

# **Developing Security Force Assistance: Lessons from Foreign Internal Defense**

**A Monograph  
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## **Abstract**

Developing Security Force Assistance: Lessons from Foreign Internal Defense by MAJ Thomas R. Matelski. U.S. Army, 55 pages.

As the United States Army continues to fight the spread of radical religious terrorism and transnational actors, there has been a realization that there is a need for development of an indirect approach as a complement to major combat operations (MCOs). The concept of Security Force Assistance (SFA) was born out of the need to be able to train, equip, and employ Foreign Security Forces (FSF). The Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) was created in April 2006 to develop integrated tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that apply to the whole force including General Purpose Forces (GPF) and Special Operations Forces (SOF).

As JCISFA has grown in scope and responsibility, Security Force Assistance (SFA) requires clearer definition and deconfliction with the current concepts and doctrine of Foreign Internal Defense (FID) in order to implement SFA across the DoD. There are mechanisms and systems that combine the strengths of SOF and conventional forces.

Through an analysis of SOFs experience in Vietnam, Colombia, and contemporary operations there are several common threads that SFA can take forward as it develops: unity of effort, Whole of Government Approach, Civil Information Management, and the Embassy Country Team. Each of these ideas supports the others and builds towards the comprehensive focus that SFA seeks to provide in accomplishing the mission.

SFA will increase in ability and execution. A more informed SFA will make a better SFA. SOF can inform and should inform SFA. U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and JCISFA should pay careful attention to the many lessons provided by SOF's experience with Foreign Internal Defense (FID) as they continue to develop SFA.

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## I. Introduction

Arguably, the most important military component of the struggle against violent extremists is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we help prepare our partners to defend and govern themselves.

-Secretary Of Defense Robert Gates, 10 October 2007

As the United States Army continues to fight against the spread of radical religious terrorism and transnational actors, there has been a realization that there is a need for development of an indirect approach as a compliment to major combat operations (MCOs). In dialogue with the senior leadership of the Department of Defense, Army Chief of Staff George W. Casey Jr. stated that the Army needs to “expand its portfolio of capabilities” in order to develop a robust ability to conduct full spectrum operations.<sup>1</sup> The ability to conduct full spectrum operations calls for organizations that are capable of employing integrated tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that apply to the whole force for both conventional and special operations. The Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) was created in April 2006 for the purpose of carrying out such a task.

A misconception, both the Army and Joint communities use Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Security Force Assistance (SFA) interchangeably. SFA is a new concept within the Department of Defense (DoD), but is an application of several older doctrinal concepts such as those of Security Assistance, Foreign Internal Defense, and Nation Assistance, among others. Separate organizations with unique specialties carried out each of these missions resulting in a lack of information sharing. However, there are practices that may help build upon success in future operations. As JCISFA has grown in scope and responsibility, SFA requires clearer

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the Army, *Army Posture Statement 2008* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 26 February 2008), 5-11.

definition and deconfliction with the current concepts and doctrine of FID in order to implement SFA across the DoD.

Historically, both conventional Army and select Special Operations Forces (SOF) (primarily Army Special Forces, the Air Force's 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, and Navy SEALs, supported by Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations) have conducted FID missions.<sup>2</sup> In the contemporary operating environment (COE), there is an increasing role of the conventional Army conducting FID missions under the expanding concept of SFA. From the beginning of the Cold War to the start of the War On Terror, SOF or SOF augmented with conventional Army forces generally conducted FID missions. Since the War on Terror, there has been a significant shift in the portion of conventional Army employed in FID and SFA execution. The SOF contribution to the SFA effort is currently in development and requires examination. Realizing that conventional Army forces will continue to conduct Security Force Assistance (SFA), what mechanisms and systems used by Special Operations Forces (SOF) can be applied to the execution of SFA?

This monograph will show SOF employs procedures, lessons learned, and systems that will assist the Army in providing a clearer concept of SFA. Through an analysis of SOFs experience in Vietnam, Colombia, and contemporary operations there are several common threads that SFA can take forward as it develops: unity of effort (lesson learned), Whole of Government Approach (procedure), Civil Information Management (system), and the Embassy Country Team (lesson learned and procedure). A refined concept of SFA will improve capabilities, eliminate redundant execution, and have possible implications on Doctrine,

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey James, *Understanding Contemporary Foreign Internal Defense and Military Advisement: Not Just a Semantic Exercise* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: School for Advanced Military Studies, AY 2008), 10-15. Prior to the creation of Special Forces in 1952, all missions were conducted by Army conventional forces and the United States Marine Corps (USMC). FID did not become a core SOF mission until the advent of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act. As a result, SOF is the only force in DoD that retains FID as a core mission.

Organization, Training, Leader development, Material, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTLMPPF) for the Army and more broadly DoD. In addressing mechanisms and systems, this monograph will discuss four areas of emphasis: a common groundwork in defining key concepts and clarification of misconceptions with regard to SFA and FID; an overview of key FID missions that have application to the development of SFA; key aspects, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs), and systems utilized by SOF in the execution of missions; and finally, recommendations of applications for the further development of SFA and identification of a way forward for the future integration of systems. The result will be a better understanding of how SOF methods can be integrated into the SFA environment.

## **II. Common Understanding**

Security Force Assistance and Foreign Internal Defense are two different concepts that are similar in nature. The terms are commonly misunderstood and wrongly considered synonymous. In reality, the two concepts are different in their development and in application but similar in execution. Understanding these critical differences will contribute to planning, development, and execution through the integration of systems and ideas.

### **A. Foreign Internal Defense**

Although Foreign Internal Defense (FID) was not officially captured in doctrine until 1976, the concepts of FID were encompassed in the Special Operations doctrine of Unconventional Warfare from 1952-1976.<sup>3</sup> Currently, JP 1-02 defines FID as “programs taken

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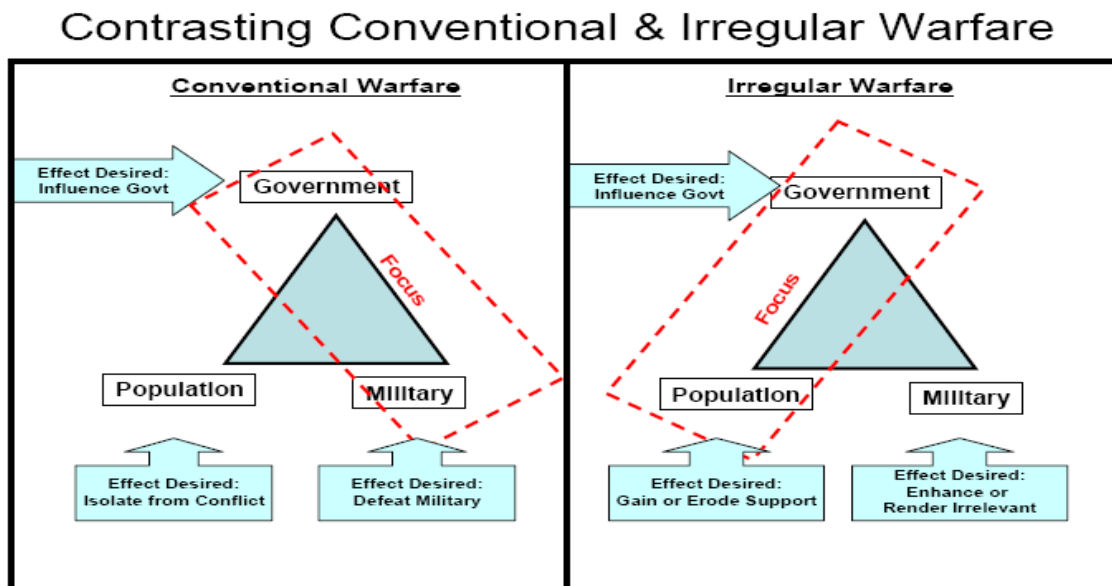
<sup>3</sup> Foreign Internal Defense was doctrinally defined by the Air Force in 1976 with the publication of Air Force Doctrine Directive 2-3.1 entitled *Foreign Internal Defense*. Previous to 1976, FID was first identified by the Nixon administration as being a core capability desired in foreign policy statements.

U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 31-21, Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1955), 2. Unconventional Warfare was defined as operations conducted in time of war behind enemy lines by predominately indigenous personnel responsible to friendly control or direction



by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.”<sup>4</sup> FID by its definition focuses internally in the protection of a host country’s society. FID is a legislated and funded government activity that requires DoD oversight and Congressional budget management.<sup>5</sup>

In the full spectrum of operations, FID falls into the Irregular Warfare (IW) concept.<sup>6</sup> The recently published *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept* emphasizes that “IW operations focus on the control and influence of populations, not on the control of an adversary’s forces or territory” and differs from conventional warfare as highlighted by a comparison in the DoD publication on IW below:<sup>7</sup>



in furtherance of military and political objectives. Although defined by being behind enemy lines, the concept loosely incorporated the advising and training of indigenous forces to combat insurgents within a given territory and was further refined in 1962 to include counterinsurgency operations.

<sup>4</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 1-02, DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 214.

<sup>5</sup> *FM 3-05.202, Special Forces Internal Defense* states that FID is a legislatively directed activity under the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act.

<sup>6</sup> Office of Secretary of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, (Figure 1), 9.

FID is one of the SOF core mission tasks.<sup>8</sup> Generally, SOF elements conduct FID, particularly Army Special Forces, the Air Forces 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, and Navy SEALs with the support of Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations. The unique skill-set of regional orientation, language training, and seniority of the personnel involved have made these soldiers the force of choice by DoD in the execution of FID. However, SOF does not always conduct FID, and sometimes both conventional forces and SOF contest the apportionment of missions.<sup>9</sup> Conventional forces, now referred to as General Purpose Forces (GPF), previously conducted FID missions with or without the support of SOF. Currently SOF is engaged in the execution of FID in both combat and peacetime environments in over 40 countries, excluding Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> These FID missions follow the principles found in FM 3-05.202:

All U.S. agencies involved in FID must coordinate with one another to ensure that they are working toward a common objective and deriving optimum benefit from the limited resources applied to the effort. The U.S. military seeks to enhance the Host Nation (HN) military and paramilitary forces' overall capability to perform their Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) mission. An evaluation of the request and the demonstrated resolve of the HN government will determine the specific form and substance of U.S. assistance, as directed by the President. Specially trained, selected, and jointly staffed U.S. military survey teams, including intelligence personnel, may be made available. U.S. military units used in FID roles should be tailored to meet the conditions within the HN. U.S. military support to FID should focus on assisting HNs in anticipating, precluding, and countering threats or potential threats.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> There are 9 SOF core missions (JP 3-05): FID, Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, Counter-terrorism, Unconventional warfare, Civil Affairs Operations, Psychological Operations, Counter-proliferation, and Information Operations.

<sup>9</sup> John Mulbury, "ARSOF, General Purpose Forces and FID: Who does what, when and where?" *Special Warfare*, (January-December 2008): 16-21. In the article LTC Mulbury argues that SOF is better suited and should be augmented by GPF periodically.

<sup>10</sup> United States Special Operations Command daily information briefing (information utilized is unclassified, but portions of the brief are classified).

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-05.202, Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2007), 2-1.

