

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Research Topics 2014



**JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS
UNIVERSITY**

7701 Tampa Point Boulevard
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Special Operations Research Topics 2014





Joint Special Operations University and the Strategic Studies Department

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

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

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

USSOCOM mission. Provide fully capable Special Operations Forces to defend the United States and its interests. Synchronize planning of global operations against terrorist networks.

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

The Strategic Studies Department also organizes and conducts strategic symposia, interagency curricula, international curricula, regional and cultural education senior level courses, and senior level professional military education.

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On the cover. Upper Left: A Critical Skills Operator stationed with 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, Camp Pendleton, Calif., carries a Special Operations Forces Combat Assault Rifle during a training exercise. (Photo courtesy Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command)

Upper Right: Republic of Mali and U.S. Special Operations Forces troops stand in formation next to each other during the opening ceremony of the Flintlock 10 Exercise in Bamako, Mali. (Photo by U.S. Army Master Sergeant Donald Sparks)

Lower Left: Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Frazier of the 711th Special Operations Squadron receives a hug from his daughter in Duke Field, Florida, after returning from a deployment to Southwest Asia. (U.S. Air Force photo by Technical Sergeant Samuel King Jr.)

Lower Right: Members of Special Boat Team 12 navigate through San Diego Bay in rigid-hull inflatable boats. (U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Geneva G. Brier)



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2014

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The JSOU Strategic Studies Department is currently accepting written works relevant to special operations for potential publication. For more information please contact the JSOU Research Director at jsou_research@socom.mil. Thank you for your interest in the JSOU Press.

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Topics Workshop 2014 participants at JSOU January 15, 2013.

Foreword

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Special Operations Research Topics 2014 publication highlights a wide range of topics collaboratively developed and prioritized by experts from across the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community. The topics in these pages are intended to guide research projects for professional military education (PME) students, JSOU faculty, fellows, and others writing about special operations during this academic year. As JSOU executes the joint education mission of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the university is focused on publication of hard-hitting, SOF-relevant research that contributes to better understanding of the policy and strategy issues affecting the operational and planning needs of SOF.

Our researchers, many of whom are world-renowned experts and authors, often find themselves lecturing in JSOU classrooms. This gives our students the unique opportunity to experience first-hand the author's perspectives on their analysis and recommendations.

To develop this list, representatives from the USSOCOM headquarters, the theater special operations commands (TSOCs), SOF chairs from the war colleges, representatives from research centers and think tanks, and JSOU senior fellows meet annually to collaboratively develop a comprehensive list of issues and challenges of concern to the greater SOF community.

The research that results from these topics directly supports JSOU's evolution as a preeminent 21st century educational institution recognized as the intellectual and SOF-focused organization to conduct research in national security, military strategy, and global and regional studies. An exciting new development is the establishment of the Center for Special Operations Studies and Research (CSOSR) located at JSOU with initial operational capability forecast this year. CSOSR is the intellectual foundation for the USSOCOM Commander's vision that SOF is the most educated force and will be the recognized center for solving SOF's most complex problems.

I encourage SOF personnel to contribute their experiences and ideas to the SOF community by submitting your completed research on these topics to JSOU Press. If you have any questions about this document or ideas for future topics, contact the director of research via e-mail at jsou_research@socom.mil. I look forward to your participation in JSOU's research and publication program.

Brian A. Maher, SES
President

Introduction

The JSOU Research Topics 2014 list represents an effort to identify, categorize, and list SOF-related research topics for research by PME students, JSOU Senior Fellows, and other SOF researchers who desire to make timely and meaningful contributions to SOF issues and challenges. This list is tailored to address the USSOCOM Commander’s four lines of operation (LOOs):

- Winning the Current Fight
- The Global SOF Network
- Preservation of the Force and Families
- Responsive Resourcing

There is tremendous value and opportunity for personal growth when SOF PME students research and write on timely, relevant, SOF-related topics. Such activity develops the individual’s intellect and provides a professional and practical perspective that broadens and frames the insights of other analysts and researchers in regard to these topics. This list and the accompanying topic descriptions are a guide to stimulate interest and thinking; topics may be narrowed or otherwise modified as deemed necessary (e.g., to suit school writing requirements or maximize individual interests and experiences).

Section A (Priority Topics) identifies topics of particular importance as ranked by the research topics workshop participants. Sections B, C, D, and E each focus on one of the Commander’s LOOs. Section F contains topics of importance to SOF that do not fit into the other categories. All of the topics seek to expand SOF understanding of specific challenges and issues and promote thinking in regard to understanding them and identifying doctrine, capabilities, techniques, and procedures to increase SOF efficacy in addressing them. At the same time, the research is intended to inform policymakers, the larger military profession, and the public of the issues and challenges of concern to the SOF community and what might be undertaken in support of them. The topics reflect a consensus of those participating in the topics workshop and are vetted through TSOCs and components—that is, the topics are deemed particularly worthwhile in addressing immediate SOF needs and in building future capacity for emerging challenges.

Previous years' research topics lists provide a repository of topics highlighted in the past. These topics lists may provide prospective researchers with additional ideas of relevant topics identified in this publication. The previous editions of the USSCOM Research Topics (2009 through 2013 editions) are available on the JSOU public web site at: <https://jsou.socom.mil/Pages/Publications.aspx>.

Limited travel funding may be available from JSOU to support travel for PME student research projects (e.g., to conduct interviews or visit USSOCOM or component headquarters). These research "grants" are subject to approval by the JSOU Strategic Studies Department director, contingent on the topic selected and the anticipated value of the research. All requests for research travel funding must be submitted to JSOU through your institution's SOF Chair or senior SOF representative. Please share this reference with fellow researchers, thesis advisors, and other colleagues and feel free to submit additional topics for consideration.

We encourage you to visit our publications page on JSOU's public website to see whether JSOU has a publication that relates to your area of interest. We also encourage you to send us your completed research on these topics.

