



**NAVAL
POSTGRADUATE
SCHOOL**

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**PERMANENT PRESENCE FOR THE PERSISTENT CONFLICT:
AN ALTERNATIVE LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF SPECIAL
FORCES**

by

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June 2009

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE June 2009	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Permanent Presence for the Persistent Conflict: An Alternative Look at the Future of Special Forces		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Christopher D. Pratt		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.	
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) <p>This study addresses two questions: 1) What is the future role for SF in the Long War Strategy; and 2) How will the roles and missions of SF have a strategic impact or high utility function in this current fight and in our future endeavors? This thesis asserts that the future role for Special Forces soldiers rests in a permanent OCONUS presence and engagement, so that SF teams can leverage and refine their unique skills, to include gaining a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the regions in which they can be expected to operate.</p> <p>The arguments presented in this thesis are conceptual in nature, and are designed to offer the DoD an alternative approach for persistent presence and engagement. What I am advocating with this argument is a complete and total career commitment to living abroad. SF Groups in their entirety would be forward deployed OCONUS. The roles and posture of SF would change, but the seven primary missions would remain the same. If, as so many people argue, the U.S. needs to move forward with a smaller footprint, a forward-deployed SF would give us a permanent global posture of strategic significance—and one that would certainly help us prosecute the Long War more effectively.</p>			
14. SUBJECT TERMS Special Operations, U.S. Army Special Forces, Global War on Terror (GWOT) or (WOT), Irregular Warfare (IW), Regional Engagement, Enduring Engagement, Permanent/Persistent Presence, Building Partnership Capacity, Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Security Force Assistance (SFA), Global Counterinsurgency (COIN), Long War.			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 77
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

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AN ALTERNATIVE LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF SPECIAL FORCES**

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

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This study addresses two questions: 1) What is the future role for SF in the Long War Strategy; and 2) How will the roles and missions of SF have a strategic impact or high utility function in this current fight and in our future endeavors? This thesis asserts that the future role for Special Forces soldiers rests in a permanent OCONUS presence and engagement, so that SF teams can leverage and refine their unique skills, to include gaining a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the regions in which they can be expected to operate.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	HYPOTHETICAL/COUNTERFACTUAL	1
B.	THESIS OUTLINE.....	4
II.	STRATEGIC UTILIZATION OF SPECIAL FORCES.....	7
A.	OVERVIEW	7
B.	BACKGROUND/HISTORY.....	11
C.	MISSION OF THE SPECIAL FORCES.....	13
III.	NEW STRATEGY FOR THE LONG WAR.....	17
A.	THE ARGUMENT FOR PERSISTENT PRESENCE.....	17
B.	FROM PERSISTENT TO PERMANENT PRESENCE.....	21
IV.	PEOPLE BEFORE PLATFORMS	25
A.	INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA.....	25
B.	SUSTAINED SFA	26
V.	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	31
A.	REGIONAL ORIENTATION.....	31
1.	Notional OCONUS Deployment	33
B.	FORCE STRUCTURE.....	35
1.	3rd Special Forces Group.....	37
a.	<i>Nigeria</i>.....	39
b.	<i>Botswana</i>	40
c.	<i>Ethiopia</i>	41
2.	7th Special Forces Group:	42
a.	<i>Brazil</i>.....	44
b.	<i>Peru</i>.....	45
c.	<i>Paraguay</i>.....	46
VI.	CONCLUSION	49
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	55
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	61

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Notional SF Group Deployment Schematic	33
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Future Force Structure & Mission36

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the Defense Analysis Department and NPS support staff that help to make this a world class institution; it has truly been a privilege to study here. Specifically, I would like to mention Dr. Anna Simons; this thesis would not have been possible without her sound guidance and direction. Thank you for your patience in listening to my ideas—even the bad ones, and the countless hours you invested to bring this concept together. Additionally, I would like to thank Colonel Brian Greenshields for his professionalism and insight, not only as the second reader for this thesis—but for the opportunity to participate in various research projects that lead me to become a better educated military officer and student.

The quality of one's peers and shared experiences ultimately complete the learning experience. I greatly appreciate the insights gleaned from my fellow students, U.S. and otherwise, who have opened my eyes to a larger military and world. Thanks to LCDR Erick Peterson and Major Dennis Heaney for your friendship, mentorship, and valued insights both in and out of the classroom.

Finally, I save the most important thank you for my family. Riley, Nathan, and Ronan, you are my pride and joy—I wish I could harness that boundless energy, thank you for your unconditional love. My wife, Jennifer, your love, understanding, and support have allowed me to achieve the successes in life—usually at your sacrifice. Enduring the frustrations of my increased presence and practical absence has been no small task—I could never thank or love you enough.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As always, people, not technology, will make the difference...in short, we have to invest in the human capital that is the real key to future warfare.¹

—Thomas X. Hammes

A. HYPOTHETICAL/COUNTERFACTUAL

The American container ship gently rocked on the ocean waves. The night was silent and dark as the ship moved steadily through the Gulf of Guinea. Out of the darkness, muzzle-flashes from automatic weapons and RPGs rained in from both the port and starboard sides of the undefended vessel. No hits were immediately registered as these were clearly fired as a demonstration of force. Grappling hooks immediately clanged against the large ship's sides, soon followed by a set of men making their way over the railing. In a methodical and professional manner, these men moved about the ship, securing the bridge, engine room and crew quarters. Without weapons or the ability to resist, the ship's crew was in the very capable hands of seasoned criminals within minutes of their boarding. The Captain was barely able to send a short duress call over the satellite radio prior to being subdued: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday this is cargo ship XYZ, position latitude -5.309766/ longitude -1.801758, I require immediate assistance, we are being raided by pirates; I say again, we are being raided by pirates!"

Destined for Port Harcourt, carrying humanitarian assistance and emergency relief for several central African countries, the ship was now steered to an undisclosed region off the coast of Africa.

In April of 2009, Somali pirates made two such attempts on American vessels in the Indian Ocean, but both such attempts were quickly thwarted. The first hijacking received the immediate attention of the U.S. Navy, as the captain of one of the vessels was taken hostage, (the first such instance of an American taken hostage by pirates in

¹ Thomas X. Hammes, "Rethinking the Principles of War: The Future of Warfare," *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Anthony D. McIvor (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2005), 277.

about 200 years).² Interdiction by U.S. SOF assets resulted in the death of three of the four pirates who had threatened to kill the American captain. The second attempted hijacking was quickly averted thanks to the proactive crew. Following both failed attempts and the loss of pirate lives at the hand of U.S. forces, the pirates decreed that they would seek revenge and vowed to kill U.S. sailors.

After this latest pirate attack in the Gulf of Guinea, on the other side of the continent, AFRICOM is immediately alerted and goes into crisis response mode. Contingencies have been planned and shelved for years, but with the current force disposition in Iraq and Afghanistan, limited SOF capabilities now factor into the equation. With very little knowledge about Western Africa, and strained resources coupled with a lack of situational awareness about pirates on the coast, AFRICOM has limited options regarding any role it can play in the fate of the 26 American civilians held captive. All anyone can do is sit and wait to hear from the pirates.

I will now offer an alternative option to illustrate what might have transpired had U.S. Special Forces (SF) been operating abroad in the manner I propose in this thesis—with a permanent presence and engagement role. For instance, SF soldiers permanently residing and working with the Nigerian military would have developed contacts and relationships throughout the country. Information gathered and shared in this forum either would have prevented the entire catastrophe from occurring in the first place, or at a minimum would have opened back door intelligence channels so that more information could have quickly been gathered, (e.g., status and location of personnel/ship, points of contact for negotiations, etc.).

SF personnel operating throughout the country would have been in an excellent position to execute any type of time sensitive operation necessary to recover the crew. SF soldiers could have assisted with the establishment of a forward staging base for alternate personnel should they have been needed to carry out advanced negotiations and rescue operations. But, of course, the aim of a forward deployed permanent presence of

² Mark Tran, "Somali Pirates Seize Ship and U.S. Crew Off Horn of Africa," 8 April 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/08/somali-pirates-ship-hijack> (accessed 22 April 2009).

SF should be to help prevent the need for any such contingency responses. Ideally, the Nigerians—after working with SF for years—would have been sufficiently well-equipped and trained to thwart the attack themselves. Or, even better, no such attack would have occurred. Knowing the skill and competency of a Nigerian military that was partnered with the U.S., the pirates wouldn't have dared attack a ship anywhere in Nigeria's vicinity.

The U.S. National Defense Strategy has fundamentally shifted from focusing solely on conventional conflicts between superpowers to now having to address asymmetric regional threats. Our current enemies, terrorists and extremists alike, are predominately stateless. The prominence of these non-state actors, asymmetric threats, and the potential spread of violent radical extremism demand a change in U.S. policy and method of approach. It is said our challenge now is to develop counter-networks to monitor, disrupt, isolate and destroy these violent radicals.³ Accordingly, this thesis asserts that the future role for Special Forces soldiers rests in a permanent OCONUS presence and engagement role, so that SF teams can leverage and refine their unique skills, to include gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the regions in which they can be expected to operate.⁴

The arguments presented in this thesis are conceptual in nature, and are designed to offer the DoD an alternative approach for persistent presence and engagement. What I am advocating with this argument for the permanent presence of SF soldiers is a complete and total career commitment to living abroad. SF Groups in their entirety would be forward deployed OCONUS. The roles and posture of SF would change, but the seven primary missions would remain the same. If, as so many people argue, the U.S. needs to move forward with a smaller footprint, then forward deployed SF would give us a permanent global posture of strategic significance—and one that would certainly help us prosecute the Long War more effectively.

³ USSOCOM Posture Statement 2006, (accessed 19 February 2009).
<http://www.socom.mil/Docs/2006%20USSOCOM%20Posture%20Statement%20final.pdf>

⁴ OCONUS is a common acronym in the military, representing territories “Outside the Continental United States.”

B. THESIS OUTLINE

Having identified the central argument of this thesis, Chapter II will begin with an overview, addressing the notion of combating a global insurgency. This chapter will lay the groundwork for the main argument to come. Chapter II will take a brief look back at the historical application of forces that had a purposeful presence in their time, detailing accounts from the early exploits of the OSS and looking even further back to the successful use of Native Americans. A summary explanation of SF's current roles and missions is also necessary to establish the framework for the road ahead.

Chapter III contains the main argument of the thesis and explains the need for shifting from a *persistent* presence to a *permanent* presence. Working *by*, *with*, and *through* host-nation forces for extended periods of time will allow the necessary trust and influence to develop between both parties that is so essential to combating the global insurgency identified in Chapter II. Chapter III will recommend an alternative approach for employing Army Special Forces—deployed forward in a permanent OCONUS presence and engagement role.

In Chapter IV, I identify the type of soldier or family that would fit this permanent presence role. Such a deployment shift raises questions about our current selection process and where it would need to be changed or altered. Additionally, Chapter IV details how this permanent presence function will fulfill the Security Force Assistance (SFA) requirements, as Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has recently been designated the military-wide proponent for such operations.

Chapter V presents a conceptual framework for how SF Groups would be employed given my proposed new network of global coverage. It examines the future force structure and mission focus for each SF Group, taking into consideration the projected future growth and size of the force. Two Groups will be placed under the microscope to examine how they would deploy into three target countries within their Area of Responsibility (AOR).

Chapter VI concludes with comments about the need to re-focus our strategic efforts for a force postured in the manner suggested throughout this thesis. It is my intent that by the end of this thesis the reader should be, if not convinced, at least appreciative, of an alternative option for the strategic utilization of Army Special Forces. Special Forces are a strategic asset, trained and equipped with a strategic purpose. Understanding that the greatest military threat we currently face is the growing global insurgency, deploying SF permanently forward in a presence and engagement role could offer us one of our best means for combating this insurgency.

