

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

A STANDING UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE TASK
FORCE TO COMBAT INSURGENCY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

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Today, the U.S. military confronts transnational, and theologically based radical Islamic insurgent movements. In Afghanistan and Iraq these insurgents have joined with local insurgents that comprise elements of the deposed Taliban and Ba'athist regimes, respectively, and other groups including criminals and foreign fighters. Collectively, these groups have one objective; to overthrow regimes they consider illegitimate, to evict any vestige of foreign influence associated with the existing order, and to seize power for themselves. The predicted global persistence of insurgencies and the constant pressures placed on our military forces to confront insurgency necessitates the restructuring of the existing U.S. Army Special Forces Command headquarters organization into a standing, deployable Unconventional Warfare Task Force. This organizational model offers the Department of Defense a permanent, expeditionary, and cohesive headquarters specifically designed to command and control a modular unconventional capabilities-based force, while minimizing the size of direct conventional force participation in future counterinsurgency campaigns. My intent is to briefly examine the key aspects of the security environment, the lessons learned from Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, force structure considerations and forces structure recommendations to determine the most effective organizational model at the national level for conducting counterinsurgency. My conclusion will ultimately make the recommendation to restructure the existing U.S. Army Special Forces Command Headquarters into standing, deployable Unconventional Warfare Task Force to combat current and future insurgencies.

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A STANDING UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE TASK FORCE TO COMBAT INSURGENCY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In April 2003, shortly after the United States military toppled Saddam Hussein's regime the U.S. Army initiated its annual "future war game" exercise. Once again the campaign scenario called for the U.S. Army to remove the regime of another Middle East country 10 years into the future. The exercise featured futuristic Army units with ultramodern equipment attacking simultaneously from multiple directions and striking enemy targets throughout the depth of the battle space. When the war game ended the participants celebrated the future Army's ability to overwhelm and devastate the enemy's simulated armed forces. Now according to retired Lieutenant General William Carter, who commanded the futuristic Army units during the exercise, "we didn't understand that what we were seeing in those games wasn't victory." This exercise stands as a prime example of how senior leaders within the Department of Defense (DOD) and U.S. Army miscalculated how future enemies would fight the United States in the years leading up to the invasion of Iraq.¹

DOD executed Operation IRAQI FREEDOM on the premise that speed, information dominance, sophisticated weaponry, and precision strikes would swiftly defeat Saddam's regime and radically alter the American way of war. According to DOD doctrine, swift, and precise attacks against specific enemy targets such as headquarters and communications centers would isolate enemy units and disrupt their leadership's decision making process to the point of paralysis. Doctrine concluded that if you "chopped off the enemy's head, the whole body would die." Therefore, moving rapidly and fighting with greater precision became the focal point of modernization plans within the U.S. Army and the other services.²

Today, the intensifying insurgency in Iraq and the lingering insurgency in Afghanistan demonstrate that swiftly defeating your adversary can produce a myriad of problems which current U.S. Army formations and units cannot quickly overcome. Senior officials within DOD now recognize that strategic victory in Iraq required more than decapitating the regimes leadership or annihilating its armed forces. An enduring victory will also require winning the support of the Iraqi population and eliminating insurgents. Secretary Rumsfeld recently acknowledged the same when he said "the military is still organized to fight big armies, navies, and air forces on a conventional basis, we must change in order to deal with guerrilla fighters and terrorists. The department simply has to be much more facile and agile." He concluded his comments by adding that operations in Afghanistan and Iraq still proved the "critical importance of speed and precision as opposed to mass and sheer numbers."³

Considering the recent comments made by Secretary Rumsfeld, the time has come for the Army to restructure its existing Special Forces Command headquarters organization into a standing, deployable Unconventional Warfare Task Force. This organizational model offers DOD a permanent, expeditionary, and cohesive headquarters specifically designed to command and control a modular unconventional capabilities-based force, while minimizing the size of direct conventional force in future counterinsurgency campaigns.

