Special Warfare

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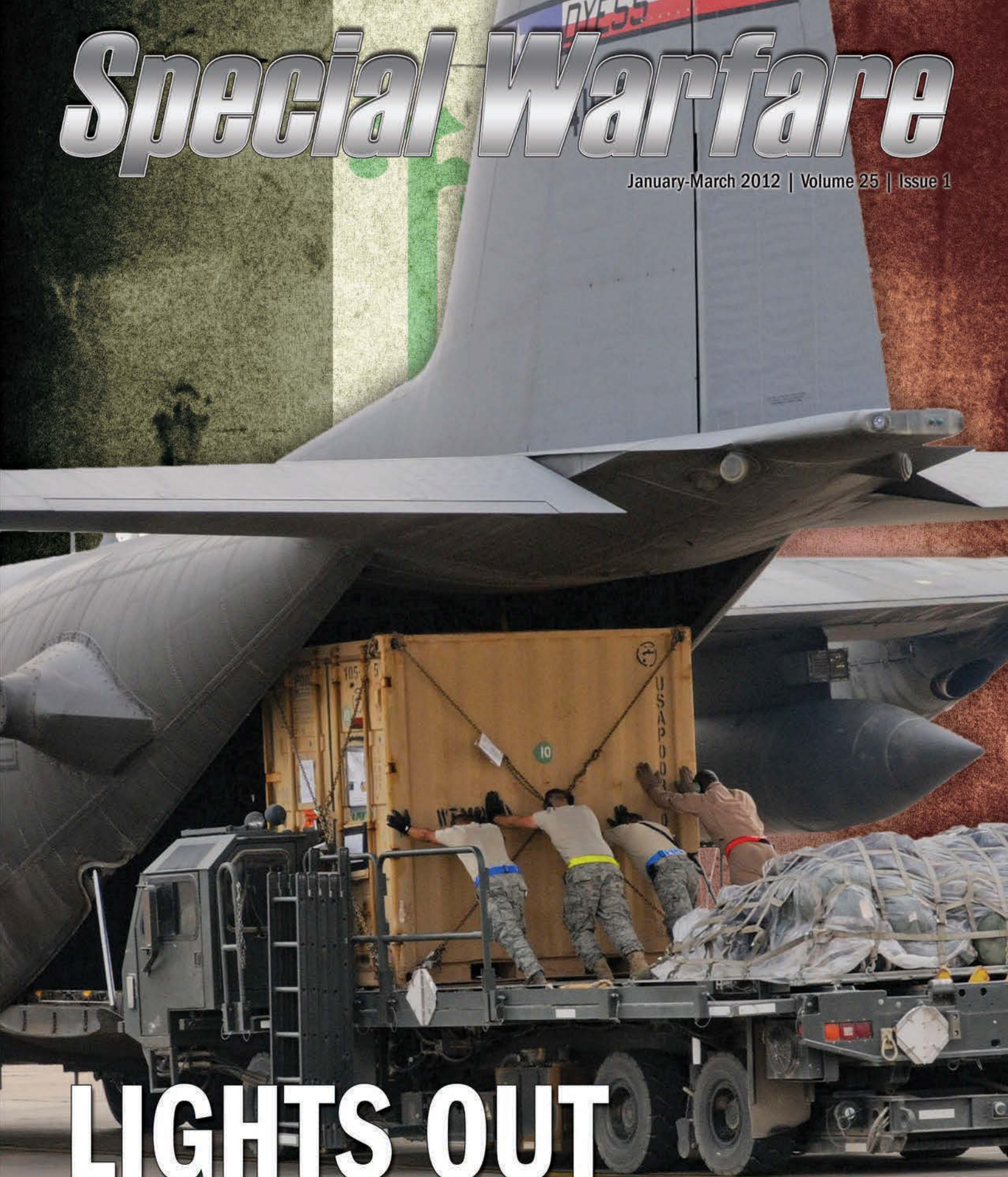

LIGHTS OUT

ARSOF PACKS IT UP IN IRAQ

Cover Story

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Lights Out

As American Soldiers prepare to leave Iraq, Special Warfare visited Iraq to take the pulse of ARSOF and to assess its role over the past eight years.

Cover photo: Service members load cargo containers onto a C-130 aircraft in Iraq. These aircraft have ferried the bulk of U.S. service members redeploying. *U.S. Army photo by Private Andrew Slovensky*

ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

Special Warfare

U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY
SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL

MISSION: The JFK Special Warfare Center and School invests in the development of human capital to produce Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Operations and Special Forces Soldiers from recruitment to retirement in order to provide our regiments with a professionally trained and well-educated force.

VISION: Professionalism starts here. We are an adaptive institution characterized by agility, collaboration, accountability and integrity. We promote life-long learning and transformation. We are THE Special Operations Center of Learning whose credibility in producing the world's finest special operators is recognized and sustained by every single member of our three regiments.

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Special Warfare welcomes submissions of scholarly, independent research from members of the armed forces, security policy-makers and -shapers, defense analysts, academic specialists and civilians from the United States and abroad.

Manuscripts should be 2,500 to 3,000 words in length. Include a cover letter. Submit a complete biography with author contact information (i.e., complete mailing address, telephone, fax, e-mail address).

Manuscripts should be submitted in plain text, double-spaced and in a digital file. End notes should accompany works in lieu of embedded footnotes. Please consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Edition, for footnote style.

Submit graphics, tables and charts with source references in separate files from the manuscript (no embedded graphics). *Special Warfare* may accept high-resolution (300 dpi or greater) digital photos; be sure to include a caption and photographer's credit. Prints and 35 mm transparencies are also acceptable. Photos will be returned, if possible.

All submissions will be reviewed in a timely manner. *Special Warfare* reserves the right to edit all contributions. *Special Warfare* will attempt to afford authors an opportunity to review the final edited version; requests for changes must be received by the given deadline.

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Views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official Army position. This publication does not supersede any information presented in other official Army publications.

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FROM THE COMMANDANT

On March 17, 2003, President George W. Bush announced a 48-hour deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq. On March 19, Soldiers from the 5th Special Forces Group headed over the berm into Iraq.

It came as no surprise to the members of our regiments that United States Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, would be at the tip of the spear in the invasion. Eight years later, as the war wound down, ARSOF were still in the fight, training Iraqi special-operations forces.

Iraqi SOF, U.S. Special Forces' main partners throughout the war, are some of the most balanced and most capable organizations within the Iraq army. With the end of the war in sight, it is these forces that will be critical in preventing the insurgency from gaining ground. The training ARSOF have provided them over the past eight years should stand them in good stead.

More importantly, the relationships that we have built over the past eight years should ensure that we will remain persistently engaged with ISOF, in the normal "military to military" relationships that the current administration has vowed to carry on with Iraq. Iraqi SOF leaders have been quite vocal about the fact that while they can stand on their own, they do not want to lose the partnership with ARSOF that has been forged during the eight years of war.

It is this kind of relationship and bond that makes our force so unique. We don't just talk about building relationships and working through and with. We do it, time after time, and in locations all over the world.

In *Special Warfare*, we seek to create a forum for you to share not only ways of building those relationships but also ways to make them endure.

As the U.S. presence in Iraq wound down last year, *Special Warfare* was there. A team from the schoolhouse went to Iraq to document the last days of the war. While there, we saw the strides that have been made in the training of the Iraqi force. We saw how our doctrine has been tested and has improved from the lessons learned throughout eight years of combat.

In this issue, our team members will chronicle what they saw, and learned, and they suggest ways that ARSOF can improve its operational capabilities and ways that we can improve our training here at the schoolhouse to prepare our Soldiers for the next uncertain environment they will face.

Over the course of the next year, *Special Warfare teams* — writers, photographers and doctrine subject-matter experts — will make visits throughout ARSOF's areas of operation. Upcoming issues of *Special Warfare* will take a look at operations in Africa, the Pacific and South America. If you are serving in those areas, we ask that you share the knowledge you have gained from operations in those areas with the members of the ARSOF regiments. If you have ideas for article or something that you think our team should see and cover, send your ideas to our team at Specialwarfare@ahqb.soc.mil

Major General Bennet S. Sacolick

Valor ceremony honors Special Forces Soldiers

Thirty Soldiers from the 3rd Special Forces Group were honored Sept. 15 at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, as the commander of the United States Army Special Operations Command, Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland Jr., awarded two Silver Star Medals, seven Bronze Star Medals with "V" device, 10 Army Commendation Medals with "V" device and 11 Purple Heart Medals.

The ceremony showcased vignettes of the respective actions of the two Silver Star Medal recipients, Capt. Matthew L. Golsteyn and Sgt. 1st Class Chad E. Lawson.

Each Soldier braved enemy fire for hours; exposing himself to danger in order to help his fellow service members and Afghan counterparts.

Golsteyn was recognized for his actions on Feb. 20, 2010, in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

"I had the trust and loyalty of my teammates," Golsteyn said. "I owe this to them. Recognition like this doesn't happen if you aren't leading excellent people."

Lawson was recognized for his actions on Aug. 4, 2010, in the Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.

His former detachment commander, Capt. Aaron Baty, said Lawson was the "epitome of a Special Forces NCO."

The USASOC commander acknowledged the selfless and humble nature of the Special Forces Soldier as he addressed the crowd of family members, friends and fellow service members.

"One thing that every one of these guys would say, I'm sure, if you asked them, is 'I was just doing my job,' " Mulholland said.

He went on to say that it was his "extraordinary honor and privilege" to recognize the Soldiers. — *by Staff Sgt. Jeremy D. Crisp.*

Silver Star:
Capt. Matthew L. Golsteyn
Sgt. 1st Class Chad E. Lawson

Bronze Star with "V" device:
Master Sgt. Matthew Moore
Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Drew
Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Misero
Sgt. 1st Class Scott Redding
Staff Sgt Robert Bradford
Staff Sgt. Benjamin Wilson
Staff Sgt. Brian Wilson

5th Special Forces Group (A) celebrates 50 years of service

There have been many milestones observed by Green Berets of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) during the unit's storied history, but a special milestone was celebrated at Fort Campbell, Ky., in September.

Past and present members of the 5th SF Group (A) commemorated the 50th anniversary of the unit's activation on Sept. 21, 1961, at Fort Bragg, N.C. The week-long reunion allowed Soldiers and veterans alike to observe and participate in various events, but more importantly, it was a time to simply enjoy the camaraderie between the generations of Green Berets present.

The reunion events included weapons competitions, sporting events, golf and fishing tournaments, airborne operations, a capabilities demonstration, guest-speaker seminars, a formal banquet on the General Jackson Showboat in Nashville, Tenn., and a day-long picnic culminating with a 20-minute firework display.

The week was highlighted by a formal ceremony on Gabriel Field that marked the anniversary of the group's activation. The ceremony recognized the historic achievements and sacrifices made during five decades of service to the nation.

During the ceremony, the oldest and the youngest Green Beret jointly unveiled a 9/11 monument. The monument features two World Trade Center structural-steel columns recovered from Ground Zero in New York City and presented to the unit by the Port Authority of both New York and New Jersey on May 27, 2011.

The steel columns, which are shaped in a Roman numeral V, serve as a constant reminder to the unit of the thousands of lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and the special relationship between the 5th SF Group and New York City first responders, and why, to this day, the group remains vigilant and at the forefront in the war on terror.

Col. Scott E. Brower, commander of the 5th SF Group, elaborated on the significance of the recently unveiled 9/11 monument and reinforced the importance of what Green Berets do.

Green Berets were the first to invade Afghanistan in response to the attacks, and once again led the 2003 invasion of Iraq, resulting in a stable environment and the opportunity for a free and democratic society, commented Brower.

"It is an understanding, and an ability to relate to those first responders who risked their lives to go to the aid of others, that has kept our Soldiers and these three [emergency response] organizations friends to this day," Brower stated. "The brave first responders of 9/11 who were running to the World Trade Center, not away, who were climbing up stairwells, not down them." — *by Staff Sgt. Barbara Ospina, 5th Special Forces Group (A) Public Affairs.*

Special Warfare announces change in leadership, updates to technology and calls for articles

For the past 24 years, Jerry Steelman has been at the helm of *Special Warfare*. On Dec. 31, Steelman retired with 40 years of government service.

He was involved in the creation of the very first *Special Warfare* in April of 1988. That issue had articles on new initiatives in Special Forces training; terrorism as an element of war, which dealt with Muammar Quaddafi and his use of terrorism to further his own goals; cultural interaction; and making the most of SF pre-mission planning. These topics are as relevant today as they were in 1988. Or, as Steelman is fond of saying, "The more things change, the more they are the same."

Over the years, Steelman has worked tirelessly to keep the publication up-to-date, not only in the topics it covers but also in its design and layout. The publication has gone through a number of redesigns, with the most recent one in 2010.

In 2006, the magazine gained a Web presence, which is continuing to grow, with a complete revamp of the website early in 2011. In this issue, we are happy to announce the latest upgrade to our Web presence — commenting on articles. When you visit the publication online, you will find the commenting section at the end of every article. It is our hope that this new addition to the Web, will build professional discussion and dialogue about the articles in each issue. We ask that all comments be professional and be made in the spirit of creating professional discussion and as a means to exchange ideas.

For those on the go, at the end of each article, you will find a QR code. If you scan the code with your mobile smart phone, it will take you directly to the commenting section so that you can share your thoughts. Free QR code-scanning applications are available for download for most smart phone models.

We are also issuing a call for articles for the 2012 publications. We are asking anyone interested in writing articles that pertain to the slated topics to contact the new Special Warfare editor, Janice Burton, at janice.burton@us.army.mil or 910-432-5703, with their ideas and to get publication deadlines. The following are the 2012 topics:

- *April-June 2012:* Persistent Engagement in the CENTOM area of operations. We are looking for articles from Yemen, Lebanon and other areas in the CENTCOM AO where ARSOF is persistently engaged.
- *July-September 2012*: ARSOF in the SOUTHCOM AO
- *October-December 2012:* ARSOF in the PACOM AO
- January- March 2013: ARSOF in AFRICOM

Submit articles and artwork to Specialwarfare@ahqb.soc.mil.

BRONZED HONOR Members of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command take part in the unveiling of De Oppresso Liber at Two World Financial Center in New York City, to commemorate the role of special-operations Soldiers in Afghanistan. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell L. Klika*

'Horse Soldier' statue dedicated near Ground Zero

More than 10 years ago, Green Berets of the 5th Special Forces Group rode furiously through the mountains of Afghanistan, pursuing those behind the attacks on 9/11. A decade later, special-operations Soldiers, who earned the name "Masters of Chaos" for their ride through Afghanistan, met at the Winter Garden Hall in Two World Financial Center near Ground Zero as Vice President Joseph Biden dedicated a larger-than-life bronze statue depicting the courageous Afghanistan campaign of the Green Berets.

Members of Task Force Dagger; a joint special-operations team consisting mostly of Green Berets from the 5th SF Group, aircrew members from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and Air Force combat controllers; joined the vice president and various New York business leaders and veterans support groups to dedicate an 18-foot statue in honor of the Green Berets, entitled "De Oppresso Liber."

De oppresso liber, which in Latin means "to liberate the oppressed," depicts a Special Forces Green Beret on horseback leading the invasion into Afghanistan in the weeks that followed the attacks on the World Trade Center. It captures the iconic image of adaptability, skill and courage that characterize the missions and qualities of U.S. Army Special Forces.

The statue was sculpted by Douwe Blumberg, and was inspired in part by a photo of commandos on horseback in Afghanistan that then Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld displayed during a news conference in late 2001.

"The visual irony of a 21st-century, high-tech trooper mounted on a ragged Afghan mountain horse, unchanged for centuries, fascinated me," said Blumberg.

In forging the statue, Blumberg paid attention to the commandos' stories and included tiny details: In the tread of the Soldier's boots are pieces of gravel from Afghanistan that a Green Beret gave the artist for inspiration.

Another detail: On the soldier's left hand is the outline of a wedding band under his glove. "That's my way of tipping my hat to wives, marriages and strain on families," Blumberg said. "It's to acknowledge the stresses caused by multiple deployments."

As the nation's first responders overseas, the Green Berets were given the mission to hunt down those responsible for the 9/11 attacks and bring them to justice. The SF teams faced enormous operational challenges and were required to rapidly adapt 21st-century combat technologies and tactics into age-old central Asian models of guerrilla and tribal warfare as they partnered with the Afghan tribes of the Northern Alliance.

Needing suitable transportation to navigate the difficult mountainous terrain of northern Afghanistan, the Special Forces operational detachments – alpha, were provided horses by the Afghan tribes they were supporting. The Green Berets readily adapted to this form of mobility and proceeded to assist and advise the Northern Alliance fighters from horseback, similar to cavalry units of old.

USASOC remembers, honors 9/11

The fire, smoke and rubble that covered the landscape of lower Manhattan, N.Y.; Stonycreek Township, Penn.; and the Pentagon on 9/11 sent shock waves throughout the nation and around the world. Now, 10 years later, those shock waves and feelings are still felt just as strongly as on that tragic day.

The United States Army Special Operations Command conducted a ceremony at Meadows Field Memorial Plaza Sept. 9 to remember and honor those who were lost on that day as well as during the years of war that continue today.

Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland Jr., commanding general of USASOC, thanked everyone in attendance for coming and noted the importance of this ceremony.

"Thank you for taking the time to be here with us today at our memorial plaza as we remember this critical anniversary, this essential anniversary, this inevitable anniversary of the attacks of 9/11," said Mulholland.

"It is a striking time for us. It is a time for us to remember and reflect, particularly within this community of the Army special operations and within our larger joint-special-operations community, on what we have done and the price that we have paid and our families along with us," said Mulholland.

During his speech, Mulholland made reference to the stanzas from the national anthem and described the importance of each to our current military engagements.

"Any and all of us who have ever listened to the words of our national anthem know that it asks of us every time it is played a critical question. That question is: 'O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave. O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.' This is the question put before us on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001," said Mulholland.

Mulholland concluded his speech by answering that question with a synopsis of the accomplishments and sacrifices that have been made by Army special-operations forces and their brothers and sisters in the emergency-response field.

"We validate that verse every single day. We know it is our job to validate that verse every day until this war is won," Mulholland continued.

"The thing that I ask of all of us is that we remain worthy of that question and how we answer it every single day. And without question I have absolutely no doubt that if there is any force on Earth that will remain loyal to that question and answer it in the affirmative, it is the U.S Army special operations and our families," said Mulholland.

After Mulholland concluded his speech, Command Sgt. Maj. Parry Baer, the USASOC command sergeant major, recognized those who perished on 9/11 and those in each of the subordinate units of USASOC who have made the ultimate sacrifice since that fateful day. — *by Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASOC Public Affairs.*

REMEMBRANCE Soldiers, civilians and family members gathered at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Memorial Wall to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of 9/11. *Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASOC Public Affairs*

Coordinating military operations with local tribal warlords while on horseback, the Green Berets accomplished in weeks what many thought would take months, if not years — defeating the Taliban and pushing surviving members of al-Qaeda into the mountains of Pakistan.

In honor of the victims of the 9/11 attacks, each Green Beret A-Team carried pieces of steel recovered from the rubble of the World Trade Center. At the site where each A-team completed its mission, the team members buried a piece of the World Trade Center and a properly folded American flag.

As members of the the first unit to invade Afghanistan and take the fight to those responsible, the Green Berets of the 5th SF Group would forever bond with New York City's first responders. The burial ceremonies formed an understanding and an ability to relate to the first responders, who risked their lives going to the aid of others, running toward the World Trade Center, not away.

On Veterans Day, that bond was renewed, as members of Task Force Dagger joined the New York Police, New York Firemen and the Port Authority Police in the Veterans Day parade down 5th Avenue. The "De Oppresso Liber" statue and the contingent of Green Berets and their families followed behind the city's first responders in the parade.

Lt. Gen. John Mulholland, commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and the former commander of Task Force Dagger, reminded those present during the dedication ceremony later that evening that the statue is not a memorial only for the Green Berets. The statue is for all who shared the common bond and responsibility to protect America's homeland – whether it was in New York City; Washington, D.C.; Shanksville, Pa.; or overseas.

Two World Financial Center will serve as a temporary home for the statue, which will eventually be relocated to a site overlooking the 9/11 Memorial and Ground Zero. — *by Maj. Brandon Bissell, 5th Special Forces Group (A) Public Affairs.*

Special Forces team takes top honors at international sniper competition

Master Sgt. Kevin Owens and Sgt. 1st Class Terry Gower of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), emerged from a field of 32 teams to capture the top spot in the 2011 International Sniper Competition. Fort Bragg wound up placing three teams in the top five at the 11th annual event, which began at Fort Benning, Ga., Sept. 27.

The field included entries from Ireland, Spain, Canada, Germany, the Air Force, the Marine Corps and Army National Guard. There were state-police teams from Florida and California.

"It gets more competitive every year," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Vest, a U.S. Army Sniper School instructor and team sergeant. "As the technology grows, everyone seems to get better. This also

continued on page 08

SMALL-UNIT TACTICS: TEMPERING TIMELESS REQUIREMENTS WITH THE CURRENT THREAT

Over the years, the sequencing, execution and even the name of the small-unit-tactics, or SUT, phase of the Special Forces Qualification Course, or SFQC, have changed dramatically, but the defining experience of the training remains small-unit patrolling.

Training in SUT is important for ensuring that Special Forces Soldiers will have the tactical competence and skills they will need to succeed in a complex environment. That training is conducted at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School by Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group.

As Co. B continually reassesses its course curriculum, it has identified training refinements that support efforts to maintain current and future relevance without losing focus on the fundamentals and principles of patrolling. Cadre members are incorporating current threat tactics into the phase by soliciting feedback from the U.S. Army Special Forces Command and by putting experienced Soldiers from the operational force in instructor positions.

Co. B has also introduced changes recommended by a critical-task review board, such as medical training/trauma management and basic counter-IED operations. Furthermore, to introduce principles of unconventional warfare, or UW, earlier in the SFQC, Co. B has assumed responsibility for some instruction that was previously taught during the Robin Sage culmination exercise, such as air-bundle resupply and landing-zone/drop-zone operations. Co. B's most substantive adjustment, however, has been to its training methodology, which now uses outcome-based training and evaluation to develop adaptive thinkers and leaders.

The most noticeable result of the training refinements has been the development of a new field-training exercise, or FTX, conducted in a counter-insurgency environment. During this culmination exercise, students conduct village-stability operations through and with local villagers and members of the Pineland Local Police in an area contested by insurgents. The police and villagers are portrayed by language-qualified role-players, and the scenario compels the students to engage the indigenous population using the target language they learned in the previous phase.

While training in SUT is evolving to meet the current operational requirements, Co. B still conducts training in land navigation, weapons training and qualification using the M-4, basic urban combat and small-unit patrolling. The requirements for proper route selection and route planning; preparation of men, weapons and equipment on the objective rally point; triple coverage of the kill-zone; surprise; and violence of action on the objective remain key components of the phase.

Co. B's desired end state is that every student will demonstrate a mastery of the fundamental principles of patrolling and proficiency in SUT and will be able to creatively apply and adapt those basic principles to solve complex and ambiguous problems in a realistic combat scenario. Considering the desired end state, Co. B's constant challenge is to reassess the most important basic skills and the most effective way of transferring those skills to the students. As it works toward professionalizing the force, Co. B remains an agile and adaptive organization, fully prepared to provide relevant training in a tactical environment in order to ensure that the entry-level SF Soldier will possesses the tactical competence and decision-making abilities necessary to succeed in combat on an SF A-detachment.

Sniper Competition *continued from page 08*

gives us a chance to share ideas and spread our knowledge a little, even with other countries."

A wide range of skills was tested as competitors fired rifles at fixed and moving targets, from various distances and positions, both day and night. Instructors said most events required sharp communication between shooter and spotter. Factors such as elevation, weather conditions and wind must be accounted for.

"You can't see everything at one time," Vest said. "Ask any sniper. You really have to rely on your partner. It's not only the guy who pulls the trigger. Your partner has to be able to talk you onto the target."

In the past, teams in the International Sniper Competition could bring any weapon considered military issue. This year, all used the M-110 Semiautomatic Sniper System, a 7.62 mm, gas-operated rifle that's standard in the Sniper School.

"We were trying to alleviate guys from coming in here with high-powered scopes and different guns," said Staff Sgt. Derek Balboa, an instructor. "We wanted to level the playing field a little bit. It had become too much of a gear race. This year, we made it more of a marksmanship skill and competition."

Despite the new threat and changing operational focus triggered by 9/11 and the war on terror, the sniper skill sets reserved for more conventional warfare are still needed today, Balboa said.

Nowhere was that more apparent than on the 360-degree "stalk lane," which unfolded Thursday at Harmony Church. Teams decked out in camouflage had to move through thick brush and over rolling hills in an effort to get shots on targets about 300 meters away — all while avoiding detection.

All the scenarios throughout the four-day showdown were relevant to real-world missions and operations, organizers said.

The week included a two-day kickoff symposium with discussions about lessons learned in war zones and a review of tactics, techniques and procedures.

Vest said the annual gathering allows representatives from across the sniper community to meet and exchange information, and the competition stands as a solid training opportunity, as well.

"You usually work alone in this profession," he said. "Bringing these guys together, you learn more about what to teach the students coming through the courses. And there are things we can pick up and use ourselves."

The networking among the military branches, special-operations forces, Sniper School officials and civilians from industry will produce additional benefits for snipers, Balboa said.

"You start seeing trends during the competition from military and civilian teams," he said. "If it's a good idea, it's a good idea. We'll incorporate it as training value.

"This is going to get better and better as far as the competitive aspect goes. Within a month or so, we'll start planning for the 2012 event. We always tweak it a little and try to do different stuff." — *Army News Service.*

TOP FIVE SNIPER TEAMS

The top five finishers (with point total) in the 2011 International Sniper Competition at Fort Benning:

Champion - 585 points:
Master Sgt. Kevin Owens and Sgt. 1st Class Terry Gower
Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C.

Runner-up - 555 points:
Cpl. Michael Craven and Cpl. Lloyd Kenny
Irish Defence Forces

3rd place - 535 points:
Sgt. 1st Class Tony Amerman and Sgt. 1st Class Andy Roy
Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group, Fort Bragg, N.C.

4th place - 505 points:
Staff Sgt. Jonathan Geib and Sgt. Jesse Wargolet
Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, 29th Brigade Combat Team, Arizona National Guard

5th place - 485 points:
Sgt. 1st Class Gabe Kessay and Sgt. 1st Class Chance Giannelli
D Co. D, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Q&A

BRIGADIER GENERAL DARSIE ROGERS

JOINT FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMPONENT COMMAND-IRAQ

SW: **What does success look like, particularly to U.S. special-operations forces in Iraq, right now?**

Rogers: The mission statement for U.S. SOF in Iraq has taken many forms over the years. Thinking back, two things have remained constant: To assist Iraq in building an enduring special-operations and counterterrorism capability that they can sustain within their own security-forces structure once we depart; and to target those extremist groups that threaten the sovereignty of Iraq as well as the presence of U.S. forces, allied forces, diplomats and Iraq's citizens.

Along with other members of the U.S. military, our interagency partners and the commitment of our Iraqi partners, we've developed an enduring capability while simultaneously maintaining pressure on the networks to protect U.S. efforts and interests and allow the government of Iraq the breathing room to grow and develop their political and military structure.

