

# **The Role of Special Operations Forces in a Sustainable U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy**

## **Moving Beyond Kinetic Targeting in the Future Operating Environment**

---

by Anthony Gilgis

### **Introduction**

For the past two decades, the United States military and the national security apparatus have focused their energy and capabilities on confronting Islamic terrorism as a kinetic target. Much of U.S. counterterrorism policy today consists of lethal raids and unmanned aerial vehicle strikes against targeted individuals. The U.S. government has come to rely heavily on the Special Operations Forces (USSOF) in particular for lethal raids, also termed “Direct Action” assaults, one of the ten “Core Activities” that Title X identifies for USSOF. Unfortunately, Direct Action has come to overshadow the broad array of missions that USSOF was originally intended to conduct. Unconventional Warfare, for example, is a core USSOF mission intended to prevent radical ideology from taking root in a society with a range of activities to build local good will towards friendly forces and animosity towards extremists. The U.S. can more effectively incorporate USSOF into a “whole-of-government” approach to counterterrorism by refocusing attention on non-kinetic, counter-ideology operations.

To move beyond the recognized battlefields of the past decade, U.S. officials must embrace a multidimensional operating environment that requires simultaneous focus along multiple lines of effort. Future warfare will include complex, adaptive systems of ideology, economy, physical infrastructure, governance, and energy — which cannot be defeated through kinetic operations alone. The USSOF will need to transform its operations accordingly.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, a paradigm shift occurred in the realm of transnational terrorism and how nations responded to it. Shifting away from a focus on political goals, transnational terrorist groups began using religion as a motivating factor — both in their operations and in their recruitment. This new form of terrorism required a shift in response from the international community. It took the West almost a decade to recognize this shift and adjust its response to the emergent threat. Following 9/11, the United States fully engaged Special Operations Forces and paramilitary elements to actively counter this new religious ideology. SOF and paramilitary units were tasked to conduct raids against members of radical extremist groups. However, after almost 15 years of continuous warfare, the U.S. has arguably experienced limited success with its counterterrorism efforts as groups continue to conduct attacks and grow, gaining notoriety and establishing affiliated movements around the globe. Kinetic actions have created an entire generation of potential radicals who are victims of our counterterrorism “successes.” Populations sensitive to radicalization are also vulnerable to state-level terror in the form of unexpected and unpredictable military strikes. The battle against terrorism to date leaves the question, “As the United States looks to the future operating environment, can the Special Operations community find a more effective method to counter the ideology that creates the modern Islamic terrorist?”

Since 2001, the West has increasingly focused on lethal targeting of individuals within religious-based extremist organizations. This method of conducting kinetic operations — either through direct action assaults by military or paramilitary units, or through the use of missile strikes from aerial platforms — has become the public face of the United States counterterrorism effort. While the United States military has arguably raised man-hunting of individuals from an imprecise task to a methodical science, targeted lethal actions are nonetheless perceived

as little more than indiscriminate state-level terror within the populations in which the operations are conducted. Looking to the future operating environment, the current policy of countering terrorist actions with targeted killing is unlikely to sway the underlying ideology in Americans' favor. As such, it is necessary to develop a sustainable counterterrorism strategy that considers the human domain of local opinion as the future battlefield.

The Special Operations Forces of the U.S. military will play a central role in any long-term strategy to counter violent extremist organizations; they are specifically designed to create a counter-ideology within the scope of unconventional warfare. Before looking at the role of U.S. Special Operation Forces within this emerging strategy, an understanding of the changing nature of warfare within a complex environment is necessary. Moving forward in the concept of developing a long-term counterterrorism strategy beyond the use of kinetic operations, we must understand that Islamic extremism is rooted in an ideology the West has displayed overt ignorance of and has been unprepared to counter. As stated by Patrick Sookhdeo, "Equally damaging has been the desire for a quick-fix and the reluctance to engage in a long-term struggle against the ideological struggle that nourishes and promotes Islamist terrorism."<sup>1</sup>

## Looking to the Future

---

Guerrilla warfare, in the larger sense...is revolutionary war, engaging a civilian population, or a significant part of such a population, against the military forces of established or usurpative governmental authority.