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II. STRATEGIC UTILIZATION OF SPECIAL FORCES

An increasing global presence and focus, enhanced SOF warrior capabilities, and growing international and interagency coordination all combine to form SOF's direction for the future.⁵

—USSOCOM Posture Statement (2006)

A. OVERVIEW

The War on Terror (WOT) is not a state-centric war, but more rightly described as a global counterinsurgency campaign.⁶ The entanglement of the U.S. in this Irregular Warfare (IW) environment, in which we see a combination of insurgency, terrorism, and transnational crime, is both new and extremely daunting. The involvement of Special Operations Forces (SOF), specifically Special Forces, has never been more important: “The military organization most capable of conducting Unconventional Warfare (UW), and the only organization with a record of success in UW, is U.S. Army Special Forces, especially in combination with Civil Affairs, and Psyops assets.”⁷

This study addresses two questions: 1) What is the future role for SF in the Long War Strategy; and 2) How will the roles and missions of SF have a strategic impact or high utility function in this current fight and our future endeavors? This thesis asserts that the future role of Special Forces soldiers rests in a permanent OCONUS presence and engagement, where they can leverage their unique skills, to include a comprehensive understanding of the local customs and culture.

⁵ USSOCOM Posture Statement 2006,. <http://www.socom.mil/Docs/2006%20USSOCOM%20Posture%20Statement%20final.pdf> (accessed 19 February 2009).

⁶ The ‘War on Terror’ phrase has lost its panache with the new administration. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “The administration has stopped using the phrase, and I think that speaks for itself.” Jay Solomon, “U.S. Drops ‘War on Terror’ Phrase, Clinton Says,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 31 March 2009. I continue to utilize the phrase in this thesis as it is prevalent throughout most of the literature I am citing, there has been nothing new articulated by the present administration, and the term is still being used in military circles, (May 2009). Our current Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, wrote recently (January/February 2009) in *Foreign Affairs*, “What is dubbed the war on terrorism, in grim reality, is a prolonged, worldwide, irregular campaign—a struggle between the forces of violent extremism and those of moderation.”

⁷ Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operation Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (London/Portland, OR: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998) 302.

Dr. David Kilcullen ascribes to the notion, one with which I completely agree, that we are facing a global insurgency. Through the use of terrorism and other violent and invasive tactics, elements of Salafi-Takfiri (Sunni) and Khomeinist (Shia) terrorist groups are attempting to establish a new world order informed by radical and extremist Islamic fundamentalism.⁸ These groups utilize a diffuse network of cells whereby they disseminate their tactics, techniques, procedures, and funding around the globe in an attempt to establish an Islamic Caliphate and combat Western ideals. “Islamist movements appear to function through regional ‘theaters of operation’ where operatives cooperate, or conduct activities in neighboring countries.”⁹

If we allow the aggregation of these cells, and permit them to continue to operate openly, thereby sowing seeds of distrust and promoting violent conflict, the global insurgency will continue to grow and flourish. Although cooperation may exist in the sense that terrorists share close geographical ties, they nonetheless lack a centralized hierarchal command structure. According to Kilcullen, “A strategy of disaggregation would attack this operational method by breaking the links that allow the *jihad* to function as a global entity.”¹⁰ Because jihadists count on the overall strategic effect of numerous tactical actions dispersed across time and space, severing the head will not end this global insurgency; there is no head. Instead, we need to confront this insurgency on a regional level, employing forces across the globe.

Our current enemy, comprised of terrorists and extremists alike, is predominately stateless. The prominence of non-state actors, asymmetric threats and the potential spread of violent radical extremism consequently demand a change in U.S. policy and in our method of approach. Although terrorist networks require a modicum of stability within a state to survive and function, the U.S. should not focus solely on terrorist *states*,

⁸ Robert O. Work, VP for Strategic Studies with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, identifies these two non-state groups as the most prominent terrorist organizations threatening global security. “The Future Security Environment: Multidimensional Challenges in a Multi-Player World,” 21 August 2008. http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/S.20080820.Future_Security_En/S.20080820.Future_Security_En.pdf (accessed 16 January 2009).

⁹ David J. Kilcullen, Strategy and Terrorism: Countering Global Insurgency, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, August 2005, 597–617.

¹⁰ Ibid.

but rather on the terrorist networks that come together to form the global insurgency confronting us. One way to achieve this would be through the global deployment of forces in a permanent presence and engagement role—a strategic mission for SF soldiers.

Historically, the United States has taken a ‘state-centric’ view when it comes to fighting wars, identifying the enemy with a particular nation-state. Japan, Germany, and Korea all serve as examples of countries where battles were waged with successful outcomes against a well-defined nation-state enemy. In Vietnam, the U.S. witnessed its first loss/withdrawal as it tried to fight a state-on-state style war against what some argue was an ideology (namely communism). One could make the same argument for our involvement in Lebanon and Somalia; in neither instance were we fighting another nation-state. Similar failures have been noted in the first few years of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and while some of these setbacks have been corrected, we face ever increasing and similar challenges in Afghanistan. The global counterinsurgency campaign we are currently waging is a nation-state vs. network battle—a fight which will demand the protracted involvement of U.S. forces.¹¹ I contend that the preponderance of these personnel should come from the Special Forces.

The National Defense Strategy (June 2008) places the future focus of the Department of Defense (DoD) squarely on the ‘Long War’ approach to combating extremism throughout the world.

Ungoverned, under-governed, misgoverned, and contested areas offer fertile ground for [insurgent groups/non-state actors] to exploit the gaps in governance capacity of local regimes to undermine local stability and regional security. Addressing this problem will require local partnerships and *creative approaches* to deny extremists the opportunity to gain footholds.¹²

¹¹ The “network” construct that our current enemy is operating under has been advanced by many respected academics and authors. For further reading on networks, see John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001); Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Consider also the book by Thomas Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004).

¹² National Defense Strategy, June 2008. (Emphasis added by author). www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20National%20Defense%20Strategy.pdf (accessed 10 January 2009).

Lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan rate Islamist extremist ideologies above conventional challenges posed by both China and Russia. “U.S. dominance in conventional warfare has given prospective adversaries, particularly non-state actors and their state sponsors, strong motivation to adopt asymmetric methods to counter our advantages. For this reason, we must display a mastery of irregular warfare comparable to that which we possess in conventional combat.”¹³ The asymmetric challenges we face today are sufficiently urgent and complex that they warrant that the bulk of U.S. strategic efforts be placed in the hands of the SOF community due to SOF’s adeptness at dealing with complexity in irregular environments.

Since 2001, there have been many comparisons made between the threats we faced with communism and the threat of violent extremism in the Middle East and around the globe today. As a military and as a nation, we must bridge the information and culture gaps that exist regarding the global operating environment. Just as a Long War strategy was applied to the Cold War, the WOT clearly calls for something equally visionary if we intend to win. Rear Admiral Bill Sullivan, the former Vice Director for Strategic Plans and Policy on the Joint Staff (J-5), lists four reasons why we need a Long War Strategy:

1. The enemy is committed to his cause. He is prepared to fight to the death for what he believes is a defense of his religion.
2. The enemy has a strategy with global aspirations. He estimates it will take him decades to accomplish his strategic objectives.
3. It requires change within the Islamic world. Historically, such changes have taken centuries to occur.
4. It requires increased partner nation capacity – armed forces, police, economic development, and good governance – to combat the violent extremist threat. Such growth takes decades to achieve.¹⁴

¹³ National Defense Strategy, June 2008.

¹⁴ Bill Sullivan, “Fighting the Long War—Military Strategy for the War on Terrorism,” *Executive Lecture Forum—Radvanyi Chair in International Security Studies, Mississippi State University*, PowerPoint Presentation, Slide 3. www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jcs/jcslongwar_12jan06_j5.pdf (accessed 10 January 2009).

Although the Cold War was waged against a political ideology, and the WOT is being fought against violent Islamist based extremism, the fact remains that a sustained American effort coupled with a significant investment of blood and treasure will be necessary to win. As the USSOCOM Posture Statement for 2008 puts it, “There is no ‘silver bullet’ for success, and—like the cold war—it will take a sustained, national effort over many years to achieve victory.”¹⁵

B. BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Modern day Army Special Forces trace their lineage back to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) established by President Roosevelt just prior to World War II. This paramilitary agency, under the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was placed under the leadership of William Donovan, a World War I hero and personal friend of the president. The U.S., recognizing the necessary role it must play in the liberation of France, established a formal agreement to work with the British equivalent of the OSS—the Special Operations Executive (SOE)—in a combined effort. “Today’s Special Forces were based directly on the OSS experience, especially the aid to anti-German partisans in occupied territory proffered by small ‘Jedburgh’ teams and larger ‘Operational Groups’ fielded by that organization.”¹⁶

In conjunction with the Normandy invasion, three-man elements—Jedburgh Teams—parachuted into France, Holland, and Belgium in support of Allied Forces. Each team had a French national who was not necessarily a member of the Maquis (French armed Resistance fighters), but was a French-speaker who possessed the necessary language and cultural background to operate behind enemy lines. These invaluable French volunteers earned immediate credibility from the local populace as they could empathize with the cause and seamlessly blend into the environment. As General Eisenhower said of the Jedburghs: “The disruption of enemy rail communications, the

¹⁵ United States Special Operations Command Posture Statement: *Right Place, Right Time, Right Adversary*, 2006. www.socom.mil/docs/2006%20ussocom%20posture%20statement%20final.pdf (accessed 10 January 2009).

¹⁶ Thomas K. Adams, *U.S. Special Operation Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare*, 34.

harassing of German road moves and the continual and increasing strain placed on the German war economy throughout occupied Europe by these organized forces of resistance played a very considerable part in our complete and final victory.”¹⁷ These teams supplied valuable reconnaissance, organized resistance movements, and executed countless covert operations, exemplifying the use of ‘Economy of Force’ for this period, with an obvious strategic utility and impact.

Coastwatchers represent another example of the strategic importance of persistent presence and a willingness to adapt and understand local customs and languages. According to OSS Secretariat Walter Lord’s descriptions of the exploits of Donald Kennedy, Kennedy’s hilltop guerilla base at Segi, on the southeastern tip of New Georgia, was ideal for monitoring Japanese traffic throughout the area during World War II. Given few assets but great latitude, Kennedy built a small but capable guerilla force that continually harassed the Japanese and provided valuable information to his higher headquarters. Eventually, his efforts and the information he generated resulted in the strategic decision to build an airstrip on Segi to support deeper attacks into enemy territory. As Lord concludes, “He [Donald Kennedy] belonged to a far smaller world built around personal loyalty, personal authority, personal initiative, personal contact.”¹⁸ This type of personal loyalty and personal contact that Lord is alluding to can only be achieved through a dedicated and extended presence of forces.

History is littered with examples of the benefits to be gained by working *by*, *with* and *through* indigenous or surrogate forces. For example, long before World War I, the U.S. Government made use of American Indians to further its strategic aims. After the Civil War, the U.S. Government found itself having to return to policing the ungoverned areas of the Western frontier, and used native Indian scouts to accomplish this mission. A lone Indian Scout unit was “six times” more valuable than the equivalent cavalry unit, as a consequence of: 1) the scouts’ ability to speak the language and understand the

¹⁷ Corey Ford and Alastair MacBain, *Cloak and Dagger: The Secret Story of OSS* (New York: Random House, 1945) 67.

