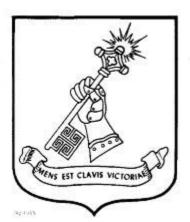# Unconventional Counterinsurgency: Leveraging Traditional Social Networks and Irregular Forces in Remote and Ungoverned Areas

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by
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# Abstract

Unconventional Counterinsurgency: Leveraging Traditional Social Networks and Irregular Forces in Remote and Ungoverned Areas by MAJ John D. Litchfield, US Army, 62 pages.


The Sunni tribal uprising against Al Qaeda in Iraq, known as the Anbar Awakening, was the decisive event in the counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq. To capitalize on discontent between the Sunni population and Al Qaeda, U.S. commanders on the ground in Anbar Province applied more creativity and opportunism than deliberate application of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, which at that time did not fully grasp the importance of traditional social networks and irregular forces. The U.S. military is now attempting to capture the lessons of the tribal uprising in Iraq and incorporate those lessons into theory, doctrine and practice. More immediately, the U.S. must determine the applicability of those lessons to ongoing counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan and counterterrorism efforts across the region.

The paper argues that traditional social networks and irregular security forces represent a critical source of intelligence, political support and security for governments attempting to increase state control and legitimacy during an insurgency. Moreover, U.S. Army Special Forces are uniquely qualified to leverage traditional social networks and irregular security forces due to their unique training regiment, organization and experience in their capstone mission of Unconventional Warfare (UW). Ultimately these two claims provide the background for a central argument: the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) should refocus the counterinsurgency role of Army Special Forces on leveraging traditional social networks and employing irregular security forces to expand host nation control and security in contested, ungoverned or insurgent controlled spaces.

This monograph explains that tribes and traditional social networks continue to provide a degree of social order in some of the world's least governed and most volatile areas. Capitalizing on that underlying social order is critical to stabilizing remote areas and undermining insurgencies, especially when the government lacks favorable force ratios for counterinsurgency. The United States historically employed tribes and irregulars successfully in support of comprehensive counterinsurgency operations in the Philippines and Vietnam, and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. Army Special Forces have demonstrated a unique ability to organize tribal networks for self-defense and lead irregular forces to secure remote areas and isolate insurgents. The U.S. must capitalize on this core competency that exists within the special operations community to effectively deal with the ungoverned spaces that abound in current areas of conflict and prevent them from becoming safe-havens for insurgents and violent extremists.

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# Introduction

The Anbar Awakening from 2007 to 2008 helped turned the tide against a growing insurgency in Iraq, and also served as an awakening of sorts for American military and civilian counterinsurgency strategists.[1] Until very recently, American counterinsurgency doctrine and practice underemphasized the importance of working through tribes, clans, kinships, religious communities and other traditional social networks and employing irregular security forces. The United States military is again discovering the benefits of leveraging the irregular security capacity, intelligence networks and political support structures that traditional social networks can provide to a government threatened by insurgency.

United States Army Special Forces (SF) are uniquely qualified to leverage traditional social networks and the irregular security capacity, intelligence, and political support those networks can provide. This paper articulates two claims that together make a case for refining the American approach to counterinsurgency and the SF contribution to that approach. First, traditional social networks and irregular security forces represent a critical source of intelligence, political support and security for governments attempting to increase state control and legitimacy during an insurgency. Second, SF are uniquely qualified to leverage traditional social networks and employ irregular security forces during counterinsurgency due to their unique training, organization and experience in their capstone mission of unconventional warfare (UW). Ultimately these two claims provide the background for a central argument: the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) should refocus the counterinsurgency role of Army Special Forces on leveraging traditional social networks and employing irregular security forces to expand host nation control and security in contested, ungoverned or insurgent controlled spaces. This refinement will maintain and capitalize on many of the core competencies Special

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[1] Niel Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), March - April 2008: 41-52.

Forces draws from its primary mission of unconventional warfare (UW).  More importantly, this unique SF capacity, if employed correctly, provides the Joint Forces Commander a distinct line of operations that can better compliment and enable the other elements of a coalition counterinsurgency campaign.

This papers first claim rests on demonstrating the historic, current and future applicability of leveraging traditional social networks and irregular security forces in counterinsurgency. American counterinsurgency doctrine and planning tends to "mirror image" western ideas of state formation that focus on the rapid consolidation of power in a formal central government.  A key element for success in this formula is creating state sovereignty through the "monopolization of the legitimate use of physical force" and violence in the hands of the central government.[2] However, this formula often fails to consolidate a society in the aftermath of collapse, conquest or revolution, which too often results in factional fighting, insurgency or counter-revolution.  This is particularly true in societies with no recent history of a strong central state or where traditional social networks, such as tribes, clans, and kinship, form the basis of local identity more than nationalist ideals. American failure to recognize the full importance of tribes for the consolidation of power in Iraq and Afghanistan cost time and resources and likely extended both campaigns. In Iraq, the United States adapted its approach to a growing insurgency slowly, even though it was apparent that without the tribes, the Iraqi government had neither the popular legitimacy, physical capacity or understanding of the local environment to enforce its will. In 2007 a combination of factors presented an opportunity for a tribal uprising in support of the coalition known as the Anbar Awakening. Outreach by local American commanders and Iraqi tribal rejection of oppressive insurgent rule that was inconsistent with tribal values provided the right conditions for a change in allegiance. Tribal forces rose, to some degree spontaneously, and

[2] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" (Lecture, Munich University, Munich, Germany, January 1919).

rapidly began to retake local control from the insurgents. What followed was a dramatic reversal

in the internal security situation and the course of the war in general.[3] These developments led

American planners to rethink how they envision counterinsurgency and what the implications are

for future operations. Subsequently, military and civilian counterinsurgency planners began to

reexamine how U.S. doctrine and practice capitalizes on existing social structure and makes use

of irregular forces. As the United States struggles to chart a sustainable strategy over the coming

years for Afghanistan, the Anbar experience, and a long American history of employing irregular

forces in counterinsurgency has particular relevance. While underlying conditions, social

systems, and the root causes of the two conflicts are different; the Anbar experience can serve as

a model and point of departure for discussions about the counterinsurgency role of tribes and

irregulars in Afghanistan and beyond.

This paper's second claim rests on demonstrating the applicability of competencies and

"methods" gained by SF through preparation for and experience in its capstone mission of UW in

counterinsurgency. Special Forces define themselves by their capstone mission of UW.  The

nature of that mission however continues to serve as a point of contention both within SF, the

larger special operations community and the Department of Defense as a whole.  The argument

exists between two primary schools of thought, one that views UW principally by its ends, the

other by its ways and means. Colonel Dave Witty, in his *Special Warfare* article "The Great UW

Debate", identifies these two camps as "traditionalist" and "methodologist."[4] The "traditionalists"

believe that the U.S. can only conduct UW against an enemy that provides an openly targetable

infrastructure such as a hostile state or occupying power. "Methodologists" believe that the U.S.

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[3] Niel Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), March - April 2008: 41-52.

[4] A third school of thought, "universalists" that view unconventional warfare as an umbrella term that encapsulated all of the missions, capabilities and actions of army special forces has largely been discredited and fallen out of mainstream discourse. David Witty, "The Great UW Debate," *Special Warfare* (United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School) 23, no. 2 (March-April 2010).

can use UW to undermine and disrupt virtually any enemy by leveraging local conditions,

political issues, and social networks through the employment of unconventional methods,

techniques and irregular forces. The lack of agreement between these two visions led to confusion

about whether or not the United States could employ elements of UW against insurgents, terrorist

and other non-state groups. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and

United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) recently settled the debate about

the nature of UW by approving a new definition in June 2009 that falls decidedly in favor of the

"traditionalist" view. It describes Unconventional Warfare as:

> Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or
> overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an
> underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area.[5]

Therefore, UW is a mission, not a methodology. It has a distinct and finite objective:

"to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power." This new definition may

finally settle "the great debate" about the nature of UW as a mission.[6] However, the

"methodologist" contention about the wider applicability of competencies and methods gained

from preparation for that mission remains. This is of particular concern to the central argument of

this paper that claims that two of those competencies SF gain from UW, the ability to leverage

traditional social networks and employ irregular forces, have critical applicability to Foreign

Internal Defense (FID)[7], Counterinsurgency (COIN)[8], and potentially Counterterrorism (CT)[9].

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[5] David Witty, "The Great UW Debate," *Special Warfare* (United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School) 23, no. 2 (March-April 2010).

[6] Ibid.

[7] Foreign Internal Defense: "Participation by the civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency." U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-22 *Foriegn Internal Defense* (Washington, District of Columbia: U.S. Department of Defense, 2009), I-1.

Two concepts are woven throughout this analysis to provide a lens for the two claims and the central argument.  The first concept is strategic utility. Renowned strategist Colin Gray describes strategic utility as "the contribution of a of a particular kind of military activity to the course and outcome of an entire conflict."[10]  He further explains that there are two "master claims" concerning the strategic utility of SOF: Economy of Force and Expansion of Choice.  He describes SOF economy of force as "the ability to achieve significant results with limited forces"[11] and expansion of choice as "expanding the options available to military and civilian leaders."[12] The second concept is resource-based theory (RBT), which "emphasizes that a firm's unique resources may allow the organization to develop a sustained competitive advantage."[13] Under this theory a resource can be tangible or intangible, physical, human or organizational, and property or knowledge based. However, for resource to be key it must meet four criteria.  It must be valuable, rare, non-substitutable, and imperfectly imitable.[14]  This paper will consistently revisit these two concepts as a means of validating its two claims and central argument.

Can the U.S. work through traditional social networks to gain intelligence, legitimacy and support for governments facing insurgency? Can irregular military forces organized from within these traditional networks be employed effectively to support and extend the control of the state over ungoverned space? The answer to both of these questions is yes.  Moreover, US Army

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[8] Counterinsurgency: "Comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and address any core grievances." U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, Vol. Version 1.0 (Washington, District of Columbia: Department of Defense, 2009), I-2.

[9] Counterterrorism: "Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism." U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-26 *Counterterrorism* (Washington, District of Columbia: Department of Defense, 2009), I-1.

[10] Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport , Connecticut: Praeger, 1996), 163.

[11] Ibid. 168.

[12] Ibid. 174.

[13] Charles D. Pringle and Mark J. Kroll, "Why Trafalgar Was Won Before It Was Fought: Lessons from Resource-based Theory," *Academy of Management Executive* 11, no. 4 (1997): 73-89.

[14] Ibid.

Special Forces (SF) are uniquely suited to leverage those traditional social networks and irregular forces based on their unique competencies derived from training, organization and experience in unconventional warfare.  This paper will first demonstrate the validity of these claims, and then explore the importance of a tribal and irregular line of effort to the current counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan. Finally, it will discuss changes that need to occur in current practice and policy to refocus SF on traditional social networks and irregular forces in counterinsurgency.

# Empowering the Population to Secure the Government

*Claim #1: traditional social networks and irregular security forces are a critical source of intelligence, political support and security for governments attempting to increase control and legitimacy during an insurgency.*

The twenty-first century finds the United States confronted by "threats that are defined more by the fault lines within societies than by the territorial boundaries between them."[15] The converging destabilizing effects of globalization, demographic crisis, economic disparity, competition for critical resources and clashes both between and within cultures creates a world where threats can quickly emerge from regions of extreme isolation and poverty with "unprecedented destructive power."[16] As a victim of its success in the industrial age, World War I, World Wars II, the Cold War, and the information age, the U.S. finds itself as the great power most invested in the current system of states, markets, international order and stability. It also has the most to lose when those systems break down. Countries unable to integrate into the globalized economy and suffering from cultural conflicts in the aftermath of decolonization have in many cases become failed states. These states are incapable of effectively governing their populations and maintaining control within their sovereign borders.[17] Failed and failing states contribute to ungoverned space where insurgents, violent extremist and organized criminal elements fill the void by exploiting disenfranchised populations. These groups often employ an "identity-based insurgency strategy" that creates a "mass base" of support within traditionally networked

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[15] National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), 361.

[16] Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century* (New York, New York: Putman, 2004); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1997); National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), 362-363.

[17] Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century* (New York, New York: Putman, 2004).

populations.[18] "Blood and religion" define identity-based movements and the conflicts associated with them, not the competing socio-political ideologies that dominated the twentieth century.[19]

The phenomenon of failed states and ungoverned space is a both a product and a subsequent cause of the converging destabilizing effects of globalization.  The breakdown, disorder and conflict that emanate from ungoverned space, and the violent extremist belief systems that feed on it, threaten the international system that America relies on to sustain its leadership, security, and prosperity.  Therefore, America must continue to search for answers to deal with failed states, ungoverned space, and regional insurgencies.  Further, the U.S must continue to seek expedient and realistic strategies to reestablish responsible order, or at the very least contain the threats that emanate from hostile spaces.

First, this section explores the importance of tribes and other traditional social networks in providing a social foundation for the reestablishment of order in the chaos of state failure, or in the aftermath of dramatic change through internal revolution or external invasion. Second, it examines past roles that irregular security forces played in providing assistance to a government facing insurgency to derive the utility of an irregular approach.

## Tribes and Other Traditional Social Networks

This paper calls, in part, for a shift in the Western understanding of state formation to one that is less idealistic and instead founded upon the social realities in developing societies. While the long-term goals of the United States (and the West in general) should retain their idealistic aspirations and designs, they must build upon short-term realities if they are going to find

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[18] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006) and U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24.2 Counterinsurgency Tactics* (Washington, Disctrict of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2009), 218.

[19] Ralph Peters (Lecture, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: March 15, 2010).

success. In his article "Building a Republican Peace", Michael Barnett describes how current

nation and "peace building" efforts, which are "informed by the belief that, to have legitimacy,

the state must be organized around liberal-democratic principles", may actually undermine the

goal of creating a stable state.[20] He further explains that this dynamic is especially counter-

productive in post-conflict environments.

