SOF perspective and experience offer in regard to interagency relationships and processes? What lessons have been learned? What are the implications for development of training, education, professional development, and exercises and duty for SOF, the military, and the whole of government?

D6. Building comprehensive host nation perspective of U.S. support—Effective Strategic Communications

The United States provides significant support through various agencies and activities to multiple countries and peoples. Yet, we need to look no further than Iraq or Afghanistan for evidence that this support is falling short of building the kind of relationship with the host nation and its citizens that U.S. policy seeks. There are numerous reasons. Some have described it simply as losing the strategic communication battle. Others point to the disjointed and competitive agency programs and messages and express a growing concern that

these populations perceive these efforts in a piecemeal fashion. There is a perspective that, individuals, contractors, and separate agencies become competitors for what we really want — legitimacy of our intervention and legitimacy for the government we are supporting. What are the distinct reasons U.S. contributions have not resulted in more favorable indigenous support and legitimacy for U.S. policy goals? Which can be addressed? Which cannot? How does the U.S. government employ strategic communications to get indigenous populations to see individual U.S. agency assistance as a whole of U.S. contribution and favorable U.S. policy at work? How do we effectively integrate and coordinate strategic communications between agencies in order to affect indigenous populations favorably? How do strategic communications and MISO operations improve population attitudes in regard to what whole of government efforts are achieving within the battle space — transition from the perspective of the hand that feeds them to an understanding of good governance?

D7. Reconsideration of the 1997 DoD/DoS MOA on AT/FP issues

The DoD/DoS 1997 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) issues for DoD elements addresses the issue of whether military units come under the authority/responsibility of the Chief of Mission or Combatant Command when operating in a foreign country. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as incidents involving SOF units in Pakistan have caused the Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), the security and law enforcement arm of DoS, to revisit this MOA for possible revision. Examine the major provisions of the current MOA and the issues associated with it. Discuss its strengths and shortfalls. Is the MOA appropriate for today's environment, and is the major issue one of education and adherence? Are the issues substantial and require a revised or new MOA? What new provisions are needed to support evolving circumstances and requirements? How should resources and funding be controlled and accounted for? Are unique provisions needed in regard to SOF?

D8. Bridging the DoD-nongovernmental organization (NGO) divide

There is an existing history of NGO aversion to cooperation and identification with U.S. military forces. Yet, military professionals and NGO professionals share much in common in regard to values and commitment. And, increasingly they share the same operational space. More recently, some members of the NGO community have

begun to question their aversion, and the military has developed a new appreciation for what NGOs can do to help in fragile states. Should we further bridge the DoD–NGO divide, and if so, how? What are the reasons for the divide? What are the advantages and disadvantages of greater cooperation? Where does it make sense, and where is it not appropriate? Are there ways to facilitate shared operational space issues? Are there doctrinal precepts? What are they? What are the mechanisms of bridging—for example, doctrine, education, and structural? Are there unique SOCOM roles and responsibilities in regard to NGOs? What are possibilities and the pros and cons of SOF working with NGOs?

D9. Embedding full-time SOCOM Liaison Officers in select embassies

SOCOM is developing Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLO) for assignment with partner nation SOF headquarters overseas. Should SOCOM have full-time SOLOs embedded in the country teams at U.S. embassies in countries with critical SOF operations? What would be the purpose and role of such SOLOs? What role justifies placement of a full-time SOLO at an embassy as opposed to what military attaches or security cooperation officers (SCOs) do currently? What would be the specific duties of a SOLO, and how would they differ from other U.S. military personnel assigned to an embassy? What are the diplomatic, legal, and bureaucratic requirements? Are there professional development implications? Should SOF heavily participate in respective Service Foreign Area Officer (FAO) programs or develop a parallel SOF-specific career track? Should there be language, country experience, and rank requirements? Do we have the resources/manpower to execute this idea?

D10. Success factors in Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

PRTs are an innovative solution to applying interagency capabilities to the battle space. While generally accepted as a successful innovation, approaches and performance have varied widely among PRTs. What are the measures of success for a PRT? How do they link to the host nations' national plans? What roles should PRTs play? What are the attributes of a successful PRT? What promotes success or contributes to failure? What are the issues related to and confronted by PRTs? What best prepares PRT personnel? What should be SOCOM's position in regard to PRTs? Are PRTs appropriate assignments for SOF personnel? What other relationships with PRTs should SOF cultivate or avoid?

E. Regional and Cultural Studies

Topic Titles

- E1. Importance of sociocultural understanding in the war on terror
- E2. 21st century SOF warrior regional and cultural proficiency
- E3. Requirements for language and cultural immersion training
- E4. Acquiring population awareness
- E5. Regional specialization and focus...value and limitations
- E6. Aligning assignments and individual cultural affinity
- E7. Influencing public attitudes in different cultures and societies
- E8. Preempting and preventing insurgencies
- E9. Seeing the differences in Arab states
- E10. SOF roles and missions in an unstable Middle East

Topic Descriptions

- E1. Importance of sociocultural understanding in the war on terror**
Understanding culture has been an area of training and tactical emphasis for SOF warrior-diplomats since the beginning of Special Forces. Improvements in cultural understanding at the tactical and interpersonal level have been useful, but insufficient. Success requires an understanding of both culture and society and how they interrelate. Individual cultures, tribes, civil and religious structure and organizations, economic structure and activities, and governance structure and practices are all part of the tapestry of a nation. How do we need to think holistically and strategically about societies and cultures? What disciplines are available to aid SOF in thinking about cultures and societies, and how can they inform us? What paradigms are available to help us understand the complexity and nature of intercultural interactions? What are the implications of what is known and what is not known at this time? How can SOF use this knowledge or improve on it? How does enhanced cultural awareness impact SOF operations? What is the linkage between the U.S. and Host Nation End State and cultural understanding?

E2. 21st century SOF warrior regional and cultural proficiency

The SOF Warrior ethos values intellectual agility, cultural astuteness, and situational awareness. A large number of SOF members have been committed to deployment cycles that have taken them away from their traditional areas of expertise. Most have been focused on specific combat environments. National, regional, and global interactions are changing at an exponential pace. What does the 21st century SOF warrior need from his education and training experiences to regain or sustain his regional proficiency, cultural awareness, and mental preparedness to operate in an ever changing world environment? What is the nature and level of the content required to maintain proficiency? How can this be accomplished — teaching and learning methodologies, structures, and education resources? What are the obstacles that must be overcome? What changes or improvements, if any, are required to better facilitate the learning process?

E3. Requirements for language and cultural immersion training

Deployment commitments and other expedient decisions have distracted SOF professional development priorities away from language and cultural immersion. At the same time, the importance of language and cultural awareness has been reinforced by the facts on the ground of combat operations. How should SOF approach this problem? What is the current status of qualification of the force? What are the metrics used to determine proficiency? Are they adequate? How does training need to be changed? Are there roles for others, such as anthropologists, as well as linguists? Should language and cultural immersion training (for example: at least 90 days in a given country) be mandatory for SOF? What is the role of technology? Are changes to incentives required? What should an effective program look like, and how much would it cost?

E4. Acquiring population awareness

Winning hearts and minds requires an understanding of differing populations to support the end state or U.S. political objective. Culture, social context, knowledge, and individual and collective interests all matter. The way a person and his social equals understand the world influences the way they act in it. For example, a rural Afghan and his fellows living in an isolated village may not understand the geopolitical justifications of the presence of a SOF-led VSO in his village. However, those in Kabul may grasp it readily. SOF operatives with extensive field experience in a region appear to intuitively

practice nuanced population awareness. How do we prepare the SOF as a whole to interface appropriately and more rapidly with differing populations? Can what is known about culture and social dynamics be merged with an assessment of particular segments of populations to enhance SOF interaction with them? Is there education, training, or models that would enable a quicker bridging of the experience gap? This research brings together what is known about this topic and recommends potential ways forward.

E5. Regional specialization and focus ... value and limitations

The value of regional experience and knowledge is recognized by all the services. Individuals, assignment managers, and gaining commands tend to support multiple assignments to the same region for reasons ranging from convenience to readiness. Many SOF operations are dependent on in-depth study and knowledge of a region, others less so. Yet, regional specialization and focus remain ill-defined and misunderstood. Define regional specialization and focus in terms of individuals, units, and missions. What are the values and advantages gained from regional specialization and focus for individuals, services, and Combatant Commands (COCOM)? Categorize these. What are the disadvantages and costs of such practices? Analyze the data and draw conclusions about comparative advantages? Who should specialize and focus in terms of individuals and units? For example, is it feasible for everyone within a SOF unit to have a regional specialty or a “micro-regional” specialty? In what ways? Does an AC-130 or MH-47 crew need the same level as an A-team? Should units within each of the services be regionally focused like the Special Forces (SF) Groups? Should Corps/divisions/Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) learn the language and culture of a specific region? This research provides better understanding of the purpose and relative value of regional specialization and focus.

E6. Aligning assignments and individual cultural affinity

The military services recruit tens of thousands of individuals every year. Many of these recruits have innate or acquired linguistic and culture knowledge or other affinities for non-American cultures. Yet, much of this capacity goes unrecognized or mal-utilized because of the inability of our personnel systems to recognize the potential or overcome the administrative barriers to better align assignments (e.g., contracts, fairness policies, and lack of incentives). Is it possible to better identify cultural affinities and linguistic skills and potential in

the recruitment process or early in service careers for personnel with such skills? Can they be tracked or developed more effectively? How might this be done? Given such potential capacity exists, what are the obstacles to its more effective use? How might these obstacles be overcome (for example: can it be incentivized, can inter-service transfers be simplified, and assignment policies wavered)? Does the potential derived merit the efforts involved?

E7. Influencing public attitudes in different cultures and societies

The U.S. military effort to assist earthquake victims in Pakistan changed public attitudes in regard to the United States favorably, if only briefly. How foreign public attitudes shift and change is poorly understood or responded to by United States agencies. What research has been done in regard to foreign public attitudes and how they are shaped and changed? What are the dynamics of these shifts, and why does the U.S. fail to anticipate, avoid, or gain advantage from them? What insights can SOF gain from this research? Does it confirm or conflict with what SOF now believes or acts on?

E8. Preempting and preventing insurgencies

The Iraq and Afghanistan experience reinforces the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Explore the possibility that through strategic assessment, U.S. assets could identify where insurgencies might occur and take preemptive actions or preventive measures to preclude them or mitigate their consequences. What are the metrics for an assessment and the decision to act? What types of missions might be used? What are the metrics for success? What risks are involved? Considering all this, how would SOF assets be used in these circumstances? How do you convince the host nation it has a problem, and then how does the Embassy/SOF team approach the problem?

E9. Seeing the differences in Arab states

The Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa are increasingly unstable, and vital U.S. interests are threatened by this instability. Within the U.S. military there is a tendency to think of all Arabs as one homogeneous society. While Arabs largely share a common culture and religion, the societies in the various states differ greatly. What are these differences, and how will they shape the consequences of any government failure? For example, what is the significance of citizens who share or aspire to a national identity as opposed to a tribal one? What difference does education and other modern social

attributes, including the use of online social networking, make? How do resources affect the nature of change in these states? What are the implications of the uniqueness of each society for U.S. policy options and potential operations?

E10. SOF roles and missions in an unstable Middle East

Recent instability in numerous Islamic countries presents challenges and opportunities to the U.S. in the global order. However, these opportunities do not promise to be easy, and failure will create more challenges to the world community. U.S. interests are best served if modernity occurs and arrives in the least painful way for the populations involved. Where on the spectrum of conflict might these transitions occur? How can they be moved closer to stability? What are the likely SOF roles and missions as this process unfolds. How can SOF contribute to the reshaping of these societies in ways that are not contrary to the interests of the United States and the indigenous populations? How does Special Operation Forces collaborate with its European allies to have a positive impact on Islamic Nations? What risks are involved? Who leads the effort?

F. USSOCOM and SOF Issues

Topic Titles

- F1. SOCOM and SOF organization in a changing environment
- F2. SOCOM's role as provider of "Special Operations" Forces
- F3. Effects of an end to the extraordinary demand for SOF in counterterrorism
- F4. Adequacy of SOCOM Title 10 authorities
- F5. Training and education in a SOCOM Training and Doctrine Command
- F6. SOF and the questions of risk
- F7. Strengthening the human dimension through SOF relationships
- F8. Collaboration initiatives in R&D, operational planning/execution, and information sharing
- F9. Defining future air capability for transport
- F10. GPF PME on SOF strategy, operational concepts, capacity, and utility
- F11. Identifying potential unnecessary redundancy, misalignments, and mission creep in SOCOM
- F12. Emerging 21st century strategic insights and a theory of SOF
- F13. Required SOF warriors attributes for the Future (15+ years)
- F14. SOF professional development and advancement
- F15. The need for SOF strategists
- F16. 21st century SOF warrior as a weapon system
- F17. Cyber as a SOF enabler

Topic Descriptions

- F1. **SOCOM and SOF organization in a changing environment**
SOCOM and component SOF organizations undertake periodic reviews in order to ensure the structure is appropriate for the changes and challenges of the strategic environment. What changes and challenges are anticipated in the strategic environment in the mid- and long-term? What are the basic organizational structures, mission and functions of SOCOM and SOF organizations? What were they

maximized to do? Are they appropriate for the changes and challenges that are anticipated? What are SOCOM's Title 10 roles, and do the SOF Core Activities support Title 10 authorities? Which are appropriate and necessary? What staff activities are duplicative of GCCs or the larger Services? How have SOCOM and SOF organized in the past to execute the irregular warfare mission? What might be applicable for the future? What changes can be made to the current USSOCOM headquarters in order to gain efficacy? Are the various components — AFSOC, USASOC, NAVSPECWARCOM, MARSOC — best organized to support current or future USSOCOM and GCC missions? Discuss the justification — pros and cons — for TSOCs to fall under SOCOM. Should operational units be organized based on capabilities or missions, or both? How so? This research is designed to provoke innovative thinking and challenge current precepts in regard to SOCOM and SOF organization.