To remain relevant, Special Forces must base any decisions regarding future organizational models on two significant criteria. The first criterion entails a clear understanding of the future security environment. The second criterion involves examining the key lessons learned from the ongoing counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. By examining lessons learned the Army's leadership can gain valuable insight into the capabilities and organizational requirements for conducting successful counterinsurgency campaigns in the future. Capturing lessons learned also allows the Army's strategic leadership to formulate conceptual models for constructing the most effective counterinsurgency organization for combating the ongoing insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Surely, many forms of protracted warfare and violence will emerge as the international security environment coalesces. Of these, insurgency or the use of terrorism, subversion, and armed conflict by an organizational movement to overthrow a constituted government will certainly persist.⁴ Insurgency, more than any other form of conflict has persisted throughout history. The history of U.S. military interventions and operations supports this fact.

Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military has emerged as the world's most capable and powerful. As the Afghan War of 2001 and the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003 demonstrated the U.S. military is so successful in waging modern war that America's adversaries have sought advantages at the extreme ends of the conflict spectrum. At the high end, states like North Korea and Iran actively pursue a nuclear arsenal. At the low end, terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda, Abu Sayyaf, Muslim Brotherhood, and remnants of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, splinter Iraqi Sunni groups and the Taliban pursue insurgency warfare.⁵

The recently published figures from the Strategic Studies Armed Conflict Database supports the claim that unconventional warfare has replaced the idea that two equivalent-sized and equipped conventional armies will engage each other in a series of large set-piece battles. The current world map shows that terrorist acts and internal armed conflicts accounted for 53 of

the 57 ongoing or recent conflicts. International armed conflicts accounted for only four of the recent conflicts.⁶

Today, the U.S. military confronts transnational, and theologically based radical Islamic insurgent movements. In Afghanistan and Iraq these insurgents have joined with local insurgents that comprise elements of the deposed Taliban and Ba'athist regimes, respectively, and other groups including criminals and foreign fighters. Collectively, these groups have one objective; to overthrow regimes they consider illegitimate, to evict any vestige of foreign influence associated with the existing order and to seize power for themselves.⁷

The future security environment will involve warfare against entities that have no uniformed army and no defined geographic borders, but nevertheless possess the means to inflict significant property damage, psychological trauma, and great loss of human life. Terrorist organizations and insurgents represent examples of such entities. Combating these kinds of entities will require a different approach, and a new mindset. The majority of strategists agree that DOD must develop new doctrine, new capabilities, new organizations, and new methods for applying existing capabilities. The U.S. military must adapt and modify existing organizational models to confront the challenges of the new security environment.⁸

As evident in Iraq, the U.S. military has difficulty exercising its remarkable conventional capabilities outside the set battle-piece framework. For DOD to ensure our national security, the U.S. military will have to bolster its unconventional warfare capabilities to counter insurgents, terrorists, and other forms of influence and coercion directed at U.S. critical weaknesses. With the exception of Special Forces, the Army is not optimally organized to combat the realities of the current or future security environment or to take full advantage of the advances in technology.⁹

Continued advances in information technologies will give the Army an unprecedented ability to employ a relatively small number of specially trained personnel to conduct surveillance, tracking, and rapid engagement of insurgents or terrorists. With greater refinements, the technology will allow command and control headquarters to identify, track, and engage enemy targets by fusing imagery, signals intelligence, human intelligence, and inputs from other sensors. The rapid fusing of information between multiple sensors into one central command and control node will significantly increase the speed at which enemy targets can be identified, targeted, attacked, and destroyed. This capability will soon become reality as the U.S. military continues to network sensors together into a system of systems. Once established, this system of systems will allow sensor-to-sensor fusion and communications, that will select targets and destruction platforms based upon variables such as priority, weather, terrain, and the likelihood

of successful engagement. In turn, this system of systems will provide options to precision-engagement teams located throughout the battle space.¹⁰

In response, the U.S. military can expect future adversaries to seek out alternative methods and unconventional means of engaging U.S. forces in the hope of finding an operational environment which negates our sensor and targeting methods. Army Special Forces, because of their organizational size, ingenuity, maturity, and unconventional warfare expertise, will remain the most relevant force in the future security environment characterized by insurgency, terrorism, and an expanded array of enemy unconventional capabilities and methods of employment.¹¹