So, have we achieved success? The answer to that is yes. The Iraqi Security Forces have a reliable, professional counterterrorism capability that has allowed them to plan their own successful operations against Iraq's enemies — be they extremists, criminals or terrorists. The forces we've partnered with over the years routinely conduct counterterrorism operations independently — without U.S. adviser support. The bottom line is that they develop their own intelligence so they can conduct their own planning. They then are able to execute missions unilaterally and have the ability to exploit that intelligence and conduct operations against follow-on targets.

Today, as we near completion of our drawdown in Iraq with just a little over a month remaining of Operation New Dawn, we continue to conduct advise-and assist-operations. But now the purpose of those operations has more to do with strengthening our partnership, to help the Iraqis expand their TTPs, (tactics, techniques and procedures) and capabilities, and hone the skills they've learned. The Iraqis can certainly sustain this capability once we leave. Specifically, the Iraq Special Operations Forces are capable of denying terrorists the freedom of movement needed for large coordinated activities, and as a result, we can transition out of Iraq with confidence that they will be able to maintain pressure on networks threatening the government of Iraq.

SW: **Do you feel confident that they will be able to sustain the mission without our force structure in place?**

Rogers: We have to be careful not to view Iraqi SOF competencies through a U.S. lens. Our U.S. special-operations forces can seize an objective and establish a forward operating base in a matter of days, as demonstrated time and again in Afghanistan or Iraq. We have magnificent special operators who can come into an uncertain environment and have an immediate impact, because they have sharpened their skills for years. They are extremely well-prepared, well-trained and supported by a massive doctrine, communications and logistics network. However, the Iraqis have only been at this for eight-plus years. That really isn't a very long time to develop a high-end counterterrorism and special-operations force. The Iraqis have received world-class training, and their training culminated in combat operations. Few forces in the world have more combat experience, and they are very, very capable at targeting the threat within Iraq's borders. So, we have to manage expectations with regard to the current limitations against the capabilities they possess and will be able to sustain. For instance, they will not have an ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capability equivalent to ours, at least not immediately. They will not have an aviation component that is comparable to ours, initially. Over time, they will desire and develop a need for those advanced capabilities, but for now, they have what they need to be successful.

Really, when considered from a larger perspective, we have a sovereign, stable, self-reliant Iraq which has a democratically elected government, functioning civil institutions and a growing economy. This is a fledgling democracy, but already we see the beginnings of the military-to-civilian transition of the security tasks. But they still have a lot of work to do. The security forces, over time, will take on a more traditional role of defending the nation's borders rather than a day-to-day interior fight. They will refine their future requirements in time, designing them to meet the needs of the government and the regional internal or external threats.

I'm very confident that Iraqi SOF elements, specifically the Counterterrorism Service and Iraqi Special Operations Forces, will be able to sustain effective CT and special operations after our departure.

SW: **How important are the Iraqi Special Operations Forces and the Counterterrorism Service to the sovereignty of Iraq, and what is the key to their success in the coming years?**

Rogers: It is important to note that over the years, we have partnered with a broad range of units across the Iraqi Security Forces, border guards and police. SOF fingerprints are all over Iraq's Security Forces. The real backbone of Iraq's SOF capability is the Counterterrorism Service. They will be the force of choice to disrupt high-end terror networks, protect the Iraqi people and isolate extremist groups from internal and external support.

The key to Iraq's success is the continuation of force development. There is a propensity for Iraq's military organizations to equate improvement to an increase in force size. We have stressed that force size, defined as the numbers of battalions or brigades in the formation, is much less important than precision capability. It is so much more than just having a bunch of great shooters. They've got to address the entire organization: structure, logistics, recruiting, initial-entry training, budget, you name it. At some point, they should integrate into the Ministry of Defense, or MoD, or another higher support structure. If it is decided that the Counterterrorism Service is to remain independent from the MoD, there may be ways to mitigate shortfalls, such as contracting their sustainment and support requirements. Whatever the decision, they must start thinking about the long-term sustainment and structure of the organization.

They have an ambitious training and expansion program. They want to expand ISOF by four additional battalions that are regionally oriented, and have developed a feasible plan without being too ambitious in terms of numbers and equipment. The special-operations advisers who spent so much time with the CTS headquarters and at the brigades have convinced them that capability does not equate to numbers. What matters is how good you are today and what you do to be better tomorrow.

SW: **How important have our efforts been to the political-security landscape in the Middle East?**

Rogers: Obviously we have removed some of the world's most brutal terrorists from the ranks of al-Qaeda in Iraq and other violent extremist organizations. We've really done a fantastic job of maintaining pressure on terrorist networks, and in many cases disrupting networks outside Iraq, interdicting those players who may be transiting or recruited from here. I think we've had a significant impact on the landscape and threats terrorists posed across the Middle East.

But the fight against terrorists is not fought by CT capabilities in Iraq alone. Good governance and rule of law are arguably more essential at this stage. Take the Arab Spring demonstrations that have been raging across the region. Iraq's democratically elected government was not immune to angry protests, but the demonstrations were a result of the people demanding efficiency from their government, not the ousting of the government. There is something to be said for the overall effort. You look to Iraq's left and right, and there is a lot of conflict in the region, but Iraq is relatively stable and will be for some time to come. When people believe they have a voice and recourse against bad leadership or injustice, when they exercise their rights peacefully and with impunity, they are less likely to take up arms against that system. The Iraqi Security Forces and the government of Iraq reacted responsibly, and so, in turn, did the people, for the most part. Both the institutions of authority and the people here need to earn each other's trust, and cooperation will hopefully follow. They've been given a unique opportunity to pursue freedom and prosperity on their own terms, and now they have to figure out how to unite toward a common goal, which should be to realize the full potential of their country.

SW: **U.S. forces have dealt with a lot of challenges; what has been the biggest challenge?**

Rogers: There have been a range of challenges here over the years, and in my current position, I think that we have always seen the challenge as that of engaging the threat. We have had some pretty formidable experiences with extremist groups that have grown more advanced. They have been amorphous and adapted to our TTPs. They've become cellular in nature. They have developed specializations in the fields of counterfeiting, forgery and identification theft, media exploitation and finance, just to name a few examples. So operations in Iraq have become more demanding as our adversary becomes more advanced and circumvents our TTPs. The bottom line is that we have had the arduous task of shredding those networks. It's hard work, but our forces and associated partners have acclimated to these conditions and become very adept over years of multiple tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places around the world.

During the last several months, though, the biggest challenge is getting eight years' worth of stuff out of Iraq. We went from bare-base operations to huge facilities spread across the entirety of Iraq. It has been a tremendous challenge. Once the scale of the accomplishment becomes clear, people will be astonished. Take, for instance, an ODA that sets up in one location, and over the course of 2 to 5 years has upgraded its communications footprint from relying on tactical radios and SATCOM to robust SIPR and NIPR connectivity and everything else associated with an enduring base. We have had to account for, turn in and redeploy all of those things. I can't begin to compliment our logisticians and the U.S. military support apparatus enough. They have been absolutely magnificent, but it has been a challenge for everyone. When you are bringing in that extra pallet every rotation, you never think about having to send it home. So kudos to SF groups and the SOTFs who began reducing this mountain of steel in advance of Operation New Dawn. They have really pushed hard these last few months to winnow the sustainment needs down to the essentials, and we are going to get all we need to take with us out of here and on time. I am very proud of them for knocking that out.

SW: **It seems like we are doing a good job of denying the enemy's ambitions to take advantage of our logistics challenges.**

Rogers: There has been a very deliberate plan. In the Information Age, there are greater operational-security concerns than ever before, and we cannot allow the enemy to know when we are leaving so they can take advantage of our departure. We have tried to control the movement, the departure of forces and the transition of bases, all in coordination and cooperation with the Iraqi government. The Iraqi Security Forces begin to assume greater responsibility for the perimeter security of our bases as we collapse our footprint, and we no longer announce when we are going to officially transfer a base until after our troops have left and are safely on their way home. By safeguarding our plans and movements, we are in good shape to depart Iraq safely, responsibly and on time.

It's important to mention that we could not be accomplishing the next-to-impossible without the partnership of the Iraqis. There is an official and collaborative process for how everything is transferred to the Iraqi government. The GoI (government of Iraq) identified a sole proprietor with the official title of Receivership Secretariat, who inventories and inspects every building on every base. There are some items we will leave here only because it is cost-prohibitive to bring them home. That said, every item transferred to the GoI is accounted for and transitioned to them in good condition that the RS accepts.

It's also no accident that our base transitions have gone smoothly. Over the years, we have made countless improvements to the bases and facilities we used across this country, and that

is to our countries' mutual benefit. We cannot take things like plumbing, central air conditioning and water-treatment plants with us, so we are leaving these bases in better condition than before. It is the right and responsible thing to do, and it is one more way we have set the Iraqis up for success. The Iraqi government will hopefully continue to improve upon these sites and put them to good use for their military or citizens.

***SW:* What are the most important lessons learned for ARSOF regiments from the eight-plus years in Iraq? How has the force changed from our experience in Iraq?**

Rogers: Our force hasn't changed because of Iraq. Our force has changed because of the experiences we have had in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Africa, everywhere we are, every day. NCOs and SOF leaders have taken those experiences and incorporated them into our pre-mission training, unit training, our military education system, the school house and doctrine. Iraq is just one component of the evolution of SOF. It has brought us to where we are today. I hope someone has taken what we have learned here and applied it elsewhere, as we have taken the lessons of others and incorporated them here.

Because of those experiences, we are a far better organization today than we were, and the fact that we have smart guys out there — a hell of a lot smarter than me — who take this information and fuse it into a product — be it pre-mission training or doctrine — that our special operators can use for their next mission, is truly remarkable and critical to the continued growth of our force.

As for my time here, and the different capacities in which I have served over the years, I have seen our force grow as Iraq evolved. We were required to adapt to the changing mission and the changing environment. No rotation was ever the same. Guys would come over and execute and come back six or 18 months later, and they had to calibrate to the environment. We didn't come in cold … we were all studying, learning as we went along. We are a learning force. We adapt to our enemy, as well.

In the early days, we focused on unilateral operations, pursuing senior regime officials with U.S. CT forces. There were no Iraqi Security Forces after the army had been disbanded. Then we took on the next phase; we were in the lead, starting to develop a partner force. Our initial partners, such as the 36th Commandos and Hillah SWAT, were conducting movement-to-contact operations in pickup trucks, carrying 10 men in the back, armed only with an AK-47 and one magazine apiece. That was the beginning of our enduring partnership.

MEAGER BEGINNINGS Our initial partners were conducting movement-to-contact operations in pickup trucks, carrying 10 men in the back, armed only with an AK-47 and one magazine apiece. *U.S. Army photo*

As we transitioned to working in conjunction with the Iraqis, they took on the duties of a professional military force. They had initial training and the beginnings of a military structure. At that point, they were pursuing those forces that were threatening their government.

Today, the Iraqi forces are in the lead, while we are coaching, standing off to the side in a supporting role. In most cases, we only assist with the initial planning or supply intelligence support, if necessary, and focus on the after-action review process to fine-tune their capability.

The list of lessons learned is a mile long. They go from the junior Soldier on the ODA to the head of the CJSOTF or higher. The take-away is our force has a tremendous capability to learn from operations across all the theaters, use it, fuse it and produce the ideal, prototypical special operator who can fall into any of the SF groups and, in short order, be ready to deploy to an operational area — whether it's efforts in the Philippines or a village in Afghanistan.

Another important lesson is that the culture has changed over time. Special-operations forces serve side-by-side with conventional forces. Because we work together every day, we've formed a bona fide partnership with conventional forces. It's always been one fight, but in the past, we spent too much energy fighting each other over turf. Today, the communication and teamwork have never been better. Not everyone has had the positive experience I have, but the relationship between the two is outstanding in Iraq. We have to keep working together. If we go back to our stovepipe training mentality, we will lose the familiarity and relationships built over the past eight years here and in the other theaters, and that would be a tragic loss.

***SW:* Any last thoughts?**

Rogers: As this draws to an end on Dec. 31, we will leave a sovereign, stable and self-reliant country with a promising and prosperous future. There has been a lot of sacrifice here from everyone — from our special operators, all U.S. military and interagency partners and so many innocent Iraqi people. While Iraq has made tremendous gains in both security and stability, internal friction and external influences will weigh heavy on its leaders, requiring difficult choices. They have been given promising opportunities, and I am optimistic that they will realize their potential.

American forces should be proud of what they have accomplished here. It has come at tremendous cost — both personally and financially — on the part of Soldiers, families and the American people. Anyone who has done a tour should be proud of what we have built. The Iraqis I have come to know are appreciative of our efforts. They want us to come back and train with them in the future and maintain a partnership with U.S. SOF. That, I think, best speaks to the idea that America's military has come to represent here. I'm just damn proud to be part of it. ***SW***

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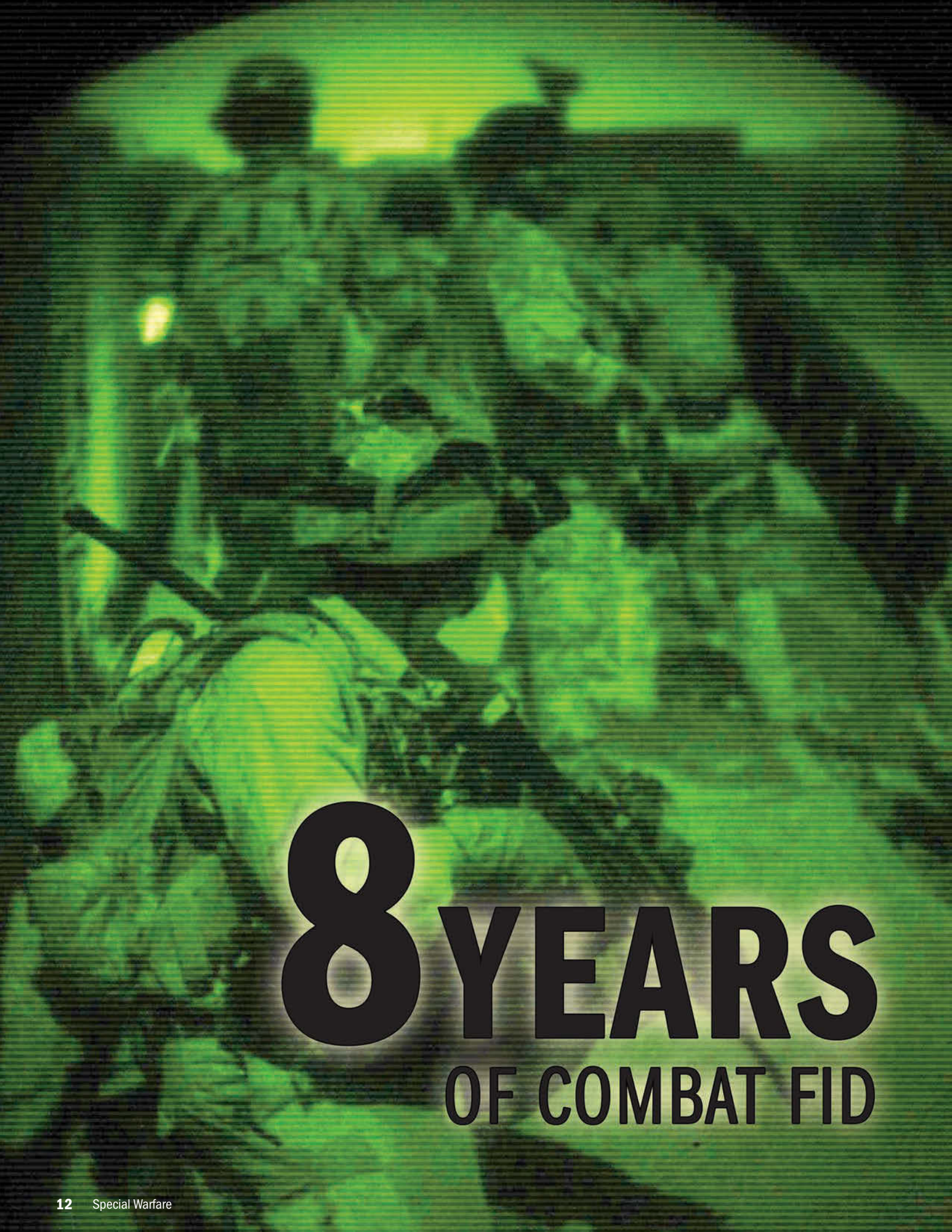


8 YEARS OF COMBAT FID

A RETROSPECTIVE ON SF IN IRAQ

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 KEVIN WELLS

Operation Iraqi Freedom, or OIF, began March 19, 2003. On Dec. 31, 2011, the final day of the Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA, with the government of Iraq, the war ended. Iraqis wanted United States forces to leave. Any Soldiers staying to train Iraqi Security Forces will not have immunity. That condition alone is a deal-breaker for Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

While opinions differ on the pull-out, one thing is certain: An elected Iraqi parliament made the decision. When a new SOFA is reached, the government of Iraq, or GoI, will join the ranks of Middle Eastern countries that have security-cooperation agreements with the U.S. The decision to ask U.S. forces to leave and to return as partners is a successful mark of a functioning democracy in the Middle East.

Internal and external threats still exist in Iraq, but incidents have dropped sharply since their peak in 2007, signaling a semblance of stability. A senior adviser to three U.S. ambassadors compared the numbers, "Iraq is averaging between zero and seven security incidents a day nationwide — compared to 180 per day four years ago." Many believe a malignant Iranian shadow is at the root of these incidents. The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq will test the real effect of the last eight years of reconstruction and efforts of foreign internal defense, or FID.

The next Special Forces operational detachment-alpha, or ODA, traveling to Iraq will support the theater security-cooperation plan of the geographic combatant command, or GCC. The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, James Jeffrey, and his country team are working on the new SOFA. The country team's office of security cooperation will focus on several military-to-military relationships (e.g., F-16 support and M-1 Abrams support). Joint combined exchange training, or JCET, exercises should be anticipated for SF ODAs, which signals a return to business as usual for Special Forces Soldiers.

What did SF accomplish?

During OIF, a generation of SF Soldiers came of age. At the outset of the effort, their mission was both unconventional warfare, or UW, and other special operations, or SO. When Saddam Hussein's regime fell on April 9, 2003, the SF mission switched to FID in support of stability operations.

With the fall of Baghdad came the rise of resilient armed factions who fought U.S. troops for legitimacy and influence over the population of Iraq. SF ODAs played critical roles in OIF from the invasion in March 2003 through the final security operations of Operation New Dawn, having been tasked to help secure the movement of the last 44,000 U.S. forces and their materiel out of Iraq before Jan. 1, 2012.

With unrest increasing in the Middle East and in Africa, SF must capitalize on the past eight years in Iraq. Using the collective knowledge gained, SF will be prepared to serve as this nation's premier authority for what has been termed "uncomfortable wars."

Pub 1, the new capstone doctrine of the U.S. Special Operations Command, or USSOCOM, specifically identifies SF as the experts in UW and FID. Pairing UW and FID reflects the synergystic capabilities that allow SF ODAs to disrupt and destroy irregular threats, which by their nature can defeat a conventional approach. No other element of special-operations forces, or SOF, is linked to UW and FID in Pub 1. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, also identifies UW as the core mission of SF. With the end of operations in Iraq, SF ODAs are better positioned than ever before to successfully engage in irregular warfare. Enemies of the U.S. and her allies will continue to challenge conventional forces with unconventional tactics. Subversion, sabotage and guerrilla warfare are best confronted by a force familiar with the tactics, stages and objectives of insurgencies.

The possession of a UW capability adds an invaluable dimension to the combat FID mission. On the surface, UW might seem to be almost the opposite of FID, but the FID mission is enhanced by UW training and mentality. What disrupts and terrifies the insurgent most are other insurgents hunting him, disrupting his plans and turning the populace against him. Large conventional forces on large bases will not be the insurgents' principal threat; it will be someone who operates in their backyard.

In Iraq, ODAs conducted FID and too often left most of their UW skills out of the fight. Suffice it to say that in UW, you stay alive by having better intel than your opponent. You surprise him, he never surprises you. Your security lies in the population, not in having a fixed base. Using the UW mentality is the trick to staying on the offensive and keeping the insurgent on the run, thus giving stability operations a chance to succeed.

Opening successes

Where did SF succeed in Iraq? Measuring effectiveness is always challenging when many factors play significant roles. To win a population, though, a case must be made that you offer them a better future. Insurgents will make the case clearly, profoundly and personally. To compete, the United States must deliver the message personally and will need to leave behind a security deposit. Money will not suffice. Putting boots on the ground is the unambiguous pledge that the U.S. is all in. Putting SF teams on the ground in northern Iraq before decisive operations made the case to the Iraqi Kurds that the U.S. would stand with them.

A decisive win: TF Viking. The original plan for a northern front in OIF called for SF to support the ground movement of the 4th Infantry Division. But after Turkey denied the U.S. the use of its airspace and refused to let the U.S. launch an offensive from its territory,

the job of holding a 1,200-mile northern front fell to a force of fewer than 1,000 SF Soldiers. The three battalions of Task Force Viking, consisting of Soldiers from the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 10th SF Group and the 3rd Battalion, 3rd SF Group, were given the mission to conduct UW and SO. The plan was to link up with 60,000 Kurdish Peshmerga forces and drive toward Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit. The intent was to prevent 13 Iraqi divisions from moving south to support the defense of Baghdad and to prevent the Kurds from taking Kirkuk. In another sensitive mission, Viking Hammer, the 3rd Battalion, 10th SF Group, assaulted the town of Sargat in eastern Iraq, on the Iranian border. Ansar al Islam, a terrorist group associated with al-Qaeda, was the target, along with the prospect of uncovering a weapons factory.

The battle for Debecka crossroads illustrates the combat power of ODAs during the northern invasion. ODAs 044, 391 and 392, with 80 Peshmerga, moved south on April 6, 2003, to control an intersection of the north-south highway between Mosul and Kirkuk and the east-west highway from Erbil. The combined force ran into a minefield, breached it and took the high ground overlooking the crossroads. Soon they were engaged by an armor column of four T-55 tanks and motorized infantry consisting of 150 Iraqi soldiers in eight armored personnel carriers and three trucks. At the height of the battle, friendly fire hit the Kurds' position, killing 18 and wounding 45. Half of the SF Soldiers went back to treat the wounded, while the rest continued to engage the armor column with M-2 machine guns, M-19 grenade launchers and Javelin antitank weapons. The ODAs held the crossroads, destroyed the reinforced mechanized-infantry company and were instrumental in saving many lives among the wounded Kurds.

At the same time, ODAs from the 5th SF Group were performing missions in the south and west. Forward Operating Base 51, or FOB 51, was tasked to find SCUD missiles and prevent their being launched against Israel. FOB 52 seized terrain and provided intelligence in support of the 5th Corps and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force as they moved north toward Baghdad. ODA 551's reconnaissance of the Karbala gap supported the advance of the 3rd Infantry Division.

The variety of special operations conducted at the onset of hostilities set a precedent for using SF's unique talents in a hostile and politically sensitive environment. SF's close and historic relationship with the Kurds helped control their aspirations while making use of all that the Kurds brought to the fight. Assigning the Kurds to take Kirkuk and its oil fields risked two terrible consequences: There might be no unified Iraq, and perception of a "Kurdistan" could draw Turkey into the fight. SF Soldiers helped restrain the Kurds while maintaining a friendship with them that would provide critical intelligence assets and dependable security forces during the first chaotic years after the fall of Baghdad. SF's mobility, spearheaded by the 5th SF Group's well-developed tactics, techniques and procedures, set SF apart on the battlefield as the lightest, most agile and deepest-penetrating armed element. That mobility was sustained throughout OIF.

Advantage lost

OIF was to be accomplished in four phases: Phase I, preparation, would set conditions for neutralizing Iraqi forces; Phase II, shape the battlespace, would require posturing coalition forces to conduct combat operations, degrading Iraqi command-and-control systems and border-security forces, seizing key terrain and countering the threat of theater ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction; Phase III, decisive operations, would include the coalition air campaign, preparatory ground operations and the conventional attack north to Baghdad; Phase IV, post-hostility or stability operations, would cover the transition from major combat to security and stability operations, including humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.[1]

Although the war was expected to last 90 days, U.S. forces found themselves in Baghdad on April 5, and the regime fell April 9. The war would prove to be far from over, but events moved as if peace was assured. With the war declared over, SF's mission turned to its familiar peacetime role, FID. To most, FID meant indirect or direct support. In Iraq, it would be combat FID. OIF II was a stability mission but without a unified plan. ODAs surveyed their terrain, quickly trained-up the closest Iraqi Security Forces, or ISF, and started pushing back against the growing threats.

And what were the threats to stability? The headliners were former regime personalities like Saddam Fedayeen and elements like al-Qaeda affiliates. In truth, the opposing elements of the post-hostility phase would prove to be far tougher to defeat than Saddam's regular forces. Sunni insurgents, Shiite extremists, criminal opportunists and foreign jihadists answering the call were a part of the early violent mix. Iranian influences with malicious intent were also present from the beginning. There were many other threats to peace: Kurdish encroachment south toward the oil fields around Kirkuk and Kurdish PKK on the border with Turkey represented regional threats to stability. An aging infrastructure, further deteriorated by a decade of embargo, made the populace vulnerable to the idea that they had been better off under Saddam. The insurgent recruiting pool was wide and deep, and the message was the same for all: Infidels are in the land of Islam.

Without a unified plan for Phase IV operations, the force laydown of SF ODAs for OIF II remained fluid as commanders tried to figure out where best to position their forces. Major cities were at the top of the list. Lines of communication and ISF bases were also priorities for receiving ODA protection. The challenge at that point was to develop an ISF from unvetted, inexperienced and generally leaderless personnel. The mantra would soon become "through and with." Unilateral operations required justification. Iraqis had to take responsibility, but when Ambassador Paul Bremer dissolved the Iraqi army, the ISF had to be started from scratch, and Iraqi troops were highly dependent on ODAs for all phases of their operation.

Sharing battlespace

SF teams soon partnered with newly created units of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, or ICDC, and determined how to operate in coalition force, or CF, battlespace. Relationships were strained, sometimes broken, because there was no agreed-to relationship. Fortunately, someone came up the concept of mutual support vs. operational control or tactical control. That solution created a simple starting place for CF commanders and gave ODAs some breathing room in a CF operational environment. Every battlespace owner was different, and coordination required a "Robin Sage" mentality, meaning earning trust by displaying competence and building rapport.

ODAs became valuable to CF in three areas: transitions, targeting and covering dead space. When victory was declared, the forces that had been exceptionally prepared to win a ground war were told to pack up. For the follow-on forces, ODAs became a helpful guide through the chaos as the war plan fell apart.

Transitions are notorious points of failure in military history. In a mutual-support environment, ODAs naturally ramped-up operations in an attempt to keep enemy elements on the defensive while CF forces conducted a relief-in-place. Living among the populace gave ODAs insight into their area of responsibility, or AOR, that cannot be duplicated by Soldiers living in compounds. Mutual support soon developed into intel fusion and a cooperative relationship. CF often provided quick-reaction support, attached security personnel, sustainment and training facilities that allowed ODAs to push out much further than they could have otherwise. ODAs acted as reception parties for incoming units and the eyes and ears for the AOR and neighboring areas of operations, or AOs. For a new unit on the ground, SF provided a lighthouse in the fog.