A. Priority Topics

Topic Titles

- A1. No time to think: Crisis management culture in SOF is inhibiting strategic thought
- A2. SOF in under-governed spaces
- A3. The next SOF fight: Emerging trends and mission consequences
- A4. Women in SOF
- A5. How do you “build” future SOF leaders?
- A6. Advantages and disadvantages of a persistent SOF forward presence
- A7. SOF 2030: The way SOF will look and operate in the future
- A8. Cyber operations and SOF
- A9. Using unconventional warfare against violent extremists

Topic Descriptions

A1. No time to think: Crisis management culture in SOF is inhibiting strategic thought

From our most senior leaders down to the lowest level of leadership, Special Operations Forces (SOF) perpetuate a culture of crisis response and rapid problem solving. While this can be very beneficial in high-stress, time-sensitive situations, it may not be conducive to the development of far-reaching strategies and effective programs. A perceived lack of time to think and ponder consequences of actions can have the net result of strategic deficiency. What are some examples of this cultural impediment, and how can SOF adapt the culture to improve strategic decision making? Do our leaders spend sufficient time considering all the risks and benefits of particular decisions, or are they constrained by the next meeting or latest crisis? Even in U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) headquarters, away from the battlefield, a culture of crisis management has created a perception that everything is important and all problems must be quickly solved. Not only does this imply that slowing down to think is a waste of time, but it also increases the level of stress for all concerned. Without taking time to critically think about issues,

do personnel have difficulty making sense of their situation leading to increased stress? How does this environment thwart any parallel efforts to manage stress? Does a culture of crisis management in SOF artificially impose stress even when service members and civilians are not actively deployed? Are there effective ways to overcome the crisis culture? Is the USSOCOM crisis management style driven by the direct action door kickers at the expense of thinkers? Could Sun Tzu or Clausewitz have done their foundational work at USSOCOM given the crisis management culture?

A2. SOF in under-governed spaces

Recent events in Mali, Libya, and Somalia have highlighted the difficulties of countering terrorism in areas lacking a viable national government. What roles should SOF play in these areas? Should SOF concentrate on long-term capacity building or short-term operations? Are there some lessons learned from previous SOF efforts? Are SOF prepared to advocate a form of government that is acceptable to locals yet at odds with the ideological desires of interagency partners? Does, or should, the legal framework for our actions in other countries apply to under-governed spaces? Is a revised definition of sovereignty needed? In irregular warfare (IW), what are the historical best practices and primary considerations for operations in remote areas, under-governed spaces, or denied areas?

A3. The next SOF fight: Emerging trends and mission consequences

Emerging trends warrant a reexamination of SOF missions and their consequences. The last decade has challenged and focused SOF resources in specific ways. However, the strategic environment and the potential actors within it have not been static. A key question is where, and for what reason, will SOF be in hostile environments? Where have SOF been, and what have these forces accomplished? What historical outcomes may be linked or associated with the presence of SOF? What were the metrics of success? Were these metrics effective or appropriate? What are some recommended metrics for future conflicts? Is there a link between SOF presence in a country and that country's subsequent economic growth? Should we send SOF to areas where we wish to 'reinforce success' or areas we hope to 'save

from total disaster’? What is the level of concern that those forces we train to a higher standard will become more capable adversaries in the future? Do SOF have sufficient capabilities and capacity for the next fight?

A4. Women in SOF

In January 2013, the Secretary of Defense removed the ban on women in specialties and positions whose primary mission is direct ground combat. This was partially in response to the realities of the modern battlefield and recent experiences with female engagement teams and cultural support teams. With removal of these restrictions, the special operations community needs to determine how to best integrate women into SOF. In what missions would the incorporation of women in SOF be a distinct advantage or disadvantage? What are the relevant experiences of other armies in integrating women into SOF? How have women been incorporated into insurgent and terrorist operations? What lessons can be learned from women in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II? What distinct contributions can females make to U.S. special operations? How effective has female engagement been in Iraq and Afghanistan? To date, what has been the benefit versus the cost for U.S. forces? As women are integrated more deeply into SOF, how does this potentially affect recruiting? How will integration impact male and female social dynamics as a whole? Is there an impact on readiness, facilities, and training standards?

A5. How do you “build” future SOF leaders?

Given parochial interests of the services, it is natural that their primary concern is service-oriented rather than SOF-oriented. Yet, SOF need to be highly specialized with skill sets that do not necessarily fit into service-oriented models. As USSOCOM looks to have high quality leadership, is it reasonable to expect the services to ensure future SOF leaders are prepared? Who in SOF should be “groomed”—operators, support personnel, or everyone assigned? How many people need to be “groomed” and for what leadership positions? Should USSOCOM be able to select component and other commanders? Which commander/office/leader is in the right position to make this work properly? What new authorities does USSOCOM need to do

this? Does grooming these leaders create too many “clones” that lack the diversity to serve and examine SOF? Unconstrained from current models, given the conditions of the contemporary battle space, what skill sets would you want to foster? USSOCOM wants to develop SOF with doctorate degrees; how do you identify, manage, and retain these people?

A6. Advantages and disadvantages of a persistent SOF forward presence

SOF are moving forward to help build a global SOF network and increase responsiveness. While there is no question of whether this effort is going to occur, there should be serious examination of the benefits and best practices of the forces. What advantages may be realized from posturing (or basing) SOF outside the U.S.? What are some of the disadvantages or even potential unintended consequences associated with posturing SOF forward? Language proficiency should be greatly enhanced, but only if risk aversion and a relaxed force protection posture allows for local interaction by SOF; is this realistic? In countries where SOF have a continuous presence, do they stay long enough in one place to accomplish their missions? Do personnel rotate too frequently to build adequate relationships with partnership personnel?

A7. SOF 2030: The way SOF will look and operate in the future

What common vision of the individual operator, as well as collective SOF, will harmonize and align the efforts of the planners and acquisition personnel as they conduct long-range planning for the expenditure of resources and efforts? What future technology trends for requirements, training, and education are reasonably possible for equipping the force? What strategic contextualization is required to prevent irrelevance of a SOF 2030 vision? Is 2030 too far in the future to realistically deal with fiscal realities and uncertainty? Historically, how well have SOF and the services succeeded in achieving future visions? Based on ever-increasing regional complexity, technology advances, and global social responsibility concerns, is it time for the elevation of USSOCOM to a service-level equivalent? How will continued sensor development and fidelity provide SOF with increased

capability across core activities? Yet, technology is not a substitute for strategy; how will SOF tailor its approach to less technical partners to maximize capability?