The U.S. military conducts FID missions usually in support of a Host Nation's strategy known as Internal Defense and Development (IDAD).<sup>12</sup> The U.S. Embassy Country Team develops these measures to promote economic growth and provide security in conjunction with the HN government. Ambassadors review their Host Nation's respective IDAD plans (also known as Mission Performance Plans [MPP] and Country Action Plans [CAP]) at a minimum annually and the Country Team coordinates support with DoD. Interagency partners often conduct coordination in the form of FID working groups allowing for a synchronized whole of government approach to missions. The figure below highlights the detailed coordination required:<sup>13</sup>

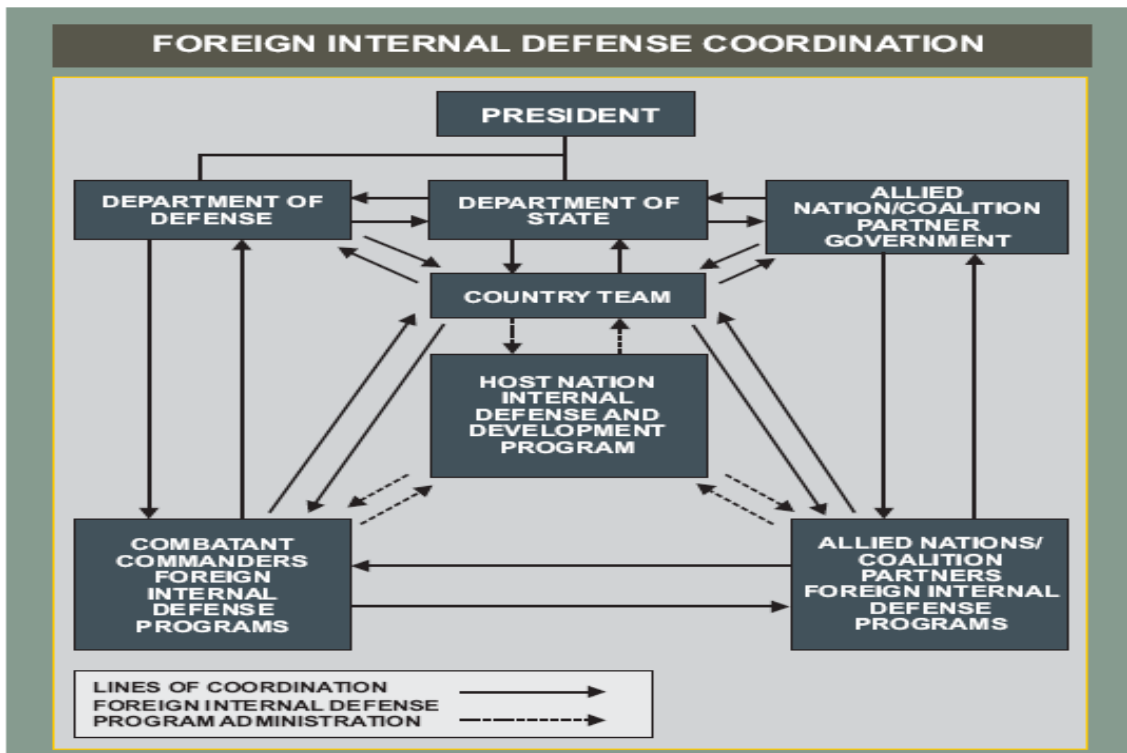


Figure II-1. Foreign Internal Defense Coordination

<sup>12</sup> JP 1-02 defines Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) as The full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and to protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. It focuses on building viable institutions (political, economic, social, and military) that respond to the needs of society.

The Embassy Country Team validates each FID mission it desires and determines manning requirements during the development of a yearly Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) in conjunction with the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs).<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the GCCs brief each TSCP and gains approval by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) prior to the allocation of funds for the year. As the War on Terror developed into the Long War, the Department of Defense needed a broader concept for the training, equipping, and employment of security forces. This need led to the development of Security Force Assistance.

## **B. Security Force Assistance**

On 4 April 2006, then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld signed the charter document for establishment of the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance. This document established JCISFA with the stated mission:

The JCISFA captures and organizes security force assistance lessons from contemporary operations in order to advise combatant commands and Military Departments on appropriate doctrine, practices, and proven tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to prepare for and conduct security force assistance missions efficiently.<sup>15</sup>

The document did not however explain exactly what SFA is or what it is supposed to do.

The current Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, dated 17 October 2007, does not contain the definition of SFA. The manual

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<sup>13</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-07.1, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 30 April 2004), Figure II-1.

<sup>14</sup> JP 1-02 describes TSCP in terms of security cooperation planning . This is defined as planning of all Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.

Under the Global Employment of the Force (GEF) concept recently implemented by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, TSCP has been incorporated into the Theater Cooperation Plan (TCP).

<sup>15</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance Charter” dated 4 April 2006.

provides excellent definitions for security assistance and several associated terms that are all aspects of SFA.<sup>16</sup> What, then, is the doctrinal basis of SFA? JCISFA defines SFA as “unified action to generate, employ, sustain and assist local, host nation, or regional security forces in support of legitimate authority.”<sup>17</sup> The nature of the mission implies the role of advisors in the execution of SFA. In the current Operating Environment (OE) and especially the CENTCOM Area of Operations (AOR), the execution of SFA is identified with the implementation of Military Transition Teams (MiTT) in both Iraq and Afghanistan. As the Department of Defense looks toward the future, the execution of SFA will have an increasing role and needs further development. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice provided emphasis as they testified before the House Armed Services Committee about the importance of one aspect of SFA, Global Train and Equip operations.<sup>18</sup> To that end, JCISFA conducted a symposium in January 2008, and continues to conduct advisor working groups periodically with the most recent having been conducted 4-8 April 2008.

The concept of SFA planning and execution is important to understand in the construct of full spectrum operations. SFA occurs across the full spectrum of operations and is not specific to any one area such as Irregular Warfare. The figure below describes the 5-phase process of SFA regardless of the spectrum of operations.<sup>19</sup>

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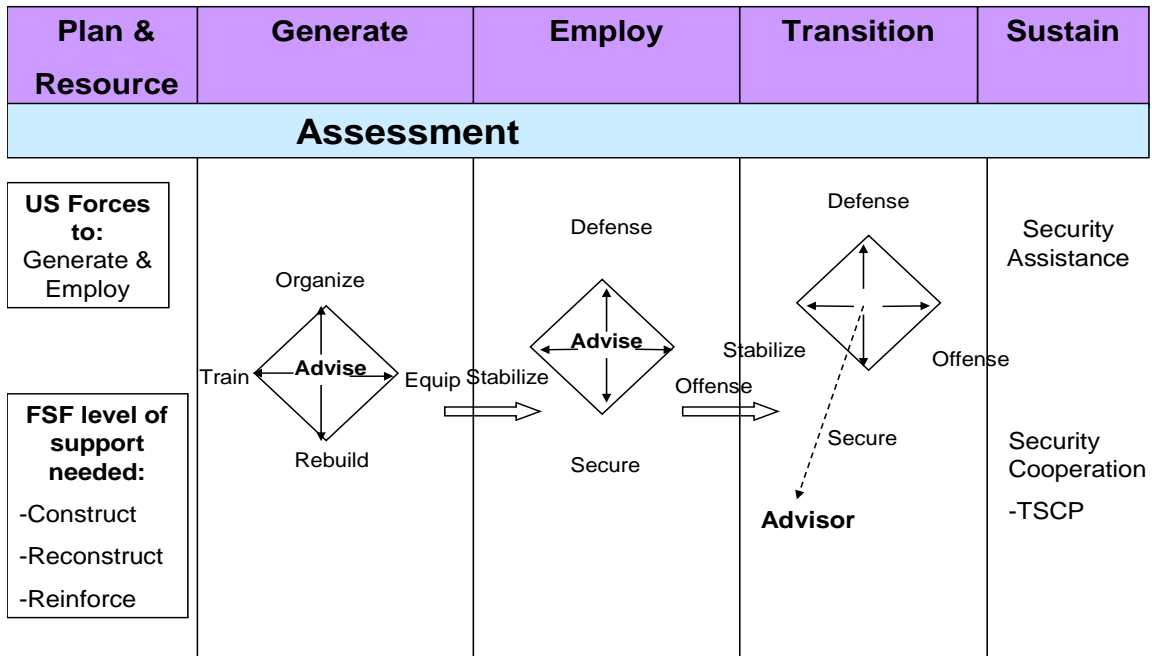
<sup>16</sup> JP 1-02 provides definitions for Security Assistance, Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Internal Defense and a number of other missions encompassed by SFA.

<sup>17</sup> Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: JCISFA, 2008), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, “Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process.” April 15, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/04/103589.htm> and <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1226> {accessed August 8, 2008}.

<sup>19</sup> JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide*, (Figure 1-9),12.

## Compilation of the SFA Phases



SFA incorporates key aspects of operations previously part of Nation Assistance programs such as Security Assistance and Security Cooperation.<sup>20</sup> The role of the advisor is critical in the execution of SFA. The advisor is the primary interface on the ground between the U.S. military forces and the foreign nation security forces, government, and U.S. government representatives in a country. SFA incorporates 9 key tasks:

- Force generation;
- Advise the FSF as a part of FID;
- Assist employment of FSF in support of campaigns and major operations;
- Advise the FSF faced with an external threat;

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<sup>20</sup> JP 1-02 defines Security Assistance as a group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.

JP 1-02 defines Security Cooperation as all Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.

- Provide traditional Security Assistance;
- Develop Title X capabilities of the FSF;
- Develop legislative and legal authorities of partner nations;
- Integrate FSF into the broader interagency of the partner nation;
- Enhance professionalization of FSF as legitimate forces of a partner nation.<sup>21</sup>

The tasks are broad in concept allowing for maximum flexibility in supporting Foreign Security Forces (FSF).

The conduct of SFA is accomplished by multiple units and organizations across the whole of government in support of the FSF, the advisor, and objectives--tactical through strategic--expressed in the SFA plan. The SFA plan nests within the current construct of Joint operations expressed in Joint Pub 5-0.<sup>22</sup>

### **C. Are FID and SFA the same?**

To the untrained observer, FID and SFA appear to be the same. To others, FID is a tactical mission while SFA is considered operational or strategic. This is despite the fact that both FID and SFA focus at the national level in their scope of operations. How are the two different and how are they similar?