The ODAs' targeting did two things for CF. For CF units that came in with an inexperienced intel shop, the ODA's aggressive targeting methodology showcased what it takes to conduct successful direct-action operations. Early skepticism evaporated when SF teams were consistently getting a jackpot (right place, right time, right guy). Because ODAs ran with the locals (partner forces, key-leader engagements, presence patrols), their human-intelligence, or HUMINT, networks filled the target intel packets with enough information to produce decisive, discriminate operations. Good intel produced the jackpot with less negative impact on the populace and more impact on enemy cells and networks. So the second benefit of effective, HUMINT-driven, targeting was to keep insurgents on the defensive, allowing CF to retake the initiative.

GROUND TRUTH A Special Forces Soldier briefs members of the Iraq Special Operations Force Commandos for joint mission training near Baghdad. As a part of the training, the ISOF maintained communications with Iraqi ISR throughout the event. The ISOF and the Soldiers train together to prepare for real missions together in the future. *Photo by Petty Officer Third Class Thomas L. Rosprim*

Building ISF from scratch

The FID mission would become increasingly important to the Multinational Force-Iraq, or MNF-I, and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula, or CJSOTF-AP, as ISF development slowed during the first two years of OIF. The ICDC changed to the Iraqi National Guard and then to the Iraqi Army, or IA. Everyone had their own way of handling it. Development of the Iraqi Police, or IP, lagged. Contractors were used with uneven results. They tended to be advisers, but they would not patrol with the IP the way the ODAs patrolled with their partner forces. From the ODA's viewpoint, ISF development was ad hoc and relied completely on the expertise and vision of local MNF-I units. Capacity was growing steadily, but not capability. To say the Iraqi fighting force was 50-percent effective would be generous. Again, quality was sacrificed for speed.

The initial plan was to develop an Iraqi army consisting of three light, motorized divisions. Their role, border defense, would be developed over a period of years. The IP would develop separately along a Western model. The Facilities Protection Service was developed to handle threats against infrastructure, but it was too poorly trained and equipped to handle criminal activity, much less an insurgency, and the effort was abandoned. Because the threat of an insurgency was not taken seriously, efforts to develop strong Iraqi security forces did not have the needed priority. Regional MNF-I commands took various approaches and generally considered counterinsurgency to be a low-priority mission. As a result, it took years for the CF to bring the IA and IP capabilities to handle internal threats. Iraqi special units were the first ISF elements capable of fighting the full array of threats facing the country.

Until 2005, Iraq lacked a comprehensive approach to develop ISF capacity for combating an insurgency. Military units were initially dissolved with little attention paid to the consequences. The IA was getting the attention, not the IP, contrary to the principles of counterinsurgency. Implementers noted no overall plan for ISF development and the lack of unified effort afforded destabilizing forces

time to organize and become operational. People were plugging holes where they found them, and each transfer of authority brought different priorities.

The early strategy was not designed to defeat a Sunni-based insurgency; it was a rush to turn the problem over to the Iraqis as soon as possible. The lack of a COIN strategy might have been due to the search for an exit strategy rather than for a comprehensive approach to security problems. Letting the Iraqis handle their problems became a popular sentiment inside the military and back home. Military training was naturally given priority because police training takes a different skill set. ODAs conducting FID were generally paired with an IA unit, but ODAs instinctively knew that a weak police force provided insurgents and other destabilizing forces freedom of movement. IP elements receiving training and advice from SF were usually SWAT teams. Constant attacks against IP recruiting efforts signaled that the insurgents understood the threat of effective police forces and training. Effective policing is the first line of defense in COIN, special police are the second line, with the military being brought in on large-scale operations. The critical missing piece was a conventional police force.

Iraqi SOF: Enduring contribution

In early 2003, an initiative began to build a national counterterrorism capability called the Iraqi Counterterrorism Force, or ICTF. Billed as a unique Iraqi element that could handle the toughest assignments, the ICTF would train under SF doctrine using SF weapons, and the training became a new mission for select SF companies. SF culled volunteers from different parts of the country, including Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites, to train in Jordan for national CT missions. Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd SF Group, was the first company assigned to the task. An SF master sergeant who served in that company eight years ago as an SF communications sergeant remembers the soldiers in the multiethnic Iraqi unit as cohesive, and that their abilities after training were comparable to his own after he completed SF's most challenging shooting school, the Special Forces Advanced Reconnaissance, Target Analysis and Exploitation Techniques Course.

ICTF would become a part of the 1st Iraqi Special Operations Force, or ISOF, a brigade that also included the 36th Commando Battalion, a reconnaissance company and a support company. The Iraqi Special Warfare School, called ISWCS, is fully operational and taking responsibility for the training mission. A second ISOF brigade now contains regional Iraqi SOF battalions. Currently ISOF works apart from the Ministry of Defense, or MoD, under the Counterterrorism Service, which reports to the Iraqi prime minister.

At the same time, the Emergency Response Brigade, or ERB, absorbed Iraqi SWAT elements and became the national asset for handling law-enforcement emergencies. The CJSOTFs paid close attention to the ISOF and the ERB, tasking their staff sections with ensuring that both elements had the best resources in vehicles, radios, weapons and ammo, and helping the Iraqis to identify the most capable Iraqi officers for command of the elite units. Those efforts quickly produced a capable Iraqi CT capability whose elements eventually became regionally oriented to get closer to the population.

The ISOF and ERB, combat-advised by select ODAs and SEAL platoons, were taking the fight to terror cells, foreign fighters and the key leaders and facilitators of the insurgency, regardless of ethnicity. Commanders of both units were reliable and capable leaders, but in early 2011, the ERB commander was arrested for corruption. His replacement removed the most experienced commanders, reducing the ERB's effectiveness. Now seemingly unwilling to go after Shia targets, the ERB is less likely to be a partner force in the future.

ISOF will likely be the most enduring FID success story for SF. It has had the most consistent attention of any Iraqi military unit. While changes in its leadership could be as problematic as those for the ERB, SF advisers consider sustainment to be the unit's most likely failure point. It is still the force most capable of striking hard and fast. It is fully capable of unilateral operations, and while outsiders fear the unit could devolve into a secret-police force, eight years of integration with SF has passed on a culture of military professionalism and shown members the need for operating as a legitimate security force in a democracy.

What is next for SF in Iraq? Without a SOFA, the mission will not be one of advising ISOF. The Iraqi government already plans to use contractors to train its air force; it has proposed doing the same for its land forces. Assuming that negotiations eventually allow U.S military trainers, what should SF do next? The Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq was given the reins as of Oct. 1, 2011. The future for SF in Iraq will hinge on understanding and supporting the U.S. Embassy security plan.

Military leaders often speak of key enablers. At this point of the discussion, the key enabler is the seasoned staff officer who can understand and help influence the process. The staff officer can help shape the diplomatic environment and smooth the way for effective use of SF personnel and capabilities in Iraq 2012. The ODA must be positioned to provide the ambassador with options that empower diplomacy and are not restricted to a small glass case with instructions "break in case of emergency."

Evaluating eight years of effort

As the combat FID mission in Iraq comes to an end, it's time to evaluate what happened. There are currently pressing situations that call for seasoned soldiers who can address unconventional threats. Every foreign engagement should be considered a left-of-zero opportunity to develop the security situation. Lessons learned in Iraq must be translated into training that will prepare an ODA to conduct appropriate shaping operations in a complex, interagency environment.

The criteria for judging the ODA's effectiveness will not be metrics. Metrics can be speculative when attempting to determine causality between SF activities and the level of violent incidents. Instead, the criteria are based on classic principles of irregular warfare. Why? Progress usually comes from working on time-tested fundamentals.

Principles for defeating an insurgency

Sir Robert Thompson's 1966 study of the basic principles of communist insurgencies and of counterinsurgency, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam,*[2] is predictive of what happened in Iraq. In the book, Thompson asks, "How do communist guerrilla forces

survive, and even threaten to prevail over large-scale conventional forces supported by countries whose power, wealth and good intentions are seemingly invincible? And how can they be defeated except at enormous costs in men, money, material and time and without risk of general war?" The reasons for insurgencies always exist when governments fail to protect the populace. Thompson gives six principles of governance that must be followed to defeat an insurgency:

- A government must have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent and united country that is politically and economically stable and viable.
- The government must function in accordance with law. That tends to make more sense to common people than the idea of democracy = legitimacy. Security before democracy.
- The government must have an overall plan.
- The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas.
- In the guerrilla phase of an insurgency, a government must secure its base areas first.
- Government must demonstrate the determination and capacity to win.

Baghdad would not be like Paris in 1944; it would be more like Mogadishu: no cheering crowds, just people waiting to see which way the wind would blow. U.S. policy in Iraq was not informed by the harsh reality of irregular warfare — it was informed by conventional military doctrine and conventional civilian constructs for government and human rights. It operated under an unrealistic timetable with the most optimistic forecasts. No one should doubt the capability of the Department of Defense, State Department or U.N. agencies. But taking a pragmatic view rather than an idealistic one may cause us to question the merit of speed over security or of human rights over population control. The military wanted to recreate Desert Storm, and the civilian authorities wanted to usher in Western idealism. The doors of freedom swung both ways and thus were wide open to the insurgency. A successful COIN plan requires military and civilian elements to implement one game plan. COIN relies on measured, enduring and often indirect military responses that have an indigenous face.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH A Special Forces Soldier conducts drills with Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. *U.S. Army photo by CW4 Bob Pennington*

Evaluating SF on principle

Evaluating SF's FID mission in Iraq based on principles of UW may be the more practical guide for the discussion. The relevant principles listed here were adapted from Thompson's book.

Balance of forces is one of the most vital issues both for the political stability of the country and for ensuring the full coordination of civilian measures and military operations. "The requirement is for a small, elite, highly disciplined, lightly equipped and aggressive army with supporting air force to make the army highly mobile," to support the civil government, according to Thompson's six principles of governance. Unilateral operations against insurgents, especially large ones, will have the benefits of attrition. They will have the drawbacks of providing the enemy with motives and causes to resist. Observers noted that CF units arriving during Phase IV operations were not interested in stability operations. They wanted to fight, not train troops.

Those sentiments existed in a percentage of SF Soldiers who wanted to conduct elite, high-profile and unilateral direct action. However, SF generally acted in the manner in which it was designed to act: as a small, disciplined, aggressive force. With the aid of special-operations air assets, and using ISOF, SF was always highly mobile and able to react quickly with appropriate force. Using SF in an overall FID mission will keep the balance of forces in line with COIN principles.

Seizing and keeping the initiative was the reason for speed in war planning. The areas of the country bypassed created pockets of resistance that quickly seized the initiative as CF transitioned to a nebulous post-hostility mission. Each ODA hit the ground, picked up whatever ISF they could find, simultaneously trained them while developing and prosecuting targets.. During transitions, however, a wide divergence of methods and objectives between two ODAs in the same AOR could be counterproductive. (The creation of the Coalition Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan smoothed out transitions between the two SF groups running the CJSOTF-AP.) Otherwise, SF ODAs performed as advertised. They sought out the enemy and kept pressure on him for eight years.

COIN has little chance of success without *a systematic intelligence effort.* It is no hyperbole to say that there wasn't a more productive gatherer of HUMINT in Iraq than the 12-man ODA. SF's freedom of movement was envied by other intel collectors who needed high-profile security support to get outside the wire. Living with the population, combined with an organic intel-processing capability, provided a reliable, constant stream for U.S. consumers of intelligence. SF contributions to intel-collection and -dissemina-

tion were a linchpin that allowed SF and CF to work well together in OIF and Operation New Dawn. To an ODA, "mutual support" always meant getting ground truth to their CF partners. SF also contributed to a common intel picture by maintaining communications across AORs and between units. Lateral dissemination of time-sensitive intelligence, something difficult between large units, is structurally easier for an ODA, and it showed. An outsider may point to SF's intel-collection efforts as its main achievement in OIF.

Practical action at the lowest level is always a part of successful COIN, because the enemy will thrive on the bureaucratic inefficiencies. The population will respect (or fear) small-unit activity, whether it supports or subverts the government. As should be expected, a small, free-roaming SF element will only expand CF's ability to stay on top of problems. Whether it was nonlethal aid to a village or a quick response to an attack on an Iraqi police station, ODAs routinely would take action rather than simply play the observer. They were sometimes imperfect but never inert. Because they conduct their own mission analysis and are inherently risk-takers, ODAs are the match for of an aggressive and well-trained insurgent cell. As such, they are the smallest element that understands and counteracts the effect of enemy activity on a population. This was especially true where ODAs assumed responsibility for an Iraqi population.

ODAs were also particularly good at *cultural sensitivity*. Living with Iraqis, hiring Iraqi guards and using local translators and cooks brought firsthand experience with Iraqis of all faiths and socio-economic levels. ODAs conducted key-leader engagements with tribal, military, police and government leaders, expanding their understanding of the Iraqi ways of thinking vs. a generic Middle Eastern mindset. That understanding helped build many cooperative relationships and developed Iraqi solutions rather than American ones.

Police vs. army. Police are better than the army at developing internal security intelligence. One weakness in the evolving SF approach to building security capacity was the tendency to focus on SWAT teams rather than on ordinary police officers. There are levels of policing needed to fight an insurgency. The national force is the least important. The local SWAT teams are the second least important. The most critical element of policing, and the one insurgents cannot bear, is a local beat cop. He knows his neighborhood. When possible, he should conduct the arrest, with special units in the wings.

Circumstances made training police difficult. The police had been infiltrated. SF was not trained to build a police force, and contractors were being paid to do it. Working combined operations with a police lead had many problems. Typically they were compromised. It was common to find contracted trainers who were too risk-averse to accompany their police on patrols or missions. It's also a problem for SF to accompany police in gun trucks and full kit. You don't want a military signature with the police.

Insurgency grows naturally; COIN does not. COIN requires a methodical clear-and-hold strategy. Clear and hold requires an effective local constabulary and local support of the government before expanding. Village-stability operations in Afghanistan are an example of a clear-and-hold strategy. The key is protecting the population and getting them invested in their government (and not a U.S. program). No one should underestimate the difficulty of implementing this kind of strategy. Search-and-destroy missions are preferred because they produce measurable results and require little adaptation of conventional military units. Clear-and-hold relies on small units with civilian counterparts and police as the first line of defense — all unorthodox structures for the military. ODAs in small towns had the freedom to pursue a clear-and-hold strategy, but their efforts were isolated. CF and other government agencies operating in the same area could have completely different agendas. As time passed, SF units moved more toward a search-and-destroy strategy against enemy networks. At the end, SF ODAs were partnered with Iraqi National SOF, living on bases and distant from the Iraqi populace.

Targeting priorities are subject to local politics. The principle states that guerrillas are second to the subversives. Was SF better than 50/50 on following that principle? SF worked diligently to pressure nets and cells, targeting identified leaders and enablers, not just the low-hanging fruit. When it came to attacking the enemy's lethal activities (high-profile attacks or assassinations), SF did well. Against nonlethal enemy efforts to subvert, SF's performance was uneven. Two facts work against SF countering subversion and sabotage well: One, we do not train for it. UW involves running a guerrilla force and conducting subversion and sabotage. SF trains on guerrilla activities (what Thompson argues is the least critical element). SF thinks of sabotage as simply blowing up lines of communication. How do you counter subversion if you cannot do it yourself?

Another reason targeting will tend toward lethal activities is that water flows downhill. Raids are simple (almost a battle drill) and measurable, and they win lots of "attaboys." How do you successfully impugn an insurgent leader's reputation? How do you measure that effect? It is doable, but it is challenging, and success demands ultimate secrecy. That's all very hard to manage, but our opponent does it every day. Failing to train to some level of proficiency in these black arts translates to giving the opposition free reign.

Securing the people is the key, rather than territory or body counts. At the start of OIF, ODAs were heavily engaged with Kurds, Shias and Arab Sunnis. Key-leader engagements focused on all aspects of culture, from the small-town police chief to the heads of the dominant tribes in Iraq. Few constraints existed, and an ODA could easily use a full-spectrum approach. A raid one evening could easily be followed by a Civil Affairs engagement the next day in the same village.

As the insurgency grew in organization and lethality, ODAs were brought into FOBs, giving them a safe and significant distance from the population. As FID evolved into working only with ISOF, the mission lost the flexibility to get close to the populace. SF garnered a whack-a-mole reputation and fell into a war of attrition in its primary mission of pressuring enemy networks. Ancillary activities did build working relationships with Iraqis, but those were generally off the radar if they did not produce actionable intelligence. Creating a safe distance from the populace has the unwanted second-order effect of allowing insurgents access to that key base.

Legitimacy

Thompson said, "Experience shows that legitimacy is the most important single dimension in a war against subversion."[4] There is a need to establish the legitimacy of the threatened government. Factors of

BACK TO ITS ROOTS Special Forces went back to its roots in Iraq. Members of the 1st Special Forces Group serve as advisers to Iraqi commandos. *Photo by MC3 Thomas L. Rosprim*

legitimacy are the populace's acceptance (tribe, ethnic group, community) of government's policies and actions. Are they moral? Are they just? Al-Qaeda in Iraq lost its legitimacy in Anbar because it considered the Islamic movement more important than the community. It was willing to assassinate the ruling elite without understanding the effect. They didn't understand because they were not local, but transnational. "Through and with" is critical for keeping the U.S. from supplying second- or third-order effects that undermine the legitimacy of the government.

While building a national SOF provides the Iraqis with a potent DA capability, it must work in coordination with the local constabulary to ensure that targets are legitimate and that the right message is delivered to the community. Whenever you have a national asset, a stay-behind element is critical to judge the effect of operations, specifically, whether the action improved the situation or played into the hands of the insurgents. In Iraq, that element could be a CA element or a local commander providing funds from the Commander's Emergency Relief Program to pay for damages. It should be an Iraqi policeman or local government official who can judge the reaction and manage consequences while reinforcing confidence in the government's ability to protect that community.

Conclusion

The ODA compares well with other small SOF units when it comes to direct-action and special-reconnaissance missions. The ODA's core mission, UW, and the associated skill sets needed to conduct special operations in the context of irregular warfare, makes the ODA a uniquely qualified force. Considering the fact that there are 360 active-duty ODAs to provide GCC with a force that can provide the persistent presence needed to counter irregular threats worldwide, it seems that the ODA should be the most qualified force. Is it?

UW may be defined as a spectrum of operations that by nature have long duration and are conducted through an irregular force. So it is different from FID. To define it as the opposite of FID, though, is counterproductive, because it leads to the attitude that the two missions are mutually exclusive. They are interrelated. On the cusp of many FID missions is a denied, hostile area that require UW-skilled personnel to penetrate. It may require the most delicate, indirect approach. It will require imagination. So, while we are conducting FID in country X, an unconventional mentality with an array of UW skills will set up opportunities for left-of-zero activities. Until zero hour comes, it may be difficult to produce the metrics to prove that SF activities prevent conflict, but zero hour will come someday and somewhere. Being unprepared would be costly.

UW must be more than a collection of operations; it must be the way SF thinks, behaves and trains. When a team returns from a JCET, one of its gold standards should be a thorough

SAFEKEEPING Iraq exists, and the soldiers of the Iraqi Special Operations are key to its continued stability. *U.S. Army photo*

assessment. The country team should be pouring coffee for Green Berets late at night to ensure that the assessment is done before the team gets on the plane. That assessment should reflect the limits of that team's capability. If the team is properly trained, it will, because ODAs will have the skills, imagination and vision to live in the enemy's domain.

Vision must be informed by national policy. UW operations require great discernment, unity of effort and patience. That kind of operational maturity is underwritten by a thorough understanding of current security strategies as well as a persistent presence in a region. Without authorities, a team will not know its limits and could easily exceed them, or it might operate well below what is allowed and miss critical opportunities to interdict a problem.

The combat FID mission in Iraq is over. ODAs aggressively attacked enemies of the U.S. and the GoI, anytime, anyplace. How do you measure their effectiveness? Iraq exists. There were some terrible losses and incredible frustrations with circumstances seemingly outside of SF's control. While it would be easy to blame circumstances in OIF for what SF did not accomplish, SF Soldiers should refrain from criticism toward outsiders. Keep the party line. Iraq exists. Now, SF should keep moving and strive to be one step ahead of the enemy, never forgetting our roots and working always to be in the right place at the right time, wherever threats to our national security can develop. The right time is pre-conflict, the further left-of-zero the better. To accomplish that, the FID mission will continue to be the peacetime mission that turns a 12-man ODA into a strategic asset. A UW mentality, which is back in ascendancy, needs development and risk-takers. Training and thinking UW all along the way will stage an ODA on a potential battlefield long before the threat develops, at best preventing a costly conflict, at least setting the conditions to prevail.

Postscript

This article argues that keeping to our roots and truly being the nation's experts at UW will produce a higher magnitude of operational success in support of the country's worldwide security objectives. At this moment, there is a concerted effort to get back on track with UW as *the core mission* of SF. After years of focusing on special reconnaissance and direct action; after recruiting a generation of Green Berets who found their best moment in kit, in a stack, waiting for the breach; after working since Vietnam to get back into the good graces of the conventional Army, SF has much to do to become the unquestioned UW experts.

We must expend effort on many different levels, from the nation's capitol to Camp Mackall. Values must change. Failure of imagination must receive the same feedback as shooting the hostage in a training shoothouse scenario. We must be able to appreciate the Green Beret, not some cookie-cutout operator. We have the talent. Retooling is happening. Leaders need to continue to shape the picture of what it means to be the experts in UW, because it is a complex concept.

A joint-pub definition does not sell to a country team that perceives its country as peaceful. A broad UW skillset has abundant peacetime applications for a GCC and a country team. Those applications need to be explained up front to avoid the perception that UW is simply about sabotage, subversion, and guerrilla warfare.

Ask 10 Green Berets to explain UW. Ask them how they would employ it in their region. Ask them for the mission-essential task list. The answers will point to holes in our program that need filling quickly. Ask 10 members of Congress to explain the value of UW to this nation's security interests. Better yet, ask 10 ambassadors how UW can help them. When we get to a 70-percent pass rate for those questions, we'll be well on our way to developing a left-of-zero capability that puts Green Berets where they are meant to be, working though and with indigenous people, their security forces and their government to prevent oppression, or in places of conflict, to operate in the denied areas to disrupt, dislocate and drain the enemy's will to fight. ***SW***

comment here

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kevin Wells *recently visited Iraq, assessing Special Forces elements conducting foreign internal defense. He served four combat tours in Iraq with the 10th Special Forces Group and currently works in Special Forces Doctrine Development at the United States Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School.*

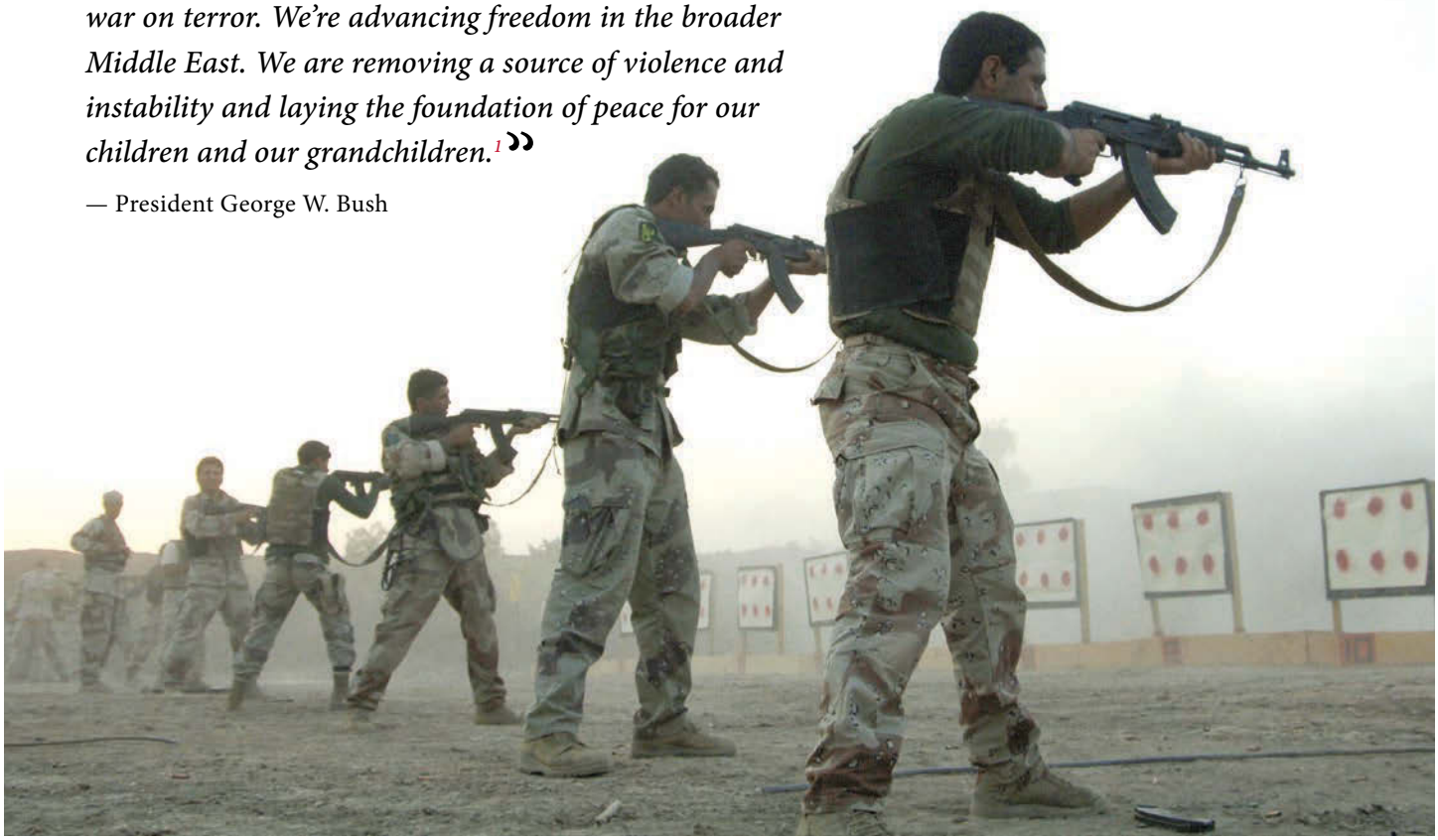
Notes:

1. Dr. Charles Briscoe, et al., *All Roads Lead to Baghdad: Army Special Operations Forces in Iraq* (Fort Bragg, N.C.: USASOC History Office, 2006), 455.

2. Sir Robert G.K. Thompson, *Defeating a Communist Insurgency: Experiences in Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2nd edition, 1966).

3. Max G. Manwaring, ed., *Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm of Low Intensity Conflict* (Boulder Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), 20.