LESSONS LEARNED

“What died on the battlefields of Iraq was the vision held by man of a homogenized army-one in which units would largely resemble one another. Instead, the Army of the future will require a large kit bag of capabilities that can deploy and fit together, sometime in the middle of battle to meet the many exigencies of this new era in warfare.” (Major General Robert Scales, USA Ret., Statement before the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, 21 October 2003)¹²

While the major combat phases of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM have confirmed to future adversaries that they cannot prevail against the massive U.S. advantages in technology, joint synergy, and precision-fires; the current phases of both campaigns have demonstrated that they can persist and even achieve some limited successes through insurgency and irregular warfare, despite overwhelming U.S. conventional power. The dichotomy between phases has driven the U.S. military to redefine its imperatives for the future and renewed the calls for a shift in the cultural emphasis of our armed forces. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, civil-military operations, and interagency coordination now define the operational environment in which U.S. forces will operate. The experiences of the last two years in Afghanistan and Iraq have proven to senior U.S. military leaders that conventional military tactics and firepower alone will no longer achieve the strategic end states of the campaigns.

According to Christopher Henry, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy the U.S. military needs to focus more on no-traditional and irregular threats. This irregular warfare challenge is characterized by insurgency and civil war dubbed by Pentagon officials as the “strategy of the weak.” The DOD leadership expects that future adversaries will

attempt to erode U.S. power in unconventional ways similar to the insurgency U.S. forces face in Iraq. For that reason, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has recently directed new policy and planning goals to better prepare U.S. forces for a wider range of challenges including irregular threats. Secretary Rumsfeld believes that our current military capabilities are too focused on traditional and conventional threats.¹³

In the wake of new policy directives, the Army recently published FMI 3-07.22 in recognition that future engagements in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) would require the use of counterinsurgency tactics, techniques, and procedures. The introduction to FMI 3-07.22, states: "The stunning victory over Saddam Hussein's army in 2003 validated U.S. conventional force tactics techniques and procedures, but the ensuing aftermath of instability has caused review of lessons from the Army's historical experience and those of other services and multinational partners. One of the key recurring lessons is that the United States cannot win other countries' war for them, but can certainly help legitimate foreign governments overcome attempts to overthrow them. US forces can assist a country confronted by an insurgency by providing a safe and secure environment at the local level and continuously building on the incremental success."¹⁴

In Afghanistan and Iraq the insurgents follow the traditional insurgency strategy of targeting the population for their active or passive support. Counterinsurgency experts describe the indigenous population as the strategic center of gravity in an insurgency.¹⁵ While the strategic center of gravity in conventional warfare may take many forms such as: the enemy's political leadership, its capital city, or its economic infrastructure; the population remains the preeminent center of gravity in an insurgency.¹⁶ To eventually control the country the insurgents must achieve popular support from or control over the population. As Mao Tse-tung noted, "The people are like water and the army like fish." It is important to note that popular support does not necessarily imply support for the insurgent's goals. Rather, popular support becomes defined as the measure of the insurgents' ability to control the population, either through their willing cooperation or as a result of insurgent threats, coercion, acts of terror, or the physical occupation of their communities. The insurgents only need to win the minds of the population not necessarily the hearts of the population.¹⁷

In Afghanistan and Iraq the insurgent's have optimized time, access to the population, and irregular warfare tactics in an attempt to win the minds of the local populations. Unquestionably, the ineffective domestic security apparatus in both countries has aided the insurgents by providing them the fertile soil or conditions for establishing critically important sanctuaries within local communities and provinces. Presently, Iraqi insurgents operate with almost impunity from

the major cities and area defined as the Sunni triangle; while the Taliban continue to operate from the remote western provinces along the Pakistan border. This condition has allowed the insurgents to persist and even expand their operations. Only by developing an effective domestic security apparatus will U.S. and indigenous forces begin to create the conditions necessary for winning the hearts and minds of the local population. Specifically, U.S. and indigenous forces must achieve a level security for the population that protects them from insurgent occupation of their communities and insurgent acts of coercion, retribution, and terrorism. Once achieved, the insurgent's lose the source of strength and become like fish out of water.¹⁸

Its is important to note that in the absence of personal security, the vast majority of the population typically remains uncommitted, providing support only when coerced, or when a clear winner emerges. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the insurgents have relied upon the active cooperation or the passive acceptance of the vast majority of the indigenous population to sustain their rebellion. As T.E. Lawrence noted, "rebellions can be made by two percent active in a striking force and 98 percent passively sympathetic." In the absence of an effective domestic security apparatus passivity among the population will persist. In Afghanistan and Iraq, those individuals who oppose the insurgency or support the interim government risk brutal retribution from insurgents. As clearly evident in Iraq, future reconstruction efforts and attempts at political reform in the absence of security will almost certainly fail.¹⁹ The U.S. and indigenous security forces in Afghanistan and Iraq must achieve an increased level of security for the population or they risk losing the support of the populations.