F2. SOCOM's role as provider of "Special Operations" Forces

SOCOM's primary role is to provide "special operations" forces — trained and equipped to accomplish missions General Purpose Forces (GPFs) are not structured for or capable of accomplishing with efficacy. Defining the future of the SOF Warrior is essential to SOCOM successfully fulfilling this role. Missions and requirements will evolve and devolve requiring SOF to do the same. What are the evolving demands for capabilities in the 21st century? How will they affect SOF? What functions, missions, and capabilities will require specialized training, levels of performance, technology/equipment, and a military culture that cannot be incorporated into the GPF with efficacy? How will SOCOM meet the challenge of providing these special operations forces? Where and how must SOCOM compete for resources? Discuss the apparent conflict in mission caused by GPF taking on more SOF-like missions.

F3. Effects of an End to the extraordinary demand for SOF in counterterrorism

The war on terror has created extraordinary demands for SOF in a CT role. This demand has been met by reprioritizing SOF missions, training, deployment, development, and increases in recruitment. What happens in SOF when "terrorism" as a threat is institutionalized in the state's bureaucracy, or when terrorism as a strategic threat ends? What has been left undone that should now be undertaken — for example, missions, training, professional development, and doctrine? How will

SOF requirements be reprioritized? What opportunities for change for the future are presented? Discuss future roles and missions for SOF as/if CT missions lessen. What has SOF forgotten or has reduced visibility on to meet the demands of CT?

F4. Adequacy of SOCOM Title 10 authorities

SOCOM's experience as a force provider in the war on terror provides a unique opportunity to examine the adequacy of the Title 10 Service-like responsibilities and authorities of the command. What issues and problems have emerged? What has worked well? Where have responsibilities and authorities not been adequate for the demands placed on the forces? What additional "Service-like" authorities should be given to USSOCOM? Should SO become a separate service with responsibilities and authority for assignment of personnel, promotion, all training and education, special pay entitlements, etc.? Why or why not? Should SOCOM become a fifth Service?

F5. Training and education in a SOCOM Training and Doctrine Command

Special operations are inherently joint and are unique from GPF operations. As a result of SOCOM's unique missions, should SOCOM seek establishment of a Training and Doctrine Command to provide central SOF training, educational, and doctrine distinct from the Services? What are the requirements, costs, advantages, and disadvantages of such a SOF command? What would such an organization look like, and what would be its missions and functions? Should the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) and the Naval Special Warfare Center (NAVSPECWARCEN) be brought under this command? How would role of JSOU change under such a command structure?

F6. SOF and the questions of risk

Part of SOF's uniqueness is the SOF warrior's relationship with risk. SOF accept extraordinary risk as inherent to the nature of its missions, but recognition of mission risk transmutes to extraordinary preparation, precision performance, and emphasis on adaptability. Risk is also both incurred and mitigated in the acceptance and use of advanced and special training and technology. Is the SOF relationship with risk taking changing? What is the relationship, and how has it historically manifested itself? Does the success of cutting-edge technology against asymmetric foes invite an attitude of risk aversion among SOF? Has the force become too reliant on technology? For

example, if a unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) cannot be dedicated to an operation, the operation may be cancelled. Can the technological advantages actually become a handicap? In a war of beliefs and ideas, is atrophy of nontechnical competencies creating unnecessary risks? What is the place of risk in SOF operations and how should the SOF warrior culture consider it?

F7. Strengthening the human dimension through SOF relationships

Engaging and building relationships with and among peoples, governments, militaries, interest groups, and individuals is a core SOF capability. It is founded in understanding of cultures and the role of human potential to influence outcomes. What relationships should the SOF community seek to sustain or develop abroad for a changing strategic environment and the resulting national priorities? Can SOCOM strategically frame and prioritize these relationships? What measures of effectiveness should be applied or what other models can be used to determine an outcome? What existing programs should SOCOM retain, adapt, or eliminate? What new programs should be undertaken? Why?

F8. Collaboration initiatives in Research and Development (R&D), operational planning/execution, and information sharing

How does the whole of the U.S. government and our allies operate or coordinate with DoD/SOF and COIN? They also conduct research and development, regional and country analysis, and operational missions. In what ways can SOCOM and SOF collaborate with, combine, or piggyback off of these like activities to gain advantages (for example: innovation, save costs, and gain easier access to areas in which others already have a presence) and greater effectiveness and efficiency? How should SOF think about this? Are there precepts to guide it? What are the advantages and disadvantages? What risks are involved, and how will such risk be managed or mitigated?

F9. Defining future air capability for transport

SOF operates in and supports operations by others in environments that lack infrastructure or deny use of roads and airfields. SOF will require an air transport capability suited to its unique mission requirements to move supplies to troops in hostile environments that are not favorable for road convoys or lack suitable airfields. What are the requirements for SOF mission air transport? Are remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs) an option? What missions cannot be met with

existing U.S. military airframes? What is available commercially or from other friendly militaries and agencies? What is the need and advantages of R&D of a specific airframe? What is the recommended way forward?

F10. GPF PME on SOF strategy, operational concepts, capacity, and utility

Iraq and Afghanistan operations have brought more visibility of SOF and SOF operations to the GPF. However, in large part, SOF strategies, operational concepts, capacity, and utility remain a mystery to far too many future GPF leaders who one day may need to employ or contribute to decisions in regard to SOF. What is the requirement for GPF PME for SOF-oriented education to develop both the military professional and SOCOM's institutional needs? What is being done now? What are the gaps? How should this education be accomplished, and what should it consist of? What is the way forward? Discuss JSOU's role in providing such education.

F11. Identifying potential unnecessary redundancy, misalignments, and mission creep in SOCOM.

The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) recently directed all of DoD to look at where efficiencies can be made and savings gained. Future budget reductions are in the wind. This research seeks to augment and challenge SOCOM internal thinking about how SOCOM and SOF can best deal with these reductions. For example, what are the various SOCOM staff activities doing that is either redundant with what others are doing, should be done by the theater commands or national agencies, does not need to be done, or can be consolidated within SOCOM? What are the efficiencies that can be gained across the SOF community? Any such look would also identify anything that surfaces that is needed but is not being done. What changes are recommended, and what issues or risks, if any, are associated with the changes?

F12. Emerging 21st century strategic insights and a theory of SOF

The SOF experience in the first decade of the 21st century — what has been done and what has been recognized as needed, but not resourced — provides good insights into what the new century portends for SOF. What are the SOF strategic insights gained over the last decade by U.S. and foreign SOF? How do they inform SOF thinking? What strategic framework helps explain the role of SOF in the new century? What is an appropriate theory for SOF power and doctrine

in the 21st century? How is it founded in other theories, and what are its specific premises? What are the implications of these premises for SOCOM and special operations?

F13. Required SOF warriors attributes for the Future (15+ years)

Adaptation and change are inherent to the SOF warrior ethos, and we know the future consists of continuities and change. What are SOF attributes now and how do they compare to past organizations such as the OSS? What attributes will define SOF warriors in 15+ years? Are there identifiable “Enduring Attributes” that can be adopted similar to the “SOF Truths”? What continuities and changes are required? This research should focus on what will constitute a SOF warrior in 15+ years, and what attributes and commonalities bind these warriors together as SOF. Such research would also address any appropriate distinctions.

F14. SOF professional development and advancement

SOF professional development and advancement continue to be areas of general concern. Is this a problem supported by facts or merely perceptions? Discuss commonalities and differences within SOF components that affect individual professional development. Are they on par with their non-SOF contemporaries? How do SOF careers compare with other low density specialties versus GPF specialties? Discuss ways to level SOF career progression throughout the Command to ensure advancement on par with other services. Are there differences among the services? Are changes needed? This research should include a statistical analysis to distinguish perception from realities and to discern the extent and nature of substantiated concerns. Subjective analysis proceeds from this concrete data. Research should address career development (education) and career advancement at the Officer, Warrant Officer and NCO levels. Consider the current OPTEMPO and operational demands in your review of operational and staff development issues.

F15. The need for SOF strategists

There is a general consensus that SOF will play an increased and often lead role in 21st century security policy. What are the justifications for creating SOF strategists? What are the arguments against endorsing SOF strategists? How should SOCOM select, educate, professionally develop, and nurture SOF strategists? How does SOF create the environment to promote strategic thinking? How do we identify SOF

thinkers early on in their careers? How does SOF encourage a culture of operators and change some into a cultural of strategic thinkers?

F16. 21st century SOF warrior as a weapon system

The SOF warrior of the 21st century should be treated as a weapon system. This topic will define each variant of the SOF warrior as a system. The researcher will define interfaces, architectures and interactions to include use cases for programs and developers to build to. Hardware and software developed for SOF are managed by various programs, and currently there is no integrated and synchronized approach for development of hardware and software. The assumption is that defining the operator and use cases will assist with improving how programs focus on specific needs of individual SOF units or the greater SOF community. The use case and solution analysis and output should describe the 21st century SOF warrior system. If material solutions are available, the study will be able to identify them as well. A collateral goal of a weapon system approach is to reduce training time. How can this be accomplished — teaching and learning methodologies, structures, and education resources? What are the obstacles? What changes or improvements to material solutions are required to improve operations?

F17. Cyber as a SOF enabler

There is a predominant global approach to cyber-related activities. It is important to investigate the requirements and capabilities that USSOCOM has and will need within the cyber domain. Assuming cyber capability is an important SOF enabler, what are the cyber forces and support required across the spectrum of conflict? What is the impact of SOF utilizing cyber as a force multiplier? What are the effects that cyber enables in SOF-specific mission sets? Is there a requirement for organic cyber capability or cyber support to SOF? Is there a reason to have Special Operations cyber forces? How does SOF bridge the gap between its operators being digital natives versus digital immigrants?

G. Miscellaneous

Topic Titles

- G1. SOF roles and responsibilities in domestic events
- G2. SOF and countering gangs and narcotics trafficking
- G3. Relationship between USSOCOM and NORTHCOM Special Operations Directorate (SOD)
- G4. Role of “preemption” and “prevention” in SOF thinking in the 21st century
- G5. SOF roles and missions in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- G6. Weakening the terrorist factories (i.e., Islamic schools, mosques, Internet)
- G7. SOF employment of police/investigative techniques
- G8. Nature of SOCOM/SOF relationship with the CIA
- G9. Effects of near term mission expediency on core SOF activities
- G10. Need for more than one SOC in the Pacific Theater
- G11. Role of the National Guard and Reserve in SOF activities
- G12. SOF knowledge management imperatives
- G13. Evaluating a COIN synthesis
- G14. Levels and distinctions in legitimacy
- G15. Optimal Prioritization of USSOCOM MILCON Projects

Topic Descriptions

G1. SOF roles and responsibilities in domestic events

The nature and extent of challenges and threats confronting the United States domestically has raised questions about *posse comitatus*, the defining law in regard to domestic use of military force. What are the implications for the SOF community if *posse comitatus* is revoked or changed? What are the potential roles, responsibilities, and missions SOCOM and SOF may incur if changes are made to the law? What changes in authorities, organizations, and doctrine and training will be required?

G2. SOF and countering gangs and narcotics trafficking

SOF capabilities have wide application to traditional police security concerns. How far should SOF allow itself to be drawn into police work against gangs and narcotics trafficking? What potential contributions can SOF make in countering these threats at home and abroad? What should SOF's role be? What are the second and third order effects of greater SOF involvement? What are the political consequences? If greater involvement is directed, how should this involvement be prioritized in relation to specific threats and locations? How would such mission demands "fit" with SOF's core activities? Does it become a core activity of the 21st century? What new capabilities and training should be considered? How does this fit into regional strategy and a whole of government approach?

G3. Relationship between USSOCOM and NORTHCOM Special Operations Directorate (SOD)

SOD is not a TSOC. SOD has no operational control (OPCON) of SOF forces. SOF are not likely to be used "operationally" in the NORTHCOM AOR, except for possibly Mexico. In the case of the latter, NORTHCOM SOD is likely to grow in importance. In addition, as SOCJFCOM is being eliminated, some missions and tasks may migrate to the SOD, or a SOCNORTHCOM may be established. What is the range of scenarios involving NORTHCOM SOD? What are the implications for the relationship between USSOCOM and NORTHCOM SOD or its successor? This research should also consider the histories of TSOC and SOD creation and the reasons the current relationships exist.

G4. Role of "preemption" and "prevention" in SOF thinking in the 21st century

The Bush Administration discovered in articulating its national security strategy that words have meaning when they appeared to get confused over prevention of war and preemptive war. What should prevention and preemption in SOF thinking for the 21st century be? Do we need to rethink it in strategic terms? Preventive and preemptive actions properly executed are much cheaper and faster than a long war. This research is intended to add clarity to SOF thinking about and articulation of preemptive and preventive actions in war and peace. Compare and contrast prevention and preemption and other applicable "titled" concepts as different terms with specific meanings. What should be the SOF understanding of preventive and preemptive

war? What are the differing implications of war and other actions for SOF? For example, why is SFA not war? What is the spectrum of SOF preventive and preemptive actions in the 21st century?