> *"Our mission in Iraq is clear. We're hunting down the terrorists. We're helping Iraqis build a free nation that is an ally in the war on terror. We're advancing freedom in the broader Middle East. We are removing a source of violence and instability and laying the foundation of peace for our children and our grandchildren."*[1]
>
> — President George W. Bush



ADVANCED SKILLS Iraqi Security Forces fire at targets during a course in advanced firearms conducted by U.S. special-operations forces near Fallujah, Iraq. *U.S. Army photo*

FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE IN IRAQ:

ARSOF Core Tasks Enable Iraqi Combating-Terrorism Capability

BY MASTER SERGEANT MICHAEL O'BRIEN

The road map to a secure and democratic Iraq is vetted in the United States national-security interests to establish regional stability throughout the Middle East. These interests are maintained through a strategic goal of creating an environment that advances the decree for peace, security and economic prosperity for all nations and their people.[2] The U.S. draws on all its instruments of national power, incorporating a whole-of-government approach as necessary to promote the internal security and stability within emerging democracies like Iraq.[3]

Following the fall of Baghdad in April 2003, it became clear to U.S. strategists that Iraq was transitioning from a traditional (conventional) warfare environment to one of irregular warfare, or IW, which still exists today.[4] For Iraq to gain the capacity to combat its internal threats, which quickly evolved within certain regions of the populace, U.S. forces were required to train an Iraqi force with specific capabilities to identify, locate and eliminate or neutralize threats.

The U.S. instituted an integrated strategy employing all elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) to ensure that Iraq began its re-emergence with a democratic process of self-determination and economic stability within its own infrastructure, and the ability to secure its country while carrying out a campaign to defeat the terrorists and neutralize threats of insurgency.[5] A military strategy was devised to enhance Iraq's ability to combat these immediate internal threats. During Operation Iraqi Freedom II, the strategy of U.S. special-operations forces, or SOF, focused on creating a capability for counterterrorism, or CT, enhanced by a robust intelligence-collection process established to identify key leaders, personnel and support mechanisms of the terror networks operating within the IW environment.

Conducting CT operations and enabling an Iraqi force with a CT capability became the line of operation for the U.S. Special Operations Command's subordinate units providing special-operations capability to U.S. commanders in Iraq. The United States Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, assumed responsibility as the main effort to train the Iraqi CT force. A program of foreign internal defense, commonly referred to as FID, was initiated during combat operations to develop, train, equip and advise the Iraqi CT force, its command-and-control elements and support assets. Training the CT operators became the responsibility of U.S. Special Forces groups, usually deployed to Iraq as battalion and headquarters elements. ARSOF Civil Affairs and Military

Information Support units assumed vital roles, as their missions focused on addressing the issues in the IW environment that were advantageous to the terror networks and insurgents.

This article provides a look at the U.S. FID program and its applicability in transitioning Iraq toward a stable and secure environment. An examination of the unique capabilities of the units of United States Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, will illuminate the essential elements that enabled the Iraqi CT force to successfully effect the transition. An examination of the elements encompassing a FID program, such as the one designed for Iraq, will detail the complexity of FID in a combat environment and its unique circumstance. The successes that have been achieved by ARSOF rely on their unique ability to operate in the contemporary IW environment — an environment that encapsulates their special-operations training at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

There is a misconception even within the military that FID is a mission that consists of merely training foreign troops. Analysis of the ARSOF capabilities, which extend beyond tactical-level training of foreign forces on individual and collective tasks relating to internal defense, will shed further light on the complexity of the FID program, and what leads the force to fulfill evolving mission requirements and its success criteria. For Iraq, this includes developing a CT capability that is self-sustaining and self-generating, with a command structure that rises to the echelons of civilian governmental ministries charged with creating the policies and resources that govern and sustain the national asset.

Foreign internal defense

There are several programs and activities that provide foreign assistance, not all specifically inherent to the U.S. The majority of assistance involving the military is supported by U.S. SOF core tasks. The programs provide overarching assistance capabilities to host-nations, or HN, and are coordinated through diplomatic channels, or authorized by executive order in combat environments. The type of assistance and funding selected is dependent on the lead (executive authority) department or agency, the operational environment and type of element, and to which department or ministry of the HN the support is being provided. Some of these programs and activities include nation assistance, security assistance, foreign-humanitarian assistance and FID.

FID is a top–down driven program tailored to provide or develop specific requirements to create or enhance a nation's internal defense capabilities. FID provides assistance through a foreign government's civilian and military departments and agencies to programs established by the government, designed to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism and other threats to internal security.[6] This assistance usually supports a nation's internal defense and development, or IDAD, plan upon their request. In a combat environment such as Iraq, the program creates capabilities from the ground-up to combat its internal threats as the government is being formed. If combat operations are authorized under executive order, as with Operation Iraqi Freedom, or OIF, FID can be a valuable program used to assist in creating government forces capable of maintaining a secure environment within its nation's borders.

The ideology governing FID, in other than a combat environment recognizes its activities as a preventive effort. If successful, the activities preclude the need to deploy larger maneuver units or multinational forces and equipment to a hostile environment that the HN becomes unable to control. During major combat operations like OIF, the FID program is a force multiplier, providing HN force capability, and replacing the requirement for foreign forces. The strategic end state of FID is to provide the HN with capabilities within its own instruments of power to eradicate internal threats. For its military, that includes the ability to use offensive, defensive and stability operations. Success criteria in achieving stability and security include maintaining legitimacy of the government through the eyes of the populace, and respect of the government forces enforcing law and order within the authorities of the government.

FID programs in a noncombat environment are most often authorized through the Department of State as the lead agent, working through the respective U.S. country team. The majority of FID activities are administered by Department of Defense assets, authorized by the Secretary of Defense in support of the respective geographic combatant commander's theater security cooperation plan. The U.S. forces, whether a single SOF element, a joint force or task-organized as an interagency activity, conduct FID in direct and or indirect support to HN activities. There is a unity of effort and purpose in the operational design of each program, providing a nested concept capability to support national security objectives within each geographical region. That flexibility enables its use during peacetime, in support of stability, security, transition and reconstruction operations, as well as other components of full-spectrum operations.

Indirect FID operations are effective for a HN when their forces or agencies involved are already self-sufficient in conducting the specific type of operations. A joint combined exchange training, or JCET, mission conducted by U.S. SOF is one example that provides a training venue to enhance the HN capabilities under the indirect FID model. Indirect support activities are designed to limit the exposure and operational involvement of foreign forces that may intensify conflict between the HN government and groups that pose internal threats to stability and security. Other programs of indirect support include multinational and joint exercises, military exchange and educational programs, and equipment transfer and training.

The SF FID mission in Iraq, although conducted in a combat environment, began its transition to an indirect role as the Iraqi Special Operations Force, referred to as ISOF, and other SF-trained units within Iraq became proficient enough to conduct independent CT operations. Prior to that, SF teams conducted unilateral CT missions as the training and venues for the Iraqi CT forces began to form. Once ISOF gained proficiency in the art of planning and executing CT operations, SF maintained a direct role in the missions, conducting operations alongside the ISOF. For reasons that will be explored later in this article, SF conduct these operations for two reasons. First, to allow ISOF to gain confidence in the U.S. SF as advisers and practitioners of the doctrine taught to them. Second, during each mission SF conduct a proficiency evaluation of the Iraqi force to determine the need for follow-on remedial training.

Direct operations in support of FID involve the use of U.S. forces conducting operations to support the HN populace or the military. Conducting that type of operation may be necessary after assessments determine that the HN does not possess adequate

capabilities or resources to conduct the activities independently, or under urgent circumstances involving an imminent threat to life or a humanitarian crisis. Direct operations expose U.S. forces as overtly involved in supporting the HN.

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, SF, Civil Affairs and Military Information Support units have been the leading effort in the U.S. FID program supporting CT operations in Iraq since its inception. The core tasks of these units, collectively, are tailored to address the complex issues of a continuously evolving IW environment.

There are numerous missions that fall under the umbrella of Civil Affairs operations that have been a quintessential asset to accomplishing the strategic and operational objectives in direct support of the Iraq FID program. The MIS units contribute directly to the host-nation IDAD plan. This capability facilitates the necessary degree of acceptance and support from the populace through undermining terrorist and insurgent propaganda and promoting the national objectives of the Iraqi government. The true limits of the SF capabilities in support of FID in Iraq and elsewhere have yet to be realized.

During combat operations, U.S. forces supporting FID will use indirect and direct missions, and combat operations to assist HN forces. The doctrinal orientation for conducting combat operation using FID is not necessarily analogous with how the Iraq FID program evolved. There are fundamental principles to maintaining the mission focus of FID during combat. First, combat operations do not usurp the priorities of the FID force in supporting the HN IDAD plan. Second, security and support of the populace remain essential elements to accomplishing operational objectives of FID. A third principle provides a more common objective between FID and combat operations. Direct operations in FID will generally increase, as will ARSOF core-task responsibilities, working with and through HN forces to regain stability and control. This will provide the HN force with an advantage to gain command and control of the developing situation.

FID is conducted by conventional and SOF forces, however Title 10 U.S. Code recognizes FID as a special-operations activity, "insofar as it relates to special operations," as listed under the authority and special-operations activities of the commander of the United Special Operations Command.[7]

RAPPORT BUILDING Members of the Iraqi Special Operations Force's 8th Regional Commando Battalion hand out backpacks to students at the Al-Ahdaf Primary school on Jan. 30. Their mission, reflective of U.S. Civil Affairs actions in Iraq, builds rapport with the people. *Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Emmanuel Rios*

Conventional forces that conduct FID accomplish their responsibilities as subject-matter experts on the tasks they are responsible for training foreign forces to execute. The conventional FID force in Iraq, composed of U.S. and coalition forces, has conducted significant FID operations, mainly in the tasks encompassing counter-insurgency, or COIN. They have been very successful in training the Iraqi conventional forces to a sustainable level of proficiency in their associated mission tasks.

It is well-documented in doctrinal and other publications that U.S. SOF possess unique capabilities that enable them to conduct FID activities in a more enduring and responsive manner. ARSOF receive extensive foreign-language training. The units are usually regionally oriented and attuned to cultural, religious and ethnic customs, values and traditions. Whether they are conducting operations within their region of expertise or deployed elsewhere, ARSOF personnel are sensitive to the political implications and national interests that their actions, decisions and mission accomplishments affect. These attributes, amplified by regionally oriented persistent engagement of forces, allow a more interactive relationship to form with foreign forces, not only as trainers but also as advisers and mentors; as partner forces during combat operations.

These attributes predicate a bond that enhances the training of HN forces beyond a trainer/trainee mentality. They promote greater unity of effort within branches of government, at all levels, involved with force

NEWSWORTHY Military Information Support Soldiers filled a vital role in Iraq, addressing issues in the IW environment advantageous to terror networks and insurgents. *U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson*

generation, training and sustainment. Within the civil populace, identified as a center of gravity in a IW environment, these attributes pertain to the phenomenon of acceptance, however temporary, to foreign-force occupation. An examination of the ARSOF FID mission in Iraq, and these attributes that amplify the successes, will hopefully foment discussion that will articulate the full value and unrealized capabilities of what is characterized as the U.S. SOF FID capability.

SOF FID in Iraq

U.S. SOF in Iraq were under the operational control of the Joint Forces Special Operations Command - Iraq, or JFSOC-I. A general-officer command, JFSOC-I, is responsible for the synchronization of personnel, resources and special-operations activities of all U.S. SOF forces operating in Iraq. Among these forces is the Combined Joint Special Options Task Force-Arabian Peninsula, or CJSOTF-AP, which is commanded on a rotational basis by the commanders of 5th and 10th Special Forces groups.

The CJSOTF-AP has command and control of three regional commands known as special-operations task forces, or SOTFs. The SOTF is an SF battalion headquarters element with CA and MIS assets available to facilitate operations in the IW environment. Each SOTF plans, coordinates and resources the FID activities within its area of responsibility. The disposition of SF within the regions consists of company headquarters and/or operational detachment-Alphas, better known as A-teams, that are co-located with Iraqi CT forces, headquarter elements or training facilities.

The SOF FID program was implemented during OIF II. The first Iraqi forces trained for offensive operations by SF occurred late in 2003 under the directive of JTF-7 and the coalition provisional authority.[8] The battalion was designated the 36th Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, or 36th ICDC. In December 2003, by a directive from the U.S. Secretary of Defense, the U.S. SF formed and trained the Iraqi Counterterrorism Force, or ICTF. There were other commando; reconnaissance, or RECCE, and Iraqi National Guard, or ING, units being trained during the same period by SF advisers throughout the country. One such unit was the 202 ING, formed and trained by a detachment from the 3rd SF Group. The initiative of this detachment to create the 202 ING highlights the professionalism and character, situational awareness and understanding of the joint-operational environment required for a bottom-up combat-FID training plan. The 202 ING with its SF advisers would distinguish itself in Operation Baton Rouge during the battle of Samarra.

The Iraqi CT force has evolved from the units mentioned above into a two-brigade unit that includes supporting elements, a dedicated intelligence capability and a force-generating training center. The ISOF 1st Brigade consists of five battalions: the Commando, ICTF, Support, Iraq Special Warfare Center, or ISWCS, and the RECCE battalions. The 2nd Brigade has command and control over the four regional commando battalions. Its

command-and-control authority falls under the Counterterrorism Command, or CTC, which is subordinate to the Counterterrorism Service, or CTS. CTS is a ministry-level position under the authority of the prime minister as per his determination.[9]

The ISWCS conducts all ISOF training. The training center is the result of the scope of ARSOF FID planning, integration and dedication to establishing an Iraqi CT capability. As SF maintain advisers at ISWCS for continuity and bilateral training, ISWCS training teams are also embedded within the ISOF brigade units to ensure continuity of internal training.

When the U.S.-Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement was reached in 2008, a majority of the command-and-control authorities were transitioned over to the Iraqi command structure, with ISOF forces numbering more than 4,000. This number of trained personnel, over a seven-year period, provided sufficient numbers of personnel in accordance with the unit authorizations as of April 2008, while validating the second and third SOF Truths: Q*uality is better than quantity; and Special-operations forces cannot be mass-produced*.

This broad historical overview outlines the complexity of the FID program executed by U.S. SOF during OIF. It illustrates capabilities that extend beyond the traditional FID established for a successful end state. Highlighting the achievements of ARSOF FID alone prohibits the recognition and appreciation of how and why ARSOF forces execute the tasks associated with FID so successfully and in such a way that positively affects the HN forces' survivability and legitimacy at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

The scope of the ARSOF missions in Iraq can be examined using an applicable assessment tool that provides the bases for ARSOF FID functions. The metrics used to measure the overall capabilities and successes of the SOF FID program in Iraq are identified in Lt. Col. Mark Ulrich's publication, *Cutting the Gordian Knot: The Counterguerrilla's Guide to Defeating Insurgencies and Conducting Populist Centric Operations.*[10] His work provides guidelines on the application of tactical counterinsurgency operations and a how-to guide detailing training and advisory responsibilities.

The publication bases its premise on the best practices of U.S. Army and joint doctrine as applied throughout the geographical theaters. Ulrich identifies four categories used to assess HN forces for planning, operations and resourcing purposes during FID and security-force assistance, or SFA, in support of the HN IDAD plan. The assessment categories include *leadership, training, sustainment and professionalization.* His articulation of the assessment categories provides ample depth to the criteria required to analyze the ARSOF FID activities during OIF. Highlighting the execution of the ARSOF FID will substantiate the legitimacy of its legacy; a highly trained, professional and legitimate Iraqi counterterrorism force capable of self-generation and sustainment, with leadership, command and control and a headquarters hierarchy able to provide the necessary funding, personnel and resources to sustain the force.

Training. The SOF FID training during operations in a combat environment relies on effective short- and long-term planning. ARSOF commanders envision the evolution of the HN security force as a continuum that extends from the training of basic soldier skills through the advisory responsibilities, working with the HN force made self-sufficient through effective training, experience and leadership.

The training and adviser role is not limited to the CT "operator." Equivalent to an indigenous force in an unconventional-warfare environment, the new Iraqi security forces had to be built from the ground up. According to SF advisers, only about half of the trainees had any prior military experience.

Understanding the operational environment, SOF planners were aware of the demographics and religious divergence that had begun to erode Iraq's internal security. The focus was to create a capable CT force that would maintain credibility of their authority and legitimacy as a government force in the eyes of the Iraqi people. Personnel were selected from different ethnic and religious orientations covering all regions of Iraq. This selection process enabled the force to focus on unit training and missions as an Iraqi [government] security force, and conduct operations indiscriminately. It became a compelling factor to the professionalization of the force and its legitimacy within the populace.

SOF planners also realized the immediate need for proper training facilities. The needs statement prompted diplomatic involvement that resulted in trilateral agreements to have the ICTF trained in Jordan. The use of Jordanian facilities, and U.S. and Jordanian Special Forces trainers greatly reduced the security risks and training time for the ICTF to become operational. The Jordanian training venues were used until proper Iraqi facilities could be constructed, resulting in the ISWCS.

In developing multiple options to expedite the initial training of the ISOF, coordinations were made through conventional forces for the use of U.S. training assets in country. After the 3rd SF Group detachment located at forward operating base, or FOB, Brassfield-Moro formed a cohort battalion that would become the 202 ING, similar needs requests for a training venue were sent through the SF headquarters. Coordinations were made to transport the battalion-size force to the 1st Infantry Division [basic] training center in Tikrit. The ODA in-processed the Iraqi cohort and issued uniforms and equipment. They assumed responsibility of the school for two months. The ODA conducted basic training and small-unit tactics up to platoon-size maneuver during that period.

Shortly after returning to the FOB, the unit was engaged in Operation Baton Rouge. The 202 ING was placed under control of the Iraqi conventional forces after the battle for Samarra, though the SF A-team maintained operational control of one platoon, focusing training on intelligence and targeting in support of their CT mission.[11]

Creating a sustainable force required personnel proficient in all supporting roles for the CT battalions and later brigade elements. The selection-and-assessment process conducted by detachment members included placement of personnel in supporting positions such as drivers, crew-served-weapons positions, communications and intelligence personnel. Along with this training was the introduction to staff functions for the soldiers and officers working within the headquarters elements. Training officers and soldiers for staff functions also included providing the ISOF brigade and CTC with CA and MIS capabilities.

Developing leaders who promote a professional force within the headquarters staff sections is an implied task for elements such as SF liaison elements, or SFLEs, and military transition teams, known as MiTTs. SFLEs consisted of SF NCOs and officers assigned to the ISOF brigade and CTC and assisted with intelligence fusion from the dynamic network that supports CT operations. As transitioning authorities progressed, MiTTs that included ARSOF personnel advised the Iraqi staff in their duties and responsibilities.

After the Soldiers returned from initial training in Jordan, it became the receiving detachments' responsibilities to also train selected soldiers to a level of proficiency in supporting roles of the CT operations. As OIF transitioned through its phases, ODAs and AOBs (company-level operations) were eventually provided personnel to assist in training respective of their military occupational specialty, or MOS.[12] One of ARSOF's greatest capabilities is being a force multiplier. The ability to develop unit-supporting roles coincides with ensuring proficiency and long-term sustainment of the HN force.

Leadership. Developing leaders within ISOF is the cornerstone of all other assessment criteria and is interrelated with the development of a professional force. Instilling or recognizing leadership traits in HN force officers and NCOs facilitate the discipline and professionalism needed to create a legitimate force. For ARSOF in Iraq, leadership attributes and competencies do not only have to be exemplified, but the leadership-selection process for the ICTF involved a constant assessment process. The SF advisers know it is prudent not to set the standards of performance to their own level. In the same light, they know that when assessing soldiers for leadership potential, trying to find personnel who exhibit all the attributes and competencies of a leader will not make the selection process productive. Identifying particular leadership traits in individuals and promoting the development of them became a tool for successful professional leadership development of the Iraq leaders.

As advisers to the Iraqi force, SF lived, worked and interacted on a daily basis with their respective Iraqi partner force. This interrelationship builds on the leadership traits of the partner force through the observation of leader characteristics, professional conduct, respect for the rule of law and concern for the welfare of subordinates.

These assessments were conducted throughout all phases of training and combat operations. SF members selected the Iraqi partner-force leadership at the tactical, operational and strategic levels or presented a much-respected opinion on possible candidates. During initial training phases in Jordan and Tikrit, leadership positions would change hands between prospective candidates until the correct characteristic presented a leadership structure complementary to the unit and mission. One example of the leadership-selection process occurred in January 2006. SF SOTF commanders, one of whom was Lt. Col. Barry Naylor, currently the commander, 1st Special Warfare Training Group, JFK Special Warfare Center and School, selected and promoted Maj. Gen. Fadhel al-Barwari to assume command of the ISOF brigade. Providing credibility and respect of the promotion in the eyes of the Iraqi ministry-level representatives, and the prime minister, Maj. Gen. al-Barwari is still the ISOF Brigade commander.

Sustainment. A strategic objective for the FID program is to provide the Iraqi government with a CT capability. The long-term sustainment of the ICTF would be ensured as the GoI recognized its capability as a national asset to promote stability. Several milestones in the ARSOF FID process attributed to the sustainment of the Iraqi CT capability. Two of those milestones include the force-generating capability established with the creation of the ISWCS and the formation of the command-and-control headquarters elements.

Long-range planning for ISOF envisioned an Iraqi force-generating capability operating independently from the advisory and supporting responsibility of the U.S. government and its SOF personnel. SF played a major role in the creation of the ISWCS. U.S. ARSOF assistance includes establishing the need for a training venue, providing SF trainers, funding and presently providing SF advisory personnel for continuity. The selection-and-assessment process provides personnel for operations as well as supporting positions. As the ISOF capability expanded into two brigades, ISWCS became an independent element under the CTC with its own funding source. This capability ensures the sustainment of personnel into the CT force.

A major step toward the force-sustainment capability came with the recognition of the ICTF as a national CT asset and the creation of its command-and-control headquarters. ISOF was under operational control of the CJSOTF-AP until September 2006, when a memorandum of agreement was signed between the commander, Multinational Forces-Iraq and the Iraqi prime minister. The agreement placed all Iraqi forces under the control of the GoI, to include ISOF. SOF planners then sent SF trained staff personnel to the Iraqi Joint Headquarters, or IJHQ. That action gave ISOF subject-matter experts the ability to advise the IJHQ staff. The same tasks were filled by SF, CA and MIS personnel at the ISOF brigade and CTC. The SFLEs conducted advisory responsibilities within the staff and coordination and the deconfliction of information and operations. CA and MIS elements are involved in planning at this level, training of Iraqi staff members on how best to incorporate their enabling assets and capabilities.

Other milestones not elaborated on are the expansion of ISOF elements to regional outposts, the security-force funding prior to assumption of responsibility by the GoI and the transitional phased planning that allowed a persistent engagement of ARSOF personnel with the entire ICTF structure.

Professionalization. Developing a professional force in an IW environment is arguably the highest priority. A professional force will encompass and enhance the other functions of a FID program. The U.S. FID advisers realize that in an IW environment, the population is the center of gravity for operations. Training a disciplined, professional CT force that conducts its duties within the scope of applicable laws and authority, with respect for the Iraqi citizens, will be the defining factor in winning the support of the people.

ARSOF advisers provided professional development to the ISOF soldiers, NCOs and officers through their actions and execution of responsibilities; demonstrating the "what" and "how" of the way a professional force operates. The professionalism is reinforced with proper instruction that answers the "why" to the U.S. forces' committed efforts. The social, religious and cultural knowledge ARSOF forces possess of their operational area allows them to exemplify professionalism and leadership traits in a proper and influential manner to their partner force. The interrelationships detailed in the training function provide core elements that build on the trust and confidence in the Iraqi force.

When FID combat operations began, SF took the lead when executing missions with the Iraqi force. That provided the opportunity for the ICTF to observe the actions of the SF members. The ISOF responsibilities increased as SF training, observations and experience led them to the required level of operational proficiency. Eventually, SF began to take a supporting role in operations while evaluating the Iraqi forces' mission planning and execution. This transition of responsibility became the impetus of the Iraqi force to emulate the operational procedures and conduct of their advisers.

STRONG ALLY Army Brig. Gen. Kevin Mangum, commander of the Iraqi National Counterterrorism Force Transition Team, thanks Maj. Gen. Fadhel al Barwari, the commanding officer of the Iraq Special Operations Force, for his support. *Photo by Petty Officer Second Class Jimmy Pan*

The same efforts are conducted by CA and MIS Soldiers during the execution of their responsibilities. Whether training a partner force in their applicable duties or conducting missions, ARSOF Soldiers are cognizant of the mission success and political implication once the transition of authority and responsibility is placed with the Iraqi force.

Conclusion

The ARSOF force operating in Iraq has brought the doctrinal capabilities to fruition in its execution of the Iraqi SOF FID program. In an IW combat environment, a "protracted" conflict is relevant, and we must never forget the many sacrifices made to accomplish the strategic objective so successfully. ARSOF have been an invaluable military asset to the U.S. strategy in Iraq. By accomplishing the Iraq CT mission and having a positive impact on the counterinsurgency mission, the force has established an environment favorable for the Iraqi government to provide for its people through the democratic process.

In October 2011, the determination was made within diplomatic channels not to have U.S. forces, SOF or conventional, retain an enduring presence in Iraq. That does not mean an end to the Iraqi FID program. Title 10 FID functions will most likely continue for ARSOF in the form of JCET events, military educational exchanges and even further development with the counterinsurgency effort using conventional and SOF forces.

The future of the ISOF capability now rests solely in the hands of the Iraqi government. ARSOF forces should remain exceptionally proud of the professional, self-generating ICTF they are responsible for developing at the tactical and operational levels. A successful strategic plan for ISOF provides for the force to remain an impartial military command, providing a national CT capability to the GoI in its effort to control a stable Iraq as a legitimate governing democracy. ***SW***

comment here

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Notes

1. President George W. Bush, *On Iraq War Progress and Vision*, speech delivered on 28 June 2005, Fort Bragg, NC. http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wariniraq/gwbushiraq62805.htm. Accessed 12 September 2011.

2. National Security Strategy, May 2010. Washington D.C., GPO, 3, 11, 24-26. A repetitive theme of the strategic outlook.

3. Elements of national power for the United States traditionally include diplomatic, information, military and economic and are known as the DIME. Recently, for specific uses such as the Partnership to Defeat Terrorism, geared toward addressing domestic issues, law enforcement has been added as an element.

4. Irregular warfare: A violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence and will (Joint Publication 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 189). An IW environment is predicated by the use of irregular forces and tactics.

5. Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2006 (Section 9010), Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, May 2006 (Washington, D.C.: GPO), 1-5. This report echoes the three preceding reports to Congress on the same subject.

6. Joint Publication 1-02, 145, and FM 3-05.2, *Foreign Internal Defense*, Glossary-5. The foreign internal defense definition is paraphrased. Definitions from both references are similar.

7. Title 10 USC, Chapter 6, is added as an amendment by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, Section 214. Chapter 6, Section 167, references special-operations activities; Chapter 101, Section 2010, concerns training foreign forces. http://uscode.house.gov/download/title_10.shtml. Accessed 3 September 2011.

8. Unknown author, *Iraqi Special Operations Forces Overview*, CJSOTF-AP, April 2010, 1-3.

9. Iraqi Executive Order 61, April 5, 2007, and the 9204 Report to Congress: Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, March 2010, 70.

10. Lt. Col. Mark Ulrich, "Cutting the Gordian Knot: The Counterguerrilla's Guide to Defeating Insurgencies and Conducting Populist Centric Operations," October 2010.