Winning the hearts and minds of the population, also involves convincing the population that their personal goals will be better served if the government prevails. The completion of critically important civic action programs and efforts to rebuild public works requires a relatively secure and stable environment. Establishing security and rebuilding public works takes a considerable amount of time to bring about, which explains the protracted nature of counterinsurgency campaigns. However, the completion of civic action programs can pre-empt the insurgents by diminishing their cause and demonstrating to the population that their quality of life will continue to improve as long as the counterinsurgency forces and legitimate government prevail.

Ultimately, the people decide their own fate, and their own form of government. First, through local elections and then as more areas of the country become secure, regional, and national elections. A reasonable level of security affords the population the opportunity to conduct local elections, and ensures those who assume office do not have to fear for their lives.

The formation of indigenous local security forces in Iraq and Afghanistan has helped reduced the burden on U.S. forces to provide security. These local security forces also assist in protecting the community's improved infrastructure, economy, and newly acquired access to political power.

The inhabitants of the immediate town or region should fill the ranks of these police and paramilitary forces. Their training should include small unit counterinsurgency tactics such as patrolling, night operations, and ambush and react to ambush techniques. As in other forms of civic action, progress in training takes considerable time. Certainly far more time than had been initially allotted for by U.S. and multi-national forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. While DOD has tried to replace its troops with indigenous Afghani and Iraqi security forces that fact remains that the process started particularly late in Iraq and training indigenous security forces takes time. Hence DOD's dilemma: how to provide security which takes a considerable amount of time; while meeting the demand to reduce the number of U.S. troops in both countries with well-trained and well-equipped indigenous security forces which also takes a considerable amount of time.²⁰

Overcoming this dilemma requires a patient and balanced approach with a priority to establishing an effective domestic security apparatus first, and collecting critical intelligence on the insurgent infrastructure second. The population must feel secure from insurgent retribution before they will risk their lives to provide U.S. or indigenous forces with critical intelligence on the locations, movements, intentions, and the identities of insurgent senior leadership. Should U.S. forces focus their principal military efforts on destroying armed guerrilla forces, a typical conventional warfare priority and give population security a lower priority, the longer the insurgents will persist. Rarely has inflicting casualties on the armed guerrilla faction proven decisive in a counterinsurgency campaign. As evident by the recent and widespread retaliation following the defeat of guerrilla forces in Fallujah, as so long as the insurgents can maintain access to the population they can meter their casualties to keep at tolerable levels, and replenish their losses and ranks by recruiting from the population. Only after isolating the insurgents from the population can U.S. and indigenous forces significantly attrit the insurgency.²¹

In this respect, the first arrangements reached with Sunni and Shiite insurgents in Fallujah and Najaf respectively, that allowed sympathetic forces to operate in those cities as opposed to U.S. and indigenous security forces, represented a serious setback for the counterinsurgency campaign. These arrangements allowed the insurgents to gain access to the local population, and in doing so increased the likelihood of recruiting new members and the procurement of

needed weapons and supplies. Access to the local population also enabled the insurgents to secure temporary sanctuary and to gain critical intelligence concerning the plans, intentions, and locations of U.S. forces.