¹⁸ Walter Lord, *Lonely Vigil* (New York: Viking, 1977) *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times*, ed. John Arquilla, (London/New York: University Press of America, 1996) 273–274.

culture; 2) their knowledge of the terrain/area; 3) their knowledge of the local populace; and 4) the counterinsurgent usefulness of ‘fighting fire with fire’—using Indians to fight other Indians, a proven method for combating an insurgent enemy.¹⁹ In 1895, these scout units were incorporated into the Army with their own distinctive insignia—a device of crossed arrows, worn today by Special Forces soldiers.

C. MISSION OF THE SPECIAL FORCES

What, meanwhile, *is* so ‘special’ about Special Forces, and what *are* their roles and missions? Academics, policymakers and even those within the SOF Community openly debate this question. “These disagreements are reflective of a division of opinion within the special-ops community as to whether they [SF] ought to be shooters or social workers.”²⁰

Understanding what makes SF special, and then defining SF’s roles and missions, is essential to determining SF’s future significance. Currently, SF is the primary lead for conducting UW, a vital WOT capability for use against both state and non-state actors. “SOF will really be the main DoD instrument, not necessarily the main U.S. Government instrument in all cases, but main DoD instrument in the longer term GWOT.”²¹

According to FM 3–05 (Army Special Operations Forces), “Commanders employ SF to help attain strategic and operational objectives.”²² The typical SF soldier is flexible and comfortable operating in ambiguous environments. He possesses unique skills that separate him from the common soldier, including, but not limited to: language proficiency, regional orientation, interpersonal capabilities, as well as cultural

¹⁹ James D. Campbell, *Making Riflemen from Mud: Restoring the Army’s Culture of Irregular Warfare*, (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA) 7.

²⁰ Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operation Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare*, 8.

²¹ Michael G. Vickers, current Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (SO/LIC&IC), was serving as a Senior Vice President for Strategic Studies, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) and a senior advisor to the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review when he presented this statement at a hearing before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, 29 June 2006.

²² FM 3-05 (FM 100–25), Army Special Operations Forces, September 2006, 3–5.

understanding through experience and in-depth study. Linguistic abilities together with cultural competence are critical to gaining situational awareness and operational freedom for working with a tribe, in a society, or with varied groups in a region.

In distinguishing between roles and missions: “The DoD defines military roles in legal terms as the broad and enduring purpose for which Congress established the services..., and missions as the more specific tasks assigned to the combatant commanders...”²³ In other words, the role is the overall strategic purpose, and the mission is the specific means by which we execute that role. Roles and missions are of particular importance because it is within this framework that units establish their identity and strategic significance or utility. Roles and missions will change from time to time as is necessary given the ever changing operational environment, but when this occurs, the changes need to be clearly articulated and defined in order to maximize a unit’s impact on the outcome of a war or campaign.

FM 3–05, the field manual that establishes doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces, requires Special Forces units to be capable of performing seven core tasks. These are:

Unconventional Warfare (UW)
Foreign Internal Defense (FID)
Special Reconnaissance (SR)
Direct Action (DA)
Combating Terrorism (CT)
Counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (CP of WMD)
Information Operations (IO)

As U.S. Special Forces Command notes, “These missions make Special Forces unique in the U.S. military, because they are employed throughout the three stages of the operational continuum: peacetime, conflict and war.”²⁴

My contention in this thesis will be that it is the ability of SF soldiers to operate across this continuum *by, with, and through* indigenous or surrogate forces that makes

²³ David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007) 143.

²⁴ U.S. Army Special Forces Command (A) Fact Sheet, <http://www.soc.mil/SF/factsheets.htm> (accessed 10 January 2009) .

them truly unique and *should* enable them to fulfill the permanent presence and engagement role I will describe. Furthermore, I would submit that six of the seven missions are a subset of the first—UW. Conducting these six missions under the contextual framework of UW is what makes SF unlike any other unit; I say this because, outside of the UW umbrella, these missions [FID/DA/SR/CT/CP/and IO] are all being successfully executed by Conventional Forces (CF) today in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the post-9/11 focus on capture/kill missions has pushed SF too heavily towards the kinetic/Direct Action (DA) style of operations, misusing SF's role as a *strategic* asset and lowering it to a *tactical* level. In an address to the Naval Postgraduate School, Admiral Olson, Commander of SOCOM, stated "Direct Action is important, not decisive; Indirect Action is decisive."²⁵ According to Max Boot, a Senior Fellow for National Security Studies, "SOCOM has become very focused on direct action, on rappelling out of helicopters, kicking down doors, taking out bad guys."²⁶ His main point (delivered in Congressional testimony) is that there are limitations to these types of operations or actions. The 'manhunter' aspects of COIN and CT currently used in OIF and OEF, which result in the capture/kill of High Value Targets (HVTs), have unfortunately left in their wake a very capable and networked insurgency in both theaters. I would also add that in some cases this focus has actually helped fuel the insurgency.

Currently, SF operate in a largely supporting role to the CF in OIF and OEF, which reduces them to an elite conventional, or 'hyper-conventional' force—neither one having a long-term strategic value or impact.²⁷ The unilateral use of Army SF in OIF and OEF for the tactical capture/kill missions is a prime example of how to misuse a strategic asset. There is a definite need for this capability, and the U.S. military has extremely capable SOF and conventional units to execute this task. But it should not fall directly to

²⁵ Eric T. Olson (Admiral), Commander—United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), Command Brief given to NPS Students and Faculty, 2 September 2008.

²⁶ Max Boot, Senior Fellow for National Security Studies, Council of Foreign Relations, presenting a statement at a hearing before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, 29 June 2006.

²⁷ Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan & The Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006) 102. Dr. Rothstein uses the term hyper-conventional to describe the type of units within the SOF community which specialize and focus the majority of their attention on the execution of Direct Action (DA) missions, (i.e., Special Mission Units (SMUs) and Rangers to name only two).

Army SF. Nor should SF seek these missions. Rather, in order to regain its strategic utility, SF must return to their roots of operating *by, with* and *through* an indigenous populace. Regional immersion is necessary for regaining the necessary linguistic, cultural, and political sensitivities necessary to win this global fight. The role and mission of SF does not lie in door-kicking. DoD and SOCOM would be far better served were SF to be utilized as an independent strategic force instead.

To summarize then, what I would submit makes SF special is that they represent an economy of force, trained and employed for use across the full spectrum of conflict with a strategic purpose. They possess the ability to affect the socio-economic and political environments of a particular adversary, or ally. They can do this, in part, by leveraging intelligence assets to solve problems which require a more artful or irregular approach. In short, the SF soldier is a strategic asset, trained and equipped for strategic use.

III. NEW STRATEGY FOR THE LONG WAR

You can't commute to work. A nuanced appreciation of local situations is essential to understanding the tribal structures, the power brokers, the good guys and the bad guys, local cultures and history.²⁸

—General David Petraeus

A. THE ARGUMENT FOR PERSISTENT PRESENCE

The future threat faced by the United States does not lie with a conventional foe on a two-way battlefield; globalization has assured us that the world is too interdependent and economically interconnected for that. Both our military and our strategy need to shift and evolve as the world threat continually shifts and evolves. According to Michael Vickers, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (SO/LIC&IC):

I think the future of the long war or Global War on Terror will predominantly be persistent operations in countries with which the U.S. is not at war, leveraging locals. And so the key will be to have a distributed global presence where we are working with lots of locals to suppress this global insurgency down to very low levels.²⁹

In other words, according to those directing policy, the future demands a move towards a global posture with strategic significance. The argument here is that Special Forces can serve in this capacity for the duration of the Long War.

Operating under a very broad and overarching construct, the U.S. has historically used Conventional Military Operations (CMO) against an adversary's armed forces to leverage our will regarding desired outcomes against the adversary's government. The effort of an Irregular Warfare (IW) campaign requires focusing on the local populace

²⁸ Nicholas Kulish & Helene Cooper, "Holbrooke Says Afghan War 'Tougher Than Iraq'", *New York Times*, 9 February 2009, 9. General Petraeus is making the comment in reference to counterinsurgency and the uphill battle the U.S. faces in Afghanistan.

²⁹ Michael G. Vickers was serving as a Senior Vice President for Strategic Studies, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) and a senior advisor to the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review when he testified at a hearing before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, 29 June 2006.

instead.³⁰ The IW environment extends beyond the military domain to include political, diplomatic, economic, informational and psychological operations as methods that can be leveraged by military actions and forces. Understanding that the indigenous populace is the center of gravity in a counterinsurgency is what drives the asymmetric fight. “IW depends not just on our military prowess, but also on our understanding of such social dynamics as tribal politics, social networks, religious influences, and cultural mores. *People, not platforms and advanced technology, will be the key to IW success.*”³¹

Colonel Joe Osborne, one of the principal designers for the USSOCOM global synchronization process and methodology, frames IW in this way:

It is a concept and philosophy properly considered in the strategic context that allows us to apply capabilities holistically to achieve desired effects. Its most unique characteristics are the focus on the relevant populations, support to sovereign partners and a linkage to our shared interests. It is a DoD activity not limited to SOF or dependent on a state of war.³²

The protracted nature of IW favors our adversaries; they do not have to defeat us—only out-last us. This is not a new concept; our own history during the American Revolution reveals a penchant for IW, with our forebears having won freedom despite never winning a major battle against the British in the South.

In CSBA’s “Strategy for the Long Haul” series, Senior Fellow Robert Martinage specifically examines “Future Challenges and Opportunities” for Special Operations Forces. Martinage identifies three strategic challenges for the U.S.: 1) continued terrorism in the form of violent Islamic-based radicalism; 2) aggressive posturing and attitudes by rising military powers and authoritarian regimes which seek to compete militarily with the U.S. (i.e., China, Russia, Iran); and 3) proliferation of Weapons of

³⁰ Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC) Version 1.0, produced by the DoD, 11 September 2007, defines IW as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will.

³¹ Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC) Version 1.0, DoD, 11 September 2007, 1.

³² Joseph E. Osborne (Colonel, US Army), “Beyond Irregular Warfare: A Strategic Concept for Countering Irregular Adversaries and Engagement in Complex Security Environments,” *Small Wars Journal Op-Ed*, 11 February 2009, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/docs-temp/184-osborne.pdf> (accessed 3 March 2009).

Mass Destruction (WMD).³³ Although the U.S. cannot face these future challenges alone, it is also understood that we need to restructure our current force posture and some elements of our *modus operandi*. According to Martinage, “In order to prepare for a future security environment defined by these challenges, SOF will need to shift from an episodic deployment force to a persistent-presence force, with more units forward in more places for longer periods of time.”³⁴

Martinage points out that the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan are absorbing the preponderance of SOF personnel and resources right now—80 percent between the two countries. I believe this constitutes a massive misallocation of assets which has left the U.S. vulnerable to emerging threats and competitors throughout the world. We no longer have the eyes and ears forward—the human presence—to identify potential “hot spots” around the globe. Martinage argues: “An on-the-ground presence is essential not only for collecting tactical intelligence and developing local situational awareness, but also for supporting partner security forces and responding rapidly if and when high-value terrorist targets are identified and located.”³⁵

The last three decades have seen a significant investment in technology (satellites, F-22 Raptors, F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, and the Army’s Future Combat System, to name only a few), while relatively little money has been invested in the human factor/elements, such as the procurement of Human Intelligence (HUMINT). Of the 18 programs in the 2008 military budget that were allocated more than \$1 billion, only three are actively employed in our current theaters of operation.³⁶ More than five years ago, MG Robert Scales Jr. (U.S. Army Retired) argued that too many within the military viewed transformation exclusively as a technological challenge:

³³ Robert Martinage, “Special Operations Forces: Future Challenges and Opportunities,” *CSBA Publication: Strategy for the Long Haul*, 17 November 2008, 25. http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20081117.Special_Operation_/R.20081117.Special_Operation_.pdf (accessed 20 January 2009).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁶ See “Military Budget of the United States,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_budget_of_the_United_States (accessed on 20 February 2009).

