

# USSOCOM Research Topics 2010



Joint Special Operations University  
357 Tully Street  
Alison Building  
Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

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

JSOU conducts research through its Strategic Studies Department where effort centers upon the USSOCOM mission and the commander's priorities.

**Mission.** Provide fully capable special operations forces to defend the United States and its interests. Plan and synchronize operations against terrorist networks.

**Priorities.**

- Deter, disrupt, and defeat terrorist threats.
- Develop and support our people and their families.
- Sustain and modernize the force.

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On the cover

Top left. Night training mission, two CV-22 Osprey aircraft, assigned to the 58th Special Operations Wing, at Kirtland AFB.

Top right. A U.S. Army Special Operations soldier scans for insurgents during an engagement in the Sangin District area, Helmand Province, Southern Afghanistan.

Bottom left. Marines from the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion discuss their imminent jump 2,500 feet above Camp Pendleton, California.

Bottom right. Naval Special Warfare combatant-craft crewmen operate a Rigid Inflatable Boat from a forward location.



*USSOCOM*  
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Comments about this publication are invited and should be forwarded to Director, Strategic Studies Department, Joint Special Operations University, 357 Tully Street, Alison Building, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544. Copies of this publication may be obtained by calling JSOU at 850-884-1569; FAX 850-884-3917.

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The Strategic Studies Department, JSOU is currently accepting written works relevant to special operations for potential publication. For more information please contact Mr. Jim Anderson, JSOU Director of Research, at 850-884-1569, DSN 579-1569, james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil. Thank you for your interest in the JSOU Press.

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# Foreword

The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) 2010 Research Topics list, produced by the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), is intended to guide research projects for Professional Military Education (PME) students, JSOU faculty, research fellows, and others writing about special operations during this academic year. Research is one of the cornerstones of JSOU's academic mission as we strive to produce publications to meet joint Special Operations Forces (SOF) operational and planning needs. Each year representatives from USSOCOM, the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs), SOF chairs from the war colleges, and JSOU senior fellows develop a list of salient issues confronting SOF in the near term. The list is vetted through the components and TSOCs to ensure that research will advance SOF missions and support SOF interests. The final recommendations for research topics are approved by the USSOCOM commander.

The topics list is organized into eight sections (A-H) with the first seven addressing the most pressing needs or issues facing SOF today. Section B focuses on research issues related to Combating Terrorist Networks (CbTNs) as this is the critical fight the United States and its allies are engaged in today. The following sections expand on issues crucial to understanding CbTNs: irregular warfare, the interagency process, and regional and cultural studies.

The interagency is often discussed today, but frequently misunderstood. The interagency is best understood as a community or process that links different elements of government. Two key locations where the interagency comes together are Washington, D.C. and at U.S. embassies in foreign countries. The overarching focus of interagency research is how to best ensure the interagency process meets requirements for successful prosecution of the ongoing irregular form of war. Irregular war engenders much debate, and its concepts are strongly linked to the interagency process. The third key element in the current conflict is the critical concept of cultural or regional studies. Defining the cultural, regional, or linguistic requirements for CbTN is itself a major challenge.

These critical topics, concepts, and processes reflect the challenges of winning the current conflicts and meeting the needs for the conflicts

most likely to face us in the foreseeable future. This alone speaks to the need for more debate, research, and study. Therefore, I encourage you to review the topics and to make use of the research tools found on the JSOU Education Gateway at <https://jsoupublic.socom.mil/gateway>. If you have any questions about this document, JSOU Press in general, or how JSOU can assist you in your academic research, contact Mr. James Anderson, JSOU Research Manager at (850) 884-1569 (DSN 579) or [james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil](mailto:james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil).

Kenneth H. Poole  
Director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department

# Preface

**T**his booklet represents an effort to list and categorize special operations-related research topics presented to professional military education (PME) students, JSOU part-time senior fellows, and other SOF researchers. The commander of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) places high emphasis on Special Operations Forces (SOF) students writing on timely, relevant, SOF-related topics. This list is simply a guide to stimulate ideas; topics may be narrowed, broadened, or otherwise modified as deemed necessary (e.g., to suit school writing requirements or individual experiences).

**Sections A through G** contain new topic categories with major ideas/concepts for 2010 from which topics can be derived, depending on the interest/experience of the researcher and the desired level of detail.

Section A (Priority Topics) identifies those topics of particular importance that the commander, USSOCOM has selected for special emphasis. Each of these seeks to expand SOF understanding of specific challenges and to suggest techniques and procedures to increase SOF efficiency in addressing them. The Priority Topics reflect a consensus of those participating in the topics project as being particularly useful in addressing immediate SOF needs and in building future capabilities. Topics focus on the following:

- a. Achieving greater understanding of the structure and functioning of terrorist networks through social networking tools and other initiatives
- b. Employing social marketing techniques and other best practices to address terrorist networks
- c. Developing assessment protocols to determine effectiveness of effort against those networks.

Other topics solicit fresh insights into combating terrorism through direct and indirect approaches; developing new intelligence architectures; countering radicalization by working through local indigenous persons; and exploring the role for SOF in political warfare, coercive diplomacy, and active security campaigns.

**Section H** is a list of topics retained from previous years.

Limited TDY funding will be available from JSOU for researchers (e.g., PME students) to support their projects (e.g., to conduct interviews or visit USSOCOM or component headquarters). These research “grants” are subject to approval by the director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department depending on the topic selected and the value added to the project.

For questions and clarification of a given topic or for requesting funding to support your research, contact the manager of JSOU Research, Mr. James D. Anderson, at [james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil](mailto:james.d.anderson@hurlburt.af.mil), DSN 579-1569 or (850) 884-1569. Share this reference with fellow researchers, thesis advisors, and other colleagues; and feel free to submit additional topics for inclusion in updated editions.

JSOU Press has released several publications that may relate to your topic of interest; see the complete list at <http://jsoupublic.socom.mil>.

# A. Priority Topics

## Topic Titles

- A1. What initiatives are necessary to improve SOF capabilities to understand local, global, and regional terrorist networks?
- A2. How to understand more precisely the employment of social networking tools and techniques in terrorist networks: A quantitative analysis of using new technologies for terrorism
- A3. Operationalizing combating terrorism: Direct and indirect approaches
- A4. Countering radicalization: How do we identify and recruit the appropriate indigenous persons and leverage them to improve SOF understanding and effectiveness at the local level?
- A5. Use of social marketing techniques to counter terrorist networks
- A6. How to build capabilities to conduct local, regional, and global assessments of counterterrorist network effectiveness
- A7. How to expand capabilities to identify, locate, target, and disrupt key components of terrorist networks
- A8. SOF contributions to a new intelligence architecture for counterterrorism
- A9. Phase 0, SOFt power: Role for SOF in political warfare, coercive diplomacy, and active security campaigns
- A10. Money as a weapon system: Are Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds being spent wisely?
- A11. Integrating General Purpose Forces (GPF) and SOF operations in IW
- A12. Building an IW force for the future
- A13. Retooling Special Forces for the 21st century counterterrorism effort
- A14. Role of gender in *hearts and minds* campaigns

## Topic Descriptions

### A1. **What initiatives are necessary to improve SOF capabilities to understand local, global, and regional terrorist networks?**

For SOF to be successful in defeating and deterring terrorist networks, we must first understand our operational environment, whether physical or virtual. To do this, we need the cognitive skill sets to provide SOF with local, global, and regional understandings of those environments. Historical context is essential for understanding current conditions and to avoid becoming trapped in the centuries-old role of under informed westerners confronting radical Islamic forces. What is a “network”? How do they find strength in their cultural surroundings? What outcomes against terrorist networks are truly possible and acceptable? This study examines current SOF capabilities to learn about and share awareness of terrorist network structures, strengths, and vulnerabilities. It then moves forward to propose steps to improve current capabilities while seeking initiatives to fill existing gaps.

### A2. **How to understand more precisely the employment of social networking tools and techniques in terrorist networks: A quantitative analysis of using new technologies for terrorism**

Virtual social networks have become an integral part of contemporary personal interaction. Blogs, instant messaging, My Space, Facebook, chat rooms, webcasts, and video games have contributed to the alteration of traditional communication methods. This project involves a quantitative analysis of the use of social networking tools to disseminate messages and techniques for attracting participation in terrorist activities. Previous work has focused on qualitative methods. It is important to know and understand how these new technologies are used to create social movements in support of terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda and Hezbollah. Virtual collaboration changes how organizations communicate and how they exercise command and control. With the advent of these new technologies and techniques, how can DoD best counter and/or exploit these technologies? Do SOF need to develop their own *virtual operators* to function in this environment? As western studies are typically employed to interpret Middle Eastern communication trends, this study seeks to employ cross cultural communication methods.

**A3. Operationalizing combating terrorism: Direct and indirect approaches**

Experience teaches that fighting and winning within the counterterrorism effort are separate, though complementary, endeavors. Fighting requires *direct* action to kill or capture terrorists and destroy their support networks. However, is reliance on such quick, decisive, and measurable missions reflective of a winning strategy? How does such a mindset hinder or help win a war when the ultimate effects of such operations may not be apparent for months or even years? Thus, is the reliance on Direct Action missions to attrit terrorists effective beyond force protection or the defense of strategic interests within the broader war on terror? Winning must ultimately be about *indirect* actions intended to eliminate the environment that enables terrorists to flourish and operate. Winning is also about eliminating sanctuaries, an effort inevitably requiring a mix of direct and indirect actions. This study proposes a “right mix” of direct and indirect actions to assure the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives. What is the correct force structure to win and win decisively? What does “operationalizing intelligence” mean to collectors, analysts, planners, and operators? How does the process of *operationalizing* look when successfully implemented?

**A4. Countering radicalization: How do we identify and recruit the appropriate indigenous persons and leverage them to improve SOF understanding and effectiveness at the local level?**

One of the lessons of the counterterrorism effort is that “radical” Islamic thought and practice represent a very complex and diverse mix of groups and agendas. However, by simply labeling terrorists and their networks as “Al Qaeda” or some other shorthand reference without a more detailed understanding of their nature runs the risk of missing important characteristics that are essential to the successful engagement of these networks. Such generalizations also tend to assign credit and prestige to Al Qaeda, even when the group and its proxies may have nothing to do with a specific situation. SOF need to become far more sophisticated in their understanding of Islam in general and in categorization of Islam’s radical elements. This study surveys the relevant Islamic groups, their belief structures, and their agendas. For example, what are the differences between an Iraqi Jaysh al-Mahdi follower who adheres to Wilayat al-Fiqh as a political philosophy and an Iranian who espouses similar beliefs? Once

the differences are identified and understood, what can be done to leverage them to achieve success in the counterterrorism effort? How do we counter radicalization by identifying, recruiting, and working with indigenous assets with special emphasis on parents and relatives?

**A5. Use of social marketing techniques to counter terrorist networks**

*Indirect action* relies heavily on shaping the environment and creating perceptions that are favorable to counterterrorism activities. This study addresses the question, Can the use of accepted communication and marketing techniques have applications for the development of Strategic Communication, Information Operations, and Psychological Operations plans? Review the range of relevant techniques and procedures from the fields of social marketing, strategic communication, public relations, and rhetoric and propose initiatives to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of counterterrorism influence campaigns.

**A6. How to build capabilities to conduct local, regional, and global assessments of counterterrorist network effectiveness**

Credible assessments of counterterrorist network effectiveness are essential to sustained and successful counterterrorism operations. This study explores the purpose of such assessments, USSOCOM's authorities to conduct assessments, the assumptions and components that drive the assumption process, and the complex interactions required with other combatant commands and the wider interagency to ensure the most complete assessment products. Assessments allow the joint force to determine the effects associated with counterterrorist network operations: the impact upon the terrorist network, the effect upon the targeted populace and other actors, the effect upon other elements within the operational environment, and the requirements for future joint force contributions to counterterrorist network operations. This study also includes an overview of planning assumptions to include the understanding of the terrorist network, emerging effects, and the changing conditions within the operational environment to determine the accuracy of understanding, effectiveness of operations, and the course corrections required for future operations.

**A7. How to expand capabilities to identify, locate, target, and disrupt key components of terrorist networks**

Central to any counterterrorism effort is the capability to engage the full spectrum of a terrorist network and to render the network unable or unwilling to continue to function. This study examines techniques by which parallel organizations can be established to compete with and neutralize components of existing terrorist networks. Engagement of such networks can be either led or enabled by the DoD functioning by, with, and through interagency, multinational, and/or nongovernmental partners. Activities may involve direct actions focused on specific nodes or links of interest; they may also employ indirect methods addressing some aspect of the operating environment and thus rendering ineffective the node or link of interest.

**A8. SOF contributions to a new intelligence architecture for counterterrorism**

In the late summer of 2008, the Defense Science Board (DSB) identified key security issues that, if not addressed, could lead to future military failure. One of these was a lack of deep penetration capabilities needed for developing actionable intelligence against individual terrorists and terrorist groups. More broadly, the DSB underscored the need for a new architecture that no longer focused on mainly fixed installations, but on people and activities “hiding in plain sight” and collection that would be “close-in, intrusive, and must achieve deep penetration.” The DSB pointed to SOF as one of the “enduring pockets of innovation, agility, and prudent risk-taking” within DoD. Using the DSB findings as a point of departure, this study will address specific steps that SOF can take to enhance new counterterrorism intelligence collection efforts in appropriate and feasible ways. Overview reading: *Defense Imperatives for the New Administration*, Defense Science Board, August 2008.

**A9. Phase 0, SOFt power: Role for SOF in political warfare, coercive diplomacy, and active security campaigns**

There is a need to assist the DoD and the interagency to understand and integrate Phase 0 operations into the preparation of the environment in support of irregular warfare (IW). This study explores the strategic utility of SOF to achieve U.S. policy objectives in nonwar and preventive-war scenarios. It is relevant to theater and SOF

strategists, campaign planners, the IW community, and the inter-agency. The discussion should include the achievement of strategic effects in periods of political warfare (e.g., secret warfare, ideological warfare, and flexible deterrent options)—also known as “Grey” SOF—during coercive diplomacy and as part of COCOM persistent and adaptive Phase 0 theater campaigns. The research should explore the ways and means SOF achieves high levels of strategic performance in pursuit of national political goals; identify the optimal cooperation and team arrangements among SOF, DoD, and the wider U.S. Government interagency to achieve both military and political objectives; identify the best war-prevention measures SOF can perform; and recommend any necessary changes to the current security assistance environment to develop strategically sound, long-term, adaptable campaign lines of operation.