Correspondingly, the inability of the U.S. backed governments in Kabul and Baghdad to exercise even the simplest population control measures will eventually erode their military strength by denying those needed recruits and replacements for their armed forces and police, as well as seriously degrade the ability to register voters, collect taxes, and re-distribute wealth. Therefore, the insurgent's seek every opportunity to access the local population and gain their control through intimidation, popular appeal, or a combination of both. Access to the population increases the insurgent's prospects for success and this explains why in Iraq the insurgent movement can expand as a whole, despite suffering heavy casualties to its guerrilla units.²²

Accordingly, U.S. and indigenous security forces must focus their priority of intelligence requirements on the insurgent infrastructure and not the guerrilla force. By identifying, tracking, and eliminating the insurgent senior leadership that lives among the people, the insurgents lose their ability to proselytize, intimidate, coerce, or terrorize the local population. Moreover, local inhabitants will feel more secure if the principal threat to their security cannot freely exist and operate within their communities. Presently, the insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq have achieved a high degree of operational flexibility in both urban and rural areas. For that reason, the precise targeting and engagement of the insurgent infrastructure will require a long-term investment of trained personnel.

Specifically, it will require personnel highly trained in collecting human intelligence (HUMINT).²³ Given that U.S. and indigenous security forces suffer from a discrimination problem, in that they cannot easily distinguish insurgents from the general population, well planned and coordinated HUMINT operations provide the best means for distinguishing the insurgents from the noncombatant civilian population. Once U.S. and indigenous security forces understand the nature of the insurgent's infrastructure they have more than enough military capability to kill or capture them. The key to obtaining the best sources of HUMINT on the insurgent infrastructure once again relies on the ability of U.S. and indigenous security forces to win the hearts and mind of the local population by providing a reasonable level of security.

The insurgents recognize the same and try to deny critical intelligence to U.S. and indigenous security forces by creating conditions of instability and insecurity throughout the local population. As evident by recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. and indigenous security forces risk defeat when they ignore the importance of HUMINT collection operations on

the insurgent's infrastructure and focus almost exclusively on engaging and destroying guerrilla forces.

Until U.S. and indigenous security forces can provide a reasonably secure environment the support of the population will remain passive at best. To achieve the unconditional support of the population U.S. and indigenous forces must demonstrate convincingly that they have the means to protect and the will to prevail. Despite public declarations that America will "stay the course" in Afghanistan and Iraq, both populations have endured a series of strategic course changes by the U.S. Government. The slow delivery of reconstruction aid to the new Afghan government and the failure of U.S. forces to deal with the known insurgent sanctuaries in the Sunni Triangle have significantly delayed winning the hearts and minds of the local populations.²⁴

Moreover, the poor U.S. record of departing Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Lebanon, Haiti, and Somalia after failing to defeat hostile insurgencies and stabilize those countries has provided encouragement to the insurgent leadership in both Afghanistan and Iraq to persist despite numerous tactical defeats. And even though the insurgents cannot defeat U.S. forces in direct combat, they pursue their objectives on two major fronts: the home front by trying to convince the local populations that U.S. forces cannot endure over the long term, and will eventually withdraw from the region; and the overseas front by trying to convince the American public and their elected representatives that the war is not worth the cost in terms of American lives and dollars.²⁵

In fact, the insurgents do not have to achieve battlefield success; they have only to break U.S. will to win, or diminish it to the point where the American people acquiesce to their demands. The insurgents understand the American public's sensitivity to combat casualties and therefore, focus their efforts on killing or injuring as many U.S. soldiers as possible in the hopes of directly affecting the will of the American people. As stated before, reducing the presence of U.S. forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq remains an essential factor in maintaining the will and support of the American people.²⁶

The insurgents also understand the critical importance of prolonging their rebellion. The longer they can survive, and the longer they can inspire insurgence, the greater their chances for gaining the support of the local population and draining the will of the American people. Although U.S. conventional forces can drive insurgent forces from a given area with relative ease, it becomes far more difficult for the same conventional forces to work closely with local police and paramilitary forces over a prolonged period of time to establish domestic security and eliminate the insurgent's local infrastructure. In recognition of this, DOD must prepare the

American public and selected forces for a decade long counterinsurgency campaign in both Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁷

FORCE STRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Currently, the U.S. Army is not designed to wage counterinsurgency warfare in terms of its culture, doctrine, or force structure. Recent attempts to reorient and redesign conventional forces to deal with insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq have proven extremely difficult, involving as it does not only the restructuring of combat and combat support units to deal with a very different conflict environment, but cultural and doctrinal change as well. The legacy of post-Vietnam decisions to purge counterinsurgency doctrine and training from the conventional military has made it all the more difficult for the Army to reorient its culture, doctrine, and force structure to confront insurgencies. Counterinsurgency warfare necessitates a forces structure heavily comprised of light infantry, combat engineers, special forces, civil affairs, and psychological operations units. Yet the bulk of the U.S. Army's active component today lacks these types of units.