Taber

---

The evolving nature of warfare throughout history suggests that Islamic extremists, too, will change their approach over time. Understanding how adaptation, co-evolution, change, and the non-linear nature of warfare has manifested itself, it is important to look at the Global

Salafi-jihadi movement as it is in the process of shifting from a Guevarist-style kinetic

insurgency to a more Maoist-style systemic strategy. The most successful Islamic extremist groups are no longer solely focused on kinetic operations to achieve their goals; rather they have proven an ability to take advantage of vulnerabilities in the local political system and use forms of social engineering to achieve long term goals. Understanding who the adversary is, why they fight, and more significantly how their concept of their warfare will change creates opportunities to successfully engage this ideology. Unconventional warfare tactics, originally designed to affect change within a society, can disrupt the formation of affiliates and acolytes before the virulent ideology can take root within an at-risk population. Moving away from an operational environment dominated by kinetic actions, USSOF are ideally suited to operate “left of the beginning.”

## **The Future of Warfare is Increasingly Irregular**

There are many terms for the nature of non-linear warfare. Irregular Warfare dominates the space as the umbrella term to describe wars and tactics other than regular. Since the Boxer Rebellion at the beginning of the twentieth century, the U.S. military has been consistently engaged in more than 80 irregular conflicts that occur at the sub-state level.<sup>2</sup> This indicates that irregular warfare, in the form of unconventional warfare, insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and modes of warfare yet to be defined are likely to be a dominate form of warfare for generations to come. It is therefore imperative that the various tactics of Irregular Warfare, and their potential impact on U.S. national strategy, be understood.

Even as the gap between developed and under-developed nations continues to widen, technology and economics are creating a tiered system within the ranks of developed countries. Governments are becoming acutely aware of the capability gaps emerging among the great powers.<sup>3</sup> As the gap between the different tiers begins to widen, near-peers and adversaries at

both the state and non-state levels will be forced to resort to irregular warfare as a method to express their political will short of engaging in a kinetic war. Recognizing this trend towards asymmetric use of force, it is essential to prepare for Irregular Warfare across the complete spectrum of conflict.

### **Insurgency as a Form of Warfare**

As a result of perceived inequality, sectors of the population become isolated and disenfranchised. Often, insurgencies begin long before they emerge into the public eye with groups establishing clandestine networks and shadow governments in the form of auxiliary and underground support elements. The U.S. Army's joint publication on counterinsurgency indicates that "insurgents challenge government forces only to the extent needed to attain their political aims: their main effort is not just to engage [host nation] military and other security forces, but instead to establish a competing system of control over the population, making it impossible for the government to administer its territory and people."<sup>4</sup> However, this does not take into account governments who abdicate their role in these areas, leaving the population to fend for themselves without support from the central government. It is within these complex environments that insurgencies blossom, radical ideologies thrive, and where USSOF will operate deep into this century.

---

Insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.

U.S. Army FM 3-24

---

Insurgencies do not occur in a vacuum — they develop over many years as the direct result of the failure of the central government to provide for swaths of the population. Often faced with

expansive ethnic, sectarian, demographic, and economic divides, national governments often struggle to find a balance. Regardless of the relative strength of the central government, its

inability to provide stability and security throughout the country classifies it as a weak government.

Countries with weak central governments often exhibit limited control across the entire span of the country, instead seeking to control population centers and critical infrastructure. This is done as a way to consolidate security forces and maximize the number of citizens — in the form of affiliated supporters — they can protect with limited resources. This choice of governance creates vast pockets of under-governed space within their borders where the central government either does not exist, or chooses to not exercise authority. These under-governed territories, found within both the rural and urban environments of a country, become the breeding ground for civil discontent that leads to insurgency, radical ideology, or exploitation by transnational organizations.

### **The Role of Under-governed Space**

While there are many variations of under-governed areas within a country and region, the RAND Corporation was able to identify three general typologies to use as a basis for defining these territories.<sup>5</sup>

- **Contested Governance**, also referred to as “competing governance,” is where a group refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the government’s rule. In most cases, the groups contesting the state’s authority are seeking to establish their own state-like entity.
- **Incomplete Governance** is when a state seeks to exert authority over its territory but lacks the resources to do so. The legitimate government cannot maintain a competent, qualified presence that is stronger than the sources of violence and order. Other forces, some tribal, some criminal, move in to fill the vacuum that results.