**A10. Money as a weapon system: Are Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds being spent wisely?**

Dr. Eli Burman recently provided the director of J9 an information brief during which he raised the question, “Are CERP funds being spent in ways that are truly having a positive effect on the counterterrorism effort?” The basic assumption driving this question is that money can be employed as a *weapons system* as part of indirect operations in support of irregular-warfare strategies. This study researches the expenditure of CERP funds during the counterterrorism effort in various theaters and reaches conclusions about the effectiveness of the decisions taken. It further provides recommendations about how to best utilize CERP resources in the future based on lessons learned and the specific environments commanders may find themselves.

**A11. Integrating General Purpose Forces (GPF) and SOF operations in IW**

The integration of GPF and SOF operations in IW environments raises many familiar questions. This study identifies the most persistent of these and proposes answers that seek to formalize the relationship between the complementary efforts. What lines of authority delineate SOF and GPF-controlled portions of an area of operation? When is one component the supported and the other the supporting within a specific operation? What are the mechanisms for the deconfliction of GPF and SOF rules of engagement? What are the mechanisms for ensuring the resolution of other interoperability

issues that may arise? How does SOF gain equitable access to GPF-controlled sustainment and mission enablers such as transportation, communication, intelligence resources, and UAV support?

**A12. Building an IW force for the future**

Emerging thought contends that SOF may not be adequately prepared to interact with indigenous populations in the variety of operational environments in which the IW counterterrorism effort will be fought and won. Do such shortcomings exist? If so, how can SOF better prepare itself for its global missions by addressing these shortcomings through employment of proxies, irregulars, or surrogates? Propose procedures to identify those with particular aptitudes for cultural awareness, intercultural communication, and language proficiency. What indicators in secondary school curricula can assist in alerting recruiters to individuals with appropriate skill sets? Increasing numbers of school systems offer and sometimes require Spanish language proficiency. Are similar mandates available for Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Russian, and so on? What is cultural awareness? How should proficiency levels in cultural awareness be introduced and managed? Should training be focused on individual soldiers, units, or force-wide capabilities? How should cultural awareness training be tailored for different Military Occupational Specialties (MOSS), duty positions, and grades? Is cultural awareness sufficient for SOF to meet mission requirements? Should standards for specific cross-cultural capabilities be introduced to expand individual and unit SOF proficiencies across multiple geographical areas?

**A13. Retooling Special Forces for the 21st century counterterrorism effort**

This research topic focuses on U.S. Army Special Forces and potential changes in how they operate to address the counterterrorism effort and related threats. How practical is it to have U.S. Army Special Forces prepare themselves primarily for unconventional warfare and FID missions while retaining the capabilities for support of remaining core SOF missions? With a narrower lane to travel, how can the training of language and cultural skills be upgraded to address the specific requirements of unconventional warfare and FID? What initiatives are available to establish and sustain stronger and more credible relationships with host-nation personnel? Is there utility in forward deploying Special Forces units to draw on

improved infrastructures and opportunities for immersion in local and regional cultures? Consider historical examples and outline potential benefits and drawbacks to these approaches. Shifting to the future, how might such initiatives better prepare Special Forces units to identify, understand, prepare for, and confront emerging threats? Conduct assessments of the ODAs, ODBs, and Groups with an eye toward suggesting changes in their structures and skill sets. Is a 12-man ODA too large, too small or just right? Are its skill sets in need of a fresh assessment? Might the communication sergeant become the “Computer Surveillance/Attack Sergeant”? Is the Special Forces education and training system outdated? Are we getting the maximum benefit from the “brainpower” of ODA members? What specific steps are necessary to field the most efficient and effective Special Forces capability for the future?

**A14. Role of gender in *hearts and minds* campaigns**

Women play major motivational roles and assert considerable influence in Muslim and other cultures. The challenge is that the specifics of those roles and influence are frequently unclear to outsiders, especially to SOF. Evidence indicates that in some Muslim communities, women act as hard-core motivators behind male jihadist activities, including suicide bombings. By contrast, women can also serve as powerful motivators to counter radicalization. This study surveys the roles that women play in specific regions of interest (i.e., Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa). How do women influence activities within their families and wider communities? How do women interact with their immediate social environments? What values do they bring to those interactions? How can a better understanding of the role of women in a given region result in more effective engagement by SOF or the U.S. Government interagency? How can all-male SOF engage local populations in ways that are both appropriate and credible? What are some current initiatives for engaging women? What new engagement techniques should be added? What specific engagement techniques should be avoided? Is there an opportunity to employ women in Civil Affairs and PSYOP units to build bridges to indigenous female populations? How might the increased attention to gender issues lead to greater sensitivity to ethnicity, religion, and other socioeconomic variables?

## B. Combating Terrorist Networks

### Topic Titles

- B1. What capabilities can and should be developed to provide support to the interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental counterterrorist network?
- B2. Turning the *hot war cold*: Suggestions for the increased emphasis on the indirect lines of operation to combat terrorist networks
- B3. Engaging the constructive, credible Muslim Ummah to counter violent extremist ideology
- B4. Capability to synchronize DoD/DoS networks to counter terrorist networks
- B5. Capability to share information with interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental partners in local, regional, and global counterterrorist networks
- B6. What makes an extremist: The world's disaffected youth and their potential for extremist activity
- B7. How can Islamic religious tenets be employed to counter terrorist activities and slow the recruitment of new extremists?
- B8. The Rules of War and Combating Terrorist Networks (CbTNs)
- B9. Know your enemy

### Topic Descriptions

- B1. What capabilities can and should be developed to provide support to the interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental counterterrorist network?**

Joint Forces possess a variety of direct and indirect services, products, and resources to enable counterterrorist network disruption operations as well as programs to encourage local development, governance, and security. This study identifies possible Joint Force contributions that are both appropriate and acceptable to partners in the interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental counterterrorist network. The resulting program may include training, security assistance, education, command and control, logistics, ISR, funding,

support to civil authority, information operations, and direct action missions.

**B2. Turning the *hot war cold*: Suggestions for the increased emphasis on the indirect lines of operation to combat terrorist networks**

It is commonly accepted that *indirect action* and *lines of operation* are central to the efforts to defeat terrorists and their networks. Even so, it would appear that direct action missions are the preferred choice. This study surveys historical examples, lessons learned, and best practices to provide a comprehensive overview of the strategic, long-term nature of the indirect process. Examples such as the Marshall Plan and case studies from the Cold War serve as support for indirect thinking. What do SOF operators and leaders need to relearn about indirect planning and operations? Suggestions to improve the quality of indirect efforts should focus on preparing the irregular-warfare operational environment through the use of information operations, population influence, strategic communication, and civil-military operations.

**B3. Engaging the constructive, credible Muslim Ummah to counter violent extremist ideology**

This topic continues to be one of growing interest among members of the Intelligence community who are seeking strategies for countering radicalization or changing the attitudes of those who are already extremists. Focusing primarily on Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Pakistan, and Europe, what can the U.S. government do to reduce information barriers among 10–40 year-old Muslims? Which U.S. policies should be either increased or reduced to enhance positive engagement of the constructive Muslim Ummah organization? Also, how does the U.S. support or encourage credible Muslim voices without discrediting them through our endorsement or support? Identify avenues and methodologies to positively engage the constructive Muslim Ummah to counter violent extremist ideology. Further, look to other nations such as India (home to more Muslims than Pakistan), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nigeria, Senegal, and Mali as venues for similar initiatives. For instance, are the techniques that are appropriate in Egypt also appropriate in Indonesia or elsewhere?

**B4. Capability to synchronize DoD/DoS networks to counter terrorist networks**

The complexities of terrorist networks require the establishment and synchronization of counterterrorism networks that field the necessary capabilities from the DoD, DoS, and throughout the wider U.S. Government interagency. Such arrangements remain elusive as stovepipe relationships and legislation prohibiting collaboration among various agencies limit network functioning. This study looks at how terrorist groups form their social networks and in what areas of interest they operate. As we consider the emerging concept of “communities of interest” built around social networking, is *network* the best way to conceptualize both terrorist and counterterrorist structures? What specific steps are necessary to synchronize DoD/DoS counterterrorist structures so they more efficiently bridge organizational boundaries? How do we construct counterterrorist structures that mirror those of our adversaries? How do we ensure that the emerging counterterrorism structures reach down to the operational level and are not blocked by the temptation to over-classify the flow of essential information?

**B5. Capability to share information with interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental partners in local, regional, and global counterterrorist networks**

One of the challenges of establishing and sustaining counterterrorist networks is the need to remember that “all terrorism is local.” Thus the requirement to work from the bottom up in many cases becomes more important than adherence to classic hierarchy structures. This study seeks to maximize the effectiveness of information sharing throughout counterterrorist networks. How best can we create a Common Operating Picture that is understood by and trusted by DoD and its appropriate interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental partners? How can the information-sharing capability be exploited to ensure dissemination of useful information that establishes a common basis for counterterrorist network decisions? Information sharing is currently uneven. During steady state conditions, it is inadequate in granting access to shared plans, lessons learned, information exchanges among agencies, and technology integration. In times of crisis response, information and relevant data are shared, but it does not occur on a regular or recurring basis. How can information sharing and harmonization of plans be

improved to provide visibility and prepare a diverse set of stakeholders with the most useful information at the right time? How do we maximize intelligence and information capabilities, incorporate and exploit those capabilities, and determine what information may be shared among interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental partners and surrogates? How do we provide information that addresses the operational environment, the dynamics of the targeted populates, and vulnerable adversary nodes and links?

**B6. What makes an extremist: The world's disaffected youth and their potential for extremist activity**

The lack of opportunity for jobs and upward social mobility has much to do with creating a disenfranchised population. Many see terrorism as the last chance to change their personal and family positions in life. To what extent do such motivations reflect after-the-fact rationalizations to justify actions already taken? Research equally compelling motivations for violence—for example, turf battles, revenge, issues of personal and family honor, desire for status, peer pressure, and boredom. Personal interviews with young men and women who are at risk of being radicalized or are undergoing the process will add certainty about motives. Once those motivations are identified, what can be done to turn those who are vulnerable into neutral, even productive, individuals? How can broader understandings about youthful motivation undermine terrorist networks by limiting the source pool of new extremists rather than expending resources to disrupt the demand for their services?

**B7. How can Islamic religious tenets be employed to counter terrorist activities and slow the recruitment of new extremists?**

Islamic extremists justify their behavior by invoking religious principles and elements of faith. This study turns the tables by challenging these claims and suggesting alternative Islamic interpretations that discredit terrorist behavior. Survey re-education programs such as in Singapore and other countries that use religious teachers to meet with captured extremists or terrorists to challenge their interpretation of Islamic teachings, discredit their justifications for violent conduct, and reframe Islamic teachings as condemning violent acts rather than endorsing them. Instead of relying on imprecise terminology and labels, what Islamic words and verses exist that reject the violence committed and “justified” by religion? For instance, the often-used terms such as *jihadist* and *mujahedeen*

are, in fact, positive terms that bolster the prestige and morale of the Islamic extremist. What Islamic words convey negative judgment on a *terrorist* or *evil doer*? How can we carefully use Islamic beliefs against the extremists? What is the true meaning of *fatwas* and their role in Islamic culture? Propose approaches that originate with credible Islamic voices, not with nonIslamic, noncleric, nonreligious scholars. What primary source secular materials exist that highlight the hypocrisy and internal contradictions contained in the writings and actions of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Pointing out that such groups are opportunistic as much as they are ideological or religious can serve as an effective way to undermine their propaganda and presumed righteousness.

**B8. The Rules of War and Combating Terrorist Networks (CbTNs)**

The counterterrorism effort has revealed various gaps in international security systems that lead to reassessment and modification. This study considers the impacts of the Rules of War on the complexities of combating terrorism and terrorist networks, threats that have grown in their importance since the establishment of relevant international legal protocols. Does international law and the Geneva/Hague Conventions hamper military operations to defeat a threat that does not accept or follow the same rules? What are some relevant historical examples? How do the Rules of War affect CbTN policies and strategy? To what degree has or can the articles of the Rules of War be modified or replaced to accommodate current and future operational environments where terrorists and their tactics are a persistent presence? How can modifications to the Rules of War be crafted to avoid long-term detrimental effects to U.S. CbTN activities? What role does the public's immediate access to information and criticism from the news media force our commanders to fight a politically correct war? What is the correct balance for allowing operational latitude for tactical decisions while ensuring adequate checks are in place to avoid abuses? How can request authorities be crafted to ensure timely guidance in the face of uncertainty over what is appropriate behavior? Because of the increasing role of contractors, what responsibilities do they have to follow the Rules of War? What sanctions are available to ensure contractor compliance?

**B9. Know your enemy**

Analyze several terrorist and nonstate threat leaders, specifically focusing on their creative and innovative aspects. Examine the

decision-making process, adaptability, and contingency planning of threat leaders and their organizations. Determine the feasibility of U.S. and allied SOF commanders/leaders adopting any/some of these traits to exploit threat weaknesses and enhance mission accomplishment in their own units.

## C. Irregular Warfare Strategy and Operations

### Topic Titles

- C1. What are the appropriate metrics for DoD to assess irregular warfare (IW) operations?
- C2. Hearts and minds: Human influence operations in IW
- C3. Refining the indirect approach, irregular warfare strategy and operations
- C4. Influence operations within IW
- C5. Can SOF effectively accomplish its mission in a high end asymmetric threat environment and at what cost?

### Topic Descriptions

- C1. What are the appropriate metrics for DoD to assess irregular warfare (IW) operations?**

The measurement of success in IW operations is extremely difficult because of the absence of “cookie-cutter” solutions to address any given situation and the need to develop specific metrics on a case-by-case basis. This study tackles the challenge of determining how IW operations can be viewed as effects-based when existing measurements of success are so rudimentary. Active engagement with academia and the application of assessment and analysis tools already used by social scientists can greatly assist in IW evaluation efforts. Contrast the need for an “inside out” assessment model that considers people, adversaries, and environmental perspectives with the traditional U.S. “outside in” approach. How do we arrive at data baselines against which to measure effectiveness? How do we measure the impact of IW activities (beyond killing the terrorists) in achieving geographic combatant command, DoD, and national strategic goals? What is the measurement of effect(s) for foreign internal defense (FID) in terms of partner preparedness vs. SOF relationship building? What are the lines of operation for other SOF activities, and how can those measurements be captured? How do we define success, and how do we measure it? How do we measure

*good enough?* How do we assess when no action is better than action that, though successful, may result in huge strategic costs? What are the time horizons across which we should measure?