A8. Cyber operations and SOF

Cyber conflict is not the future; it is the present. Yet the complexity of the subject area is deep and the rules and tools unclear. How should USSOCOM prepare for environments in which cyber operations occur? How could USSOCOM ensure theater special operations commands (TSOCs) are equipped with minimal capabilities to conduct general analysis in their respective area of responsibility (AOR)? How could USSOCOM prepare for significant cyber threats to counter nefarious activities conducted in the TSOC geographical areas? Can SOF's global presence be leveraged to actively defend friendly networks through interdiction of networks? Recent regime changes in Egypt and Libya exemplify the use of cyber tools, like social media, to successfully influence and organize resistance movements. How do cyber operations affect the conduct of UW? To what extent is it reasonable to reject legalistic constraints on cyber war as it is likely to hinder U.S. capability while failing to impact foreign state and non-state actors? Staying ahead of the adversary requires a clear understanding of the strategies, threats, capabilities, and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs); what are the counters to these threats?

A9. Using unconventional warfare against violent extremists

With profound change occurring in many countries, once well-known regimes are being replaced. With such monumental changes occurring, the end-state is far from clear. It is possible that UW could become a more significant activity for SOF in the near future. What changes in U.S. legal authorities and restraints need to occur to prevent enemy exploitation? How would we have to modify existing UW policy and doctrine to use SOF in a force multiplier role for a cost-efficient containment strategy against violent extremism? In an era of constrained resources and a continued demand for low-density/high-demand assets, can persistent engagement with surrogates provide an economical UW approach? What does the research and body

of literature in the strategic logic of nonviolent conflict offer to U.S. UW paradigms? How can SOF illuminate networks to mitigate the inadvertent empowerment of malign actors?

B. Line of Operation 1 - Winning the Current Fight

Topic Titles

- B1. Service-provided capabilities for SOF in post-2014 Afghanistan
- B2. Transitioning from a wartime posture in Afghanistan: A transfer of responsibilities
- B3. Afghanistan 2014 and beyond: An evolving SOF mission
- B4. Village stability operations: Lessons from the past and into the future
- B5. Transnational organized crime and terrorism
- B6. SOF's role in influencing relevant populations' behavior
- B7. Regional allocation of SOF
- B8. Transnational violent extremism
- B9. Special warfare campaigning: Rising to the operational level of war
- B10. How do SOF and conventional forces train, equip, man, and fight together?
- B11. Relationships between North African tribes, al-Qaeda, and other violent extremist organizations

Topic Descriptions

- B1. Service-provided capabilities for SOF in post-2014 Afghanistan**

The post-2014 U.S. military presence in Afghanistan will see most but not all conventional forces (CF) withdrawn from Afghanistan. SOF presence will remain in Afghanistan and require service-provided capabilities to support continued operations. What challenges do the services face in providing support to SOF while trying to simultaneously reset their forces? How does the impending rebalance to the Asia/Pacific area impact sourcing requirements necessary for Afghanistan over the long term? Given the long "tail" of support required for special operations, what are the critical enabling elements provided by the services? Do these critical enablers need to be part of SOF (rather than the services) to ensure the continuity, C2, and common mindset needed as part of the SOF team? As an example, will the next explosive ordinance detachment (EOD) unit

rotating in understand enough of SOF and the SOF “approach” to seamlessly and efficiently perform to standards? Considering that military support units are built to meet specific requirements and conventional support units are force-listed and resourced to satisfy conventional unit requirements, will any “excess capacity” exist to support SOF? Or, should USSOCOM support units be restructured/grown to meet future demands in a self-sufficient model rather than a dependency model?

B2. Transitioning from a wartime posture in Afghanistan:

A transfer of responsibilities

A post-International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) environment will require an adjustment of C2 relationships and interagency involvement. What are those ISAF-led tasks and responsibilities that will be transferred to the interagency, international community, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, or simply will not be done? How will the U.S. consolidate successes while assisting Afghanistan’s government in maintaining legitimacy? How does the U.S. do this in such a way that it strengthens Afghanistan’s status as a sovereign nation, contributes to their relationships in the region as well as their status as an effective member in the international community, while remaining a responsible partner for the U.S.? How do SOF transition from a wartime posture in apportioned battle space, using Title 10 and 50 authorities, to a post-conflict posture supporting U.S. security assistance activities in a non-apportioned space or sovereign nation territory, under Titles 10, 22, and 50 authorities? What is the role of the TSOC during this period?

B3. Afghanistan 2014 and beyond: An evolving SOF mission

The drawdown in Afghanistan will necessarily change the security environment. The absence of a visibly large U.S. force to maintain stability will be replaced by small SOF units and Afghan security forces. A continued examination of the security environment in Afghanistan for 2014 is critical. As the U.S. military draws down in Afghanistan, what national security challenges will remain? What organizations will pose the greatest threat to U.S. interests as the drawdown is executed? What actions can SOF take now to prepare

for success as the CF prepare to depart? What missions will SOF be required to do, and what do they look like in this specific environment? What are the implications for force structure and sustaining the force? “Drawdown” is not just about military numbers, the types of forces, and the primary military command structure. It is also about the Department of State and Department of Defense (DOD) enabling functions that SOF require in order to deal with a new security environment. What will that new security environment look like? How will those relationships develop, and how will those responsibilities be shared? What conditions must be set for Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command – Afghanistan to disengage from the Afghan Local Police program?

B4. Village stability operations: Lessons from the past and into the future

Village stability operations (VSO) are a major part of the coalition program in Afghanistan. Can we learn anything from the “Strategic Hamlet” program in Vietnam? Are there any similarities from the Vietnam experience that are relevant to Afghanistan, as an example, in the areas of technology or information sharing? To what degrees can technical means overcome some of the tactical challenges from the Vietnam era? And to what extent did technical “improvements” actually exacerbate the tactical through strategic challenges? What mechanisms can improve information sharing between Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, and Afghan National Directorate of Security? This should include assessing the roles and effectiveness of the Operational Control Groups and the Regional Operational Control Groups that are conducting the coordination between these three elements on a daily basis. What potential assessment methodologies—to include both quantitative and qualitative measures—might be used to evaluate the effectiveness of VSO in a particular location as it applies to a particular command decision, mission, or end state? What things could be changed or identified internally or externally from VSO that could better support the way ahead? Is the VSO concept applicable to other theaters, and if so, how might it be adapted or generalized?