G5. SOF roles and missions in humanitarian assistance (HA) and disaster relief (DR)

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations are a growing reality of the 21st century. USSOCOM and SOF interagency experiences in providing support in places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Haiti constitute a remarkable, if not well told, history in these missions. How does SOF participation in HA/DR operations in other countries potentially advance national objectives in potential hotspots or “areas of interest” around the world? What should be the SOF role and mission in HA/DR operations? Are there transferable tactics, techniques, processes, and procedures (TTP) from previous experiences that can enable the U.S. military and SOF to better plan, execute, and support HA/DR operations? Examine SOF’s role in the opening hours and days of the Haiti earthquake disaster and discuss other HA/DR operations in which SOF have been used. How can we better integrate SOF capabilities to support HA/DR with those of general purpose forces? What does the de jure primacy of other government agencies (OGA) mean for SOF operations, specifically Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), in any foreign HA/DR effort? Would rehearsals or participation in interagency or international exercises improve SOF capacity for these missions? What are the implications for training and capabilities?

G6. Weakening the terrorist factories (i.e., Islamic schools, mosques, Internet)

Terrorist organizations have created virtual terrorist factories through their appropriation and use of school houses, mosques, and the Internet. Continued indoctrination through the means of education, religion, and Internet communications provide a ready supply of new recruits. How do we degrade the effect of or eliminate these terrorist virtual factories? This research topic seeks effective ways to degrade “terrorist factories” with methods that do not create negative secondary effects. What are the key strategic factors to be considered in any strategy? What are the objectives, concepts, and resources required for a successful strategy? What are the political and reactionary risks of engaging in such a campaign, one that seems to target religions, education, and free speech? How can this be mitigated? Specifically,

discuss the impact such a campaign would have on U.S. efforts to win over hearts and minds and change the attitudes and beliefs of those inclined to support terrorism.

G7. SOF employment of police/investigative techniques

SOF units in the field have increasingly encountered mission circumstances where the lines between military tactics and police skills and techniques are blurred. Do SOF units need to be trained in police/forensic investigative techniques (such as cyber-crime, financial fraud, documentation and fabrication) to work with the interagency, particularly law enforcement community and achieve mission success? What is the juxtaposing of conflict and criminality, and is this a form of hybrid warfare? What are the issues it poses for nation-state security, and how might states and the international community deal with them? For example, in the event that a SOF unit encounters a location that is involved in illegal activity, will the expectation be that evidence, suspect interviews, witness statements, and so forth, are collected and forwarded to U.S. law enforcement attaches for evaluation and possibly further investigation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of SOF employment in law enforcement-type missions as compared to agencies established and trained for counter-crime missions? Debate whether SOF units are more or less capable to perform this mission, and discuss why SOF should or should not take on this mission. Are there ways in which SOF can better leverage those U.S. agencies that have the expertise to create a more Whole of Government approach in operations of this nature? Discuss any advantages of participating in joint training or deploying interagency elements with SOF teams. Consider also any advantages of using SF National Guard groups with significant law enforcement backgrounds, some of which may already be performing some of these functions.

G8. Nature of SOCOM/SOF relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

There is a history of SOF and CIA working collaboratively in the Vietnam War and more recently cooperation in Iraq, in the intervention phase into Afghanistan, and the successful hunt for Osama Bin Laden. Some aspects of close collaboration with the CIA significantly contribute to SOF success, but others were problematic. The security issues of the 21st century portend an increasing nexus between SOF and CIA missions. How should SOF think about this nexus? What does an analysis of past experience and the future environment

future reveal in regard to potential future advantages and disadvantages — what are the synergies, pitfalls, and risks of increased collaboration? Should SOCOM establish an extraordinary and enduring relationship with the CIA? At what levels? How would these differ from other interagency coordination? What would be the effect on the favorable reputation SOF enjoys with the American people and Congress? How would a closer affiliation affect success in other SOF endeavors? How would it affect the SOF ethos? Would it create impediments to joint and combined operational cooperation in the future? Should SOCOM seek additional authorities to enhance its ability to collaborate with CIA?

G9. Effects of near-term mission expediency on core SOF activities

SOF always fully supports the mission assigned. It is inherent to the SOF ethos. However, in the current conflicts, SOF has been both an essential and expedient Direct Action solution to a lot of problems, often at the expense of future proficiency in other core activities. How can SOF refocus more on core activities in order to avoid the prospect of becoming a “jack of all trades and a master of none?” What are the current core activities of SOF? How do they relate to current mission requirements?” How are resources being consumed? What are the implications of any mismatch? Are the core activities correct for the 21st century environment confronting SOF? Discuss the tradeoffs in the “need to be relevant today” and the opportunity costs to the future. What can SOF do to close the gaps?

G10. Need for more than one Special Operations Command in the Pacific Theater

The Pacific Theater is large and culturally diverse, potential threats and conflict are numerous and widespread, and opportunities for employment of SOF assets are extensive. Korea as a divided and conflict-prone nation poses a special challenge. However, this theater only has one TSOC. Will SOCKOR be given the resources/priority of effort in sufficient time for any conflict on the Korean Peninsula? Is there adequate SOF command and control capacity and forces to meet Korean missions and effectively engage the rest of the vast region? What would be the relationship between the current TSOC of today and one that would be added in the future — for example, functions and responsibilities, missions and activities, command and control, areas of responsibility, and resourcing? Explain your rationale for how this might change over time. With a majority of SOF forces deployed

currently in the CENTCOM AOR, how would you adjust priorities to reapportion resources for the two SOCs caused by an uptick in Korean issues?

G11. Role of the National Guard and Reserve in SOF activities

Active duty SOF capacity is limited by a number of different factors. In spite of a number of initiatives to mitigate these factors, National Guard and Reserve forces will remain important to SOF activities. Examine the roles, missions, and functions of National Guard and Reserve forces in relation to current and future SOF activities. What are the multiple relationships and interactions — formal and informal, existing and potential — between active and Reserve component SOF (for example, the need and ability to retain experienced, well trained, and battle-tested SOF personnel through transitioning to the Reserve force)? How can these relationships be better exploited to build greater SOF capacity and efficacy?

G12. SOF knowledge management imperatives

SOF has a historical appreciation of the value of information, but today we live in a world of information overload. A significant strategic advantage goes to the actor who can better manage and use knowledge derived from this information stream. The purpose of this research is to examine how SOF might gain advantage through knowledge management. What is knowledge management in terms meaningful to SOF? Is there a current knowledge management plan? How have others — for example, different professions, different societies, and other militaries — been able to gain advantages from knowledge management? What impediments and opportunities exist? How can SOF best manage knowledge — for example, in what areas or categories of missions, and functions? What should be the objectives of knowledge management, and how can these objectives be achieved? What resources are required? How should SOF move forward?

G13. Evaluating a COIN synthesis

COIN manuals are proliferating and reflect different culture, social, and professional perspectives. There are contemporary U.S., French, British, and other COIN manuals available. Other potential or unpublished manuals exist in various educational and training institutions around the world, such as the COIN Academy Afghanistan’s curriculum content. What are the existing superior COIN “manuals?” How are they alike and where do they differ? Create a synthesis of the better precepts and ideas. Is there a real understanding of COIN?

What is similar and different between the countries with COIN Doctrine?

G14. Levels and distinctions in legitimacy

In the struggle among states, insurgents, and international supporters, authorities such as David Galula and Timothy Lomperis, suggest there are levels of “legitimacy,” and these levels matter. Sovereignty and legitimacy are being redefined in the 21st century and differing disciplines are still exploring these changes and their implications. Legitimacy has been “codified” in SOF doctrine and is being “operationalized” without fully comprehending what it is and its relationship to sovereignty. What is legitimacy? Who defines legitimacy? What is sovereignty and how is it changing? Using a multi-disciplinary approach, synthesize what is known about the dynamics of sovereignty and legitimacy for the 21st century, and develop insights for how governments should or must act when challenged by insurgents, terrorists, or other non-state actors.

G15. Optimal Prioritization of USSOCOM MILCON Projects

The SOCOM J8 is responsible for building a Program Objective Memorandum that provides the best mix of Joint SOF capability. Inherent in this process is balancing readiness, force structure, and infrastructure (MILCON). To ensure that the resources allocated to MILCON are used in the most efficient manner possible, the SOCOM J-8 employs a MILCON prioritization model to prioritize all MFP-11 MILCON projects. The current model, which will be revised for use in POM 14, used the resource sponsor’s prioritization and the SOCOM Capability Based Program List in the weighted product model to produce an initial prioritization list. This priority list is then subject to revision based on the senior military judgment of a panel of the component deputy commanders chaired by the SOCOM Deputy Commander. Review the revised model proposed for use in POM 14 for potential analytical improvement for possible implementation in POM 15 (fall of CY12). How can the proposed model better distinguish between resource sponsor projects with similar priorities while normalizing project priority between resource sponsors with differing numbers of projects? How can it better determine urgency of need for a project and maintain a capability linkage to the prioritization process?

H. Additional Topics and Their Sponsoring Organizations

CJOTF-Afghanistan submitted the following research questions related to counterinsurgency (COIN) and Village Stability Operations (VSO).

- H1. What makes for successful COIN and how can it be applied to Afghanistan?
- H2. What should Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) do now to prepare for the withdrawal of General Purpose Forces?
- H3. What key tasks should SOF teams execute to maintain a balance between security, development, and governance when conducting VSO?
- H4. What is the most efficient task organization of a Village Stability Platform (VSP) that provides the maximum capability with the minimum physical and logistical footprint?
- H5. Are VSPs that embed into local villages more successful than VSPs that operate from Combat Outposts or traditional bases?
- H6. What objective metrics define successful VSO?
- H7. What is an ideal model of stability in Afghanistan?
- H8. How can coalition forces identify and empower true traditional leaders (as opposed to nefarious power brokers) in Afghanistan?
- H09. What roles do Pashtunwali, Islam, and other regional customs play in VSO in Afghanistan?
- H10. What traditional and modern local defense mechanisms exist in Afghanistan and how do they compare to the Afghan Local Police (ALP) program?
- H11. Given that the ALP program is intended to last for 3–5 years, what are some viable options for demobilizing ALP members?
- H12. What must Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior (MoI) do to expand and sustain the ALP program?
- H13. What conditions must be set for Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A) to disengage from the ALP program? Discuss the requirement for a capable Afghan National Army (ANA) to support an Afghan Campaign Plan.

- H14. How can SOF and GPF illuminate not only the dark, but also the light and gray networks to mitigate the inadvertent empowerment of malign actors?
- H15. How can malign actors be marginalized when they cannot be removed?
- H16. What is the most efficient use of Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds to support VSO and mitigate the empowerment of criminal patronage networks?
- H17. How can SOF and GPF better integrate to conduct COIN and VSO in Afghanistan?
- H18. What special training and task organization is required for GPF and Coalition Forces to conduct VSO?
- H19. What conditions must be set and what resources are required for SOF Teams (U.S. Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (ODA), Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Platoons, and Marine Special Operations Teams (MSOT) to conduct split-team VSO in Afghanistan? Consider integration of SOF and GPF enablers, Military Information Support to Operations (e.g., MISO, Civil Affairs (CA), and Female Treatment Teams Cultural Support Teams), ALP and Afghan National Army Special Forces (ANASF), which is part of Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC).
- H20. What is the most effective manner to employ SOF organic UAVs in Afghanistan?
- H21. What are objective metrics to identify effective Information Operations (IO) at the tactical and operational levels of war?
- H22. In light of the recent wave of popular revolts in the Middle East, what is the viability of a grass-roots social movement in Afghanistan that counters Islamists and builds sustainable governing structures (Afghan Enlightenment or Third Way)?
- H23. How can GPF be integrated into SOF elements to conduct VSO?
- H24. How can CJSOTF-A improve CA, IO, and MISO effectiveness?
- H25. Evaluate the effectiveness of SOF Command and Control in Afghanistan and make recommendations for improvement.
- H26. Is the Advanced Special Operations Management System (ASOMS) effective and what are possible alternative solutions?
- H27. What role do the Baluchis play in countering Al-Qaida, the Taliban, and Iranian aggression?

- H28. Evaluate the current Personnel Recovery (PR) architecture of the SF Groups and CJSOTFs. Are those elements properly manned and trained to meet PR requirements? Address SOF, GPF, Nonconventional Assisted Recovery (NAR), and Unconventional Assisted Recovery Mechanisms (UARM).
- H29. What role do the Sayyed play in Afghanistan and traditional governance?
- H30. What mechanisms can improve information sharing between Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, and the National Directorate of Security?