So far, we have spent billions to gain a few additional meters of precision, knots of speed, or bits of bandwidth. Some of that money might be better spent improving how our military thinks and studies, to create a parallel transformation based on cognition and cultural awareness.³⁷

In a recent speech, Defense Secretary Robert Gates outlined his thoughts on the future of combat: "Smaller, irregular forces—insurgents, guerrillas, terrorists—will find ways, as they always have, to frustrate and neutralize the advantages of larger, regular militaries. And even nation-states will try to exploit our perceived vulnerabilities in an asymmetric way, rather than play to our inherent strengths."³⁸ Michael Vickers echoes this same sentiment, "The U.S. has considerable overmatch in traditional capabilities...and more and more adversaries have realized it's better to take us on in an asymmetric fashion."³⁹

Under Gates' direction, the country's National Defense Strategy has fundamentally shifted from a focus on conventional conflicts between superpowers to a concern with asymmetric regional threats. Not only has this fundamental shift been deemed pressing, but there has been a growing recognition that we need to embrace this change quickly. Defense Secretary Gates supports this shift based on American military experiences over the past four decades:

Think of where our forces have been sent and have been engaged over the last 40-plus years: Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa and more.... In fact, the first Gulf War stands alone in over two generations of constant military engagement as a more or less traditional conventional conflict.⁴⁰

³⁷ Robert H. Scales (MG, US Army – retired), "Culture-Centric Warfare," *The Naval Institute: Proceedings*, October 2004.

³⁸ Josh White, "Defense Secretary Urges Military to Mold Itself to Fight Iraq-Style Wars," *Washington Post*, 14 May 2008, 4.

³⁹ Ann Scott Tyson, "U.S. To Raise 'Irregular War' Capabilities," *Washington Post*, 4 December 2008, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

As Secretary Gates rightly points out, “We do not have the luxury of opting out because they [insurgents and extremist groups] do not conform to preferred notions of the American way of war.”⁴¹

Meanwhile, if our focus is no longer completely on China and Russia, but on the various terrorist/extremist networks that continue to operate and grow in weak or failing states, how do we develop counter-networks to monitor, isolate, disrupt and destroy these violent radicals? Invariably, the solution demands or favors an irregular military approach, utilizing both direct and indirect methods of operation.

B. FROM PERSISTENT TO PERMANENT PRESENCE

It was prescient of the late General Wayne Downing to stipulate over a decade ago that the future would require the unique and varied skills of SOF personnel. “SOF must be prepared to move into *appropriate* emerging mission areas where there is currently a gap in our national defense capabilities.”⁴² While General Downing may not have meant “move” in the literal sense, this thesis takes his admonishment to heart. I agree with the various policy makers, scholars and warriors who advocate a persistent presence as the U.S. conducts protracted global operations. I simply extend the notion by arguing for a *permanent* presence, vis-à-vis a new rotational concept. My premise is that SF soldiers should be deployed forward in a permanent OCONUS presence and engagement role.

By being engaged in a permanent forward presence posture throughout the world, Special Forces soldiers would once again achieve positive strategic results, exactly what they were designed to do. Special Forces soldiers are trained and groomed to serve as warrior-diplomats. As previously mentioned, they possess unique skills, to include but not limited to: language proficiency, regional orientation, interpersonal capabilities, as well as political and cultural sensitivities gained through experience and in-depth study.

⁴¹ Ann Scott Tyson, “U.S. To Raise ‘Irregular War’ Capabilities,” *Washington Post*, 4 December 2008, 4.

⁴² Wayne A. Downing, USA General (Ret.), *Challenges of the Future*, aptly titled foreword for the book entitled *The Roles and Missions of Special Operations Forces in the Aftermath of the Cold War*, edited by Richard H. Shultz, Jr., Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., and W. Bradley Stock, 1994, 3.

The typical SF soldier is older and more mature and, as a result, is capable of making well-informed independent decisions. Finally, and maybe most important for our present and future conflicts, SF soldiers are specifically trained in understanding and developing human intelligence.

Given all of the time and effort spent training, educating, and testing SF soldiers on the above skills, they are under-utilized whenever they are deployed out of context. Operational Detachment Alpha—Teams (ODAs) offer the ultimate economy of force to gain very deep knowledge—essentially human intelligence—of foreign cultures, languages, and societies, awareness that is critical to effectively understanding and operating in a specific area. The only *true* way to gain this human intelligence, which is essential to effectively combating networked terrorist organizations, is via complete and total immersion. An individual has to eat, sleep, and live in another society before he truly understands the people and culture, and/or—more importantly—before the people of that society truly trust and believe that person well enough to confide in him.

Establishing a permanent global presence would allow the U.S. to acquire the necessary *ground* intelligence about our adversaries, as well as build partner capacity for long-term host nation and U.S. interests. The “Supporting Ideas” section of the IW JOC draws attention to the problems that occur when there is too much turnover:

Periodic short-duration deployments to at-risk states will be an inadequate operational approach to IW because the results of these deployments will be quickly reversed by adversary countermeasures and by the inertia common in failed and failing states.⁴³

Some policymakers and senior ranking officers seem to feel that SOF’s current rotational force posture and structure are adequate for accomplishing the mission at hand. The Honorable Thomas W. O’Connell, for instance, testified:

⁴³ Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC) Version 1.0, DoD, 11 September 2007, 22.

With a shift from SOF being postured for reactive, regional contingencies to being a global, proactive and preemptive force, we are witnessing a key evolution in how we must conduct our security affairs in the future and address those ungoverned spaces and build capacity to deal with those who would harm our country.⁴⁴

USSOCOM's initiative, detailed in its 2007 Posture Statement, focuses on a Global SOF Posture (GSP) with a 'Presence for Purpose,' thus supporting the notion of a continuous rotational presence of SOF personnel through areas deemed strategic. The Foreign Area Officers (FAO) and Defense Attaché (DAT) programs, Military Liaison Elements (MLEs), Interagency Intelligence personnel, Security Assistance Training Management Organization (SATMO), and Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCETs) exercises all serve as examples of a limited forward presence. But I would argue that these efforts only scratch the surface—temporarily alleviating the itch.

First, you can never determine with any degree of certainty where the next 'hot spot' will be, so you must have eyes and ears spread globally at all times. Second, rotational deployments do not afford an individual adequate immersion to develop the necessary levels of local insight or the *trust* required to develop true partners and dependable allies. Rotational deployments create *generalists*, when what we currently need are *experts* on particular areas when it comes to dealing with particular people(s). As Edward Luttwak noted two decades ago, when addressing SF's participation in low-intensity wars:

One hopes, we would no longer see even the smallest military assistance groups shared out between the different Services and we would no longer see the constant renewal of inexperience by the senseless enforcement of the principle of rotation even in cases where unique expertise vital for continuity is thereby dissipated.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Thomas W. O'Connell, private consultant on defense matters and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/ Low Intensity Conflict, presenting a statement at a hearing before the Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, 8 March 2006.

⁴⁵ Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low-Intensity Warfare," *Parameters*, December 1983, 342.

There is no question that the permanent presence of SF soldiers that I am advocating would require a complete and total career commitment to living abroad. SF Groups in their entirety, to include everything from operational line items to families, would be forward deployed OCONUS. The Group HQ would act as the hub or base for that Group's particular region. Battalions, companies, and teams would be further spread throughout the geographical region to form a web of interconnections that would help provide the global coverage we currently lack. Under such a rubric, the roles and posture of SF would change, but the seven primary missions would essentially remain the same. This concept will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V.

IV. PEOPLE BEFORE PLATFORMS

What we really need is probably a special forces – not commandos, but rather people who are thinking through the kind of environment they are going to fight in and who have enough intelligence information to do the proper things. We have enormous problems knowing the areas in which we are going to fight.⁴⁶

—Rowan Scarborough

A. INDIVIDUAL CRITERIA

In thinking about my idea for a permanent global presence, I often wondered whether a special type of individual would have to step forward to fill this role. Would it be necessary for the operators I envision to possess the adventurous spirit, intellect, and drive of men like T.E. Lawrence, John Glubb Pasha, and Edward Lansdale of previous generations? Would it be necessary to re-design the selection process to identify such individuals? I believe the answer to these questions is no. In my view we currently have such individuals in the force, and the SF selection process is working perfectly fine to identify them. Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) and the Qualification Course for Special Forces continue to identify the right capabilities, temperament, and personality in soldiers entering the regiment.

SF has always attracted a certain type of person—mentally flexible and capable of operating in an ambiguous environment with little to no supervision. While many do not attempt to join SF because of the physical demands placed on the individual, it is the mental strain of having to be innovative in a decentralized and unstructured environment that makes a person prefer to stay home. One of the greatest initial criteria for selection has historically been the self-selection process. Unfortunately, we may have degraded this criterion over the past few years in an attempt to grow the force faster than normal.

⁴⁶ Rowan Scarborough, “Pentagon Eyes Cut, Peacekeeping Focus: Army, Air Force May Suffer Most,” *Washington Times*, 13 December 1996, A1/A14.

By being completely honest about what a career in a forward deployed SF unit would entail, self-selection would once again assist SF to find exactly the people needed. Self-selection would once again serve its purpose as an essential initial assessment tool.

The often unenviable position and role of a military spouse would also have to be taken into consideration. While military wives would no longer have to deal with the *rotational* absence of their husbands, they would have to accept the realities of living in a foreign country. A career abroad has obvious impacts on a family, which in turn would require a different kind of self, or self-and-family, assessment as an individual enters the SF pipeline. But these considerations would not necessarily be different from those given today to diplomatic families assigned abroad. I believe the types of individuals already attracted to SF bring with them families who would, more often than not, embrace a career spent OCONUS.

The stabilizing effect of family presence would be of added benefit in other ways. Not only would ODA's "get" to stay abroad longer without risking losing their families to the stresses of long absences, but temporary duty assignments can sometimes appear to host nation personnel as if 12 guys are showing up for "fun" and adventure. Having families present would signal an altogether different degree—and seriousness of—"commitment."

B. SUSTAINED SFA

What, meanwhile, would these SF units do abroad? The current DoD emphasis on Security Forces Assistance (SFA) would be integrated as part of the mission of these permanently engaged SF personnel throughout the world.⁴⁷ Essentially, SFA entails empowering local governments through the development of their security forces, to include all constabulary, military, and para-military forces.

⁴⁷ The Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) defines SFA as, "Unified action by the joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational community to generate, employ, sustain and assist host nation or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority. *SFA is a broad framework that spans the spectrum of conflict focused on assisting foreign security forces in support of U.S. and Coalition interests regardless of operating environment.*" <https://jcisfa.jcs.mil/Index.aspx> (accessed 21 January 2009).

Arguably the most important military component in the war on terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern their own countries.⁴⁸

Foreign security forces need to be developed across the full spectrum of operations. This is particularly critical in failing or emerging nation-states to prepare them to defend themselves against all internal and external enemies. The end result should be the establishment of a professional, fully capable, and self-sustaining set of security forces.