B5. Transnational organized crime and terrorism

Transnational organized crime (TOC) networks are a world-wide issue and span across combatant commanders' AORs. How do TOC networks interact with adversaries as not only facilitators, but smugglers, providers, and "fronts" as well? Connections go well beyond the drug cartels, to include terrorism, and the effects these organizations are having on the U.S. What are the successes, failures, constraints, authorities, operational, legal, and intelligence issues associated with supporting interagency TOC analysis and operations? How do the various TSOCs work together to address the issue? What benefit or detriment emerges from making a distinction between terrorist organizations and criminal organizations? Does this distinction enable or hinder interagency coordination? International coordination? International legitimacy?

B6. SOF's role in influencing relevant populations' behavior

IW strategy includes influencing the behavior of relevant populations, yet SOF are learning this through on-the-job training. What needs to be included in SOF training and education in order to increase the effectiveness of information operations? Is this a function of the Critical Task Review Board or Critical Task Site Selection Board within the school houses? Should this be part of the curriculum review process?

Considering the question of metrics in information operations, what is the appropriate balance between information operations conducted by outsiders to influence the local relevant population, and the information generated by the population itself? How is this balance measured? How does it change across different social-cultural settings, political regimes, and types of conflict? What is the TSOC's responsibility in influencing relevant population behavior in its AOR? Is it properly resourced, permitted, and capable?

B7. Regional allocation of SOF

As SOF levels in Afghanistan are reduced, the allocation of SOF across regions is likely to change. Should Asia/Pacific receive most of the reallocated SOF as part of the general DOD pivot to Asia? Should Africa receive more SOF because of the newly emerging crises? Should the U.S. Northern Command AOR receive more SOF to deal

with the Mexican TOC networks? With a change in priority regions, what are the toughest languages, greatest distances, and diminishing resources? Is Special Forces (SF) regional expertise even possible? On the other hand, with these changing priorities, is it prudent for SOF to be aligned with TSOC C2 structures, or should they align against enemy threats under a centralized command for resource efficiency and unity of command? Given the assumption that authorities for SF will not change, how could SF groups, indeed SOF as a whole, best engage and maintain engagement with key countries in their respective AORs? What would this look like?

B8. Transnational violent extremism

The threat of al-Qaeda and other groups remains an area of concern for the U.S. and its allies around the world. The reach of al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks can now be found not only in the U.S. Central Command AOR, but expanding into the U.S. Africa Command AOR as well. In particular, there is concern for militant groups operating in eastern Central African Republic, Northern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, South Sudan, and Sudan, including their operating areas, membership, ideology, and smuggling routes. Additionally, research in the area should include those territories that are transitioning to Sharia Law.

Research questions relevant to the topic include: What is the nature of terrorism as a tactic in the third decade of this cycle? Who will use terrorism, to what ends, and how? Procedurally, how do SOF coordinate intelligence, planning, and operations across U.S. organizational boundaries as compared to country teams, geographic combatant commanders (GCCs), State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and others? Are UW TTPs viable tools for containing these movements? What are the detailed cultural beliefs and standards derived from Sharia Law in areas where Sharia Law is not the known to be the governing law of the land?

B9. Special warfare campaigning: Rising to the operational level of war

Despite 10 years' experience in IW, CF's ability to plan and execute operational level campaigns requiring an emphasis on special warfare

is lacking. There is no SOF headquarters designed to execute special warfare at the campaign level, nor is there comprehensive doctrine for special warfare/special operations campaign planning at the operational level. Should special warfare be the domain of SOF at the campaign level, or is it the responsibility of Joint Force Headquarters and specifically GCCs to develop integrated campaigns that include Special Warfare similar to traditional war-like campaign plans? In an era of persistent conflict, where persistent engagement will be the norm, consideration needs to be given to how the GCCs plan and conduct campaigns that are primarily SOF-relevant, but where the joint task force commander is likely to be a conventional commander.

The crux of the issue is the GCC staff has the lead in developing the campaign plan and the ground force commander will generally be a conventional three-star commander. The TSOC supports the GCC and conventional commander, but the nature of the campaign would imply the inverse. Will the Afghanistan model, where the special operations joint task force (SOJTF) exercises command and control over all forces be the new norm? If so, can SOF support more than one SOJTF?

B10. How do SOF and conventional forces train, equip, man, and fight together?

As the transition of the war in Afghanistan continues and the downsizing of units meets minimal manning levels, it is imperative that SOF and CF combine efforts and resources to meet the requirements identified by the President and DOD. Command, control, and manning, to include type of manning, are critical ingredients in this process. In addition, the ability to advise and fight against an asymmetric enemy while planning with minimal force levels and enablers is critical. Objectives include: clear, defined processes for deployment and integration of SOF and CF to include pre-deployment, partnering and training; clearly established force modular formations; identification of minimal and optimal enablers and low-density military and interagency support; and exit strategies and measures of success against determined enemies capitalizing on asymmetric strategies.

How can SOF and CF better integrate to conduct counterinsurgency and CT operations? Is it necessary for CF and SOF to train

together before they deploy together? Does training together improve C2? As an example, for an EOD unit? A water purification unit? Do SOF need some conventional enablers assigned to USSOCOM, like EOD? What roles will the Army's Regionally Aligned Brigades play? How will they affect SOF? What adjustments should SOF make in order to optimize the overall U.S. Government (USG) effort?

B11. Relationships between North African tribes, al-Qaeda, and other violent extremist organizations

Investigate tribal connections between al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) of the region. Provide insight on how to address the threats and leverage tribal connections/seams against AQIM and VEOs. As an example, what are the lessons from Iraq? The success in Western Iraq was largely due to leveraging the Sunni population to reject and resist al-Qaeda. All transnational groups, tribes, and other organizations/affiliations that might be leveraged against the expansion of AQIM and other al-Qaeda associated groups should be examined. Therefore, what are the relationships between North African tribes, AQIM and VEOs? Where are the seams, and what are the common interests that unite the various organizations? How can those seams or common interests be used to influence the various populations?