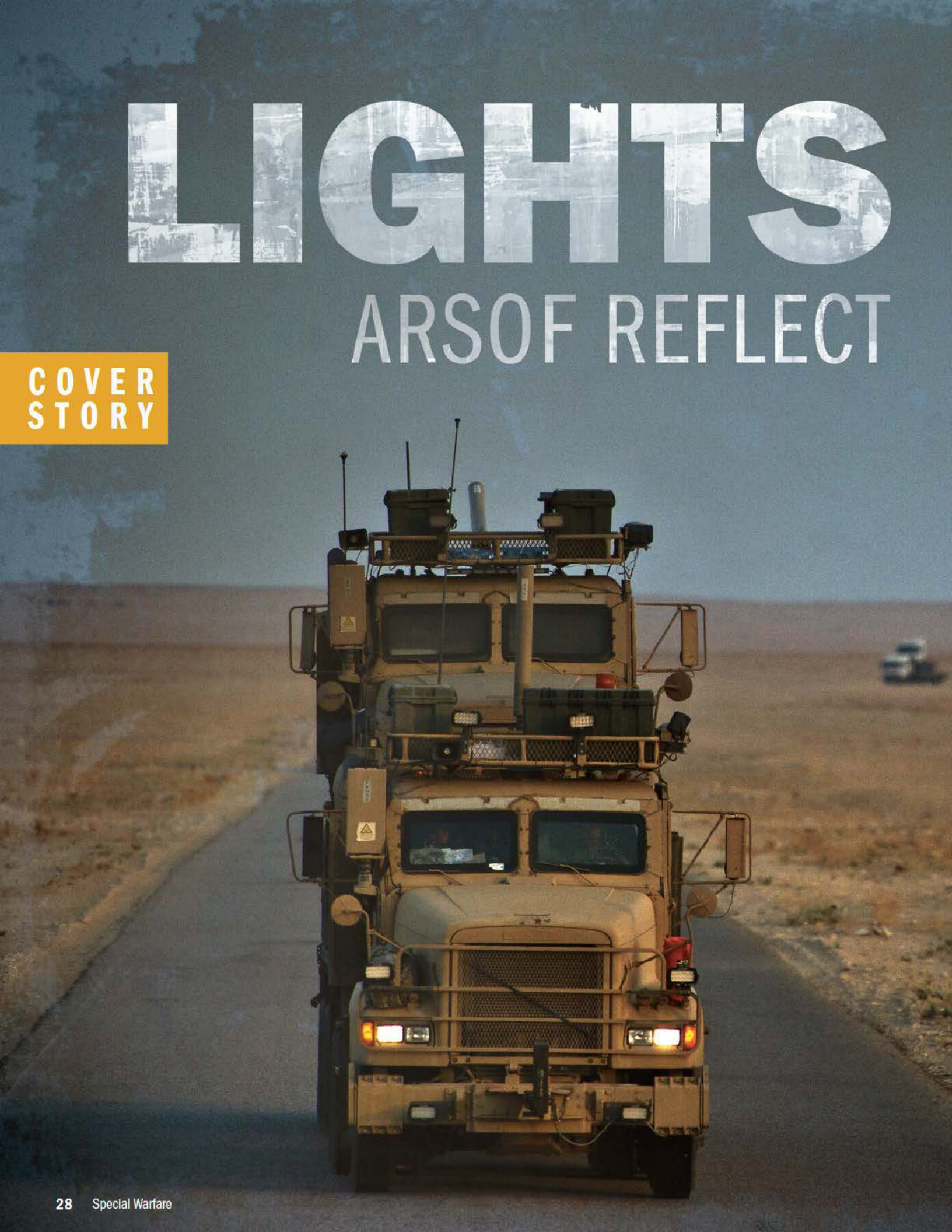
11. Information concerning the training of the 202nd ING provided by the then-team sergeant of ODB 3220, the detachment training the unit.

12. Information pertaining to training of ISOF personnel received during interview with the operations sergeant for ODA 3222. During OIF II, he was an 18E on a detachment in the 3rd SF Group.

LIGHTS

ARSOF REFLECT

COVER STORY



OUT

BY MAJOR DAVE BUTLER

ON 8 YEARS IN IRAQ

In August 2011, a team from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, serving as representatives of Special Warfare, visited special-operations forces in Iraq to take the pulse of special operations in the Arabian Peninsula.

During this historic time, U.S. forces were already reposturing for what was to become the U.S. exit from Iraq. Staffs at every level worked through multiple scenarios to inform their commands of if/then situations. Leaders made recommendations. Forward operating bases closed. The enemy took advantage where he could. Each day in August and September of 2011 was rich with signals of the end of the war in Iraq...

The Iraq of 2011 is far different from the one encountered by U.S. troops eight years ago, but some things have remained the same. In a statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March, 2011, Gen. James N. Mattis, the commander of the U.S. Central Command, noted, "Iraq faces lingering ethnic and sectarian mistrust, tensions between political parties, and strained governmental capacity to provide basic services. Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) remains committed to undermining the Iraqi government and is capable of carrying out orchestrated, high-profile attacks. Likewise, Iranian-inspired and equipped proxies continue to be a threat to Iraqi security and governance.

"While the security situation in Iraq is vastly improved since the peak of sectarian violence there in mid-2007 (violence is currently at all-time lowest levels since 2003), Iraq continues to face significant political, economic and security challenges," continued Mattis. "Over the coming year, several factors will determine Iraq's strategic direction, including the continuing development of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), the effectiveness of the nascent governing coalition and the degree to which the country is influenced by Iran and threatened by AQI and Shi'a militia elements.

"From now until the end of this year, United States Forces-Iraq (USF-I) is continuing to partner with ISF during this historic period of transition. USF-I is undertaking a range of activities, foremost among these strengthening the ISF, transitioning security-related activities to Iraq and the U.S. interagency, and contributing to border management and ministerial development. Through USF-I and in partnership with the embassy country team, we are planning the initial stand-up of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) in June of this year and expect it to be fully operational by this October. OSC-I is the cornerstone of our long-term mission to build partner capacity with the ISF. Additionally, the OSC-I will ensure the continuation of the military-to-military relationships that advise, train and assist Iraqi Security Forces."

Mattis' plans for 2011 became of utmost importance in October, when President Barack Obama announced the pull-out of American forces from Iraq.

"The last American Soldier[s] will cross the border out of Iraq with their heads held high, proud of their success and knowing that the American people stand united in our support for our troops. That is how America's military efforts in Iraq will end," said President Obama.[1]

With the President's announcement, Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, began taking stock of the past eight years in Iraq and looking forward to their possible role in Iraq's future.

Partners for LIfe

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

U.S. special-operations formations have lived and breathed Gates' words over much of the past eight years, as they have invested into the development of Iraqi special-operations forces, or ISOF. The success of ISOF speaks volumes to the training and the partnership between the two forces. Tactical formations are able to operate largely independently through the entire targeting cycle in order to execute operations directed by the government of Iraq, or GoI.

Conventional forces stopped combat operations altogether on Aug. 31, 2010.[2] Special-operations forces were still conducting bilateral counterterrorism operations to put pressure on the terrorist networks in Iraq, and throughout 2011, they transitioned those missions to their ISOF brethren.

Some Special Forces operational detachments-alpha or ODAs, were positioned away from their partner forces during the drawdown of conventional forces. Special operators referred to that unique situation as "commuter foreign internal defense." Commuter FID is not an ideal relationship; it sometimes allows contact with FID partners only by phone. But did ISOF sit on their laurels or cease to conduct effective operations? No. ISOF continued to put effective pressure on terrorist networks throughout the country.

The U.S. SOF mission, under the unified command of the Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command – Iraq, was to conduct special operations with select partners to counter threats to internal security, disrupt violent extremist organizations and develop an enduring counterterrorism capability, and set conditions for a long-term partnership between Iraq and the U.S.[3]

ISOF proved to be effective fighting forces within the limits of their capabilities. ARSOF operators understand Iraqi limitations as compared to our military. The savvy operator also understands the benefit of a less advanced fighting force. As U.S. forces draw down, Special Forces teams are proud of what they have achieved during eight years of combat FID.

Soldiers assigned to the CJSOTF-Arabian Peninsula, or CJSOTF-AP, almost overwhelmingly agree that their Iraqi special-operations partners have become an effective fighting force.

"The constable leadership has the mind set and intelligence to make happen anything you or I could make happen," said the team sergeant of ODA 5435, when describing a recent operation that was conducted at a U.S. SOF to ISOF ratio of 1:6, in which the ISOF controlled the operation via their own communications network and cleared every building on an eight-building objective.

"This operation was so transparent. We shared intelligence, routes; we shared the name of the target," said the team sergeant. "The only thing we facilitated was ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aerial platform], but they could have done without it."[4]

With the end of the war in sight, and the complete pull-out of U.S. troops by Dec. 31, Iraqi and American forces were looking at their relationship and how it would be affected. In an interview with the *New York Times* in July 2011, Iraq's top SOF leader made a plea for U.S. Special Forces to remain in the country. "The Americans need to stay, because we don't have control over our borders," said Maj. Gen. Fadhel al-Barwari.

Al-Barwari's relationship with U.S. Special Forces dates back to 1991 in northern Iraq. He resumed his relationship in 2003, as ARSOF units took on the training of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Force. Like many in the Iraq Army, al-Barwari rose through the ranks and maintained personal relationships with U.S. SOF leaders as they deployed and returned to Iraq. During *Special Warfare's* visit to Iraq, al-Barwari hosted the team and numerous other members of U.S. SOF for dinner in his home. The long-term

UPDATE IRAQ A team representing *Special Warfare* visited Iraq in August to get the ground truth of ARSOF's final missions in Iraq. *U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Roberto Di Giovine*

relationships that existed were apparent from the warm embraces and recollective conversations. He is fond of noting that he is advised today by the same American Soldiers who made him do push-ups eight years ago.

That kind of persistent engagement and building of relationships are hallmarks of ARSOF. Noting that ARSOF is the only force in the Department of Defense that is specifically trained and educated to work with indigenous forces, Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick, the commander of the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, says, "They [ARSOF] possess a unique set of capabilities that enable both lethal and nonlethal missions specifically designed to influence enemy, neutral and friendly audiences. Those forces can shape foreign political and military environments by working with host nations, regional partners, indigenous populations and their respective institutions in order to prevent insurgencies or conflicts from destabilizing allies, partner nations and vital security relationships. Through those actions, they can ultimately deter conflict, prevail in war or succeed in a wide range of contingencies."[5]

Because of their ability to build relationships, ARSOF in Iraq have continually partnered at every level of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service, or CTS.

Special Forces A-teams were assigned to separate ISOF companies, SF companies and B-teams were assigned to brigades, and SF-led military training teams partnered at the national, CTS level. Prior to August, U.S. SOF maintained A-teams who acted as SF liaison elements, or SFLEs, at the Iraqi national- and intelligence-agency level to assist in intelligence analysis and sharing.

Each U.S. SOF element had decisive and deliberate contact with its Iraqi partners on a regular basis. Various fledgling ISOF headquarters still require support and training in order to sustain, equip and maintain their more developed force. Until an extended agreement is reached, it is worthwhile to review our progress, the ISOF's abilities and the current state of operations.

The Product - The Iraqi CTS

"Our partner force can do the full spectrum of operations from planning all the way to sensitive-site exploitation to their standard … they are successful at what they do," said the team leader of ODA 2116.

Under the tutelage of SF elements in Iraq, the CTS and the Emergency Response Brigade, or ERB, have been established. The CTS is an all-Iraqi, internal, direct-action task force. It is composed of two Iraqi special-operations brigades and the Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School. The ERB is composed of six special-weapons-and-tactics battalions and one battalion for logistics support.

The primary difference between the ERB and CTS lies in the authority under which they operate. The ERB is a force directed and funded by the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior.

"We no longer partner with the ERB," said Brig. Gen. Darsie Rogers, commander, Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command-Iraq. "We terminated that relationship, which was part of the greater plan as we depart here. The ERB is a very capable unit. They've suffered some leadership challenges toward the end of rotation. I think the intent of Iraqi security forces is to bring ERB if not under the control, then essentially under the tactical command of the CT Service, and that may bring some overhead structure to the organization. The ERB is still functioning, and they are still conducting operations across the region. We made a great element. There is a lot of capability there. The Iraqis who are part of the ERB have been provided all the opportunities to make it a world-class law-enforcement organization. At this point, it is up to them to see what they can make of it."[6]

Together, the ERB and CTS conduct direct-action operations to eliminate terrorist threats in Iraq. The forces maintain an excellent human-intelligence capability, as well as the capability to plan and execute unilateral offensive operations.[7]

A good example of ISOF tactical intelligence at work was related by the commander of AOB 3220, which was partnered with the 1st ISOF Brigade. It shows how the ISOF intelligence capability could be effective if its higher headquarters were mentored into a capable and empowered force.

> "Because of their ability to build relationships, ARSOF in Iraq have continually partnered at every level of the Iraqi Counterterrorism Service, or CTS."

During an operation to capture an insurgent leader whose network members killed one ISOF soldier and wounded several others the week before, the ISOF brigade commander requested and was granted the use of an Iraqi ISR platform. AOB 3220's commander watched as the ISOF brigade staff planned for and integrated an unmanned aerial vehicle in its operations. ISOF units led the movement to the objective while monitoring their own ISR. When it was time to execute the mission, ISOF units isolated and assaulted the objective, detaining the targeted insurgent. The mission was accomplished entirely with U.S. SOF elements in trail.

"This was a success. They used ISR, monitored it, even briefed it in their plan," said a team leader.

Some U.S. SOF Soldiers are still frustrated by what they see as sectarianism, corruption and a counterproductive policy of withholding information rather than sharing it.

Commanders, ODA team leaders and operators are quick to note that although the targeting process is valid when information is properly shared, units are often slow to act regarding individuals who have religious or political ties to the upper echelons of the Iraqi leadership.

Intelligence fusion and analysis are often ineffective because of sectarianism and other systemic problems. Tactical intelligence systems are capable, and human intelligence is working. "If the target is Shia, unless he is a low-level guy, they're [CTS] not going to action it," said the commander of AOB 3220. "At the tactical level, it [the targeting cycle] is working well. … At the brigade level, they would be able to do F3EAD [find, fix, finish, exploit, analyze, disseminate]."[8]

Another reason for seeking to maintain a presence at the higher levels of ISOF is the underlying theme of corruption, which hampers operations. Often, effective Iraqi leaders will be replaced suddenly, without notice or obvious reason, causing disruption in the ranks and reducing effectiveness. "Since we got here, we are working with a new brigade commander and all new battalion commanders. Whether that's an initiative on their part, I don't know; we felt that at the ODA level," said the team leader of ODA 2134.[9]

In an effort to legitimize the targeting process, the Iraqi government has developed a warrant system for properly vetting operations. Prior to any operation, Iraqi units will build a warrant package to submit through the military and judicial systems for approval. Those warrant packages are often delayed or disapproved for no apparent reason. The details about the target can also be leaked, giving the targeted individual early warning and allowing him to escape.

The Future of ARSOF in Iraq

"Would we hope after spending eight years in this country, sharing blood, sweat and tears, dying side by side, working with each other, that we would maintain a relationship? Of course we would," said Col. Scott E. Brower, commander of the CJSOTF-AP.[10]

If ARSOF has a role in the future of Iraq, it will be under the auspices of the State Department's Office of Security Cooperation, or OSC, which will be housed in the U.S. Embassy. With the deadline for departure looming, the U.S. government had drawn up plans for expansion of the U.S. Embassy and its operations. The OSC will be staffed by civilians and military personnel who are responsible for overseeing the training and equipping of Iraq's security forces.

Soldiers currently in Iraq operate under the Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA, of 2008. It has been suggested that American Soldiers operating under the auspices of the OSC will fall under diplomatic immunity. Attempts failed earlier in 2011 when Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki tried to gain approval through the Iraqi Parliament for immunity for 3,000 U.S. troops in Iraq.[11]

On Oct. 24, 2011, U.S. and Iraqi officials met to discuss what a standard military-to-military relationship would look like. "The president said very clearly that what we're looking for is a more normal military-to-military relationship," said a U.S. Navy

TOP OF THE CLASS Iraqi counterterrorism forces salute during the playing of the Iraqi national anthem at a graduation ceremony for the newest members to complete the ICTF training. *Photo by MC2(AW) Michael D. Blackwell II*

captain, who was a member of the U.S. delegation at the meeting. "That's the crux of what we're discussing right now."[12]

According to recent reports, around 200 U.S. trainers will be attached to the embassy's OSC, and 700 civilian trainers will help Iraqi forces train on new U.S. military hardware they have purchased, such as F-16 fighters and Abrams tanks.[13]

Based on recent information coming from the Department of Defense, U.S. SOF will be part of a military-to-military relationship similar to what we have become used to in more than 50 countries around the world. U.S. SOF should expect to be engaged in either cyclical combined training programs or a similar enduring program.

U.S. special-operations units could rotate through Iraq in order to train with and engage ISOF and to continue building capacity or simply preserving our existing relationship. The training could be accomplished on a rotational basis, with gaps between visits, or through an enduring presence, wherein special-operations units overlap each other's presence in country. The relationship could take place as joint combined exchange training, or JCET. In either case, the training partnership would be vetted and approved through the U.S. State Department and have specific training objectives tied to it.

That type of presence is what our special operators currently deployed to Iraq agree is the right answer. Special operators refer to typical results from partner operations as "inroads," "relationships" and "ground truth." They are also quick to note the robust human-intelligence capability and networks that exist within the Iraqi counterterrorism forces.

Overwhelmingly, SOF operators suggested the benefit of a U.S. SOF presence in Iraq. There is some disagreement about where best to employ our forces: Some suggest that SOF would be best employed at the ISOF battalion level and below, in order to monitor the progress of ISOF, as well as to observe the ground truth of enemy operations, while others hope for a SOF presence at the ISOF brigade level and higher, to assist in the professionalization of ISOF and in intelligence analysis and fusion.

The Strategic Reality

"Strategic reality demands that the U.S. government get better at building partner capacity." — Secretary Robert Gates

Andrew Shapiro, assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, recently explained the role of security assistance in today's world, and while his remarks were not directed toward Iraq, they sum up the work of ARSOF over the past eight years and point toward its future in Iraq.

"Security assistance has broad foreign-policy implications. It is not just that weapons can be used in a conflict and therefore must be dealt with very carefully. It is that the distribution of security assistance is fundamentally a foreign-policy act. Additionally, programs like the International Military Education and Training program, or IMET, help build military-to-military connections between countries. This builds ties between militaries and creates strong incentives for recipient countries to maintain good ties with the United States," he said. "When countries ac-

ON PATROL Members of the Iraqi Emergency Response Brigade conduct operations with U.S. Special Operations Forces. *Photo by MC2 John Hulle*

cept security assistance, they are ultimately making a long-term strategic commitment to develop a relationship with the U.S. Security assistance is therefore a critical tool that helps undergird our diplomatic relationships and strengthen alliances with countries around the world."

He noted that work like that done by ARSOF in Iraq is crucial. "Today, we're often more concerned about a state that is weak than one that is strong. In an interconnected world, terrorists, pirates, traffickers and other transnational actors can exploit the weakness of states to cause mayhem and instability. Security assistance can be a critical tool to support states trying to build their security capacity. Our assistance can help states better control their borders and their coastlines. It can help train a state's forces to ensure they operate in a more professional manner that protects their publics, while respecting human rights. And our assistance can help states better deal with transnational threats."

During a visit to Iraq in November, Vice President Joe Biden said that people in the U.S. still ask whether it is worth it to spend so much energy and money in Iraq, a country where 4,485 American military personnel have died and tens of thousands of Iraqis have been killed.

"We have jointly demonstrated it is worth it. It is worth it — as costly and as difficult and sometimes as controversial as it is," he said.[14] **SW**

Maj. Dave Butler *served as an Infantry company commander in central Iraq during the Iraq War troop surge in 2007. He has numerous deployments as an Infantry officer and most recently deployed as the editorial team leader for* Special Warfare. *Maj. Butler currently serves as the public affairs officer and chief of strategic communication for the JFK Special Warfare Center and School.*

comment here

Notes

1. Remarks by Secretary of Defense Gates to the Washington *Post*, July 31, 2009.

2. Remarks by President Barack Obama in address to the nation on the end of combat operations in Iraq, Aug. 31, 2010; web source: www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/08/31/remarks-president-address-nation-end-combat-operations-iraq.

3. Remarks made by Brig. Gen. Darsie Rogers, to *Special Warfare* magazine team in Iraq, Aug. 24, 2011.

4. Interview held with the ODA 5435 team sergeant during *Special Warfare* magazine visit to central Iraq, Aug. 28, 2011.

5. Bennet S. Sacolick, "Persistent Engagement: Why Foreign Internal Defense Is Important," *Special Warfare*, September-December 2011, 43.

6. Brig. Gen. Darsie Rogers, phone interview, Iraq, Nov. 22, 2011.

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8. Interview held with AOB 3220 commander during *Special Warfare* magazine visit, central Iraq, Aug. 28, 2011.

9. ODA 2134 team leader, interview held during *Special Warfare* magazine visit, northern Iraq, Aug. 27, 2011.

10. Tim Arango,"Taking Lead, Iraqis Hope U.S. Special Operations Commandos Stay," *New York Times*, July 2, 2011, web source: www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/world/middleeast/03iraq.html?pagewanted=all.

11. Alister Bull, "Biden says U.S. pullout brings new phase with Iraq," Reuters, Nov. 30, 2011, web source: http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/30/us-usa-iraq-biden-idUSTRE7AS1JZ20111130.

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THROUGH AND WITH

REINTEGRATION IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

BY COLONEL CHRISTIAN M. KARSNER AND DOCTOR SARAH E. KOPCZYNSKI

Reintegration is a core element to achieving conflict termination in Afghanistan. During the nascent stages of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program, or APRP, I recognized the great strategic potential reintegration held to shape the battlefield in Afghanistan, especially in Regional Command North. What we did early on that other regional commands either could not or chose not to do was to fully resource and empower our reintegration cell to implement swiftly through and with the northern governors.

The north command's emphasis on APRP was unprecedented, and still is, making clear the impact of our partnering with the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanista, of GIRoA,: From summer 2010 to summer 2011, more than 25 percent of the estimated insurgents in the north abandoned the insurgent cause to embrace the GIRoA, through a constructive peace process, greatly reducing the insurgents' numbers and their will to continue fighting.

In the north, we recognized that lethal operations, especially the kill-capture missions performed by partnered Afghan and United States Special Forces, were going to make a significant impact on the enemy, but those missions would better serve a secondary role in our counterinsurgency strategy. Therefore, we paired reintegration with lethal targeting as a mechanism for bringing insurgents back to the GIRoA. Successful reintegration activities in the north not only tapped into the insurgent network but also empowered the governors to out-administer the insurgents, thereby reducing the need to out-fight them.

— Brigadier General Sean P. Mulholland
Deputy commander of Regional Command North, Afghanistan

As the U.S. and NATO continue to plan the draw down of forces in Afghanistan, debate over the importance of and the means for achieving successful reintegration of former insurgents becomes more prevalent. This article discusses recent progress made by partnering with Afghan leaders to support reintegration in Afghanistan's Regional Command North, or RC-North.

Reintegration is the operational- and tactical-level effort to bring rank-and-file members of the insurgency and low- to mid-level commanders back into peaceful Afghan society. Reconciliation is a tandem political-strategic process targeting senior insurgent commanders to broker deals to terminate their armed resistance against the GIRoA. Reintegration and reconciliation are accepted as better alternatives to armed conflict after the promise of insurgent victory has been destroyed.

Brief history. Previous Afghan reintegration programs, such as Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups, or DIAG, and Takhim-e-Sol, failed because of poor transparency, inadequate accountability, broken promises and top-down, centralized decision-making. Seeking to reinvigorate reintegration, President Hamad Karzai announced his commit-

ment to peace during his November 2009 inauguration speech. A few months later, he explained Afghanistan's reintegration end state at the White House: "Afghanistan is seeking peace, because through military means alone, we are not going to get our objectives of bringing stability and peace to Afghanistan and the defeat of terrorism."[1] By the end of 2010, the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program, or APRP, was formally launched by the GIRoA and backed by more than $200 million pledged by donor nations to a new reintegration trust fund called the Reintegration Financing Mechanism, or RFM.

Program objective and end state. The goal of the APRP is to encourage fighters who previously sided with armed opposition groups to renounce violence against the government and join a constructive process of reintegration back into society. The APRP will address grievances that cause insurgents to fight and will broker agreements with insurgents to achieve peace and stability.

Dynamics in northern Afghanistan

RC North setting. RC-N is the largest of six regional commands in NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, or ISAF. RC-N is headquartered in Balkh Province's capital city of Mazar-e-Sharif.

Encompassing 62,600 square miles[2] — an area the size of Wisconsin — RC-N includes the nine provinces of Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Sar-e Pul and Faryab (Figure 1-Map). RC-N borders China and the central Asian republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Provincial reconstruction teams, or PRTs, and smaller PRT advisory offices led by non-U.S. forces are distributed throughout the provinces, tasked to partner with provincial governors to improve governance, development and security. Overall, security in the north is better than in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan, largely because of its lower numbers of insurgents. Insurgent groups in the north are divided among Taliban, Haqqani Network, Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and United Tajik Opposition. While various remote and isolated pockets are under insurgent influence, strategically significant insurgent strongholds have not been established that would allow the insurgents to establish regional control.

Ethnic and insurgent dynamics. More than 6,750,000[3] Afghans, more than one quarter of the national population, live in the largely rural communities of RC-N.

The minor Pashtun presence in the north caused many to assume that the north would be less tolerant of the insurgency, yet recent observations show the insurgency drawing across several ethnic lines.[4] Ethnically mixed insurgent groups, especially within the Taliban,[5] are becoming increasingly common. Interviewed reintegrants are Hazara, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Turkmens and Uzbeks. Most insurgents are locals, with a few interspersed groups of foreigners.

Geographically, the insurgency is strongest in northern Baghlan, southern and northern Kunduz, northern Takhar, southwestern Faryab, southern Jawzjan and northwestern Sar-e Pul provinces. Insurgents easily capitalize on the security vacuum separating the vulnerable rural population from the small presence of government and Afghan National Security Forces, or ANSF, in the north. Insurgents locally undermine security through key-leader assassinations, roadside bombings and attacks against vulnerable rural communities or compounds.

Battles over key terrain between insurgent groups are often motivated by a desire to expand territorial control and reap the benefits of access to major transportation routes, key water sources, fertile farming areas and logistical centers. Of considerable value are revenue from informal taxation and extortion, easier smuggling access and influence over NATO supply routes.

Insurgent numbers. To bracket numbers of prospects for the reintegration program, the RC-N Reintegration Cell developed estimates of insurgents in each province during operational meetings with provincial and district governors, national-security directors (intelligence), chiefs of police and other provincial and district sources. In late summer 2010, during the program's inception, RC-N estimated that there were between 4,500 and 6,000 members of the insurgency in the north, and that, of these, most were facilitators or members of the auxiliary or underground who support the guerrilla activities of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 insurgent fighters. Though those were only estimates, the calculus for each province remained relatively consistent and served as the foundation for operational planning with governors. The RC-N reintegration calculus was roughly consistent with estimates suggested by other independent parties.[6,7,8]

RC-North understood that reintegration required the targeting of the entire insurgent network, including the support elements and facilitators. Targeting only gun-carrying fighters would leave behind viable human infrastructure and a support network that would quickly be able to empower new guerrilla recruits and continue the insurgency.