However, because of lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq the Army has reexamined its transformation initiatives and priorities. Rather than focusing exclusively on improving capabilities to conduct precision fires, Army transformation initiatives will now focus on improving maneuver, force protection, logistics, sensing, and command.²⁸

Several of the Army initiatives include plans to significantly enhance the Special Operations Community. Specifically, the Army will increase the size of active duty and National Guard Special Forces units by more than 700 soldiers over the next three to four years. The Army will also add two active duty Psychological Operations companies and two active duty and two Reserve Civil Affairs battalions to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command over the same period.²⁹

Previous proposals in the mid-1990s to transform and restructure the special operations community in general and Special Forces in particular focused primarily on the complete reorganization of the Special Forces group headquarters organization to deal with such nontraditional missions as counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, and promoting democracy on a full-time basis. The previous proposals included one notable recommendation for a unique Army special operations brigade-sized organization that combined special operations forces with conventional forces. Principally, the concept recommended special forces, civil affairs, psychological operations, infantry, aviation, military police, engineers, and combat service support units assigned to a

single special operations brigade-size headquarters. Although this proposal for restructuring the Special Forces group headquarters received some attention within the special operations community, the future structure for Special Forces remained unchanged as the Army focused on restructuring its conventional forces.³⁰

Then, in January 2004, a select group of participants from academia, industry, the media, the special operations community and the public service sector met in Cody, Wyoming with the principal purpose of identifying proposals to transform Special Forces in order to effectively combat the persistent problem of insurgency not only in Afghanistan and Iraq but in the future. The Cody conference participant's discussed recent lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq and debated a range of issues related to the future roles and the potential contributions of Special Forces in the GWOT. In recognition of Special Forces expertise in conducting unconventional warfare, which includes counterinsurgency and guerilla warfare, the participant's recommended DOD officially charter U.S. Army Special Forces Command to monitor and combat insurgencies, to allow the conventional Army to move on to new priorities and transformation initiatives.³¹

The Cody Conference participants also expressly recommended the Army establish a new deployable headquarters capable of conducting what the participants described as long-term "prevention and mitigation" operations. Specifically, prevention and mitigation operations would include advising and training host-nation military forces, police, intelligence units, counter-terrorism forces, border guards, and other members of the state security apparatus to increase the overall security conditions within the host nation. The deployable headquarters would seek to gain allies against insurgent and terrorist threats by developing the long-term personal relationships required for successful HUMINT operations, information-sharing, and counterinsurgency operations with indigenous security forces.³²

Possessing a broad range of capabilities, the new deployable headquarters would also direct and supervise the execution of medical civil-assistance programs, engineer civil-assistance programs, and other projects in high-threat areas in order to improve the overall quality of life for the local population and create opportunities for identifying the local insurgent infrastructure. When required, this deployable headquarters would employ Special Forces units and teams in denied areas to conduct unilateral special reconnaissance, direct action, and other special operations with the primary purpose of destroying the insurgent infrastructure and key leadership.³³

Uniquely organized, trained, and equipped the new deployable headquarters would gather and exploit HUMINT gained as result of the long-term personal relationships with the indigenous

population. By leveraging the ability of Special Forces soldiers to train and assist host nation security forces in penetrating insurgent organizations and by capitalizing on the latest technology and improved techniques for tagging, tracking, and analyzing insurgent movements, the new deployable headquarters would allow DOD to expand the intelligence database on the insurgency and guarantee an definitive “eye on the problem” regardless of changing U.S. national security priorities and threats.³⁴

FORCE STRUCTURE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Clearly the time has come for restructuring U.S Army Special Forces Command. As stated previously, the emergence of transnational and theologically based radical Islamic insurgent movements pose the greatest threat to U.S. national security interests and regional stability in the Middle East. Therefore, it is critical to restructure the force to successfully combat this threat.