The most obvious difference is found in the nature of FID itself. As the name implies, FID focuses exclusively internal. Operations execute within an Irregular Warfare context focused on the Host Nation's population. On the other hand, SFA incorporates both internal and external threats utilizing some aspects of FID and other aspects of Security Assistance defined by Joint Publication 1-02:

The group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training,

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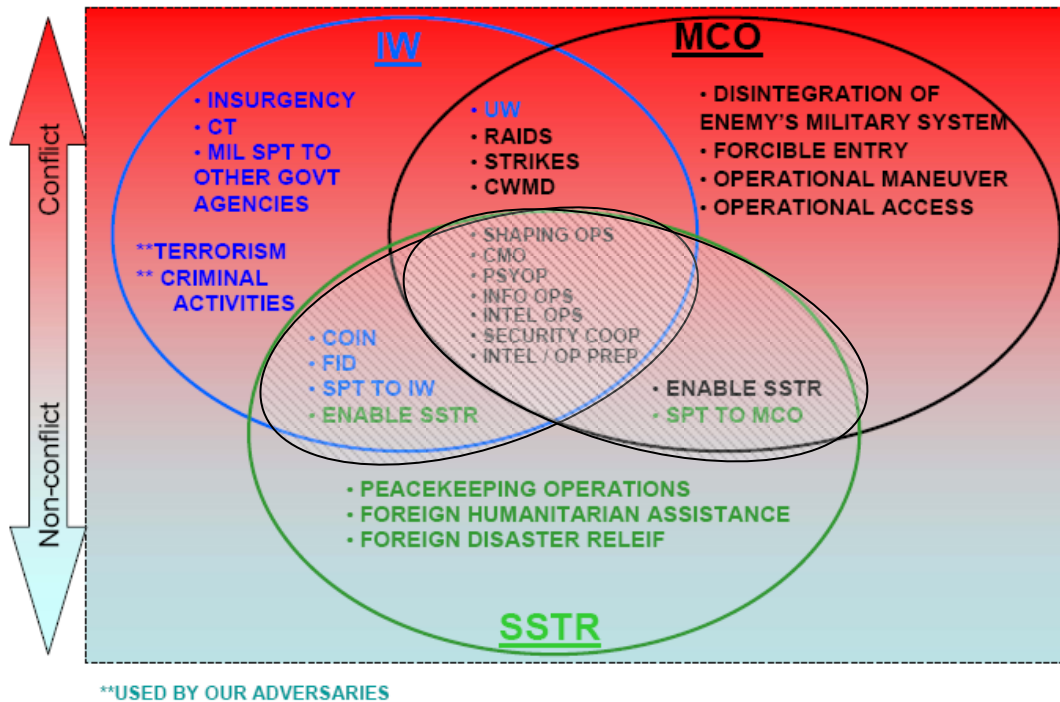
<sup>21</sup> JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> JP 5-0 describes the planning of operations in a six phase construct (Phase 0-Shape, Phase I-Deter, Phase II-Seize the Initiative, Phase III-Dominate, Phase IV-Stabilize, Phase V-Enable Civil Authority).

and other defense related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.<sup>23</sup>

An illustrative example of where FID lies is found in the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating concept:<sup>24</sup>

## JOC Relationships



SFA, depicted as the diagonally shaded area, would form the environment of the three overlapping areas of the Joint Operating Concepts depicted above, incorporating aspects of IW, Major Combat Operations (MCO), and Stability, Support, Transition, and Reconstruction

<sup>23</sup> JP 1-02, 483.

<sup>24</sup>Office of Secretary of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, 15.



(SSTR).<sup>25</sup> Similar to FID, SFA focuses on the Host Nation's population, but additionally focuses on the development of security forces (police, border guards, and others) including the military.<sup>26</sup>

FID has been developed and executed for decades as a mission. FID has funding sources in multiple programs and opportunities for training based on SOF capabilities. DoD developed SFA as a recent concept in the past two years. The concept for the execution of SFA occurs in distinct phases nested within the Joint Planning construct. In contrast, Joint Publication 3-07.1, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense describe FID as a program, mission, and an operation depending on the level of planning for execution.<sup>27</sup> The multiple functions of FID make it flexible, but also confusing.

FID and SFA share common practices between them. As the concepts for execution of SFA continue to develop, SFA should incorporate FID concepts. Cultural understanding is the paramount feature of both missions and is a major planning consideration. The SFA Planner's Guide describes the importance: "While security force assistance (SFA) is not always conducted in a threat environment, the inherent cultural, political, leadership and other complexities associated with any SFA mission still demand careful and deliberate attention from SFA planners."<sup>28</sup> Additionally, many of the SFA imperatives align very closely with SOF imperatives employed for well over 25 years. The U.S. Army Special Forces Command does describe in more detail the effects of each of the imperatives in its advisor's reference book.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The current family of Joint Operating Concepts (JOpC) include: Irregular Warfare, Major Combat Operations, Military Support to Shaping Operations, Stability, Support, Transition, and Reconstruction, Deterrence Operations, and Homeland Defense/Civil Support.

<sup>26</sup> Although the threat focus is broader in SFA than FID, the execution may or may not be more focused in SFA.

<sup>27</sup> JP 3-07.1 describes FID as a mission in the first two chapters, in the subsequent chapters as a program planned jointly and on the interagency level, and finally in chapter five as an operation.

<sup>28</sup> JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> United States Army Special Forces Command, *Special Forces Advisor's Reference Book* (Fort Bragg, NC, Research Planning, Inc.:2001)

Eventually, SFA will have similar capabilities and funding as current FID missions. United States Special Operations Command is assigned proponentcy for SFA will continue to develop SFA. JCISFA is the DoD' *Center of Excellence* for SFA. As SFA continues to grow, develop, and DoD implements SFA, the lessons of FID are pivotal.

### **III. Operations with SFA applications**

Although previous missions were not defined as SFA, it has a history going back to the founding of the United States with U.S. security forces being the focus of development. The earliest SFA efforts consisted of French, Prussian, and Polish officers training the nascent Continental Army during the American Revolution. Operations in El Salvador, Korea, Vietnam, and the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan provide excellent examples of SFA despite the fact that it until now was not called as such. JCISFA was born out of the need to establish a unity of effort in the execution of SFA. Part of JCISFA's mission is to "capture, analyze, and document security force assistance observations, insights, and lessons from contemporary operations."<sup>30</sup> Although JCISFA peered back into history to establish lessons learned for current and future operations, additional lessons from the SOF experience in conducting FID hold further merit in refining SFA. The examples below should not be taken as evidence that the SOF experience is always successful and should be the only focus of study. There are many historical examples such as the Philippines and U.S. Marine Corps experiences in small wars prior to the establishment of SOF in 1952 that hold merit. For each vignette, a brief historical overview analyzes specific aspects of the operation followed by potential lessons learned to carry forward into the practical applications to SFA later in the monograph.

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<sup>30</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance Charter" dated 4 April 2006.

## A. Vietnam: Advisors at the Forefront

Vietnam carries with it the connotations of failure. This view of the conflict often clouds the successes that took place in countering the Viet Cong insurgency during the 1960's.<sup>31</sup> Numerous books written about Vietnam highlight the chain of strategic failures that did not take advantage of tactical successes on the ground.<sup>32</sup> However, the same authors, such as Neil Sheehan and A.J. Langgruth agree that the advisory period enjoyed successes that may have changed the outcome of the conflict, but were hindered by a strategic failure to understand and convey the situation in Vietnam. The unity of effort that occurred during the advisory efforts in Vietnam, especially with regard to the implementation of the CORDS program, provides an example of a working framework that met with success. Additionally, the importance of cultural awareness in advising efforts and its impact on the advisor's freedom of action is noteworthy.

### Advisor Efforts before Americanization and Vietnamization.

The advisor period of the Vietnam war is largely viewed in light of the many successful contributions of the conventional force, despite the strategic failure of the war.<sup>33</sup> Often overlooked are the contributions of the role played by Special Forces advisors. The newly established Special Forces undertook early efforts at advising. In the Center for Military

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<sup>31</sup> Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters*, (Summer 2004): 73-83. In his article, LTC Cassidy argues that the American military culture has been unable to learn the lessons of Vietnam due to clouding by the atmosphere of failure surrounding Vietnam.

<sup>32</sup> H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: Harper's, 1997).

A.J. Langgruth, *Our Vietnam: The War 1954-1975* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1988).

Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> A.J. Langgruth, *Our Vietnam: The War 1954-1975* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 30-36, 49-64, 72-107.

History's series on Vietnam, Jeffrey C. Clarke highlights the critical role of Special Forces, "With over ten years of experience by 1965, the American advisory effort in South Vietnam was well established."<sup>34</sup> This effort consisted of mostly Special Forces soldiers. A.J. Langgruth notes the beginning of the advisory effort in 1957, "the first unit (Special Forces) had sent men to train Vietnamese commandos at Nah Trang."<sup>35</sup> These personnel were able to work well because of their specialized training and cultural awareness. The United States Army Special Operations Command historian Robert W. Jones details, "Missions began as mobile training teams then expanded to six month temporary duty deployments (TDY) followed by one year deployments based upon individual replacements on Operational Detachment-Alphas (ODAs)."<sup>36</sup> Training and advising largely involved the Montagnard tribesmen of central Vietnam and the implementation of the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) program.<sup>37</sup> The hallmark of the Special Forces approach to advising was the importance of rapport and trust built on a common cultural understanding. A January 1965 article in the *National Geographic* highlighted the "bond of friendship" that existed between the Special Forces team and the 700 man Montagnard battalion.<sup>38</sup>

As the early efforts of advising made progress and had achieved some successes, Military Assistance Command- Vietnam (MAC-V) expanded the program bringing into Vietnam a robust advising capacity combining both Special Forces and conventional force soldiers from the Army,

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<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988), 49.

<sup>35</sup> Langgruth, *Our Vietnam*, 119.

<sup>36</sup> Robert W. Jones, Jr., "A Team Effort: Special Forces in Vietnam June-December 1964," *Veritas*, (2007): 24.

<sup>37</sup> CIDG primarily trained and equipped the Vietnamese (primarily Montagnards) on counter-insurgency tactics focused on the Viet Cong in the local area. By the end of 1964, there were over 40 CIDG camps with numerous established along the Cambodian and Lao borders.

<sup>38</sup> Howard Sochurek, "American Special Forces in Action in Vietnam," *National Geographic*, January 1965, 38-65.

Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.<sup>39</sup> Jeffrey C. Clarke provides specific details, “The number of field advisors grew from a small number of Special Forces advisors to total of 8,232 personnel at the end of 1965.”<sup>40</sup> The number of conventional force personnel began to far exceed the number of Special Forces on the ground, changing the nature of the advising. Largely independent operations conducted by the early advisors (both SF and conventional) became more centralized as MAC-V and the advising effort grew considerably larger. The increased effort required more coordination and eventually grew to a staff exceeding 2,000 personnel in support of 25,000 advisors.<sup>41</sup> The details reflect the breadth and depth of the advisor effort by 1965:

The command and staff advisors at MAC-V headquarters and the U.S. Embassy in Saigon were among the most important and the most prominent. They included the MAC-V commander, the U.S. Ambassador, and at least a portion of the senior officers and executives in their subordinate staff sections and offices. In general, the counterparts of these command and staff advisors were the corresponding national-level Vietnamese leaders. More numerous but less prominent were the military field advisors that permeated almost every echelon of the South Vietnamese Army, Navy, marine Corps, and Air Force. They constituted the heart of the military advisory system and included U.S. Army advisory teams assigned to South Vietnamese corps, division, regiments, and battalions; those teams assigned to provinces and districts; those to combat support organizations, schools, and training centers; the separate U.S. Naval and Air Force Advisory Groups; and the bulk of U.S. Army Special Forces teams. Supplementing the work of these advisory elements were special U.S. military training teams that visited South Vietnam on a temporary basis and a smaller civilian field advisory network that had quasi-military responsibilities.<sup>42</sup>

As the first U.S. Marines came ashore in 1965, the overall advisory effort lost steam due to the amount of time and effort utilized to coordinate with the main force U.S. units conducting combat operations in the same area. The uniqueness of the U.S. military advisor gave way to the additional combat units placed in Vietnam by the Lyndon Johnson Administration. Independence gave way to coordination and eventually control by the U.S. ground commander, and the role of

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<sup>39</sup> Cassidy, “Back to the Street without Joy,” 75.