> Peacebuilding…does not have an impressive track record. Certainly one reason is that it is virtually unimaginable that peacebuilders can create such a nearly ideal society with scant resources and little time under such unfavorable conditions. Yet liberal peacebuilding might inadvertently be doing more harm than good. In their effort to radically transform all aspects of the state, society and economy in a matter of months (and thus expecting conflict-ridden societies to achieve what took Western states decades) peacebuilders are subjecting these fragile societies to tremendous stress. States emerging from war do not have the necessary institutional framework or civic culture to absorb the potential pressures associated with political and market competition.[21]

The West must shift its understanding of how to move underdeveloped nations forward,

by recognizing that social order predicates progress.[22]  Therefore attempting to transform

societies in ways that undercut their current social order is antithetical to progress. The growth of

western style liberal democracy is an evolutionary result of social order and progress, not a

precursor to it. In much of the developing world, ethnic or tribal affiliation, religious belief and

tradition largely maintain the existing social order. The identities based on these factors often

continue to provide some structure to society in the absence of governance.  Tribes and other

traditional social networks can provide a foundation for the re-establishment of order in the

ungoverned or poorly governed space that insurgency and terrorism create and thrive in.

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[20] Michael Barnett, "Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States after War," *International Security* (MIT Press) 30, no. 4 (Spring 2006): 87-112, 88.

[21] Ibid. 88-89.

[22] "In the future, joint and Army operations must aim to sustain improvements in the security situation that permit progress toward achieving political goals over time." U.S. Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pam 525-3-0 *The Army Capstone Concept 2016-2028* (Fort Monroe, Virginia: Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2009), 19.

David Ronfeldt in the RAND Corporation series, *In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes – The First and Forever Form*, describes four basic forms of societal organizations:

1) Tribal - kinship providing identity and belonging

2) Institutional - hierarchies like military, church, state

3) Market - competitive, free, and fair economic exchanges

4) Network (dispersed groups connected by technology to act conjointly) [23]

This study uses the term *traditional social network* to expand Ronfeldt's first category of societal organization to include: tribe, clan, band, gang, kinship, family – and in more limited terms – ethnicity.[24] Some of the dominant elements that define these legacy social organizations are identity, kinship, culture, tradition and myth. These elements combine to create solidarity and endurance in both formal and informal human relationships. The bonds within these social structures are more tightly coupled and enduring than those of institutional, market and network (multi-organizational) organizations. The elements of kinship, identity, tradition, and myth begin at birth and continue until death for generations, forever binding the relationships within traditional social networks. Traditional social networks are generally closed organizations and the primary shared interests are security and continuation. On the other hand, the connections in institutional, market and network (multi-organizational) societal organizations are more highly evolved and fluid. They are increasing based on shared short-term interests in social and business realms and exchanges designed to promote and protect those interest. The relationships within

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[23] David Ronfeldt, *In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes - The First and Forever Form*, Working Paper, Pardee Center, RAND (RAND Pardee Center, 2006), 1.

[24] Ronfeldt does not use the term "network" to describe tribes because he reserves the term to describe one of his organizational forms, the "all-channel" or "multi-organizational" network form. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that most social scientists use the term network to describe "social networks of people" and that network analysts consider networks to "lie behind all forms of organizations." This paper chooses to use the term network in describing traditional social networks in an attempt to remain consistent with the majority of social science terminology and discourse on the subject. David Ronfeldt, *In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes - The First and Forever Form*, Working Paper, Pardee Center, RAND (RAND Pardee Center, 2006), 18.

these modern interest-based societal organizations are open to interaction and transformation as members rationally recalculate interests and the best relationships, political and business structures for attaining them.[25]

In the developed Western world (especially North America and Europe) institutional, market and network organizations together arguably supplanted traditional social networks as the dominant societal structures. The development of the modern nation-state, the advance of liberal democracy, the industrial revolution, the growth of market economies, and advances in technology all contribute to the ascendancy of these forms of societal organizations. Moreover, personal independence and mobility (both social and physical) largely reduce traditional social networks to cellular families of ever decreasing size. However, this western paradigm does not extend to the developing world, where societies are either at different levels of progression towards that western model, or are pursuing a different path altogether. A fundamental understanding that traditional social networks and tribal societal structures still dominate life for most people in the developing world is critical to effectively face many of the challenges there. The best intentions of the west often fall flat because of a failure to grasp the implications of this fact.

While traditional social networks provide a broad context for categorizing identity based societal organizations, this paper focuses on tribes due to their importance in the current conflicts. Tribes have significant relevance to the Middle East, South Asia and Central Asia, where the United States is struggling to find success overcoming both local and regional insurgencies. Even in the most modern Arab states, tribes still play a prominent role in society. More importantly, in the developing states of Central and South Asia, tribal identities and loyalties dominate the societal framework. Those identities "map the exact place" each individual holds "in the

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[25] David Ronfeldt, *In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes - The First and Forever Form*, Working Paper, Pardee Center, RAND (RAND Pardee Center, 2006). 19.

ethnic/tribal order, who he owes loyalty to, who he will fight against".[26] In their book *Insurgents, Terrorist and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat*, Richard H. Shultz Jr. and Andrea J. Dew describe the preeminence of Afghan tribal society and how it has resisted all attempts, both internal and external, to reconstruct it, often violently.

> At heart, twenty-first-century Afghanistan is a society with strong tribal elements in which centralized power has at best been only tolerated as a necessary stabilizing presence, secondary to clan and tribal affiliation and loyalty. For the past three centuries the ability of Afghanistan's kings to keep their thrones in Kabul has depended on their ability to co-opt tribal leaders, balance tribal rivalries, and share the wealth. And when outside invading forces such as the British Army in the 1840s or the Soviet Red Army in the 1980s disturbed this relationship in Afghan society, the reaction has been determined and bloody.[27]

If the U.S. government is to deal effectively with failed states, ungoverned space, and contested areas in the context of identity-based regional insurgencies, it must gain a greater understanding of traditional social networks. It must seek ways capitalize on the social order they can provide in the midst of chaos, and learn how to co-opt the elements of identity that shape their choices. Ultimately in many areas of the world, tribes offer the only element of social order to build upon. David Rhonfeldt describes just how essential they are to the phenomenon of ungoverned space.

> Deeply tribal societies often have great difficulty advancing beyond their traditional ways. Indeed many of the world's current trouble spots – in the Middle East, South Asia, the Balkans, the Caucuses and Africa – are in societies so riven by imbedded tribal and clan dynamics that the outlook remains terribly uncertain for them to build professional states and competitive businesses that are unencumbered by tribal and clan dynamics. Many so-called failed states are really failed tribes.[28]

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[26] Richard H. Shultz and Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 151.

[27] Ibid.

[28] David Ronfeldt, *In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes - The First and Forever Form*, Working Paper, Pardee Center, RAND (RAND Pardee Center, 2006), 5.

In his article "Fighting Identity: Why We Are Losing Our Wars", Michael Vlahos argues that today's wars with non-state enemies are "above all, wars of identity."[29] Moreover, he argues that U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, rooted in lessons countering communist and nationalist insurgencies from the 1950s through 1980s, is inadequate for today's wars of identity.[30] His article asserts that the developments in Iraq's Anbar province were not the result of successful employment of new U.S. COIN doctrine, but "expedient cooption, desperately embraced after years of casual American denial".[31] In one of his few optimistic notes however, he also asserts that this may represent the "first glimmer of a new strategic path: toward a doctrine of cooption over counterinsurgency".[32] He believes that a doctrine that incorporates greater cooption of identity will have greater application in reshaping our enemy's driving narrative that pits his passion against our reason.[33]

## Traditional Social Networks in U.S. Military Doctrine

Joint and Army irregular warfare doctrine contains several references to identity and existing social structures, especially in manuals written after the Anbar experience. When read together these manuals powerfully reinforce Michael Vlahos' imperative to reshape the population and enemy narrative by co-opting identity.[34] However, the most expansive discussion of identity comes not in counterinsurgency doctrine, but unsurprisingly in the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) manual for unconventional warfare. Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* devotes thirteen pages (appendix H) to the

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[29] Michael Vlahos, "Fighting Identity: Why We Are Losing Our Wars," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), November - December 2007: 2-12, 5.

[30] Ibid. 7.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid. 8.

[33] Ibid. 5.

[34] Ibid.

role of history and culture in irregular war in addition to weaving those concepts throughout its operational approach.[35] The appendix reads like the Cliff Notes to Anthropology 101. It explores the concepts of culture, civilization, society, nation, state, race, ethnic group, tribe, clan, tradition, mythology, folklore and religion. These "facets of human terrain" together provide a "historical narrative" and "worldview" that powerfully shape the perceptions and decisions of the relevant population.[36] UW doctrine provides excellent working descriptions of social network, tribe, clan, band, and tradition, which this paper groups together to build the term traditional social network.[37] UW doctrine provides the cornerstone for how SF, along with psychological operations (PSYOPS) and civil affairs (CA) forces train for, plan and execute unconventional warfare. This doctrine provides a basis upon which Army Special Operations Forces and SF in particular build the core competencies and methods required in UW to leverage traditional social networks.

The current COIN manuals devote some attention to tribes and "social networks organized by extended kinship," but not as comprehensively as UW doctrine.[38] Each manual discusses the contemporary phenomenon of identity-based insurgencies where "insurgent organizations are often based on existing social networks."[39] The expansion strategy in identity-based insurgencies seeks to mobilize support on the common identity of a particular religious

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[35] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008), Appendix H.

[36] Ibid. H-1.

[37] Ibid. H-4-11

[38] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 3-4, U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24.2 *Counterinsurgency Tactics* (Washington, Disctrict of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2009), and U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, Vol. Version 1.0 (Washington, District of Columbia: Department of Defense, 2009).

[39] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 3-19

affiliation, clan, tribe or ethnic group.[40] Additionally, identity-focused insurgencies possess

unique structures where the "mass base" forms around the identity itself.  The roles of individual

members are particularly hard to define because "people drift between combatant, auxiliary, and

follower status as needed."[41] Moreover, FM 3-24 explains that these "traditionally networked

societies" are ready-made for insurgency,

> "A tribal society already has affiliated social, economic, and military networks easily
> adapted to war fighting. The ways in which insurgents exploit a tribal network does not
> represent an evolved form of insurgency but the expression of inherent cultural and social
> customs. The social dynamic that sustains ongoing fighting is best understood when
> considered in tribal terms—in particular, from the perspective of a traditionally
> networked society. It is the traditional tribal network that offers rebels and insurgents a
> ready-made insurrectionary infrastructure on which to draw."[42]

While Joint and Army COIN manuals written after the Anbar experience consistently

express the importance of traditional social networks within identity-focused insurgencies, they

only briefly mentions strategies to deal with them. Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*

acknowledges the possibility that, "[i]dentity-focused insurgencies can be defeated in some cases

by co-opting the traditional authority figure."[43] While COIN doctrine increasingly recognizes the

significance of traditional social networks, UW warfare doctrine provides greater scope and depth

to the discussion.  This is not surprising given the UW focus on organizing and building an

insurgency, which often includes capitalizing on identity-based allegiances. Identity-based

allegiances and traditional social networks are also a fundamental element in Robin Sage, the UW

validation exercise that all SF soldiers participate in to complete their qualification. More by

circumstance than design, insurgent auxiliary and underground elements in Robin Sage are often

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[40] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24.2 *Counterinsurgency Tactics* (Washington, Disctrict of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2009), 2-18

[41] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 1-14

[42] Ibid. B-15.

[43] Ibid. 1-14

organized around family and religious connections in the small North Carolina towns where the exercise takes place. This provides those trained and experienced in UW a unique insight into the role of traditional social networks in an insurgency.[44]

## Irregular Security Forces in Counterinsurgency

In his thesis, *"Making Riflemen From Mud": Restoring the Army's Culture of Irregular Warfare*, Lieutenant Colonel James D. Campbell shows that the employment of irregular forces occurred almost without exception throughout U.S. military history. Americans considered it a necessary part of warfare prior to World War II. This was particularly true for low-intensity conflict and counterinsurgency. Irregular indigenous forces historically served in enabling and force-multiplying roles for conventional operations. The U.S. Army considered irregulars well-suited for roles such as scouts, constabulatory forces, interpreters, guerrillas, counter-guerrillas, guides, agents, and spies, village self defense forces, and even main forces during conventional operations.[45] Campbell further describes the employment of irregulars from the colonial period onward as a preeminent part of "American military tradition" until 1941.

> Prior to World War II, the Army had a deeply ingrained facility with and acceptance of what we now term unconventional warfare – raising, training, advising, and cooperating with tribal militias, local paramilitaries, and other nonstate armed groups. This culture of irregular warfare was attributed to nearly 300 years of American military tradition from the colonial period until 1941, including extensive experience in cooperating with Native American tribes and individual scouts during the expansion of the western frontier. These traditions of unconventional war reached maturity in the years of fighting on the

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[44] In the author's own experience in Robin Sage, many members of the auxiliary and underground in rural North Carolina were related by blood or marriage, and often belonged to the same churches and civic organizations. Additionally, the structure was often multi-generational and hereditary, with service and even roles in the organization passing from parent to child. Some auxiliary members have participated in the same role for the fictional resistance movement for over 50 years. These traditional social networks formed the basis of a resilient and closed human and physical infrastructure that was transparent and effective in its ability to protect and grow an insurgency.