C. Line of Operation 2 - The Global SOF Network

Topic Titles

- C1. Expanding the global SOF network: To what end?
- C2. Joint service capabilities in support of SOF
- C3. The next SOF fight: Capabilities and future adversaries
- C4. Global SOF posture and access: Past, present, and future
- C5. Leveraging networks for persistent presence
- C6. Concepts for regional SOF coordination centers
- C7. Training partner nation forces
- C8. Embedding full-time special operations liaison officers in select embassies

Topic Discussions

C1. **Expanding the global SOF network: To what end?**

Clearly establishing and defining the ends is important to maintaining U.S. relative superiority in an expanded SOF network. What capabilities will SOF require in the future in order to maintain relative superiority in an expanded global SOF network? What is the right balance of SOF capability and force structure across the range of missions assigned to SOF? What implications does expansion of a global SOF network have on UW or CT? Can the value or effectiveness of a SOF network be measured or quantified? If so, what metrics are appropriate to measure or gauge the effectiveness of a SOF network?

C2. **Joint service capabilities in support of SOF**

As the role of SOF increases to shape national security strategy missions abroad, how might the services support SOF using CF? Fiscal realities and national interests will compel the U.S. to reduce the conventional military force footprint abroad, leaving SOF as the globally predominant engagement force. Designed for light operations in austere environments, SOF require logistical and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities typically organic to theater-aligned CF. How might the services and combatant commanders provide SOF

with logistical and C4ISR infrastructure after the larger more robust CF depart? Should SOF develop their support capability for those functions? What should joint and service strategies be for achieving national security objectives in a new era of reduced resources?

C3. The next SOF fight: Capabilities and future adversaries

The SOF community is reexamining its purpose and relooking at activities and missions that have not received the attention in training and resourcing necessary to maintain proficiency. Can SOF capabilities required for the emerging trends and mission sets be identified and clearly delineated? Based on current SOF capabilities, do SOF have sufficient capabilities and capacity for the next fight? Can indicators that require SOF to modify, adjust, or change their operational capabilities and training be identified? How has the infusion of technological advances reshaped the way SOF operate and will be able to operate against future peer or technologically-superior adversaries in non-permissive or restrictive environments? What asymmetric TTPs will impact future SOF operations?

C4. Global SOF posture and access: Past, present, and future

How has past and current global SOF posture enabled or constrained the U.S.s' ability to respond to crisis, or ability to leverage existing partner nation relationships to achieve security objectives? How have past or present USG policy decisions and partner nation constraints/restraints impacted SOF posture and access to conduct operations, engagements, and exercises? How do SOF achieve the right balance of access and posture in each GCC's theater as a critical component to both the USSOCOM 2020 vision and National Defense Strategy? What opportunities are there to gain synergy with SOF from key partner nations?

C5. Leveraging networks for persistent presence

What is the real power in a network: standardization or shared vision? Should more effort be applied toward developing shared visions so the U.S. can minimize overall cost and obligations? Is the declared presence of U.S. SOF in a partner nation a hindrance to achieving U.S. or partner national goals? To what degree do partners in the

SOF global network need to be totally interoperable? Is the intent of the planned regional SOF coordination centers, foreign internal defense, and security force assistance programs to develop capacities and capabilities in other countries that replicate the U.S. model or are non-standard, non-Western approaches satisfactory if the ultimate objective is achieved?

C6. Concepts for regional SOF coordination centers

The USSOCOM commander has directed, where feasible, the establishment of regional SOF coordination centers (RSCCs) as vehicles for regional collaboration. RSCCs are considered integral to enabling the global SOF network and are envisioned to be regional, multilateral engagement hubs for facilitating communication and interoperability among global SOF partners. What are the different possibilities in creating these centers taking into account cultural, political, and social sensitivities? What should the roles and responsibilities of the regional centers be? How should the RSCCs be staffed? How can partner nations be encouraged to provide personnel? Do each of these centers need to be approached differently? If so, what are some examples? Should the RSCCs be aligned by GCC or some other means? Can RSCCs successfully exist where a U.S. presence is problematic? How can the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of these centers be measured? What metrics should be considered? What should be the approach to information sharing in RSCCs?

C7. Training partner nation forces

Training partner nation forces is a traditional SOF mission and one that is aligned with U.S. national strategy of building partner nation capacity in all regions of the world. How much of USSOCOM allocated resources should be dedicated to training partner-nation forces? Do the GCCs have policies, programs, or similar interactions with partner nations in their region? Are these programs sufficient? Should SOF train only partner-nation SOF, or should it also train CF, constabularies, police, and civil administrations? Should SOF work with conventional trainers to ensure synergy? Do opportunities exist within other geographic regions that would enable the same kind of collaboration among SOF that currently exists within North Atlantic

Treaty Organization? What constitutes a strategic partnership in regards to SOF? How does partnership differ from capacity-building? How can training with partner nation forces be leveraged into a basis for a strategic partnership?

C8. Embedding full-time special operations liaison officers in select embassies

USSOCOM is developing special operations liaison officers (SOLOs) for assignment with partner nations' SOF headquarters overseas. Should USSOCOM have full-time SOLOs embedded in the country teams at U.S. embassies in countries with critical SOF operations? What would be the purpose and role of such SOLOs? What conditions justify placement of a full-time SOLO at an embassy as opposed to what military attachés or security cooperation officers do currently? What would be the specific duties of a SOLO, and how would they differ from other U.S. military personnel assigned to an embassy? What are the diplomatic, legal, and bureaucratic requirements of embedding SOLOs in embassies? Are there professional development implications of deploying SOLOs? Should SOF heavily participate in respective service foreign area officer programs or develop a parallel SOF-specific career track? Should there be language, country experience, and rank requirements for SOLOs? Is a SOLO career track feasible? Does USSOCOM have the resources/manpower to execute this initiative?