<sup>40</sup> Jeffrey Clarke, *Advice and Support*, 56.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

the Republic of Vietnam Army (ARVN) diminished until reinvigorated by the Richard Nixon administration and General Creighton Abrams during the Vietnamization period. With the focus on advising as a way to withdraw from Vietnam, the military was unable to maximize its efforts as before and failed to take advantage of a critical program that saw success during the middle part of the Vietnam war. That program was CORDS.

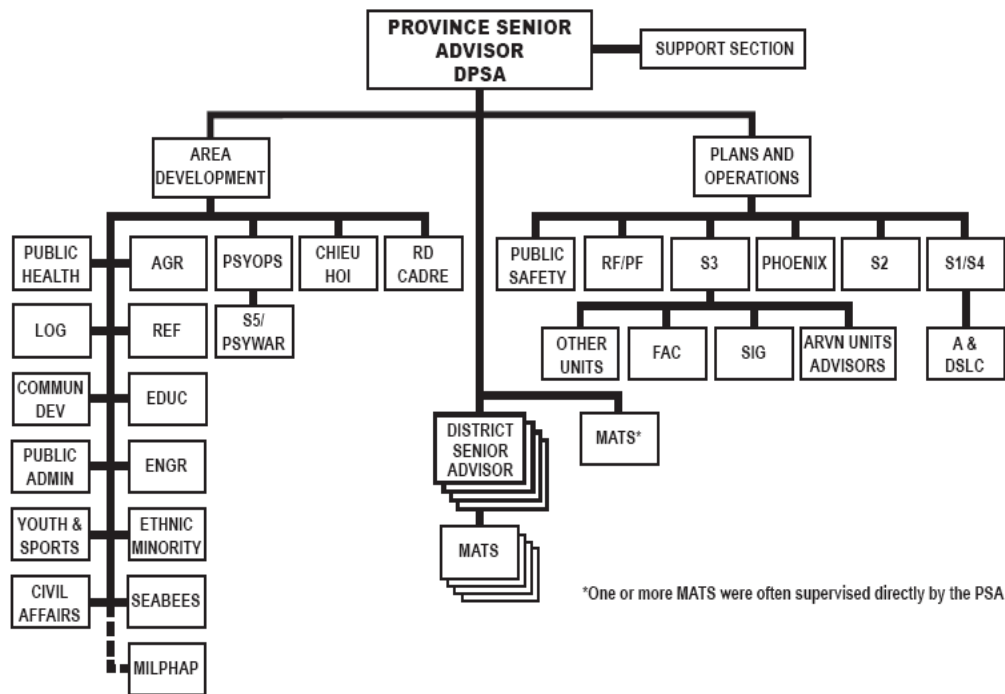
## Effects of the CORDS Program

The Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program was established in 1967 as the military's first efforts at an inter-agency approach to warfare. Although not specifically executed by SOF soldiers as a FID mission, the influence of the FID experience is evident in the CORDS experience. As the war in Vietnam continued to develop, two faces of the enemy showed: one that was a conventional threat from North Vietnam and the other an unconventional force among the people, known as the Viet Cong. As another facet of the advisory mission in Vietnam is described by historians Lester Grau and Jacob Kipp, "the CORDS program specifically matched focused intelligence collection with direct action and integrated activities aimed at winning the 'hearts and minds' of the South Vietnamese."<sup>43</sup> The program incorporated elements of the U.S. government from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Information service (USIS), Department of State and military. Grau and Kipp describe key aspects of the program, "A key feature leading to the success of CORDS was an effective collection and reporting system that focused on the factors essential for the promotion of security, economic development, governance, and the provision of needed government services down to the hamlet level."<sup>44</sup> Although focused at the hamlet level for execution, support for action was coordinated from the national down to the local

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<sup>43</sup> Jacob Kipp, Lester Grau, Karl Prinslow, and Don Smith, "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Military Review*, (September-October 2006): 8-15.

level producing an effect of increased stability. An example organization chart from a provincial CORDS team shows how broadly and holistically the organization addressed efforts.<sup>45</sup> This one organization nearly addressed every facet of the society and the military.



Source: Ngo Quang Truong, *Indochina Monographs: RVNAF and US Operational Cooperation and Coordination* (Washington, D.C.: Army Center of Military History, 1980), p. 154.

Organization of the CORDS team at province level.

The unity of effort brought to bear by the CORDS organization focused resources and effects. After the Tet Offensive in 1968, implementation of CORDS began in earnest. The lack of security was highlighted by the overall surprise of the Tet Offensive. CORDS could work towards developing security.<sup>46</sup> The implementation of the program became known as pacification. Pacification could not only occur on the local level but had to have some measure of presence in

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>45</sup> Dale Andrade and James H. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," *Military Review*, (March-April 2006): 9-23.

order to maintain stability. Vietnam expert James Willbanks describes the depth and breadth of the pacification program, “(it) consisted of 7,601 advisors...CORDS ability to bring manpower, money, and supplies to the countryside where they were needed were impressive.”<sup>47</sup>

## Importance of early advisor efforts and CORDS

The early advisor efforts in Vietnam showed the importance of cultural awareness and independence of action. The advisor understood the nuances of the local environment and the implications of actions taken by the units. The advisor’s informed actions created flexibility in operations due to the increasing support by the local populace, a keystone of counterinsurgency operations. However, this does not imply that actions do not need to be coordinated in a broader effort. During the end of the advisory period and transition to Americanization of Vietnam, advisors actions were limited due to the size and scope of operations. Part of the criticism of SOF involvement in SFA is the nature of the focus of operations. As SFA concepts continue to develop and the execution of SFA activities in Iraq and Afghanistan grow larger, some Army officers argue the importance of cultural awareness, relationship, and specialized training become less relevant.<sup>48</sup> The exact opposite holds true because relationships must be built on trust and access gained through specialized training and cultural awareness. JCISFA advocates the importance of these critical skills, but also should not lose sight of them in developing the scope of the mission.

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<sup>46</sup> Neil Sheehan. *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*. (New York: Random House: 1988), 652-660. The account provides the details of how CORDS was implemented after numerous battles with GEN William Westmoreland, Commander MAC-V.

<sup>47</sup> Andrade and Willbanks, “CORDS/Phoenix,” 16. The article provides detailed data on dollars spent, personnel trained, and effectiveness that are not necessary for this monograph but important to the importance of CORDS.

<sup>48</sup> Discussion by present and former military officers in military blogs such as the Small Wars Council constantly debate the importance of cultural awareness and relationships is not as important in SFA missions. For more details see [www.council.smallwarsjournal.com](http://www.council.smallwarsjournal.com).



Why was CORDS so essential to building progress? CORDS was a well developed unity of effort. As with operations today, agencies and organizations representing all of the elements of national power were present in Vietnam.<sup>49</sup> Each of these parties have different interests and agendas in how to accomplish a particular action and in the contemporary operating environment, the military element of national power is proportionally larger. Upon taking command of MAC-V from General Westmoreland, General Creighton Abrams realized that the United States was not fighting as a unified element:

The enemy's operational pattern is his understanding that this is just one, repeat one war. He knows there's no such thing as a war of big battalions, a war of pacification, or a war of territorial security. Friendly forces have got to recognize and understand the one war concept and carry the battle to the enemy, simultaneously, in all areas of the conflict.<sup>50</sup>

As Abrams saw it, the only way to see progress in Vietnam was through unity of effort and a large portion of that unity fell into place with CORDS.

CORDS brought all of these organizations into one headquarters. Although General Abrams remained the overall commander with responsibility for implementation of CORDS, Robert W. Comer was direct supervisor for the program as the Deputy to Commander, MAC-V for CORDS.<sup>51</sup> The importance of this relationship between civil and military leadership was reflected down to the lowest levels in Vietnam. In the re-examination of the CORDS effort, Major Ross Coffey highlights the unity of the program, "The partnership in the MAC-V headquarters of a civilian CORDS deputy and the military commander was also replicated

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<sup>49</sup> The elements of national power are collectively called DIME-LF (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, Economic, Law Enforcement, and Finance) or more generically DIME. Each element of national power is used in different proportions according to the requirements of the situation.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1999), 18.

<sup>51</sup> Ross Coffey, "Revisiting CORDS: The Need for Unity of Effort to Secure Victory in Iraq," *Military Review*, (March-April 2006): 24-34.

throughout subordinate echelons of the command; each of the four corps commanders partnered with a CORDS chief performing similar functions.”<sup>52</sup>

The establishment of this unity of effort was important because the military had access to the majority of resources and equipment. This fact was recognized as reality for the civilian leadership. Coffey describes, “Placement of the pacification programs under military control became necessary because the military controlled the practical resources.”<sup>53</sup> The unity of effort created by the CORDS program coupled with the importance of the early advisor period of Vietnam provide a glimpse of the Whole of Government approach that SFA seeks to employ. Tactical through strategic along with national down to local level efforts exemplified by CORDS and early advisory created results and placed the adversary at a disadvantage.<sup>54</sup> CORDS provides an excellent example highlighting the importance of cultural awareness, relationships from the individual up to the governmental level, and unity of effort that extends from the local through the district and provincial to the national level. CORDS should not be viewed as a “cookie-cutter” solution to the problems that the military faces in the contemporary operating environment, but the unity of effort demonstrated by CORDS provides an excellent lesson learned for SFA as it grows and further develops.

## **B. Colombia: Working towards a Whole of Government approach**

Colombia represents an example of advisory efforts with a different result than Vietnam. For the last 46 years, the U.S. military, particularly members of the SOF community, have been working in partnership with the Colombian government in order to defeat insurgent movements seeking to overthrow the legitimate government and establish a new regime. Most U.S. efforts

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>53</sup> Coffey, “Revisiting CORDS,”29.

revolve around counterinsurgency and counternarcotics. More visibly in the last year has been an emerging external threat combined with the internal threat of insurgency.<sup>55</sup> During operations conducted by Colombia in the last year, definitive connections of covert support with financing and weapons connected the government of Venezuela to the ongoing struggle with an insurgency. Additionally, insurgents increased activities by crossing borders into Ecuador where they were interdicted by Colombian forces. The implications of the FID mission that has been ongoing in Colombia for nearly 25 years combined with the emerging threat from Venezuela may make this country a future point of reference for SFA. Operations in Colombia represent the ability of planners to work together in a Whole of Government approach that builds a unity of effort between the military, multiple governments, and a wide range of other actors.

Colombia's experiences present many challenges in trying to overcome insurgency. Expanding governance over a large population has been a challenge since the break-up of Gran Colombia into Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela in 1822.<sup>56</sup> With its mountainous terrain and tropical climate, vast areas of Colombia remain ungoverned or with limited government control. These areas create significant challenges in ending the various insurgencies since the 1960s.<sup>57</sup> The creation of separate independent republics in 1964 and later, the creation of the *Despeje*, (more commonly referred to as *FARClandia*) magnified the effects of these challenges.<sup>58</sup> These conditions leave the government of Colombia in the position of trying to develop and implement

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<sup>54</sup> Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, 731. Although definitive statistics of pacification through the success of CORDS is hard to verify, the program was still seen a success driving back the Viet Cong's efforts in Long An and several other provinces.