[45] James D. Campbell, *Making Riflemen From Mud: Restoring the Army's Culture of Irregular Warfare*, Carlisle Paper in Security Strategy, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 1-19.

western plains after the Civil War, and were given ultimate expression in the creation of the Philippine Scouts at the beginning of the 20th century.[46]

Indigenous irregulars, particularly those employed in their local area, offer foreign forces, as well as regular forces from their own nation, unique capabilities that are critical to successful operations in most military campaigns. First and foremost, they know the culture, the ground, the people, the language, the enemy, and the local issues far better than any outsiders. Second, they have relationships and access within the local operational environment that provide them with a level of situational awareness and freedom of movement that outsiders, both foreigners and countrymen from other regions or social groups, cannot match. Third, they are very flexible and creative because they are not bound by a rigid system of doctrine, policies and procedures. Therefore, they often accept greater risk and embrace unorthodox methods and approaches to tactical problems. Fourth, if they come from an irregular fighting tradition, both their martial prowess and understanding of the guerrilla perspective, may provide them with an inherent advantage and knowledge of the "best practices" for defeating the insurgents.[47] Finally, they are in their villages every day and often have an immediate stake in the local outcome, often defending their own villages and families. Therefore, they often prove to have far greater dedication than professional or conscripted soldiers who are paid to serve in a conflict for which they may feel little personal connection. When combined with host nation government or even external U.S. support these tribes can quickly turn the tables on an insurgency at the local level.

Following the Spanish-American War the United States found itself in the uncomfortable new position of controlling an overseas empire. This included the former Spanish colony of the

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[46] James D. Campbell, *Making Riflemen From Mud: Restoring the Army's Culture of Irregular Warfare*, Carlisle Paper in Security Strategy, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), v.

[47] Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), May - June 2005: 8-12, 8.

Philippines where elements of the anti-colonial insurgency quickly turned upon their liberators. The Philippine-American War (1899 to 1902) that followed became one of the United States' more successful experiences in irregular warfare. This was in no small part due the U.S. Army's institutional flexibility at the time "and the willingness of regional officers to use Filipino auxiliaries."[48] Officers experienced in the Indian wars of U.S. westward expansion where the use of native scouts proved essential filled the Army at the turn of the Twentieth Century. In the Philippines, "these officers were quick to form alliances with groups and individuals in order to secure the tranquility of their areas."[49] The Macabebe Scouts were only one of many such auxiliaries. Originally formed as a 100-man company they were "given a short course in drill and tactics, equipped with Krag carbines, and assigned to four-to-six men *banca* teams." Within a matter of weeks they "quickly reduced guerrilla attacks on army communications" leading army commanders to rapidly expand their ranks to a five-company battalion. These scouts along with other indigenous elements eventually became part of the Philippine Military Auxiliary Corps, an irregular force of over 15,000 men with elements under American commanders in almost every province.[50]

The auxiliaries offered the US Army capabilities and advantages that it simply did not possess alone. They knew the people, issues, terrain, and languages of the operational environment. The auxiliary forces assumed many roles that complimented US Army capabilities, as well as those of those of other irregular Philippine elements. A combination of village self-defense groups, police and constabulatory organizations, scouts and counter-guerrillas created an urban and rural network that strangled the insurgency. The combination of mobile counter-

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[48] Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 169.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 128.

guerilla elements in the countryside and constabulatory forces in the towns proved especially adept at denying insurgents safe-haven and freedom of movement. "Macabebe *bancas* (four-to-six man teams) successfully traversed the otherwise impassable swamps and forced the heretofore protected guerillas into the towns, where they were quickly identified and arrested."[51]

The decentralization of operations in the Philippines provided U.S. Army officers at the local level a high degree of autonomy. This autonomy combined with "the Army's…lack of adherence to rigid doctrines or theories and the willingness of its officers to experiment with novel pacification schemes" provided room and incentive for commander's to tailor their counterinsurgency approach to local conditions.[52] This included the flexibility to rapidly capitalize on opportunities created when insurgent excesses alienated local tribes. In one such incident, "Tagalog guerrillas murdered a prominent Ilocano leader, opening a bitter conflict that the Americans exploited to the full, recruiting 400 Ilocano Scouts and hundreds of auxiliaries."[53] Bold leadership at the local level and flexible approaches to counterinsurgency that maximized the use of irregular indigenous forces even "in the face of obstruction from Manila or Departmental Headquarters," proved critical to American success in the Philippines.[54]

American army officers in Iraq from 2006 to 2007 also found themselves in dire need of creative solutions. After three years of steadily growing instability, violence, terrorism, insurgency and civil war these officers were ready to experiment and employ novel ideas in the hopes that one might show promise. In fact, their fortunes were about to take a turn for the better. A new commander, a surge of 30,000 additional troops, a renewed commitment from the

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[51] Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 269.

[52] Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 169.

[53] Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 268.

[54] Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 169.

President, and a new comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy that placed population security at the center of American efforts provided a breath of life back into the mission. The new counterinsurgency approach consolidated a great deal of classic counterinsurgency thought from 1960s theorists such David Galula, Sir Robert Thompson, Roger Trinquer and others who placed pacification efforts through population security, effective local governance, and isolation of the insurgent at the heart of a successful campaign.[55]

The story of success in Iraq cannot be told, however, without acknowledging the dramatic effect of the Anbar Awakening and the almost seismic reverberations and upheaval it created across the country as Iraqi tribes and their members (including former insurgents) began one by one to turn on the insurgency. This phenomenon was primarily the result of the demonstrated courage and wisdom of the Iraqi people and their tribal leaders, who ultimately saw through the false promise of a violent and extreme ideology that was inconsistent with their tribal norms and values. However, like the officers in the Philippines a century before, it also required ingenuity, initiative and willingness to accept risk by a small group of American military officers in Ramadi who came to understand the tribes as the key to success in regaining control from the insurgents. More importantly, the tribes themselves "soon saw that instead of being the hunted, they could become the hunters."[56]

U. S. Army and Marine commanders in Anbar sparked this remarkable reversal by capitalizing on a dynamic within Iraqi society and the local insurgency for which contemporary doctrine did not provide guidance. First and foremost, they came to understand and appreciate the tribes as the most legitimate source of social structure and authority in Iraqi society. Next they

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[55] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 1964), Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966) and Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1964).

[56] Niel Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), March - April 2008: 41-52, 44.

decided to embrace, empower and co-opt that structure and authority to gain local control.  They did this by authorizing, then training and assisting tribal forces as they rose up and fought the insurgency neighborhood-by-neighborhood, village-by-village and city-by-city. "As the benefits…became obvious to the various local sheiks, more and more of them expressed an interest in cooperating."[57]  The results were dramatic, Al Qaeda cadre and foreign fighters that dominated the area days and weeks before, were rapidly isolated and decimated in a sea of tribal hostility. "Once a tribal area joined the Awakening, enemy contact in those areas typically dropped to near zero."[58] As word spread throughout the country, other tribes began approaching Iraqi and US commanders who became increasingly eager to replicate the Anbar Awakening.

The history of American experience demonstrates the critical role that irregular forces play in successful counterinsurgency. In the Philippines and in Iraq, their contribution proved decisive. Moreover, the link in both cases between the identity-based tribes and ethnic minorities and effective use of irregular forces from those groups reinforces the idea of a social structure that is ready-made for irregular war. With the preeminence of tribes in the developing world, the long history of the U. S. Army employing irregulars forces, and the recent success of the Anbar Awakening, U.S counterinsurgency doctrine and practice is beginning to address the importance of enabling tribes and other traditional social networks to secure themselves and provide a social foundation for the growth of legitimate government.

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[57] Niel Smith and Sean MacFarland, "Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), March - April 2008: 41-52, 45

[58] Ibid. 51

## Irregular Forces in U.S. Military Doctrine

Almost all of the recent Irregular Warfare (IW)[59], UW, COIN and FID manuals discuss the use of irregular forces. Irregular forces are absolutely central to UW doctrine. Virtually every section of the UW manual addresses the employment of irregulars in a variety of roles across the guerilla, underground and auxiliary elements of the insurgency or resistance.[60] Essentially, the use of irregulars is a doctrinal necessity in UW and SF specifically organizes and trains to maximize effective employment of irregular elements in their capstone mission.

Current COIN and FID doctrine also provides important insight on the utility of employing irregulars in a counterinsurgency role. Two concepts in particular stand out and make room within COIN and FID operational constructs for employing irregulars. First, the most expansive statement in current U.S. military doctrine regarding the role of tribes and irregular forces in COIN is found in JP 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, and reads strikingly like a combination of the "Anbar Awakening" and army experiences in the Philippines War. It describes the irregulars as auxiliary forces and calls their contribution potentially decisive:

> Well organized, equipped, trained, and led auxiliary forces can play a decisive role in COIN. They can augment and assist professional military and law enforcement forces, especially with providing a permanent presence within the population. A permanent presence within the population is vital to security, but is manpower intensive. Auxiliary forces are best used to augment or execute defensive or stability operations. Auxiliary forces are often based on local family, tribal, clan, ethnic, or religious affiliations, so they have inherent cultural and linguistic advantages. In this capacity, they can be invaluable intelligence assets; their understanding of the local OE is far superior to that of any outsider. Auxiliary forces may also have specialized skills developed as part of their culture that may complement other more professional forces. These skills can include tracking, patrolling, understanding of the terrain and wildlife, and communications.[61]

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[59] Irregular Warfare: "A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations." U.S. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)* (Washington, District of Columbia: U.S. Department of Defense, 2007), 6.

[60] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008).

[61] U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, Vol. Version 1.0 (Washington, District of Columbia: Department of Defense, 2009).

Second, FM 3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (2007)

contains a somewhat more obscure piece of irregular force doctrine it refers to as Remote Area

Operations. This reference appears to combine Vietnam-era Civil Irregular Defense Group

(CIDG) and Mobile Guerilla Force (MGF) concepts with contemporary SF experiences leading

Afghan Militia and Security Forces (AMF/ASF) in COIN operations between 2002 and 2005.

> Remote area operations take place in insurgent-controlled or contested areas to establish
> islands of popular support for the HN government and deny support to the insurgents.
> They differ from consolidation operations in that they do not establish permanent HN
> government control over the area. Ethnic, religious, or other isolated minority groups
> may populate remote areas. They may be in the interior of the HN or near border areas
> where major infiltration routes exist. Remote area operations normally involve specially
> trained paramilitary or irregular forces. SF teams support remote area operations to
> interdict insurgent activity, destroy insurgent base areas, and demonstrate that the HN
> government has not conceded.[62]

Overlaid together these concepts offer a roadmap for a new supporting line of operations

within the existing U.S. COIN campaign model. When regime change, government collapse, or

growing insurgency results in contested, ungoverned, or insurgent controlled space, and

significant U.S. national interests are at stake, the U.S. will seek options to directly influence that

space. This is the environment where SF capacity to directly leverage traditional social networks

and employ irregular forces in counterinsurgency is most applicable, and where COIN, FID and

UW doctrine and experience combine to offer this critical line of effort.

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[62] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army , 2007), A-9

# US Army Special Forces and Irregulars

*Claim #2 - U. S. Army Special Forces are uniquely qualified to leverage traditional social networks and employ irregular security forces during Counterinsurgency due to their training, organization and experience in their capstone mission of Unconventional Warfare.*

This section provides a new understanding of the role of US Army Special Forces in counterinsurgency that capitalizes on their unique unconventional training, organization and capabilities. It argues that when the U.S. military engages in counterinsurgency as the major force provider, the best employment of SF is to organize and lead irregular forces that compliment conventional U.S. and host nation capabilities. This distinct SF mission is particularly important as an economy of force measure when remote and ungoverned areas effect the operational environment, a common characteristic of rural based insurgencies. Such employment capitalizes on the core competencies developed by Special Forces in preparation for their capstone mission of unconventional warfare. Moreover, it is the role most complimentary to the capabilities of other special operations and conventional forces engaged in security and pacification efforts in critical areas of the country.

First, a discussion of unconventional warfare will assist in describing the unique competencies that exist in SF as a result of organization, training, and experience in this capstone mission. These competencies, developed in preparation to assist and lead insurgencies, have important application in counterinsurgency as well. The second section will look at effective past use of SF in counterinsurgency. It will focus on comparisons of SF small unit action leading irregular forces and co-opting traditional social networks in the early stages of Vietnam and Afghanistan.

## Unconventional Warfare: The Capstone Mission

Unconventional Warfare was the mission for which Special Forces was founded. While since that time its employment has largely been limited to surrogate, it remains a

large part of the essence of Special Forces, having major and important identity, psychological and training impacts. While other organizations may, at different locations and levels of effort, have roles within the broad boundaries of Special Forces' other operational missions, UW remains uniquely Special Forces. It is the soul of Special Forces: the willingness to accept its isolation and hardships defines the Special Forces soldier. Its training is both the keystone and standard of Special Forces Training: it has long been an article of faith, confirmed over forty years of worldwide operations, that "If you can do the UW mission, you can do all others." The objective of UW and Special Forces' dedication to it is expressed in Special Forces' motto: De Oppresso Liber.[63]

- Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates

The US Army created Special Forces (SF) in 1952 to conduct unconventional warfare (UW) in Europe in the event of a Soviet attack. The army intended SF to operate in the enemy's rear area to organize and lead resistance movements in the event the Soviets overran portions of Western Europe. The organization and mission of the original 10th Special Forces Group reflected the experience of supporting resistance movements in Nazi-occupied territory gained by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during WWII. Not surprisingly the resistance model became the basis for early concepts of UW. In the early 1960s, President Kennedy intuitively recognized the value of employing men trained to lead insurgencies to instead counter them, especially where communist expansionism took the form of what Nikita Khrushchev termed "Wars of National Liberation."[64] Thereafter the role and mission of SF expanded during the 1960s through the 1980s when it became the force of choice for FID and COIN operations in Laos, Vietnam, Bolivia, and El Salvador, among others.