## **C2. Hearts and minds: Human influence operations in IW**

At the core of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and the indirect approach lies the concept of *hearts and minds*. SOF is deeply engaged in both counterinsurgency (COIN) and the indirect approach; therefore, the winning of the hearts and minds of indigenous peoples is central to their missions. Despite the significance of hearts and minds to SOF, the concept is often treated as a buzzword—a phrase that is taken at face value with little analysis, historical grounding, or precise understanding of what it entails. Its application also differs in recent history and in different theaters. This study looks at the concept of *hearts and minds* from a fresh perspective with the goal of deepening understanding of the concept and its relevance to the struggle against terrorism. Is winning the compliance and cooperation of the population a more relevant understanding of the task? After all, populations need to see good reasons to support government efforts, though not necessarily to like their government. Has the emphasis on kinetic operations produced negative consequences for hearts-and-minds efforts because of friendly fire/collateral damage incidents or because SOF are seen as supporting an unpopular government? How do we address religion (hearts and souls) as a component of the hearts-and-minds challenge? This research should capture the techniques and best practices as we know them from IW experiences. Are we changing minds/opinions, or are we simply seeking common ground where interests match? What steps do we need to take to at least keep the population neutral? Are hearts-and-minds efforts a method or line of operation rather than an objective?

## **C3. Refining the indirect approach, irregular warfare strategy and operations**

The proper coordination and application of effort in the areas of governance, development, security, economics, and social structures can result in the unbalancing of our adversaries and/or the alteration of environmental conditions. Such indirect approaches normally require a long-term commitment and challenge the patience of politicians and publics. Based on lessons learned, this study reviews the essential issues of indirect action with an idea of refining the paradigm to account for inevitable long-duration involvement. Attention

must be paid to the various leverage points so as to gain maximum effect. These include goals/desired end states, levels of operational risk, access of U.S. forces and resources, U.S. “anti-bodies,” pre-conflict vs. conflict roles, security vs. nonsecurity threats, regional players (e.g., EU, AU, ASEAN, OAS), and independent players (e.g., UN, ICRC, business/industry). What are the indirect action lessons learned? How do we prioritize various indirect approaches? How do we prepare domestic, partner, and host-nation publics to understand and accept the long-term nature of indirect action? The study recognizes the theoretical influence of rhetorical studies and strategic communication theory such as inoculation theory, cultivation theory, and the two-step communication process.

**C4. Influence operations within IW**

The understanding and support—or at least the neutrality—of a variety of audiences is necessary for the successful prosecution of IW operations. These include the populations of the host nation/region, the U.S., and partner nations, as well as the collective endorsement of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations who have an interest in the outcomes. This study takes a fresh look at how to synchronize the interagency capabilities of Public Affairs, public diplomacy, Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and strategic communication, both individually and collectively under the umbrella of Information Operations. How do practitioners in each discipline coordinate their activities with the others? How are desired end states defined? What steps are necessary to ensure consistency of messages in a way that is perceived as credible by each target audience? How can the U.S. accommodate communication programs fielded by host nations, partner nations, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations? What metrics should be established to be able to accurately assess effectiveness?

**C5. Can SOF effectively accomplish its mission in a high end asymmetric threat environment and at what cost?**

Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) exposure is a show stopper to aircraft mobility and utility. Ops tempo cannot be sustained more than for a few sorties because expensive air assets will be compromised by CBRN-related warfare agents due to the lack of tactical indications and warnings to avoid; and lack of aircraft decontamination capability to allow timely restoration of

operational tempo. Consequently, what would be the impact on SOF specifically on aircraft mobility/utility and are there any mitigating factors?”

## D. Interagency

### Topic Titles

- D1. Capability to train, advise, and assist interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental governance and security partners in disrupting terrorist network resources
- D2. Controlling the message: Organizational issues affecting strategic Communication, public diplomacy, and influence within the interagency
- D3. Game theory and the warrior diplomat: Understanding competitive and cooperative decision making and their applications to interagency interaction
- D4. Impact of organizational (agency) cultures on effective interagency interaction
- D5. Analyze interagency C2, planning, and operational mechanisms employed during contingency operations where the interagency leads
- D6. What steps can the DoD take to encourage the engagement of *the whole of government* in the counterterrorism effort, thus maximizing best practices while reducing redundancy and costly overlap with other U.S. Government agencies, partner and cooperative countries, and multinational organizations?
- D7. Interagency turf battles
- D8. Exploring a joint interagency structure such as the Joint Service System within the DoD
- D9. SOF thoughts on improving security assistance programs

### Topic Descriptions

- D1. **Capability to train, advise, and assist interagency, multinational, and nongovernmental governance and security partners in disrupting terrorist network resources**  
This study considers various ways to increase the capability to prepare a complex mix of actors to take actions to disrupt terrorist networks and their resources. Ideas should include providing training

and advice to local, regional, and global partners. Specific recommendations include traditional entities such as intelligence, law enforcement, internal security forces, and paramilitary forces. Also addressed are nontraditional governance and security partners such as private industry or other institutions that share common interests in promoting the defeat of terrorist networks. This training may be conducted by, with, or through U.S. or other partner forces and may be executed in the joint operational area or elsewhere as required in support of shared endgame objectives.

**D2. Controlling the message: Organizational issues affecting strategic communication, public diplomacy, and influence within the interagency**

A basic principle of strategic communication has always been to *speak with one voice*. This challenge becomes more difficult as messaging moves from the parent organization into the broader U.S. Government interagency process. What issues affect the ability of the interagency to conduct credible communication and messaging, both domestically and internationally? Areas of interest include law, policy, organizational communication, and cultural awareness. How does the interagency capture and incorporate the communication and messaging best practices from individual U.S. Government organizations? How can the interagency adapt to new technology and techniques in competing with other messaging agendas? How does the interagency structure itself to accommodate the communication agendas of host nations, partner nations, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations? Overview readings include relevant GAO Reports, Defense Science Board Reports, and the IO Roadmap.

**D3. Game theory and the warrior diplomat: Understanding competitive and cooperative decision making and their applications to interagency interaction**

When conducting interagency collaboration or negotiations, most participants are trained to approach the bargaining table as if they are engaged in a *zero-sum game*—that is, if another agency *wins*, my agency *loses*. This approach reflects classic competitive decision making. How can the introduction of *game theory* shift the negotiation paradigm from competitive to cooperative decision making? Drawing on the assumption that it is in the best interests of each participant to cooperate with the others, what techniques are

available to teach that all participants benefit from cooperative decision making models? How might game theory assist in developing lasting interagency decision models that can also be further applied to state-to-state negotiations?

**D4. Impact of organizational (agency) cultures on effective inter-agency interaction**

Understanding different organizational cultures is essential in seeking to reconcile different approaches for dealing with inter-agency issues. The goal is to achieve a unity of action by identifying complementary approaches in framing and addressing a specific challenge. Unique organizational cultures determine such things as decision-making models, communication styles, goal expectations, operational structures, and resource flows. This study explores these dimensions within the DoD, DoS, and other key participants in the interagency process. How do these differences affect both positive and negative interagency interaction? How might best practices in different agencies be documented and adapted throughout the interagency? Part of the design of the interagency, especially the respective Intelligence nodes within the Intelligence community, was to foster competition. The organizational culture within the DoS is very different from that within the DoD or CIA, leading in part to differing Intelligence estimates. This competition was intended to ensure that decision makers had different opinions to weigh against one another. Does the creation of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) run the risk of undermining this competition in favor of consensus assessments? What procedures can be developed to ensure that decision makers in all functional areas have different opinions to weigh against one another?

**D5. Analyze interagency C2, planning, and operational mechanisms employed during contingency operations where the interagency leads**

The interagency has successfully led contingency-based operations, many with IW parameters. Around the globe, the interagency leads on a daily basis the U.S. Government efforts in combating terrorism, counter-finance, counter-criminal business enterprise, counter-drug, and other security missions. During the secret war in Laos (Vietnam War era), the covert and paramilitary efforts of the U.S. Government, in conjunction with SOF, were led by the U.S. ambassador and his country team with operational control over both U.S.

military and civil assets. Successful COIN cases exist where DoS-led efforts, enabled by U.S. SOF and other military forces, advanced U.S. interests and achieved strategic political objectives (e.g., El Salvador, Operation Enduring Freedom, Philippines, and security assistance to Greece after World War II). Efforts to win the drug war and assist Plan Columbia are interagency-led, specifically by the U.S. ambassador and his military group (MILGRP). However, important differences in approach persist. This study analyzes the various methods that different agencies employ. For example, the military uses a very structured planning process (MDMP), but the DoS utilizes a different method. How does each department's planning processes differ, and what we can do to fill the gaps resulting from these differences? Should we plan on using similar processes, and if not, how do we bridge gaps that might result? Study and analyze interagency-led contingency-size task force operations to identify and synthesize best practices in strategic and operational planning, C2, and implementation. Identify the vital role SOF can play in these indirect applications of military power. Identify best uses of GPF to facilitate these operations. Recommend a 21st century task organization for the country team. This would include the MILGRP, which would optimize contingency operations when led by the interagency. What are the risks? What challenges and strategic opportunities will dictate the use of interagency task forces? Consider the use of an interagency task force to accomplish soft-power campaigns over extended periods. What are the implications of having non-DoD departments (e.g. DoS/DoJ/DoE) *in charge* of DoD elements? Is the DoD prepared to place DoD assets under the control of OGA *commanders*?

**D6. What steps can the DoD take to encourage the engagement of the *whole of government* in the counterterrorism effort, thus maximizing best practices while reducing redundancy and costly overlap with other U.S. Government agencies, partner and cooperative countries, and multinational organizations?**

The skill sets and resources necessary for the successful prosecution of the counterterrorism effort reside throughout the U.S. Government. One of the weaknesses of the interagency process is the absence of a clear mandate for who is authorized to contribute to the requirements generated by the counterterrorism effort. What specific steps are necessary to identify and engage the full range of U.S. Government capabilities? One of the recurring problems is that

of information sharing. What can be done within the interagency to break down stovepipes and flatten the dynamic process of information exchange? How can DoD improve its capabilities to share information with the U.S. Government interagency, partner and cooperative countries, and multinational organizations?

#### **D7. Interagency turf battles**

As experiences in Afghanistan and elsewhere have taught, the military frequently finds itself in the position of performing tasks normally performed by DoS or other U.S. Government agencies because the magnitude of the work precluded those normally responsible from doing it. This reality raises important political/social theory questions about the tension among organizations that have been given formal mandates/charters to perform while resources have been given to another organization, and capabilities perhaps reside with yet a third. What examples of both success and failure exist in such complex situations? How can objective after-action reports prepared by external reviewers (and not intended merely to assess blame) assist in identifying best practices in interagency relationships? What are the underlying obstacles to creating a synchronized interagency process to execute the counterterrorism effort and other theater missions and objectives? How can we convince others within the U.S. Government to muster resources towards a common goal when no individual and independent agency is subordinate to another? How do interagency players overcome the restrictions of their legal responsibilities, capabilities, and capacities and yet provide the fullest support to a whole-of-government effort? Do we need an interagency commission with representatives from the DoS, DoD, DNI, DoJ, and other agencies to run the counterterrorism effort? Does such management-by-consensus stifle real leadership? Examine various options or approaches, taking into account the human factors involved, with recommendations of how to better run the whole-of-government machinery without creating another cumbersome layer of bureaucracy. How do we manage/resolve conflicting agency missions to achieve true interagency solutions? How do we develop practical *nonhierarchical C-2 structures* to enable SOF, GPF, and other government agencies to work together on the battlefield?

**D8. Exploring a joint interagency structure such as the Joint Service System within the DoD**

Recognizing that the counterterrorism effort and other issues pose challenges far greater than the skill sets and resources of the DoD alone, is it feasible to establish a joint interagency structure to facilitate counterterrorism and other cross-functional priorities? How can the lessons learned from the organizational structure of AFRICOM assist in building a broader interagency initiative? What is the tradeoff in effectiveness between leveraging existing interagency relationships and establishing new informal relationships that are activated as situations require vs. establishing a new quasi-institution (the *interagency*) that can be resourced and staffed? How does the strengthening of interagency structures overcome the problem of part-time members of an interagency task force maintaining ultimate allegiance to their parent agencies? Does the evolution of the National Security Professional Program provide a path toward the establishment of a more formal *in-charge* agency with a specific set of responsibilities such as counterterrorism? What could such an organization look like?

**D9. SOF thoughts on improving security assistance programs**

The interagency nature of establishing, resourcing, and conducting security assistance programs presents significant challenges to SOF units at the operational and tactical levels. This study surveys current practices in executing such programs and suggests specific steps that should be taken to improve their effectiveness. What interagency reforms are necessary, especially between DoS and DoD? What can be done to streamline the process of determining resource requirements? Once those requirements are established, how can greater efficiencies be introduced into the procurement and delivery of basic resources such as fuel and ammunition?

## E. Regional and Cultural Studies

### Topic Titles

- E1. Best practices of providing cultural education in preparation for SOF operations
- E2. Supporting U.S. southwest border stability in a crisis period: Potential SOF assistance to struggling Mexican security institutions and U.S. CONUS defense
- E3. Foreign perceptions of the threat and use of special operations: The NATO-Europe view

### Topic Descriptions

**E1. Best practices of providing cultural education in preparation for SOF operations**

SOF traditionally place a heavy reliance on operating within unfamiliar cultures. Cultural awareness and language proficiency are the building blocks of cultural education. How do different SOF components prepare their personnel to conduct operations with indigenous populations? Do specific education methods work better for certain missions? How does language proficiency assist with cultural education? Which elements of culture are essential to prepare SOF for down-range experiences? Do nongovernmental organizations, international governmental organizations, and other international players conduct education programs that may be helpful in assessing and improving SOF cultural education? How might cultural immersion programs assist SOF preparations? Identify standards for determining how much education is sufficient in a given situation.

**E2. Supporting U.S. southwest border stability in a crisis period: Potential SOF assistance to struggling Mexican security institutions and U.S. CONUS defense**

The U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) recent articulation of the U.S. Joint Operational Environment (JOE) highlights a real potential for Mexico becoming a failed state. Sustained pressures from organized crime- and gang-fed violence increasingly point to weakening Mexican military and security institutions, while at the same time entrenched government corruption undermines the most

serious reform efforts. JFCOM—in a judgment that may have been characterized as excessive just a few years ago—highlights Mexico’s weakening institutions as a threat to Western Hemispheric security generally, and especially as a U.S. Homeland Security problem of “immense proportions.” Visible increases in Mexican cross-border violence immediately following the JFCOM report’s release were underscored by Phoenix, Arizona being named the top U.S. kidnaping center and the second highest in the world as a consequence of Mexican gang and paramilitary violence. Individual U.S. states, in response, have begun to formulate their own plans for border crisis. The possibility of a sudden catastrophic collapse with ensuing mass border crossings, humanitarian crises all point to the broadest U.S. support requirements being implemented, and anticipatory planning or actions undertaken ahead of time. The U.S. State Department’s *FY 2009 Strategic Mission Plan: U.S. Mission to Mexico* has declared four major policy goals. These potentially benefit from the direct or indirect support of U.S. SOF to appropriate Mexican institutions and to CONUS military, law enforcement, and interagency organizations: enhancing common border security, increasing security of a shared North American homeland, strengthening Mexican law enforcement and judicial capabilities, and helping Mexico consolidate and strengthen its governmental institutions and the rule of law. Research under this topic examines the ways in which U.S. special operations components—and especially the roles of U.S. NORTHCOM and the interagency community—can effectively support such U.S. policy goals in today’s operational environment that blurs distinctions between U.S. and Mexican requirements.