Currently, many regional stabilization efforts across the globe occur under the label of SFA. Upon returning from Iraq in August of 2008, John Nagl, retired Lieutenant Colonel and Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security—well known for his academic work on COIN—stressed SFA as a “critical component” for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴⁹ As Nagl puts it, “Indigenous security forces have greater legitimacy with the local population than external forces, and they understand the social networks in which they operate.”⁵⁰ SFA assists willing nations to be able to police their respective territories. SF soldiers have been undertaking such training and advising missions since SF’s inception, and could easily expand their current mission set to include these additional SFA responsibilities.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID) has long been a primary mission for SF and rests at the core of stability operations.⁵¹ Providing assistance through training, advising, and equipping foreign militaries in order to deal with threats to their Internal Defense and

⁴⁸ Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, speech given at the annual conference of the Association of the US Army in Washington, 10 October 2007.

⁴⁹ Defense News Stand.com, “Pentagon Leaders Eye SOCOM to Lead Foreign Security Forces Training,” 18 August 2008. http://defensenewsstand.com/newsstand_search.asp?ACTION=RETURN

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ FM 3-05 (FM 100-25), Army Special Operations Forces, September 2006, 2-5, defines Foreign Internal Defense (FID) as participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.

Development (IDAD) has been a core SF strength. SFA pushes this mission one step further by taking into consideration the external threats that a foreign military faces.⁵²

There is a great deal of overlap between the responsibilities inherent in FID and SFA in that they both seek to develop cooperative security agreements with foreign partners. Also, they both enable and illustrate the commitment of the U.S. and send a clear global signal. We will never be able to police or operate in other countries as well as their own citizens can. Ultimately, if our main aim is to build partnership capacity while generating good will and mutual trust, it is hard to imagine a more parsimonious way to do this than via the permanent embedding of SF in communities abroad. More significantly, the permanent presence I am arguing for would illustrate *by deed* American commitment, and would begin to rebuild the trust and confidence we need faster than anything else we could do.

An Additional Bonus: As time passes and relationships are fortified, the opportunity might arise for SF to recruit and integrate indigenous forces from the region to operate in its same capacity. This would only emerge as a possibility with permanent presence, as it would take years to be able to identify and vet the right local nationals. Note: clearly, this could only be done with the host nation's approval. Chances are this would become most useful for vetting and recruiting refugees from countries that are denied to us—much as Detachment 101 recruited Burmese and Anglo-Burmese in Indian refugee camps for operations in occupied Burma. Historical precedence exists for assimilation of foreign nationals into SF; one need only think back to the Lodge Act.⁵³ Specific safeguards were emplaced back then involving personnel quotas, requisite skill sets, and marital status. Equally stringent measures could be emplaced today. As several

⁵² A more detailed argument is presented by Major David Jenkins, "Distinguishing Between Security Force Assistance & Foreign Internal Defense: Determining A Doctrine Road-Ahead," *Small Wars Journal*, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/mag/docs-temp/146-jenkins.pdf> (accessed 22 January 2009).

⁵³ The Act was pushed through Congress by Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. during the Cold War, in an attempt to recruit Eastern European nationals to form infiltration units working in that part of the world. The Lodge-Philbin Act – a U.S. law passed on 30 June 1950, allowed for recruiting foreign nationals into a military force to fight under the command of the U.S. armed forces. The Act permitted initially up to 2,500 non-resident aliens (later expanded to allow up to 12,500) to enlist. If these recruits successfully served five years with an honorable discharge, they were guaranteed U.S. citizenship. More than 200 Eastern Europeans qualified as commandos before the Lodge Act expired in 1959.

people have been saying for years “By recruiting foreigners, the U.S. military could address its most pressing strategic deficit in the war on terrorism—lack of knowledge about other cultures. The most efficient way to expand the government's corps of Pashto or Arabic speakers isn't to send native-born Americans to language schools; it's to recruit native speakers of those languages.”⁵⁴ Or, as Robert Martinage has argued in a slightly different context, “Not only will this create the conditions for a gradual reduction of the US military’s commitment abroad, it could also facilitate more effective Counter Terrorism [CT] operations since these partners have unmatched advantages with respect to cultural intimacy and language proficiency.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Max Boot & Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, “Uncle Sam Wants Tu,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Op-Ed printed in the Los Angeles Times, 24 February 2005. <http://www.cfr.org/publication.html?id=7861> (accessed 29 January 2009).

⁵⁵ Robert Martinage, “Special Operations Forces: Future Challenges and Opportunities,” 29. Martinage is specifically referencing the utility of using host nation forces to conduct CT operations, not necessarily advocating the return of the Lodge Act.

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V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The battlefield in the global counterinsurgency is intimately local; it calls for a “granular” knowledge of the social terrains on which it is competing.⁵⁶

—George Packer

A. REGIONAL ORIENTATION

What might be the best way for the U.S. to rebuild or establish the necessary trust and confidence currently missing? The U.S. must demonstrate an uncompromising will and commitment to individual countries and to the global commons. One of the main goals of an insurgency is to crush the will of the local government or foreign power which supports that government. Our adversaries will no longer attempt to directly fight us in a face-to-face confrontation; they will seek to outlast the U.S., exploiting all possible asymmetric avenues of attack. If you take away the will of the U.S. Government, populace, and service members, our adversaries are more likely to be able to defeat the U.S. on foreign soil. Aligning our Special Forces with foreign militaries around the world will demonstrate a strong desire and resolve on the part of the U.S., a necessary step in defeating our enemies and rebuilding our global image.

The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), released just three weeks after 9/11, outlined several responsibilities for the U.S. military, chief among them—the ability to execute operations in four potential hotspot regions abroad: Europe, the Middle East, the “Asian littoral” and Northeast Asia. The latest QDR, released in 2006, expands on the need for a greater global posture: “the past four years demonstrated the need for U.S. forces to operate around the globe, and not only in and from the four regions.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ George Packer, “Knowing the Enemy: Can Social Scientist’s Redefine the ‘War on Terror,?’” *The New Yorker*, 18 December 2006. Packer conducted interviews with Australian Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen, anthropologist and Pentagon consultant Montgomery McFate, and the State Department’s coordinator for counter-terrorism Henry Crumpton. Packer combines the “global counterinsurgency” thoughts of Kilcullen and Crumpton with the “social terrain” knowledge of McFate to indicate a potential way ahead for the American government.

⁵⁷ Ann Scott Tyson, “Ability to Wage ‘Long War’ Is Key to Pentagon Plan”, *Washington Post*, 4 February 2006, A01.

Permanent presence of SF aligned with foreign militaries, demonstrating our commitment and embodying our national values, is the best way possible – by actual example – to push forward on the Long War road. “Longer duration operations will emphasize building personal relationships with foreign military and security forces and other indigenous assets to achieve common objectives.”⁵⁸

Regionally focused permanent presence forces around the globe will take a great deal of time and effort to establish. Understanding that it is important to lay an early foundation when dealing with foreign counterparts and partner countries, we would be better served to develop these relationships during times of peace than to attempt to build them during a time of crisis. Trust and confidence is built over years, not months. “The only Americans likely to earn lasting trust are individuals who can commit to the same life-long attachments locals do, and via the same methods.”⁵⁹ The permanent placement of SF soldiers around the globe would fill the “ethnographic sensor” void that we currently suffer from. Basic cultural awareness, sensitivities, and language can all be trained in classrooms; and with the exception of language, you can attune soldiers to most cultural nuances in a short pre-deployment training block. What we truly lack is ethnographic intelligence, very different from customs and courtesies. According to Dr. Anna Simons:

Ethnographic Intelligence can only be put together by drilling into social relations and delving below patterns of association to map actual connections between people, frequency, and content of interactions, etc.—all of which requires extensive time in place and training in ethnographic techniques.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ 2006 QDR <http://www.defenselink.mil/qdr/report/Report20060203.pdf> (accessed on 17 February 2009).

⁵⁹ Anna Simons, “Seeing the Enemy (or Not),” *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Anthony D. McIvor, (Annapolis, MD, Naval Institute Press, 2005), 323–344.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

1. Notional OCONUS Deployment

Figure 1 illustrates a very small snapshot of how an abbreviated SF Group might establish itself in a notional region. The Group HQ would serve as an anchor in one country; battalions would be pushed forward to other countries or, depending on the region and specific local needs, possibly co-located. Companies and teams would be further decentralized and forward deployed. Together they would yield a web of coverage and interconnectedness. Clearly, some countries or regions will be non-permissive for a variety of reasons, but this only exacerbates the need to have SF stationed/operating in and around these areas.

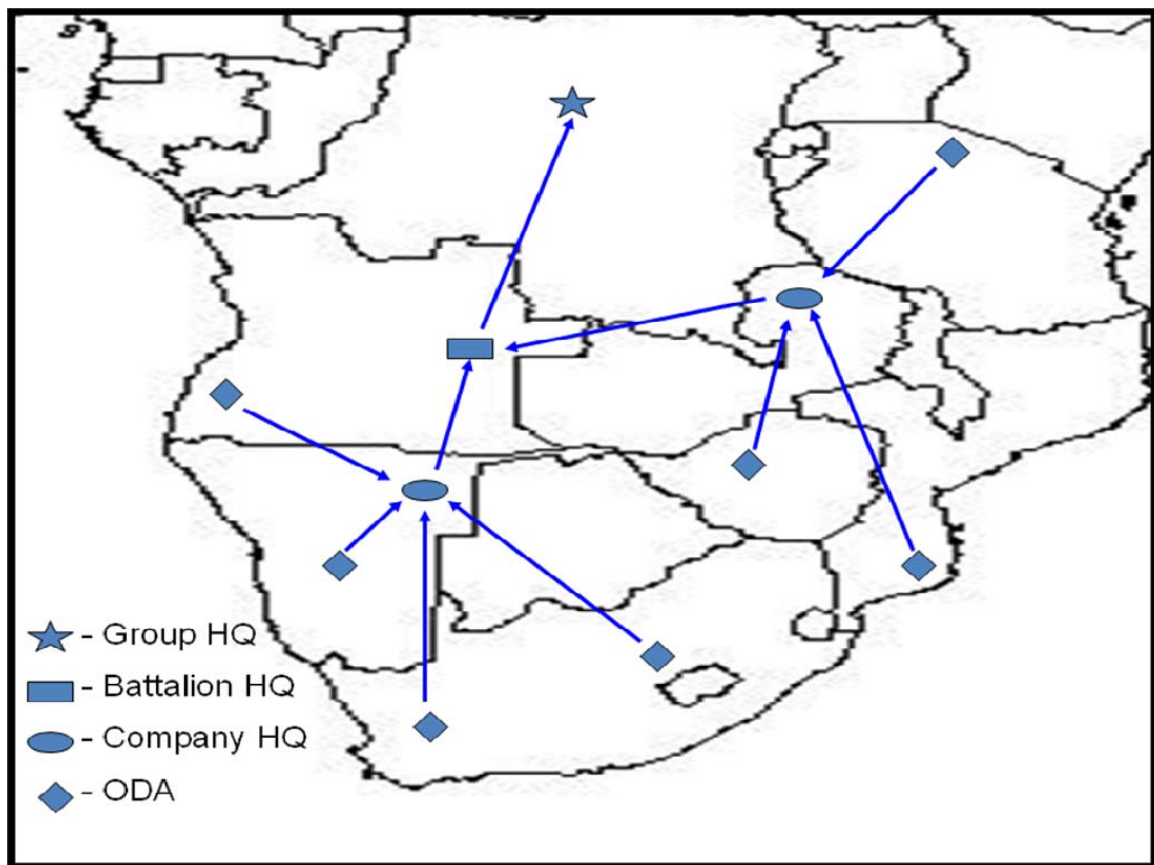


Figure 1. Notional SF Group Deployment Schematic

At all levels of command, our military forces will be partnered with their indigenous or surrogate counterparts and will engage in mission essential tasks for these units. The Ambassador and country team would help determine how to mesh the Combatant Commander's (COCOM) needs with their assessment of what would most benefit the country and the broader region. The ability to work together is made much easier by SF teams no longer floating in and out on TDY. The problems with information gaps and information flows that arise at all levels would likewise be diminished in scope by having a permanent and stable presence of forces providing continuous ground truth.