- **Abdicated Governance** is when the central government abdicates its responsibilities for poor provinces and regions where it concludes that maintaining a presence is not cost effective or where ethnic minorities with whom the government shares little affinity predominate.

These emerging countries typically have weak and corrupt central governments, high unemployment, exorbitant poverty levels, limited internal infrastructure, deep ethnic and religious divisions, and a history of humanitarian issues which make these regions ripe for radicalization. The rise of transnational non-state and sub-state actors will serve to complicate actions throughout the region of under-governed nations. Millenarian groups and illicit organizations will look to these vast under-governed areas to establish operational nodes, communications hubs, and support networks to train the next generation of terrorists. This region of the world will require continual vigilance to maintain security and will occupy the majority of nation-state investment and attention well into the next decade.

### **Combatting Ideology**

In his work on defining a religious-based war, noted Islamic scholar S.K. Malik wrote that “terror is the viable means to conduct war, jihad is the responsibility of both soldiers and civilians.”<sup>6</sup> During the last two decades of the twentieth century, a new phenomenon emerged — a global insurgency tied to ideology instead of nationality. This new evolution of the transnational insurgent freed the organization to conduct spectacular attacks outside of the local supporting population. While terrorism has become the overriding focus of our National Security Strategy, it remains only a tactic in the adversary's asymmetric efforts against us.

The commitment to a long-term strategy to combat ideology will force a change in operational outlook for both conventional forces as well as USSOF. As the U.S. and its allies

move into the middle of this century under the weight of overburdened economies, legacy geopolitical strategies will reemerge alongside existing transnational, non-state threats.

Special Operations Forces will operate within this ill-defined battlefield and must understand that this type of conflict will include new requirements for identification and engagement of the adversary. Within this changing operational landscape, the recognized sovereignty of nations will continually be challenged by the rise of transnational non-state and sub-state organizations, and sympathetic populations connected to each other through the global conversation.

### **Political Ideology**

Political ideology is typically seen as affecting change within the existing government. At its roots, political ideology is focused locally and does not seek annihilation of the state, but rather the reformation of the state structure, to include a rapid return to international rapprochement. As the nature of warfare changes, or as the adversary adapts and changes, and the lines between political warfare, insurgency and terrorism blur, it remains essential that USSOF continues to operate within the seams of such chaos.

### **Religious Ideology**

Religious ideology emerged following the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979. Largely based on the writings of Sayyid Qutb, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, S.K. Malik, and Abdullah Azzam, what became known as Islamic terrorism evolved from a politically-driven opposition to Western and Israeli occupation into a global effort to defend Muslim lands. The current divide within Islam, centered on the Sunni and Shi'a sects, is likely to



expand beyond the Near East, continuing to trigger regional and transnational sectarian conflicts well into this century. It becomes essential to begin looking at these opposing non-state elements in the light of a global influencer — rather than as the adversary itself.

Perhaps the most effective method in both creating and sustaining an organizational goal is to immerse them in a combination of political and religious ideologies.

It is this role which makes transnational terrorism so insidious. Ideology cannot simply be destroyed; in order to effect change at this level requires the repudiation of a belief structure. “A political ideology or a set of religious beliefs readily becomes the source of truth for — and the basis for violent action by — young fanatics. Such principles can be used to transform the true believer into a terrorist and justify the acts of terrorism at the same time.”<sup>7</sup>

This new-breed of extremist leaders has learned to adapt, evolve, and incorporate commercial technologies to recruit, train, and control their networks while also announcing their operations to the world.<sup>8</sup> Leveraging business models and lessons learned from other licit and illicit organizations, many of these twenty-first century terrorist leaders are capable of creating and managing a covert diversified network with multiple simultaneous methods for achieving and reviving long held grievances. It is the apparently random aggregation and disaggregation of groups that complicate identifying the systemic nature of conflict.