Similar to the Cody Conference recommendation, restructuring Army Special Forces Command into a standing, deployable Unconventional Warfare Task Force (UWTF) chartered to conduct long-term, unconventional warfare offers DOD the most immediate and viable response to the current security environment. A standing UWTF provides DOD with a permanent, expeditionary, and cohesive headquarters specifically designed to command and control a modular unconventional capabilities-based force, while minimizing the size of direct conventional force participation in future counterinsurgency campaigns.

Like Secretary Rumsfeld’s Standing Joint Force Headquarters concept,³⁵ the UWTF would serve as a full time command and control element focused on counterinsurgency and insurgency operations within a designated combatant command. As a fully integrated staff of unconventional warfare experts, the UWTF would significantly enhance a combatant command’s planning efforts and accelerate the efficient formation of a Joint Headquarters, when required. During counterinsurgency operations, the UWTF would lead and focus U.S. efforts to continuously locate, track, and rapidly attack insurgent targets, while simultaneously providing for the expertise and capability to train and advise indigenous security forces to conduct counterinsurgency warfare.

Once established, the UWTF would provide immediate operational benefits in the GWOT, as well as provide the organizational means to lead the transformation of Special Forces. By conducting experimental exercises and networking new technologies as they become available, the UWTF would exploit new concepts and capabilities to improve a combatant command’s contingency and crisis response options.

The Army Special Forces Command headquarters based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina would form the nucleus of the UWTF. The organizational size and structure of this manned, trained, and equipped headquarters provides DOD with an immediately available and culturally oriented organization with the personnel and expertise for establishing the UWTF. More importantly, the existing Army Special Forces Command structure provides unity of command and facilitates unity of effort when augmented by a Special Forces group or equivalent-sized special operations forces from other services. Lastly, restructuring Army Special Forces Command headquarters to form the nucleus of the UWTF avoids the numerous problems and delays associated with the alternative methods of constructing the UWTF.

The Task Force (TF) organizational concept and structure permits greater flexibility in supporting the counterinsurgency campaign by affording the commander the authority to organize and tailor the TF depending upon the factors of METTT-TC (the mission, the enemy, the terrain, the troops and time available and the civilian situation). The TF concept also permits the rotation or introduction of subordinate units on an as needed basis while maintaining a viable counterinsurgency effort in country.

Most importantly, a TF commander can tailor the force to achieve a limited, long-term U.S. military presence in resolving a protracted insurgent conflict. And since the UWTF is built primarily around rotational Special Forces groups or equivalent-sized special operations forces from other services, it can conduct and maintain continuous, low visibility operations over a long period of time in austere environments, while simultaneously sustaining U.S. resolve and conserving conventional military resources.

The UWTF concept, like the deployable headquarters concept recommended by the Cody Conference, will provide the command and control architecture for training and assisting host nation security forces, as well as collecting and exploiting human, signal, and imagery intelligence. However, the UWTF model differs from the Cody Conference model by its ability to command and control a significant number of conventional forces for the purpose of conducting population control programs, deception operations, and other unilateral and combined operations focused on forcing insurgent actions and reactions. Lastly, the UWTF can function as the preeminent force multiplier for DOD by sustaining the focus on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism long after the combatant commands, services, and other national agencies have shifted to the other emerging threats.

CONCLUSION

The insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq will continue to influence the way we think about war and how we transform our military forces. Special Forces must participate in the transformation process in order to adjust to the new geostrategic realities that have emerged over the past decade. For the U.S. to defeat Al Qaeda and to prevent its allies from inspiring insurgencies and terrorism that puts our nation and allies at catastrophic risk, Special Force must exploit every opportunity to destroy their sanctuaries and kill their leadership.³⁶ Creating a permanent and expeditionary UWTF specifically designed to command and control a modular unconventional capabilities-based force offers the best solution to this grave threat facing our nation.

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ENDNOTES

¹Greg Jaffe, "Defining Victory: As Chaos Mounts in Iraq, U.S. Army Rethinks Its Future" *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 December 2004, p.1.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Tactics, techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)*, Joint Pub 3-07.1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), GL-5. An insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (JP 1-02). It is a protracted, political military struggle designed to weaken the government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control. Political power is the central issue in an insurgency. Insurgencies traditionally comprise three phases: Phase I, insurgent agitation and proselytization among the mass populace; Phase II, overt violence, guerrilla operations and the establishment of sanctuaries; Phase III, open warfare between insurgent and government forces designed to topple the existing regime. In Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. forces confront insurgent movements engaged in Phase I and Phase II operations.