Where national training centers exist in foreign countries, our forces will work with units that rotate through to spread the wealth in terms of exposure to U.S. military skills. Knowledge and information about SF roles and missions in the host country will be made publicly available. This is especially important since their dominant role will be to train with and advise Host-Nation (HN) forces for the good of the host country, and transparency is one of the hallmarks of a professional force.

Once again, it is very important to note that SF will not be engaging in covert or clandestine operations. As it is, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a secret U.S. military presence in a foreign country for an extended period of time. Operating in the open promises U.S. political leaders less 'blowback' should something go awry; this in turn would help render null any issues directly related to secrecy, cover, and deconflicting covert operations along with the long term trail of commitments they generate. If a situation developed whereby a classified operation was necessary, SF teams which have been in place for years and, having allayed suspicions about their activities, would be well positioned to support or execute such an operation, (Note: they should only be asked to do this in dire circumstances, as the result of this will most likely be expulsion from the region).

B. FORCE STRUCTURE

The past eight years of the GWOT have weighed heavily on the force posture of USSF personnel. According to Admiral Olson, “we are going to fewer countries, staying for shorter periods of time, with smaller numbers of people than historically we have done.”⁶¹ With the preponderance of forces deployed to Central/South Asia, SF is losing its global situational awareness and ability to establish vital partnerships with foreign allies. Permanently stationing SF personnel abroad would increase our ability to see early indicators or warnings of potential problems and address them via the appropriate response prior to their becoming major crises. For all the reasons already cited, permanent presence would allow us to foster dependable relationships with foreign partners; but, to facilitate this would require a more sensible theater re-alignment.

In an effort to meet the current demands of the WOT, OIF & OEF force requirements have severely strained all active and National Guard SF Groups. The strain and OP-tempo have forced all of the Groups to split their focus between two theaters, and one Group has been completely shifted to a new Area of Responsibility (AOR) altogether.⁶² A realignment of all five active SF Group Headquarters, with a permanent presence and force structure appropriate for each AOR, would allow the U.S. to meet emerging strategic threats globally and on a consistent basis. Not every Group would or should need to have the same operational focus, structure and manning, (see Table 1), as every region does not present the same array of *by*, *with* and *through* challenges. This table outlines one possible re-orientation and allocation of personnel and equipment necessary to fill the force requirements for a regionally oriented and globally postured Special Force:

⁶¹ Eric T. Olson, USN Admiral, SOCOM Commander, comment made during his first interview as SOCOM Commander, Associated Press, *SOCOM Says Forces Spread Thin*, 6 May 2008.

⁶² 3rd SFG(A) has historically been responsible for Africa. With the advent of the WOT, 3rd Group has had to completely shift regions to become the lead proponent for Afghanistan, normally falling under the 5th SFG(A) umbrella of coverage, in order to allow 5th Group to focus on operations in and around Iraq. While small contingents of 3rd Group soldiers have participated in several missions to Africa since the WOT began, it is clearly evident that Afghanistan is the Group’s primary focus. 10th SFG(A) has assumed the preponderance of missions in Africa. I would be remiss if I did not mention that all five remaining SFGs have played key roles in OIF and OEF while still maintaining coverage and presence in their respective AORs.

<u>Group</u>	<u>AOR</u>	<u>Force Structure</u>	<u>Mission Focus</u>
1 st	East Asia	5 Battalions	COIN/ UW/ FID & SFA/ CP of WMD
3 rd	Africa	4 Battalions	COIN/ UW/ CT/ FID & SFA
5 th	West Africa	5 Battalions	COIN/ UW/ CT/ FID & SFA/ CP of WMD
7 th	Latin America	3 Battalions	COIN/ Counter-narcotics/ UW/ CT/ FID & SFA
10 th	Europe	3 Battalions	COIN/ FID & SFA

Table 1. Future Force Structure & Mission

Each SF Group HQ would have a battalion co-located with it in its respective AOR. This attached battalion, which would include the Combatant Commander’s In-extremis Force (CIF), would not be directly involved with the postured units serving in a permanent presence role. The co-located battalion would be tasked with several responsibilities: 1) act as a necessary theater reaction force; 2) assist and reinforce the permanently postured teams with training and emerging missions; and 3) execute whatever extraneous missions arise at the discretion of the Group Commander and Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC); this would include the ongoing combat operations in OIF and OEF.

For illustrative purposes, I will describe the utilization of SF personnel in two separate geographical areas or Group AORs. The intent of this portion of the thesis is to sketch a hypothetical application of the permanent presence concept. To outline how an entire Group would be deployed is beyond the scope of this thesis and would require

consultation with regional subject matter experts and representatives from the interagency (e.g., DOS, CIA, etc.). The significance of this exercise is largely to highlight how the permanent presence approach might work in practice.⁶³

1. 3rd Special Forces Group

The AOR for all four battalions of 3rd SFG would be the entire African continent. The importance of Africa in relation to U.S. security interests has been on the rise. As Rear Admiral Richard Hunt, the Commander of Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJT-HOA) explained in 2007: "Africa is the new frontier that we need to engage now, or we are going to end up doing it later in a very negative way."⁶⁴ Piracy off the eastern coast of Africa and terrorist groups allegedly utilizing under-governed areas in the Horn of Africa to transport personnel, weapons, and drugs create considerable security issues for the U.S.

While the former Bush Administration is viewed positively by a large majority of Africans (since it gave more aid to Africa than any previous administration), the Obama Administration is viewed with even greater optimism.⁶⁵ President Obama has enormous social and political capital at home and abroad. This could be put to great use in Africa. Working with the African Union towards the cessation of internal conflict and wars would ultimately serve in the best interests of the U.S. and world writ large. Stability is well recognized as an essential tool for any type of development and progress. Phillip Carter, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs within the

⁶³ It should be added that I have never served in either theater. Nor do I have much more than cursory knowledge of the geo-political environment in these regions. Whether the countries I discuss would allow expanded U.S. representation in the form of a permanent SF presence is an issue to be worked out by senior military officials and the Department of State. Political and military experts commonly agree that the solution to our current WOT requires all elements of national power—armed force *in conjunction with* political, economic, and informational operations. I, clearly, am only focusing on SF's capabilities, and not SF in conjunction with other elements of national power, which would be a key consideration for DoD, DoS, country teams in embassies, etc.

⁶⁴ Frida Berrigan, "The New Military Frontier: Africa," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 18 September 2007. <http://www.fpif.org/fpif.txt/4561> (accessed 15 April 2008).

⁶⁵ According to ABC News article: *Will Obama Give Africa More Than Just Pride?*—Africa was a priority under former President Bush. His administration directed more money to the continent than any before it, with the United States allocating more than \$5 billion a year in aid by the end of Bush's second term. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/President44/story?id=6711854&page=1> (accessed 13 April 2009).

Department of State, recently spoke of the current administration's initiative and strategy to operate more effectively in a world where non-state actors and illegal trans-border activity can pose major threats to even the most powerful of countries. "The goal is to develop a network of well-governed states capable through responsible sovereignty of protecting themselves and contributing to regional security."⁶⁶

Unfortunately, AFRICOM has been viewed by many Africans as an attempt by the U.S. to apply an imperialistic agenda. The fear is that the U.S. wants to militarize Africa under the auspices of the WOT in order to gain access to key regions in an effort to preempt potential threats. Emeka Chiakwelu, Principal Policy Strategist at the Africa Political and Economic Strategic Center, argues that the:

American government has set-up AFRICOM—a military command for Africa, which is to secure peace and goodwill in Africa. Many African countries are skeptical of America's real intention, fearing that AFRICOM can become a tool to punish America's foes in the region in the name of fighting terrorism. The unexpressed fear is that it could be used to control and manipulate internal policies and the status quo of African nations.⁶⁷

Although AFRICOM is viewed negatively by many countries within the African Union, there is still a large measure of U.S. involvement in the strategic development of some African militaries. These militaries have become dependent on private-sector U.S. corporations to assist in the training and development of military missions and strategy with respect to the national security interests of their country. One such example is Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI) and the work it has done with the Nigerian government to design a force structure and strategy to meet future needs and combat potential adversaries. According to the African Unification Front:

MPRI, sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Office of Transition Initiatives (INEC), assists the

⁶⁶ Phillip Carter, III, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs gave a talk on *U.S. Policy in Africa in the 21st Century* at The Africa Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, DC on the 9th of February 2009. <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2009/117326.htm> (accessed 13 April 2009).

⁶⁷ Emeka Chiakwelu, Principal Policy Strategist at the Africa Political and Economic Strategic Center, *The Obama Administration: The Policy for Nigeria and Africa*, 1 March 2009. <http://www.modernghana.com/news/204352/1/the-obama-administration-the-policy-for-nigeria-an.html>.

Nigerian state government and the military in developing institutional knowledge as to how the military will interact with its civilian leaders, how to formulate and present a budget to the National Assembly and the basic administrative tasks that go into running an efficient military.⁶⁸

a. Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous and prosperous nation in Africa, with the largest military, a constitution, civilian democratic government, and natural resources rivaled only by South Africa. Exploiting large oil reserves in the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria now exports a large quantity of oil to Europe and North America. Given Nigeria's size and population, it exudes a great deal of influence over West Africa and is well positioned to lead Africa politically, culturally, and economically in the 21st century.⁶⁹ That being said, religious tensions and rifts exist between Muslims and Christians (the country is almost evenly split); the military has been neglected for some time; and corruption is still rampant throughout the political system. Criminal activity is rife as Nigeria remains a transit point for narco-traffickers pushing shipments of illicit drugs to all parts of the world, including the U.S.⁷⁰ Given all of this, the U.S. cannot afford for democracy in Nigeria to fail or for Nigeria to slip further toward lawlessness – not when there is already so much instability in the region.

Professionalization of the military is an essential first step in assisting a young democracy to continue to promote the rule of law. The permanent presence of SF personnel will have immediate benefits for the Nigerian Military. One SF ODA, representing an extremely small footprint, can be stationed at the Infantry Corps Center and Training School in Jaji, Kaduna. Partnered with the school house cadre for Guerilla Warfare Training, SF personnel can mentor, teach, and train at all levels within this curriculum. Training and U.S. involvement would help facilitate, if not ensure more classes on Human Rights and other subjects critical for a country and region where militaries are held in low regard due to past offenses and abuses. Working with all

⁶⁸ African Unification Front, <http://www.africanfront.com/index.php> (accessed 14 April 2008).

⁶⁹ CIA World Fact Book, 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (accessed 13 April 2009).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

soldiers as they make their way through this arduous training would prove invaluable for building rapport and establishing long term relationships with some of the best and brightest within the Nigerian Military. Also, this same military training facility in Nigeria extends its sphere of influence by offering slots to Africans from other countries, providing yet another opportunity for SF to build relationships, rapport, and contacts.⁷¹

b. Botswana

Botswana has capitalized on two of its most valuable resources, diamonds and tourism. Impressive economic gains have transformed Botswana over the past decade from one of the poorest countries in the world to a “middle-income” country.⁷² Extensive nature preserves and wildlife habitats generate money from tourism, while diamonds mined throughout the country serve as the chief export and primary source of capital. Botswana does not have nearly the same level of corruption and criminal activity as Nigeria, but it is plagued by one of the world’s highest known rates of HIV/AIDS. As the HIV pandemic continues to evolve, the Botswana Defense Force (BDF) will have to harbor its manpower (its own HIV rates are substantial) and make the best possible use of its personnel to assist with the country’s development.