<sup>55</sup> Brian Wagner, "Colombia says Rebel Document Shows links to Venezuela," *Voice of America News*, March 3, 2008, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-03/2008-03-03-voa57.cfm?CFID=2382560&CFTOKEN=15147646> {accessed June 19, 2008}

<sup>56</sup> Colombia, according to the 2008 CIA World Factbook is the third most populous state in South America with a population of over 45 million people. Panama was later separated from Colombia in 1903.

<sup>57</sup> Geoffrey Demarest, *Mapping Colombia: The Correlation Between Land Data and Strategy* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, March 2003), 1-15.

strategies that seek to expand and maintain government control, improve the conditions for the entire population, and limit the influence of external actors such as Venezuela. This is where the United States and SOF in particular enter the picture.

## History of U.S. military involvement

The history of U.S. involvement in Colombia is checkered by past support of corrupt regimes from Colombia's independence to the troubled times of *La Violencia* to the current supportive effort of *Plan Colombia* and *Plan Patriota*.<sup>59</sup> The evolution of the U.S. involvement highlights that the development of a unity of effort reaches beyond the military aspects of operations and became a refined Whole of Government approach with far reaching capabilities marked with some failures but a larger overall success.

The roots of American involvement begin with efforts to stop the spread of Communism after the conclusion of World War II. Military involvement in Colombia developed as various Communist insurgent groups coalesced under the banner of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, more commonly known by the acronym FARC. The banding together under the FARC banner created a viable threat to the Government of Colombia and invited the attention of the United States as Communist insurgencies spread throughout Latin America in the 1960s. Coupled with the Communist threat was a right wing threat of self-defense militias, Communist inspired *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN), and reactionary groups such as the urban-based 19<sup>th</sup> of April Movement (M-19).<sup>60</sup> All of these groups threatened to

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<sup>58</sup> Robert W. Jones, "Plan Colombia and Plan Patriota: the Evolution of Colombia's National Strategy," *Veritas*, (2006):60-64.

<sup>59</sup> Troy J. Saquety, "Colombia's Troubled Past," *Veritas*, (2006): 8-14. *La Violencia* is the era of time from 1948-1966 highlighted by continuous civil wars and violence between two major parties attempting to establish control over Colombia. The violence resulted in over 250,000 deaths.

Jones, "Plan Colombia and Plan Patriota," 61, 64. *Plan Colombia* lasted from 1998-2002 and *Plan Patriota* 2002-present.

<sup>60</sup> Saquety, "Colombia's Troubled Past," 10.

collapse the country into warring factions and instability and the U.S. Administration turned to the military for assistance. In 1962, Brigadier General William P. Yarborough, while commander of Fort Bragg's Special Warfare Center, visited Bogota and helped develop the first military plan for Colombia, *Plan Lazo*.<sup>61</sup> *Plan Lazo* was the first comprehensive plan enacted by the Colombian government calling for "broad civic action programs within the violence zones and an improved antiviolence system, which coupled with military action, would target for elimination the leading bandit elements of quasi-guerilla forces."<sup>62</sup> U.S. military involvement consisted of Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) and a small number of Special Forces operating with Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations support.

The Colombian government viewed the insurgencies as an internal affair under the purview of the National Police and not a U.S. National Defense issue as it was viewed by the United States. The effect was that "the Colombian Army did not get involved and the result was the ceding of large areas of Colombia to the insurgency."<sup>63</sup> This decision set the conditions for the explosion of the narcotics industry within Colombia and invited broader U.S. involvement to stem the tide of illicit drugs flowing into the United States and the rest of the Western Hemisphere. However, U.S. involvement did not increase until the 1980s due to more pressing commitments in other areas of the globe such as Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua. U.S. Special Forces conducted counter-narcotics operations, but the operations were not executed in a unity of effort until *Plan Colombia* emerged in 1998.

The largest strategic plan enacted by the Colombian government came with the election of President Andres Pastrana. Elected on a "promise to seek peace with insurgent groups.

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<sup>61</sup> Kenneth Finlayson, "Colombia: A Special Relationship," *Veritas*, (2006): 5-7. LTG Yarborough was instrumental in the development and expansion of Army Special Forces. He commanded the JFK Special Warfare Center from 1961-1965.

<sup>62</sup> Charles H. Briscoe, "Plan Lazo: Evaluation and and Execution," *Veritas*, (2006): 38-46.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Pastrana's advisors developed a peace plan entitled '*Plan Colombia: Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and Strengthening the State*'.<sup>64</sup> The U.S. support for the plan included economic support, but mostly equipment, personnel, and training provided by Special Forces. "Responsibility for *Plan Colombia* was assigned to the Department of State and implementation would be through the U.S. Embassy in Bogota."<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately the plan had its drawbacks, including the creation of a demilitarized zone called the *despeje*.



The demilitarized zone in Colombia 1998-2002<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Jones, "Plan Colombia and Plan Patriota," 61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>66</sup> Adam Isacson. "Memorandum: Next Steps for Talks with the FARC." October 16, 2006, *Center for International Policy*. <http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/061016cip.htm>, {Accessed June 19, 2008}.

This area became synonymous with a lack of control by the government and free reign for the FARC, resulting in a defacto state within a state supported by narco-trafficking. Special Forces involvement grew in response to the increase in illicit drugs, largely due to increased U.S. national interest with the War on Drugs and skyrocketing drug use in U.S. cities. The need for a stronger effort is highlighted by a report by the Center for International Policy: “In 1999, the U.S. Southern Command commander, Marine General Charles Wilhelm, working in concert with the National Drug Policy Coordinator, retired Army General Barry McCaffrey, proposed that a Colombian Army unit be trained, equipped, and dedicated to only counter-drug operations.”<sup>67</sup> This resulted in a dual focused approach for military operations in Colombia. The FID mission would train the Colombian Army and Special Forces, as well as the National Police. The counter-narcotics mission would train security forces and advise the national government on the defeat of narco-traffic.

As the Global War on Terror emerged after September 11, 2001, U.S. military involvement in Colombia experienced an expansion in capabilities shifting more broadly from counter-drug operations to Foreign Internal Defense operations. However, the focus of operations moving to Afghanistan and then Iraq resulted in less resources and personnel available, constraining the expanded capabilities. Special Forces were “more involved in the war on narcotics traffickers and terrorists as the result of ‘expanded authorities’ granted by President Bush.”<sup>68</sup> *Plan Colombia* still had its limitations because of the creation of the *despeje*, but this would soon change with a new Colombian administration.

President Alvaro Uribe was elected in part due the failure of aspects of *Plan Colombia* and futile negotiations between the FARC and the Pastrana administration. “Uribe’s offensive was divided into two parts. One was a general security strategy known as ‘democratic security’,

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<sup>67</sup> Isacson, “Memorandum,”1.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, “Plan Colombia and Plan Patriota,” 63.

which dramatically increased the number of police in municipalities across the country. The second part was a new joint military operation called *Plan Patriota*, which dedicated at least 18,000 soldiers to attack the *despeje*.<sup>69</sup> This plan was and is a melding of the two previous strategies, seeking a balance amongst civic action and development, counter-drug, and extending governance actions of the past. As a result, the Colombian government has extended control to a majority of the country, dismantled the FARC controlled *despeje*, and expanded governance to areas that had no prior to 2002. Integral to the successful execution of the plan has been the contributions of Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations soldiers in a Whole of Government approach.<sup>70</sup>

### Whole of Government approach in action

The usage of the “Whole of Government” approach (WGA) or comprehensive approach has become the latest attempt to describe the close coordination that is required in establishing a comprehensive unity of effort and accomplishing the actions of national government, either U.S., Partner Nation, or both. Although described as the newest method to produce a unity of effort, U.S. efforts in Colombia have been closely coordinated between the Government of Colombia, the United States Department of State (DoS), the U.S. military through U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), and a host of other government agencies too numerous to list for well over 20 years.<sup>71</sup> This mere fact notes that it takes significant time to build a Whole of Government approach; it does not occur overnight.

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<sup>69</sup> Jones, “Plan Colombia and Plan Patriota,” 63.

<sup>70</sup> Although a clear definition for “Whole of Government” is unavailable, I will define the term as the coordinated efforts across all of the elements of national power towards a specific goal or objective in order to support a strategic policy (U.S. or Partner Nation) objective.

<sup>71</sup> Joint Pub 1-02 defines unity of effort as coordination and cooperation toward common objectives, even if the participants are not necessarily part of the same command or organization.



For the military conducting activities within Colombia, the entry point is through the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH), and the Military Group (MILGRP). The relationship between the three organizations in concert with the Colombian government makes U.S. efforts in support of Colombia possible. MILGRPs play an essential role within the U.S. Embassy because they are “the primary liaison between the Department of Defense and the host nation. The commander serves as the primary advisor to the U.S. ambassador and his staff and is central coordinating agent for military operations.”<sup>72</sup> Military operations in Colombia are represented in large part by the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) from Fort Bragg, North Carolina with support of elements of 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne), and 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group (Airborne). This collective effort integrates the resources provided by the U.S. Embassy and executes operations as a whole of government approach. Through the execution of Humanitarian Assistance, Humanitarian Civic Action, Joint Combined Exchange Training, Military Information Support Teams, Military Training Teams, and primarily Foreign Internal Defense, military operations provide support to the development and training of conventional, special operations, and national police forces. All of the efforts are to be “transparent to the Colombian public. This is done through the integration of Colombian forces, police, civilian government agencies, NGOs, doctors, engineers, to plan coordinate, and execute operations...to legitimize Colombian institutions and create and sustain favorable opinion.”<sup>73</sup> Efforts directly impact the success or failure of the Government of Colombia’s implementation of *Plan Patriota* and the stability of Colombia.

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<sup>72</sup> Kenneth Finlayson, “U.S. Forces: The Major Command Structure,” *Veritas*, (2006):65-68.

<sup>73</sup> Robert W. Jones, Jr. “Civil Affairs in Colombia,” *Veritas*, (2006): 99-102.

## Colombia's lesson for SFA

The breadth of experience in Colombia is highlighted in *Veritas*' special issue on Colombia, "For more than fifty years the U.S. Military has played an active role in advising, assisting, and training the Colombian defense forces."<sup>74</sup> The preponderance of U.S. efforts have been internally focused on the stability of Colombia. However, some of these inward looking features have broader implications for regional affairs and reach to the United States. As relations between Colombia and its immediate neighbors (Ecuador and Venezuela) have deteriorated over the past two years, Colombia has been forced to maintain focus internally and additionally look externally encompassing a key feature of SFA.

Over 20 years of practical experience through U.S. FID efforts in Colombia laid important groundwork for the implementation of SFA. SFA can complement ongoing U.S. efforts without compromising them by developing a more complete framework for Colombia. Major Jose Madera notes, "Our Armed Forces can only be partially successful if they lack the framework for the adequate linkage of strategic objectives to actions at the tactical level while at the same time taking into account the effect of non-military factors upon those actions."<sup>75</sup> The relationships established by the Embassy, MILGRP, and SOCSOUTH should be enhanced and not replaced because they have proven value and continue to support ongoing efforts within Colombia. The current method for Colombia works and "strategy is best devised when resources, method, and objective can all be reconciled at the outset."<sup>76</sup>

The success of employing a Whole of Government Approach builds upon the unity of effort that was learned in the Vietnam experience of SOF. In developing support to Colombia

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<sup>74</sup> Finlayson, "U.S. Forces," 68.