⁵Andrew F. Krepinevich, "The War in Iraq: The Nature of Insurgency Warfare." 2 June 2004; available from <http://www.csbaonline.org/6About_Us/2staff_Directory/Andrew_F_Krepinevich.htm>; Internet; accessed 5 December 2004.

⁶Michael P. Noonan, "The Geopolitics of American Redeployment," *ROA National Security Report*, October 2004, 40.

⁷Krepinevich, 2. The stated goal of Al Qaeda is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate throughout the world by working with allied Islamic extremists groups to overthrow regimes deemed "non-Islamic" and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries.

⁸Adrian Erckenbrack, "Transformation: Roles and Missions for ARSOF", *Special Forces* 16 (December 2002): 3.

⁹Ibid., 4.

¹⁰Ibid., 5.

¹¹Ibid., 5.

¹²Scott Boston, "Toward a Protected Future Force," *Parameters* 34 (Winter 2004-5): 64.

¹³Jason Sherman, "Bracing for Modern Brands of Warfare" *Army Times*, 4 October 2004, p. 19.

¹⁴Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, Field Manual Interim 3-07.22 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, October 2004), vi.

¹⁵U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, Joint Pub 5-00.1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 25 January 2002), GL-4. Defines the Center of

Gravity as those characteristics capabilities or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight.

¹⁶Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency Operations*,1-1.

¹⁷Krepinevich, 4.

¹⁸Ibid., 5.

¹⁹Ibid., 5.

²⁰Ibid., 7.

²¹Ibid., 6.

²²Ibid., 4.

²³U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other than War*, Joint Pub 3-07 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 16 June 1995), IV-2. Human Intelligence is a category of intelligence derived from information collected and provided by human sources. Human intelligence may provide the most useful sources of information. It can supplement other sources with psychological information not available through technical means. For example while overhead imagery may graphically depict the number of people gathered in the town square, it cannot gauge the motivations or the enthusiasm of the crowds. Additionally, in underdeveloped areas belligerent forces may not rely heavily on radio communications, denying U.S. forces intelligence derived through radio signal intercepts. Human intelligence is required to supplement signals intelligence and overhead imagery which U.S. forces typically rely upon to produce the most accurate intelligence products.

²⁴Krepinevich, 8.

²⁵ Earl H Tilford, "The War on Terror: World War IV," *ROA National Security Report*, October 2004, 37.

²⁶Ibid., 39.

²⁷Krepinevich, 9.

²⁸Boston, 69.

²⁹U.S. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, "U.S.. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress," 28 September 2004; available from <<http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RS21048.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 8 November 2004.

³⁰ Sidney Shachnow, "As I Remember It: Notional "X" Command, *Special Warfare*, October 1995,16.

³¹MG Geoffrey C. Lambert, "The Cody Conference: Discussing the War on Terrorism and the Future of Special Forces," *Special Warfare*, May 2004, 23.

³²Ibid., 23.

³³Ibid., 24

³⁴Ibid., 24.

³⁵U.S. Joint Forces Command, "Doctrinal Implications of the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)" *JWFC Pam 6*, (Suffolk, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, 27 June 2004), 4-3. The Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) organization is an initiative of the Secretary of Defense. The organization is a full time joint, C2 element within the combatant commander's staff. Its daily focus is warfighting readiness, and it is a fully integrated participant in the deliberate, contingency and crisis action plans and operations of the combatant commander's staff. The SJFHQs core element provides the combatant command with a staffed, trained, and equipped joint C2 capability specifically designed to enhance situational understanding within designated areas. The SJFHQ core element exploits new organizational and operational concepts and capabilities to enhance the command's peacetime planning efforts, accelerate the efficient formation of a JTF HQ, and facilitate crisis response by the joint force.

³⁶Michael P. Noonan, "The Geopolitics of American Redeployment," *ROA National Security Report*, October 2004, 44.

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