The BDF is comprised of only a small Army or Ground Force with an attached Air Wing. On a continent where most national militaries are held in contempt, the BDF is held in high regard by Botswanans, and by the U.S. According to a White House fact sheet, “the BDF is one of the most professional military forces in Africa and has participated successfully in peacekeeping operations on the continent. Some two-

⁷¹ Micahel Kpayili, “Liberia: 200 AFL Soldiers Commence Advance Military Training Courses in Nigeria,” *The Liberian Times*, 4 March 2008. The infantry training is part of a continuous military assistance package offered to Liberia by the Government and people of Nigeria. According to a Nigerian Defense Military release, the specialized warfare course comprises training in jungle warfare, Counter-Terrorism, and mountain and desert warfare. The Soldiers are also expected to attend specialized courses at the Amphibious Training School, Calabar, South Eastern Nigeria.
http://www.theliberiantimes.com/article_2008_03_4_3242.shtml

⁷² CIA World Fact Book, 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bc.html> (accessed 13 April 2009).

thirds of BDF general officers have been trained in the United States."⁷³ This positive perception is most likely due to the fact that Botswana's progressive civilian leadership has utilized the BDF in a proactive internal security posture, mostly in an effort to prevent poaching of its wild game, but also in disaster preparedness. It has also sent Botswanans abroad on peacekeeping missions throughout Africa.

The small BDF is responsible for covering a vast country. An SF contingent would expand the BDF's capabilities by introducing it to more sophisticated communications packages and access to imagery and airframes. Devising innovative ways to integrate technology into the anti-poaching effort would pay large dividends for both the U.S. and BDF. Also, continued development and professionalization of the BDF would further enhance relationships and stability throughout Southern Africa, a region of the continent which has already refused to host AFRICOM.

At current strength, the BDF has two brigades of Infantry. One is located in Gaborone (the capital city), and the other in the northeast part of the country – Francistown. One ODA could be located with each brigade to continue their development and training in a partnership capacity. Yearly, 30 BDF officers receive training in various military schools throughout the U.S. through the International Military Education & Training (IMET) program. Continuing to foster and develop these relationships can mutually benefit both countries and the sub-region.

c. Ethiopia

Ethiopia serves as yet another example of a developing democracy on the African continent. Ethiopia does not possess the oil reserves of Nigeria or the diamond resources and nature preserves of Botswana, but it does occupy a key geostrategic location on the Horn of Africa and is willing to partner with the U.S. in our WOT. The African Union Headquarters is located in the capital city, Addis Ababa, and the stationing of a small number of USSF within the country would be an excellent step in advancing

⁷³ Jim Fisher-Thompson, "Botswana Looking To Join Fledgling U.S. Military Partnership," America.gov <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/July/20030711103508rehisiF0.6762964.html> (accessed 24 April 2009).

our partnership with Ethiopia and also demonstrating our support for the African Union. As Philip Carter has put it, “Our first priority is providing security assistance programs that are critical to securing the objective of a peaceful African continent.”⁷⁴

The Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) is primarily a ground force with an air wing (much like the BDF; both countries are land-locked). Ethiopia was among the first countries in the world to deploy peacekeepers and would be well postured to do so again. The Ethiopian government has been engaged in both direct and indirect conflicts for decades and is currently countering several insurgencies. The ENDF has been actively involved in ongoing operations in Somalia to prevent the further spread of lawlessness and terrorist safe havens. In an effort to support U.S. interests in the region, Ethiopia has allowed for a small contingent of U.S. forces to operate out of a forward staging base within the country. All of these efforts make Ethiopia an excellent country for continued cooperation and partnership.⁷⁵ SF could be partnered with the Ethiopian Special Forces, known as the Agazi Commandos, to continue to train and develop the force. SF could also assist with offering civic action and other non-lethal population-centric training initiatives.

2. 7th Special Forces Group:

The AOR for the 7th SFG would encompass Central America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In order to distribute the forces appropriately throughout the region, this area should probably be broken down into three main geographical regions: 1) the Andean Ridge, (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Venezuela); 2) the Southern Cone, (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay); and 3) Central America and the Caribbean. A number of progressive regional leaders continue to distance themselves from any form of U.S. military presence in their territory, so it is doubtful that Hugo Chavez in Venezuela or Evo Morales in Bolivia are going to want USSF partnered with

⁷⁴ Phillip Carter, Department of State, “U.S. Policy in Africa in the 21st Century,” 9 February 2009.

⁷⁵ Some might object on human rights grounds to our partnering too closely with a government that is known to engage in heavy-handed tactics. But, I would argue, that is all the more reason we should have a presence; otherwise, we can never mitigate such tactics or encourage Ethiopians to professionalize toward more acceptable international standards.

their militaries. Current tensions between the U.S. and Ecuador over the Manta Air Base (which has played a vital role in the drug war), and the alleged involvement and support by the U.S. of the Colombian raids on FARC camps (March 2009) in the shared border region between Colombia and Ecuador, have strained relations even further. Ecuador's President, Rafael Correa, has vowed not to renew the Manta Air Base lease due to expire in November of 2009. Also, it is hard to imagine too many families agreeing to live in Colombia right now; definitely none should be assigned outside of the capital.

However, Brazil is hugely important in the region and shares a border with every country in South America except Chile and Ecuador (of particular note is that they do this without disputes). Paraguay is very poor, and is considered to be the least stable nation in the region, as well as home to at least some supporters of Islamic extremism.⁷⁶ Thus, if we were sketching one possible plan for a forward deployed 7th Group, the Group HQ, along with one of its three battalions, could be centrally located in Panama. The battalion co-located with 7th Group's HQ would be responsible for supplying a rapidly deployable theater reaction force; assisting the permanently postured teams with training and missions as requested; fulfilling extraneous mission requirements tasked by the Group Commander or COCOM; as well as covering down on Central America and the Caribbean as necessary. We'll call this 1st Battalion.

The 2nd Battalion would be located in Brazil, with primary responsibility for the Southern Cone. One company would be tasked with spreading its ODAs through Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, as the region is not overly volatile. 2nd Battalion's other two companies could be located in Brazil, with some dedicated focus to the regions bordering Bolivia and Venezuela. 3rd Battalion, meanwhile, would be situated in Peru, with responsibility for the Andean Ridge region and Chile to incorporate the eastern coast of Latin America. One company might be assigned to Bogotá, one to Chile, and one to Peru with some dedicated focus on the border regions of Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia respectively.

⁷⁶ Jack Sweeney, "DEA Boosts its Role in Paraguay," *The Washington Times*, 21 August 2001. According to Sweeney, "Paraguay has long been a home to Arabs linked to the Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad militias." <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/paraguay/paraguay-drugs.htm> (accessed 15 May 2009).

a. Brazil

Brazil is a major player in Latin America and serves as a significant trade partner with the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere. Since it is the most populous and prosperous country in South America, we need to continue to develop and fortify our positive relations with Brazil. An ally to the U.S. during World War II, Brazil continued to assist U.S. military efforts in the 1960s with operations in the Dominican Republic. Throughout the past decade, Brazil has continued to contribute peacekeeping forces to the U.N. missions in Haiti and East Timor, demonstrating its resolve and intentions to support global efforts.

SF has a long-standing close relationship with the Brazilian Special Forces. In 1957, an SF training team was sent to Brazil to conduct the initial training course for the establishment of an SF capability within the Brazilian military. Through the years, this capability has developed into the 1st Special Forces Battalion, Brazil's primary special operations force.⁷⁷ SF could establish a presence with an ODA co-located with the 1st SF Battalion in Guadalupe, continuing our long partnership through training and development of the force.

Brazil is currently troubled with issues throughout the Amazon region of the country, which occupies almost half of its territory. Narco-traffickers and narco-guerillas have taken up residence in the region as a sanctuary from which they conduct illegal operations. Criminal elements have started taking advantage of the vast resources within the Amazon, illegally logging, fishing, and gold-mining, not to mention smuggling arms, drugs, and money through the densely forested area. Also, there have been large oil reserves discovered in the Amazon that could lead to further fighting and disputes if these are not well managed and monitored by the appropriate authorities.

The Brazilian Army has established a Frontier Command and assigns Jungle Infantry Brigades the responsibility of patrolling this area. But the enormity of the task is daunting for this ill-equipped force. Jungle Operations Detachments, known

⁷⁷ See the Brazilian Special Forces webpage for further information.
http://www.specwarnet.net/americas/brazil_1st_sfb.htm (accessed on 12 May 2009).

locally as Destacamentos Operacionais de Selva (DOS), patrol this region, but its remoteness limits them to foot patrols.⁷⁸ These detachments have been formed in the image of an SF ODA, with 12 highly trained infantry soldiers and 2 officers. SF is ideally suited to provide them necessary technical assistance and training to enhance their capabilities and maximize their usefulness to the federal and state governments.

b. Peru

Peru has been plagued with political instability over the past five decades as it has transitioned from military rule, to being run by an authoritarian regime, to being led by democratically elected officials. Also, like most countries throughout Latin America, Peru is constantly battling the production, sale, and transport of illicit narcotics—most notably cocaine originating from Colombia.⁷⁹ Peru is also the birthplace for the “Shining Path” (Sendero Luminoso), an organization founded on Maoist principles seeking a communist/cultural revolution. After a decade-long counterinsurgency struggle, Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman was captured in the early 1990s, but remnants of the organization still exist today and remain committed to their ‘revolutionary war.’

Over the past year Shining Path insurgents have executed successful ambushes resulting in the death of 32 Peruvian soldiers with 42 others wounded. Once famous for promoting an austere communist agenda, the Shining Path appears to have shifted to criminal enterprises and the production and trafficking of cocaine. Former Interior Minister Fernando Rospigliosi has labeled the counterinsurgency efforts a “disaster.” As he recently argued, “the lack of results in terms of rebel kills and captures shows that the government's strategy of taking and holding territory against the well-

⁷⁸ William W. Mendel, “The Brazilian Amazon: Controlling the Hydra,” *Military Review*, July-August 1999. <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/hydra/hydra.htm> (accessed 12 May 2009).

⁷⁹ CIA World Fact Book, 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ec.html> (accessed 20 April 2009).

armed guerrillas is not working. He suggested instead that the government launch intelligence-supported Special Forces operations.”⁸⁰

Here is where USSF is once again ideally suited to provide the necessary assistance in the form of both advanced technology and sound operational training/advice to elements of the 1st and 3rd Special Forces Brigades in Peru.

c. Paraguay

One of the poorest countries in Latin America, Paraguay presents just one example of the all too common predicament as lack of investment in health and education, followed by universal hunger and unemployment, leads to criminal activities, and worse.

Of concern to many political and military leaders is the tri-border area where Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay converges. A combination of weak border controls; smuggling of weapons and drugs; and money laundering are seen as precursors for the development of anti-government and extremist safe-havens or bases of operation. Navy Cmdr Victor Hyder, an operations officer in Special Operations Command South, has said, “There is a true reason for special operations forces in Paraguay, all of the networks that a terrorist organization could use are in place in the region.”⁸¹

SF has been in and out of Paraguay for many years. With a permanent presence it should prove even easier to develop a partnership with Paraguay so that best practices can be shared. Effective development of Paraguay’s military and police agencies will prevent criminals and extremists from being able to take advantage of the under-governed tri-border region. Unfortunately, the part-time assistance provided by the U.S. till now has not been sufficient, as evidenced by the annual increases in crime and cannabis production. The long-term presence of SF in the region on a permanent basis would provide an element of much needed stability.