**E3. Foreign perceptions of the threat and use of special operations:  
The NATO-Europe view**

This study should evaluate European perceptions regarding a range of threats, with a view to determining why Europeans tend to view threats differently than Americans do. It should also pay particular attention to European perceptions of special operations in countering some of these threats. Much current opinion holds many kinds of special operations to be illegitimate or illegal. This study will examine the reasons for this and suggest possible remedies.

One of the great obstacles to concerted action in the struggle against terrorism is the significant variance of what these threats actually are and how serious they are taken. Many Europeans, for example, believe that the U.S. is the greatest security threat they face. Given

this, the potential for building a lasting coalition to fight terrorism is nearly impossible. Since security alliances are built on common threat perceptions, the future for the counterterrorist alliance is grim unless these perceptions can be altered.

The study should identify key threat perceptions on both sides of the Atlantic and examine the discrepancies, with a view towards establishing the implications of these discrepancies for combined action. Because elite opinion is often closer to American perceptions than the public at large, a key element of this study should examine these differences.



## F. Special Interest

### Topic Titles

- F1. Leveraging *academic* support for special operations
- F2. Strategic culture analysis: Predictive capacity for current and future threats
- F3. Natural resources battlefield
- F4. Nonkinetic measures of effect
- F5. Balancing openness with OPSEC
- F6. Consequences of classified information disclosure in news media reporting of SOF operations
- F7. Detainee disposition instructions
- F8. Deciding on the classification levels of studies on terrorism topics
- F9. Differing perspectives: Seeking of effort by the U.S. and Europe
- F10. SOF intellectual capital
- F11. Law and legal institutions
- F12. Tailoring a new U.S. Government organization
- F13. Contemporary space applications for special operations

### Topic Descriptions

#### F1. Leveraging *academic* support for special operations

The SOF community, in the form of Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was an innovator in the recruiting and use of academic specialists—for example, anthropologists, political scientists, historians, and linguists—to advance IW initiatives. Support in the early days was typically enthusiastic. While productive relationships have continued to some extent, recent years have seen far less enthusiasm in academia for defense and security interaction. Sometimes the response is outright rejection and hostility. In a 2008 effort to reinvigorate what decades earlier had been productive relationships, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates oversaw the development of what was called the Minerva Consortia. This initiative included academic outreach and a number of programs that included the creation and deployment of Human Terrain Teams (HTTs), document

exploitation for key areas of interest to both scholars and military planners, religious and ideological studies, and other applications of history, anthropology, sociology, and evolutionary psychology expertise residing in U.S. universities. Some of these programs, however, particularly the HTTs under U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) management, have proven controversial in academia and in reviews of implementation and effectiveness. While SOF has its own priorities and approaches, concepts for leveraging academic support for special operations should be considered in light of such controversies and problem areas. This study addresses how SOF can most productively use expertise found in U.S. universities and academic research centers to advance SOF knowledge, skills, initiatives, and operations. It will consider concepts, approaches, specific activities and programs, and the overall nature, appropriateness, and potential of academic/university relationships.

Overview readings are Speech to the Association of American Universities (Washington, D.C.) as delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Washington, D.C., 14 April 2008 and Robin Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939–1961* (Yale University Press, 1996).

**F2. Strategic culture analysis: Predictive capacity for current and future threats**

Many feel that *strategic culture* analysis holds significant promise for interpreting and understanding how different states approach matters of war, peace, strategy, and the use of military force. Strategic culture analysis emerged from Cold War requirements to understand and possibly predict Soviet nuclear behavior. Strategic culture fell out of favor as a concept after the fall of the Soviet Union. More sophisticated than its Cold War construct, strategic culture now explores belief systems, values, climate, resources, geography, classical text, defense concepts, military doctrine, economic resources, and a country's technological base. Given their structures and purposes, are Al Qaeda and other transnational, nonstate terrorist, and criminal groups appropriate candidates for strategic cultural analysis? Consider state-like attributes such as military forces, an international economic base, a sophisticated communication network, a system of social services, and clearly articulated international security objectives. Can strategic culture analysis of transnational, nonstate actors identify strategic personalities, define strategic

perspectives, and ultimately predict strategic behavior? Is strategic culture analysis a viable tool for understanding current and predicting future terrorist threats?

### **F3. Natural resources battlefield**

Competition for natural resources such as oil, water, food, and wood has led to conflict throughout history. Research is necessary to identify contemporary vulnerabilities, security measures, and the location of any seams. Second-order effects on population, land use, and economic activity are also of immediate concern. More specifically, the study identifies potential natural resource battlefields and their roles in future acts of terrorism and wider aspects of IW. Examples include oil and natural gas reserves sited amidst Iran, Russia, and China. What are the implications of U.S. petroleum security commitments to the Gulf states? Discuss the use of oil (controlling supply/artificial price manipulation) by oil-producing nations to blackmail/damage western economic systems. Analyze historical trends from the creation of the OPEC cartel to the present to determine if there is precedent to attempt long-term damage through cartel policies. What roles might SOF play in such security scenarios? Examine the current structure of indigenous internal security and military forces as they relate to petroleum infrastructure security (oil refineries, wells, pipelines, and offshore facilities). What are some emerging security threats to natural resources? What integrated security operational concepts will be required? How would those concepts integrate local MoD, MoI, and commercial resources into a comprehensive security infrastructure for petroleum and other natural resources? How can SOF integrate with local Special Security Forces (SSF), typically under the direction of the MoI? How do proposed security concepts enhance coordination among MoIs, MoDs and SOF?

### **F4. Nonkinetic measures of effect**

The assessments of the effects of traditional military operations are typically straight forward in their measurement and presentation: weight of ordnance dropped, number of enemy killed or disabled, targets destroyed, terrain occupied or denied to the enemy. However, the applications of indirect action or soft power to affect outcomes do not yield such precise results. Thus the measurement of non-kinetic effects will not be quantifiable in the familiar formats. For instance, it is simple to tabulate the number of strategic messages

developed and transmitted. However, assessing the effects generated by public receipt, understanding and acceptance of those messages is a far different measurement challenge. It is also the more relevant assessment. This study looks at the challenges of developing and employing nonkinetic measures of effectiveness. How do we measure the effect of a FID mission? What metrics can we use to determine the effectiveness of the relationships developed between SOF and host-nation leadership? How do we assess a SOF unit if the most effective decision is to avoid direct action? Research the assessments on which fielded units have taken decisions to redirect their activities in the face of operational failure. Is there a measurable basis for instinctive decisions? How do nongovernmental organizations and other aid organizations assess the effectiveness of their efforts? How can social science research inform the development of nonkinetic measures of effect? To what extent can best-practices insights come from fields such as marketing, business, education, and public relations?

**F5. Balancing openness with OPSEC**

More than ever, public support for U.S. counterterrorism efforts is necessary for the successful prosecution of a war of uncertain duration and uneven outcomes. The problem is complicated by the fact that the public does not always pay attention to the flow of events in the absence of spectacular, and often negative, event coverage. U.S. public support is contingent to a significant extent on documented successes and the perception that military and interagency competence is sufficient to ensure future victories. This study explores the nature of public support, the role of perceptions, and examples of efforts to balance public candor with necessary OPSE limitations. How can the complexities of the counterterrorism effort be presented credibly to U.S. and other relevant audiences? What measures of effectiveness are available to inform the public about what success looks like and what has taken place to move efforts closer to those goals? How can the U.S. and other relevant publics be informed about the role of SOF without jeopardizing mission effectiveness and security? How can SOF nurture relationships with the media without alienating them through attempts at control? What specific and mutually agreeable ground rules are available to generate the most informed and credible news media coverage?

**F6. Consequences of classified information disclosure in news media reporting of SOF operations**

One of the points of tension between U.S. military forces and the news media who cover them is the persistent concern that it is inevitable news-media reporting will disclose important and damaging classified information. It already has. Numerous books, magazines, and broadcast news/documentary productions have contained sensitive and classified information regarding decision makers, organizations, techniques, and sensitive details about mission failures and successes. This study examines the variables of this ongoing debate. The prevailing belief is that these disclosures have had a significant impact on the missions they address. Consequently, should steps be taken to limit future access to SOF information and SOF operations because the disclosure of classified information inevitably increases the risks and limits the ability of military forces to combat terrorist networks? Can mutually agreed ground rules be established that frame both the collection and reporting of information? Is a vetting process viable? A contrary opinion holds that the disclosure of specific capabilities and operational details should be a key component of an overall national strategy to legitimize U.S. operations and build both domestic and international support. Is the over-classification of operational information counterproductive, unrealistic, and unmanageable? Survey the consequences of recent classified disclosures on military operations, U.S. domestic publics, our partner nations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, our adversaries, and other nations. What procedures can the Public Affairs Office (PAO) follow to identify information that is useful in providing both explanation and context and then vetting that information for release? How might embedding journalists improve news-media understanding of appropriate operational details and speed their disclosure without jeopardizing security concerns? How can the commander and PAO conduct effect assessments of such openness?

**F7. Detainee disposition instructions**

One of the persistent challenges of the global war on terror has been the management of detainees within the context of the wider controversy over their treatment and disposition. This study seeks to suggest a program of specific measures and instructions for guiding SOF activities. What should be the decision process both before and after capturing detainees in an IW situation? What permission

planning considerations should be followed to place SOF in the best position to manage detainees? Once captured, what disposition alternatives exist for war on terror detainees? Should these detainees be treated as law enforcement or military *targets*? Suggest guidelines that assist in making that judgment. What challenges exist for the development and exercise of chain-of-evidence procedures? What are the implications of detainee operations for prosecutorial authorities?

**F8. Deciding on the classification levels of studies on terrorism topics**

Any study of terrorism runs the risk of drifting into the discussion and inadvertent release of classified information. Obviously it is necessary that, for security reasons, some studies remain unavailable to the general public and the news media. However, it is equally important that the taxpaying public and others have appropriate and vetted access to knowledge about what DoD forces and the wider U.S. Government interagency are doing to protect the U.S. and our citizens from terrorist threats. As a minimum, such awareness breeds confidence in government efforts. This study will discuss the issues of access to information about terrorism issues and suggests guidelines for determining levels of classification. The role of the Internet in spreading information, both accurate and misleading, makes such standards especially important. How does the precise definition of the audience for a study inform the classification decision? How can classification concerns be communicated to subject specialists in academia to provide guidance as to the framing of studies and the development of conclusions? How might the partial release of unclassified executive summaries or extracts assist in both informing the public while preserving their classified nature?

**F9. Differing perspectives: Seeking of effort by the U.S. and Europe**

Experience teaches that Europeans and Americans express markedly different threat perceptions, frequently making cooperation and coordination on security issues very difficult. This study surveys a collection of European and American political, military, diplomatic, and academic practitioners and opinion leaders to identify contrasting threat perceptions. Particular emphasis will rest on threats posed by terrorism and other nonconventional threats. What are the major differences in perceptions about threats facing Europe and the U.S.? What specific steps are necessary to align these differing views?

Given the differences, what strategies can be prepared, resourced, and as necessary, implemented to address those threats?

**F10. SOF intellectual capital**

Develop a framework for selection and assessment for the next generation of SOF leaders based on understanding of the strategic level of security policy. Discuss how to build a requisite academic body of knowledge to support this framework and explain how it might be integrated into the existing military education system as pertains to SOF leaders.

**F11. Law and legal institutions**

Analyze perspectives from senior lawyers coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan on developing rule of *law and legal institutions*. Discuss obstacles to this development, akin to a lessons-learned analysis. Collect and examine viewpoints of Staff Judge Advocate personnel who have served on Joint Special Operations Task Forces, capturing unique issues in providing legal and rules of engagement advice to SOF.

**F12. Tailoring a new U.S. Government organization**

Outline the feasibility and a construct for an organization using the following set of ideas from a “Greybeard”:

A new cadre of officers—not just military, not just Intel, not just Special Operations—but perhaps drawn from all three as well as from academia, think tanks, and the IT worlds too. I believe we need a special cadre under one independent organization and one commander—accountable only to the President and maybe the National Security Council, that brings together the new and completely different skill sets and knowledge base required to fight radical Islam. This cadre needs its own dedicated set of special operations teams that can be moved quickly, quietly, and without endless chains of command into a crisis situation on orders from a Presidential Directive or Finding. This might be military special operations, but it also might be other types of psychological operations, or even IW. Irregular and asymmetric warfare definitely is a big part of all this, but so are experts on Islam and geographical regions, linguists, financial wizards who can track the movement of funds, behavior and psychological experts, counterterrorism folks, and computer geeks that can create software to connect all the dots. They should be brought together under one command...kept very small...no more than several hundred overall, every one an expert...no trainees, no

journeymen, just masters. Just as the radical Islamist threat is multidimensional, a total way of life, and playing out on a timeframe of hundreds of years, so we, too, need to organize to fight this way as well.

**F13. Contemporary space applications for special operations**

The current body of knowledge regarding space applications for SOF is very basic. In fact, SOF utilize space assets like GPS, ISR, SATCOM, Blue Force Tracking, and more. Further, SOF are capable of enabling a broad array of space-related missions ranging from Navigation Warfare (NAVWAR) ops against space-based positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) to materiel sabotage and beyond. Such topics can be discussed at an unclassified level in greater detail than what is currently offered in Joint Publications.