## Unconventional Warfare...the Role of Special Ops

The battle against Islamic extremism following 9/11 has further justified USSOF operational capabilities and identified the continuing need for the development of a more specialized form of warfare that transcends the spectrum of conflict. USSOF has proven their ability, flexibility, insight, and ingenuity to operate in a complex warfighting domain, employing small unit tactics to achieve relative superiority across the spectrum of conflict.

As the national combatant command for conducting traditional unconventional warfare, the U.S. Special Operations Command has played a primary role in developing the methods and tactics necessary for implementing persistent host-nation engagement to further the nation's strategic and operational objectives. As the world becomes more complex, unconventional warfare operations are becoming an integral part of an overarching strategy transcending traditional military operations and diplomatic actions. This shift of focus will place a greater emphasis on the non-linear, non-kinetic, small-unit missions of the Special Operations core competencies.

The nature of future USSOF missions will call for them to be conducted across the developing world ranging from austere, remote areas into the heart of feral megacities — often beyond the reach of conventional logistics and support infrastructure. The role of USSOF in these areas will be to support the Combatant Commander's and the Ambassador's strategy by providing tailored information campaigns designed to operate within the cognitive battle space, construction projects designed to rehabilitate the local infrastructure, as well as train, advise, assist, and when necessary, accompany host-nation security forces in “a manner similar to the insurgents themselves.”<sup>9</sup> When looking at this type of warfare, it becomes essential to understand the concepts of unconventional warfare, specifically the tactics of Special Warfare.

## Unconventional Warfare

Moving deeper into the twenty-first century, unconventional warfare will dominate the international battlefield. As the adversary adapts and employs increasingly non-linear forms of warfare, as the technological gap continues to divide first-world nations from the less developed and under-developed nations, as international borders and geo-strategic boundaries blur, the adversary — in its new and continually changing form — will resort to asymmetric efforts spanning the spectrum of conflict. This effort will range from leveraging proxy elements to conducting military-style operations short of war, to using economic, social, and diplomatic actions to influence and coerce other governments to achieve a desired outcome.<sup>10</sup> This concept of political warfare is defined as “the employment of all the means at a nation’s command, *short of war*, to achieve its national objectives.”<sup>11</sup>

Unconventional Warfare must become a natural extension of foreign policy – something that transcends agency, national, and geo-strategic boundaries. This special warfare is not merely a tool to be used during a U.S. centric concept of Phase Zero preparation and planning, rather it must be recognized as a strategy for preventing or mitigating the need for any “phase” of operations that they may be in. When properly utilized, unconventional warfare expertise provides the intellectual foundation to help the country-team and host-nation security forces develop strategies to counter enemy insurgent plans and actions before they mature into a local or regional security issue — operations “left of the beginning.”

## Special Warfare & Surgical Strike - USSOF Core Competencies

---

Strikes from the air, or from long distance leave decision making in the hands of the enemy...only on land can you compel an outcome.

---

Special Operations Forces have become masters of non-linear warfare. In pursuing and perfecting small unit

operational tactics relying on relative superiority in both direct and indirect methods of warfare, USSOF elements create effects disproportionate to the size unit they employ.

Moving into the middle of the twenty-first century, it will be essential for the U.S to prevent conflict before it reaches into traditional phases of warfare. This realm of pre-conflict and the actions taken during this period are identified as special warfare. After thirteen years of conducting surgical strikes in support of the counter-terrorism effort, the U.S. concept of unconventional warfare has become very tactical, narrow and limited in focus. As the mission moves from reactionary to preventative, USSOF must adjust its ability to conduct a holistic and effective unconventional warfare campaign in support of a national strategy.

### **Special Warfare**

Special warfare is the future of USSOF and is defined as “the execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and non-lethal actions taken by specially trained and educated forces that have a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, subversion, sabotage and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.”<sup>12</sup>

The role of Army Special Operations Forces becomes most effective when employed within the gap that exists between the conventional combined arms maneuver and that of diplomatic action. Special Warfare provides the full range of military options focused on the human domain. In looking to the future, this domain will require continued expertise in asymmetric conflict, a working knowledge and application of human factors, and will

increasingly require an understanding and specialization in the cognitive battle space of the adversary.