Unconventional Warfare may be the most important and difficult SF mission, but in its ideal form is also the most unlikely mission SF will conduct. Ideal UW would entail covert

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[63] Robert M. Gates, Remarks at the dedication of the OSS Memorial, Langley, VA, 12 June 1992, quoted in The Special Forces Historical Society's The Special Forces Regimental History Calendar, 1994. (Fort Bragg, NC: Office of the Command Historian, U.S. Army Special Operations Command).

[64] Nikita S. Khrushchev, "National Liberation Wars", Speech (1 January 1961) Quoted in Andrew J. Kauffman, "On Wars of National Liberation," *Military Review* (United States Army Combined Arms Center), October 1968: 32 - 44.

preparation of intelligence and operational infrastructure, clandestine entry into denied territory to link up with a disenfranchised opposition group, organization of a guerrilla, underground and auxiliary networks, incremental build-up insurgent capacity and political mass base, effective transition through multiple phases of an increasingly robust insurgency, successful overthrow of the hostile government, and finally transition into the new state security apparatus or demobilization. [65] In almost every instance of U.S support to insurgency, only some of these conditions and phases were present. The international and domestic political risks and the unintended consequences associated with using UW to destabilize an existing government have always been the primary inhibiting factors to its employment. The organizational history of SF since 1952 provides far more examples of their involvement in providing support to foreign governments than it does "activities to…coerce, disrupt or overthrow"[66] them. There are numerous examples in Latin America, Asia and Africa over the last six decades where SF either provided existing foreign governments training and advice or directly participated in internal security and counterinsurgency efforts.

When the U.S. sought to remove "governments or occupying powers" over the past 60 years, the employment of SF to "enable a resistance movement or insurgency" was rare.[67] The U.S. simply did not use UW in Grenada, Panama, and Kuwait (Iraqi Occupation in 1991). It did enable resistance movements and insurgencies in Cuba, Nicaragua and Afghanistan (Soviet Occupation), but primarily through the Central Intelligence Agency, with little and in some cases no direct role for SF. Even the more recent examples of conducting UW in support of the

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[65] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008).

[66] From the definition of Unconventional Warfare approved by USSOCOM in June 2009. United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Unconventional Warfare Definition Brief* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 9, 2009).

[67] Ibid.

Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in 2001-2002 and the Peshmerga in Northern Iraq in 2003 do not fit neatly into "through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area."[68] While both of these missions were arguably UW, the insurgents held a degree of control over their territory as organized and equipped semi-conventional forces prior to the introduction of SF; this is especially true of Afghanistan's Northern Alliance.

This paper does not intend to challenge the validity of the new definition of UW or its primacy as the capstone SF mission. However, if SF is to remain relevant, it must significantly contribute to defending the United States against a wide range of current and future threats. More importantly SF must clearly identify what unique skills and competencies it possesses that provide what resource based-theory calls the source of its competitive advantage.[69] This is essential to ensuring that SF is realizing the strategic utility that military and political leaders require of it.[70] The new definition of UW clearly describes the mission in its ideal form. However, it is important to acknowledge that this description of the mission is in some ways a Platonic ideal.[71] It is a model that will rarely, if ever, be realized in its full true state. "Actual UW", like Clausewitz's "actual war"[72] contains elements of the ideal, but rarely the whole. The U.S. employs real UW in a number of situations that fall short of the ideal mission. Moreover the methods derived from preparation for UW have far wider application than the mission itself.

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[68] From the definition of Unconventional Warfare approved by USSOCOM in June 2009. United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Unconventional Warfare Definition Brief* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 9, 2009).

[69] Charles D. Pringle and Mark J. Kroll, "Why Trafalgar Was Won Before It Was Fought: Lessons from Resource-based Theory," *Academy of Management Executive* 11, no. 4 (1997): 73-89.

[70] Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport , Connecticut: Praeger, 1996). 168

[71] Plato, "The Republic," *The Internet Classics Archive*, 360 B.C., http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html (accessed April 11, 2010).

[72] Carl von Clausewitz, On War. Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 91.

The mission of UW does provide a conceptual alternative campaign model that the force can select, organize, train and equip itself around. However, here is where SF should seek a new understanding of how it chooses to define itself, and what the force's real core competencies and key resources are. The key resource that provides SF a competitive advantage and in turn the force's true strategic utility is not the mission of UW, but the unique skills and competencies attained in preparation for that capstone mission. The U.S. will likely need to employ these unique unconventional skills, competencies and methods against both the threats it faces from irregular non-state actors and those it faces from hostile states. Moreover, ungoverned space in third party nations with limited ability to execute full sovereignty will continue to present challenges for which these core competencies and methods have natural application. Given the present level of investment in SF and the justifiable expectations political and military leaders have for the regiment's effectiveness against a variety of threats, SF strategic utility is better defined by the competencies and methods gained from UW that have application across multiple missions than by the specific state-centric focus and endstate of the UW mission itself. Therefore, the *institutional core competencies and methods associated with UW* are the real defining characteristic of SF: its rare, valuable, non-substitutable and imperfectly imitable resource.[73]

## Bridging the Gap from Unconventional Warfare to Counterinsurgency

Unconventional warfare doctrine provides the most comprehensive discussion of traditional social networks and guidance for employing irregular forces of any U.S. military doctrine. UW theory and doctrine guides the organization and training of SF and provides methods that collective experience within SF perpetually tests and reinforces into its core competencies. A combination of unconventional warfare, intelligence, and language training

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[73] Charles D. Pringle and Mark J. Kroll, "Why Trafalgar Was Won Before It Was Fought: Lessons from Resource-based Theory," *Academy of Management Executive* 11, no. 4 (1997): 73-89.

along with cultural skills developed though years spent working with indigenous personnel in a particular theater or country provide SF soldiers an unparalleled ability to contend with the challenges of organizing and leading irregular forces in an austere environment. Additionally, SF soldiers receive invaluable experience during their validation exercise of Robin Sage during which they learn from the first hand perspective of being the insurgent. This provides critical insight into the way insurgents have to think and act in order to survive. Robin Sage imparts a unique understanding of insurgent strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the minds of SF students. More than anything it creates a cognitive shift from the student's previous conventional and regimented military experience to a far more fluid, nuanced and clandestine political and military environment that demands a greater degree of creativity and flexibility. This knowledge and experience, combined with patience, maturity, and cultural attunement creates a soldier inherently well suited for UW. Moreover, the individual soldiers and the organization as a whole have ability to employ these unconventional competencies and methods to not only support an insurgency, but to counter one as well. SF can leverage traditional social networks for intelligence and support in a COIN environment the same way they create underground and auxiliary networks in a UW environment. They can lead irregular counter-guerrilla forces with the same level of expertise and effectiveness that they lead guerrillas. While the entire U.S. military is engaged in counterinsurgency, SF's core competency and capability to apply an unconventional approach that leverages traditional social networks and irregular forces remains a unique and key resource that the U.S military currently under utilizes.

John Shy's triangular description of "revolutionary war" where insurgents and counterinsurgents contend with each other directly and indirectly through the population[74] matches the Irregular Warfare (IW) doctrinal assertion that both sides are competing for

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[74] John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan press, 1990), 199

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"legitimacy and influence over relevant populations."[75] This is instructive for a discussion on how to apply unconventional methods in a COIN environment. There is a degree of symmetry in IW that often goes unnoticed due to obsession with its asymmetry. Strategies and tactics of the insurgent can have genuine utility for the counterinsurgent, though generally not as a main effort, but certainly as a supporting effort to a larger COIN campaign. FM 3-05.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* points out that, while "the broadest classical conceptions of UW doctrine did not apply to COIN situations," during the Vietnam conflict there was growing recognition that, "select UW tactics and techniques…had obvious application to COIN."[76] This was consistent with the belief held by President Kennedy, one of SF's most ardent supporters, that those individuals and units trained to conduct insurgency might also be the best at finding ways to defeat one.[77]

Today there is a growing sense of realization that the U.S. may have to augment its long-term western and idealistic approach to state formation and international order, with a very pragmatic and realistic source of short-term control to secure its interests and disrupt its enemies. Moreover, emerging IW doctrine has correctly identified the need to employ elements or methods gained from UW to new emerging threats and realities. "The UW envisioned by joint IW planners differs from the more traditional uses of UW" and "will be conducted against non-state actors existing outside of the normal institutions of a state (such as ungoverned or under-governed

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[75] U.S. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC)* (Washington, District of Columbia: U.S. Department of Defense, 2007), 6.

[76] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008), J-2.

[77] John F. Kennedy, "John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum," *Special Message to the Congress on Urgent Needs*, May 25, 1961, http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/003POF03NationalNeeds05251961.htm (accessed April 23, 2010) and John F. Kennedy, "John F. Kennedy Presidential LIbrary and Museum," *Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the Trade Mart in Dallas*, November 22, 1963, http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Speeches/JFK/003POF03TradeMart11221963.htm (accessed April 23, 2010).

areas)."[78] While the new definition may seek to prevent calling anything other than a mission against a "government or occupying power" UW, the actual true utility and necessity to employ unconventional methods in COIN, CT and FID remains. If Special Forces are to successfully apply their institutional core competency and maintain maximum strategic utility, then expanding on the FID concept of Remote Area Operations[79] and the COIN concept of Auxiliary Forces[80] may provide a doctrinal vehicle to refocus the SF contribution to a U.S. or host nation counterinsurgency campaign.

## Special Forces, Tribes and Irregulars in Remote Area Operations

In 1961, before the conventional US Military became significantly involved in South Vietnam, two men in civilian clothes, an Army SF Medic and an agricultural project officer from the embassy, "drove a jeep into the highlands" to make contact with and conduct an initial assessment of mountain tribes in the contested central highlands.[81] Upon initial contact with the tribe, Sergeant First Class Paul Campbell built trust by employing a simple combination of medical expertise and cultural agility acquired through his SF experience.

> Campbell examined the girl [an elder's daughter] as the shaman looked on. Campbell…
> told the shaman that he possessed medicine that might help the girl. It would work only
> if the shaman helped administer it using his strong personal medicine. The Rhade were
> animists, and propitiation to the spirits for significant events was common. Perhaps they
> made a sacrifice of a chicken, examined its entrails. Campbell gave the girl an injection
> of antibiotics.[82]

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[78] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008). 3-19.

[79] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army , 2007).

[80] U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, Vol. Version 1.0 (Washington, District of Columbia: Department of Defense, 2009).

[81] Christopher K. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Military Innovation and Institutional Failure, 1961-1963* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2007), 14.

[82] Ibid. 16.

Eventually, the rapport gained by Campbell and his subsequent assessment set the stage for the deployment of two 12-man Army SF detachments from Okinawa to the Buon Enao area and began one of the most successful counterinsurgency programs during the conflict in South Vietnam.[83] The SF mission was to support the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Village Defense Program and Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG). The Village Defense Program and CIDG focused on pacifying regions in the central highlands by allying and living with mountain tribes and denying the Viet Cong access to the remote area.  According to Andrew Krepinevich in *The Army and Vietnam*, "The Green Berets worked hand in hand with the people to fortify their villages; they constructed shelters and an early-warning system and closely regulated the movement of people in and out of the area. A dispensary was built and local volunteers were armed and trained to help protect the village from attack by guerrillas. A small group of men from the village were designated a strike force." Expanding to five SF teams over the next six months, the "oil spot" continued to grow rapidly and encompassed hundreds of villages.[84] Within a year the success achieved by a handful of SF teams and their Montagnard tribal allies exceeded all initial expectations. Krepinevich continues:

> The CIA considered the program a rousing success, and for good reasons: by the end of 1962 the CIDG political action program had recovered and secured several hundred villages, some three hundred thousand civilians, and several hundred square miles of territory from the VC, utilizing some thirty eight thousand armed civilian irregulars. These people fought well on their home ground without support from conventional Vietnamese armed forces and had a record of almost unbroken success against the VC. By the end of 1962 the Government of Vietnam declared Darlac Province secure[85]

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[83] Christopher K. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Military Innovation and Institutional Failure, 1961-1963* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2007), 1.

[84] The "oil spot" theory generally resembles the clear, hold and build concept. The insurgent controlled area is first cleared of insurgents, civil authority and police are re-established, development programs reinforce government legitimacy and the area is stabilized. As this process is repeated in nearby areas, the "oil spots" begin to grow into one another to form large pacified areas. Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 68-70.

[85] Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 71.

Unfortunately this experiment came to an early end. The U.S Army became increasingly uncomfortable with SF involvement in the CIA's rapidly growing CIDG mission. As the program grew to more than 400 SF personnel the Army successfully agued that they should command the mission, not the CIA. At the same time, the Army planned to shift SF to more offensively oriented unconventional warfare missions where it would focus on leading its own guerrilla force against Viet Cong base areas. The irregular CIDG approach to counterinsurgency did not fully reflect the classic offensive interpretation of UW and the army did not consider it to be the best use of SF's premier capabilities. Therefore, in 1963 Operation Switchback transferred the Village Defense Program to the Army who incorporated it into the less successful Strategic Hamlet Program. South Vietnamese Special Forces who had considerable cultural enmity with the mountain tribes took over the highland mission. By October of 1963, SF began peeling off the strike elements of CIDG to form Mobile Guerilla Forces (MGF) and spent the remainder of the war conducting border interdiction and small unit guerrilla reconnaissance and raids against VC base areas. The government of the Republic of Vietnam integrated the remaining Montegnard CIDG into the National Auxiliary Forces, where they rapidly became ineffective due largely to distrust and mismanagement by the South Vietnamese. The result was the eventual failure of the highland pacification campaign that SF had carried out so successfully under the auspices of the CIA from 1961 to 1963.[86]

The Mobile Guerrilla Force concept that grew out of the remnants of the CIDG pacification mission focused on offensive operations to "take the fight to areas of South Vietnam controlled by the Viet Cong."[87] It would maintain initiative by conducting "extended operations,

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[86] Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 73-75.