## G. USSOCOM and SOF Issues

### Topic Titles

- G1. U.S. SOF training of foreign military/security forces “to enhance their capacity” in counterterrorism, COIN, and FID is a major strategy of the U.S. and USSOCOM overseas contingency operations, but have those efforts generated the desired results?
- G2. Diplomatic agreements to support rapid SOF support for other nations
- G3. Importance of language skills for successful SOF operations
- G4. Indirect benefits of SOF to parent military services and the interagency
- G5. Security Force Assistance (SFA)
- G6. SOF interaction with host-nation Ministry of Interior (MoI) resources
- G7. Influence and relationship between USSOCOM and the military services
- G8. Training systems for USSOCOM and its components
- G9. SOF aviation: Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs)
- G10. Preparing the human weapons platform
- G11. Planning for Joint special operations for the indirect approach

### Topic Descriptions

- G1. U.S. SOF training of foreign military/security forces “to enhance their capacity” in counterterrorism, COIN, and FID is a major strategy of the U.S. and USSOCOM overseas contingency operations, but have those efforts generated the desired results?**

For more than 50 years, SOF has taken the lead role in DoD for training indigenous forces in counterterrorism, FID and COIN skills. Because of the capacity-building requirements of the effort, this strategy has become a major component of DoD’s efforts in North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. After all these years, is there sufficient evidence that the U.S. commitment of personnel and material resources has

been successful in developing the intended capacity in local security forces? Furthermore, does the development of capacity even matter if the host-nation government is not willing to employ those forces as we intended, or at all? This study looks at the track record of SOF training and answers the question, “How do we know if it is working?” What are specific cases of both success and failure? Why do the outcomes vary? Is the mission truly to “build capacity,” or is it merely to establish a sustained presence on the ground? SOF has operated in places like the Philippines and Colombia for many decades. Should we keep doing it, or should we dramatically change how we do it? What are the standards for success? What steps should be in place to increase the likelihood of success? To what level and extent should host-nation forces be trained and what technologies/resources should the U.S. provide them?

## **G2. Diplomatic agreements to support rapid SOF support for other nations**

U.S. SOF possess training, equipment, and mobility capabilities that far surpass those of many nations’ police and military forces. In the event of a crisis, particularly those involving U.S. persons and interests, the employment of U.S. SOF could be the most effective and credible response. Recent and ongoing concerns over weapons of mass destruction, piracy, and transnational terrorists are relevant examples. However, most sovereign governments are adverse to the employment of another nation’s military forces within their state boundaries. Despite many cases of extensive training and coordination between U.S. and host-nation militaries, the host-nation government still may not be well informed about the shortcomings of their own forces, the capabilities of U.S. SOF, and the capabilities of U.S. SOF to respond to an immediate threat. Should the U.S. establish diplomatic agreements with other countries prior to a crisis to formalize U.S. response options and streamline diplomatic decisions in the event of a time-sensitive crisis? Understanding that decisions in crisis situations are of a political nature, who should participate in the discussions leading to such agreements? What provisions should such agreements contain? To what extent should such agreements commit the U.S. to supporting a particular government against internal threats? What can be done to minimize friction between the ambassador/country team and the SOF deployed to the area? What provisions with the host nation are necessary for testing the response system?

**G3. Importance of language skills for successful SOF operations**

Despite the time and money spent on language education and training, language skills remain deficient. Why? What can be done to address the shortfall in language proficiency? Does it make sense to train all officers in foreign languages as 21st century warfare is heavily coalition based? Examine language proficiency levels as enablers for rapport only and for operational applicability. Traditional assumptions about the importance of language training are facing challenges that cultural awareness is a more important skill for SOF operators. Might it be that cross-cultural skills are more useful than language proficiency? To avoid an *either-or* choice of language skills vs. cultural awareness, what kinds of immersion programs might be useful in simultaneously developing language aptitude and cultural understanding? Assess how true immersion can develop an operator's cognitive ability to learn and understand social networking.

**G4. Indirect benefits of SOF to parent military services and the interagency**

SOF work for USSOCOM and the TSOCs in direct support of U.S. foreign policy goals. However, the parent services of SOF often derive indirect benefits from their SOF units. For example, images of SOF operators are used in recruiting materials by the U.S. Navy. The opportunities that SOF missions provide to enlisted personnel can increase retention among the best performers within each service. Of course, SOF were first created because of direct contributions they made to the capabilities of their parent services (i.e., UDTs to support amphibious landings; Special Forces to conduct unconventional warfare operations). As a rule, SOF are much more flexible and can be applied to perform operations that GPF cannot across a variety of mission areas. The interagency also benefits indirectly through enhanced training with SOF during exercises; through the use of SOF resources for strategic communications; or by recruiting individuals with SOF training in language, interpersonal, and cross-cultural skills. This study identifies, compares, and contrasts the indirect benefits of SOF to their parent services, noting which benefits are common among SOF units and why some indirect benefits are present only in one service but not the others. Ensure that, in the complexity of the current threat environment, USSOCOM/SOF are not viewed by the military services or the interagency as an isolated or uncooperative player. Make clear to the military services

and the interagency how they benefit from unique USSOCOM/SOF capabilities, training, and missions.

**G5. Security Force Assistance (SFA)**

This study examines the nature of SFA missions within the context of complementary operations and multiple participants. How do we determine if a SFA mission set is a SOF or General Purpose Force requirement? How do we clearly define SFA? How can USSOCOM best organize itself to accomplish the mission of SFA proponenty? How can the U.S. Government seamlessly integrate DoS, DoD, and other members of the interagency into SFA programs? How can IGOs and NGOs make contributions consistent with their capabilities and agendas? What needs to be done to gain IGO and NGO investment in the process? Examine the issues, similarities, and differences among SFA, Security Assistance, and FID missions. What makes them similar? What makes them different? Are those differences merely semantic? FID is supposed to be a noncombat operation. When threat conditions introduce the need for combat, FID is more rightly categorized as COIN or support to COIN. Should SFA be categorized as combat or noncombat? Could it be both? If SFA is a noncombat activity, what approaches become appropriate in combat?

**G6. SOF interaction with host-nation Ministry of Interior (MoI) resources**

In the Middle East and other regions, MoIs normally have internal security forces that resemble special operations organizations in their structure and functions. They may be called *Special Security Forces* or *Paramilitary Forces*, but they operate as an arm of the police. Frequently they are larger than the special operations components of the host-nation military assisted by U.S. SOF. This study examines the structure and functioning of such organizations. How are they used to protect the ruling government and provide stability both within the country and the region? How can U.S. SOF interface with these units to improve internal security conditions and build counterterrorism capacity? If necessary, how can SOF counterbalance these MoI units within the internal security context?

**G7. Influence and relationship between USSOCOM and the military services**

The USSOCOM commander is tasked with conducting SOF core activities across a spectrum of missions. To do so, USSOCOM relies

on the military services for the recruitment, training, development, retention, and assignment of SOF personnel. This relationship is central to USSOCOM's abilities to accomplish the assigned missions. This study surveys the current relationships and influences between USSOCOM and the military services, with particular emphasis on issues concerning SOF personnel. Determine whether and where there are gaps in these relationships. What can be done to close these gaps? What influence does the USSOCOM commander require over military service management of SOF personnel, their incentives and retention, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) development, assignments, and promotion/career management opportunities to effectively accomplish the USSOCOM mission? What steps can be taken to improve the required coordination and cooperation between USSOCOM and the military services?

#### **G8. Training systems for USSOCOM and its components**

The rapid procurement and fielding of new equipment and evolving technologies present a variety of training challenges. At the same time, the standardized training of common tasks remains a familiar requirement. This study takes a comprehensive look at ways to provide timely and effective training on new equipment and other systems as fresh initiatives come on line and become forward deployed. Who is responsible for developing training programs and ensuring that they remain current and relevant? Identify the best ways to train the end users in such fast-moving environments. Which media are most effective in providing that training? How useful is a simulation system that is networked for all receiving components and organizations to access and/or download, especially when deployed? What roles can Web-based applications play? Survey ongoing and future innovations to address training program development, delivery, assessment, and sustainability. Are the Joint Training System (JTS) and the Joint Training Information Management System (JTIMS) useful tools to users in the field? Is feeding the system more resource intensive than originally envisioned? If it needs improvement, how can we make it better? Consider also efficiencies to be gained for current training approaches. For instance, resources, throughput capacity, and practicality have driven USSOCOM components to establish multiple training venues for the same skill set (e.g., military fee-fall, combat dive, and snipers). What is the best process for USSOCOM to establish a baseline SOF standard for a particular skill set? How should those baselines be evaluated and sustained at

required proficiency levels? What potential advantages accrue to the establishment of a SOF Training Center of Excellence (SOFTCOE) for the standardization and consolidation of SOF common skills training? Might a USSOCOM “Training and Education Command” represent a more comprehensive approach to training, standardization, and innovation? Review the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) mission set and make a recommendation on the best training a unit can do to prepare for the JSOTF mission. Should USSOCOM certify units for the JSOTF mission? If so, what are the standards and procedures for awarding such a certification?

**G9. SOF aviation: Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UASs)**

UASs have provided enhanced capabilities to address a variety of operational requirements. The purpose of this study is to explore the utility of employing UAS assets to support IW operations. How can multimission UASs assist in nontraditional environments? What specific capabilities can UASs bring to IW activities? Which IW strategies and tasks are appropriate for UASs? Identify specific employment profiles for using UASs in IW situations. Consider such missions as humanitarian relief operations, civil affairs, disaster response and the resulting hybrid threats they may impose on COIN and IW operations.

**G10. Preparing the human weapons platform**

Discussion of new technology and weapons systems is a familiar staple. This study returns to basics by focusing on the irreplaceable human element of SOF operations and identifying specific steps to prepare the *human weapons system* for the variety of SOF challenges it faces. What are the SOF current capabilities to recruit, train, condition, and monitor the full range of individual capabilities inherent to each Special Operations warrior? What improvements are necessary to better educate, train, and monitor physical development and, when required, to recondition and rehabilitate SOF individuals? Consider new concepts for strength building, conditioning, combat nutrition, supplemental sports programs, sustainment training techniques, designs for physical fitness facilities, and certifications of proficiency.

**G11. Planning for joint special operations for the indirect approach**

This study focuses on planning approaches for JSOTF strategic and operational missions in current and future environments. It would particularly focus on SOF core activities that typically involve

indirect approaches to achieving strategic objectives, such as unconventional warfare, SFA, and FID. The study should identify classic campaign planning constructs and investigate how SOF joint headquarters (TSOC, JSOTF) conduct campaign planning in the current environment. Consideration should include planning for future SOF organizations such as expeditionary task forces that incorporate service combat multipliers as inherent parts of the force. Conclusions and recommendations should be provided that confirm or advance changes to SOF planning procedures.



## H. Topics Retained from Previous Years

### Topic Titles

- H1. What are the missions and roles of SOF in the economic domain as it applies to narcoterrorism: Should SOF do more there?
- H2. Developing regional counterterrorism strategy—enabling partners
- H3. Getting beyond Al Qaeda and looking to the future of counterterrorism policy and operations
- H4. Counterterrorism partnerships between SOF and law enforcement agencies (LEAs)
- H5. Sharing of methods and long-range power projection of various types of groups
- H6. Disaggregating counterterrorism operations: Al Qaeda is not Hezbollah is not the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
- H7. How does cultural awareness contribute to effective activities in combating terrorism?
- H8. What levels of analysis model should the U.S. military use?
- H9. Intelligence for counterterrorism operations: Best practices, future requirements, possible synergies among USSOCOM and other U.S. agencies—for example, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—allies, and other less savory options
- H10. Antiterrorism: More than defense—SOF contribution to application of national power to prevent terrorism
- H11. Raising the costs: Counter value strategies in counterterrorism
- H12. Use of surrogates for clandestine counterterrorism
- H13. What are the funding relationships between terrorist organizations and organized crime?
- H14. Is the cyber terrorism threat real? Is it different in kind than a threat to any other critical infrastructure or national asset?
- H15. When counterterrorism is counterproductive: Case studies and theories of the misapplication of counterterrorism
- H16. Poverty is a pawn: The myth of poverty as genesis of terrorism and how poverty is used by terrorist leaders
- H17. Terrorist safe havens/sanctuaries/ungoverned areas

- H18. Toxic cultures: Long-term strategies for their transformation or elimination
- H19. Employing private security firms to conduct counterterrorism in nonpermissive environments
- H20. Information operations and counterterrorism
- H21. How to conduct strategic human targeting of a terrorist organization's senior leadership
- H22. What strategy should the U.S. pursue to break the power jihadist terrorist hold over third world population and what is the role of SOF in this strategy?
- H23. Should there be a single DoD campaign plan to address all violent extremist organizations, or should there be multiple plans that address each organization individually?
- H24. Lessons not learned in irregular warfare (IW) to date
- H25. Revolutionaries and criminal groups
- H26. Organizing interagency for IW campaigns
- H27. What is the role of strategic communications for SOF in IW?
- H28. Clarifying the nuances between IW, stability operations, and special operations
- H29. Strategic theories on IW
- H30. Operational art design for IW-centric campaigns
- H31. Understanding police investigation and intelligence operations in IW/counterterrorism efforts
- H32. How is IW financed and who controls the resources?
- H33. Security Forces assistance (anti-insurgency)
- H34. How have affected host nations been engaged and advised on IW/counterinsurgency?
- H35. How do policy, strategy, and planning interrelate in IW?
- H36. What is the joint, common operating environment for SOF in IW?
- H37. Building Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plans for key partner nations
- H38. Case studies of SOF creating strategic effects in IW
- H39. How to advise host nations engaged in IW
- H40. Strategic decision making for IW: Case studies on IW success and failure

- H41. Various roles for SOF in helping host-nation governments to develop the capability for self governance
- H42. Building partner capability and capacity: What do our partner nations need?
- H43. What strategic factors are key to success or failure in IW?
- H44. Are Rangers and MARSOC contributors to the IW fight?
- H45. Conventional/SOF cooperation
- H46. Embassy role in U.S. Government IW effort
- H47. Legislative requirements for effective interagency campaigns
- H48. Integrating interagency efforts to build partner capacity
- H49. Interagency and SOF minifield exercises in IW environment
- H50. Does IW suggest major restructuring of the U.S. government?
- H51. Who are the natural supporters of IW in the military, legislature, executive branch, academia and intellectual communities, business community, and populace at home and abroad?
- H52. What are the divisions or types of interagency efforts?
- H53. Resourcing essential 21st century strategic capacity: Deployable civilian departments and agencies
- H54. Country team approach
- H55. What are the evolving standards for judging legitimacy made by various types of state and nonstate actors?
- H56. Cultural awareness
- H57. Are culture, religion, and worldview factors in motivating IW?
- H58. Cultural knowledge in IW campaign planning
- H59. Regional studies
- H60. Ethics for SOF behavior: What are the first principles that do not change?
- H61. Utilizing “SOF for Life” to rapidly and flexibly increase cultural awareness
- H62. The realities of human terrain (HT): Clarifying what SOF means by HT and how that applies to strategy, planning, and operations
- H63. SOF and cultural engagement
- H64. Culturally attuned engagement
- H65. Understanding the underworld: Black markets, gray markets, and how to exploit them to U.S. advantage

- H66. How is strategy developed for special operations and what is the framework for such development?
- H67. What is the nature of conflict in the 21st century and what is the role for SOF?
- H68. Why is Phase 0 important and how can SOF support the geographic combatant commander strategy: Informing the joint conventional community
- H69. Develop SOF internships with Fortune 500 companies in order to develop IW skill sets (marketing; influence, investigations, strategic communications)
- H70. Integrating SOF and “big service” requirements/systems
- H71. Counterinsurgency methods
- H72. SOF role in current/future Afghanistan
- H73. Impact of crossing borders to conduct military operations
- H74. Maritime SOF and overseas contingency operations
- H75. Countering ideological support for terrorism (CIST)
- H76. SOF and HUMINT/SIGINT/IMINT
- H77. Roles of SOF and nongovernmental organizations in complex humanitarian emergencies
- H78. Islamic and Islamist movements in the Sahel region of Africa, West Africa, and Central Africa
- H79. Future role of contracting and SOF
- H80. Should SOF be given Title 50 responsibilities?
- H81. Oral histories of SOF leaders for publication/professional development
- H82. SOF and Joint Fires
- H83. Capabilities of services’ SOF logistical units/elements
- H84. SOF senior leader competencies for joint warfare: Preparing for joint SOF combat command
- H85. Cross area-of-responsibility operations
- H86. U.S. national security initiatives in Africa and the counterterrorism effort
- H87. Effective PSYOP in a mostly illiterate population

## Topic Descriptions

### H1. What are the missions and roles of SOF in the economic domain as it applies to narcoterrorism: Should SOF do more there?