### **Surgical Strike**

Surgical Strike is defined as "the execution of activities in a precise manner that employ Special Operations Forces in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets, or influence threats."<sup>13</sup> As the war in Afghanistan, and eventually Iraq, expanded to counter-network operations, the Special Operations Forces refined their ability to conduct surgical strike operations from an art to science. With next-generation terrorist networks beginning to operate beyond the established battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, the counter-terrorism forces of the United States find that they are no longer operating under the umbrella of network and technological dominance, and are limited by the scope of the new enemy. This shift in the enemy's capabilities increases the need for U.S. national security elements to be able to conduct man hunting operations across the spectrum of the operating environment.

To counter and disrupt these networks requires a different methodology — recognizing vulnerable populations early and establishing a network designed to counter virulent ideology before it takes root as well as being prepared to rapidly adjust to permutations in the adversarial network and take immediate action to counter the extremist organization's emergence. This balance will require extensive lead time to build the necessary nodes and establish trust within the host nation. However, this effort will pay dividends, as violent extremist organizations will find it increasingly difficult to establish their ideology in areas that no longer are susceptible to their ideology.

## Persistent Factors Impacting the Future Operating Environment

The world has increasingly devolved into a complex environment with multiple aspects of state power and non-state influence combining or becoming interchanged with each other. The inter-related nature of society complicates our efforts to close observed capability gaps within one aspect of society, and may actually create a gap in another. A key trend that reveals this environment is the emergence and proliferation of technology. Technology enables communication to occur at an exponential rate and on a global scale, linking disparate communities into a common international conversation while exposing populations to how other societies think and act.<sup>14</sup> This connectivity increases individual empowerment and erodes the centrality of the state, openly challenging the traditional Westphalian concept of state sovereignty.

---

Today's non-state actors represent a significant threat to regional security. In many cases, the host nation's ability to maintain internal stability is hindered by local popular support for the non-state actor. Some governments knowingly allow non-state actors to operate from within their borders.

Marks, Meer and Nilson

---

Moving away from the artificial limitations imposed by sovereign borders, extensive pockets of under-governed areas, controlled by non-state and sub-state actors, will transcend recognized international borders and exploit geo-strategic seams. This will place a

premium on small, highly mobile forces capable of operating across the spectrum of conflict within these complex environments in support of multiple partner-nations within the region. As these areas fall beyond the abilities of host nation security forces it will become essential to conduct traditional Special Forces missions as well as engaging in special warfare in support of partner-nation elements and U.S. regional strategy. Understanding the impact of complex systems on traditional Special Operations Forces missions will become essential.

## Complex Operating Environments

Complex environments will create situations that will challenge existing concepts of warfare.

These future environments will encompass social, economic, physical, and virtual aspects that must be accounted for in both preparation and sanctioned operational authorities.

- **Social:** This challenge involves the close groupings of different ethnic, sectarian, or socio-economic populations who will have varying degrees of tolerance, communications, and beliefs. Social norms and mores must be understood, and taken into account, when working within these populations whether conducting unilateral operations or creating operational plans alongside host-nation elements.
- **Economic:** In their work on unrestricted warfare, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui assert that future conflict will certainly involve economic actions as offensive tactics for conducting war. Used as an asymmetric weapon, economic attacks can be disruptive to the point of destabilizing an entire nation-state.<sup>15</sup> This method of conflict will be used as both a solitary method as well as in combination with other tactics to conduct irregular warfare. This future battlefield will be both ubiquitous as well as ambiguous.
- **Physical:** The physical environment is the easiest to recognize and prepare for. However, it is essential to anticipate this environment in order to create systems and concepts of operation which will be effective across a diverse physical and ethnic landscape. Due to different operational lenses, the operational requirements within the physical environment will vary between maneuver elements and SOF units. The complex physical environment will require U.S. elements to be prepared to conduct the

full range of diplomatic and military options in areas of dense megacities and austere hinterlands with minimal adjustments to authorities, equipment, and training.

- **Virtual:** Perhaps the most insidious and pervasive of the future operating environments, the virtual world, creates issues which span the whole of government ability to react and protect against potential nefarious actors and actions. While considered outside the traditional operating environment, the virtual environment enables illicit networks to organize, plan, train, and recruit without relying on face-to-face encounters. As any conflict in this environment will occur at the speed of processing, the ability for leaders to employ considered analysis and long development cycles, in the midst of the conflict, will be virtually eliminated. Therefore, relationships and authorities must be in place before a conflict occurs in order to create space for the decision-makers. Additionally, this environment is also the most ambiguous as actions within and emanating from this realm are not entirely clear as to what constitutes an act of war.