<sup>75</sup> Jose A. Madera, *Civil Information Management in Support of Counterinsurgency Operations: A Case for Geospatial Information Systems in Colombia* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, School for Advanced Military Studies, AY2005-2006), 54.

<sup>76</sup> Demarest, *Mapping Colombia*, 13.

that focus both internally and externally, SFA can provide additional resources and assets to the Government of Colombia. However, the integration into the current Whole of Government Approach in Colombia is paramount to maintain the unity of effort built by SOF and the multiple agencies involved.

## **IV. Applications from the Field into SFA**

Aside from the past experiences described above, there are specific practices conducted by SOF that have definite influences on the development and execution of SFA. Some of these applications are more technical, but support broader mission requirements, while others are relational components that support the execution of operations. Although not an exhaustive list by any measure, these methods hold substantial merit and improve the way in which operations are conducted by making them more efficient and relevant in today's contemporary operating environment.

### **A. Civil Information Management**

Civil Reconnaissance and Civil Information Management (CIM) are at the forefront of what Civil Affairs forces contribute to the current operating environment. CIM is largely a SOF effort and recently expanded in application to conventional operations. CIM has contributed to the successes of FID in Colombia by providing vital linkages between aspects of the terrain and the expansion of governance. Although not yet formalized in doctrine, the 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) and the larger community of Army Reserve Civil Affairs units have been implementing these methods for over 5 years. Current Civil Affairs doctrine provides two key definitions:

Civil information is information developed from data with relation to civil areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events, within the civil component of the commander's operational environment that can be fused or processed to increase DOD/Interagency/IGO/NGO/IPI situational awareness, situational understanding, or situational dominance.

Civil Information Management is the process whereby, civil information is collected, entered into a central database, and internally fused with the supported element, higher HQ, other USG and DOD agencies, IGOs, and NGOs to ensure the timely availability of information for analysis and the widest possible dissemination of the raw and analyzed civil information to military and nonmilitary partners throughout the AO.<sup>77</sup>

Civil Information encompasses numerous aspects of the socio-cultural environment and is generally found through routine personal interactions with members of a population. Information can be found through open source communications such as radio, television, or the internet.

CIM provides the ability to better inform commanders, staffs, and interagency partners of the civil dimension of the operating environment and may help identify trends and activities that support the development of operations and activities. The purpose is to “engage the civilian population with precision; provide an overall enhanced understanding of the human terrain; impede the enemy’s ability to operate freely among the population; and capitalize on opportunities to gain the trust and confidence of the civilian population.”<sup>78</sup> Civil information is not just in the purview of U.S. Army Civil Affairs soldiers. Units of any type can collect civil information, however the management (CIM) remains the responsibility of Civil Affairs soldiers.<sup>79</sup> CIM was recently incorporated into a core task for Civil Affairs units. Below is depicted how CIM fits into the spectrum of Civil Affairs operations (CAO) taken from FM 3-05.40.<sup>80</sup> It specifically highlights the importance of CIM in relationship to the other core Civil Affairs tasks.

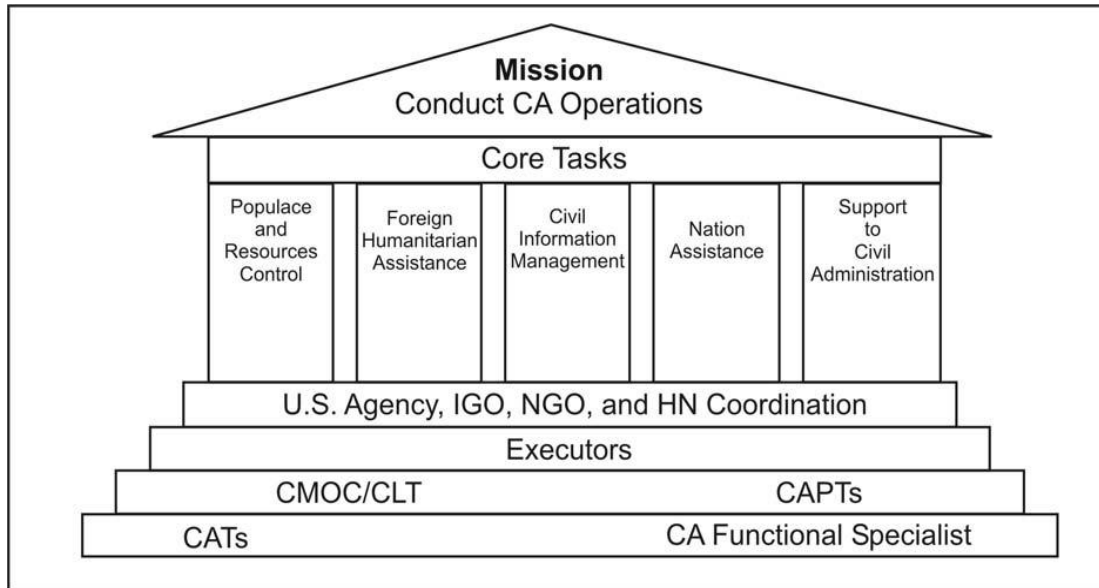
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<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-05.40 Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2007), 3-85.

<sup>78</sup> Kevin P. Burke, *Civil Reconnaissance: Separating the Insurgent from the Population* (Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2007), 2.

<sup>79</sup> Civil Affairs units are the only units currently capable of collecting, maintaining and future development of CIM.

<sup>80</sup> *FM 3-05.40 Civil Affairs Operations*, 1-3.



### Why Civil Information matters: A short story

Civil Affairs has been deployed in support of the Global War on Terror since the beginning in 2001, but the role that Civil Affairs has played has shifted from preventing civilian interference in military operations to becoming a fully invested partner in developing the contemporary operating environment.<sup>81</sup>

During Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF VIII), Bravo Company, 97<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) deployed in support of 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) from January to September 2006.<sup>82</sup> As part the development of tactics, techniques, and procedures being developed for CIM, Bravo Company employed several practices that effectively shaped the operating environment for the supported unit, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) Afghanistan, and also Joint Task Force-76 (CJTF-76), International Security

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<sup>81</sup> Although denying civilian interference in military operations is an aspect of the Civil Affairs mission activity Populace and Resources Control (PRC), the use of the statement was generically used by commanders to define what the entire Civil Affairs mission entailed.

<sup>82</sup> The story provides a brief overview of the contribution CIM and Civil Reconnaissance can make in a combat environment. The account is based upon the experiences of B/97<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) in support of CJSOTF-Afghanistan from January-September 2006.

Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan, and many other organizations operating both in Afghanistan and throughout the theater of operations. One such practice was that of implementing a weekly trends analysis report based upon Civil Information gained in daily interactions with the local populace and open source reporting.

The weekly trends report consisted of trends seen in both general and specific areas of expertise from the teams on the ground in combination with a week by week assessment of the overall situation in a given district or province in Afghanistan. The original report was meant to develop Bravo Company's understanding of the operating environment, but gradually ended up expanding to encompass the entire supported unit, but also CJTF-76, ISAF partnered elements, and senior levels of reporting back in the United States. One senior officer, the CJTF-76 J-2 commented that Bravo Company's information closed gaps in information that were as old as five years. All that the company had done was reap the benefits of Civil Information Management and develop a fully usable product. Civil Information gleaned from Civil Reconnaissance provided the impetus for the better understanding of the environment.

### What is Civil Reconnaissance?

The use of the term reconnaissance is routinely used to describe a discreet activity that is done to collect or glean specific information about an area or subject of interest to U.S. military operations. This usually connotes the use of intelligence assets or trained collectors to gain the information. The same thought process reflects similarly in the Joint definition.<sup>83</sup> However, reconnaissance does not need to be of a nefarious nature or have a specific intelligence driven process. Civil Affairs practice Civil Reconnaissance (CR) in order to better define an area, a population, or a specific behavior. Civil Affairs doctrine defines CR as "A targeted, planned, and

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<sup>83</sup> JP-1-02 defines reconnaissance as a mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area.

coordinated observation and evaluation of those specific civil aspects of the environment. Civil reconnaissance focuses specifically on the civil component, the elements of which are best represented by the mnemonic ASCOPE: areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events.”<sup>84</sup> The word information is not used in the definition, but Civil Information is the direct result of CR being conducted. Trained Civil Affairs personnel primarily conduct CR and the information gained distributed via CIM means. The purpose in maintaining this mission activity within Civil Affairs operations is to provide transparency in missions involving the civil populace. This transparency is a critical requirement in gaining the support of the local populace for both U.S. operations and partner nation activities. The local populace interacts with U.S. forces at their own risk often putting their families and their livelihoods in jeopardy. Separating civil reconnaissance from intelligence collection activities is paramount.

The common misnomer of information being synonymous with intelligence strikes at the heart of the debate about maintaining transparency. Major Kevin Burke writes, “Civil reconnaissance is not the covert collection of information by agents employed by the U.S. or Coalition forces, but rather data obtained from open sources, primarily through interaction with the host population, review of open source information found in various mediums, and academic research.”<sup>85</sup> The distinction between intelligence and information is critical. JP 1-02 defines intelligence as:

The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations. The term is also applied to the activity, which results in the product and to the organizations engaged in such activity.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-05.40 Civil Affairs Operations*, Glossary-10.

<sup>85</sup> Burke, *Civil Reconnaissance*, 4.

<sup>86</sup> JP 1-02, 268.

Information is distinguished from intelligence by being defined as “Facts, data, or instructions in any medium or form. Or the meaning that a human assigns to data by means of the known conventions used in their representation.”<sup>87</sup> Thus, Civil Information gained can become intelligence once it is analyzed and is put to another purpose by trained personnel. The argument may seem trivial to some, but the distinction can mean the difference between support of the local populace and a loss of trust. Trust is a keystone of SFA in action.

### Can CIM play a role in SFA?

CIM already plays an important role in the development and understanding of operations in mission conducted by SOF. It informs, shapes, directs, and develops the operating environment in Iraq, Afghanistan, Philippines, and elsewhere in support of GWOT missions. CIM is also usefully employed in theater engagement activities in Indonesia, Colombia, Chile, and a whole host of other countries. The 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) CIM Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provides an excellent set of objectives for CIM in any environment:

“Effective Civil Information Management provides a framework to develop and enhance unit’s abilities in collecting, collating, processing, analyzing, reporting, and sharing of civil information. This will facilitate the following:

a. Ensure the CA soldier has the necessary skills to use the Asymmetric Software Kit (ASK) at a level that facilitates a deployed element’s ability to support mission requirements and report and manage Civil Information.

b. Provide a detailed method for the analysis of civil information that integrates civil reconnaissance, civil damage assessments (JP1.02), area studies, and operational assessment feedback into the military targeting process to support the maneuver commander.

c. Fulfill the 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (A) requirement to be able to provide the supported commander [95<sup>th</sup> CAB(A) and USASOC(A)] with accurate, relevant, and timely civil information by providing him with a civil layer to the Common Operating Picture (COP) of the battle space.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> JP 1-02, 260.

<sup>88</sup> 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), Annex M (Civil Information Management) to 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) Garrison Standard Operating Procedure (Fort Bragg, NC: Local Production) March 2008, page 1.



Although, no doctrine currently exists that standardizes the use of CIM and how it integrates into full spectrum operations, the utility of CIM should be apparent. Currently, efforts are underway in the Joint community to develop and test CIM concepts for full employment across the force beyond Civil Affairs.<sup>89</sup> The purpose of the test is to take the next step from Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures to Joint doctrine for employment and determine the utility of CIM in the current operating environment.