[87] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008), Appendix I-5.

including long-range reconnaissance patrolling and ambushing, to fight the Viet Cong using their own tactics against them."[88] The Mobile Guerrilla Forces successfully conducted the offensive side of remote area operations by keeping the enemy off balance and challenging control and security in their base areas. "Operating largely in sparsely populated areas, the Mobile Guerrilla Forces combined cultural awareness; local knowledge and support; U.S. supply, mobility, and firepower; and guerrilla tactics offensively and successfully against the Viet Cong."[89]

Other offensive indigenous irregular operations included Apache Forces and Project Delta ten-man hunter-killer teams, both of which were small indigenous elements led by one or two SF soldiers. Krepinevich describes these elements, along with the Mobile Guerilla Forces, as the UW "strike" approach to special operations in enemy controlled territory of South Vietnam. While he argues that the early CIDG pacification efforts were the most effective use of SF in Vietnam, he concedes the success of Mobile Guerrilla Force and other "strike" operations as well. "Through their unconventional warfare operations, strike teams performed a useful economy of force role that, would have freed up many of the big (conventional) units for population security missions."[90] He argues that had the Army adopted a an overall pacification approach to Vietnam with conventional forces conducting security in major population centers, the SF/indigenous UW elements could have effectively harassed and disrupted enemy main forces in the rural countryside and screened those pacification efforts by providing early warning of any threatening enemy build-up.[91] Unfortunately, the army did not adopt that strategy and SF ultimately withdrew from Vietnam in 1970. However, some 40 years later in Afghanistan, SF remote area operations

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[88] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008), Appendix I-5.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 231

[91] Ibid. 232.

would again find relevance in the Joint Special Operations Areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

On a cold winter night in late February 2005, two bearded SF soldiers quietly packed several days worth of supplies on three donkeys. They set out under the cover of darkness from a small special forces A-camp in the remote mountainous border region of eastern Afghanistan, near the Taliban controlled Pakistani border town of Lwara. They spent the next four days, accompanied by four indigenous members of the irregular Afghan Security Force (ASF), walking across snow covered mountains in order to make contact with tribal leaders in Afghanistan's isolated and historically enemy-controlled Gayan Valley.[92]

The SF detachment at A-Camp Tillman had been experimenting for several months with employing small four-to-six man "recce teams" to hunt Taliban insurgents moving freely through the mountains on their way to conduct attacks throughout Paktika Province. The recce teams consisted of a two-man SF sniper/observer element and two-to-four locally hired and specially selected Afghan Security Force (ASF) scouts to serve as guides and provide security. In February, these operations began to meet with success. The small teams, often employing pack animals, moved long distances through the mountains discretely, established hide sites along suspected infiltration routes, and achieved tactical surprise on Taliban patrols. Over the next six months, these small teams increasingly inflicted losses on squad and platoon-size Taliban elements. They effectively employed a combination of stealth, sniper engagements and artillery fire from the 105mm howitzers at the A-Camp to achieve relative superiority over numerically superior enemy forces, without endangering the population in the villages.[93]

The Taliban defeats were physical, but more importantly psychological. The insurgents

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[92] Based on the author's personal experiences and observations while commanding Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha 732 conducting remote area operations in Joint Special Operations Area Oklahoma, vicinity Lwara, Afghanistan from November 2004 – June 2005.

[93] Ibid.

had become very comfortable with being able to move freely through this difficult terrain to conduct rocket and mortar attacks on coalition bases and set up ambushes on coalition patrols that were largely tied to their vehicles along the narrow mountain trails and streams that sufficed as the Afghan equivalent of roads. The sudden and unexpected surprise of sniper and artillery fire shattered the confidence of the Taliban who could not visually detect the recce teams, anticipate the contact or effectively respond to the tactics. Each contact concluded with the insurgents retreating back across the Pakistani border after taking initial casualties. Radio intercepts clearly revealed their frustrations. The insurgent physical casualties resulting from these operations, though often minimal in nature, had a profound psychological impact. The insurgents were now unsure in an environment they previously felt confident in and reconsidered their movements along infiltration routes they once traveled with impunity. By late spring, insurgents largely abandoned border penetrations in the Lwara area and instead focused on long-range rocket attacks from the relative safety of Pakistani territory.[94]

Unfortunately, the acceptability of these highly successful small-team tactics largely came to an end following the loss of a four-man SEAL reconnaissance team in Operation Red Wings in June 2005.[95] The operational environment became more restrictive in the months that followed and the appetite for the risk associated with these tactics rapidly evaporated. In the Lwara area, this would eventually result in the resumption of large-scale enemy penetrations and attacks in the fall of 2005.

Several days before their journey into Gayan, Sergeant First Class Christopher Roach and Sergeant First Class Victor Cervantes had approached their commander with an interesting idea.

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[94] Based on the author's personal experiences and observations while commanding Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha 732 conducting remote area operations in Joint Special Operations Area Oklahoma, vicinity Lwara, Afghanistan from November 2004 – June 2005.

[95] Marcus Luttrell and Patrick Robinson, *Lone Survivor* (New York, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007).

After the first couple of daylight returns from their "recce patrols" they had abandoned their

posture of stealth and overtly approached a couple of small mountain villages. [96] The villagers

first assumed that the small party of bearded men descending from the mountains in a motley mix

of camouflage and afghan garb was Taliban. The Afghans cautiously came out to greet the party

as it entered the small village, but somewhat shocked when the "Taliban" (the ASF scouts)

introduced them to the Americans accompanying them. What followed surprised the two green

berets. The tribe welcomed them into the village with a level of hospitality they had yet to witness

in Afghanistan. In their first two of months in the Lwara area, their contact with villagers had

normally come as they stepped from a Humvee bristling with machine guns. Now they were

initially mistaken for a Taliban patrol. Moreover, even after their foreign identity was known,

they were still treated noticeably different by the Pashtun tribesmen because of the way they

looked and familiar Afghan manner they had approached the village. Their appearance and

actions, especially the way they entered the village walking down out of the mountains leading

donkey, reflected a warrior image that the Afghans identified with and embraced. After the

second incident like this, they developed a theory that they could walk over a mountain range and

enter the last "bad guy" valley in the district and potentially receive the same instant rapport. [97]

The Gayan Valley was a narrow opening between two mountain ranges that converged

again at the upper end in the north.  A single stream emptied out of the lower end of the valley in

the south and served as the only vehicle route in and out.  The rock canyon walls of the stream

were thirty feet high in areas and were so narrow in some places that the mirrors on a humvee had

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[96] SFC Christopher Roach and SFC Victor Cervantes would continue to conduct dozens of similar 4-6 man "recce" missions with their Afghan Security Force scouts over the winter and spring of 2005. Each would fight in a number of contacts with numerically superior enemy forces, both receiving awards for their valor. SFC Cervantes was later Killed in Action on June 10, 2005, while fighting to come to aid of a U.S. infantry squad that had been ambushed by insurgents in Paktika province.  He was scheduled to rotate back to the United States only six days later.

[97] Based on the author's personal experiences and observations while commanding Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha 732 conducting remote area operations in Joint Special Operations Area Oklahoma, vicinity Lwara, Afghanistan from November 2004 – June 2005.

to be folded in to squeeze through. This canyon essentially served as gate to the valley. It was virtually impossible to fight into the valley on the ground if the local tribe chose to resist. Several gunfights with coalition forces had taken place near this southern gate between 2002-2004.[98] This resulted in a few special operations helicopter raids near the southern end of the valley that further soured the valley's reputation with the coalition, and the coalition's reputation with the valley. Nevertheless, it was unclear whether the tribe in Gayan had real ideological links to the Taliban or simply preferred their isolation and made that point by occasionally shooting at coalition members passing by the southern opening.[99]

SFC Roach and SFC Cervantes planned their mission for several days. They would cross a 10,000 ft. high snow covered mountain range and approach the valley from the north. They would observe the valley for a couple days from the mountains to ensure no large insurgent elements were present, and would then decide whether or not to approach. Once initial contact was made they had a three-fold agenda; build rapport, conduct an assessment of the tribal leadership's political sentiments, and attempt to secure an agreement from the tribe to accept a medical civic action program (MEDCAP) visit. If successful, the MEDCAP would set the environment for eventually negotiating a mutual security pact with the tribe. The long-range goals of the SF team included a future safe-house and clinic in Gayan along with a 40-man security force to protect the valley. However this mission would be a success even if it only opened a line of communication with the tribe in Gayan.[100]

During this reconnaissance and assessment, the small six-man party would be outside the range of the camp's artillery. To mitigate this short-coming in protective firepower, a Marine

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[98] Major Matthew Harmon, 3rd Special Forces Group 2002-2006, 5th Special Forces Group 2009-present, interview by Author, (October 15, 2009).

[99] Based on the author's personal experiences and observations while commanding Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha 732 conducting remote area operations in Joint Special Operations Area Oklahoma, vicinity Lwara, Afghanistan from November 2004 – June 2005.

[100] Ibid.

Corps Embedded Training Team (ETT) assisted by positioning an Afghan National Army reaction force approximately 20 kilometers from Gayan under the guise of a traffic control point along the main east-west route through Paktika province. Nevertheless, it was an inherently risky operation, even more so given the valley's history and the A-Camp's inability to range the valley with artillery fire. Nevertheless, the theory the two SF sergeants presented was strong, their argument compelling and the potential payoff worth the risk. [101]

After two days of walking and two more watching the valley from a rocky peak, two bearded Americans, four Afghan scouts, three donkeys, and a dog walked down out of the snow-covered mountains and into the Gayan valley. The result exceeded expectations. As the two SF sergeants predicted, the appearance of the patrol both amazed and bemused the tribe, especially when the ASF scouts introduced them to the two Americans. They walked into the village like members of the tribe returning from one of their own patrols. One of the tribal elders was so impressed by the event, that before dinner that evening, for the first time in years, he put on his old police uniform from the pre-Taliban era. After a couple of dinners and meetings over chai, the tribal elders agreed to the proposals in full. Two weeks later the MEDCAP drew over 2,000 patients, the team hired a 40-man tribal security force, rented a safe-house and established a permanent presence in the valley. Over the coming months based on the success of this operation, CJSOTF-A decided to relocate an SF detachment from Orgun, Afghanistan, to occupy the new safe-house, assume control of the security force, and begin the construction of a firebase. Without a firing a shot, two SF sergeants had pacified the Gayan valley and changed the dynamics in the one of the most dangerous districts in Afghanistan. [102]

Unfortunately, CJSOTF-A wouldn't be able to significantly spread this technique on a

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[101] Based on the author's personal experiences and observations while commanding Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha 732 conducting remote area operations in Joint Special Operations Area Oklahoma, vicinity Lwara, Afghanistan from November 2004 – June 2005.

[102] Ibid.

larger scale as had been done in Buon Enao experiment in Vietnam. Gayan would be one of the last times for several years that an SF team would be allowed to create an irregular tribal security force as part of an effort to co-opt a tribe.  By the end of 2005, the Joint Special Operations Areas in Afghanistan were dissolved; the battle space all along the remote border region was handed over to conventional forces, and the mass demobilization of irregular forces in Afghanistan, in accordance with the Bonn Agreement,[103] was underway.[104]

These two vignettes clearly depict successful SF operations leveraging traditional social networks and employing irregulars in remote and ungoverned rural areas during a counterinsurgency campaign. However, in both cases this success gave way to changes in the SF mission as more conventional forces entered the operational environment. Once SF and conventional forces operate in the same space, the friction between methodologies often results in SF slowly adopting more conventional approaches to its operations. Often the role of SF becomes more narrowly focused on special operations reconnaissance and raids, either unilaterally or bilaterally with host nation SOF. Special operations scholars often describe this well-documented friction as the primary cause of SOF conventionalization as operating environments become increasingly dominated by large numbers of U.S. forces.[105] In Vietnam, SF was able to maintain some irregular character to these "strike" missions through the MGF. However, in both cases the holistic SF unconventional approach to leveraging traditional social networks and employing

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[103] "Upon the official transfer of power, all mujahidin, Afghan armed forces and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority, and be reorganized according to the requirements of the new Afghan security and armed forces." Afghan Interim Authority, "Government of Afghanistan - Bonn Agreement," *Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions*, December 5, 2001, http://www.afghangovernment.com/AfghanAgreementBonn.htm (accessed April 23, 2010).

[104] James D. Campbell, *Making Riflemen From Mud: Restoring the Army's Culture of Irregular Warfare*, Carlisle Paper in Security Strategy, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 19.

[105] David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 103-104 and Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 140-144.

irregulars in both defensive pacification and offensive counter-guerrilla operations in remote areas became much more constrained as the U.S commitment to the conflict grew. While this evolution of the SF mission reduced friction with the conventional force, it also reduced the ability of SF to provide a truly distinct and complimentary line of operations. The following section will demonstrate how SF can re-establish that distinct contribution and leverage traditional social networks and irregular forces as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign.

# Tribes and Irregular Forces in Counterinsurgency Strategy

> We must do things dramatically different – even uncomfortably different – to change how we operate, and also how we think. Our every action must reflect this change of mindset: how we traverse the country, how we use force, and how we partner with the Afghans. Conventional wisdom is not sacred; security may not come from the barrel of a gun. Better force protection may be counterintuitive; it might come from less armor and less distance from the population.[106]

> - General Stanley McChrystal

When governments are struggling to form and consolidate power, the best way to counter threats emanating from non-state identity may be to pragmatically leverage elements from within that identity. This approach could offer the best hope for a stable outcome. The long-term goal of democracy is in many ways predicated on order, stability and even prosperity. Democracy is the result of an evolutionary social and political process likely to take generations, not years. Moreover, in many cases the U.S. simply does not have the political will and energy to remain engaged that long. Nevertheless, it must still seek ways to prevent sanctuary for violent extremists. The existing structure that traditional social networks possess provides a potential source of underlying order and legitimacy in the disorder of ungoverned or contested space. However, it is important to recognize, that tribes and irregulars alone are not the answer; they are merely part of the answer. They provide a supporting line of effort that assists the U.S. and host nation buy enough time and space to replant the seeds of a nation-state.