How reintegration works in the north

RC-North's support strategy. Kabul-level GIRoA issued orders related to the APRP's implementation and strategic framework,[9] defining the operating space for governors to build reintegration programs. RC-N's overarching strategy was twofold: to partner with provincial governors to assist them in destroying the insurgent promise of victory (in the minds of the members of the population as well as of the insurgents), and to provide insurgents a better alternative through resourced reintegration deals negotiated and brokered by Afghan provincial and district leaders.

Resourcing. A significant challenge facing provincial and district leaders immediately after APRP was launched was the absence of APRP resourcing by Kabul-level GIRoA. Immature financial policies prevented the flow of money from the RFM, leaving provincial governors unable to respond to reintegration opportunities.

The GIRoA asked the ISAF to assist provincial and district leaders until the problem could be resolved. The U.S. Department of Defense allocated $50 million as part of a new fund called the DoD Afghan Reintegration Program, or ARP, and encouraged the use of DoD funds from the Commanders Emergency Response Program, or CERP.

RC-N lines of effort. The APRP outlines three stages of reintegration: outreach and grievance resolution, demobilization and consolidation of peace, shown as a flow arrow in Figure 2. Implementation support from RC-N, depicted on the right as four lines of effort, were designed to help set the conditions for governors through lethal operations, exploitation of information operations, governance and development. Each province implemented reintegration slightly differently. While each line of effort is shown sequentially, the actual order may vary, and some lines of effort may not be involved in precipitating a particular reintegration event.

Afghan examples. To ensure that Afghan ownership was maintained, RC-N sought to maintain program momentum without taking over the program and without moving at a faster pace than the GIRoA could

sustain. In an attempt to keep the provincial governors informed of what "right" could look like. RC-N shared digital and hard-copy program documents from Kabul and examples of processes, programs or programs of instruction being used in neighboring provinces, thus reinforcing good leadership and the propagation of Afghan solutions.

Afghan reintegration centers. RC-N assisted provincial governors in establishing local centers for managing the APRP. The first Afghan reintegration centers, or ARCs, were established in the north, and, depending on the number reintegration prospects, there were as many as two ARCs per province. Governors selected buildings to accommodate peace-council meetings and administrative functions, reintegration shuras, demobilization training, women's annexes and some types of vocational training.

FIGURE 1: AFGHANISTAN AND RC-NORTH MAP Map of Afghanistan and neighboring nations, highlighting the nine provinces of Regional Command North, geographically the largest of the six ISAF regional commands and home to more than 25 percent of Afghanistan's largely rural population.

The ARC provided short-term living accommodations for reintegrants during their demobilization and vocational training when necessary. Depending on local conditions, separate buildings were sometimes established for the adult vocational-training center or the women's center.

Lethal and IO targeting. Success in RC-North demonstrated that persistent pressure from lethal operations and kill-capture missions that targeted insurgent leaders were highly effective in undermining insurgent confidence and establishing a strategic advantage. Interviews with candidates for reintegration revealed that missions to remove insurgent leaders significantly pressured successive leaders and their subordinate fighters to consider reintegration for fear of being next on the target list.

Military Information Support fliers and radio messages following raids exploited those fears and advertised the benefits of siding with the GIRoA through reintegration. Governors and peace councils resourced to deliver on reintegration deals brokered with former insurgents demonstrated to mid- and high-level commanders that reintegration was a viable alternative to continued alignment with the insurgency.

As mid-level insurgent leaders were removed through targeting and reintegration, one sign of damage to the insurgency from RC-North's twofold approach was that replacements for insurgent leaders were increasingly younger and less experienced. A number of insurgent leaders also left their provincial bases to reside outside Afghanistan's borders.

Outreach and grievance resolution

The first stage of APRP is outreach and grievance resolution. Kabul envisioned that this stage would be orchestrated bureaucratically by nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs; provincial and district leaders; and APRP officials from Kabul. The reality in the field differed from their vision.

Informal outreach. In the field, Afghans establish informal means of communication and negotiation quietly through trusted networks well before any involvement of the Kabul government or APRP agents. They accomplish informal outreach through traditional Afghan methods, both in relaying APRP information to the population and in passing information or queries to district and provincial GIRoA leaders from insurgents interested in reintegration or in resolving grievances.

The primary means of informal outreach is by cell phone or face-to-face transmission of program news, details about successful outcomes, information about reintegration eligibility, treatment or benefits reintegrants can expect procedures for beginning reintegration.

Informal grievance resolution. Conversations regarding insurgent grievances are negotiated informally, as well as "leaked," well prior to the reintegration event. Negotiations occur through Afghan networking, often by cell phone, initially using intermediary contacts and trusted government interlocutors. Trusted interlocutors have tribal or ethnic ties, as well as relationships with local elders and trusted officials of the district or provincial government who can negotiate with authority as decision-makers or who have ties to the decision-makers. Government officials frequently include, or are tied to, district or provincial governors; chiefs of the National Directorate of Security, or NDS; chiefs of police; members of the Afghan National Army, or ANA; and members of district or provincial APRP peace councils.

Terms of an agreement are discussed and finalized among contacts and government interlocutors before the insurgent comes forward publicly. Nobody comes in from the insurgency"cold": Before coming into a reintegration *shura* or event, insurgents first determine what

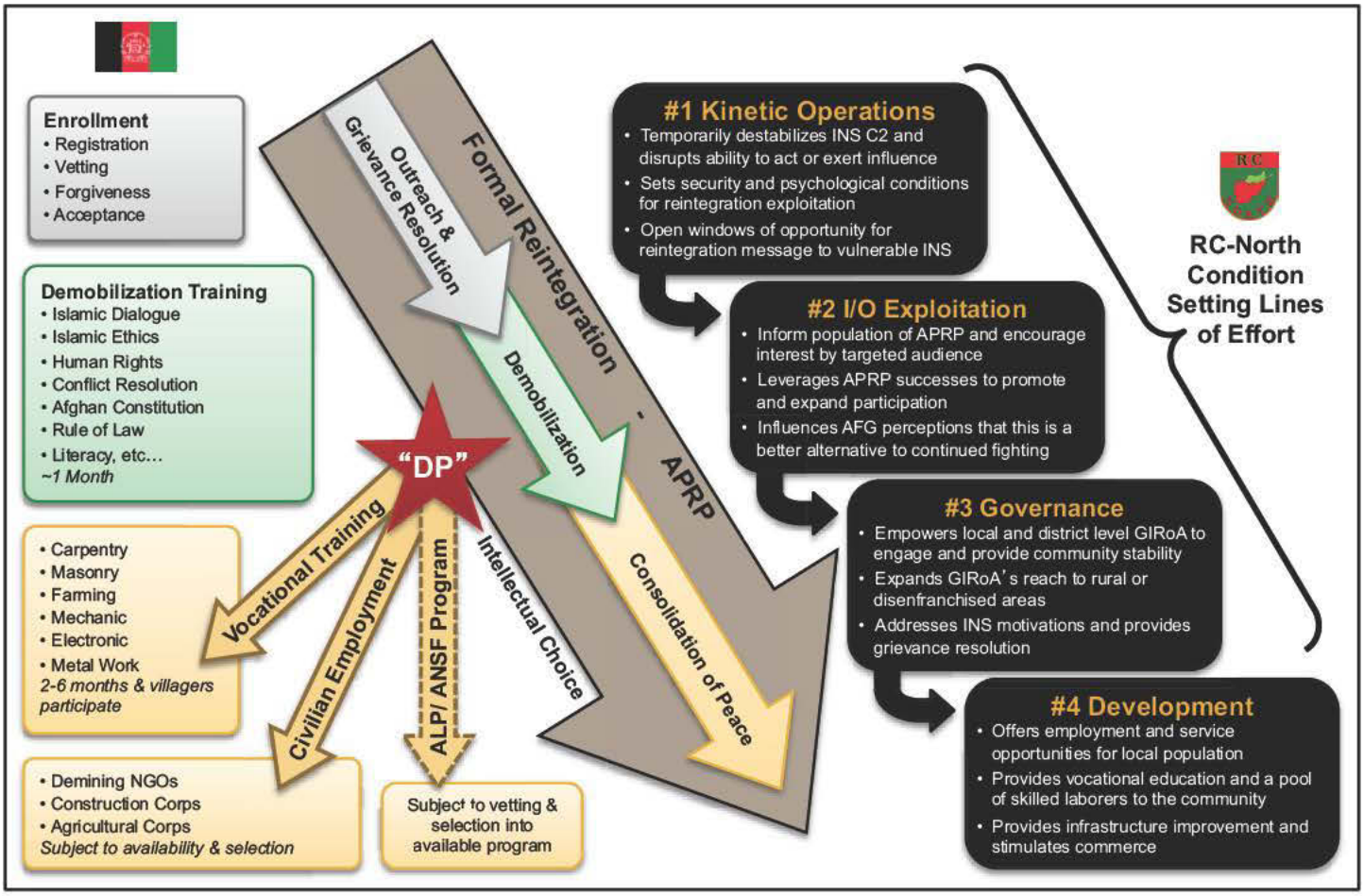

FIGURE 2: APRP PROCESS FLOW MODEL The three stages of GIRoA's Formal APRP Process: outreach and grievance resolution, demobilization and consolidation of peace, are shown as a flow arrow with various APRP programmatic components to the left. Nested to the right, RC-North's augmenting lines of effort were designed to help to set the conditions for reintegration through kinetic operations, I/O exploitation, governance and development. This process model depicts major elements, though naturally each province implemented them slightly differently, and while each line of effort is shown sequentially, the actual order may vary, and some lines of effort were not necessarily involved in precipitating each reintegration event.

the outcome of their reintegration will be. Once an agreement has been reached, it is publicly announced that a commander and various numbers of his insurgent group are reintegrating.

Insurgent motives. During discussions with provincial and district leaders, insurgents have revealed their motivations for fighting and reintegrating. Some cite as reasons for fighting the mere presence of foreign "invaders," land and water disputes and financial opportunity. Others cite grievances against Kabul, provincial or district governors, or corrupt local leaders or members of the police. Reasons for reintegration include fear of targeting, weariness with the insurgent cause, desire to join local defense forces working for ANSF, and interest in options advertised by the reintegration program as a better alternative to the insurgency.

Still, in other cases, whole communities that formerly sided with the insurgency have come forward after rejecting the draconian rule of insurgent groups. An already weary community in one province was galvanized to reintegrate after a pregnant woman in distress died on the road because insurgents refused to let her pass through a roadblock during a skirmish. The people of the community sided with the GIRoA, turning against the insurgency and opening a strategically important area that was previously denied to GIRoA.

Formal outreach. RC-N supported formal outreach and exploitation of information operations to help governors promote broad awareness of the APRP. Television spots, radio announcements and news reports of the peace process and reintegration events were broadcast across the provinces and in target areas with known insurgent populations to maximize the IO effect. APRP billboards with messages of peace were established at key locations. Reintegration flyers were produced and distributed by ANSF as "friendly night-letters." Standardized and governor-customized leaflets were produced with a governor's message and a GIRoA or ANSF "hot-line" that could be called for information or networking.

Demobilization

The second APRP stage, demobilization, manages an individual's transition from insurgent to reintegrants. As originally designed in the APRP, RC-N demobilization incorporated registration and biometrics, forgiveness and community acceptance, the reintegration shura with a peace and loyalty pledge, the provision of local security and demobilization training for subsequent reintegration to Afghan society.

Registration and biometrics. APRP registration required completing personal-data forms and biometrics collection to confirm an individual's identity and review and vet his past actions.

Candidates were required to complete several pages of personal data capturing information on their family background, role in the

insurgency, motives for fighting and reintegrating and weapons registration. They were legally allowed to register and retain a small firearm, but larger weapons were generally turned in. Candidates complete the data package by signing (or marking) a formal statement of their intention to reintegrate with the GIRoA.

Because the vast majority of reintegration candidates are illiterate, numerous translators and interpreters must be available during the enrollment process to counsel candidates and write down their responses to the surveys. Kabul fly-away teams deliver small numbers of trained staff to facilitate the reintegration process, but they are unable to deploy often enough or in large enough numbers to provide a viable solution. When enrollment events involve large numbers of candidates, the process can be slow and tiresome. Provinces will benefit from sharing their trained and literate reintegration staff to support larger reintegration events.

The personal-data surveys are reviewed at the local and national level. Provincial leaders, as well as intelligence and security staffs, must assess the package, agree that the men are credible reintegration candidates, and provide an endorsed list of the reintegration candidates names to Kabul-level GIRoA and the ISAF. Kabul-level GIRoA is supposed to check names against intelligence databases for completeness and to arbitrate issues, as needed. ISAF uses the lists to temporarily place targeting restrictions on credible reintegration candidates who are coordinating with the GIRoA to join the peace process.

Reintegration shura and pledge. Reintegration candidates take part in a reintegration shura attended by district or provincial GIRoA leaders, religious leaders, peace councils, the participating village or district elders, and the insurgent leaders and their men. In RC-N, the reintegration shura is generally viewed as a formality that publicly acknowledges decisions and agreements negotiated during outreach and grievance-resolution.

During the shura, the former insurgents offer public admission of wrongful deeds and ask that their victims, community and government grant forgiveness. Elders and governors usually make public admonishments for wrongful deeds, casting shame on insurgent actions and mullahs or religious leaders remind people that such actions are not Islamic, stressing that only forgiveness will bring peace. Finally, community members usually agree to forgiveness, and local GIRoA leaders (provincial, district and sometimes municipal) echo that forgiveness, thereby also granting GIRoA amnesty. The governor pronounces the former insurgents reintegrated, and welcomes them back into Afghan society as brothers. Money from the RFM is then approved by Kabul for the governors to support reintegrants and their communities.

It is significant that forgiveness, *afwa*, and amnesty from past deeds are not given lightly and are highlighted by the GIRoA as the primary incentive for reintegration. While many shuras were a formality (most insurgents would not agree to come without first determining whether they would be granted amnesty), there have been times when decisions required prolonged debate by the shura, while the candidate awaited his fate.

In one province, for example, the elders, governor and peace council debated whether they could forgive an insurgent for targeting and killing the adolescent son of a local NDS director. They ultimately granted forgiveness after a speech by the governor reminding the shura, "There can be no justice for what has happened over the past 30 years — but it is time to forgive to build peace."

Demobilization training. The APRP requires reintegrants to receive training in demobilization, or disengagement, in order to transition them toward nonviolent lawful practices and prepare their minds for the transition to a lawful and peaceful society.

In the north, reintegration accelerated before Kabul was able to provide guidance regarding the scope of demobilization training. Recognizing that as a required step, RC-N helped governors to design and resource their own demobilization training classes, based on early discussions of what Kabul considered to be important topics. The result was a month-long, generic program of demobilization training that provinces could tailor to local conditions and requirements.

Some governors shaped demobilization training as a means of immediately tying reintegrants to the local government — which is key to reintegration. Instead of hiring outside NGOs and contractors to provide the instruction, as suggested by Kabul, they had classes taught by local religious scholars, ANSF mullahs and local GIRoA governmental employees (teachers, police, lawyers, judges, doctors, etc.). As those instructors were already receiving Afghan government salaries, their work for APRP was provided at no cost to coalition sponsors or to the APRP program, underscoring the sincerity of the governors in seeking to make reintegration successful.

Governors quickly took ownership of the demobilization training. The original APRP design included provision of a GIRoA stipend for reintegrants to purchase food and other necessities for themselves and their families, but Kabul was initially unprepared to pay it. Using U.S. DoD ARP funds, RC-North matched the stipend model outlined in the APRP, providing the stipends to the governors, who then delivered them to the reintegrants in training.

Kabul agreed that those attending province-designed training would be given credit for completing demobilization training and indicated that it might actually adopt the demobilization training developed by the provincial governors in the north.

One important advantage of starting the demobilization training right away is that contracts for the third phase of APRP, vocational training and community-development projects, take considerable time to launch. Demobilization training is faster to launch and easier to fund, and the sequencing provides the lead-time needed to prepare for Phase-3 activities.

Provision of security. Rural areas outside of the GIRoA control have the highest density of insurgents and thus also present the greatest potential for reintegration. A security-based problem emerges, as APRP enrolls large numbers of reintegrants from rural, unsecured areas beyond the reach of the ANSF and the coalition, where they are easy targets for insurgent attempts to murder their families or burn their homes in retaliation for their participation in APRP.

Entire communities are sometimes vulnerable, and insurgents have attacked and killed members of communities that have accepted reintegrants. Threats and attacks discourage reintegration and compel reintegrants and their extended families to leave remote villages to seek APRP assistance, GIRoA security and lodging at provincial or district capitals. Displacement of that high number of reintegrants and families is not supportable within the APRP parameters.

To compound the problem, contractors recycled from previous failed reintegration programs (e.g., the UNDP's DIAG) who are now working for APRP continue to follow old policies of disarming reintegrants instead of simply registering legal weapons in accordance with APRP policy. Disarmament poses a significant risk to reinte-

FORGIVENESS Following the successful APRP reintegration shura in which the reintegrants (standing in the line) asked their community and the governor for forgiveness for their insurgent activities, Lt. Gen. Dauod Dauoud and the district governor distributed food and clothing from the delivery truckload to the new reintegrants to assist the men and their families. *Photo by Sarah Kopczynski*

grants' lives, and the confusion causes them to distrust the GIRoA.

In one province, for example, after reintegrants had been killed by insurgents, the governor, frustrated by former DIAG employees from Kabul requesting that he disarm another new group of reintegration candidates, told the candidates to return home without reintegrating. He advised them to retain all their weapons — legal personal weapons as well as the larger, typically unauthorized weapons — in order to defend their village against the insurgents who had already issued threats against the community. The governor told RC-N that because the insurgents use the larger weapons to threaten villagers, he would not take comparable weapons away from the villagers and send them home to be slaughtered for supporting the GIRoA's peace process.

The APRP originally envisioned that demobilization would also provide plans for protecting targeted reintegrants and communities in order to allow full implementation of APRP in rural areas. In RC-N, temporary accommodations are made for individuals and very small groups using safe houses of the NDS or ANP and other venues procured by governors, but those temporary solutions cannot sufficiently accommodate the increasing numbers of reintegrants. Existing local-security programs cannot expand to meet the increasing demand without large-scale decisions to expand funding and commit the required U.S. partnering manpower.

Expansion of local community security programs, such as the CFSOCC-A Afghan Local Police, or ALP, and the RC-N Community Based Security Solutions, or CBSS, is one option for addressing the problem. ALP and CBSS provide security at the district and rural-village level, where large numbers of former fighters reintegrate by hiring a local guard force of community members and reintegrants to protect the community, thereby allowing people to remain in their homes.

Consolidation of peace

The intent of the third and final APRP phase, consolidation of peace, is to provide skills training, employment options or development opportunities to insurgents and members of their community to facilitate the continued recovery from the after effects of war.

Original construct. As originally conceived, the APRP would establish national-scale works corps (e.g., Agricultural Corps, Construction Corps, etc.) to employ tens of thousands of people under programs centrally managed and funded through the GIRoA's ministries. Unfortunately, those work corps do not exist, and plans for them will not bear fruit for many years, if ever. Development cannot take place nationally until security conditions permit large-scale investment. Further, corruption within the GIRoA must be dealt with.

Start-up support. Recognizing the challenges of delivering the GIRoA APRP model, RC-N engaged with governors to help them find ways to offer skills training and smaller, community-based development projects. To manage expectations and avoid the continued perception of broken promises, RC-N emphasized to governors that they must make clear to reintegrants that APRP does not promise jobs.

RC-N agreed to use CERP and ARP to provide skills-training start-up capital and program funding for the first six months. Training classes lasted two to six months, depending on the skill set. RC-N provided funding for a monthly stipend to reintegrants and community members while they were in vocational training.

Governors also agreed to contribute "in kind" and leverage existing resources during the first six months, including GIRoA-owned adult-training centers, and to use their budgets to pay for meals for pupils in the training classes. In those cases, RC-N provided supplies for the classes, stipends to pay instructors and pay for other costs related to vocational training.

Designing training programs. Needing to build toward Afghan ownership and sustainability, governors agreed that they would design training and community-recovery programs.

Governors and their peace committees selected vocational training and apprenticeship classes based on community requirements, potential employment opportunities and the aptitude and desires of the reintegrants. Sometimes skills training and literacy training were available for women, as well.

Two training models. Governors in RC-North developed two vocational-training models: the nongovernmental organization, or NGO, model; and the apprenticeship/adult-education model. Most NGOs in Afghanistan are for-profit organizations that command large fees, rather than philanthropic, not-for-profit organizations. Under the NGO training model, the province hires an organization to deliver a training package to a specified number of pupils over a given period of time. The advantage of the NGO model is that it is

more efficient and makes it easier to contract with a training vendor. However, the money spent benefits the NGOs, not the community.

The apprenticeship/adult education model, on the other hand, hires local artisans and skilled tradesmen to train reintegrants through on-the-job training or in an informal classroom setting. The model provides money to the governor's community and provides the added benefit of improving local capacity-building. Many governors want to use the apprenticeship model to keep skills and money in their province and reinforce the benefits of reintegration among the reintegrants and other citizens in the province.

Post-training plans. In Afghanistan, it is a challenge to sustain the impact of vocational training by providing links to employment opportunities. Stressing that training has the most impact when it is tied to a revenue-generating opportunity, RC-North encouraged governors to mandate that all new development or industrial projects in the province (e.g., demining, mineral exploration, etc.) must hire a given percentage (e.g., 20-25 percent) of local reintegrants trained in the province.

Status of reintegration in northern Afghanistan

Slightly more than a year after the APRP program launched and RC-N began assisting the governors in designing and resourcing their programs, 1,840 former insurgents joined the reintegration program in nine provinces and were accepted by the provincial governors, although as of September 2011, only 1,191 of them had completed the formal, Kabul-mandated APRP registration requirements.

Not counted in those numbers are an additional 163 additional insurgents with whom the governors acknowledged they were still negotiating in September. If successful, the negotiations would bring the total number of former northern insurgents participating in the APRP peace process to more than 2,000, or nearly equal to the total number of reintegrants in all the other five regional commands during the same period.

As of mid-June, the provincial governors had identified seven recidivists from the program in the north — all from the same province. Four were arrested for their involvement in an attack on a U.N. compound, and three were arrested for murders committed during their criminal activities in an Afghan community.

Formal, informal, semiformal. The Kabul APRP office distinguishes three types of reintegrants: formal, informal and semiformal. Formal reintegrants complete all the paperwork, biometrics and vetting processes needed to be fully recognized by APRP in Kabul. In RC-North, of the 1,840 reintegrants accepted by the governors following negotiations, only 1,191 of them are formal. Informal reintegrants are former insurgents who cease insurgent activity and return to their communities without coordinating with the Afghan government, choosing to remain anonymous and seeking no benefits from APRP. Because they remain anonymous, informal reintegrants are not counted by APRP.

Semiformal reintegrants are publically endorsed in the provinces but lack legitimacy (and therefore program support) with the Kabul-level GIRoA. They have brokered reintegration deals with provincial and district leaders and peace councils and have made public reintegration pledges but have been unable — for a variety of reasons — to complete all biometric or paperwork requirements. Kabul developed numerous bureaucratic steps for completing the reintegration process but did not resource most provinces to fulfill the requirements until almost a year after APRP launched.

For most of that year, more than 1,000 men in the north were semiformal reintegrants, having publically pledged to support the GIRoA and, in some cases, fought alongside the Afghan police and Afghan army to defend the province against insurgent attacks. Eventually, Kabul began responding to northern governors' demands that the GIRoA resource the APRP administrative requirements. Northern governors slowly transitioned the large backlog of semiformal reintegrants to formal status, though many are still unregistered. Unfortunately, across Afghanistan, semiformal reintegrants still wait for many months, and in some regional commands, candidates are rumored to have given up and returned to the insurgency.

Impact

Although reintegration in the north is only a year old, the positive impact is already apparent, emphasizing that the promise reintegration holds as a key element of the security strategy. Early successes in the north built confidence in the program, leading to more success. Provincial police chiefs, NDS directors and senior ANSF leaders worked their networks and encouraged men to come forward. Increasing numbers of reintegrants in the north and evidence that promises were being kept encouraged other groups to join the process.

Out-administering the insurgency. Provincial and district leaders were able to broker deals and deliver on promises because of RC-North background resourcing. Governors and other provincial or district leaders demonstrated to the people that they were able to out-administer the insurgency. The insurgents responded by threatening and targeting those leaders. Throughout the year, insurgents routinely targeted government officials in Kunduz and other provinces who actively supported the peace process and delivered on promises.

Siding with GIRoA. Ideally, reintegration would be a post-conflict activity. Launching reintegration while Afghanistan is still in a state of active conflict has complicated the reintegration process. Many former insurgents are reintegrating in nonsecure areas, making the communities targets. Recognizing that, many reintegrants request to fight alongside the ANSF to secure their local areas.

Some reintegrants fight in GIRoA-led police and army operations against insurgents, and a good number of them have lost their lives on behalf of the GIRoA. While the end state of APRP is to transition reintegrants back to a peaceful society, in many places, peaceful and stable society does not exist.

Factors driving success in north

The reintegration program in the north has been successful for several reasons. A key success factor was the command emphasis of RC-North's American deputy commander and German commander. The deputy commander requested nightly desk-side reintegration briefs, and the commander requested weekly ones. Both leveraged their positions of command power to reinforce their nations' pledges to see reintegration succeed. By emphasizing reintegration during nearly every security briefing, key-leader engagement or staff meeting, both made their commitment to reintegration apparent to all subordinate commanders and members of the staff.

Building trust with leaders. Another key to success in RC-North was the establishment of strong relationships of trust with key Afghan decision-makers and leaders. RC-N established strong relationships with most governors, many district and municipal leaders and community leaders. Influential leaders in the Afghan National Police and NDS became allies and trusted supporters.

Members of RC-North met with those leaders at least weekly to plan, update and discuss issues related to APRP and security. Outside of meetings, they maintained close contact with leaders and their staff through frequent e-mail and phone contacts. RC-N became known as a reliable partner and asset. Because of the close relationships, leaders often sought RC-North's support in solving problems not related to reintegration. In helping them, RC-N suggested and steered, always insisting on Afghan solutions to Afghan problems — an imperfect Afghan solution is infinitely more desirable than a less-imperfect foreign solution.

Position of strength. In general, Afghan leaders respect those who deal firmly from a position of strength but also with honesty and compassion. In dealing with leaders, RC-North made clear that their relationship as partners required both parties to maintain goodwill and to deliver. RC-N and partnered Afghan leaders were equally accountable to agreements.

But when some Afghan leaders failed to uphold their agreed-to responsibility for reasons of corruption or lack of will, RC-North made clear it was also prepared to walk away. When poor leaders continually broke agreements or took actions that undermined APRP credibility, RC-North ceased working with them and requested that Kabul address them through higher-level, political engagement. RC-North instead refocused its support on other leaders who honored their deals, thereby building success around "toxic regions" to apply indirect pressure on poor leaders.