NATO SOF Headquarters submitted the following topics:

- H31. NSHQ (NATO SOF HQ) is striving for maximum interoperability between partner nations. How interoperable should international or NATO SOF forces be? This research question is intended to identify the limit of interoperability and seek to understand when sharing among nations becomes a security risk (if it even does).
- H32. How much emphasis should PME place on political, economic, social, information, and infrastructure areas of competence? If so, how could the SOF PME curriculum be updated to reflect these changes to develop more rounded and competent mid-, senior-, and executive-level leadership?
- H33. The NATO Response Force (NRF) is the current NATO system that pools together military forces from NATO Troop Contributing Nations (TCN) in order to meet immediate military contingencies. The current NRF system receives criticism for being slow and cumbersome. How can the NRF model be updated to reflect a system that is truly responsive? Note: This problem set is a real problem/puzzle at the strategic level, and extremely complicated due to the legal framework that binds much of what NATO does.
- H34. NATO SOF Air assets. NSHQ would like to, in the future, purchase and maintain its own fleet of air assets to be a responsive SOF unit within NATO. If that were to actually happen, what would this SOF Wing look like? How many rotary wing (RW) assets would exist, what would be the cost, where would the pilots come from, and why would this be a good (or bad) thing? This topic should be done in a similar fashion to the current SOCC Core thesis, with the exception that once NSHQ gets a green light to get RW assets they would already have a model showing them “how to.”

- H35. Given the assumption that authorities for Special Forces will not change in the future, how could SF Groups best engage and maintain engagement with key countries in their respective AORs? What would this look like?
- H36. What are the long-term strategic engagement countries that SOF should be interested in? This thesis would be AOR-dependent and look at AOR threats 10–15 years into the future.
- H37. How can current and future SOF capabilities enable cyber warfare, and how can SOF capabilities evolve to enable U.S. cyber forces to meet the growing cyber threat? For example, how can SOF provide access for U.S. Cyber forces to adversaries' denied/closed networks? What does this mean with respect to ODA composition, pipeline training, and associated organic enablers within the SF Group?
- H38. NSHQ is seen by NATO countries located in Europe as a prime facilitator for SOF training and proponency in their home countries. This has occurred via the training that NSHQ conducts through their NATO SOF Education Program (NSTEP) within Belgium and the strategic engagement campaign. However, NSHQ is predominately regionally oriented to NATO countries within Europe. What other opportunities exist within other geographic regions that would enable the same kind of collaboration among SOF that currently exists within NATO?

Naval Postgraduate School, NATO COIN Course and Common Operational Research Environment (CORE) Lab FY11 generated the following research questions and thesis ideas:

- H39. How have leaders effectively synchronized units during COIN campaigns in the past? (3-24, Academies, Portuguese, Malaysia, Vietnam)
- H40. Evaluate the organizational design of Village Stability Coordination Centers (VSCC) in Afghanistan?
- H41. From an organizational design perspective, evaluate how to connect VSO to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA).
- H42. What are the consequences, methods, and options for confronting the Afghan poppy trade during VSO?
- H43. Is there a way to subvert the poppy network in Afghanistan? Have other counterinsurgents successfully harness illicit economies?

- H44. How can ground operators understand and employ the cultural idiosyncrasies of Pashtunwali to separate insurgents from the population?
- H45. What opportunities exist to transition from poppy to high-price crops? (Rose Oil, Black Cumin)
- H46. What are the tenets of a collective society concept and how do counterinsurgents manage the population in such a society?
- H47. How is defensive targeting used in conjunction with VSO to ensure survivability and create the time/space gap needed to succeed in VSO?
- H48. How are national level strike assets effectively nested into a COIN strategy?
- H49. What are the considerations for reconciliation in Afghanistan?
- H50. What is the value of differentiating and independently analyzing networks: friendly, opposition, illicit economy, and the population?
- H51. Conduct an Organizational Design Analysis of the joint service SOTFs in Afghanistan (SOTF-W and SOTF-SE 2011).
- H52. What are the effects and derived decision criteria for raids by a local or higher echelon security force?
- H53. What are the historical best practices and primary considerations for remote area and denied area resupply in IW?
- H54. Beginning in April 2011 an INF BN has been TACON to CJSOTF to support VSO. What are the organization design and cultural challenges?
- H55. What are the critical metrics in VSO and ALP: for site selection, embedding, for ALP certification, and transition to ANSF responsibility?
- H56. What are the VSO/ALP security considerations and quick reaction force (QRF) requirements by phase in the operation?
- H57. What are the best practices for split team operations?
- H58. What are the critical functions and capabilities of District Support Teams?
- H59. What are the best practices for CERP approval that ensure value is added to the community, maximize utility of funds, avoid fraud and waste, and avoid increased rivalry throughout the society while enhancing the legitimacy of GIRoA?
- H60. Assess the NATO COIN Field Manual (FM), AJP 3-44. (Available on request)

- H61. Does Area Structures Capabilities Organizations People and Events (ASCOPE) or Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, Information, Physical Environment, and Time (PMESII-PT) best support understanding and analysis of the COIN environment?
- H62. Evaluate the COIN model that forms the theoretical basis of instruction at the COIN Academy in Afghanistan (“war amongst the people?”)
- H63. Evaluate the manual used by the COIN Academy in Afghanistan (Cutting the Gordian Knot).
- H64. What is the value/effect of putting all brigade/battalion commanders/staff through a COIN Academy upon arrival in Afghanistan?
- H65. What are the historical best practices of small unit Clear, Hold, Build operations? (Question from Denmark Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF))
- H66. What are the differences and techniques for effectively participating or influencing a Jirga versus a Shura meeting? (Question posed by Italy and Belgium)
- H67. Assess COIN “Principles” taught by COIN Academy-A.
- H68. Assess elements of insurgency taught by COIN Academy-A.
- H69. Assess the new French COIN FM. (available upon request)
- H70. Assess the new British COIN FM. (available upon request)
- H71. COIN Academy Afghanistan asks students to evaluate insurgent strategy. Among the possible types of insurgent strategies is “Subversive Strategy.” Is the concept of a Subversive Strategy valid? Rather than a strategy, is subversion a tactic or line of operation within the context of an insurgency?
- H72. Authorities such as Galula and Lomperis suggest levels of legitimacy. What are the levels and how is a population moved from one level to the next?
- H73. Denmark ARSOF was created to conduct UW and COIN. In the 1980-90s, it switched mission focus to DA. Now, the unit is transitioning back to a UW/COIN focus and is attempting to join U.S. Special Forces in VSO. What challenges will the force face as it transitions? What are the advantages and obstacles of NATO countries specializing in particular SOF missions? How does their transition reflect tendencies/challenges and the future of U.S. Special Forces indecision concerning mission specialization?

- H74. Are there momentum (or growth) cycles in insurgency conflicts (both for the insurgents and COIN forces)? What are the variables and how are they influenced by phase?
- H75. COIN Academy Afghanistan identifies three prerequisites for insurgency: weak government, vulnerability tied to basic need conditions, and leadership. Assess these prerequisites and propose additional conditions if applicable.
- H76. Population Resource Control (PRC) is frequently viewed as levels. Can PRC techniques be broken down and defined as a menu of options from which a force can select the right technique to achieve affect with minimal disturbance of the population? Or, can PRC techniques be used to regain initiative and maneuver insurgents into poor physical or information positions?
- H77. COIN Academy–A has linked McCormick’s Diamond directly to D3A targeting; serious flaws existed in there linkage. Is it possible to link McCormick’s Diamond to targeting? How?
- H78. What techniques are available for leaders to war-game 2nd and 3rd order effects across the entire spectrum of operations?

For more information on topics in this section: please send an email to the JSOU Director of Research at jsou_research@socom.mil. You will be provided with additional information and a topic point of contact.

I. Topics Retained from Previous Years

Topic Titles

- I1. What initiatives are necessary to improve SOF capabilities to understand local, global, and regional terrorist networks?
- I2. Operationalizing combating terrorism: Direct and indirect approaches
- I3. Countering radicalization: How do we identify and recruit the appropriate indigenous persons and leverage them to improve SOF understanding and effectiveness at the local level?
- I4. How to build capabilities to conduct local, regional, and global assessments of counterterrorist network effectiveness
- I5. How to expand capabilities to identify, locate, target, and disrupt key components of terrorist networks
- I6. SOF contributions to a new intelligence architecture for counterterrorism
- I7. Phase 0, SOFt Power: Role for SOF in political warfare, coercive diplomacy, and active security campaigns
- I8. Integrating General Purpose Forces (GPF) and SOF operations in irregular warfare
- I9. Building an irregular warfare force for the future
- I10. Retooling Special Forces for the 21st century counterterrorism effort
- I11. What capabilities can and should be developed to provide support to the interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental counterterrorist network?
- I12. Turning the hot war cold: Suggestions for the increased emphasis on the indirect lines of operation to combat terrorist networks
- I13. Engaging the constructive, credible Muslim Ummah to counter violent extremist ideology
- I14. Capability to synchronize DoD/DoS networks to counter terrorist networks
- I15. How can Islamic religious tenets be employed to counter terrorist activities and slow the recruitment of new extremists?

- I16. What are the appropriate metrics for DoD to assess irregular warfare operations?
- I17. Refining the indirect approach, irregular warfare strategy and operations
- I18. Game theory and the warrior diplomat: Understanding competitive and cooperative decision making and their applications to interagency interaction
- I19. Impact of organizational (agency) cultures on effective interagency interaction
- I20. Analyze interagency C2, planning, and operational mechanisms employed during contingency operations where the interagency community leads
- I21. What steps can the DoD take to encourage the engagement of the whole of government in the counterterrorism effort, thus maximizing best practices while reducing redundancy and costly overlap with other U.S. Government agencies, partner and cooperative countries, and multinational organizations?
- I22. Interagency community turf battles
- I23. Best practices of providing cultural education in preparation for SOF operations
- I24. Supporting U.S. southwest border stability in a crisis period: Potential SOF assistance to struggling Mexican security institutions and U.S. CONUS defense
- I25. Leveraging academic support for special operations
- I26. Strategic culture analysis: Predictive capacity for current and future threats
- I27. Natural resources battlefield
- I28. SOF intellectual capital
- I29. Law and legal institutions
- I30. U.S. SOF training of foreign military/security forces “to enhance their capacity” in counterterrorism, COIN, and FID is a major strategy of the U.S. and USSOCOM overseas contingency operations, but have those efforts generated the desired results?
- I31. Diplomatic agreements to support rapid SOF support for other nations
- I32. Security Force Assistance (SFA)

- I33. SOF interaction with host-nation Ministry of Interior (MoI) resources
- I34. Influence and relationship between USSOCOM and the military services
- I35. Training systems for USSOCOM and its components
- I36. SOF aviation: Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs)
- I37. Use of Unmanned Ground Vehicle (UHV) systems
- I38. Use of Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) and Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) systems
- I39. Planning for Joint special operations for the indirect approach
- I40. Developing regional counterterrorism strategy — enabling partners
- I41. Getting beyond Al Qaeda and looking to the future of counterterrorism policy and operations
- I42. Counterterrorism partnerships between SOF and law enforcement agencies (LEAs)
- I43. How does cultural awareness contribute to effective activities in combating terrorism?
- I44. Intelligence for counterterrorism operations: Best practices, future requirements, possible synergies among USSOCOM and other U.S. agencies — for example, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) — allies, and other less savory options
- I45. What are the funding relationships between terrorist organizations and organized crime?
- I46. When counterterrorism is counterproductive: Case studies and theories of the misapplication of counterterrorism
- I47. Poverty is a pawn: The myth of poverty as genesis of terrorism and how poverty is used by terrorist leaders
- I48. Terrorist safe havens/sanctuaries/ungoverned areas
- I49. What strategy should the U.S. pursue to break the power jihadist terrorist hold over third world population and what is the role of SOF in this strategy?
- I50. Lessons not learned in irregular warfare to date
- I51. Organizing interagency community for irregular warfare campaigns
- I52. Strategic theories on irregular warfare
- I53. Operational art design for irregular warfare-centric campaigns

- I54. Building Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plans for key partner nations
- I55. Case studies of SOF creating strategic effects in irregular warfare
- I56. How to advise host nations engaged in irregular warfare
- I57. Conventional/SOF cooperation
- I58. Embassy role in U.S. Government irregular warfare effort
- I59. Legislative requirements for effective interagency campaigns
- I60. Country team approach
- I61. Cultural awareness
- I62. Are culture, religion, and worldview factors in motivating irregular warfare?
- I63. Cultural knowledge in irregular warfare campaign planning
- I64. Regional studies
- I65. How is strategy developed for special operations and what is the framework for such development?
- I66. Why is Phase 0 important and how can SOF support the geographic combatant commander strategy: Informing the joint conventional community
- I67. Develop SOF internships with Fortune 500 companies in order to develop irregular warfare skill sets (marketing; influence, investigations, strategic communications)
- I68. Impact of crossing borders to conduct military operations
- I69. Roles of SOF and NGOs in complex humanitarian emergencies
- I70. Oral histories of SOF leaders for publication/professional development
- I71. SOF senior leader competencies for joint warfare: Preparing for joint SOF combat command
- I72. Cross area-of-responsibility operations
- I73. U.S. national security initiatives in Africa and the counterterrorism effort
- I74. Effective PSYOP in a mostly illiterate population

Topic Descriptions

11. **What initiatives are necessary to improve SOF capabilities to understand local, global, and regional terrorist networks?**

For SOF to be successful in defeating and deterring terrorist networks, we must first understand our operational environment, whether physical or virtual. To do this, we need the cognitive skill sets to provide SOF with local, global, and regional understandings of those environments. What cognitive skill sets? Historical context is essential for understanding current conditions and to avoid becoming trapped in a Western mindset. What is a “network”? What hindrances do we bring to the fight? What outcomes against terrorist networks are truly possible and acceptable? This study examines current SOF capabilities to learn about and share awareness of terrorist network structures, strengths, and vulnerabilities. It then moves forward to propose steps to improve current capabilities while seeking initiatives to fill existing gaps.