Afghanistan's two most enduring characteristics are its fractured tribal society and the defeat that has befallen foreign powers that tried to tame it. Alexander the Great, the Persians, the Mongols, the British (three attempts), and most recently the Soviets all "fell into the same trap" while discovering the central truth of the forbidding land and its people: "Afghanistan was easy to

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[106] Stanley A. McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, COMISAF Initial Assessment, NATO International Security Assistance Force - Afghanistan (Kabul: Headquarters, International Security Force - Afghanistan, 2009), 1-3.

invade, but impossible to hold."[107] The British and the Soviets rolled with ease into Kabul and

Kandahar. Mistaking their early success for victory, they were ultimately dragged into the

mountains and trapped in bloody struggles with an enemy that was patient, cunning, and

ultimately impossible for them to overcome.[108] Their ability to control the cities became

irrelevant as the insurgency ultimately exhausted and strangled them from its rural base.

Previous failures in Afghanistan were partially due to the inability of invaders to

understand a society where ethnicity, tribe and religion dominate identity and provide more order

and structure than the central state. Moreover, the society's inherent inter-tribal competition and

conflict and the importance it places on its warriors and warfare are equally misunderstood. This

is particularly true when foreign invaders sought to transform Afghan society, instead of just

controlling it as the British finally learned to do and the Pakistanis continued. The Soviet and

American experiences in Afghanistan engendered reactionary violence in response to efforts that

attempt to reorder society, first with communism, then with democracy. Regardless of how well

intentioned these efforts may be, they run headlong into a society where local identity and

tradition matter far more than foreign ideals about governing efficiency, personal freedom or

social justice. Ralph Peters explains that in places like Afghanistan, the U.S. is witnessing a

return to wars of "blood and belief" characterized by ethnic or tribal identity and religion. This

follows a period where wars between highly developed ideologies and social constructs like

communism, fascism, socialism and democracy dominated western understanding of conflict.

Developed countries therefore have a difficult time understanding the nature of these primitive

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[107] Richard H. Shultz and Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 156.

[108] Ibid. 188.

wars, because they either fail to grasp or simply dismiss the narrative and worldview of the culture with which they are engaged. [109]

In a culture where the tribal warrior is the most highly esteemed member of society, bloodshed and battle are necessary parts of identity. Richard Shultz and Andrea Dew provide exceptional insight into this aspect of tribal and warrior culture in their book *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warrior of Contemporary Combat.* "Afghan tribes are not concerned with how outsiders measure their society, but they do care deeply how fellow tribesmen measure tribesmen. Thus one of the most important standards by which a man's place in Afghan society is measured, and upward mobility achieved, is the degree of personal honor and courage displayed in combat."[110] The essential element of Afghan society is the quam (tribe), "the basic sub-national identity based on kinship, residence and sometimes occupation."[111] The Afghan way of war is centered on the duty of the warrior to defend family, tribe, and honor in a never-ending series of blood feuds and land disputes, and occasional expelling of foreign invaders. The style of war is intrinsically tied to the tribes and the harsh mountain environment where the weak can bleed the strong. They ambush and raid from ancestral fighting positions, escaping down draws and crevices used by their fathers for centuries, and fade back into the countryside.

Since the dramatic rout of the Taliban in 2001, the coalition gradually increased its commitment in both men and material while the insurgency grew in direct proportion. From 2003 to 2006 the majority of the conflict was along the volatile border with Pakistan. Special Forces working with ANA and irregular security/militia forces fought a largely cross-border

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[109] Ralph Peters (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Lecture, School of Advanced Military Studies, March 15, 2010).

[110] Richard H. Shultz and Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 158

[111] Ali A. Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War* (Quantico, Virginia: USMC Studies and Analysis Division, 1995), xiii

insurgency as the Taliban attempted to maintain relevance, while solidifying their base in Pakistan. When NATO assumed control of the southern portion of the country, the insurgency sensed an opportunity and shifted focus from the eastern border to the Pashtun heartland in the south. Capitalizing on NATO's complicated command and control structure, inconsistent operational approach, and an exploding poppy trade, the insurgency made substantial gains, ultimately gaining control of key poppy growing areas of Helmand province in 2007. In 2008-2010 the conflict escalated substantially across all regions, but particularly in the south and east. Dramatic increases in the levels of violence and the deteriorating political situation left the population in the position of weighing their fortunes between a government they view as corrupt and an insurgency they fear is invincible. In 2010, the United States took dramatic steps to reverse course, including a change in command, a very public national strategy review, and a significant increase in troop levels. The timing of this paper finds the troop increase in its initial stages and elements of the strategy coming into full view.

Counterinsurgency is essentially a campaign of moral (and in some ways material) attrition[112] where population security is the first order of business, followed closely by the protection of government institutions and legitimacy, public infrastructure, and commerce. In polling data, the Afghan people consistently cite the four biggest problems facing them as: Security, the Taliban, the Economy, and Corruption.[113] U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine suggests five lines of effort that are designed to address these concerns: Combat/Civil Security Operations, HN Security Forces, Essential Services, Governance, and Economic Development.[114] Yet

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[112] James Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[113] The Brookings Institution, "Brookings," *Afghanistan Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction and Security in post-9/11 Afghanistan*, September 30, 2008, http://www.brookings.edu/-/media/files/Programs/FP/afghanistan%20index/index20080930.pdf (accessed April 23, 2010).

[114] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2006), 5-3.

coalition efforts do not reach much of the population in rural Afghanistan. In the countryside and small villages, families and tribes remain essentially on their own without the protection and services of the government. As General McChrystal recently noted, they often make "rational decisions to back the Taliban, because they lack confidence in government competence and ability to protect them and provide basic justice."[115] Solving the security problem in counterinsurgency seems to predicate progress in other areas. Afghanistan's isolated geography, large size, rugged terrain and high level of population distribution create a truth that Afghan and Coalition forces alone are unlikely to overcome; there is simply not enough manpower and resources to secure all of Afghanistan without employing irregulars. The U.S. surge, like the British and Russians before, will likely only secure the cities, primary agricultural zones, and routes between them where reconstruction, development and improvement in governance can affect the greatest percentage of the population. This will not solve the problem in Afghanistan's more remote and rural areas, where the insurgency draws much of its moral and material strength.

Until recently the coalition woefully neglected the development of Afghan security capacity. This is rightfully becoming a major effort under the new strategy. As in Vietnam, the U.S. Army's conventional forces rediscovered their lead role in large-scale security force assistance (SFA) in both Iraq and Afghanistan.[116] The formalization of the Army's SFA role now appears mature with the deployment of dedicated advisory brigades to a mission that was piecemealed during the early years of the war.[117] These advisory brigades and the added

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[115] Stanley McChrystal, "8 Imperatives of COIN," *You Tube*, http://www.youtube.com/user/ISAFMEDIA#p/f/101/X3APTOKZ9Vc.

[116] Security Force Assistance. "The Department of Defense activities that contribute to unified action by the U.S. Government to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions. Also called SFA." U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-07.1 *Security Force Assistance* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2009).

[117] Assessment based on the author's personal experiences and observations in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2004, 2005, and 2007.

emphasis and capacity that accompany them are critical to successfully fielding higher quantities and qualities of Afghan nation security forces. However, even significant increases in the size of the Afghan army combined the U.S. surge are still unlikely to secure all of the contested areas within Afghanistan.

In his book, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, David Kilcullen explains how the "strategic arithmetic of local security forces" is essential to achieve appropriate force ratios for counterinsurgency. He estimates that only 7-10,000 troops out of a 50,000-man American unit can be employed in active operations at any given time due to logistics, headquarters, security, and refit rotation requirements. Therefore, the net effect of a 50,000-man deployment is only a 7-10,000-man improvement in security capacity. On the other hand, out of a 50,000-man irregular force, 40,000 can be expected to operate at any given time, due to their minimal support requirements and the fact that they live in the operational environment. Moreover, since they are also potential recruits for the insurgency, they have the additional effect of denying 50,000 personnel to the enemy. Therefore, the net effect of a 50,000-man local irregular force is actually an 80-95,000-man improvement in security capacity. "The benefit gained by developing local partnerships with the community being protected is on the order of 10 times greater that what is achieved by inserting western troops in the environment."[118]

In Vietnam, another rural based insurgency in difficult terrain, the U.S. Army was faced with a similar geographic and force ratio dilemma. As described in the previous section, Army SF through a combination of first FID (CIDG) and later UW (MGF) offered the Army an irregular capacity in an attempt to achieve a principle of war that is essential to solving the current problem in Afghanistan. To achieve successful force ratios for counterinsurgency the counterinsurgent requires mass in the critical areas it seeks to pacify. To achieve mass in critical

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[118] David J. Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), ch. 5.

areas, the options are to either cede less relevant territory to the enemy or to apply an effective

economy of force operation in the less critical areas. Ceding territory to the enemy is generally an

unacceptable course of action in COIN, because populations that are ceded are often forever lost,

because not only do they lose security, they lose trust.[119] General McChrystal recently described

the centrality of both security and trust to his strategy when he stated that, "without security a

family can't make a decision" and that in counterinsurgency "all relationships are built on

trust."[120]

Colin Gray's two master claims about the strategic utility of SOF, Economy of Force

(significant results with limited forces) and Expansion of Choice (expanding options available to

political and military leaders), have equal applicability to provide a feasible and acceptable

solution.[121] The economy of force capacity of an organization that specializes in the ability of

twelve men to force multiply into five hundred is relatively obvious.[122]  More importantly, SF

offers an expansion of choice option that cannot be replicated elsewhere in the department of

defense: the unique specialization in creating those indigenous forces from within existing local

civilian populations and building the intelligence and logistical support networks to protect and

sustain them.  CJSOTF-A and its assigned SF teams have the capacity to create the required

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[119] The author had the personal experience in 2004 of attempting to secure an area that the coalition had abandoned due to Taliban pressure in 2003. The reprisals the local population had apparently suffered following abandonment left a level of distrust that was difficult to overcome.

[120] Stanley McChrystal, "8 Imperatives of COIN," *You Tube*, http://www.youtube.com/user/ISAFMEDIA#p/f/101/X3APTOKZ9Vc.

[121] Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport , Connecticut: Praeger, 1996), 168.

[122] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army , 2007) and U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-03.130 Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008).

economy of force by organizing and leading irregular forces in remote areas operations

throughout the sparsely populated and mountainous regions of Afghanistan.[123]

Tribal structure and authority is arguably more important in Afghanistan than it was in

Iraq, yet despite this central truth and the success witnessed in Al Anbar and in Afghanistan from

2002 to 2005, the U.S. has been reluctant to employ elements of a tribal strategy. Major Jim

Gant's essay "One Tribe at a Time" lays down a powerful and compelling argument for greater

emphasis on working through indigenous tribes and irregular forces in Afghanistan.[124] Gant's

thesis essentially states that tribes are the key to social order and stability in Afghanistan and that

any successful strategy must not only focus on gaining their allegiance, but enlisting them in the

fight to wrestle control of their land from the Taliban.  He drives the point home with a personal

narrative that captures the essence of this idea based on his experience as a SF team leader:

> We demonstrated month in and month out that a small effective fighting force could unite
> with an Afghan tribe, become trusted and respected brothers-in-arms with their leaders and
> families, and make a difference in the US effort in Afghanistan.  In doing so, we discovered
> what I believe to be the seed of enduring success in that country.[125]

If the coalition along with Afghan security forces cannot secure the rural population of

Afghanistan, then there is little choice but to incorporate some form of local irregular defense

initiative into the overall strategy.[126] Special Forces has proven their ability to successfully create

and lead irregular village self-defense forces in austere environments.  The same core competency

that led to the successful experiment in Buon Enao, Vietnam in 1961 still had application in

Gayan Valley, Afghanistan in 2005 and is even more relevant in 2010. Additionally, by

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[123] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army , 2007).

[124] Jim Gant, "One Tribe at a Time: A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan" (Los Angeles, California: Nine Sisters Imports, 2009).

[125] Ibid. 4.

[126] Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency In Afghanistan* (New York, New York: Columbia Universtiy Press, 2008), 173.

employing counter-guerrilla forces, what retired SF Colonel Joseph Celeski refers to as counter-organizational forces (locally recruited paramilitaries, irregulars and Gendarme-type police),[127] SF can assist in denying the Taliban the respite they obtain in their rural sanctuary and pressure their decision cycle. The Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) model of integrated village self-defense and the Mobile Guerrilla Force (MFG) model of discreet counter-guerrilla efforts to disrupt enemy base areas both have direct applicability to current coalition challenging in Afghanistan.  These two concepts employed together as SF Remote Area Operations can achieve the economy of force and tribal cooption necessary to protect rural populations and deny enemy sanctuary in select areas Afghanistan. Remote Area Operations are not the solution; they are part of the solution. They provide the economy of force that will allow greater conventional mass for pacification in the critical and contested populated areas of the country. This course of action requires the re-establishment of Joint Special Operations Areas in remote parts of Afghanistan where a combination of SOF and irregular forces can exercise this unconventional mission with maximum flexibility. This is precisely the strategy that Andrew Krepinevich claims offered the best hope of success for dealing with a similar force ration dilemma in Vietnam.