Too often, Western civilian-aid workers and military staff desperately want Afghan programs to work, and they make themselves subservient to Afghan leaders by doing the work for them when there is a lack of Afghan involvement, will or commitment. Reintegration will not be durable if Afghan will is not behind the effort. Furthermore, the U.S. government's position of strength is undermined when Americans let Afghans think that Americans care more about the success of reintegration and of Afghanistan than Afghans do.

Equally central to a position of strength is demonstrating that U.S. promises are kept; holding ourselves accountable allows RC-North to hold its partners accountable. RC-North worked hard to overcome an unfortunate history of unfulfilled agreements with one northern governor, and those efforts to re-establish trust paved the way for a strong reintegration program in that province. RC-North was careful never to commit to anything that could not be delivered — striving to under-promise and over-deliver in order to be known as a source that could always be trusted.

Permissive conditions. Undoubtedly, conditions in the north were more permissive for reintegration than in the south, southwest and east. Better security conditions in the north, vs. other RCs, contributed to earlier successful implementation of the APRP. While compelling reintegration opportunities existed in other RCs and a degree of success was possible, overall security conditions in those RCs may have precluded RC-wide implementation of the program.

Also notable is that the prevailing ethnic groups in the north set permissive conditions for reintegration. Often Tajiks, Uzbecks and Turkmens promoted education and progressive ideas, citing growth in Islamic countries such as Turkey as models. Reintegration was promoted by some of these more progressive leaders as a way to build stability between disenfranchised men and society. Their philosophy stood in contrast to the widespread, more feudal or myopic social philosophies held by dominant insurgent groups that confound progress in the south, southwest and east. RC-North remains convinced that reintegration has the potential to work in all RCs.

Future of reintegration

While conditions in RC-North supported early successes in reintegration, the problems encountered during implementation are harbingers of issues that will threaten APRP in other RCs. Excluding security challenges, the current significant threats to the durability of the APRP are primarily over-centralization of decision-making at the Kabul level and insufficient involvement of communities and districts, which thwarts a bottom-up approach.

Over-centralized decision-making. As originally planned, the APRP would assign decision-making power and resourcing to provincial and district leaders. Yet Kabul resists devolving power and decisions to provincial, district and community levels, even though it is clear that the government of Afghanistan lacks the ability to manage and deliver programs from Kabul. Kabul money — such as the RFM — is held indefinitely or not expeditiously released, causing significant program-stopping delays in stipends and support. Decisions made by provincial and district representatives of reintegration are reversed in Kabul, often without explanation, following long periods of bureaucratic silence. Unfortunately, history demonstrates that those same flaws caused past reintegration programs to fail in Afghanistan.

Insufficient involvement of communities and districts. Currently, communities and districts are largely under-represented in the reintegration process, especially with regard to decision-making. Originally, the APRP envisioned a bottom-up approach that would develop the connections between the reintegrating communities and the district and provincial leaders above them. Currently, there are no plans in Kabul for resourcing or empowering district leaders, peace committees or secretariats. Further more, Kabul has started reshaping policies to reduce the provincial role in APRP, rendering it to largely a symbolic and administrative capacity.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the interim successes of working with provincial, district and municipal leaders in Afghanistan's RC-North to assist them in reintegrating insurgents. Because of the GIRoA attempts to run the program from Kabul, sufficient support and resourcing did not flow to the provinces or districts. RC-North partnered with northern Afghan leaders to resource them to support nearly 2,000 insurgents seeking to reintegrate and cease the struggle against the legitimate Afghan government. RC-North demonstrated that power, resourcing and support delivered through and with Afghan leaders was key to setting conditions for the early success of reintegration.

Despite differing assessments of the durability of the reintegration program in Afghanistan, successful nationwide reconciliation with Afghan insurgent leaders and the reintegration of low-level fighters will occur only when the Afghan government can negotiate from a position of strength, partnering with Afghan leaders to reinforce their success. However, if the GIRoA appears weak, corrupt or insincere in the eyes of the Afghan people and the insurgents and continues to thwart bottom-up solutions, the early success of reintegration will not continue. ***SW***

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ON GUARD A reintegrant stands guard at a combat outpost in Baghlan, where he now works as a member of the Afghan Local Police program to protect his community from insurgent attacks. Reintegrants in Baghlan were among the first to join the ALP program in RC North. *Photo by ISAF Force Reintegration Cell*

Col. Christian M. Karsner *is attending senior service college at the National Defense University. He was formerly chief of RC-North's Reintegration and ALP Cell, serving during Operation Enduring Freedom. Prior to that assignment, he served at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School as chief of SF personnel proponency and as chief of the SF Doctrine Division. His other SF assignments include commander, 1st Battalion, 7th SF Group; S3, 1st SF Group; S3, 2nd Battalion, 1st SF Group; company commander, 2nd Battalion, 1st SF Group; staff officer, U.S. Army Special Operations Command; small-group instructor in the 1st Special Warfare Training Group; and detachment commander, assistant S3 and headquarters-service-company commander in the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group. He also served in the 82nd Airborne Division as a scout platoon leader and as executive officer of the long-range surveillance detachment. Before receiving his commission through Officer Candidate School, Karsner served more than eight years as an SF NCO.*

Dr. Sarah E. Kopczynski *served two years in Afghanistan as a Department of Army civilian assigned to ISAF, assisting the Afghan government to develop and implement the APRP. She started as the director of development and was one of the founding members of the ISAF headquarters Force Reintegration Cell in 2009, later serving as the reintegration operational adviser at the ISAF joint command, concluding her tour in 2011 as the deputy chief of the RC-North Reintegration and ALP Cell. Prior to that, as an Army civilian, she was the lead program officer for the metrics-assessment framework, Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments Afghanistan Case Study; principal investigator for a NASA earth-systems-science research fellowship; and project manager for various U.S. Army basic and applied-research initiatives.*

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ARSOF OFFICER EDUCATION AT FORT LEAVENWORTH

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL SCHMIDT AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL BRIAN PETIT

The United States Army's path of officer Professional Military Education, or PME, requires all majors to attend Intermediate Level Education, or ILE, between their 10th and 14th year of service. With few exceptions, majors in special-operations forces, or SOF, will attend resident ILE at one of the following locations: the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.; the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, Calif.; the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security at Fort Benning, Ga.; or sister-service ILE schools or foreign ILE equivalents. This article will discuss the expectations, curriculum and goals for SOF majors of the Fort Leavenworth ILE program.

Expectations

The Fort Leavenworth ILE experience for SOF students is demanding. Expect daily intellectual challenges, academic rigor, complex problem-solving exercises, impassioned peer-to-peer interactions and broad exposure to joint, interagency and multinational perspectives.

The faculty members intend to produce the field-grade officers that SOF Soldiers deserve: tactically proficient, professionally competent, intellectually grounded, organizationally skilled, ethically sound and readily able to exercise disciplined initiative in a battalion, group or joint SOF headquarters.

The stakes justify the rigor. Today's dynamic operating environment continues to test our field-grade officers, exposing those who are unprepared and challenging the majority who are exceptionally prepared.

Background

According to AR 600-3, *The Army Personnel Development System*, "ILE is the Army's formal education program for majors. It is a tailored, resident education program designed to prepare new field-grade officers for their next 10 years of service. It produces field-grade officers who have a warrior ethos and a joint, expeditionary mindset, who are grounded in warfighting doctrine, and who have the technical, tactical and leadership competencies to be successful at more senior levels in their respective branch or functional area. ILE consists of a common-core phase of operational instruction offered to all officers and a tailored education phase (qualification course) tied to the technical requirements of the officer's branch or functional area."

At Fort Leavenworth, ILE is conducted through an 11-month academic year. Classes start both in the summer (July) and in the winter (January). ILE is run seminar-style, with 16-person staff groups consisting of Army officers complemented with a mix of Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force officers, international officers and interagency representatives. This intentional composition ensures that every staff group has joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational contributors, combining an array of unique perspectives to enhance learning and understanding.

For special-operations officers, the Fort Leavenworth ILE program consists of three lines of education: SOF studies, U.S. Army ILE, and a student selected graduate-degree program. The leading option for graduate degree study for SOF students is the fully funded University of Kansas-Interagency Studies Program.

Line of Education #1: SOF Studies

All ARSOF (Special Forces, Military Information Support and Civil Affairs) officers who attend ILE complete a comprehensive special-operations curriculum that complements the Army Professional Military Education. SOF courses are instructed by resident, active-duty SOF faculty throughout the academic year. SOF studies are composed of the SOF Preparatory Course (P940), SOF studies (mid-year) and SOF electives (end-of-year).

SOF Preparatory Course (P940). The SOF Preparatory Course is focused on SOF leader development and education at the field-grade level, with emphasis on set-

ting the stage for academic success at the graduate level.

SOF students will arrive at Fort Leavenworth in early July, roughly three weeks prior to the start of ILE, for the 12-day SOF Preparatory Course. The course has four goals: (1) educate students on the full range of United States Special Operations Command capabilities in order to increase their knowledge of the strategic, operational and tactical application of SOF; (2) Mentor students through a complex, loosely structured unconventional-warfare planning exercise that introduces doctrinal design and planning methods; (3) Begin language refresher in their SWCS-trained language; (4) Prepare students with primers on graduate-level reading and writing to prepare them for the academic challenge of completing a master's-degree program.

SOF studies, mid-year. (S400/401). Throughout the academic year, SOF students will periodically be excused from the core Army curriculum to conduct SOF-specific classes with their peer group. These lessons include case studies in unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, village-stability operations, military information support operations and civil-military operations; theater special-operations command strategies and operations; the role of military liaison elements; the role of the CIA; the role of special-mission units; current operations and plans for Special Forces, Military Information Support, Civil Affairs, 75th Ranger Regiment and the Army Special Operations Aviation Regiment; SOF authorities and funding; SOF-general purpose forces interoperability; and student briefs on current and past special operations.

Mid-year SOF studies are also offered for any ILE officer, branch immaterial, who requires SOF-specific educational outcomes. Normally, this includes logisticians; intelligence officers; judge advocates, Air Force, Marine and Navy SOF officers; and others who will be serving in SOF units following ILE graduation.

SOF electives. In the final 10 weeks of ILE, students will enroll in electives based on their SOF branch and their desired area of study. The elective program offers multiple courses that produce additional skill identifier, or ASI, and unrestricted elective courses. Students can study languages based on projected post-graduation assignments. Electives are implemented in two five-week sessions. Each student will complete eight electives from the 192 elective courses available.

Specific SOF elective classes are required for SOF students to complete their SOF professional development. SOF elective classes include SOF Independent Studies (A570), Special Forces Company Command (A572), Advanced Civil Affairs (A574), Advanced Unconventional Warfare (A576), SOF Foreign Internal Defense (A577), Introduction to MIS and Civil Affairs (A578) and Advanced Psychological Influence Methods (A579/580).

The electives period has SOF students in small classes where they conduct analysis and focused study in classified and unclassified venues. SOF electives are taught by resident Special Forces, MIS and Civil Affairs faculty, augmented by guest instructors, guest speakers and video teleconferences. SOF electives occur at the end of the academic year, allowing students the time to become immersed in their professions and mentally prepare for their follow-on SOF assignments.

Line of Education #2: U.S. Army ILE

ILE at Fort Leavenworth provides graduates with broad exposure to the six intermediate-level college joint learning areas[1] in preparation for their Military Education Level 4, or MEL 4, and Joint Professional Military Education 1, or JPME 1, qualification.

The academic departments of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School conduct instruction in their areas of emphasis to enable ILE students to use military forces competently up to the operational level of war. In ILE, students become field-grade proficient in doctrine, concepts and terminology necessary for visualizing, describing and directing effective military operations. ILE contains instructional blocks from the departments of military history, leadership, tactics, logistics and resource operations and joint, interagency and multinational operations.

Key areas of study include strategy, operations, tactics, history, leadership and the human dimension, politics, logistics, force management and force generation. These key areas of study are provided through four major blocks: Common Core, the Advanced Operations Course, Electives Term 1 and Electives Term 2.

Common Core (3.5 months). Experiential learning underpins the ILE academic experience, with great emphasis on the application of knowledge. Approximately one-third of the ILE Common Core is devoted to practical exercises. Staff group discussions are centered on the professionally relevant experiences of Army, sister-service, international and interagency students.

There are five Common Core courses: Foundations (C100) seeks to make students more aware of the contemporary operational environment and of self.

Strategic Environment (C200) introduces students to the doctrinal and theoretical concepts required for perceiving, understanding and analyzing strategic military challenges.

Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational (JIIM) Capabilities (C300) focuses on strategic and operational joint-military-force capabilities, strategic and operational interagency and multinational considerations.

Joint Doctrine and Planning (C400) examines joint operational art and design.

Army Doctrine and Planning (C500) focuses on mission command, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, sustainment and information operations across the operational continuum. These lessons focus on the practical application of Army doctrine and decision-making using the Army's military decision-making process. Parallel blocks during Common Core include Managing Army Change (F100), Rise of the Western Way of War (H100) and Developing Organizations and Leaders (L100).

Advanced Operations Course (five months). The ILE Advanced Operations Course prepares graduates to serve as staff members and commanders with the ability to build and lead operational and tactical formations in full-spectrum operations within a joint interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, or JIIM environment. AOC is the ILE branch-credentialing course for all Army majors and has four primary blocks of instruction consisting of Campaign Planning (O100), Force Generation (O200), Major Combat Operations (O300) and Irregular Warfare/Stability Operations (O400). These

primary blocks of instruction are supported by four parallel blocks of instruction consisting of Military Innovation in Peace and War (H200), Roots of Today's Operational Environment (H300), Leadership Applied (L200) and Battle Command Technologies (B000).

Electives (2.5 months). The AOC concludes with the 10-week electives program described above in SOF electives.

Upon graduation from ILE, students are MEL 4- and JPME 1-qualified officers.

Line of Education #3: Master's Degree Program

University of Kansas – Interagency Studies Program. Select SOF students will earn a master's in global and international studies, with a concentration in interagency operations, from the University of Kansas Center for Global and International Studies. The KU-ISP curriculum is designed to immerse the SOF student in a broad, interagency-focused education. Students receive six credit hours for their ILE courses and take 27 hours of graduate classes with KU, for a total of 33 hours of graduate-level work. KU-ISP classes include Islamic law, public management, Central Intelligence Agency and the interagency, interagency studies and collaboration, negotiation and dispute resolution, approaches to international studies, globalization, cultural anthropology, and conflict and development.

The KU-ISP is an academically rigorous but highly rewarding interdisciplinary program. To date, there are 35 ARSOF KU-ISP graduates and 17 ARSOF students currently enrolled.

The KU master's program is funded by the JFK Special Warfare Center and School, or SWCS. Students apply through their branch-assignment officer and compete for selection. Once selected by the SWCS board, the students apply directly to the University of Kansas. A Graduate Record Examination score is not required.

The KU-ISP is conducted in conjunction with the Army ILE curriculum. In the fall and winter, students will take an evening KU-ISP course on Fort Leavenworth. In the spring, KU-ISP students are excused from the Army ILE electives curriculum and become full-time graduate students, attending class at the KU campus in Lawrence, Kan. KU-ISP students graduate in late July, approximately six weeks after Army ILE graduation. KU-ISP students will spend 13 months in all at Fort Leavenworth to complete ILE and their KU master's degree. KU-ISP students can expect to arrive at their follow-on duty stations in late July or early August.

For those students not enrolled in the KU-ISP, Fort Leavenworth ILE offers a variety of master's-degree options. The most popular programs are the master of military art and science degree from the Command and General Staff College, Kansas State security studies and adult education master's programs, Webster's master's of business administration and international studies program and the Central Michigan University master's-degree program.

Advanced Military Studies Program, or AMSP. For a second-year option, students can apply to the prestigious AMSP at the School for Advanced Military Studies, commonly referred to as "SAMS." AMSP is an intensive operational-art curriculum taught by a highly qualified military and civilian faculty, including battalion-command experienced ARSOF officers. AMSP focuses on military leadership at the operational level, conceptual and detailed planning, critical thinking and staff support to decision-making at the operational level. Historically, six to eight ARSOF students graduate SAMS every year. SAMS also accepts early nominations for ARSOF officers attending ILE and accepts field nominations for majors or lieutenant colonels who have completed their key and developmental assignments. Early application is recommended for ILE students so they can PCS to Fort Leavenworth for a two-year tour and withdraw from routine KD slating during their first summer.

ARSOF SAMS graduates are highly valued throughout the ARSOF community. A multitude of current and former group and battalion commanders are SAMS graduates, including the current commander of Special Operations Command-Central, Maj. Gen. Ken Tovo, and retired Col. Dave Maxwell, one of SOF's leading intellectuals and strategists.

SOF Multidisciplinary Approach Course

In 2012, select SOF students will participate in a pilot program that pairs special-operations-qualified officers with the University of Foreign Military and Culture Studies[2] Red Teaming Course. This intensive, 18-week course, taught from late January to early June, will focus on irregular-warfare environments germane to SOF. Red teaming is a structured, iterative process that provides commanders alternatives to plans, operations, concepts, organizations and capabilities from our partners' and adversaries' perspectives. The SOF Multidisciplinary Approach Course, or SMAC, combined with Army ILE, offers an 18-month time-on-station at Fort Leavenworth. Interested ARSOF officers, warrant officers and qualified NCOs should inquire through the SOF Leader Development and Education element for acceptance.

Special Forces warrant officers. SF warrant officers in the rank of CW3 or CW4 who have the right qualifications are periodically offered enrollment in both ILE, AMSP and SMAC. Those options offer unparalleled education opportunities for SF warrant officers, and they expose non-SOF ILE students and faculty to the unique perspectives of our highly experienced warrant officers.

SOF Ph.D. Program

Starting in the fall of 2012, the SWCS will commit qualified and selected officers to a University of Kansas Ph.D. program. Officers with a strong intellectual foundation, demonstrated academic record, a commitment to the regiment and proven operational performance will compete favorably for selection. Graduates will serve in nominative SOF positions at the institutional, operational and strategic levels.

Beyond education

ILE also offers requisite time to reflect, learn and grow as an individual, an officer and a family member. Fort Leavenworth is well-known for its campus-like environment, historic location, outstanding public schools, student amenities, kid-friendly atmosphere, hunting and fishing, proximity to Kansas City and high-quality family programs designed for young Army families. These intangibles are as important as the academic curriculum in resetting SOF officers and their families in mind, body and spirit for the tough assignments ahead.

Conclusion

At Fort Leavenworth, expect to complement training, self-development and experience with a graduate-level education. The

reward is a renewed personal synthesis of skills, experience, knowledge, judgment and character that prepares graduates for field-grade officer assignments.

Today's operating environment demands supremely *educated* leaders who direct our highly *trained* and uniquely *missioned* SOF. Toward that end, Fort Leavenworth ILE provides three lines of education: SOF studies, U.S. Army ILE and graduate-degree programs featuring the KU-ISP. These three lines of education complement the training, experience and self-development domains that combine to produce the world's finest special-operations leaders. **SW**

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Lt. Col. Paul Schmidt is a Civil Affairs officer and currently an instructor in the SOF Leader Development and Education Element at the Command and General Staff College. He has a master's in international relations from Troy University and is working toward a Ph.D. in education with an emphasis on international training and development. In addition to CONUS assignments in Civil Affairs, he has served three one-year tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn.

***Lt. Col. Brian Petit** is the director of Special Operations Forces Leader Development and Education at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Lt. Col. Petit has commanded SF units at the detachment, company and battalion level. He is a veteran of Operation Joint Forge (Bosnia), Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines and Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan.*

Notes

1. The six joint-learning areas are: (1) national military capabilities, command structure and strategic guidance; (2) joint doctrine and concepts; (3) joint and multinational forces at the operational level of war; (4) joint planning and execution processes; and (5) joint command and control; (6) joint operational leadership.
2. The University of Foreign and Military Cultural Studies website is http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/UFMCS/index.asp.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EDUCATION (ILE)
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

The SOF Student ILE Experience

ILE Core with Army & Joint Peers
194 hours of SOF specific classes
60 hours of language refresher
Diverse SOF peer-to-peer education
NSW, AFSOC, MARSOC students
Educate Army peers about SOF
Develop and rehearse tactical skills, operational art and strategic planning

SOF Course/Electives

P940: ARSOF Prep Course (pre-ILE)
S400/401: Intro/Advanced SOF
A570: SOF Independent Studies
A571: Introduction to SOF
A572: SF Company Command Course
A574: Advanced Civil Affairs
A576: Advanced UW
A577: SOF Foreign Internal Defense
A578: Intro to MISO and CA
A579/580: Advanced Influence I/II

University of Kansas Master's Degree Program

KU Interagency Studies Program
MA in Global & International Studies
100% SOF funded program
Initiated in '08; 35 graduates to date
Full time KU student for 4 months
13 month program (July to July)
Concurrent with ILE academic year
SOF sponsored PhD program (2012)

Other Master's Degree Options

School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMs) - 2nd year program
CGSC Master's of Military Arts and Science (MMAS)
Kansas State MA Program
Central Michigan University
Webster's
CGSC Scholar's Program

School of Advanced Military Studies

2nd year program at Fort Leavenworth, Ks.
Competitive screening process
Earn a Master's in Military Arts and Science
Intensive operational art course
SOF early selection option
Highly regarded program
Both a leader and planner course

CAREER NOTES

NCO

Civil Affairs Accepting Reclass Packets

Professionalizing Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, begins with recruitment and identifying Soldiers who possess ARSOF competencies and attributes. Effectively immediately, Career Management Field 38, Civil Affairs, will accept volunteer reclassification packets from specialists and corporals. Applicants must have completed the Warrior Leader Course before submitting their reclassification packet.

The additional-service obligation, or ASO, and service-remaining requirement, or SRR, for CMF 38 are now 36 months following completion of the respective qualification course. Previously, the ASO and SRR for the CMF were 24 months.

DA PAM 600-25, NCO Professional Development Guide

The chapters dealing with ARSOF in the current DA PAM 600-25, *Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Guide*, were generic in nature and did not provide constructive and critical developmental guidance to ARSOF Soldiers or future promotion-board members. Nor did DA PAM 600-25's professional-development models lay out the deliberate, continuous, sequential and progressive framework and process of leader development. Overall, DA PAM 600-25 did not support the Army leader-development strategy.

Approved revisions to DA PAM 600-25 for CMF 18, Special Forces; CMF 37, Military Information Support; and CMF 38, Civil Affairs, now articulate best-qualified vs. fully qualified characteristics for Soldiers, by grade and military occupational specialty. Language proficiency, pursuit of advanced civil schooling, professional military education and the importance of broadening assignments have received added emphasis. Beginning in fiscal year 2012, DA PAM 600-25 will serve as the proponents' guidance to promotion boards.

Revisions to DA PAM 600-25 and AR 600-8-19, *Enlisted Promotions and Reductions*, articulate desired characteristics in our ARSOF leaders as they progress through their careers, from recruitment to retirement, within the framework of a leader-development process that is deliberate, continuous, sequential and progressive.

AR 600-8-19, Enlisted Promotions and Reductions

Beginning in fiscal year 2012, the Army's leader-development strategy will implement the Semi-Centralized Promotion System. Changes will improve the Army's ability to select the best-qualified Soldiers for promotion and provide for execution in any operational environment, reduced personnel-service-support in the unit, and improved accuracy of data on personnel and training. For ARSOF, the revisions to AR 600-8-19 will standardize E5 to E6 promotions across the ARSOF primary military occupational specialties, or PMOSs.

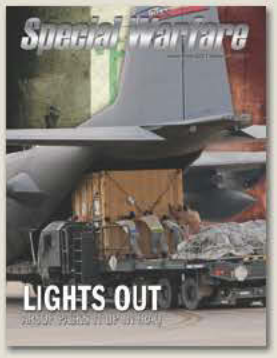
Sergeants who hold PMOSs in CMF 18, Special Forces, and are recommended for promotion with waiver may be boarded to staff sergeant after a minimum of 40 months time in service and four months time in grade, and they can be promoted to staff sergeant with a minimum of 42 months time in service and six months time in grade.

In the active-component Civil Affairs Specialist PMOS only, specialists and corporals who are otherwise qualified will be promoted to sergeant automatically upon completion of the Civil Affairs Qualification Course, or CAQC, without a promotion-board appearance. The effective date of their promotion to sergeant will be the earliest date they meet all the following requirements: graduate from the Warrior Leader Course, graduate from the CAQC and receive the award of MOS 38B. Sergeants holding the PMOS of CMF 38 may be boarded to staff sergeant after a minimum of 40 months time in service and six months time in grade, or at the commander's discretion. The revised criteria for a 38B E5 to be promoted to E6 are that the Soldier be a WLC graduate, be a CAQC graduate, have 42 months time in service and six months time in grade and be recommended by the board. Soldiers will automatically be added to the integrated promotion list once they have 60 months time in service, unless they are not recommended for promotion.

OFFICER

YG 2006, 2007 GrADSO officers should plan graduate program

Officers in year groups 2006 and 2007 who elected the option of graduate school for active-duty service obligation, or GrADSO, should contact their assignments officer soon to discuss the timing and location of the graduate program they wish to attend. The program, for which officers opt prior to their commissioning, obligates the Army to pay for graduate-school attendance after officers complete their company command and between their sixth and eleventh years of service. The advice of the assignment officer can be critical to officers in programming school attendance and forecasting the effect of its timing. The assignment officer can also be of assistance in identifying educational programs that best match officers' personal career goals. For more information about the GrADSO option program, visit the website: http://www.career-satisfaction.army.mil.



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Drop us a line and let us know what you think of SW. Better yet, submit an article, a book review or opinion piece. You can now comment on articles online!

SpecialWarfare@ahqb.soc.mil

ACTIVE DUTY

Third-quarter selection-board schedule

DATE	BOARD
03 April 2012	Senior Service College
23 April 2012	Chief Warrant Officer 3/4/5
04 June 2012	Active-Component Sergeant Major

Upcoming education boards

Start thinking about the upcoming education opportunities available to you! A MILPER message will be released in the February/March 2012 time frame announcing the upcoming education-selection board for the Interagency Studies Program, National Defense University and Naval Postgraduate School. The board will meet in July 2012 to consider officers, warrant officers and NCOs for classes in those programs that start in 2013.

SPECIAL FORCES 18F Intelligence Sergeant Eligibility Requirements

The security eligibility requirement is changing for Special Forces Intelligence Sergeant, military occupational specialty 18F. Current Special Forces Intelligence Sergeants Course, or SFISC, graduates with MOS 18F and a secret security clearance must upgrade their security clearance to top secret/secure compartmented SCI not later than October 2012. 18Fs who do not comply will be reclassified to their secondary CMF 18 MOS.