12. **Operationalizing combating terrorism: Direct and indirect approaches**

Experience teaches that fighting and winning within the counterterrorism effort are separate, though complementary, endeavors. Fighting requires direct action to kill or capture terrorists and destroy their support networks. However, is reliance on such quick, decisive, and measurable missions reflective of a winning strategy? How does such a mindset hinder or help win a war when the ultimate effects of such operations may not be apparent for months or even years? Thus, is the reliance on Direct Action missions to attrit terrorists effective beyond force protection or the defense of strategic interests within the broader war on terror? Winning must ultimately be about indirect actions intended to eliminate the environment that enables terrorists to flourish and operate. Winning is also about eliminating sanctuaries, an effort inevitably requiring a mix of direct and indirect actions. This study proposes a “right mix” of direct and indirect actions to assure the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives. What is the correct force structure to win and win decisively? What does “operationalizing intelligence” mean to collectors, analysts, planners, and operators? How does the process of operationalizing look when successfully implemented? Defining the relationship between direct and indirect action helps define the required balance between them to achieve the End State.

13. Countering radicalization: How do we identify and recruit the appropriate indigenous persons and leverage them to improve SOF understanding and effectiveness at the local level?

One of the lessons of the counterterrorism effort is that “radical” Islamic thought and practice represent a very complex and diverse mix of groups and agendas. However, by simply labeling terrorists and their networks as “Al Qaeda” or some other shorthand reference without a more detailed understanding of their nature runs the risk of missing important characteristics that are essential to the successful engagement of these networks. SOF needs to become far more sophisticated in their understanding of Islam in general and in categorization of Islam’s radical elements. This study surveys the relevant Islamic groups, their belief structures, and their agendas. For example, what are the differences between an Iraqi Jaysh al-Mahdi follower who adheres to Wilayat al-Fiqh as a political philosophy and an Iranian who espouses similar beliefs? Once the differences are identified and understood, what can be done to leverage them to achieve success in the counterterrorism effort? How do we counter radicalization in the areas of identifying motivations, recruiting methodologies, and working with indigenous assets who have special emphasis on parents and relatives?

14. How to build SOCOM capabilities to conduct local, regional, and global assessments of counterterrorist network effectiveness

Credible assessments of counterterrorist network effectiveness are essential to sustained and successful counterterrorism operations. This study explores the purpose of such assessments, USSOCOM’s authorities to conduct assessments, the assumptions and components that drive the assumption process, and the complex interactions required with other combatant commands and the wider interagency community to ensure the most complete assessment products. Assessments allow the joint force to determine the effects associated with counterterrorist network operations: the impact upon the terrorist network, the effect upon the targeted populace and other actors, the effect upon other elements within the operational environment, and the requirements for future joint force contributions to counterterrorist network operations. This study also includes an overview of planning assumptions to include the understanding of the terrorist network, emerging effects, and the changing conditions within the operational environment to determine the accuracy of understanding,

effectiveness of operations, and the course corrections required for future operations.

15. How to expand SOF capabilities to identify, locate, target, and disrupt key components of terrorist networks

Central to any counterterrorism effort is the capability to engage the full spectrum of a terrorist network and to render the network unable or unwilling to continue to function. This study examines techniques by which parallel organizations can be established to compete with and neutralize components of existing terrorist networks. Engagement of such networks can be either led or enabled by the DoD functioning by, with, and through interagency, multinational, and/or nongovernmental partners. Activities may involve direct actions focused on specific nodes or links of interest; they may also employ indirect methods addressing some aspect of the operating environment and thus rendering ineffective the node or link of interest.

16. SOF contributions to a new intelligence architecture for counterterrorism

In the late summer of 2008, the Defense Science Board (DSB) identified key security issues that, if not addressed, could lead to future military failure. One of these was a lack of deep penetration capabilities needed for developing actionable intelligence against individual terrorists and terrorist groups. More broadly, the DSB underscored the need for a new architecture that no longer focused on mainly fixed installations, but on people and activities “hiding in plain sight” and collection that would be “close-in, intrusive, and must achieve deep penetration.” The DSB pointed to SOF as one of the “enduring pockets of innovation, agility, and prudent risk-taking” within DoD. Using the DSB findings as a point of departure, this study will address specific steps that SOF can take to enhance new counterterrorism intelligence collection efforts in appropriate and feasible ways. Overview reading: Defense Imperatives for the New Administration, Defense Science Board, August 2008.

17. Phases 0-II, SOFt Power: Role for SOF in political warfare, coercive diplomacy, and active security campaigns

There is a need to assist the DoD and the interagency community to understand and integrate Phases 0-II operations into the preparation of the environment in support of irregular warfare. This study explores the strategic utility of SOF to achieve U.S. policy objectives in non-war and preventive-war scenarios. It is relevant to theater and

SOF strategists, campaign planners, the irregular warfare community, and the interagency community. The discussion should include the achievement of strategic effects in periods of political warfare (for example: secret warfare, ideological warfare, and flexible deterrent options) — also known as “Grey” SOF — during coercive diplomacy and as part of COCOM persistent and adaptive Phase 0 theater campaigns. The research should explore the ways and means by which SOF achieve high levels of strategic performance in pursuit of national political goals; identify the optimal cooperation and team arrangements among SOF, DoD, and the wider U.S. Government interagency environment to achieve both military and political objectives; identify the best war-prevention measures SOF can perform; and recommend any necessary changes to the current security assistance environment to develop strategically sound, long-term, adaptable campaign lines of operation.

18. Integrating General Purpose Forces (GPF) and SOF operations in irregular warfare

The integration of GPF and SOF operations in irregular warfare environments raises many familiar questions. This study identifies the most persistent of these integration problems and proposes answers that seek to formalize the relationship between the complementary efforts. What lines of authority delineate SOF and GPF-controlled portions of an area of operation? When is one component the supported and the other the supporting within a specific operation? What are the mechanisms for the de-confliction of GPF and SOF rules of engagement? What are the mechanisms for ensuring the resolution of other interoperability issues that may arise? How does SOF gain equitable access to GPF-controlled sustainment and mission enablers such as transportation, communication, intelligence resources, and UAV support?

19. Building an irregular warfare force for the future

Emerging thought contends that SOF may not be adequately prepared to interact with indigenous populations in the variety of operational environments in which the irregular warfare counterterrorism effort will be fought and won. Do such shortcomings exist? If so, how can SOF better prepare itself for its global missions by addressing these shortcomings through employment of proxies, irregulars, or surrogates? Propose procedures to identify those with particular aptitudes for cultural awareness, intercultural communication, and language

proficiency. What indicators in secondary school curricula can assist in alerting recruiters to individuals with appropriate skill sets? Increasing numbers of school systems offer and sometimes require Spanish language proficiency. Are similar mandates available for Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Russian, and so on? What is cultural awareness? How should proficiency levels in cultural awareness be introduced and managed? Should training be focused on individual soldiers, units, or force-wide capabilities? How should cultural awareness training be tailored for different Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs), duty positions, and grades? Is cultural awareness sufficient for SOF to meet mission requirements? Should standards for specific cross-cultural capabilities be introduced to expand individual and unit SOF proficiencies across multiple geographical areas?

110. Retooling Special Forces for the 21st century counterterrorism effort

This research topic focuses on U.S. Army Special Forces and potential changes in how they operate to address the counterterrorism effort and related threats. How practical is it to have U.S. Army Special Forces prepare themselves primarily for unconventional warfare and FID missions while retaining the capabilities for support of remaining core SOF missions? With a narrower lane to travel, how can the training of language and cultural skills be upgraded to address the specific requirements of unconventional warfare and FID? What initiatives are available to establish and sustain stronger and more credible relationships with host-nation personnel? Is there utility in forward deploying Special Forces units to draw on improved infrastructures and opportunities for immersion in local and regional cultures? Consider historical examples and outline potential benefits and drawbacks to these approaches. Shifting to the future, how might such initiatives better prepare Special Forces units to identify, understand, prepare for, and confront emerging threats? Conduct assessments of the ODAs, ODBs, and Groups with an eye toward suggesting changes in their structures and skill sets. Is a 12-man ODA too large, too small or just right? Are its skill sets in need of a fresh assessment? Might the communication sergeant become the “Computer Surveillance/Attack Sergeant?” Is the Special Forces education and training system outdated? Are we getting the maximum benefit from the “brainpower” of ODA members? What specific steps are necessary to field the most efficient and effective Special Forces capability for the future?

111. What capabilities can and should be developed to provide support to the interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental counterterrorist network?

Joint Forces possess a variety of direct and indirect services, products, and resources to enable counterterrorist network disruption operations as well as programs to encourage local development, governance, and security. This study identifies possible Joint Force contributions that are both appropriate and acceptable to partners in the interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental counterterrorist network. The resulting program may include training, security assistance, education, command and control, logistics, ISR, funding, support to civil authority, information operations, and direct action missions.

112. Turning the hot war cold: Suggestions for the increased emphasis on the indirect lines of operation to combat terrorist networks

It is commonly accepted that indirect action and lines of operation are central to the efforts to defeat terrorists and their networks. Even so, it would appear that direct action missions are the preferred choice. This study surveys historical examples, lessons learned, and best practices to provide a comprehensive overview of the strategic, long-term nature of the indirect process. Examples such as the Marshall Plan and case studies from the Cold War serve as support for indirect thinking. What do SOF operators and leaders need to relearn about indirect planning and operations? Suggestions to improve the quality of indirect efforts should focus on preparing the irregular-warfare operational environment through the use of information operations, population influence, strategic communication, and civil-military operations.

113. Engaging the constructive, credible Muslim Ummah to counter violent extremist ideology

This topic continues to be one of growing interest among members of the Intelligence community who are seeking strategies for countering radicalization or changing the attitudes of those who are already extremists. Focusing primarily on Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Pakistan, and Europe, what can the U.S. Government do to reduce information barriers among 10–40 year-old Muslims? Which U.S. policies should be either increased or reduced to enhance positive engagement of the constructive Muslim Ummah organization? Also, how does the U.S. support or encourage credible Muslim voices

without discrediting them through our endorsement or support? Identify avenues and methodologies to positively engage the constructive Muslim Ummah to counter violent extremist ideology. Further, look to other nations such as India (home to more Muslims than Pakistan), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nigeria, Senegal, and Mali as venues for similar initiatives. For instance, are the techniques that are appropriate in Egypt also appropriate in Indonesia or elsewhere?

114. Capability to synchronize DoD/DoS networks to counter terrorist networks

The complexities of terrorist networks require the establishment and synchronization of counterterrorism networks that field the necessary capabilities from the DoD, DoS, and throughout the wider U.S. Government interagency community. Such arrangements remain elusive as stovepipe relationships and legislation prohibiting collaboration among various agencies limit network functioning. This study looks at how terrorist groups form their social networks and the areas of interest in which they operate. As we consider the emerging concept of “communities of interest” built around social networking, is a network the best way to conceptualize both terrorist and counterterrorist structures? What specific steps are necessary to synchronize DoD/DoS counterterrorist structures so they more efficiently bridge organizational boundaries? How do we construct counterterrorist structures that mirror those of our adversaries? How do we ensure that the emerging counterterrorism structures reach down to the operational level and are not blocked by the temptation to over-classify the flow of essential information?

115. How can Islamic religious tenets be employed to counter terrorist activities and slow the recruitment of new extremists?

Islamic extremists justify their behavior by invoking religious principles and elements of faith. This study turns the tables by challenging these claims and suggesting alternative Islamic interpretations that discredit terrorist behavior. Survey re-education programs such as in Singapore and other countries that use religious teachers to meet with captured extremists or terrorists to challenge their interpretation of Islamic teachings, discredit their justifications for violent conduct, and reframe Islamic teachings as condemning violent acts rather than endorsing them. Instead of relying on imprecise terminology and labels, what Islamic words and verses exist that reject the violence

committed and “justified” by religion? For instance, the often-used terms such as jihadist and mujahedeen are, in fact, positive terms that bolster the prestige and morale of the Islamic extremist. What Islamic words convey negative judgment on a terrorist or evil doer? How can we carefully use Islamic beliefs against the extremists? What is the true meaning of fatwas and their role in Islamic culture? Propose approaches that originate with credible Islamic voices, not with non-Islamic, non-cleric, nonreligious scholars. What primary source secular materials exist that highlight the hypocrisy and internal contradictions contained in the writings and actions of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups? Pointing out that such groups are opportunistic as much as they are ideological or religious can serve as an effective way to undermine their propaganda and presumed righteousness.

116. What are the appropriate metrics for DoD to assess irregular warfare operations?

The measurement of success in irregular warfare operations is extremely difficult because of the absence of “cookie-cutter” solutions to address any given situation and the need to develop specific metrics on a case-by-case basis. This study tackles the challenge of determining how irregular warfare operations can be viewed as effects-based when existing measurements of success are so rudimentary. Active engagement with academia and the application of assessment and analysis tools already used by social scientists can greatly assist in irregular warfare evaluation efforts. Contrast the need for an “inside out” assessment model that considers people, adversaries, and environmental perspectives with the traditional U.S. “outside in” approach. How do we arrive at data baselines against which to measure effectiveness? How do we measure the impact of irregular warfare activities (beyond killing the terrorists) in achieving geographic combatant command, DoD, and national strategic goals? What is the measurement of effect(s) for FID in terms of partner preparedness vs. SOF relationship building? What are the lines of operation for other SOF activities, and how can those measurements be captured? How do we define success, and how do we measure it? How do we measure “good enough?” How do we assess when no action is better than action that, though successful, may result in huge strategic costs? What are the time horizons across which we should measure?