> Besides serving in an economy-of-force role, the strike units [SF and Mobile Guerilla Forces] could furnish a screen for government pacification efforts. By saturating the "demographic frontier" (a band of territory just outside the densely populated coastal region in South Vietnam), strike teams could give advance warning of major enemy forces massing for attacks against the populated areas undergoing pacification. Teams operating further inland could call in air and/or artillery strikes on targets of opportunity or conduct ambushes and raids in lieu of (conventional) search and destroy operations, allowing regular units the opportunity to participate in pacification activities and to serve as a formidable reaction force should the insurgents mass for a large-scale attack.[128]

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[127] Joseph D. Celeski, *Operationalizing COIN*, Report 05-2, Strategic Studies Department, Joint Special Operations University (Hurlbert Field : The Joint Special Operations University Press, 2005), 93-94

[128] Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 70

To help achieve this the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command – Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A) needs to critically re-evaluate the balance and emphasis of its current contribution to achieving the overall campaign. The emerging campaign plan for Afghanistan seeks to achieve greater security by massing more forces in populated areas as part of a clear, hold and build strategy. Employing irregular forces in remote areas provides a feasible, acceptable and suitable means of creating the economy of force required in rural areas to achieve mass in population centers. While Major Grant's paper calls for the creation of a new force for Tribal Engagement and Remote Area Operations, his own successful actions as a SF detachment commander doing just that support the idea that SF is already capable and ready for that mission.[129]

Three primary lines of operation by CFSOCC-A and CJSOTF-A could contribute significantly to this approach. First, CJSOTF-A should continue Special Operations support to Counterinsurgency by, through and with the Afghan Army Commandos. Second, CJSOTF-A should conduct Remote Area Operations in select Joint Special Operations Areas (JSOA). This should include a combination of primarily of rural pacification through CIDG-type integrated village defense programs with limited MGF-type counter-organizational missions into enemy base areas. Third, CJSOTF-A should increase augmentation to Tribal Engagement and Auxiliary Force support to conventional forces conducting pacification in critical population centers.

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[129] Jim Gant, "One Tribe at a Time: A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan" (Los Angeles, California: Nine Sisters Imports, 2009).

# Refocusing Special Forces to Leverage Traditional Social Networks and Irregulars

Unconventional Warfare, as recently defined by USSOCOM should remain the capstone mission that focuses Special Forces doctrine, organization, personnel management and training programs. This remains the mission that SF are chartered to conduct for the Department of Defense.[130] However, history shows that SF will be used far more often to secure governments in crisis than to over throw them. Therefore SF need to add clarity to their role in FID and COIN in such a way that ensures their unconventional competencies and methods are effectively utilized in current missions and sustained for future ones. The central litmus test for SF missions, training events, and equipment procurements should be the ability to organize, advise, train, sustain, and lead an irregular indigenous component, whether conducting an insurgency or countering one

When employed properly, the base twelve-man SFOD-A that is cellular, multifunctional and self-sufficient has the capacity to execute sustained battalion-level operations with its indigenous forces.[131] Special Forces have long placed a premium on outwitting the enemy through tactics associated with successful guerrilla and counter-guerilla forces; tactics that often mirror the very low-tech, even primitive methods that guerillas and insurgents use to negate enemy advantages. Special Forces operations are more about how to think and apply creative solutions to complex adaptive problems and in rapidly changing situations, than how to fine-tune and systematically execute rehearsed tactics and techniques.

With each subsequent rotation in Afghanistan, Special Forces have become more constrained in their methodology, lost most indigenous partners, lost all of their battle space ownership, and have become increasingly isolated from the interagency community to which they

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[130] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-03.130 *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008).

[131] U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.20 *Special Forces Operations* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1999).

owed much of their early freedom.  Special Forces undoubtedly contains the Department of Defense's insurgency experts, but they are currently suffering from the lack of a clearly articulated unconventional vision internally and a crisis of identity externally.

By refining the SF mission in counterinsurgency, USSOCOM will maintain and capitalize on many of the core competencies Special Forces draws from its primary mission of UW.  However, to effectively employ those core competencies and unconventional methodologies it is imperative that SF renews focus on four requirements to restore its strategic utility. First, SF must ensure that it remains capable of providing effective economy of force. Second, SF must embrace greater risk and unorthodox methods. Third, SF must effectively balance its mission to train and advise host nation SOF with the mission to leverage tribes and employ irregular forces. Finally, SF must vigorously reinvest in its relationship with the CIA.

Special Forces must remain capable of providing economy of force. To retain this attribute CJSOTF-A must invest more trust and accept more risk that current trends are allowing. A mature, seasoned SFOD-A should, in fact, set its sights on using an indigenous force to dominate a province, not just a building or village.  From 2006-2009 CJSOTF-A was forced to embrace an increasingly unilateral footprint, with far fewer indigenous forces per SFOD-A. Instead of advising a battalion-sized indigenous force, by 2009 many SFOD-As in Afghanistan are working with squad, platoon or at best company-sized elements.  Special Forces doctrine for both UW and FID clearly state that a single SFOD-A is optimally employed advising or leading a battalion-sized regular or irregular force.[132] Prior to the demobilization of Afghan Militia and Security Forces (AMF and ASF) in 2006 it was not uncommon for SFOD-As to execute command and control over irregular forces well exceeding battalion strength.  Moreover, they

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[132] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-03.130 Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2008) and U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05.202 Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (Washington, District of Columbia: Headquarters, Department of the Army , 2007).

often incorporated conventional forces into this battalion structure, including both Afghan

National Army (ANA) manpower and U. S. enablers such at artillery, logistics and intelligence.

Special Forces did this while establishing and sustaining their own firebases (A-camps),

executing command of their own battle space (the JSOA), and maintaining high operational

tempos by decentralizing their span of control, rarely placing more than two Special Forces

soldiers with an indigenous patrol or maneuver element.[133] In his Army War College thesis

"Making Riflemen From Mud", James Campbell describes the demobilization of these irregular

forces and some of the negative consequences.

> During the winter and spring of 2006, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) underwent a laborious process to demobilize its Afghan surrogate force, called the Afghan Security Forces (ASF). This process involved the largest formal demobilization of U. S. surrogate or irregular forces since 1945. The ASF were composed of a variety of tribal or local militias, anti-Taliban volunteers, and Afghan mercenaries. Many of them had been working with the Special Forces since 2001, as they were originally members of the Northern Alliance, the coalition of Afghans, which overthrew the Taliban with U.S. help. The ASF provided local security to Special Forces firebases and camps throughout Afghanistan, and prior to 2006 were also used extensively to assist SF units in convoy security and small-scale combat operations.[134]

By 2007 most SFOD-As were without formal indigenous partnerships all together. They

had to negotiate small groups of ANA or Afghan National Police (ANP) away from the battle

space owner (usually a conventional unit they were co-located with) and invariably leave the wire

with forces insufficient and incapable of mounting any significant combat power on their own.

They were therefore forced into tactics that employed standoff weaponry to compensate for their

lack of boots on the ground. Additionally they were unable to maintain a persistent presence

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[133] Based on the author's personal experiences and observations while commanding Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha 732 conducting remote area operations in Joint Special Operations Area Oklahoma, vicinity Lwara, Afghanistan from November 2004 – June 2005.

[134] James D. Campbell, *Making Riflemen From Mud: Restoring the Army's Culture of Irregular Warfare*, Carlisle Paper in Security Strategy, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 19.

amongst the rural population, both from a lack of indigenous manpower and due to self-imposed force protection constraints. An increasing lack of comfort with small team operations following the loss of a four-man SEAL reconnaissance element in 2005 (Operation Red Wings) led to minimum manning requirements that prevented SFOD-As from effectively distributing across a battalion-sized force and conducting mission rotation among team members to achieve an operations tempo appropriate for a large force. The combined factors of demobilized irregular forces, lost battlespace, fewer host-nation partners, and force protection constraints on manning and distribution have prevented SFOD-As from providing a degree of economy of force that is commensurate with their capability. Ideally, to perform at their maximum capacity CJSOTF-A would currently organize and advise the equivalent of at least thirty indigenous battalions (regular or irregular) in Afghanistan; as of 2008 they formally advised less than six.[135]

Special Forces must embrace greater risk and unorthodox methods. Special Forces offers a capability and approach through its unconventional methodology, that is not wholly present in either the conventional force or other Special Operations Forces. However, this unique capability and approach is quickly disappearing. It would be a mistake to reduce the argument to non-standard uniforms, Toyota pick-ups and beards, but the absence of all these are an unfortunate sign of the times. More importantly, this is about how SF are trained and then employed on the battlefield. From 2006 to 2008, many SFOD-As were forced into roles that employ them more as an elite cavalry troop than as unconventional warriors. The protracted nature of the conflict had a conventionalizing effect on SF. This conventionalization stems from the external pressure to conform within a larger hierarchal organization and internal pressure felt by every command to reduce the human toll of war. Increasing risk mitigation policies and procurements have reduced the SF ability to provide a distinct and complimentary alternative to conventional force

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[135] Based on the author's personal experience and observations in Afghanistan during 2007-2008.

capabilities. Blanket policies, unwise equipment and vehicle procurements and increasingly

orthodox practices have slowly eroded the differences between SOF and conventional forces.

This is often the result of adopting a more conventional look, feel, and operational approach. It

makes SF operations more easily understood by conventional partners, but also less

complimentary and effective.

One result of conventionalization is an ever-increasing tendency to wrap units in blanket

force protection policies and firepower postures that force subordinate leaders to consolidate their

forces, limit dismounted movements and rely too heavily on low-density resources such as close

air support. Subordinate SOF leaders must be given the freedom to plan and conduct missions in

ways that create and support a sustainable indigenous solution. SF missions should remain open

to and even strive to incorporate elements that would be unsuitable for the conventional force. To

lead irregular indigenous forces in Afghanistan effectively, long-range dismounted animal-pack

and Toyota pick-up patrols wearing hybrid indigenous uniforms, Chinese chest racks and

carrying Kalashnikovs should be as "standard" to SF as any U.S. equipment or tactics. The

insistence on body armor and armored vehicles in particular, separates the force from the

population by encapsulating them in vehicles and creating enemy sanctuaries by limiting the

effectiveness of SF operations in restrictive terrain. General McChrystal's Initial Assessment

describes some of the negative consequences of blanket force protection policies, for

conventional and special operations forces alike:

> When ISAF forces travel through even the most secure areas of Afghanistan firmly
> ensconced in armored vehicles with body armor and turrents manned, they convey a
> sense of high risk and fear to the population. ISAF cannot expect unarmed Afghans to
> feel secure before heavily armed ISAF forces do. ISAF cannot succeed if it is unwilling
> to share risk, at least equally, with the people. In fact, once the risk is shared, effective
> force protection will come from the people, and the overall risk can actually be reduced
> by operating differently. The more coalition forces are seen and known by the local
> population, the more their threat will be reduced. Adjusting force protection measures to
> local conditions sends a powerful message of confidence and normalcy to the population.
> Subordinate commanders must have greater freedom with respect to setting force
> protection measures they employ in order to help close the gap between security forces
> and the people they protect. Arguably, giving leaders greater flexibility to adjust forces
> protection measures could expose military personnel and civilians to greater risk in the

near term; however, historical experiences in counterinsurgency warfare, coupled with the above mitigation, suggests that accepting some risk in the short term will ultimately save lives in the long run.[136]

Insistence on body armor at all times make effective SF dismounted operations in Afghanistan's mountainous environment nearly impossible. From 2001 to 2005, SFOD-As had the authority and flexibility to determine uniform and force protection postures based on the operational environment and the mission. That flexibility was key to the ability to defeat insurgents at their own game, successfully employing Afghan Army and Militia in ways that negated the insurgent advantage, without turning them into a mere reflection of the U. S. Army. Special Forces soldiers were certainly lost to fire that both body and vehicle armor may have stopped during this period. However, over-reliance on protective armor stems from a far too simplified understanding of force protection and a "security blanket" mentality. Limiting effective operations to roads, valleys, and wadis makes American and Afghan forces far more predictable and targetable. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the anti-vehicular IED becomes the greatest casualty producer of the war.[137] Moreover, because U.S. operations are so easily templated, the enemy is free to initiate at a time and place of his choosing and thereby gains early tactical advantage in most encounters.

Special Forces must continue to balance efforts with host nation SOF. Since 2007, CJSOTF-A has largely focused its efforts and defined its mission through its creation and employment of the Afghan National Army Commandos. This has become the one enduring partnership and real success story for CJSOTF-A over the past three years. In fact, the commandos are a reminder of just how effective Special Forces are at creating and employing

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[136] Stanley A. McChrystal, *Commander's Initial Assessment*, COMISAF Initial Assessment, NATO International Security Assistance Force - Afghanistan (Kabul: Headquarters, International Security Force - Afghanistan, 2009), 2-12

[137] Clay Wilson, *Improvised Explosive Devices In Iraq and Afghanistan: Effects and Countermeasures*, CRS Report (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2007).

elite indigenous special operations units from scratch when given the resources and authorities. The Commando Kandaks (battalions) are by far the most professional and respected organizations in the Afghan National Army and have executed numerous successful raids since 2007. But at the end of the day, they are only six battalions. With thirty to forty SFOD-As in Afghanistan, they could have far more impact if CJSOTF-A sticks to the doctrinal force ratio of one SFOD-A per battalion. At most the Commandos should require one SFOD-B and six SFOD-As. While this has undoubtedly been a successful operation, the weight it has been given, often absorbing far more teams than is doctrinally appropriate, has detracted from CJSOTF-As ability to have a larger impact on the overall mission by allowing each SFOD-A to operate at their maximum potential. In short, CJSOTF-A must seek greater balance between this mission and irregular efforts.