Discuss how SOF leverages and grows host-nation capacity to deter narcoterrorism. Analyze one or both of the two levels to this issue:

- a. The operational/tactical level may deal with the training of law enforcement agencies, conducting operations against the drug fields/lords, intelligence activities, and coordination of assets (information operations, allies, and interministerial). Clearly, SOF has roles at this level (training, planning, and executing).
- b. The strategic/operational level areas of interest deal with strategic relations, crop substitution, justice, drug treatment, money laundering, and international legal issues.

### H2. Developing regional counterterrorism strategy: Enabling partners

Our partners and allies do not view the counterterrorism effort as a global problem and often have a problem with preemptive strategies. Counterterrorism is often viewed from the perspective of the host nation and its relations with its bordering states. Gather, analyze, and consolidate best practices in combating-terrorism strategy that could be useful at a regional level—similar to a counterterrorism Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plan. What are some important regional factors and issues with combating terrorism? What are some useful policy, strategy, and operational techniques for consideration when developing a host-nation's counterterrorism IDAD plan? This study should be a regional specialist topic—analyze selected partner nation(s) facing common problems to determine U.S. priorities and appropriate methods of assistance.

### H3. Getting beyond Al Qaeda and looking to the future of counterterrorism policy and operations

Analyses of groups using terrorist activities have resulted in typologies of different sorts (e.g., groups with political aspirations, ideological/religious motivations, financial/criminal basis; and Rapoport's four historical "waves"). Review these typologies, looking for differences and commonalities. Assess our experience with Al Qaeda against them and assess the utility of each. Apply the results of these analyses to the current geopolitical climate to discuss possible future terrorist activities. This effort may support strategic and perhaps operational planning.

**H4. Counterterrorism partnerships between SOF and law enforcement agencies (LEAs)**

The focus is how to make LEAs work complementary with SOF. At least 75 percent of successful counterterrorism operations are as a result of law enforcement or other internal security forces (nonmilitary); in combat, much intelligence to run down terrorists can come from police access to population. SOF will never achieve effectiveness and strategic utility in combating terrorism if it disregards coordination, cooperation, and combined operations with LEAs. Ascertain roles for SOF to operate in conjunction with LEAs, both international and host nation when operating abroad; identify policy and regulatory changes, including budget, needed for SOF to operate in this domain. Recommend unique training and equipping requirements for SOF to perform this function. Illustrate the role of community policing and international law enforcement in combating terrorism, then explain why SOF is failing to operate in this medium, hamstringing our efforts to fully prosecute counterterrorism plans designed by USSOCOM. This project could describe a successful indirect strategy for overseas contingency operations and one which SOF could perform well.

**H5. Sharing of methods and long-range power projection of various types of groups**

Terrorist groups are accelerating their learning from each other and their collaboration. This situation makes counterterrorism exponentially more difficult. Identify trends in how terrorist groups learn and how they collaborate. Examine case studies of past attacks where collaboration existed at the greater or smaller scope of activities. Identify trends and extrapolate. Consider global trends in causes of terrorism and anticipate where/to what those trends will lead. The product of this research could be a road map of what is coming, innovative methods to interdicting this collaboration, and a method to keep updating the road map.

**H6. Disaggregating counterterrorism operations: Al Qaeda is not Hezbollah is not the FARC**

Because of the information age and Web use, terrorist networks share common tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), both successful and unsuccessful. Identify links between various

organizations, training, and education. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was caught in Colombia, showing a link between IRA and the FARC. Repeated activity in propaganda shows support to Middle East insurgents from Brazil, which in turns shows a link between the two regions. Breaking apart the organizations is one piece, but showing how they are interlinked may be useful when looking for elusive targets.

**H7. How does cultural awareness contribute to effective activities in combating terrorism?**

A lack of understanding in how people in a given society see things—you cannot influence them, neither with your message nor your largesse. Acquaintance with language, culture, and local customs is only the first step in entering into a foreign environment. This study would provide analyses of specific terrorist or insurgent organizations highlighting how their cultural background has influenced their choices and actions. Show how cultural values determine the correctness or rationality of specific terrorist actions. Objective is to raise awareness in this area and lead to additional studies of specific terrorist organizations focused on the culture that shapes their operational planning, decisions, actions, and reactions.

**H8. What levels of analysis model should the U.S. military use?**

We are beginning to understand that adversaries adopt terrorism as a strategy for the simple reason that it works. The literature on terrorism has grown exponentially over the past 5 years. One useful technique that has grown in popularity is the level of analysis approach. A number of experts have advanced specific models. Levels of analysis are useful in allowing the military to understand the complexity of the terrorist phenomenon and where and how it can be countered. Yet no one has articulated an approach that has universal appeal to the military. The articulation and logic for such a common military model would improve both the quality of thinking and communication about terrorism, its appeal, and why it works. It is a contribution that the SOF community can provide because of extensive experience and credibility.

**H9. Intelligence for counterterrorism operations: Best practices, future requirements, possible synergies among USSOCOM and other U.S. agencies—for example, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—allies, and other less savory options**

Discuss and analyze the following statements: The intelligence community is moving beyond *need to know* to *need to share*. Counterterrorism operations need to be in the share business, and lessons observed from Iraq show success in this area. Agencies, tactical to national, need to share information because target sets are illusive; and the most current information/intelligence supports operations. The counterterrorism mission is global in scale, and the ability to have the most current intelligence, at all levels, predictive in nature (as applicable), is available to planners at any possible time. Each day this topic is more relevant. U.S. SOF must acknowledge that HUMINT is essential in this business.

**H10. Antiterrorism: More than defense—SOF contribution to application of national power to prevent terrorism**

How can SOF contribute to expanded national power (DIMFILE) globally to prevent terrorism? Specifically, which interagency partners should SOF be involved with in which activities? How does this fit with Ambassadorial Mission Performance Plans? This study can result in suggested strategy and could be regionally based.

**H11. Raising the costs: Counter value strategies in counterterrorism**

Most counterterrorism work is counterforce targeting—how to find and kill terrorists. The study objective is to examine the terrorist organization at all levels to identify what that enemy values, determine vulnerabilities in those areas, and propose strategies to attack those vulnerabilities. This approach provides a foundation for deterring terrorist actions rather than responding to their initiatives. Study could examine general principles or a specific terrorist organization and also focus on one specific area of vulnerability or contrast the vulnerabilities of different levels of the terrorist organization (leaders value control, ideology; ideological supporters may value their social standing or business interests). Proposed strategies could range from information campaigns to economic manipulation or various kinetic options.

**H12. Use of surrogates for clandestine counterterrorism**

How can the U.S. accomplish counterterrorism objectives without direct involvement? Should SOF be the basis for external support to state or nonstate actors pursuing U.S. counterterrorism strategies or counterterrorism strategies complementary to U.S. counterterrorism goals? What is the cost benefit of such an approach? Do historical examples or recent situations exist where this approach could have been considered? What are some examples where this approach would not be viable?

**H13. What are the funding relationships between terrorist organizations and organized crime?**

Consider one of two approaches:

- a. The global operating environment is changing to where transnational criminals and transnational terrorist organizations are “cooperating” to replace the state-sponsored system with a new system of business enterprise to raise funding. As this threat becomes larger, it will work to delegitimize international regulatory control over business and trading. Study this phenomenon as it relates to national security interests and threats to the U.S.; ascertain what requirements and capabilities SOF needs to thwart this threat. Describe current nexus, identify costs to national interests, predict trends, and provide solutions using SOF.
- b. Treasury officials in many countries, with a U.S. lead, have been successful in interdicting the flow of terrorist and drug networks through transnational cooperation, particularly since 9/11. Establish a compendium of best practices and lessons learned from the most successful of those rooting out terrorist financing.

**H14. Is the cyber terrorism threat real? Is it different in kind than a threat to any other critical infrastructure or national asset?**

Identify possible targets for cyberterrorist attacks. Who might conduct these attacks and for what gain? SOF has the mission of counterterrorism, and does a cyberterrorist fall into USSOCOM’s mission when attacks are taken against critical and economic infrastructure targets? Does LEA/FBI have the lead inside the U.S., and USSOCOM/other government agencies have the lead outside the U.S.? Where does the Joint Task Force for Global Network Operations (JTF-GNO)/JTF-Naval War College (NWC) fit into the

problems of cyberterrorists and what agreements need to be made between USSOCOM, the Strategic Command (STRATCOM), and other agencies? Analyze and prepare for possible cyber attacks from terrorist organizations against vital U.S./allied interests.

**H15. When counterterrorism is counterproductive: Case studies and theories of the misapplication of counterterrorism**

Discuss and analyze the current U.S. government strategy for counterterrorism through this lens, with recommendations for adjustments. The Shining Path in Peru is a great case study for excessive governmental response to terrorism. Another approach is to reexamine USSOCOM CONPLAN 7500; using the unclassified threat model, campaign framework, and method, determine if the strategy is sufficient to achieve U.S. goals and which aspects are necessary to reach U.S. goals. What is missing? What is unnecessary or insufficient and why?

**H16. Poverty is a pawn: The myth of poverty as genesis of terrorism and how poverty is used by terrorist leaders**

Terrorist leaders prey on the poor as a pool for foot soldiers, suicide bombers, and both witting and unwitting supporters through various means of exploitation. However, the vast majority of terrorist leaders do not come from poverty, but rather from the middle (Zarqawi) and even upper classes (bin Laden). How can governments mitigate this exploitation of the poor, knowing that poverty cannot be extinguished? Discuss the mix of conditions that serve to create fertile territory for developing terrorist actors. Establish a list of conditions (e.g., poverty, religious fervor, education levels, distribution of wealth) that when existing concurrently, create an environment for growing terrorist actors. Will SOF need to prepare for contingencies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America?

**H17. Terrorist safe havens/sanctuaries/ungoverned spaces**

The intelligence apparatus of the U.S. government has fairly precise locations for terrorist safe havens throughout the world. Moreover, U.S. SOF, coupled with interagency partners, arguably has the capability to *terrorize* the terrorist in selected locations such as training camps and marshaling areas. Examine needed changes in policy, force structure, and legalities for the U.S. government, with or without host-nation cooperation/approval, to affect these strikes against terrorists in their safe havens—that is, no longer make them safe. History is replete with examples of rear-area attacks destroying

critical nodes of command and control, demoralizing the enemy, and degrading his ability to go on the offensive. Determine which are the most problematic of current and future safe havens—that is, which provide most succor and protection to terrorists and fellow travelers.

**H18. Toxic cultures: Long-term strategies for their transformation or elimination**

While many conditions give rise to terrorism and violence, specific cultures and societies seem more prone to lashing out in this way. The study would analyze historical campaigns (ancient warfare, Mongols vs. sedentary populations, Tamerlane vs. Arabs, U.S. vs. plains Indians, Cold War, post-World War II Japanese reconstruction) where specific cultural change or destruction was required to achieve victory or peace. Principles derived would be applied to the global conflict against terrorists, but would expand to encompass actions to change or destroy those cultures that produce transnational terrorists.

**H19. Employing private security firms to conduct counterterrorism in nonpermissive environments**

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this idea. Numerous issues surround this course of action, very few of them good (e.g., disregarding the checkered history of private security firms in Iraq and assuming the firms had a clear-cut chain of command, mission set). Analyze the value added to employing these elements in the battlespace.

**H20. Information operations and counterterrorism**

Discrediting our enemies' extremist ideologies is a major part of eroding their support. The Colombian government and use of Plan Colombia changed the perceptions of the FARC to the populous and to the world. Can the experience and activities taken by the Colombian government be applied to activities and actions by U.S./ allied entities in the realm of information operations and strategic communications? Several angles to study could be to research the history of using terror and where it has been effective in turning the population either for or against the government, examine successful counterinsurgencies and their use/work of the media dealing with terrorism, review how a government can gain support during a period of terrorism, and identify groups by the type of terror tools used (e.g., Taliban uses different tools than Al Qaeda) in order to

point blame. Products of the study could be to develop training tools for mobile training teams to present to host nations, develop training tools for use in military education, and to review/update, as required, information operations/PSYOP tools.

**H21. How to conduct strategic human targeting of terrorist organizations' senior leadership**

Does strategic human targeting of senior leadership truly affect the organization? Research should look at how many toppled/seized leaders have led to the demise of an organizational whole—Is it possible to pull the head from a snake and not have a Hydra? Use social network analysis and other organizational analysis techniques to characterize a selected terrorist organization. Use computational tools, as appropriate, combined with qualitative analyses. Identify and justify key targets. Suggest possible organizational reactions based on your analysis if the targets are eliminated. The value of this study will lie in lessons learned from the combination of a range of analytic techniques. It is possible that the most valuable outcomes will be identification of what existing analytic approaches cannot tell us (either applied singly or in combination) and the identification of areas of theoretical or computational development.