1. As of Oct. 1, the following are the new requirements to attend the SFISC:
   - Prerequisite Item Value(s) or Range Constraint PULHES 111221.
   - Must meet height-weight standard in accordance with AR 600-9.
   - Must be male.
   - Must be a U.S. citizen.
   - Have a course security clearance of TS-SCI (innterim TS is acceptable for class 001-FY12.
   - Pay grade E6 through E7.
   - Career Management Field 18.
   - Prerequisite courses.
2. Active-component or National Guard Special Forces personnel in the rank of E6 and E7 (NOFORN), who have a validated mission need or have been nominated by their chain of command are allowed to attend the SFISC.
3. Students with less than two years time on an SF A-detachment will not be allowed to attend the course.
4. All students attending the course must have a TS-SCI Clearance and provide a copy of their Joint Personnel Adjudication System, or JPAS, during in-processing. A student who has an interim security clearance must ensure that it has been entered into the JPAS system and can be viewed.
5. Students must report with an established and active AKO-S and JWICS (National Guard) account. Students without access to the SIPR or JWICS net will have the ability to set-up or re-activate their accounts once they report.
6. Waivers are no longer required for 18D (SF medical sergeants).
7. Students must pass the Army Physical Fitness Test during the course, in accordance with FM 21-20. Any student on profile is required to show a copy of the profile (temporary or permanent) during in-processing.
8. All students are required to bring their chain of command's contact information for in-processing.
9. All students are required to complete the online Information Assurance Training that will carry them through the duration of the course and must provide a copy of the completion certificate during in-processing.
10. For additional information, please refer to the following link: https://arsocportal.soc.mil/swcs/1swtg6bn/bco/default.aspx or contact the detachment OIC: (910) 908-2606; or detachment NCOIC/OPS: (910) 396-9719.

Balance Training Key to Reducing Injuries

BY DR. RANDALL LAZICKI

After a minor ankle sprain, your body's ability to maintain balance can be significantly affected. Along with an effective physical-fitness routine, one of the most efficient means of reducing injury risk and/or recovery from a minor ankle sprain is incorporating balance training.

How it works

Balance training improves tactile, visual and vestibular input from our body and allows us to react to changing environments efficiently. Tactile input is the information our body receives from specialized cells in our joints, muscles, tendons and skin. Visual input is the information received from our eyes, providing valuable information on the surrounding environment. Vestibular input is the information received from the inner ear that makes us aware of where our head is relative to our body and space.

How to perform

A simple exercise for improving balance involves standing on a single leg while modifying tactile, visual and vestibular inputs. The following are progressions for each component and can be performed by standing on a single leg for five sets of one-minute repetitions:

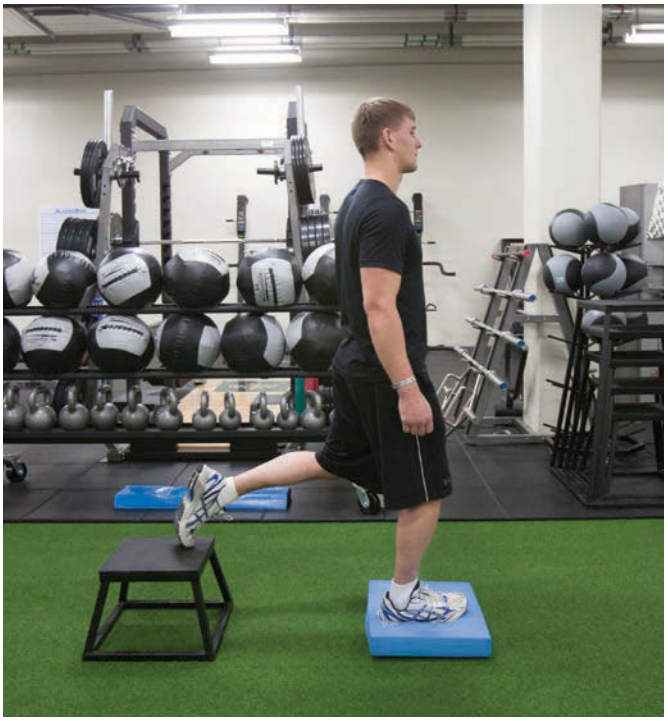
- **Tactile**
  Flat ground → Pillow or foam pad
- **Visual**
  Eyes open → Eyes closed
- **Vestibular**
  Head in fixed position → Head turns left/right or up/down

You can change one or multiple components of balance to make the exercise challenging. For instance, you can simply stand on a single leg on flat ground, with eyes open and head fixed straight ahead, or you can progress to standing on a single leg on a foam pad, with eyes closed while doing head turns left and right.

More advanced progressions include modifying the above components, along with performing strength-training exercises including squats, lunges, dead lifts, etc. For example, try performing a split squat with your front leg on a foam pad. Not challenging enough? Close your eyes (see photos).

It is important to progress to an exercise that is safe and challenges your balance; however, not one so challenging that you are unable to perform it successfully. Balance exercises can be performed daily and/or along with warm-up and movement preparation prior to beginning any physical activity. In addition, they can be added into weight-training programs to add an additional element of physical fitness.

Dr. Randall Lazicki *is the rehabilitation coordinator for the THOR3 program at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School.*



SPLIT SQUAT - START POSITION Stand with one foot flat on the ground or on a foam pad or pillow. Elevate the back leg to increase difficulty, or leave it on the ground. *Photo by Staff Sergeant Russell L. Klika*

SPLIT SQUAT - FINISH POSITION Lower into the squat position, maintaining balance on your front leg. To increase difficulty, add light resistance or perform with eyes closed. *Photo by Staff Sergeant Russell L. Klika*

MIS Soldiers to Benefit from Modernization Efforts

Military Information Support, or MIS, operators are more capable than ever because of modernization efforts stemming from operator feedback and lessons learned from the battlefield. Development and production of new systems take advantage of advances in information technology and satellite communications, allowing operators to more rapidly transmit data, execute MIS processes, print MIS products or broadcast MIS programs around the globe.

Mass media — including radio, television, telephone, Internet, cell phones and social media — continue to grow in influence in almost all parts of the world. Social sciences are also making major strides in understanding human behavior, especially in the context of today's information-rich and technologically-sophisticated environment. The MIS operator leverages advances in technology and social science to achieve greater influence with sophisticated programs and messages.

Those advances are affecting all areas of MIS — the development, fielding and sustainment of major systems of materials; the structure of MIS organization; institutional training and doctrine; unit training; unit standard-operating procedures; the way units deploy and communicate; and the facilities that house Soldiers, leaders and equipment.

Since late 2010, MIS operators have been receiving new equipment to replace legacy hardware, and fielding of new equipment across the MIS family of systems will continue into early 2013. The new equipment includes the following:

Next Generation Loudspeaker System, or NGLS (fielding began in 2011). *The NGLS Dismounted System, or NGLS-D*, is a man-portable loudspeaker that provides large-area and spot broadcast capability. NGLS-D can transmit in a variety of tactical environments and replaces the legacy Family of Loudspeakers.

The NGLS Mounted System, or NGLS-M, is the ground-vehicle and watercraft system of the NGLS family. NGLS-M consists of four modular speakers that provide greater broadcasting range from vehicle-based power sources.

Media Production Center Light, or MPC-L, and Media Production Center Medium, or MPC-M, (fielding in 2012). These systems provide the capability to acquire raw audio and video material as well as to develop, produce, distribute and archive broadcast-quality audio, visual and digital imagery MIS products in support of theater special-operations commanders. The MPC is a modular capability and can be tailored to the mission profile of the MIS team.

MISO Print Systems Medium Deployable, or MISOP-M (fielding in 2012). These systems replace the legacy Modular Print System. The MISOP-M printer will be a mobile system capable of producing 400,000 two-sided leaflets daily, using a four-color print process.

Product Distribution System Light, or PDS-L (fielded in 2010). PDS-L provides a pipeline for moving MIS products to every MIS dissemination asset. MIS products can be sent live or stored for transmission at a later, more cost-effective time. The PDS-L is interoperable with all other MIS assets related to product-development and dissemination.

HANDS-ON TRAINING MIS Soldiers take new-equipment training on the Fly Away Broadcast System Version 2. *U.S. Army photo*

Fly Away Broadcast System Version 2, or FABS V2 (fielded in 2011). FABS V2 is a modular and highly-deployable radio and television broadcasting system able to transmit on a wide range of frequencies and spectrums — including AM, FM, SW, VHF and UHF — and in digital and analog formats with software-defined radio technology.

For the future, MIS combat developers have taken the first steps in developing the concept of a MIS enterprise capability to be based at the Multimedia Operations Complex, or MOC, at Fort Bragg — reaching all MIS forces deployed worldwide. The MOC is the largest and most sophisticated MIS system, supporting a military fighting force that increasingly uses modern communications methods to engage today's and future target audiences. A major component of the MIS enterprise will be the automation of the seven-step MIS process. By integrating the seven-step methodology into an enterprise-wide process-management system and adding collaboration capabilities, MIS operators will have a powerful software tool for developing credible, timely and focused products. The system will also provide searchable archives to ensure that future MIS missions leverage and make use of previous products and lessons learned.

In summary, all MIS systems currently fielded or in development will feature greater levels of interoperability, through the enterprise-based approach — and provide greater nonlethal effects of the MIS operator on indigenous populations around the world. ***SW***

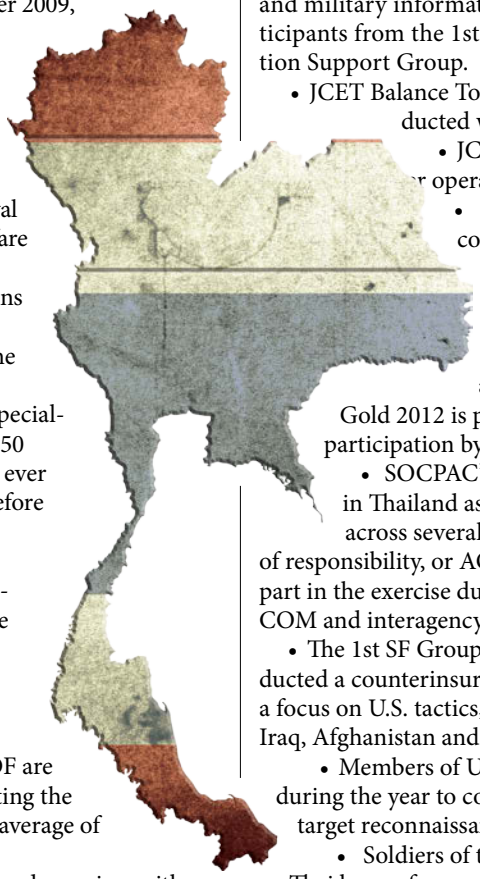
Written by Maj. August Muller, Maj. Sherri Fazzio and Samuel Foley.

The U.S.-Thailand ARSOF Relationship

BY MAJOR J. "LUMPY" LUMBACA

The kingdom of Thailand is a critical security-cooperation partner of the United States. Thailand is designated as a major non-NATO ally and has sent troops to fight and, in many cases, die alongside Americans in Korea, Vietnam and, most recently, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thailand has been a strong supporter of global efforts against violent extremist organizations. Hambali, the Indonesian mastermind of the 2002 Bali bombings that killed more than 200 people, was arrested in Thailand. In December 2009, Thailand seized a North Korean aircraft illegally trafficking 40 tons of heavy weapons of various types. It was the largest seizure in the history of the international arms embargo of North Korea. The Royal Thai Navy has recently provided forces for antipiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. The Royal Thai Army, or RTA, has its own Special Warfare Command, or SWCOM, which is the RTA's equivalent to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, and has been a key figure in several antipiracy operations over the years, as well.



The relationship between U.S. and Thai special-operations forces, or SOF, began more than 50 years ago and is now not only stronger than ever before but also more important than ever before because of the global threat.

U.S. Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, conduct 12 to 15 training events annually with the SWCOM. The events include joint and combined exchange training, or JCETs; subject-matter-expert exchanges, or SMEE; Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises; civil-military operations, or CMO; and military information-support operations. U.S. ARSOF are training, coordinating for training or transiting the kingdom of Thailand for military events an average of 10 months out of the year.

Several USASOC units conduct training and exercises with the RTA, including the 19th Special Forces Group, the Special Operations Aviation Command, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade and the 4th Military Information Support Group. Forces from the U.S. Special Operations Command, or USSOCOM, also come to Thailand throughout the year to train with the RTA, Royal Thai Navy, Royal Thai Marine Corps and Royal Thai Air Force.

The 1st Special Forces Group, however, is the U.S. SOF unit that conducts the majority of the annual training events in Thailand. The 1st SF Group also conducts counternarcotics training, or CNT, which is sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration and coordinated through the Joint Interagency Task Force-West, and executed with the Royal Thai Police, Royal Thai Maritime Police and Royal Thai Border Patrol Police.

The amount of SOF training that is conducted in Thailand each year is a testament to the importance that the commanders of the Special Operations Command-Pacific, or SOCPAC; the U.S. Pacific Command, or USPACOM; and USSOCOM place on security cooperation with Thailand. The following is a synopsis of the ARSOF training events executed during fiscal year 2011. The events take place in many locations throughout the country. Unless otherwise noted, the described training was conducted by the 1st SF Group:

- JCET Balance Torch 11-1 was an event focused on small-unit tactics, or SUT, with the RTA's 5th Special Forces Regiment.
- JCET Vector Balance Torch 11-1 was a counterterrorism exercise with the RTA's 3rd Special Forces Regiment.
- JCET Balance Torch 11-2 focused on close-quarters battle and military information support operations and included participants from the 1st SF Group and the 4th Military Information Support Group.
- JCET Balance Torch 11-3 was an SUT-focused event conducted with the RTA's 4th Special Forces Regiment.
- JCET Balance Torch 11-4 focused on helicopter operations and SUT.
- Soldiers from the 1st SF Group conducted three CMO projects in fiscal year 2011, including school renovations and medical civic-action programs in northern and central Thailand.
- JCS exercise Cobra Gold included a small SOF footprint in 2011, but Cobra Gold 2012 is projected to have a considerable increase in participation by Soldiers of the 1st SF Group.
- SOCPAC's contingency-focused JCS exercise, known in Thailand as "Cobra Gold Phase 2," occurs annually across several countries throughout the USPACOM area of responsibility, or AOR. All of SOCPAC's component units took part in the exercise during FY 2011, with several other USSOCOM and interagency organizations participating, as well.
- The 1st SF Group and key leaders from RTA SWCOM conducted a counterinsurgency/unconventional-warfare SMEE, with a focus on U.S. tactics, techniques and procedures, or TTPs, from Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines.
- Members of USSOCOM's forces came to Thailand twice during the year to conduct training events focused on close-target reconnaissance.
- Soldiers of the 1st SF Group conducted two CNTs with Thai law-enforcement agencies throughout the country.
- A U.S. military-information support team from Fort Bragg routinely trained with the RTA's PSYOP battalion.
- Combined U.S.-Thai airborne operations are a common sight across the country, and they occurred as part of many of the events listed above.

In addition to serving as a location for training, Thailand is a critical transiting and support hub for U.S. SOF exercises and training in south and southeast Asia. U.S. SOF personnel conducting events in other countries in the USPACOM AOR, whether transiting via commercial or military vessels, routinely route through the kingdom of Thailand in order to deploy and redeploy. During those transits, the Thai military, Thai police, Thai immigration and customs, Thai airport authorities and the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok support the passage of U.S. forces to and from their mission countries. It is also a common occurrence for U.S. SOF units to conduct airborne operations in Thailand in order to maintain airborne proficiency of the SOF personnel, to maintain aircrew proficiency for the U.S. Air Force personnel,

and to help build and maintain camaraderie with our Thai counterparts.

The U.S. also devotes considerable resources to the construction of training facilities through a variety of funding sources, including the Exercise-Related Construction Program. During the past 5 to 7 years, the U.S. has spent several million dollars developing facilities in Lop Buri, Thailand, which is the home of RTA SWCOM. Completed projects devoted to Thai and U.S. training there include a 600-meter known-distance sniper range and elevated shooting platform; a psychological-operations auditorium; a mock village for training in military operations on urban terrain, or MOUT; a MOUT-village expansion; a one-story facility for training in close-quarters battle, or CQB; a two-story CQB facility with an integrated sniper or rappelling tower; a demolitions breaching bay; a 100-meter flat range; and refurbishment of a 25-meter flat range.

Over the past 2 to 3 years, the U.S. and Thailand have also worked closely together in support of peacekeeping operations, or PKO, for which RTA SWCOM provides forces in concert with the rest of the Thai military and the U.N. The annual capstone PKO exercise in Thailand, named Araya Guardian, gives countries from throughout Southeast Asia a chance to exercise PKO at all levels of command and operations. With U.S. assistance, RTA SWCOM has supported PKO initiatives and currently has soldiers deployed to Sudan with the U.N. as part of a larger 800-man Thai peacekeeping force.

The U.S. also has robust programs of foreign-military sales, or FMS; foreign-military funding, or FMF; and international-military education and training, or IMET, with Thailand. Those programs benefit not only Thai ARSOF but also the entire Thai armed forces. FMF and FMS have supported equipment procurement for ARSOF-peculiar requirements, such as weapons and night-vision devices, all of which support U.S.-Thai interoperability.

RTA SWCOM personnel routinely attend courses at the Joint Special Operations University, the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies and at Fort Bragg's JFK Special Warfare Center and School, or SWCS. The Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group-Thailand, or JUSMAGTHAI, is attempting to expand its engagement with Thai SOF and other combat-arms branches across the Thai military, and in the coming years, funds from IMET and the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program will likely be used to send more Thai soldiers to the National Defense University, the Naval Postgraduate School and the Marshall Center for studies focused on counterterrorism and unconventional warfare. In addition, there will probably be more opportunities in the coming years for Thai soldiers to attend intelligence-focused schooling in the U.S. in the U.S. Army Intelligence School at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and the Defense Intelligence Agency at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, D.C.

CATCHIN' A RIDE U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers and Royal Thai Army Special Warfare Command soldiers conduct a counterterrorism assault from a helicopter onto a moving train in the vicinity of Saraburi, Thailand. *U.S. Army photo*

The U.S. and Thailand conduct numerous other security-cooperation events annually, many of them SOF-specific. Personnel from the Thai special-operations community attend the annual SOCPAC-sponsored Pacific Area Special Operations Conference, or PASOC, which has a different theme each year. Every three years, Thailand's SOF leaders travel to Tampa, Fla., to attend USSOCOM's International SOF Week conference to help foster cooperation on a global scale. In January 2011, the 1st Battalion, 1st SF Group, in Okinawa, sponsored soldiers from the RTA SWCOM's counterterrorism unit to spend a week on Okinawa conducting interoperability training. In May 2011, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Kristie A. Kenney conducted a tandem sky dive jump, her first airborne operation ever, with RTA special forces in Lop Buri. It was the first time that a foreign envoy had done such a thing with the Thai military, reinforcing the importance that the U.S. places on its relationship with its Thai ally.

Finally, Lieutenant General Podok Bunnag, the commanding general of RTA SWCOM, recently traveled to Fort Bragg to meet with the commanders of USASOC, the U.S. Army Special Forces Command, SWCS and the 4th Military Information Support Group.

Among other facets of international cooperation, the complex and dedicated U.S.-Thai ARSOF security-cooperation relationship contributes to the mutual support that the kingdom of Thailand and the U.S. provide in today's threat environment. U.S. ARSOF will continue to maintain a presence and partnership with the Thai military to strengthen our friendship and help prepare both countries for any contingencies that may arise.

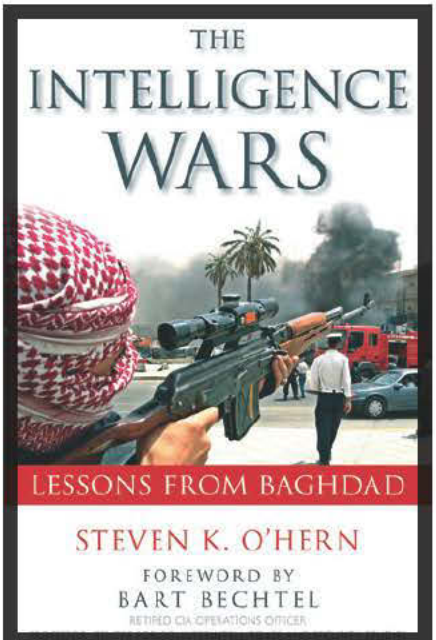
Author's note: U.S. military personnel who are planning to conduct training or transit the kingdom of Thailand should visit the JUSMAGTHAI website (www.jusmagthai.com) for information well in advance of the event. Once on the site, click on the "quick planning guide." **SW**

Major J. "Lumpy" Lumbaca *is the ground operations officer at the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group-Thailand. He is a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School's special-operations and low-intensity conflict program, has served on the SOCPAC staff, and has commanded at the SF-detachment and SF-company level with the 1st SF Group on Okinawa and at Fort Lewis, Wash.*

THE INTELIGENCE WARS: LESSONS FROM BAGHDAD

"Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

— Sir Winston Churchill



DETAILS

By Steven K. O'Hern
Amherst, N.Y.:
Prometheus Books, 2008.
ISBN: 978-1-59102-670-9
(hardcover). 277 pages. $30.

Reviewed by:
Master Sgt. Darrell Utt
USAJFKSWCS NCOA

Military operations against Iraq began at approximately 9:30 p.m. on March 19, 2003. Operation Iraqi Freedom started with "shock and awe," followed by the eruption of a full-fledged insurgency that "shocked" the United States.

Initial success with overwhelming military force, firepower and technological superiority ground to a sudden and abrupt halt as American forces found themselves fighting a stubborn and relentless insurgency. Unfortunately, the majority of American combat troops were sorely unprepared to deal with a complex insurgency. The military-intelligence community was better equipped to support large-scale ground warfare and identify conventional enemy formations — not insurgents.

Fast forward eight years, and American Soldiers are now preparing to leave Iraq. Thousands upon thousands have been critically wounded and more than 4,470 American Soldiers have paid the ultimate price. According to which expert you ask, the U.S. has spent in the high *billions* or low *trillions* for the war thus far. Many wonder what went wrong with the war in Iraq.

The Intelligence Wars: Lessons from Baghdad was written by Steven K. O'Hern, former director of the Strategic Counterintelligence Directorate of the Multi-National Force in Baghdad, Iraq. As the cover of *The Intelligence Wars* states, the book is "a critical indictment of our intelligence failures in Iraq and a compelling survey of modern war theory and human intelligence, or HUMINT, as a key tool."

The reason the military-intelligence system performed poorly in Iraq was simple — the military was ill-prepared and ill-equipped to fight an unconventional war. Prior to Afghanistan and Iraq, the focus was on the next "big war." That sentiment was echoed by former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Jack Keane, when he stated, "We put an Army on the battlefield that I had been a part of for 37 years. It didn't have any doctrine, nor was it educated and trained, to deal with an insurgency. … After the Vietnam War, we purged ourselves of everything that had to do with irregular warfare or insurgency, because it had to do with how we lost that war. In hindsight, that was a bad decision."

One of O'Hern's strongest chapters in *The Intelligence Wars* involves the colossal failure of America to realize the extent of Iranian involvement in Iraq. The intelligence supporting Iranian meddling and supplying of explosively formed projectiles was collected but not properly analyzed or acted upon until much later in the war.

O'Hern provides excellent information on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Jaysh al-Mahdi, Hezbollah, Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani, Badr Corps, the Provincial Joint Coordination Center (in Karbala), the Khazali brothers and Ali Musa Daqduq. Readers with Iraq experience, specifically in dealing with the Iranian threat, will recognize the significance of the capture and eventual interrogation of the Khazali brothers and Ali Musa Daqduq in 2007.

In addition to pointing out intelligence failures, O'Hern advises on ways to improve our civilian and military intelligence-collection apparatus. Among a few of his recommendations are:

- Recognize the value of HUMINT.
- Enlarge the HUMINT force.
- Embed analysts in HUMINT operations.

The Intelligence Wars critically examines the mistakes that the intelligence community made in Iraq, which ultimately extended the duration of the war and increased the death toll of our most treasured resource, the American Soldier. *The Intelligence Wars* is highly recommended, thought-provoking and a must-read for all with a passion for HUMINT. After reading *The Intelligence Wars*, one will realize that the weapon of choice in any counterinsurgency is HUMINT. **SW**

THE END IS JUST ANOTHER BEGINNING

BY KEVIN MAURER

The war in Iraq is over.

Afghanistan is on schedule to likely end — finished or not — in 2014, and pundits, politicians and policymakers are getting out their budget-cutting knives as the military heads toward its first years of "peace."

But none of this means much to the special-operations community.

Withdrawal only means more work, because Special Forces teams, along with their Civil Affairs and Military Information Support counterparts, will be in both Iraq and Afghanistan for years, if not decades. Ask a team from the 7th SF Group if they still go to Colombia. The Soldiers will be training and slowly building the stability necessary for those countries to not only defend themselves, but hopefully become an ally in a tough neighborhood.

With this new demand comes a renewed stress on the skills that make Special Forces special. Too often the untrained ear hears special operations or Special Forces and thinks "black clad commandos fast-roping under fire."

Yeah, Special Forces can, and do, do that.

But what sets Special Forces apart is their ability to create soldiers. If you've never seen an ODA take a common Afghan and turn him into a dedicated soldier with the ability to shoot, move and communicate in his unit, then you've never seen the magic of Special Forces.

Take Uganda, for example.

In October, President Obama sent 100 Special Forces Soldiers to central Africa to help train armies there to hunt down the Lord's Resistance Army, a terrorist group plaguing the region. LRA fighters have killed civilians and sent thousands fleeing for their homes.

The mission in Uganda is tailor-made for Special Forces.

Small teams.

A faraway land.

And a simple mission to train African troops to combat an insurgency.

Easy on paper, but the mission will take Herculean patience and skills in language and culture that no other force in the United States military has, except for the Green Berets.

When Special Forces were created in 1952, it was with an eye toward turning regular guys into soldiers and forming resistance groups. Look at the 1967 mission to capture of Che Guevara. The Bolivian soldiers who carried out the mission were trained by Special Forces. The commandos in Afghanistan and counterterrorism units in Iraq also have a long list of successful missions.

Luckily, the demands of Afghanistan and Iraq prompted military planners to plus-up the force, adding a fourth battalion to the groups. But the expansion did not come without a price. Teams are younger now. Soldiers who once would have been trained at the 82nd Airborne Division or other units are now starting their career on operational detachments. The younger force also grew up fighting in Afghanistan, where for some years, the focus was on direct action and counterterrorism.

DEFENSE Members of the Iraqi Emergency Response Brigade conduct weapons training under the supervision of U.S. Special Operations Forces. *Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Emmanuel Rios*

Killing bad guys.

In the coming years, the killing is going to be done by the students, not the teachers. Iraq is well on its way there. Afghanistan is headed that way. And in places like Uganda, success is going to mean making sure the locals can get the job done. And doing things "through and with" others is always painstakingly slow and often frustrating. But it has a lasting impact and can't be sent home after the rotation is over.

Special Forces had 10 good years of being the "bearded bastards," after running the Taliban out of Afghanistan in a little more than a month. But moving forward, it will be up to their students to do most of the fighting.

So if you are home now, rest up, and ignore all of this withdrawal talk. Your job hasn't changed.

In fact, it probably got a little harder. **SW**

Kevin Maurer *is an award-winning journalist who has covered special-operations forces for eight years. He has been embedded with U.S. Special Forces in Afghanistan six times and covered the invasion of Iraq. His book,* No Way Out, *a story of valor in the mountains of Afghanistan, is now avaliable for preorder. It is his fourth book on the war.*

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