Warfare in any of these environments proves difficult in the modern age. As each will, with varying degrees, aggregate into one complex environment, there will be significant challenges for how USSOF approaches their missions. Moving forward into the middle of this century, it can be anticipated that irregular warfare will take place in each of these environments, simultaneously, and emerge with little warning as unrestricted warfare.<sup>16</sup> While the sophistication of the adversary will determine how much impact will be felt in some of these environments, the United States must be prepared to operate in degraded conditions across the entire spectrum of the complex operating environment.



## Complex Adaptive Systems

As the capabilities gap increases between the developed and emerging world nations, the distance between them will mark the limitation of conventional influence. Across the developing world, complex adaptive systems will emerge in the gap to challenge local governance and regional stability. Complex adaptive systems are organizations where the individual components and relationships between those elements can “change due to continuous adaptations of disparate parts, which on their own produce certain system-wide behaviors in order to cope.”<sup>17</sup> Complex adaptive systems, as an adversary, will require a force that is capable of recognizing the amorphous threat and be agile enough to operate within the same decision-making cycle as the adversarial leadership.

As violent sub-systems, and the adversaries found within them, adapt and become comfortable in their milieu, they will develop the ability to skillfully adapt to variances within their environment. This ability to implement systemic change along the breadth of their network makes these groups incredibly lethal. Elements within a complex adaptive system constantly make assessments of a given situation to determine “the correct action to take in the future based on past experience.”<sup>18</sup> Understanding that complex networks can be manipulated and affected will present disruption opportunities. However, it is important to understand that this method of influence requires persistent presence and extensive lead-time, as well as a consistent, coherent strategy for network disruption. This method of manipulating complex adaptive systems is only effective if the emerging system — and the conditions under which it formed — are understood and recognized before the network becomes a regional problem.

## The Impact of Globalization

The phenomenon of globalization is increasingly driving the responsibility for national decisions further down into the population. The growing influence of sub-state and non-state groups is a clear indicator of the leadership void created by this shift in national decision-making strategy. As these sub-state groups gain support and recognition, some of them will transform into transnational armed groups. These groups will rapidly emerge from a localized domestic law-enforcement challenge into a legitimate regional or strategic security threat with little-to-no warning.

#### **Time as a Limiting Factor**

A natural by-product of the move towards globalization is the world is becoming more complex. Historically, international relations – to include war – were conducted between nation-states. Diplomacy, strategies, and even specific tactics were designed to confront rational actors who represented relatively large populations. Often correspondence between belligerents was measured in months, allowing time for considered decisions. The shift towards globalization has introduced new actors and technologies into the calculus which has simultaneously reduced the decision cycle to minutes and will eventually eliminate time as a factor in making decisions. Therefore it becomes essential to recognize this limitation and plan for it by building artificial time into the decision-making process and understand the need to create “space” in the cycle through pre-positioned authorities and approvals to the lowest possible operational levels.

Globalization has increased the organizational effectiveness, lethality, and ability for these groups to transcend traditional Westphalian borders and truly operate on a global scale. This emergent threat will require a highly mobile, scalable force with long dwell periods and pre-existing authorities, capable of recognizing and disrupting these groups before they reach breakout capability.

## **Conclusion**

For the past two decades, the U.S. military and the national security apparatus has focused its energy and capabilities on confronting Islamic terrorism as a kinetic target. The non-linear nature of warfare suggests that terrorism will evolve and incorporate tactics which will target systems across the spectrum of national power. In looking at unrestricted warfare, operations against these systems will transform how USSOF operates — no longer focusing on

short-term gains, but seeking a long-term strategy which deliberately targets the adversary's ideology and influence.