As the Joint testing continues over the next few months and years, SFA planners have the ability to incorporate this important aspect of understanding the operating environment. CIM can assist in the development of relationships and has the ability to contribute to all of the Security Force Assistance Phases.<sup>90</sup> The development of Civil Information will help establish the means to understand the geospatial, relational, and temporal aspects of the Host Nation partner, the impacts on civil society, and the potential motivation of internal and external threats of the SFA environment. The SOF experience in initiating and developing CIM provides a relevant background for SFA planners to begin to understand CIM requirements and capabilities for the future. Geospatial analysis can provide the means to understand how the physical environment shapes the civil environment, while relational analysis can help understand the complex nature of both internal and external relationships.

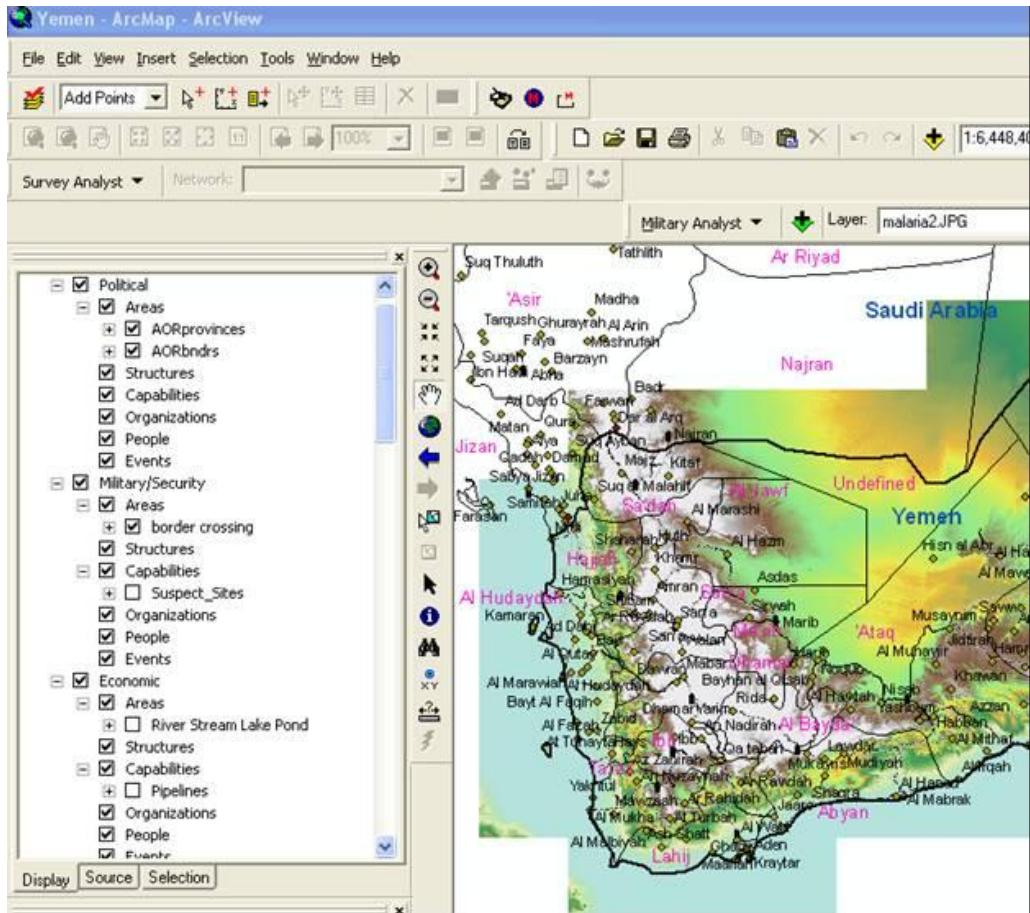
The temporal analysis will help understand the effects and influences of events on the SFA environment. To put things in perspective, “The temporal aspect of civil information is extremely critical to understanding the significance of events in the context of time. Upon first observation, this may seem the most insignificant aspect used to understand the civil

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<sup>89</sup> United States Joint Forces Command, “Announcement of Joint Civil Information Management (J-CIM) Joint Feasibility Study (JFS) Joint Warfighter’s Advisory Group (JWAG)” dated 18 April 2008.

<sup>90</sup> JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner’s Guide*, 6-13.

environment, but in most case it permeates the relevance of all other aspects of analysis.”<sup>91</sup> The end result can be subtle or substantial depending on the aspects of employment of CIM, but the impact is the same: a better informed commander. An example of the Civil Common Operating Picture (COP) is included below:<sup>92</sup>



The evidence of the amount of data that is readily available is highlighted in the left portion of the COP while pictorially displayed on the right. This combination of both visual and technical data can provide the planner with potential trends or areas of interest for future operations.

<sup>91</sup> Burke, *Civil Reconnaissance*, 64.

<sup>92</sup> 96<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), *Annex M (Civil Information Management)*, 17.

## B. Role of the Embassy Country Team

In the effort to build a Whole of Government approach, the Embassy provides a key point of engagement to build a broader unity of effort. The Embassy Country Team is the primary point of engagement for SOF in any mission (from the top-level planner all the way down to the executor). The importance of it in conventional missions is less relevant because details are worked at higher levels and not seen by the executing force or planner. As evidenced earlier in the discussion on Vietnam and Colombia, the Embassy Country Team has a role to play. On the surface, the Embassy Country Team's role has faded during the GWOT.<sup>93</sup> With the focus of current operations largely in the military element of National Power, the Geographic Combatant Commanders have seen an increased role in day-to-day engagement activities with multiple militaries and heads of state. This state of affairs has resulted in a perceived lessening of the role of diplomats in coordinating and influencing foreign policy. However, in the conduct of military missions, the relationship between the embassy and the military must remain robust. An understanding of the special relationship of the U.S. Embassy abroad and the military conducting operations within a given country is supremely important. The ties between military and foreign policy can inform and direct the planning for future operations in any environment. The Ambassador leads the way in American diplomatic efforts abroad and is the primary interface for U.S. interests. In Henry Nash's work on American foreign policy, he highlights the role of the Embassy, "In foreign areas the key person authorized to coordinate government operations is the ambassador. This authority has been delegated to him (or her) by the Secretary of State and made the ambassador responsible for the direction, coordination, and supervision of interdepartmental

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<sup>93</sup> Mitchell J. Thompson, "Breaking the Proconsulate: A New Design for National Power," *Parameters*, (Winter 2005/2006): 62-75. In the article, the author argues that the role of the U.S. embassy has been reduced as the role of the Combatant Commander has taken on an increasing role in diplomatic affairs historically seen as the role of the Ambassador.

activities sponsored by the government overseas.”<sup>94</sup> Although Ambassadors can be political appointees or life-long Foreign Service Officers, their responsibilities remain the same and are executed through the Embassy Country Team.

As in previous discussion about the Whole of Government approach, the Country Team represents the first line effort overseas to plan, direct, and integrate the policies of the United States Government. The roots of the Country Team begin with the vast rebuilding efforts of the post-World War II era. The massive task of rebuilding required unique organizations that were capable of coordinating multiple departments working towards a similar objective.

The country team consists of ranking representatives of the embassy sections and from other government agencies operating in the country. The country team meets regularly to review current developments and to advise the ambassador on what steps the embassy is taking or should be taking to promote U.S. interests in the country.<sup>95</sup>

The Country Team, throughout its evolution since the 1940’s, has continued to develop and implement interagency teams. The spectrum of the different elements of U.S. government is demonstrated in the basic construct of a Country Team is provided below:<sup>96</sup>

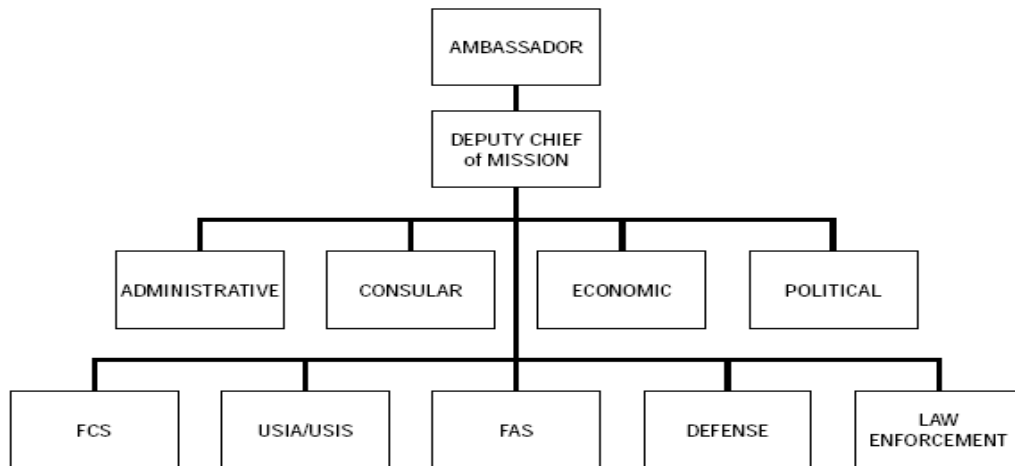
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<sup>94</sup> Henry T. Nash, *American Foreign Policy: Response to a Threat* (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1974), 74.

<sup>95</sup> John Gunderson, “Protecting U.S. National Interests: the Role of the Ambassador and the Country Team.” *Special Warfare*, (Fall 1998): 24-31.

<sup>96</sup> Gunderson, “Protecting U.S. National Interests,” 29.

## The Ambassador and Country Team



All of these separate components have competing agendas and multiple resources, but the Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission hold the over-riding decision making authority when decisions are required for implementation. Military interests do not always match up to diplomatic, economic, and informational interests, but still need to be coordinated under one authority.

Recently this has been under intense debate with relation to the Department of Defense's growing mission abroad and the perception that the Embassy has been bypassed in the interests of national security. This was highlighted in a recent *New York Times* article, "As the Pentagon takes on new roles collecting intelligence, initiating information operations and conducting other 'self-assigned missions,' the report found that some embassies have effectively become command posts, with military personnel in those countries all but supplanting the role of ambassadors in conducting American foreign policy."<sup>97</sup> Although generally not the case, special attention should be paid to the relationship between the military and the Embassy. In an era of fiscal constraint

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<sup>97</sup> "Military Role in U.S. Embassies Creates Strain, Report says." *New York Times*, 20 December 2006,

and limited assets, all parties need to work together in a unity of effort to maximize the benefit of what each organization brings to the table.

### Why the Country Team still matters.

With the recent focus on the military aspects of current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, there has been a tendency to overlook the role of the Embassy and the Country Team. Just as in the military, not every embassy is the same, but every Embassy has a Country Team in some form or another. The ability to bring multiple organizations together in one room on a regular basis makes it a key point of engagement for any military planner. The programs and funding that organizations such as the Department of Agriculture or Department of Energy provide in some countries can help expand the military's efforts to conduct a mission activity such as SFA or FID. According to Ambassador Robert Oakley and Michael Casey, three key points in favor of cooperation highlight the benefits of coordination:

Informal coordination mechanisms can work well if backed by good leaders and their personal commitment.

Senior military leader guidance in favor of civil-military collaboration is helpful.