**H22. What strategy should the U.S. pursue to break the power jihadist terrorist hold over third world population and what is the role of SOF in this strategy?**

Despite all the effort U.S. policy makers and media pundits have contributed to talking about the problem, no one has produced a satisfactory answer. Because this question has not been properly examined and appropriately answered, the U.S. largely plays a game of “whack a mole” in a global landscape where the moles look like everyone else. If insights to an answer were developed and successfully advocated, the potential for success in the counterterrorism effort would increase exponentially. Obviously, such a strategy would involve multiple instruments and might even change the classical way in which some instruments like to view themselves. What will be the SOF role?

**H23. Should there be a single DoD campaign plan to address all violent extremist organizations, or should there be multiple plans that address each organization individually?**

There is currently one DoD campaign plan for the counterterrorism effort, broadly addressing all violent extremist organizations. Is it

appropriate to maintain a single campaign, or are terrorist organizations so different in structure and integration (or nonintegration) into various cultures and societies that different campaign plans need to be developed to address each? In a broader campaign plan, is it possible to account for the different organizations by simply adding annexes or appendices? For a broad campaign plan, is it necessary to provide the level of analysis and detail related to each violent extremist organization that might be better expressed in separate plans?

**H24. Lessons not learned in irregular warfare (IW) to date**

The counterterrorism effort has occurred for 5 years in Iraq and 6 years in Afghanistan. Since their respective beginnings, much experience has been garnered in both countries. While many lessons have been learned, much has yet to be realized. These unlearned lessons need to be explored to determine if they are of value for learning and if so, what lessons are we missing or failing to understand? Information operations do not seem to be effective, campaign planning continues to be conducted in the absence of the host nations, and operations are still being run without complete integration. Who needs to learn these lessons and why they are important may help in the successful desired outcomes to these current conflicts.

**H25. Revolutionaries and criminal groups**

The lines are blurring between insurgents, revolutionaries, militias, and gangsters. The focus of this topic would be on their similarities, differences, and why they are natural partners. FARC represents a model, but the question is whether they are the model for the future. Does the consolidation of these groups necessitate a rethinking of key overseas contingency operations/counterterrorism and counter-insurgency doctrine?

**H26. Organizing interagency for IW campaigns**

The current efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrate the struggle in interagency coordination, cooperation, and unity of effort. As these events blur into the long war, the U.S. needs to review whether an organizational structure exists to fight IW from an interagency design. Who has the lead, when do they lead, and why is an agency/organization in the leadership role? What is the process used to make the interagency design function properly? How does USSOCOM fit into the interagency design?

**H27. What is the role of strategic communications for SOF in IW?**

The roles and responsibility for strategic communication by SOF is still in the maturing process. Much misunderstanding and some competition exists between the players. Key to the issue is how to effectively synchronize the effort from the national level down to at least the operational level. Additionally, how are the disciplines of PSYOP, information operations, Public Affairs, and strategic communication linked/coordinated in the current conflict or in IW?

**H28. Clarifying the nuances between IW, stability operations, and special operations**

The lines between these terms and environments have become confusing to the general audience. Articulating them ensures their proper application. An important element of this issue is to ensure SOF is their best use within this environment.

**H29. Strategic theories on IW**

What approaches can be considered for the study of IW as a traditional (nationalistic) or nontraditional underdog. Like unconventional study, Is there merit in approaching IW from the position of the insurgent/terrorist? This writing could begin with a review of current unconventional-warfare doctrine and experience to determine if they need to be revalidated or require rethinking.

**H30. Operational art design for IW-centric campaigns**

This study should focus on the development of a format of campaign designs for SOF planners specifically and conventional planners generally. The design would be meant to ensure the proper application of SOF in the fight. This view is important because little exists to help planners, SOF, or otherwise.

**H31. Understanding police investigation and intelligence operations in IW/counterterrorism efforts**

Law enforcement, in all nations, is essential in maintaining stability throughout all levels of IW. The employment of criminals, the illegal drug industry, and insurgency all require law enforcement that must be integrated into the campaign plan of any country. One of the measures of legitimacy is the public confidence in their law enforcement and legal systems. The role of law enforcement, linkage with other security force, and their integration into plans require study.

**H32. How is IW financed and who controls the resources?**

The topic for study would include the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, how are they the same, how are they different, and are they models for future nonstate IW players? This scope includes examination of past IW funding and the constraints legitimate governments have in fighting IW.

**H33. Security Forces assistance (anti-insurgency)**

This topic would examine the effectiveness of the shape/deter phases in struggling countries. It implies that countries can identify they are facing problems, and the U.S. (or other nations) has interests to protect. This writing would include review and examination policies and programs for the counterterrorism effort and drug wars. An historical review may also be useful to determine where, when, and how the shape/deter phases have been effective.

**H34. How have affected host nations been engaged and advised on IW/counterinsurgency?**

This topic deals with combining advising and adapting based on the specific country (e.g., culture, history). Is there an art to advising and if so, what should be taught to qualify a soldier to be an advisor?

**H35. How do policy, strategy, and planning interrelate in IW?**

The topic begs for leadership in linking strategy, policy, and planning into a cohesive process. This study will help clarify the process from beginning to end, assist in the tasking of the proper organizations for the correction of missions in the proper sequence, and define an end state that is achievable.

**H36. What is the joint, common operating environment for SOF in IW?**

This study will analyze the joint and global environment to understand and ascertain distinct and unique threats, trends, and opportunities for SOF in the next decade. Recommend any force structure changes and new capabilities required as a result of this analysis.

**H37. Building Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plans for key partner nations**

This topic is one that is undefined, except for a planning guide in Appendix B of Joint Publication 3-07.1 written several years ago. A methodology for framing the situation faced by a host nation to determine an IDAD strategy is absolutely necessary. The Civil

Affairs course provides a political-social analysis guide as an initial starting point. However, it is not widely known, disseminated, or understood by the conventional military. Case studies (such as El Salvador, Iraq, and Afghanistan) to highlight success and failure in this endeavor are a good study vehicle.

**H38. Case studies of SOF creating strategic effects in IW**

This topic could be a basis for strategic special operations theory and/or serve as a primer for geographic combatant command planners. If we do not understand how to create strategic effects, SOF becomes less effective. To better understand, identify what is the range of strategic effects that might be of use to SOF—that is, how SOF produces each of those types of strategic effects, looking at case studies with effective and ineffective creation of strategic effects.

**H39. How to advise host nations engaged in IW**

Advising host-nation counterparts is a slow process (requires time). We suffer with time conditions that cause pushing rather than guiding counterparts to a resolution of a problem. A need exists to teach the art of advising, much like what was done during the Vietnam era, yet no time goes to adequately train advisors. The other condition of time is length of service “in the box” by the respective services. These vary from 4 to 6 months to a year. Nothing effective can be achieved in 4 to 6 months. Advising/mentoring tours need to be at least 18 months, and an effective handoff to the incoming advisor is necessary. Finding and interviewing Vietnam-era advisors would greatly benefit this study.

**H40. Strategic decision making for IW: Case studies on IW success and failure**

Understanding how key decisions are made at the national level helps prepare for the next conflict/incident. Who made what recommendations to whom with regard to force structure, size, objectives of war in Afghanistan? For example, examine transitions of the lead effort from CIA to SOF to conventional force to NATO. How did we get approval to use CIA predators to strike terrorist targets in Yemen? Analyze recent case studies of IW to understand the decision-making process, planning mistakes, incorrect assumptions, and mission effectiveness. Operational planners will use the case-study analysis to improve the planning process. Possible case studies include Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, U.S. assistance to Ethiopian forces engaged in Somalia, effectiveness of Operation

Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara targeting AQIM, JTF-510 and the ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT) origins, methods and effectiveness. The purpose of this study is to capture lessons learned from recent, relevant IW activities to better understand national decision-making process, accuracy of planning assumptions, and effectiveness of operations to improve future operations.

**H41. Various roles for SOF in helping host-nation governments to develop the capability for self governance**

This task may be beyond the means of the DoD, let alone SOF. DoD SOF can certainly provide initial support, based on the short-term Post-Conflict Reconstruction (PCR) objectives developed by the Department of State (DoS) Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). However, that support should be based on a plan of providing for the DoS and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to assume responsibility for the development program as soon as the security situation allows. Given this stipulation and the S/CRS PCR objectives, what steps can SOF take to ensure that indigenous political structures are on track to support U.S. objectives in a country as the security situation is resolved? How do SOF liaise with and coordinate for the arrival of the DoS and USAID representatives? What are the measures of effectiveness to be agreed upon by both DoD/SOF and DoS/USAID that will determine when transition of mission responsibility occurs? Upon transition of mission responsibility, how much stay-behind support do SOF provide?

**H42. Building partner capability and capacity: What do our partner nations need?**

It is difficult to create an effective capacity in much lesser developed partner nations if no legal and judicial system is developing. Perhaps the best approach would be to train partners as follows:

- a. How to interact with other parts of their government to develop the lines of communication between military, Intel, social agencies, and the political class
- b. How to include partner contingents in foreign operations, where they will be free to develop their skills outside their home environment, and where indigenous power relationships hinder their operation.

- c. Discuss the simple differences between capability and capacity, perhaps using the elements of national power as a framework. This writing would be a study of *before* and *after*—what a given nation had in the way of capacity and capability before SOF involvement (e.g., FID, military training team, and/or joint/combined exchange training) and how the capacity and capability differed after the interaction with U.S. SOF. Examine certain indicators of capacity and capability—for example, strength levels, operations conducted, and human-rights issues.

**H43. What strategic factors are key to success or failure in IW?**

In the 21st century environment, IW is assumed to play a significant role. If true, what is really important in regard to IW at the strategic level for the U.S. and its adversaries, friends, and other state and nonstate actors? What is important would be the key strategic factors. A generic discussion or model that helps strategists and planners to grasp both the need and potential characteristics of such factors would contribute significantly to a theory of IW and help define the roles and capabilities of both SOF and conventional forces. Discussing the *ends* that ensure balance with *ways* and *means* and adapting as needed, success will generally be realized. Strategic factors would be maintaining will to accomplish the job, maintaining alliances, guaranteeing legitimacy of the friendly regime, separating populace from effects of adversary, and destroying or neutralizing the enemy's message, leadership, and key organizational structures.

**H44. Are Rangers and MARSOC contributors to the IW fight?**

Research and analyze the role of specialized units conducting long-range, long-duration operations behind enemy lines or in denied territory, with particular focus on U.S. Marines and Army Rangers. Determine why these roles no longer exist doctrinally within these two forces and propose recommendations to doctrine and missions for providing more capability to USSOCOM. Historically, Rangers have been used both for long-duration raids behind enemy lines and for extended reconnaissance patrols. MARSOC's added capabilities to USSOCOM do not include their historical role in raiding behind enemy lines. IW requires specialized forces to operate for long duration behind enemy lines or in denied enemy territory (i.e., hunter-killer teams). Neither MARSOC nor the Rangers currently provide this capability.

**H45. Conventional/SOF cooperation**

Conventional forces and SOF have coordinated and cooperated to an unprecedented degree in Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, SOF have developed a reliance on conventional forces for certain battle-field operating systems (e.g., maintenance, logistics, and quick reaction forces). Discuss the impact of the potential drawdown of GPF in theater on this reliance on SOF units in the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

**H46. Embassy role in U.S. Government IW effort**

This topic would explore initiatives for restructuring the DoS—Do they go far enough to address the requirements for the long war/persistent conflict of the 21st century? Should more of a regional hierarchy exist to DoS than independent embassies that can report directly to the President of the U.S.? How can/should SOF better work with embassies in pursuit of U.S. interests in the long war? How can interagency-SOF synergy at the embassy level better achieve U.S. interests?

**H47. Legislative requirements for effective interagency campaigns**

This topic would review current and pending legislation required to establish organizations and authorities to effectively conduct IW and large-scale FID for combating terrorism. It could also suggest who should write this interagency campaign.

**H48. Integrating interagency efforts to build partner capacity**

This topic could examine what interagency partnerships exist today or use historical, regional, and nation-specific Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) plans to frame the process that integrates interagency efforts. The FID design should be developed to force whole-of-government activities around IDAD plans, thereby causing actions that meet objectives to help friendly nations protect themselves from lawlessness, insurgency, and subversion.

**H49. Interagency and SOF minifield exercises in IW environment**

This study objective is, How do we *operationalize* FID? How do we begin shaping the campaign of unconventional warfare for long-term, persistent conflict focused on U.S. embassy direction? Specific tactical DoD units and other U.S. government agencies seldom meet—let alone exercise—together prior to real-world operations in a consistent and meaningful way. Thus both sides struggle to overcome different cultural perspectives, organizational structures,

and operating procedures to achieve the operational objectives in support of national objectives.

**H50. Does IW suggest major restructuring of the U.S. government?**

This topic would determine how we enhance cooperation among institutions, particularly U.S. agencies that will create a national security *community of interest*. This community would include military, diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence, aid lobbies, and other interests.

**H51. Who are the natural supporters of IW in the military, Congress, executive branch, academia and intellectual communities, business community, and populace at home and abroad?**

This topic begs two questions: Who are the natural supporters and the adversaries of IW and why? This study would provide the SOF community these initial benefits:

- a. Basis for understanding the resistance to the concept of IW
- b. Ideas about how to pursue convincing arguments
- c. How to build constituencies for gaining the necessary support and resources to prepare for such a future.

**H52. What are the divisions or types of interagency efforts?**

Does it make sense to divide interagency efforts into groups: domestic (relationship in the U.S.), international (within a given host nation and to include coalition partners), and regional (the host nation and its regional partners)? What degree of disconnect exists between interagency coordination, at least overseas? Give any areas of interest for SOF and interagency toward understanding the desired end states of developing military plans and operations. Where are the regional relationships located—that is, those that may be more indirect in their supported nation (surrounded by hostile nations vs. friendly nations)?

**H53. Resourcing essential 21st century strategic capacity: Deployable civilian departments and agencies**

This study will address measures needed to enable various government departments (e.g., State, Commerce, and Justice) to train and equip personnel toward supporting U.S. policy goals and related activities in the international environment. U.S. policy goals require applying all the elements of power that are represented by the various government agencies, not just the military. Examine what is important to SOF because they must interact with various government agencies overseas in accomplishing their mission.

**H54. Country team approach**

In an era of IW, SOF may find itself deployed in a number of countries and supporting the ambassador's country team. Does SOF need specific representation on the country team or is the normal representation sufficient? In either case, how would this work? What interaction is appropriate or required? Who is in charge of what? How are disputes resolved? How can this support be revived, updated, or replaced to ensure that U.S. players in a given country are working for common causes?