D. Line of Operation 3 - Preservation of the Force and Families

Topic Titles

- D1. Show no weakness: The stigma associated with seeking medical and mental health care
- D2. Balancing operational requirements with preserving the force and families
- D3. Sustaining the SOF warrior and family during an era of persistent conflict
- D4. The SOF mission and mental health: Career implications of mental health treatment
- D5. Stress inoculation in SOF operators
- D6. Partnering outside the Department of Defense for preservation of the force and family

Topic Discussions

D1. Show no weakness: The stigma associated with seeking medical and mental health care

It has been suggested that although today's military leaders publically encourage forces to seek medical or behavioral health care, there remains a stigma associated with it. What can be done to "destigmatize" SOF operators and their families seeking medical and behavioral health care? Are there any adverse consequences to destigmatizing medical and behavioral health care treatment? What elements of military and SOF culture are present that challenge efforts to balance mental fitness with duty performance? Is a culture that rewards personnel based on how many hours they work, how many days they deploy and how many sacrifices they make counterproductive to establishing programs that support restoring and maintaining reduced levels of stress? How can a SOF operator take leave, reduce time away from family and/or seek measures to reduce stress when those efforts are possibly stigmatized as non-productive or perceived as a weakness? What are the implications of SOF personnel and families seeking outside health care under the exigencies of non-disclosure

agreements? What roles could a “SOF-for-Life” program play in assisting active and retired SOF to cope with stressors? Could an analysis of the retired SOF population coping mechanisms assist in improving current treatment protocols? Is the stigma associated with mental health treatment organizationally or culturally imposed? To what extent do SOF operators contribute to stigmas which prevent the seeking of health care or counseling for themselves and their families?

D2. Balancing operational requirements with preserving the force and families

SOF service members have identified the lack of predictability in their schedules as one of the principal causes of pressure on the force and families; however they perceive that their immediate leadership and commanders do not and will not turn down requests for additional deployments and other commitments, thus increasing operations tempo and decreasing predictability. Are mission requirements increasing and outpacing available manpower? Do SOF commanders effectively balance requests to support operational and training requirements with maintaining a healthy force? Can SOF maintain readiness levels and meet mission requirements while maintaining personnel tempo levels at a manageable level? How often do SOF commanders turn down requests for operational support without risking negative career implications? Should operations tempo and training for SOF at home station be reduced? What are reasonable work hours for SOF during the period of time when they are not deployed? How does “taking SOF global” conflict with preserving the force families? Will increasing accompanied permanent change of station assignments overseas alleviate the stressors of an overseas posture for SOF?

D3. Sustaining the SOF warrior and family during an era of persistent conflict

All indications point toward a continued high operations tempo and forward global engagement by SOF after the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan is decreased. What are the lessons learned from more than 12 years of increased operations tempo that can be carried forward to sustain SOF personnel and their families? USSOCOM has

administered an innovative and aggressive initiative named the Care Coalition and its Care Coalition Recovery Program since 2005 to assist the most severely injured SOF warriors and their families. What have been the impacts of the most recent programs to sustain SOF personnel and their families? How might these programs be impacted if forced to cope with more asynchronous deployment schedules (such as smaller numbers deployed simultaneously to the same location, greater dispersion in deployment offsets and locations)? What is the best way to address family issues and therapy? Are there fiscal, legal, or other constraints or obstacles that might limit the indefinite employment of these programs at current or increased levels? What metrics will articulate success and justify the value of these efforts to military members, policymakers, and Congress? How do SOF leaders improve access to family counseling and preventive family therapy? Are results consistent across the physical and emotional realms, or are there divergent impacts in these two areas? How is resiliency improving through preventative (pre-rehabilitative) and rehabilitative approaches? What additional measures should be taken? What indicators can be identified, and which are the best predictors of overall family stress? What has been the effect of such programs on recruiting and retention? What methods of measurement can be fielded in order to facilitate the collection of reliable data?

D4. The SOF mission and mental health: career implications of mental health treatment

Although there have been great efforts to encourage service members to seek mental health counseling and a declaration that this will not jeopardize their ability to continue their mission, there are realistically some problems that should remove an individual from direct service. Where is the balance between privacy and mission requirements? Is it different in SOF units? How are SOF personnel encouraged to seek counseling when there is a real perception that if their issues are severe enough, they will lose their ability to continue serving in a SOF unit? There are psychological norms published as part of the physical standards regulations in each service, and by civilian medicine. Does USSOCOM need to develop its own standards for SOF? In special operations, what are the anticipated acceptable

mental health issues, and what are the unacceptable issues? How do we educate leadership and operators on how to identify and address them? How does mental health treatment affect the career prospects for SOF? Should it disqualify individuals from obtaining certain jobs or from obtaining security clearances? To what extent does fear of adverse career consequences discourage individuals from reporting mental health problems?

D5. Stress inoculation in SOF operators

What is human resiliency? What are the characteristics of human resiliency in SOF operators? Are current SOF selection and assessment programs efficient and effective in screening for stress-hardy individuals? Are there more efficient and faster ways to assess and select people who will succeed in SOF units? Can measuring stress resistance be a valid predictor in SOF selection? Can “stress resistance capability” be measured biochemically? Inoculation occurs to prevent certain conditions or ailments. What are the areas that need stress inoculation? What are current means of stress training? Are current training programs adequate?

D6. Partnering outside the Department of Defense for preservation of the force and family

Current laws and policies limit the circumstances under which service members and the DOD are able to accept gifts or assistance from the public and/or private organizations. Do these laws and policies need to be changed? In this time of constrained federal and state budgets, how can SOF leverage private organizations that desire to act in traditionally government-sponsored and funded roles such as post-traumatic stress/traumatic brain injury research and treatment, family/child counseling, other family services, physical therapy/rehab services, and nontraditional medical treatment? What laws/systems need to be put in place? Where can the SOF community leverage the private sector including industry and academia and other organizations outside of DOD for preservation of the force and family? Identify these organizations and how SOF could work with them. What issues, if any, are unique to the SOF community? Additionally, what about international

partners? Can preservation of the force and family lessons and programs be used as a partnership capacity building and access tool?

E. Line of Operation 4 - Responsive Resourcing

Topic Titles

- E1. Developing capabilities to meet the 2020 challenges
- E2. Service-like responsibility is not service-like authority
- E3. Humans or hardware: Straying from a SOF truth?
- E4. Building SOF programs: What else do SOF require for success?
- E5. Resources and sustainment for conducting regional unconventional warfare campaigns
- E6. The SOF funding wave has crested: What comes next?
- E7. Shortening the acquisition cycle
- E8. Does every theater special operations command need to be able to form its own special operations joint task force?