Special Forces must vigorously reinvest in its relationship with the CIA. The Central Intelligence Agency is still the U. S. Government's lead agency for covert and clandestine activities and retains the sole authority that provides SF the vehicle to execute many of its UW tasks. In recent years integration with the authorities and capabilities of the Central Intelligence Agency has stagnated as the CIA has gravitated towards and invested in partnerships with other SOF elements. Special Forces must remember that some of its greatest successes, including its early involvement in OEF I was at the behest of the Central Intelligence Agency, not the Department of Defense.[138] This connection in the past not only provided CJSOTF-A with access to a vast amount of intelligence, but also access to the irregular forces it employs so effectively. The relationship between SF and CIA is important not only to the current fight, but also postures both elements for the next UW mission. It is essential to maintain and improve upon this connection between organizations that share a history and enduring philosophical preference for unconventional and indirect warfare.

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[138] Gary Berntsen and Ralph Pezzullo, *Jawbreaker* (New York, New York: Crown, 2005) and Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 176.

# Conclusions

The conflicts that the United States is engaged in today are conflicts of identity, rooted in a historical and traditional narrative and worldview. The U.S. military needs an approach to counterinsurgency that pragmatically achieves short-term stability, while patiently continuing to work for long-term and enduring solutions that reflect our own beliefs, ideals and narrative. Special Forces have a unique capacity to contribute to that approach. This paper demonstrated the validity of two claims as the basis for its central argument: USSOCOM should refocus the counterinsurgency role of Army Special Forces on leveraging traditional social networks and employing irregular security forces to expand host nation control and security in contested, ungoverned or insurgent controlled spaces.

First, traditional social networks and irregular security forces represent a critical source of intelligence, political support and security for governments attempting to increase control and legitimacy during an insurgency. Tribes and other traditional social networks are the most enduring form of social organization, often continuing to provide social order in the absence of effective governance. The U.S. is currently involved in a series of identity-based conflicts where traditional social networks provide the most expedient and legitimate means of co-opting acceptable elements of identity to undermine the sources of conflict. The experience in Anbar Province in Iraq clearly demonstrated how decisive a shift in tribal allegiance is in insurgency. Furthermore, the U.S. has a long and successful history of employing irregular forces in counterinsurgency. Experiences from the Philippines through Iraq highlight the importance of benefiting form the local knowledge, social access, persistent presence, unorthodox capabilities and raw manpower provided by these elements can both provide to the government and deny to insurgents.

Second, Army SF are uniquely qualified to leverage traditional social networks and employ irregular security forces during counterinsurgency due to their unique training,

organization and experience in their capstone mission of unconventional warfare (UW). A review of the UW mission and SF history demonstrates that its unconventional competencies are truly unique, but also more likely to be employed to counter an insurgency, than to support one. A comparison of highly successful experiences leading tribal irregulars in remote area operations to both pacify rural areas and to challenge insurgent control in Vietnam and Afghanistan (2002 to 2005) demonstrate not only the viability of this course of action, but SF expertise in providing the capability.

Special Forces can provide a Joint Force Commander with a line of operations aimed at co-opting identity that can compliment and enable the other elements of the overall coalition counterinsurgency strategy. Employing SF to leverage traditional social networks and irregular forces in Afghanistan can help facilitate the critical security and pacification efforts of the revised counterinsurgency strategy. To achieve the mass required for effective pacification force ratios in critical population areas, the campaign must employ economy of force in less critical areas. SF can provide that economy of force by leveraging tribes and employing irregulars in remote area operations, thereby freeing additional conventional and host nation forces for pacification efforts in populated areas. Moreover, this approach can assist in co-opting the identity of what is essentially a rural based insurgency, thereby denying the enemy a critical source of its narrative and power.

By refining the SF mission in counterinsurgency, USSOCOM will maintain and capitalize on many of the core competencies SF draws from its primary mission of UW. However, to effectively employ those core competencies and unconventional methodologies SF requires renewed focus and balance on four guiding principles. First, SF must ensure that it remains capable of providing effective economy of force by adhering to its doctrinal advisor ratio of one SFOD-A per indigenous battalion. Accordingly, SF must allow teams to further distribute its members, in some cases down to two-man level across the advised force to ensure it is capable

of sustained and decentralized counterinsurgency operations. Second, SF must embrace greater risk and unorthodox methods. The operational and tactical approaches that SF employs must be significantly different from those the conventional force employs if it is to offer a truly distinct and complimentary capability. This includes more flexible force protection postures, appearances, and methods. Non-standard uniforms, indigenous vehicles, and local sources of logistical support should be the norm, not the exception. Third, SF must effectively balance its mission to train and advise host nation SOF with the mission to leverage tribes and employ irregular forces. In recent years the weight of effort has drifted decidedly towards bilateral SOF, neglecting tribal and irregular approaches. Finally, SF must vigorously reinvest in its relationship with the CIA. The CIA retains sole U.S. government authority for the covert activities that provide SF the vehicle to execute many of its UW tasks. Moreover, the greatest SF success stories have always come when this relationship is at its strongest.

The concepts described in this study likely have broader application than counterinsurgency and certainly broader application than ongoing operations in Afghanistan. Further study should explore leveraging traditional social networks and employing irregular forces in remote and ungoverned areas as part of a counterterrorism campaign. Violent extremist organizations often establish a base of operations in the safe haven of a remote area, often in countries with no viable government such as Somalia. Therefore, the ability to leverage tribes and employ irregulars against terrorist organizations in their ungoverned base areas may have even greater importance in future counterterrorism operations.

This paper concludes that in light of the new mission-based definition of UW, SF must not lose sight of the applicability of its unique unconventional competencies and methods across a wide range of missions. Those core competencies and methods, gained through organization, preparation and experience in UW, are key resources that provide SF a competitive advantage and serve to amplify its strategic utility. The world is increasingly threatened by a combination of

violent extremism and ungoverned space, where traditional social networks and irregular forces offer a path to establish some short-term order and prevent insurgent and terrorist sanctuary. Special Forces' unconventional competitive advantage can provide military and civilian leaders the economy of force and expansion of choice[139] necessary to facilitate other elements of a U.S. counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaign as it attempts to establish control and replant the seeds of a responsible state in areas of greater pliability or operational importance. The ability to leverage traditional social networks and employ irregular forces is the core competency drawn from UW that offers the greatest utility for employment of SF countering insurgency and terrorism in the twenty-first century. Therefore, the unique core competencies and methods gained by SF in preparation for UW should serve to determine their best use in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism.

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[139] Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport , Connecticut: Praeger, 1996). 168

# GLOSSARY

**area assessment.** The commander's prescribed collection of specific information that commences upon employment and is a continuous operation. It confirms, corrects, refutes, or adds to previous intelligence acquired from area studies and other sources prior to employment. (Joint Publication 1-02 *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* - 2009)

**area oriented.** Personnel or units whose organizations, mission, training, and equipping are based on projected operational deployment to a specific geographic or demographic area. (JP 1-02)

**campaign plan.** A plan for a series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space. (JP 1-02)

**civil affairs.** Designated Active and Reserve component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs activities and to support civil-military operations. Also called CA. (JP 1-02)

**civil affairs activities.** Activities performed or supported by civil affairs that (1) enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in areas where military forces are present; and (2) involve application of civil affairs functional specialty skills, in areas normally the responsibility of civil government, to enhance conduct of civil-military operations. (JP 1-02)

**clandestine operation.** An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities. (JP 1-02)

**combined joint special operations task force.** A task force composed of special operations units from one or more foreign countries and more than one US Military Department formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. The combined joint special operations task force may have conventional no special operations units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions. Also called CJSOTF. (JP 1-02)

**conventional forces.** 1. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons. 2. Those forces other than designated special operations forces. (JP 1-02.)

**counterguerrilla operations.** Operations and activities conducted by armed forces, paramilitary forces, or nonmilitary agencies against guerrillas. (Approved for inclusion in JP 1-02.)

**counterinsurgency.** Comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. Also called COIN. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in JP 1-02. SOURCE: JP 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*)

**counterterrorism.** Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism. Also called CT. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in the next edition of JP 1-02.)

**covert operation.** An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. A covert operation differs from a clandestine operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of identity of sponsor rather than on concealment of the operation. (JP 1-02)

**denied area.** An area under enemy or unfriendly control in which friendly forces cannot expect to operate successfully within existing operational constraints and force capabilities. (JP 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* - 2003)

**direct action.** Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives. Also called DA. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in the next edition of JP 1-02.)

**force multiplier.** A capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment. (JP 1-02)

**foreign internal defense.** Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Also called FID. (JP 1-02. SOURCE: JP 3-22 *Foreign Internal Defense*)

**guerrilla force.** A group of irregular, predominantly indigenous personnel organized along military lines to conduct military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held, hostile, or denied territory. (JP 1-02)

**guerrilla warfare.** Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces. Also called GW. (JP 1-02)

**governance.** The state's ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society, including the representative participatory decision-making processes typically guaranteed under inclusive, constitutional authority. (Approved for inclusion in JP 1-02.)

**host nation.** A nation which receives the forces and/or supplies of allied nations and/or NATO organizations to be located on, to operate in, or to transit through its territory.
Also called HN. (JP 1-02)

**insurgency.** The organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in JP 1-02.)

**intelligence preparation of the battlespace.** An analytical methodology employed to reduce uncertainties concerning the enemy, environment, and terrain for all types of operations. Intelligence preparation of the battlespace builds an extensive database for each potential area in

which a unit may be required to operate. The database is then analyzed in detail to determine the impact of the enemy, environment, and terrain on operations, and presents it in graphic form. Intelligence preparation of the battlespace is a continuing process. Also called IPB. (JP 1-02)

**interagency.** United States Government agencies and departments, including the Department of Defense. (JP 1-02)

**internal defense and development.** 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. Also called IDAD. See also foreign internal defense. (JP 1-02)

**irregular forces.** Armed individuals or groups who are not members of the regular armed forces, police, or other internal security forces. (JP 1-02)

**irregular warfare.** A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will. Also called IW. (JP 1-02)

**joint force commander.** A general term applied to a combatant commander, subunified commander, or joint task force commander authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a joint force. Also called JFC. (JP 1-02)

**joint special operations area.** A restricted area of land, sea, and airspace assigned by a joint force commander to the commander of a joint special operations force to conduct special operations activities. The commander of joint special operations forces may further assign a specific area or sector within the joint special operations area to a subordinate commander for mission execution. The scope and duration of the special operations forces' mission, friendly and hostile situation, and politico-military considerations all influence the number, composition, and sequencing of special operations forces deployed into a joint special operations area. It may be limited in size to accommodate a discrete direct action mission or may be extensive enough to allow a continuing broad range of unconventional warfare operations. Also called JSOA. (JP 1-02)

**joint special operations task force.** A joint task force composed of special operations units from more than one Service, formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. The joint special operations task force may have conventional non-special operations units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions. Also called JSOTF. (JP 1-02)

**military civic action.** The use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, sanitation, and others contributing to economic and social development, which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population. (US forces may at times advise or engage in military civic actions in overseas areas.) (JP 1-02)

**operational environment.** A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. Also called OE. (JP 1-02)

**paramilitary forces.** Forces or groups distinct from the regular armed forces of any country, but resembling them in organization, equipment, training, or mission. (JP 1-02)

**raid.** An operation, usually small scale, involving a swift penetration of hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or to destroy installations. It ends with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. (JP 1-02)

**Remote Area Operations.** Remote area operations take place in insurgent-controlled or contested areas to establish islands of popular support for the HN government and deny support to the insurgents. They differ from consolidation operations in that they do not establish permanent HN government control over the area. Ethnic, religious, or other isolated minority groups may populate remote areas. They may be in the interior of the HN or near border areas where major infiltration routes exist. Remote area operations normally involve specially trained paramilitary or irregular forces. SF teams support remote area operations to interdict insurgent activity, destroy insurgent base areas, and demonstrate that the HN government has not conceded control to the insurgents. They also collect and report information on insurgent intentions in more populated areas. PSYOP and CA programs help in obtaining local support for remote area operations. (FM 3-05.202 *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* – 2007)

**sea-air-land team.** US Navy forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations in maritime, littoral, and riverine environments. Also called SEAL. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in the next edition of JP 1-02.)

**security force assistance**. The Department of Defense activities that contribute to unified action by the US Government to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions. Also called **SFA**. (Upon approval of this publication, this term and its definition will be included in JP 1-02 and sourced to JP 3-22)

**special forces.** US Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities. Also called SF. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in the next edition of JP 1-02.)

**special operations.** Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. Also called SO. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in the next edition of JP 1-02.)

**special operations command.** A subordinate unified or other joint command established by a joint force commander to plan, coordinate, conduct and support joint special operations within the joint force commander's assigned operational area. Also called SOC. (JP 1-02)

**special operations forces.** Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF. (JP 1-02)

**special reconnaissance.** Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces. These actions provide an additive capability for commanders and supplement other conventional reconnaissance and surveillance actions. Also called SR. (This term and its definition modify the existing term and its definition and are approved for inclusion in the next edition of JP 1-02.)

**strategy.** A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives. (JP 1-02.)

**terrorism.** The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. See also terrorist; terrorist group. (JP 1-02)

**terrorist.** An individual who commits an act or acts of violence or threatens violence in pursuit of political, religious, or ideological objectives. See also terrorism. (JP 1-02)

**terrorist group.** Any number of terrorists who assemble together, have a unifying relationship, or are organized for the purpose of committing an act or acts of violence or threatens violence in pursuit of their political, religious, or ideological objectives. See also terrorism. (JP 1-02)

**unconventional warfare.**
1. A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery. Also called UW. (JP 1-02. SOURCE: JP 3-05)
2. Operations conducted by, with, or through irregular forces in support of a resistance movement, an insurgency, or conventional military operations. Also called **UW.** (FM 3-05.130)
3. Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area (United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Unconventional Warfare Definition Brief*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, July 9, 2009).

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