⁸⁰ MercoPress. South Atlantic News Agency, “Peruvian Government Firm on its Anti Insurgency Policy,” 13 April 2009. <http://en.mercopress.com/2009/04/15/peruvian-government-firm-on-its-anti-insurgency-policy> (accessed 15 May 2009).

⁸¹ Michael Carden (Army Staff Sergeant), “Special Ops ‘Fight’ Persistent Conflicts Around the World, Panelists Say,” *Armed Forces Press Service*, 11 February 2009. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=53048> (accessed 15 May 2009).

Introduction of SF personnel into their respective theaters would need to be slowly and carefully done. The process may take years to develop effectively. Every country is going to present unique and distinct challenges and, as such, will need to be treated individually to address its particular situation. Plans will likely need to be modified as programs develop and events affect situations on the ground. In many senses this program depends on co-evolution. Worth noting is that as the same SF soldiers will be operating throughout their region for the length of their careers, the best and brightest members of host nation militaries will be rising through the ranks, Americans will be ‘with’ them every step of their advancement and the mutual relationships that will be fostered are bound to further strengthen our partnerships.

Ultimately, the advantage of ODAs is that they operate very quietly under the radar. With such a small signature and presence in-country, media and other potential critics would grow used to their presence over time. As partnerships and, ideally, friendships are developed, social and cultural barriers will be lowered. The more the U.S. is seen to commit abroad—through its investment of soldiers and their families living locally—the more mutual trust this will build. It is vital that we begin to establish these partnerships now. As previously mentioned, time is not on our side.

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VI. CONCLUSION

According to the Petraeus Doctrine, the Army (like it or not) is entering an era in which armed conflict will be protracted, ambiguous, and continuous—with the application of force becoming a lesser part of the soldier’s repertoire.⁸²

—Andrew Bacevich

Accepting that our current WOT is a global counterinsurgency serves as the foundation for understanding the importance of SF returning to its roots of operating *by*, *with* and *through* indigenous or surrogate forces and establishing a permanent presence abroad. SF was designed with a specific mission and a strategic purpose, one in that is desperately needed in our current fight.

The population is considered to be the target in any COIN fight. Twentieth century classic counterinsurgency theorists—among them, Mao (1937), Galula (1964), Taber (1965), and Thompson (1968)—all talked about the importance of gaining the support of the populace. Over forty years ago, David Galula wrote his lessons learned about COIN warfare and identified the population as a critical piece of the puzzle:

Logic forces him [the guerilla/insurgent] to fight on a different ground where he has a better chance to balance the physical odds against him. The population represents this new ground. If the insurgent manages to dissociate the population from the counterinsurgent, to control it physically, to get its active support, he will win the war because, in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends upon the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness.⁸³

Articles are published daily in all the national papers concerning the WOT and how to win this fight. At present I believe there is little disagreement among academic or military experts about the fact that winning the population is key. Yet, we continue to

⁸² Andrew J. Bacevich, “The Petraeus Doctrine,” *The Atlantic*, October 2008. <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200810/petraeus-doctrine> (accessed 10 January 2009).

⁸³ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 1964) 4.

operate with and push a kinetic approach. This approach continues to alienate us from the populace and drives us further from our long term goals. Or, consider the situation from the locals' point of view:

On May 19, 2006, 24 American and 12 Afghan soldiers were traveling through a valley in Afghanistan's Uruzgan province when they were ambushed—struck by a storm of fire from a Taliban column of 150–200 fighters. The most intriguing thing about the battle was the fact that many local farmers spontaneously joined in, rushing home to get their weapons. Asked later why they'd done so, the villagers claimed they didn't support the Taliban's political agenda, and they were generally well-disposed towards the Americans in the area, but with the battle right in front of them – how could they *not* join in? This battle was the most exciting thing that had happened in their valley for years. It would have shamed them to stand by and wait it out, they said.⁸⁴

This excerpt is taken from David Kilcullen's new book *Accidental Guerilla*, aptly titled to describe how villagers and tribesmen get swept into insurgency. It has always been my belief, based on multiple combat tours in Afghanistan, that the majority of fighting age males do not care about the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate or global jihad against infidels; they want to go about life in much the same manner as their fathers and elders have done. They do not care about democracy or a central government; they respect and abide by decisions made by their village/tribal elders. All that being said, if there is a fight going on down the street, then they are also not going to sit back and do nothing either. They are going to join in—just as would any other young males in any other culture from across the globe.

As much as the Taliban is hated and despised by most Afghans, Americans are still considered to be outsiders and occupiers; and young males will always defend their local ways and customs from outside encroachment.⁸⁵ Around the globe Americans are commonly viewed as imperialists; proof to some people comes in our long term

⁸⁴ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla: Fighting Small Wars In the Midst of a Big One*, (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 39–41.

⁸⁵ Max Boot, Frederick Kagan, and Kimberly Kagan, "How to Surge the Taliban," *New York Times*, 13 March 2009, 27. "The Taliban holds little appeal for most Afghans—a BBC-ABC News poll in February 2009 showed only 4 percent desired Taliban rule."

occupations, of Korea and Germany. But here is also an important opportunity these perceptions reveal: because our enemy operates and affects/influences the youth at the local level, this is where we need to operate. At the very least we need to prevent ourselves from creating more “accidental” guerillas.

The image of the American as an aggressor and oppressor needs to be put to bed. One way to do this is to have SF soldiers and, when necessary, civilian specialists, physically locate and embed themselves in communities around the globe, and convey our true intentions by deeds, not just words. While it is true that Americans will never be true members of the society where they re-locate, their coming to *live* and work *with* the HN military should earn them appreciation and a depth of respect that transcends the current world view of Americans. A long-term sustained presence, with a small footprint, can convey our commitment and alleviate fears that the U.S. intends to wreak havoc at will. No one is more ideally suited for such a task than SF.

Such a shift isn't just important to repair America's image; it is also important for repairing SF. The corporate culture has shifted within the SOF community writ large, but particularly within SF. As previously mentioned, SF's focus has become kinetic operations. To our collective detriment, commanders have become too focused on DA missions—as this type of operation is easily quantifiable to superiors and peers alike. In his book comparing counterinsurgency lessons from Vietnam and Malaya (*Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*) Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, U.S. Army (retired) explains the difficulty in transforming a traditional military mindset into one that can defeat an insurgency:

Creating a political-military-economic strategy to defeat an insurgency is every bit as revolutionary as planning to overthrow a government, and a great deal more difficult. Gerald Templar created a revolution of his own in Malaya. He encouraged innovation from below and demanded a new approach to solving problems of Malayan society. He not only refused to focus exclusively on the insurgency as a military problem, but did not even see it primarily as such—and he insisted that all of his subordinates share that worldview.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 196.

Nagl cites David Lloyd Owen who recognized, “You need a man with a lot of imagination to run this kind of war, and one with an understanding of the political nature of war.”⁸⁷ Gerald Templar was that man in Malaya, and, at present, the man for Iraq appears to be David Patreaus (time will tell).

I believe the corporate culture in SF is on the verge of changing, as once-junior officers who have done multiple tours “down range” begin to rise to positions of more importance and rank. Those who were young captains at the outset of the WOT are now entering the ranks of Battalion Command. Given their experiences and knowledge, along with their growing influence, SF’s focus is bound to evolve as many are likely to intuitively understand, or at the very least appreciate, the importance of permanent presence.

If SF underwent this shift, training would not significantly change, as SF soldiers will be executing the same type of missions and operations they currently conduct. More emphasis would need to be placed on the importance of developing an individual’s linguistic capabilities, and more education would be required on specific geo-political environments—directly tailored to the region of orientation for the individual soldier. But this is what SF should be doing anyway.

Training of a permanent presence force will require thinkers and innovators, not just trigger pullers. Major General Robert H. Scales Jr., U.S. Army (retired), believes that transformation within the Army has been slow and overly technological; consequently the Army lacks the language and cultural training necessary to fight our “smaller” and more prevalent battles around the globe. “Against an enemy who fights unconventionally, it is more important to understand motivation, intent, method and culture...”⁸⁸ A true believer in human intelligence (HUMINT), Scales calls for a cadre of

⁸⁷ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005) 194.

⁸⁸ Robert H. Scales, U.S. Army Major General (ret.), “Culture Centric Warfare,” *The Naval Institute: Proceedings*, October 2004. http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI_1004_Culture-P1,00.html (accessed 13 March 2009).

global scouts.⁸⁹ Technology, he argues, is no substitute for boots on the ground among the population. “War is a thinking man’s game. A military too acculturated to solving warfighting problems with technology alone should begin now to recognize that wars must be fought with intellect.”⁹⁰

Permanent presence would ultimately require a level of decentralization in the realm of Command and Control (C2) comparable to what SF personnel were accustomed to in the past. Military and political leaders alike would have to be willing to accept more risk, allowing SF soldiers to do what they were trained to do, and understanding that soldiers and families will be more exposed than usual in foreign countries.

From a political standpoint, integration and synchronization would be absolutely essential between those representing the U.S. abroad on both the military and civilian sides of the house. Military and civilian authorities would need to be closely linked at all levels to ensure the utmost transparency and coordination regarding intent. As so many people have commented, COIN is more a political fight than one designed for the military industrial complex. At times, information is more essential than bullets. Ultimately, an ambassador working closely with the host nation government may have an advantage in giving guidance to military commanders on the ground—*based on his political, not operational judgment.*

Organizational theory suggests that organizations are created to accomplish a certain set of missions. Over the course of time, mission sets will slowly change to favor the policies that will increase the importance of a particular organization. I believe SF has drifted from its initially mandated and strategic mission of UW. “Military officers compete for roles in what is seen as the essence of the services’ activity rather than other functions where promotion is less likely... Army officers compete for roles in combat

⁸⁹ According to MG Scales, global scouts would be well educated, with a penchant for languages and comfortable operating in strange and distant places. These soldiers would be given time to absorb a single culture and to establish trust with those willing to trust them.

⁹⁰ Robert H. Scales, U.S. Army Major General (ret.), “Culture Centric Warfare,” *The Naval Institute: Proceedings*, October 2004.

organizations rather than advisory missions.”⁹¹ We haven’t forgotten our roots, but we have slowly drifted into a DA-focused mentality—we need to re-focus. The importance and strategic utility of SF rests in the COIN domain, and its expertise lies in operations under the UW umbrella—operating *by, with* and *through* indigenous personnel.

Without question, shifting to a permanent presence and engagement with foreign militaries and populations by SF would have a significant impact on the corporate culture, training, command and control, and organization of the United States Army Special Forces Command (USASFC). But, as I hope I have demonstrated by describing this shift, it may well be necessary for success in this Long War and in the wars of our future, in which case it is worth figuring out now exactly how we might make the requisite corporate changes.

You cannot conduct a global COIN fight on a TDY rotational basis; you must be intimately embedded in a society to gain the necessary trust and influence to be a tangible asset. In a globalized world, people migrate—thus ideas migrate. The U.S. must learn to deal with this problem in a holistic manner; our influence and representation must be everywhere in order to be anywhere. The solutions developed in active partnership with allied nations are more likely to succeed when we work and live side by side. Admiral Eric Olson, addressing a large audience in Washington at the 20th Annual Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict symposium said of SOF, “They’re building long-term relationships in every country in every region in the world, and we need them there for a long time, Special Operations Forces—especially Army special operations—do this better than anyone.”⁹²

⁹¹ John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam*, 5.

⁹² Michael Carden (Army Staff Sergeant), “Special Ops ‘Fight’ Persistent Conflicts Around the World, Panelists Say,” *Armed Forces Press Service*, 11 February 2009. <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=53048> (accessed 15 May 2009).

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