Topic Discussions

E1. **Developing capabilities to meet the 2020 challenges**

With uncertainty of funding comes uncertainty in operations, training, and development. However, USSOCOM must address challenges regardless of resource constraints. What are the emerging special operations challenges for 2020? What are the needed capabilities, and how and when should they be brought into the SOF enterprise? What are the challenges to SOF operations, and how should USSOCOM develop technologies to address them? How does the Joint Concept Technology Demonstration program help? Is strategic thinking trapped by the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) planning, programming, budgeting, and execution system processes? How could USSOCOM and SOF component commanders organize their staffs to develop strategic thought freed from the FYDP trap? What organizational processes inhibit a healthy, dynamic, living, changing organization, and what processes need to exist for checks and balances? Would partnering with the private sector or other USG agencies in new ways help USSOCOM better develop these capabilities while focusing and balancing resourcing?

E2. Service-like responsibility is not service-like authority

Although USSOCOM is provided Major Force Program 11 funding and reports to Congress on the success of SOF-peculiar manning, training, and equipment programs, the large majority of personnel and major item programs reside within the individual services. How does this prevent a joint organization like USSOCOM from adequately preparing its force? What are the financial and acquisition policies that inhibit effective development and resourcing of SOF? How might these processes be modified to support USSOCOM requirements? What are the costs/benefits to DOD budget with USSOCOM as a service component? How would this institutional structure impact readiness across the total force? How does this impact SOF capability, and what does this indicate for CF requirements? Given contemporary policy and strategic forecasts, what are the implications of USSOCOM as a service component on U.S. security and the defense budget?

E3. Humans or hardware: Straying from a SOF truth?

Although the SOF community continually expounds the importance of developing relationships, building partnerships, and focusing on the indirect approach, the majority of major procurement programs are focused on tools for direct action. For example, the special operations helicopter fleet was dramatically expanded over the last decade in response to a requirement in Afghanistan and Iraq for more assault platforms. The new helicopters and their increased technology provide little to no benefit to special operators conducting foreign internal defense, security force assistance, or other partnership missions. Which technological solutions have contributed most/least to providing the full spectrum of SOF capabilities? What additional training and education would be most beneficial for today's SOF? In a more limited resource environment, how can education and indirect methods be given more support in times of transition between conflicts to better prepare the human element of SOF?

E4. Building SOF programs: What else do SOF require for success?

Title 10 and Title 22 funding is required to help many partner nations build their SOF, but no single program exists that provides a suitable

solution. Which present authorities can be combined with case studies to understand gaps and fissures? Most programs also have fiscal year limitations making the development of sustainment programs problematic. What authorities are needed to better support partner nations? Goldwater-Nicholls gave SOF “service-like” responsibilities for many things, including resourcing. Has the command fully exploited these authorities? Can an “overarching” pot of money be developed with more flexibility than the current system? How do you develop/enhance SOF authorities for future success?

E5. Resources and sustainment for conducting regional unconventional warfare campaigns

The key condition of UW is effectively sustaining long-term (5 years or longer) shaping and influencing under regional engagement with partners. Many of our partners are under duress from more aggressive neighbors and larger nations seeking greater dominance in their regions. The USG has pledged to support/work with many of these partners. What are the best practices for resourcing UW in denied and/or restricted access areas? UW activities are executed mainly by the military (predominantly SOF); however the main objective is a political one which is sponsored or advocated by the civilian leadership (both USG and partner nation). How does the SOF community educate and inform those civilian leaders? Interagency support is also crucial to obtain assistance and authorities to operate in denied access or restricted areas. Yet how do SOF ensure that other partners contribute to the costs in the resource-constrained environment?

E6. The SOF funding wave may have crested: What comes next?

The funding realities in the current political and fiscal climate may mean an end to the year after year USSOCOM budget increases of the last 10 years. The new fiscal reality may dictate that USSOCOM will have to make even more difficult prioritization decisions in the future. Those decisions will have lasting implications for the SOF community. Has SOF become too reliant on high-ticket items? With less funding how do we keep effectiveness high while possibly not having advanced technology? How will USSOCOM’s strategic vision be affected should we enter an extended period of more limited funding? How do SOF

succeed in such an environment? What capabilities and/or equipment is eliminated or reduced? Sequestration reduces the top-line for DOD across FYDP; what are the potential short- and long-term effects of continuing resolutions and sequestrations on USSOCOM? What will SOF be capable of at 2007 funding levels without supplemental funding? What could be streamlined and reduced to maintain resource and operational flexibility?

E7. Shortening the acquisition cycle

With a reduction in funding comes a need for greater efficiency. While innovation to enhance efficiency should always be welcome, in a resource-constrained environment it becomes an imperative. How would a two-year operations and maintenance appropriation increase effective use of resources? The longer the cycle, the less “use it or lose it” spending will be required, leading to increased efficiencies. Is a two-year cycle optimal? Will existing programs suffer, and will a new two-year cycle be feasible? Through an abbreviated acquisition cycle, more bang for the buck is a possibility. What are the principal bottlenecks that increase acquisition time? How can they be mitigated? What areas of acquisition have the most urgent needs for reform? What command delegated signature authority levels for spending across the enterprise for best practices are winning the delayed staffing approval process fight? What are some recent examples of prolonged acquisition delays, and how have they impeded mission accomplishment? Can USSOCOM use its ability/authority to utilize PL 85.804 provisions (sole source contracting and other provisions allowing for rapid and special purpose contracting) in the interest of national security across all services? What are the downsides?

E8. Does every theater special operations command need to be able to form its own special operations joint task force?

Headquarters USSOCOM is currently moving manpower to the TSOCs to optimize the TSOC’s capabilities to include the TSOC capability to develop and provide the foundation for its own SOJTF, if required in their AOR. What type of manpower (joint manning documents) is required to provide the foundation for the standup of a SOJTF? However, would the SOJTF be better served remaining in the

continental U.S. and training together, and even add predictability?
Would this add stability?