**H55. What are the evolving standards for judging legitimacy made by various types of state and nonstate actors?**

This topic goes to the heart of U.S. foreign policy—that is, who to support. Are some terrorist's groups "legitimate" in the eyes of their fellow citizens (Kosovo)? The evaluation of a potentially supported group would implicitly point out what needs to be done to build legitimacy. Problems of understanding legitimacy for a given society and what is acceptable from our perspective requires further study as well. Understanding legitimacy from an economic point of view is another challenge to be investigated. One of the little appreciated aspects of globalization is an evolving conceptualization of legitimacy. In power relationships, legitimacy is important to *great* powers because it defines what must be done to sustain a world order favorable to them. The *small* powers and nonstate actors see legitimacy as a means to limit the actions of great powers.

**H56. Cultural awareness**

Understanding of culture will assist in finding an enemy's weakness, especially in IW where the enemy will resort to any action to achieve objectives. The need is to understand what is acceptable to that enemy, what is not, what his cultural constraints are, and what does not constraint his actions. This information will permit development of successful courses of action. Population's trust/will is culturally based, and the effective understanding of it is critical to a successful outcome. Three areas of potential study follow: a) regional specific information for a culture and population, b) generic information on awareness, and c) tools to rapidly get specific information on a culture to operators.

**H57. Are culture, religion, and worldview factors in motivating IW?**

Cultural education must include orientation on comparative analysis of religions of the world. Americans have a secular culture; some

estimates put 80 percent of the rest of the world as more faith based. Many of the conflicts throughout world history have been motivated by religion. Warrior culture is the way in which violence is valued and managed by the collectivity, and it varies from culture to culture. Research how each group handles violence and threats against the collectivity; two example questions follow:

- a. Is fighting a recognized road to high status?
- b. Are fighters separated from the group in some formal way—as we do with our military—or are they integrated and interspersed?
- c. Are there forms of warfare/fighting seen as higher status than others?

#### **H58. Cultural knowledge in IW campaign planning**

This lack of cultural understanding also has led to confusion. Because some cultures do not like to be confrontational, their acknowledgement is believed to be agreement. The fact, however, is they are only agreeing that they *understand* a position or proposal vs. *accept* it. The lack of cultural understanding is a handicap in achieved outcomes by set time schedules. Examine the need to understand the actors in the environments that the campaign will be conducted. How can this lead to some understanding of the motivations of these actors? How can this better prepare planners to tailor the campaign plan toward influencing those actors in accordance with the commander's intent?

#### **H59. Regional studies**

Review regional studies to better meet the needs of the combatant commanders. Courses that look at the regions from a strategic and operational perspective are desired, illustrating the linkage between the countries within a given commander's area of responsibility as well as the adjacent countries. Many of the countries currently engaged in the conflict were drawn in Europe and do not reflect what is occurring in either the country or the region. Ethnic groups straddle those borders and are unrecognized by the people, and the numbers of languages further complicate the region. This writing is an opportunity to leverage the revamped discipline of geography, which is now more than maps and physical terrain. Geography is now a multidisciplinary study area involving traditional geography as well as aspects of sociology, geology, political science, and economics (and some cultural anthropology may also exist).

**H60. Ethics for SOF behavior: What are the first principles that do not change?**

This paper would address behavioral expectations—including cultural accommodation in the field—that may conflict with traditional military ethics as taught during formation at the service academies and other personnel acquisition programs. What major issues exist, and how are they accommodated? How are outcomes affected by cultural awareness?

**H61. Utilizing “SOF for Life” to rapidly and flexibly increase cultural awareness**

The U.S. has countless former SOF warriors in Iraq and Afghanistan. The topic would be how to capture and share the knowledge, not only for the current operations but also as a database. How can they be engaged in-country and upon return to the U.S.? There probably are many ways to extract the information that they have acquired while in-country. That information could be used to better support the deploying troops. The result would be a valuable and flexible reservoir of cultural knowledge combined with SOF experience. What are the pros and cons of utilizing this resource? Do legal, experiential, procedural, cultural, or other barriers preclude it?

**H62. The realities of human terrain (HT): Clarifying what SOF means by HT and how that applies to strategy, planning, and operations**

This topic can focus on defining HT, how it is applied, and determining its benefits. Examination of its outcomes can also be considered and whether better ways to accomplish this mission exist.

**H63. SOF and cultural engagement**

The SOF community has cultural challenges; a few examples follow:

- a. One “big mother” service relationship with SOF subculture
- b. Interagency cultural issues with SOF as well as the nongovernmental organization environment
- c. Cultural concerns for the host nation and its regional role.

These different cultures all require a different approach/strategy. Examine one or more of the cultures, balanced against the SOF warrior culture. These challenges could be approached like engagements to ensure that the right applications of resources are used for the desired result.

**H64. Culturally attuned engagement**

One of the tenets of the USSOCOM mission is to “emphasize culturally attuned engagement.” Analyze the critical need for cultural skills (not just language skills) and discuss specific ways to enhance these skills. Give lessons learned from deployments, advantages of forward-based SOF elements, and leveraging of educational opportunities (e.g., fellowships and exchange assignments).

**H65. Understanding the underworld: Black markets, gray markets, and how to exploit them to U.S. advantage**

This topic would focus on the study of criminal activities and how they are similar to that of insurgent activities. Further, it could compare activities of FARC and that of the Taliban/drug lords in Afghanistan. Does a transfer of tactics and techniques occur between terrorist groups? Does a link exist between crime and terrorism in the early phases or is this aspect a natural progression?

**H66. How is strategy developed for special operations and what is the framework for such development?**

This question should consider the operational role of SOF in each of the phases (0-V) and assess the effectiveness of their employment in those phases. Afghanistan and Iraq could serve as case studies. The unconventional warfare operations in Afghanistan are excellent examples of pre-phase III operations. They lead into two questions:

- a. How does the U.S. government as well as DoD consider SOF use in all campaign phases?
- b. What are effective employment techniques in terms of strategy and operational art for SOF/interagency synchronization to include measures of effectiveness?

**H67. What is the nature of conflict in the 21st century and what is the role for SOF?**

This study will consider the viability of technology, impacts of cultural/religion, and other variables. What tools can be developed for early detection of an irregular conflict? Will the battlefield be economic rather than terrain oriented? How will SOF be employed in an economic conflict?

**H68. Why is Phase 0 important and how can SOF support the geographic combatant commander strategy: Informing the joint conventional community**

Phase 0 can be described in terms of anti-insurgency, in the same manner that the Army delineates between antiterrorism and counterterrorism. Phase 0 is rapidly becoming an outdated term.

**H69. Develop SOF internships with Fortune 500 companies in order to develop IW skill sets (marketing; influence, investigations, strategic communications)**

This topic would study the value of creating internships for SOF in successful companies or organizations to develop a knowledge base of nonmilitary functions (e.g., power-economic and diplomatic). Strategic communication could be explored from a marketing point of view. Strategic thinking at the multinational should also be considered. Computer operation and electronic transfer of funds could be examined because are often the terrorist's means of moving illegal money around the world. Also respond to the question, What academic credit should be granted from the internship (M.A. or Ph.D.)?

**H70. Integrating SOF and "big service" requirements/systems**

Survey and analyze current U.S. and allied approaches to integrating SOF requirements and equipment into "big service" requirements and equipment. Include recommendations and associated impact analysis of potential alternative approaches.

**H71. Counterinsurgency methods**

Treating this new era of conflict as a form of global insurgency implies that counterinsurgency methods are fundamental in combating the new form of transnational terrorism. These methods include the following:

- a. Focus on protecting and securing the population
- b. Politically and physically marginalizing the insurgents, winning the support and cooperation of at-risk populations by targeted political and development measures, and conducting precise intelligence-led special operations to eliminate critical enemy elements with minimal collateral damage.

**H72. SOF role in current/future Afghanistan**

In the context of the U.S. national interest, examine the SOF impact and effects of the war in Afghanistan and recommend strategic options based on this 4 to 5 year assessment. Which elements of U.S. national power can/should be applied there to counter drug production, empower the national government, and continue the progress made since 2002?

**H73. Impact of crossing borders to conduct military operations**

Assess the actual impact of arresting religious leaders and/or entering into mosques/madrassas as a tactic against Islamic extremists. The thesis posed via this topic is that when we are oversensitive and overstate Middle East sensitivities, we hamstring our efforts. Costs and benefits are associated with this type of approach. Can the real protagonists of terror be stopped using this method? Consider U.S. public opinion, reprisals against the U.S., reaction of coalition partners, and other factors.

**H74. Maritime SOF and overseas contingency operations**

Explore and develop a detailed concept of operations for maritime SOF involved in counterterrorism efforts. Evaluate the statement that the vast majority of weapons of mass destruction proliferation transport is maritime. Pay particular attention to the force structure, basing implications, and logistics support required for Naval Special Warfare and U.S. Marine Corps SOF. Other areas that could be addressed are joint command and control, relationships with other governmental agencies, and interoperability with coalition forces.

**H75. Countering ideological support for terrorism (CIST)**

The concept of CIST is integral to the U.S. government and military strategy for counterterrorism efforts. Investigate the tenets of CIST and provide an awareness of the culture, customs, language, and philosophy of the enemy. Analyze measures to more effectively counter the extremist ideology driving terrorists and providing cover for them to operate within their society.

**H76. SOF and HUMINT/SIGINT/IMINT**

SOF success is inextricably linked to the quality and quantity of intelligence professionals. Examine the current and future capabilities of one of the aspects of intelligence crucial to SOF. A sample of the subsets studied under this intentionally broad topic follows: how to better share data collected, improved ways to use geospatial products, how a conventional intelligence soldier becomes a SOF

intelligence professional, the synchronization of various systems, or new SOF intelligence-support structures.

**H77. Roles of SOF and nongovernmental organizations in complex humanitarian emergencies**

SOF have played an increasingly critical role in the international response to complex humanitarian emergencies. The liaison between these two elements requires that SOF understand the diversity of nongovernmental organization (NGO) objectives and organizational cultures. This topic could take an approach of the division of labor involved or education of SOF (e.g., on NGO capabilities, limitations). Give advantages and disadvantages of “collaborating” with NGOs. Include a discussion of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international organizations. The relationships between SOF and other U.S. contractors could also be explored.

**H78. Islamic and Islamist movements in the Sahel region of Africa, West Africa, and Central Africa**

According to most experts in this region, this area of Africa is a safe haven for terrorists, replete with failed or failing states, and with conditions ripe for insurgency. Analyze the Islamic strongholds in the region and examine religious conflict and its implications for regional stability in Africa. Determine if a U.S. national interest exists there. If so, offer suggestions for development of democracy and predict the impact of SOF involvement, either in a FID or Civil Affairs role. Include the evolution of professionalism in African militaries in the region and the future of modernization in African military forces.

**H79. Future role of contracting and SOF**

Should USSOCOM expand capacity—for example, in training, force protection, and convoy security—through the use of contractor personnel? Analyze issues deemed germane to this concept—for example, resourcing, legal ramifications, and physical readiness.

**H80. Should SOF be given Title 50 responsibilities?**

This Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) thesis would address the topic in enough detail to fully answer the question, which would include the following subareas of investigation:

- a. What are the facets of Title 10 responsibility for SOF?
- b. What are the facets of Title 50 for covert agencies?

- c. What are the unique aspects of SOF missions that are conducted under Title 10 authority?
- d. What are the unique aspects of missions conducted under authority of Title 50 responsibilities?
- e. What authorities would have to change under both Titles 10 and 50 to allow U.S. SOF to conduct covert-action missions that are currently being conducted under Title 50?
- f. If these authorities have to be changed, is Congress willing?
- g. What would be the impacts on force structure, personnel requirements, training, and equipment for SOF conducting Title 50 missions?
- h. What would the impact be on other governmental agencies associated with this change of mission?

The magnitude of the study suggests a group effort (5 to 7 personnel). Each member of the group would be responsible for a portion of the research, such as Title 10 responsibilities for SOF, Title 50 responsibilities for other government agencies, SOF missions conducted under Title 10 authority, and covert-action missions conducted under Title 50 authority.

**H81. Oral histories of SOF leaders for publication/professional development**

Provide a collection of personal SOF accounts throughout recent history. While this perspective has been done (e.g., in support of briefings and courses), a research-paper-length compendium will yield not only lessons learned but aspects of strategy, revolutionary thinking, and command-and-control issues for future planners and commanders from interviews with senior SOF leaders. The finished product will benefit SOF leaders as a handbook on relationships with interagency and coalition partners and furnish a range of considerations for SOF noncommissioned officers and officers. Some travel may be involved, or the collection could be gleaned from individuals living near the respective PME schools; this topic is ideal for a U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC) or School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) student because of access to a wide range of distinguished SOF senior leaders supporting the SOF elective at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

**H82. SOF and Joint Fires**

Review current thoughts and insights on integration of Joint Fires across the spectrum of conflict in special operations, focusing on concepts of how Joint Fires support SOF core tasks and small-scale counterinsurgency. Discuss the capabilities needed in the future operating environment to provide timely, accurate, and deconflicted Joint Fires support.

**H83. Capabilities of services' SOF logistical units/elements**

After examining each of the services' logistical requirements, analyze the feasibility and costs/benefits of a joint SOF logistics command. Propose a framework for this organization, determine roles and missions, interface with existing service logistical units, and so forth.

**H84. SOF senior leader competencies for joint warfare: Preparing for joint SOF combat command**

Explore organizing Joint Special Operations Task Forces (JSOTFs) at the O6 level of command and the associated leader competencies required, based on actual experiences of recent commanders of combined JSOTFs. Offer solutions of successful wartime leadership techniques for ongoing and near-future senior SOF leaders, anticipating wartime commands during counterterrorism efforts. Derive key lessons learned from the research for possible incorporation into current leader development methodologies.

**H85. Cross area-of-responsibility operations**

At the operational level, command and control as well as support relationships need to be well-defined early on in the operation. Examine the supported/supporting relationships between USSOCOM and conventional forces belonging to the regional combatant commander and/or Joint Task Force commander. This topic could be discussed in the context of tactical operations, then at the operational level.

**H86. U.S. national security initiatives in Africa and the counterterrorism effort**

Address the question of creating an African unified command or a U.S. subunified command within Africa in order to protect U.S. national interests. Analyze a proposal to establish a political-military organization, such as an African regional Joint Task Force/Special

Operations Command within Africa, to promote democratic initiatives and influence regional stability. Discuss roles and capabilities for Civil Affairs/Civil-Military Operations (CA/CMO) and inter-agency partners, framing operational preparation of environment throughout Africa, FID opportunities in the region, and the rising U.S. national interests in Africa.

**H87. Effective PSYOP in a mostly illiterate population**

Determine the effectiveness of a full PSYOP campaign in an area where most of the intended audience is illiterate. Using detailed analysis, develop possible operations—taking in account the literacy and technology of targeted audiences—for future PSYOPs in these environments. How do we reach and educate such audiences?