Without a standing system designed to reward interagency collaboration, successful interagency coordination may prove as fleeting as individual leader assignments.<sup>98</sup>

Also, key to access is the Senior Defense Official (SDO), formerly called the Defense Attache (DATT).<sup>99</sup> The SDO is the military representative to the Ambassador in a given country and resides with the Embassy. As a member of the military, the SDO speaks the same "language" as the military and can describe military activities in terms that can more readily

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[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/20/washington/20embassy.html?\\_r=2&adxnnl=1&oref=slogin&adxnnlx=1216138023-38Iqf1Ib3O+Zdha8SVZftQ&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/20/washington/20embassy.html?_r=2&adxnnl=1&oref=slogin&adxnnlx=1216138023-38Iqf1Ib3O+Zdha8SVZftQ&oref=slogin), {accessed 15 July 2008}.

<sup>98</sup> Robert B. Oakley and Michael Casey, Jr., "The Country Team: Restructuring America's First Line of Engagement," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007): 149.

<sup>99</sup> Department of Defense Directive 5105.75 dated December 2007 expands the role of the Defense Attache (DATT) and the Chief of Security Assistance Organization into one officer identified as the Senior Defense Official (SDO).

explain military objectives to the Country Team. The SDO has a longer term presence than the most U.S. military activities within and country and can be a key person in developing continuity.

Additional resources beyond funding are available through the Country Team. A special issue of *Special Warfare* magazine highlighted the cross-cultural capabilities of the Embassy, “often more than half of all employees at any U.S. Embassy are foreign-service nationals. Because of their long term experience, language capability, foreign service nationals are a unique asset for the embassy.”<sup>100</sup> In developing an understanding of the operating environment, these people are valuable assets that may reduce the “learning curve” for military planners.

All of these capabilities make it clear that the Embassy provides capabilities and resources that can only improve the military’s capability to accomplish the mission. Despite all of this, the importance of personal relationships cannot be understated as evidenced in the following, “the more the SOF warrior and the State Department diplomat understand each other’s missions, methods of operations, and even culture, the better their working relationship will be.”<sup>101</sup> Close and constant relationships matter.

### How to incorporate the Country Team in SFA.

Relationships are the critical building block in developing a plan of action in any environment. For the military planner it can mean the difference between success and failure. In the current development of SFA there appears to be an inadvertent lack of emphasis on the capabilities of the Embassy Country Team. In describing unity of effort and purpose, the emphasis is on the development of effective command relationships. There is a single reference to the Ambassador as a key player in planning for SFA. The *Security Force Assistance Planners Guide* notes the importance of relationships to the planner, “SFA command relationships may

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<sup>100</sup> Gunderson, “Protecting U.S. National Interest,” 29.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

range from very simple to very complex and military commanders may answer to non-military personnel such as an Ambassador or a special appointee.”<sup>102</sup> The emphasis on close relationships is missing and only discussed in terms of operational considerations: “at a minimum, the planner must consider the efforts of the Country Team under the Ambassador.”<sup>103</sup> This lack of emphasis in SFA is compared to the strong emphasis on relationship in SOF. The *Special Forces Advisor’s Handbook* in comparison spends an entire chapter on the emphasis on relationships (command and personal) and two appendices on the Embassy, Country Team, and potential programs available to maximize unity of effort.<sup>104</sup>

The Country Team is a special organization that is not perfect, but contributes more than it hinders. SOF missions routinely use the benefits of close coordination and additional resources provided to develop a unity of effort that supports both the military objectives and the Embassy’s Mission Performance Plan (MPP). The MPP is the “single planning document within the U.S. Government that defines U.S. national interests in foreign countries and coordinates performance measurement in these countries among U.S. Government agencies.”<sup>105</sup> The MPP objectives should be synchronized within SFA planning resulting in a unity of purpose and effort. COL David Maxwell recognizes this point in recent commentary:

The Country Team is critical to the execution of FID and Security Force Assistance operations because we have to recognize and accept that we are dealing with sovereign nations that are our friends, allies, and partners. Sovereignty is a concept that we often pay lip service to but we forget how important it is to the success of the mission especially as we concern ourselves with tactical and operational activities and neglect the understanding that every

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<sup>102</sup> JCISFA, *Security Force Assistance Planner’s Guide*, 26.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>104</sup> In the SF Advisor’s Handbook, Appendix 1 discusses working with multiple U.S. agencies, Appendix 2 spends 9 pages in discussion of the Embassy and interaction with the Country Team. Conversely, the SFA Planner’s Guide devotes a paragraph and mentions the Ambassador twice.

<sup>105</sup>“Mission Performance Plan Process,” *United States Inter-agency Working Group*, 2008, [http://www.iawg.gov/rawmedia\\_repository/ae21c9bb\\_f7f7\\_4693\\_9ed7\\_89b4a16aec23](http://www.iawg.gov/rawmedia_repository/ae21c9bb_f7f7_4693_9ed7_89b4a16aec23), {accessed on 18 July 2008}



tactical operation has strategic effects. The Country Team is the single point of entry to the sovereign host nation with who we are charged to support.<sup>106</sup>

The Country Team remains relevant and needs to be a large part of the SFA planning process. Throughout the history of SOF missions, the coordination with the Embassy Country Team played an integral part of the success of U.S. efforts. The successful and non-successful relationships developed by SOF with respective embassies provide excellent lessons learned for SFA in how to engage and coordinate with a U.S. Embassy abroad. Many of these lessons are captured as standard operating procedures for Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and other SOF. These procedures should be reviewed and incorporated in order to further develop SFA.

## **V. Areas for further study.**

There are many more procedures, lessons learned, and systems utilized by SOF that can assist not only the Army but also the broader Joint force in developing SFA. The many contributions of the Psychological Operations (PSYOP) such as the Military Information Support Team (MIST) conducted by 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group (Airborne) and the Civil Military Support Element (CMSE) provided by 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) were not discussed as a part of this monograph. Similarly, the efforts of the Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU) employed by Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) and the Aviation FID provided by Air Force Special Operations and 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron were not described. All of these efforts are uniquely SOF and provide lessons for SFA in building security forces and enhancing governance in foreign nations. The missions contributed by PSYOP and Civil Affairs bridge the gap between SOF and conventional forces because they support both on a routine basis providing a unique ability to cross-pollinate the Army and Joint force with methods and practices.

With USSOCOM assigned the proponent for SFA and JCISFA as the *Center of Excellence*, there is a stated concern that SOF may absorb the entire SFA concept. Although this

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<sup>106</sup> David Maxwell, “Considerations for Organizing and Preparing for Security Force Assistance

monograph discusses the contributions of SOF to SFA, there may be a future need to discuss the GPF's contribution to SFA in a similar manner. However, a balance between SOF and GPF currently exists due to the geographic locations of USSOCOM and JCISFA that may help dispel some of the concerns.

The most glaring issue that requires discussion is the perceived dichotomy between FID and SFA. Is there truly a gap between FID as a mission and SFA or is there a seam where the two areas overlap and therefore, there is room to share information, procedures, and expertise? The issue may be clarified in the near future. Doctrine may be the answer in disavowing a dichotomy between FID and SFA. During the research of this monograph, the vision of a dichotomy dissolved over time because of discussion with subject matter experts and analysis of the current operational environment.

## **VI. Conclusion: Merging SOF ideas into the SFA Environment**

### **A. Moving forward with SFA: Recommendations.**

Throughout the discussion of procedures, lessons learned, and systems utilized by SOF, there are several common threads that SFA can take forward as it develops: unity of effort, Whole of Government Approach, Civil Information, and the Embassy Country Team. Each of these ideas supports the others and builds towards the comprehensive focus that SFA seeks to provide in accomplishing the mission.

1) **Emphasize unity of effort in SFA doctrine and employment.** Unity of effort begins with the commander on the ground. The building blocks of trust and access build the necessary relationships to develop the linkages between the Host Nation government and institutions, the U.S. military and government counterparts, and other interested parties. JCISFA's *Security Force Assistance Planner's Guide* describes unity of effort and unity of

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Operations," *Small Wars Journal*, (2008): 1-11.

purpose together. However, there are no specific examples of how unity of effort is achieved or employed. Past SOF experiences in Vietnam and Colombia provide useful examples of the importance of unity of effort. Contemporary examples from Iraq and Afghanistan would serve to illustrate varying degrees of unity of effort. Unity of effort is easier to explain than implement. SFA will involve numerous actors and unity of effort cannot afford to go unaddressed.

2) **Integrate a Whole of Government or comprehensive approach to SFA.**

Similar to the recommendation describing the need for unity of effort, a comprehensive approach takes unity of effort and synchronizes various actors and their interests into a common direction toward a desired objective. SFA currently focuses largely on the military's efforts in conducting missions in an SFA environment. The military aspect of SFA is just one consideration.

Reflecting on SOF's experience in Colombia over the last 25 years provides an idea of how a comprehensive approach can be employed bringing together the Colombian government, U.S. government, and a host of other actors.

3) **Incorporate Civil Information Management.** Although CIM technologies are relatively new, the practice of CIM precedes the use of advanced tools. Civil Information provides the information to bridge the gap in understanding between the military and the civilian environments. SFA does not currently incorporate CIM. The practices of Civil Affairs in support of SOF bear significant relevance in improving the capabilities of units conducting missions in a SFA environment. Continued Joint testing of CIM concepts will enable easier integration into SFA, but liaison and sharing of best practices from the Civil Affairs community is an easy first step in building a continuity of information. CIM can only improve understanding of the operational environment whether FID, SFA or, any other mission requirement.

4) **Emphasize the role of the Embassy Country Team.** The Country Team is a relevant organization despite its lack of emphasis in more recent times. The Country Team provides access to a unique menu of capabilities and funding not able to be provided by the military. The strategic linkages to the missions that the military conducts work through the

Embassy. The successful coordination conducted by the Country Team in Colombia, represent a process for consideration in missions conducted in an SFA environment. However, current SFA concepts casually address the importance of the Embassy Country Team. The Embassy Country Team varies in effectiveness just as military organizations due, but the benefit of careful coordination with the Embassy far outweighs the obstacles of a less effective Country Team.

## **B. Conclusion: A Better Understanding.**

The SOF contribution to the SFA effort continues to undergo examination. Gone is the argument of who is better suited to conduct SFA. The bottom line is that SFA requires a team effort combining the strengths of SOF and conventional forces. There are mechanisms and systems utilized by SOF that apply to the development and execution of SFA. USSOCOM and JCISFA should pay careful attention to the many lessons provided by SOF's experience with Foreign Internal Defense (FID) as they continue to develop SFA.

The monograph showed there are procedures, lessons learned, and systems employed by SOF that will assist the Army in providing a clearer concept of SFA. Through an analysis of SOFs experience in Vietnam, Colombia, and contemporary operations several common threads can take SFA forward as it develops: unity of effort (lesson learned), Whole of Government Approach (procedure), Civil Information Management (system), and the Embassy Country Team (lesson learned and procedure). Each of these ideas supports the others and builds towards the comprehensive focus that SFA seeks to provide in accomplishing the mission. A refined concept of SFA will improve capabilities, eliminate redundant execution, and more broadly effect DoD. As the era of "persistent engagement" continues to drive the mission sets the Army will be asked to accomplish, SFA will increase in ability and execution. A more informed SFA will make a better SFA. SOF can inform and should inform SFA.

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