Understanding who the adversary is, why they fight, and more significantly how the concept of their warfare will change, creates opportunities to engage this ideology. As the adversary adapts and employs increasingly non-linear forms of warfare, as the technological gap continues to divide first-world nations from the less developed and under-developed nations, as international borders and geo-strategic boundaries blur, the adversary will resort to asymmetric efforts spanning the spectrum of conflict. Unconventional warfare therefore must become a natural extension of foreign policy — something that transcends agency, national, and geo-strategic boundaries.

Unconventional warfare tactics can disrupt the formation of affiliates and acolytes before the virulent ideology can take root within an at-risk population. Moving away from an operational environment dominated by kinetic actions, USSOF are ideally suited to operate as an integral aspect of a sustainable counter-terrorism strategy which incorporates a unified, whole of government, approach.

## Works Cited

Barnett, Thomas P. M. *The Pentagon's New Map : War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Berkley Books, 2005.

Flynn, Michael T. "Sandals and Robes to Business Suits and Gulf Streams: Warfare in the 21st Century." *Small Wars Journal*, 2011: 1-7.

Glenn, Kevin B. *Complex Targeting: A Complexity-based Theory of Targeting and its Application to Radical Islamic Terrorism*. Maxwell: School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 2002.

Gorka, Sebastian. "The Enemy's Threat Doctrine." MISOC Effects Group, September 04, 2013.

Kahler, Miles. "Inventing International Relations." In *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, by Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry, 33. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.

Laqueur, Walter. *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Liang, Qiao, and Wang Xiangsui. *Unrestricted Warfare*. Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999.

Marighella, Carlos. *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*. 1969.

Maxwell, David. *Unconventional Warfare and Counter-Unconventional Warfare*. Washington: Georgetown University, 2014.

McLeary, Paul. "US Army Sees 'Megacities' as the Future Battlefield." *Defense News*, 2014.

Newman, Ernest. "Exploring the 'Root Causes' of Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 2006: 749-772.

Rabasa, Angel, et al. *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007.

Sookhdeo, Patrick. "The West, Islam, and the Counter-Ideological War." In *Fighting the Ideological War: Winning Strategies from Communism to Islamism*, by Katharine C. Gorka and Patrick Sookhdeo, 15-44. McLean: The Westminster Institute, 2012.

Tse-tung, Mao. *FMFRP 12-18: Mao Tse-tung On Guerrilla Warfare*. Washington: U.S. Marine Corps, 1989.

U.S. Army. *Field Manual 3-24: Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*. Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2014.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command. *ARSOF 2022*. Ft. Bragg: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2012.

White, Jeffrey B. "A Different Kind of Threat: Some Thoughts on Irregular Warfare." *Irregular Warfare* 51-59.

White, Jonathan R. *Terrorism: An Introduction*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1998.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sookhdeo, Patrick. "The West, Islam, and the Counter-Ideological War." In *Fighting the Ideological War: Winning Strategies from Communism to Islamism*, by Katharine C. Gorka and Patrick Sookhdeo, 15-44. McLean: The Westminster Institute, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> White, Jeffrey B. "A Different Kind of Threat: Some Thoughts on Irregular Warfare." *Irregular Warfare* 51-59.

<sup>3</sup> Barnett, Thomas P. M. *The Pentagon's New Map : War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Berkley Books, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Army Special Operations Command. *ARSOF 2022*. Ft. Bragg: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Rabasa, Angel, et al. *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Gorka, Sebastian. "The Enemy's Threat Doctrine." MISOC Effects Group, September 04, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> White, Jonathan R. *Terrorism: An Introduction*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Flynn, Michael T. "Sandals and Robes to Business Suits and Gulf Streams: Warfare in the 21st Century." *Small Wars Journal*, 2011: 1-7.

<sup>9</sup> Maxwell, David. *Unconventional Warfare and Counter-Unconventional Warfare*. Washington: Georgetown University, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Liang, Qiao, and Wang Xiangsui. *Unrestricted Warfare*. Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Army Special Operations Command. *ARSOF 2022*. Ft. Bragg: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Barnett, Thomas P. M. *The Pentagon's New Map : War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Berkley Books, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Liang, Qiao, and Wang Xiangsui. *Unrestricted Warfare*. Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Glenn, Kevin B. *Complex Targeting: A Complexity-based Theory of Targeting and its Application to Radical Islamic Terrorism*. Maxwell: School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.