117. Refining the indirect approach, irregular warfare strategy and operations

The proper coordination and application of effort in the areas of governance, development, security, economics, and social structures can result in the unbalancing of our adversaries and/or the alteration of environmental conditions. Such indirect approaches normally require a long-term commitment and challenge the patience of politicians and publics. Based on lessons learned, this study reviews the essential issues of indirect action with an idea of refining the paradigm to account for inevitable long-duration involvement. Attention must be paid to the various leverage points so as to gain maximum effect. These include goals/desired end states, levels of operational risk, access of U.S. forces and resources, U.S. “anti-bodies,” pre-conflict vs. conflict roles, security vs. non-security threats, regional players (such as EU, AU, ASEAN, OAS), and independent players (such as UN, ICRC, business/industry). What are the indirect action lessons learned? How do we prioritize various indirect approaches? How do we prepare domestic, partner, and host-nation publics to understand and accept the long-term nature of indirect action? The study recognizes the theoretical influence of rhetorical studies and strategic communication theory such as inoculation theory, cultivation theory, and the two-step communication process.

118. Game theory and the warrior diplomat: Understanding competitive and cooperative decision making and their applications to interagency interaction

When conducting interagency collaboration or negotiations, most participants are trained to approach the bargaining table as if they are engaged in a zero-sum game — that is, if another agency wins, my agency loses. This approach reflects classic competitive decision making. How can the introduction of game theory shift the negotiation paradigm from competitive to cooperative decision making? Drawing on the assumption that it is in the best interests of each participant to cooperate with the others, what techniques are available to teach that all participants benefit from cooperative decision making models? How might game theory assist in developing lasting interagency decision models that can also be further applied to state-to-state negotiations?

119. Impact of organizational (agency) cultures on effective inter-agency interaction

Understanding different organizational cultures is essential in seeking to reconcile different approaches for dealing with interagency issues. The goal is to achieve a unity of action by identifying complementary approaches in framing and addressing a specific challenge. Unique organizational cultures determine such things as decision-making models, communication styles, goal expectations, operational structures, and resource flows. This study explores these dimensions within the DoD, DoS, and other key participants in the interagency process. How do these differences affect both positive and negative interagency interaction? How might best practices in different agencies be documented and adapted throughout the interagency community? Part of the design of the interagency community, especially the respective Intelligence nodes within the Intelligence community, was to foster competition. The organizational culture within the DoS is very different from that within the DoD or CIA, leading in part to differing Intelligence estimates. This competition was intended to ensure that decision makers had different opinions to weigh against one another. Does the creation of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) run the risk of undermining this competition in favor of consensus assessments? What procedures can be developed to ensure that decision makers in all functional areas have different opinions to weigh against one another?

120. Analyze interagency C2, planning, and operational mechanisms employed during contingency operations where the interagency community leads

The interagency community has successfully led contingency-based operations, many with irregular warfare parameters. Around the globe, the interagency community leads on a daily basis the U.S. Government efforts in combating terrorism, counter-finance, counter-criminal business enterprise, counter-drug, and other security missions. During the secret war in Laos (Vietnam War era), the covert and paramilitary efforts of the U.S. Government, in conjunction with SOF, were led by the U.S. ambassador and his country team with operational control over both U.S. military and civil assets. Successful COIN cases exist where DoS-led efforts, enabled by U.S. SOF and other military forces, advanced U.S. interests and achieved strategic political objectives (for example: El Salvador, Operation Enduring Freedom, Philippines, and security assistance to Greece after World

War II). Efforts to win the drug war and assist Plan Columbia are interagency community-led, specifically by the U.S. ambassador and his military group (MILHRP). However, important differences in approach persist. This study analyzes the various methods that different agencies employ. For example, the military uses a very structured planning process (MDMP), but the DoS utilize a different method. How does each department's planning processes differ, and what we can do to fill the gaps resulting from these differences? Should we plan on using similar processes, and if not, how do we bridge gaps that might result? Study and analyze interagency community-led contingency-size task force operations to identify and synthesize best practices in strategic and operational planning, C2, and implementation. Identify the vital role SOF can play in these indirect applications of military power. Identify best uses of GPF to facilitate these operations. Recommend a 21st century task organization for the country team. This would include the MILHRP, which would optimize contingency operations when led by the interagency community. What are the risks? What challenges and strategic opportunities will dictate the use of interagency task forces? Consider the use of an interagency task force to accomplish soft-power campaigns over extended periods. What are the implications of having non-DoD departments (such as DoS/DoJ/DoE) in charge of DoD elements? Is the DoD prepared to place DoD assets under the control of OHA commanders?

- 121. What steps can the DoD take to encourage the engagement of the whole of government in the counterterrorism effort, thus maximizing best practices while reducing redundancy and costly overlap with other U.S. Government agencies, partner and cooperative countries, and multinational organizations?**

The skill sets and resources necessary for the successful prosecution of the counterterrorism effort reside throughout the U.S. Government. One of the weaknesses of the interagency process is the absence of a clear mandate for who is authorized to contribute to the requirements generated by the counterterrorism effort. What specific steps are necessary to identify and engage the full range of U.S. Government capabilities? One of the recurring problems is that of information sharing. What can be done within the interagency community to break down stovepipes and flatten the dynamic process of information exchange? How can DoD improve its capabilities to share information with the U.S. Government interagency community, partner and cooperative countries, and multinational organizations?

122. Interagency community turf battles.

As experiences in Afghanistan and elsewhere have taught, the military frequently finds itself in the position of performing tasks normally performed by DoS or other U.S. government agencies because the magnitude of the work precluded those normally responsible from doing it. This reality raises important political/social theory questions about the tension among organizations that have been given formal mandates/charters to perform while resources have been given to another organization, and capabilities perhaps reside with yet a third. What examples of both success and failure exist in such complex situations? How can objective after-action reports prepared by external reviewers (and not intended merely to assess blame) assist in identifying best practices in interagency relationships? What are the underlying obstacles to creating a synchronized interagency process to execute the counterterrorism effort and other theater missions and objectives? How can we convince others within the U.S. Government to muster resources towards a common goal when no individual and independent agency is subordinate to another? How do interagency players overcome the restrictions of their legal responsibilities, capabilities, and capacities and yet provide the fullest support to a whole-of-government effort? Do we need an interagency commission with representatives from the DoS, DoD, DNI, DoJ, and other agencies to run the counterterrorism effort? Does such management-by-consensus stifle real leadership? Examine various options or approaches, taking into account the human factors involved, with recommendations of how to better run the whole-of-government machinery without creating another cumbersome layer of bureaucracy. How do we manage/resolve conflicting agency missions to achieve true interagency solutions? How do we develop practical nonhierarchical C-2 structures to enable SOF, GPF, and other government agencies to work together on the battlefield?

123. Best practices of providing cultural education in preparation for SOF operations

SOF traditionally place a heavy reliance on operating within unfamiliar cultures. Cultural awareness and language proficiency are the building blocks of cultural education. How do different SOF components prepare their personnel to conduct operations with indigenous populations? Do specific education methods work better for certain missions? How does language proficiency assist with cultural education? Which elements of culture are essential to prepare SOF

for down-range experiences? Do NGOs, international governmental organizations, and other international players conduct education programs that may be helpful in assessing and improving SOF cultural education? How might cultural immersion programs assist SOF preparations? Identify standards for determining how much education is sufficient in a given situation.

124. Supporting U.S. southwest border stability in a crisis period: Potential SOF assistance to struggling Mexican security institutions and U.S. CONUS defense

The U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) recent articulation of the U.S. Joint Operational Environment (JOE) highlights a real potential for Mexico becoming a failed state. Sustained pressures from organized crime- and gang-fed violence increasingly point to weakening Mexican military and security institutions, while at the same time entrenched government corruption undermines the most serious reform efforts. JFCOM — in a judgment that may have been characterized as excessive just a few years ago — highlights Mexico’s weakening institutions as a threat to Western Hemispheric security generally, and especially as a U.S. Homeland Security problem of “immense proportions.” Visible increases in Mexican cross-border violence immediately following the JFCOM report’s release were underscored by Phoenix, Arizona being named the top U.S. kidnapping center and the second highest in the world as a consequence of Mexican gang and paramilitary violence. Individual U.S. states, in response, have begun to formulate their own plans for border crisis. The possibility of a sudden catastrophic collapse with ensuing mass border crossings, humanitarian crises all point to the broadest U.S. support requirements being implemented, and anticipatory planning or actions undertaken ahead of time. The U.S. State Department’s FY 2009 Strategic Mission Plan: U.S. Mission to Mexico has declared four major policy goals. These potentially benefit from the direct or indirect support of U.S. SOF to appropriate Mexican institutions and to CONUS military, law enforcement, and interagency organizations: enhancing common border security, increasing security of a shared North American homeland, strengthening Mexican law enforcement and judicial capabilities, and helping Mexico consolidate and strengthen its governmental institutions and the rule of law. Research under this topic examines the ways in which U.S. special operations components — and especially the roles of U.S. NORTHCOM and the interagency community — can effectively support such U.S. policy goals in

today's operational environment that blurs distinctions between U.S. and Mexican requirements.

125. Leveraging academic support for special operations

The SOF community, in the form of Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was an innovator in the recruiting and use of academic specialists — for example, anthropologists, political scientists, historians, and linguists — to advance irregular warfare initiatives. Support in the early days was typically enthusiastic. While productive relationships have continued to some extent, recent years have seen far less enthusiasm in academia for defense and security interaction. Sometimes the response is outright rejection and hostility. In a 2008 effort to reinvigorate what decades earlier had been productive relationships, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates oversaw the development of what was called the Minerva Consortia. This initiative included academic outreach and a number of programs that included the creation and deployment of Human Terrain Teams (HTTs), document exploitation for key areas of interest to both scholars and military planners, religious and ideological studies, and other applications of history, anthropology, sociology, and evolutionary psychology expertise residing in U.S. universities. Some of these programs, however, particularly the HTTs under U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) management, have proven controversial in academia and in reviews of implementation and effectiveness. While SOF has its own priorities and approaches, concepts for leveraging academic support for special operations should be considered in light of such controversies and problem areas. This study addresses how SOF can most productively use expertise found in U.S. universities and academic research centers to advance SOF knowledge, skills, initiatives, and operations. It will consider concepts, approaches, specific activities and programs, and the overall nature, appropriateness, and potential of academic/university relationships.

Overview readings are Speech to the Association of American Universities (Washington, D.C.) as delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Washington, D.C., 14 April 2008 and Robin Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939–1961* (Yale University Press, 1996).

126. Strategic culture analysis: Predictive capacity for current and future threats

Many feel that strategic culture analysis holds significant promise for interpreting and understanding how different states approach matters of war, peace, strategy, and the use of military force. Strategic culture analysis emerged from Cold War requirements to understand and possibly predict Soviet nuclear behavior. Strategic culture fell out of favor as a concept after the fall of the Soviet Union. More sophisticated than its Cold War construct, strategic culture now explores belief systems, values, climate, resources, geography, classical text, defense concepts, military doctrine, economic resources, and a country's technological base. Given their structures and purposes, are Al Qaeda and other transnational, non-state terrorist, and criminal groups appropriate candidates for strategic cultural analysis? Consider state-like attributes such as military forces, an international economic base, a sophisticated communication network, a system of social services, and clearly articulated international security objectives. Can strategic culture analysis of transnational, non-state actors identify strategic personalities, define strategic perspectives, and ultimately predict strategic behavior? Is strategic culture analysis a viable tool for understanding current and predicting future terrorist threats?

127. Natural resources battlefield

Competition for natural resources such as oil, water, food, and wood has led to conflict throughout history. Research is necessary to identify contemporary vulnerabilities, security measures, and the location of any seams. Second-order effects on population, land use, and economic activity are also of immediate concern. More specifically, the study identifies potential natural resource battlefields and their roles in future acts of terrorism and wider aspects of irregular warfare. Examples include oil and natural gas reserves sited amidst Iran, Russia, and China. What are the implications of U.S. petroleum security commitments to the Gulf states? Discuss the use of oil (controlling supply/artificial price manipulation) by oil-producing nations to blackmail/damage western economic systems. Analyze historical trends from the creation of the OPEC cartel to the present to determine if there is precedent to attempt long-term damage through cartel policies. What roles might SOF play in such security scenarios? Examine the current structure of indigenous internal security and military forces as they relate to petroleum infrastructure

security (oil refineries, wells, pipelines, and offshore facilities). What are some emerging security threats to natural resources? What integrated security operational concepts will be required? How would those concepts integrate local MoD, MoI, and commercial resources into a comprehensive security infrastructure for petroleum and other natural resources? How can SOF integrate with local Special Security Forces (SSF), typically under the direction of the MoI? How do proposed security concepts enhance coordination among MoIs, MoDs and SOF?

128. SOF intellectual capital

Develop a framework for selection and assessment for the next generation of SOF leaders based on understanding of the strategic level of security policy. Discuss how to build a requisite academic body of knowledge to support this framework and explain how it might be integrated into the existing military education system as pertains to SOF leaders.

129. Law and legal institutions

Analyze perspectives from senior lawyers coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan on developing rule of law and legal institutions. Discuss obstacles to this development, akin to a lessons-learned analysis. Collect and examine viewpoints of Staff Judge Advocate personnel who have served on Joint Special Operations Task Forces, capturing unique issues in providing legal and rules of engagement advice to SOF.