F. Additional SOF Issues

Topic Titles

- F1. Future doctrinal and operational efforts for the SOF human domain
- F2. Improving USSOCOM's approach to interagency collaboration
- F3. Future SOF involvement in governance and development
- F4. Influencing target audiences through social media
- F5. Vetting of partner nation forces
- F6. What is regular about irregular warfare in the 21st century?
- F7. SOF communication: Inside and out
- F8. Special operations joint task force-type organizations to address regional problems
- F9. SOF mobility in an anti-access/area denial environment

Topic Descriptions

F1. Future doctrinal and operational efforts for the SOF human domain

SOF do not have a coordinated, formalized, or codified process to maximize international, partner, and human domain engagement. This type of engagement is key to expanding the global SOF network. Often, SOF thrive on existing, informal relationships to great effect. However, the existing network is a patchwork of personal relationships, episodic opportunities across regional, functional, and operational equities. The relationships are at times not cultivated with any concerted effort to best identify, maintain, or enhance current engagement opportunities. What are the current joint and SOF definitions and understanding for "human domain efforts," especially as they relate to integration with doctrinally recognized domains (e.g., air, maritime, land, space, cyber)? Should human domain become a doctrinal term? What are the expectations of the SOF enterprise for human domain as it relates to expanding the global SOF network and other DOD and interagency efforts?

F2. Improving USSOCOM's approach to interagency collaboration

The fifth "SOF truth" states most special operations require non-SOF support, and this concept extends to interagency partners. Given USSOCOM's mission, what is the best approach to conducting effective interagency collaboration? Should there be a change in structure and/or process? What are some lessons learned from USSOCOM's experience working with interagency partners and how can these lessons be used to improve the organization? How should USSOCOM – National Capitol Region be organized, and how should it interact with interagency organizations? What is the best model for USSOCOM to effectively collaborate with other agencies? How have USSOCOM interagency programs helped or hindered the DOD's interagency objectives?

F3. Future SOF involvement in governance and development

SOF have acquired extensive experience in governance and development in Afghanistan, particularly through VSO. Should governance and development remain core competencies for some or all SOF in the future? Or should these belong only to CF such as civil affairs and USAID? Is there a need for SOF to have expertise and experience in governance above the village/VSO level? Ideally, which agency/organization is responsible for development at the district/regional level?

F4. Influencing target audiences through social media

A rapidly increasing portion of the world's population is connected in some way to social media. This venue could provide superlative access to popular sentiment and opportunities to influence operations. Is there a need to widen interactive Internet activities authorities? What are the means and value of measuring sentiment on social media, and how does that vary for instance between connected young adults in their teens and twenties versus the old man in the coffee shop? Which social media venues are best suited to interfacing with particular audiences of interest? What are the future trends in social media, and how can SOF tap into this technology?

F5. Vetting of partner-nation forces

Insider attacks in Afghanistan, security force collusion in drug trafficking in Latin America, and human rights abuses by foreign peacekeepers in Somalia demonstrate the importance of vetting partner nation forces. What are the current methods of vetting, and how effective are they? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current vetting process? What new technologies and TTPs should be added to the vetting process? Does it make sense to exclude foreign forces for human rights violations instead of providing human rights training? Even the most thorough vetting process can be rendered irrelevant the moment it is completed unless the subjects are tracked and assessed. Humans are not static and are continually influenced by myriad factors. What is the relationship between vetting programs and other loyalty and confidence-building programs that will yield the most predictability and security?

F6. What is regular about irregular warfare in the 21st century?

As a result of CF superiority and the rise of non-state actors, many state and non-state actors have increasingly adopted irregular means of practicing warfare. Accepting doctrinal definitions of IW, which of these practices are so common and so well understood that primary responsibility could be migrated to CF? In those areas that could be migrated, which ones would be of benefit to SOF to divest or deemphasize? As high-demand/low-density assets, would this allow SOF to collectively shift focus to mission areas that are solely suitable to them?

F7. SOF communication: Inside and out

SOF are often referred to as a community. If so, it is a diverse one that can, at times, be isolated and secretive. This isolation can be due to operational necessity, but it is not always warranted. How can the SOF community better communicate within its confines and with outside elements? What are the legitimate concerns and rules, and what are merely impediments from history and force of habit? Some organizations are more secretive than others. As an example, SF soldiers have been called the silent professionals; however, recent news

releases have indicated that might not be a SOF community attribute. What are the cultural implications?

F8. Special operations joint task force-type organizations to address regional problems

The Special Operations Joint Task Force – Afghanistan (SOJTF-A) was stood up to deal with a synchronization of efforts of multiple SOF and CF from both the U.S. and coalition partners. Although successful, the standup did have its challenges to include manning, authorities, and synchronization of efforts across services, the coalition, and international treaties. SOJTF-A was established within a war zone with established partners and roles. A future challenge will be to establish a similar organization with limited time, involving partner nations in a time sensitive manner or in a less hospitable location. Can we define a clear process for utilization of SOJTF-type organizations to deal with contingencies across a broad spectrum of crisis? What is the basis for employing a SOJTF versus a Joint Special Operations Task Force for addressing a regional problem? What are options to man, equip, and train these organizations, as well as develop protocols to manage coalition and C2 authorities?

F9. SOF mobility in an anti-access/area denial environment

A great deal of press has been given to the air-sea battle operational concept, and its focus on ceding the initiative at the outset of an engagement to a country possessing the latest anti-access/area denial (A2AD) capabilities. Long-range mobility for SOF would be critical to an incremental deconstruction of the equipment and C4ISR network required to maintain an A2AD shield. Being able to engage on the margins of the denied area and slowly roll the shield back may require new capabilities, but it could potentially be accomplished with existing platforms available to SOF. What role could the capabilities of existing mobility platforms (submarines, littoral combat ships, C-130s, CH-53s, CV/MV-22s, et cetera) play when operating within specific threat weapons engagement zones? Could SOF get in, and if so, how far? What conditions must be set prior to entry? Research in this area would seek to expand on the available body of literature, contribute to the development of realistic timelines for mission execution, and help identify capability shortfalls.

Acronym List

A2AD	anti-access/area denial
AOR	area of responsibility
AQIM	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
C2	command and control
C4ISR	command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
CF	conventional forces
DOD	Department of Defense
EOD	explosive ordinance disposal
FYDP	Future Years Defense Program
GCC	geographic combatant commander
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IW	irregular warfare
JSOU	Joint Special Operations University
LOO	line of operation
PME	professional military education
RSCC	regional Special Operations Forces coordination center
SF	Special Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOJTF	special operations joint task force
SOJTF-A	Special Operations Joint Task Force - Afghanistan
SOLO	special operations liaison officer
TOC	transnational organized crime
TSOC	theater special operations command
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	unconventional warfare
VEO	violent extremist organization
VSO	village stability operations