130. U.S. SOF training of foreign military/security forces “to enhance their capacity” in counterterrorism, COIN, and FID is a major strategy of the U.S. and USSOCOM overseas contingency operations, but have those efforts generated the desired results?

For more than 50 years, SOF has taken the lead role in DoD for training indigenous forces in counterterrorism, FID and COIN skills. Because of the capacity-building requirements of the effort, this strategy has become a major component of DoD’s efforts in North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. After all these years, is there sufficient evidence that the U.S. commitment of personnel and material resources been successful in developing the intended capacity in local security forces? Furthermore, does the development of capacity even matter if the host-nation government is not willing to employ those forces as we intended, or at all? This study looks at the track record of SOF training and answers the question, “How do we know if it is working?” What are specific cases of

both success and failure? Why do the outcomes vary? Is the mission truly to “build capacity,” or is it merely to establish a sustained presence on the ground? SOF has operated in places like the Philippines and Colombia for many decades. Should we keep doing it, or should we dramatically change how we do it? What are the standards for success? What steps should be in place to increase the likelihood of success? To what level and extent should host-nation forces be trained and what technologies/resources should the U.S. provide them?

131. Diplomatic agreements to support rapid SOF support for other nations

U.S. SOF possess training, equipment, and mobility capabilities that far surpass those of many nations’ police and military forces. In the event of a crisis, particularly those involving U.S. persons and interests, the employment of U.S. SOF could be the most effective and credible response. Recent and ongoing concerns over weapons of mass destruction, piracy, and transnational terrorists are relevant examples. However, most sovereign governments are adverse to the employment of another nation’s military forces within their state boundaries. Despite many cases of extensive training and coordination between U.S. and host nation militaries, the host-nation government still may not be well informed about the shortcomings of their own forces and the capabilities of US SOF to respond to an immediate threat. Should the U.S. establish diplomatic agreements with other countries prior to a crisis to formalize U.S. response options and streamline diplomatic decisions in the event of a time-sensitive crisis? Understanding that decisions in crisis situations are of a political nature, who should participate in the discussions leading to such agreements? What provisions should such agreements contain? To what extent should such agreements commit the U.S. to supporting a particular government against internal threats? What can be done to minimize friction between the ambassador/country team and the SOF deployed to the area? What provisions with the host nation are necessary for testing the response system?

132. Security Force Assistance (SFA)

This study examines the nature of SFA missions within the context of complementary operations and multiple participants. How do we determine if a SFA mission set is a SOF or General Purpose Force requirement? How do we clearly define SFA? How can USSOCOM best organize itself to accomplish the mission of SFA proponentry?

How can the U.S. Government seamlessly integrate DoS, DoD, and other members of the interagency community into SFA programs? How can IGOs and NGOs make contributions consistent with their capabilities and agendas? What needs to be done to gain IGO and NGO investment in the process? Examine the issues, similarities, and differences between SFA and FID missions. What makes them similar? What makes them different? Are those differences merely semantic? FID is supposed to be a noncombat operation. When threat conditions introduce the need for combat, FID is more rightly categorized as COIN or support to COIN. Should SFA be categorized as combat or noncombat? Could it be both? If SFA is a noncombat activity, what approaches become appropriate in combat?

133. SOF interaction with host-nation Ministry of Interior (MoI) resources

In the Middle East and other regions, MoIs normally have internal security forces that resemble special operations organizations in their structure and functions. They may be called Special Security Forces or Paramilitary Forces, but they operate as an arm of the police. Frequently they are larger than the special operations components of the host-nation military assisted by U.S. SOF. This study examines the structure and functioning of such organizations. How are they used to protect the ruling government and provide stability both within the country and the region? How can U.S. SOF interface with these units to improve internal security conditions and build counterterrorism capacity? If necessary, how can SOF counterbalance these MoI units within the internal security context?

134. Influence and relationship between USSOCOM and the military services

The USSOCOM commander is tasked with conducting SOF core activities across a spectrum of missions. To do so, USSOCOM relies on the military services for the recruitment, training, development, retention, and assignment of SOF personnel. This relationship is central to USSOCOM's abilities to accomplish the assigned missions. This study surveys the current relationships and influences between USSOCOM and the military services, with particular emphasis on issues concerning SOF personnel. Determine whether and where there are gaps in these relationships. What can be done to close these gaps? What influence does the USSOCOM commander require over military service management of SOF personnel, their incentives

and retention, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) development, assignments, and promotion/career management opportunities to effectively accomplish the USSOCOM mission? What steps can be taken to improve the required coordination and cooperation between USSOCOM and the military services?

135. Training systems for USSOCOM and its components

The rapid procurement and fielding of new equipment and evolving technologies present a variety of training challenges. At the same time, the standardized training of common tasks remains a familiar requirement. This study takes a comprehensive look at ways to provide timely and effective training on new equipment and other systems as fresh initiatives come on line and become forward deployed. Who is responsible for developing training programs and ensuring that they remain current and relevant? Identify the best ways to train the end users in such fast-moving environments. Which media are most effective in providing that training? How useful is a simulation system that is networked for all receiving components and organizations to access and/or download, especially when deployed? What roles can Web-based applications play? Survey ongoing and future innovations to address training program development, delivery, assessment, and sustainability. Are the Joint Training System (JTS) and the Joint Training Information Management System (JTIMS) useful tools to users in the field? Is feeding the system more resource intensive than originally envisioned? If it needs improvement, how can we make it better? Consider also efficiencies to be gained for current training approaches. For instance, resources, throughput capacity, and practicality have driven USSOCOM components to establish multiple training venues for the same skill set (e.g., military free-fall, combat dive, and snipers). What is the best process for USSOCOM to establish a baseline SOF standard for a particular skill set? How should those baselines be evaluated and sustained at required proficiency levels? What potential advantages accrue to the establishment of a SOF Training Center of Excellence (SOFTCOE) for the standardization and consolidation of SOF common skills training? Might a USSOCOM “Training and Education Command” represent a more comprehensive approach to training, standardization, and innovation? Review the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) mission set and make a recommendation on the best training a unit can do to prepare for the JSOTF mission. Should USSOCOM certify units for the JSOTF mission?

If so, what are the standards and procedures for awarding such a certification?

136. SOF aviation: Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs)

UASs have provided enhanced capabilities to address a variety of operational requirements. The purpose of this study is to explore the utility of employing UAS assets to support irregular warfare operations. How can multi-mission UASs assist in nontraditional environments? What specific capabilities can UASs bring to irregular warfare activities? Which irregular warfare strategies and tasks are appropriate for UASs? Identify specific employment profiles for using UASs in irregular warfare situations. Consider such missions as humanitarian relief operations, civil affairs, disaster response and the resulting hybrid threats they may impose on COIN and irregular warfare operations.

137. Use of Unmanned Ground Vehicle (UGV) systems

Unmanned Ground Systems (UGS) have provided enhanced capabilities to address a variety of operational requirements. The purpose of this study is to explore the utility of employing UGV assets to support irregular warfare operations. How can UGVs assist in nontraditional environments? What specific capabilities can UGVs bring to irregular warfare activities? Which irregular warfare strategies and tasks are appropriate for UGVs? Identify specific employment profiles for using UGVs in irregular warfare situations. Consider such missions as humanitarian relief operations, civil affairs, disaster response, and the resulting hybrid threats they may impose on COIN and irregular warfare operations.

138. Use of Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) and Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) systems

Maritime unmanned systems have provided enhanced capabilities to address a variety of operational requirements. The purpose of this study is to explore the utility of employing UUV and USV assets to support irregular warfare operations. How can UUV/USVs assist in nontraditional environments? What specific capabilities can UUV/USVs bring to irregular warfare activities? Which irregular warfare strategies and tasks are appropriate for UUV/USVs? Identify specific employment profiles for using UUV/USVs in irregular warfare situations. Consider such missions as humanitarian relief operations, civil affairs, disaster response, and the resulting hybrid threats they may impose on COIN and irregular warfare operations.

139. Planning for joint special operations for the indirect approach

This study focuses on planning approaches for JSOTF strategic and operational missions in current and future environments. It would particularly focus on SOF core activities that typically involve indirect approaches to achieving strategic objectives, such as unconventional warfare, SFA, and FID. The study should identify classic campaign planning constructs and investigate how SOF joint headquarters (TSOC, JSOTF) conduct campaign planning in the current environment. Consideration should include planning for future SOF organizations such as expeditionary task forces that incorporate service combat multipliers as inherent parts of the force. Conclusions and recommendations should be provided that confirm or advance changes to SOF planning procedures.

140. Developing regional counterterrorism strategy: Enabling partners

Our partners and allies do not view the counterterrorism effort as a global problem and often have a problem with preemptive strategies. Counterterrorism is often viewed from the perspective of the host nation and its relations with its bordering states. Gather, analyze, and consolidate best practices in combating-terrorism strategy that could be useful at a regional level — similar to a counterterrorism Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plan. What are some important regional factors and issues with combating terrorism? What are some useful policy, strategy, and operational techniques for consideration when developing a host-nation's counterterrorism IDAD plan? This study should be a regional specialist topic — analyze selected partner nation(s) facing common problems to determine U.S. priorities and appropriate methods of assistance.

141. Getting beyond Al Qaeda and looking to the future of counterterrorism policy and operations

Analyses of groups using terrorist activities have resulted in typologies of different sorts (e.g., groups with political aspirations, ideological/religious motivations, financial/criminal basis; and Rapoport's four historical "waves"). Review these typologies, looking for differences and commonalities. Assess our experience with Al Qaeda against them and assess the utility of each. Apply the results of these analyses to the current geopolitical climate to discuss possible future terrorist activities. This effort may support strategic and perhaps operational planning.

142. Counterterrorism partnerships between SOF and law enforcement agencies (LEAs)

The focus is how to make LEAs work complementary with SOF. At least 75 percent of successful counterterrorism operations are as a result of law enforcement or other internal security forces (nonmilitary); in combat, much intelligence to run down terrorists can come from police access to population. SOF will never achieve effectiveness and strategic utility in combating terrorism if it disregards coordination, cooperation, and combined operations with LEAs. Ascertain roles for SOF to operate in conjunction with LEAs, both international and host nation when operating abroad; identify policy and regulatory changes, including budget, needed for SOF to operate in this domain. Recommend unique training and equipping requirements for SOF to perform this function. Illustrate the role of community policing and international law enforcement in combating terrorism, then explain why SOF is failing to operate in this medium, hamstringing our efforts to fully prosecute counterterrorism plans designed by USSOCOM. This project could describe a successful indirect strategy for overseas contingency operations and one which SOF could perform well.

143. How does cultural awareness contribute to effective activities in combating terrorism?

Acquaintance with language, culture, and local customs is only the first step in entering into a foreign environment. This study would provide analyses of specific terrorist or insurgent organizations highlighting how their cultural background has influenced their choices and actions. Show how cultural values determine the correctness or rationality of specific terrorist actions. Objective is to raise awareness in this area and lead to additional studies of specific terrorist organizations focused on the culture that shapes their operational planning, decisions, actions, and reactions.

144. Intelligence for counterterrorism operations: Best practices, future requirements, possible synergies among USSOCOM and other U.S. agencies— for example, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)— allies, and other less savory options

Discuss and analyze the following statements: The intelligence community is moving beyond need to know to need to share.

Counterterrorism operations need to be in the share business, and lessons observed from Iraq show success in this area. Agencies, tactical to national, need to share information because target sets are illusive; and the most current information/intelligence supports operations. The counterterrorism mission is global in scale, and the ability to have the most current intelligence, at all levels, predictive in nature (as applicable), is available to planners at any possible time. Each day this topic is more relevant. U.S. SOF must acknowledge that HUMINT is essential in this business.

145. What are the funding relationships between terrorist organizations and organized crime?

Consider one of two approaches:

- a. The global operating environment is changing to where transnational criminals and transnational terrorist organizations are “cooperating” to replace the state-sponsored system with a new system of business enterprise to raise funding. As this threat becomes larger, it will work to delegitimize international regulatory control over business and trading. Study this phenomenon as it relates to national security interests and threats to the U.S.; ascertain what requirements and capabilities SOF needs to thwart this threat. Describe current nexus, identify costs to national interests, predict trends, and provide solutions using SOF.
- b. Treasury officials in many countries, with a U.S. lead, have been successful in interdicting the flow of terrorist and drug networks through transnational cooperation, particularly since 9/11. Establish a compendium of best practices and lessons learned from the most successful of those rooting out terrorist financing.

146. When counterterrorism is counterproductive: Case studies and theories of the misapplication of counterterrorism

Discuss and analyze the current U.S. Government strategy for counterterrorism through this lens, with recommendations for adjustments. The Shining Path in Peru is a great case study for excessive governmental response to terrorism. Another approach is to reexamine USSOCOM CONPLAN 7500; using the unclassified threat model, campaign framework, and method, determine if the strategy is sufficient to achieve U.S. goals and which aspects are necessary to reach U.S. goals. What is missing? What is unnecessary or insufficient, and why?

147. Poverty is a pawn: The myth of poverty as genesis of terrorism and how poverty is used by terrorist leaders

Terrorist leaders prey on the poor as a pool for foot soldiers, suicide bombers, and both witting and unwitting supporters through various means of exploitation. However, the vast majority of terrorist leaders do not come from poverty, but rather from the middle (Zarqawi) and even upper classes (as did bin Laden). How can governments mitigate this exploitation of the poor, knowing that poverty cannot be extinguished? Discuss the mix of conditions that serve to create fertile territory for developing terrorist actors. Establish a list of conditions (for example: poverty, religious fervor, education levels, distribution of wealth) that when existing concurrently, create an environment for growing terrorist actors. Will SOF need to prepare for contingencies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America?

148. Terrorist safe havens/sanctuaries/ungoverned spaces

The intelligence apparatus of the U.S. Government has fairly precise locations for terrorist safe havens throughout the world. Moreover, U.S. SOF, coupled with interagency partners, arguably has the capability to terrorize the terrorist in selected locations such as training camps and marshaling areas. Examine needed changes in policy, force structure, and legalities for the U.S. Government, with or without host-nation cooperation/approval, to affect these strikes against terrorists in their safe havens — that is, no longer make them safe. History is replete with examples of rear-area attacks destroying critical nodes of command and control, demoralizing the enemy, and degrading his ability to go on the offensive. Determine which are the most problematic of current and future safe havens — that is, which provide most succor and protection to terrorists and fellow travelers.

149. What strategy should the U.S. pursue to break the power jihadist terrorist hold over third world population and what is the role of SOF in this strategy?

Despite all the effort U.S. policy makers and media pundits have contributed to talking about the problem, no one has produced a satisfactory answer. Because this question has not been properly examined and appropriately answered, the U.S. largely plays a game of “whack a mole” in a global landscape where the moles look like everyone else. If insights to an answer were developed and successfully advocated, the potential for success in the counterterrorism effort would increase exponentially. Obviously, such a strategy would involve multiple

instruments and might even change the classical way in which some instruments like to view themselves. What will be SOF's role?

150. Lessons not learned in irregular warfare to date

The counterterrorism effort has occurred for 5 years in Iraq and 6 years in Afghanistan. Since their respective beginnings, much experience has been garnered in both countries. While many lessons have been learned, much has yet to be realized. These unlearned lessons need to be explored to determine if they are of value for learning and if so, what lessons are we missing or failing to understand? Information operations do not seem to be effective, campaign planning continues to be conducted in the absence of the host nations, and operations are still being run without complete integration. Who needs to learn these lessons and why they are important may help in the successful desired outcomes to these current conflicts.

151. Organizing interagency community for irregular warfare campaigns

The current efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrate the struggle in interagency coordination, cooperation, and unity of effort. As these events blur into the long war, the U.S. needs to review whether an organizational structure exists to fight irregular warfare from an interagency design. Who has the lead, when do they lead, and why is an agency/organization in the leadership role? What is the process used to make the interagency design function properly? How does USSOCOM fit into the interagency design?

152. Strategic theories on irregular warfare

What approaches can be considered for the study of irregular warfare as a traditional (nationalistic) or nontraditional underdog. Like unconventional study, Is there merit in approaching irregular warfare from the position of the insurgent/terrorist? This writing could begin with a review of current unconventional-warfare doctrine and experience to determine if they need to be revalidated or require rethinking.

153. Operational art design for irregular warfare-centric campaigns

This study should focus on the development of a format of campaign designs for SOF planners specifically and conventional planners generally. The design would be meant to ensure the proper application of SOF in the fight. This view is important because little exists to help planners, SOF, or otherwise.

154. Building Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plans for key partner nations

This topic is one that is undefined, except for a planning guide in Appendix B of Joint Publication 3-07.1 written several years ago. A methodology for framing the situation faced by a host nation to determine an IDAD strategy is absolutely necessary. The Civil Affairs course provides a political-social analysis guide as an initial starting point. However, it is not widely known, disseminated, or understood by the conventional military. Case studies (such as El Salvador, Iraq, and Afghanistan) to highlight success and failure in this endeavor are a good study vehicle.

155. Case studies of SOF creating strategic effects in irregular warfare

This topic could be a basis for strategic special operations theory and/or serve as a primer for geographic combatant command planners. If we do not understand how to create strategic effects, SOF becomes less effective. To better understand, identify what is the range of strategic effects that might be of use to SOF — that is, how SOF produces each of those types of strategic effects, looking at case studies with effective and ineffective creation of strategic effects.

156. How to advise host nations engaged in irregular warfare

Advising host-nation counterparts is a slow process (requires time). We suffer with time conditions that cause pushing rather than guiding counterparts to a resolution of a problem. A need exists to teach the art of advising, much like what was done during the Vietnam era, yet no time goes to adequately train advisors. The other condition of time is length of service “in the box” by the respective services. These vary from 4 to 6 months to a year. Nothing effective can be achieved in 4 to 6 months. Advising/mentoring tours need to be at least 18 months, and an effective handoff to the incoming advisor is necessary. Finding and interviewing Vietnam-era advisors would greatly benefit this study. Examine conventional SOF cooperation to include the impact on both U.S. SOF and NATO/partner SOF. As conventional forces drawdown in Iraq and Afghanistan the general assumption is that the SOF role will increase. What impact will this increased requirement have on U.S. SOF? If NATO SOF support dwindles or ceases, what impact will that have on the future U.S. SOF requirement in Afghanistan? What should their focus be? What impact will this long-term requirement have on U.S. SOF (individual, collective, global)?

157. Conventional/SOF cooperation

Conventional forces and SOF have coordinated and cooperated to an unprecedented degree in Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, SOF have developed a reliance on conventional forces for certain battle-field operating systems (e.g., maintenance, logistics, and quick reaction forces). Discuss the impact of the potential drawdown of GPF in theater on this reliance on SOF units in the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

158. Embassy role in U.S. Government irregular warfare effort

This topic would explore initiatives for restructuring the DoS — Do they go far enough to address the requirements for the long war/persistent conflict of the 21st century? Should more of a regional hierarchy exist to DoS than independent embassies that can report directly to the President of the U.S.? How can/should SOF better work with embassies in pursuit of U.S. interests in the long war? How can inter-agency-SOF synergy at the embassy level better achieve U.S. interests?

159. Legislative requirements for effective interagency campaigns

This topic would review current and pending legislation required to establish organizations and authorities to effectively conduct irregular warfare and large-scale FID for combating terrorism. It could also suggest who should write this interagency campaign.

160. Country team approach

In an era of irregular warfare, SOF may find itself deployed in a number of countries and supporting the ambassador's country team. Does SOF need specific representation on the country team or is the normal representation sufficient? In either case, how would this work? What interaction is appropriate or required? Who is in charge of what? How are disputes resolved? How can this support be revived, updated, or replaced to ensure that U.S. players in a given country are working for common causes?

161. Cultural awareness

Understanding of culture will assist in finding an enemy's weakness, especially in irregular warfare where the enemy will resort to any action to achieve objectives. The need is to understand what is acceptable to that enemy, what is not, what his cultural constraints are, and what does not constraint his actions. This information will permit development of successful courses of action. Population's trust/will is culturally based, and the effective understanding of it is critical to a successful outcome. Three areas of potential study follow: a) regional

specific information for a culture and population, b) generic information on awareness, and c) tools to rapidly get specific information on a culture to operators.

162. Are culture, religion, and worldview factors in motivating irregular warfare?

Cultural education must include orientation on comparative analysis of religions of the world. Americans have a secular culture; some estimates put 80 percent of the rest of the world as more faith based. Many of the conflicts throughout world history have been motivated by religion. Warrior culture is the way in which violence is valued and managed by the collectivity, and it varies from culture to culture. Research how each group handles violence and threats against the collectivity; three example questions follow:

- a. Is fighting a recognized road to high status?
- b. Are fighters separated from the group in some formal way — as we do with our military — or are they integrated and interspersed?
- c. Are there forms of warfare/fighting seen as higher status than others?

163. Cultural knowledge in irregular warfare campaign planning

This lack of cultural understanding also has led to confusion. Because some cultures do not like to be confrontational, their acknowledgment is believed to be agreement. The fact, however, is they are only agreeing that they understand a position or proposal vs. accept it. The lack of cultural understanding is a handicap in achieved outcomes by set time schedules. Examine the need to understand the actors in the environments that the campaign will be conducted. How can this lead to some understanding of the motivations of these actors? How can this better prepare planners to tailor the campaign plan toward influencing those actors in accordance with the commander's intent?

164. Regional studies

Review regional studies to better meet the needs of the combatant commanders. Courses that look at the regions from a strategic and operational perspective are desired, illustrating the linkage between the countries within a given commander's area of responsibility as well as the adjacent countries. Many of the countries currently engaged in the conflict were drawn in Europe and do not reflect what is occurring in either the country or the region. Ethnic groups straddle those borders and are unrecognized by the people, and the numbers of languages further complicate the region. This writing

is an opportunity to leverage the revamped discipline of geography, which is now more than maps and physical terrain. Geography is now a multidisciplinary study area involving traditional geography as well as aspects of sociology, geology, political science, and economics (and some cultural anthropology may also exist).

165. How is strategy developed for special operations and what is the framework for such development?

This question should consider the operational role of SOF in each of the phases (0-V) and assess the effectiveness of their employment in those phases. Afghanistan and Iraq could serve as case studies.

The unconventional warfare operations in Afghanistan are excellent examples of pre-phase III operations. They lead into two questions:

- a. How does the U.S. Government as well as DoD consider SOF use in all campaign phases?
- b. What are effective employment techniques in terms of strategy and operational art for SOF/interagency synchronization to include measures of effectiveness?

166. Why is Phase 0 important and how can SOF support the geographic combatant commander strategy: Informing the joint conventional community

Phase 0 can be described in terms of anti-insurgency, in the same manner that the Army delineates between antiterrorism and counterterrorism. Phase 0 is rapidly becoming an outdated term.

167. Develop SOF internships with Fortune 500 companies in order to develop irregular warfare skill sets (marketing; influence, investigations, strategic communications)

This topic would study the value of creating internships for SOF in successful companies or organizations to develop a knowledge base of nonmilitary functions (e.g., power-economic and diplomatic). Strategic communication could be explored from a marketing point of view. Strategic thinking at the multinational should also be considered.

Computer operation and electronic transfer of funds could be examined because are often the terrorist's means of moving illegal money around the world. Also respond to the question, what academic credit should be granted from the internship (M.A. or Ph.D.)?

168. Impact of crossing borders to conduct military operations

Assess the actual impact of arresting religious leaders and/or entering into mosques/madrassas as a tactic against Islamic extremists.

The thesis posed via this topic is that when we are oversensitive and

overstate Middle East sensitivities, we hamstring our efforts. Costs and benefits are associated with this type of approach. Can the real protagonists of terror be stopped using this method? Consider U.S. public opinion, reprisals against the U.S., reaction of coalition partners, and other factors.

169. Roles of SOF and NGOs in complex humanitarian emergencies

SOF has played an increasingly critical role in the international response to complex humanitarian emergencies. The liaison between these two elements requires that SOF understand the diversity of nongovernmental organization (NGO) objectives and organizational cultures. This topic could take an approach of the division of labor involved or education of SOF (e.g., on NGO capabilities, limitations). Hive advantages and disadvantages of “collaborating” with NGOs. Include a discussion of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international organizations. The relationships between SOF and other U.S. contractors could also be explored.

170. Oral histories of SOF leaders for publication/professional development

Provide a collection of personal SOF accounts throughout recent history. While this perspective has been done (e.g., in support of briefings and courses), a research-paper-length compendium will yield not only lessons learned but aspects of strategy, revolutionary thinking, and command-and-control issues for future planners and commanders from interviews with senior SOF leaders. The finished product will benefit SOF leaders as a handbook on relationships with interagency community and coalition partners and furnish a range of considerations for SOF noncommissioned officers and officers. Some travel may be involved, or the collection could be gleaned from individuals living near the respective PME schools; this topic is ideal for a U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (USACHSC) or School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) student because of access to a wide range of distinguished SOF senior leaders supporting the SOF elective at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

171. SOF senior leader competencies for joint warfare: Preparing for joint SOF combat command

Explore organizing Joint Special Operations Task Forces (JSOTFs) at the O6 level of command and the associated leader competencies required, based on actual experiences of recent commanders of combined JSOTFs. Offer solutions of successful wartime leadership

techniques for ongoing and near-future senior SOF leaders, anticipating wartime commands during counterterrorism efforts. Derive key lessons learned from the research for possible incorporation into current leader development methodologies.

172. Cross area-of-responsibility operations

At the operational level, command and control as well as support relationships need to be well-defined early on in the operation. Examine the supported/supporting relationships between USSOCOM and conventional forces belonging to the regional combatant commander and/or Joint Task Force commander. This topic could be discussed in the context of tactical operations, then at the operational level.

173. U.S. national security initiatives in Africa and the counterterrorism effort

Address the question of creating an African unified command or a U.S. subunified command within Africa in order to protect U.S. national interests. Analyze a proposal to establish a political-military organization, such as an African regional Joint Task Force/Special Operations Command within Africa, to promote democratic initiatives and influence regional stability. Discuss roles and capabilities for Civil Affairs/Civil-Military Operations (CA/CMO) and interagency partners, framing operational preparation of environment throughout Africa, FID opportunities in the region, and the rising U.S. national interests in Africa.

174. Effective MISO in a mostly illiterate population

Determine the effectiveness of a full Military Information Support Operations (MISO) campaign in an area where most of the intended audience is illiterate. Using a detailed analysis, develop possible operations — taking in account the literacy and technology of targeted audiences — for future MISOs in these environments. How do we reach and educate such audiences?

