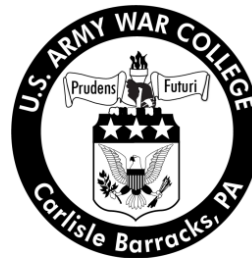


# Strategy Research Project

## Building the Human Domain Multi-Tool: Recruiting for Special Forces

by

Colonel Fredrick Charles Dummar  
United States Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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## **Abstract**

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The purpose of this paper is to describe a framework for the future operating environment in terms that might help to illuminate Special Forces operational and organizational requirements for manpower. Special Forces will continue to be used as an instrument of national power in complex environments requiring units that can build trust with our allies while increasing capacity and capability where required. The premier organization in the U.S. military for operating in a culturally attuned manner in a politically acceptable small footprint and able to solve complex problems and apply lethal military force discreetly is Special Forces. The emerging human domain concept is a potential adjunct to the current domain framework that will permit doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF) reviews to both codify the requirements and drive the doctrine of Special Operations Forces (SOF) and general purpose force (GPF) interdependence. The complexities of the human domain, and the power of diversity to enhance operational effectiveness in this complex environment, should be used to drive Special Forces recruiting.





## **Building the Human Domain Multi-Tool: Recruiting for Special Forces**

The degree of change in warfare across generations and the unpredictability of the next opponent are often topics of debate. These debates, both within and outside the U.S. Department of Defense, inform and shape the doctrine and strategies adopted by the U.S. Army to man, train and equip the future force.

A few common themes in global security seem almost certain. Humans will continue to live on land, the United States will attempt to ensure the security of human endeavors in concert with our national interests, and mastering population-centered tactics will remain the near term focus driving the evolution of U.S. Army and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) doctrine.

The modern global environment may not be the very same environment, with accompanying strategic concerns, that led the U.S. Army to establish Special Forces in 1952, but over the past 60 years Special Forces (SF) have excelled in uncertain environments. These environments, where SF excelled, never fit cleanly into military doctrine. The original veterans of the World War II Office of Strategic Service that built Special Forces in 1952 were tasked to execute Unconventional Warfare. As defined by the Army, the mission for the first of the Special Forces Groups was “to infiltrate by land, sea or air, deep into enemy-occupied territory and organize the resistance/guerrilla potential to conduct Special Forces operations, with emphasis on guerrilla warfare.”<sup>1</sup> As Colonel Aaron Bank, the first Special Forces Commander put it, “our training included many more complex subjects and was geared to entirely different, more difficult, comprehensive missions and complex operations.”<sup>2</sup> Over the past 60 years, both the Unconventional Warfare and the Irregular Warfare environments that Special Forces have been tasked to operate in have been described as complex, ambiguous, nebulous,

and disjointed along with unconventional and irregular. The struggle to describe the operating environment(s), the actors and the interest at play at the margins of Army general purpose force (GPF) activity is intermittently a doctrinal dilemma for the Army, and USSOCOM, despite the fact that Special Forces units, and the Soldiers that serve in them have a proud history of military accomplishment, unique problem solving, and crisis resolution. Special Forces operational detachments have been the tool of choice for the U.S. Army and USSOCOM when the U.S. military is tasked to operate in an environment that requires cultural understanding, language skills, discrete use of force, and the ability to solve complex problems. Past glories notwithstanding, a focus on the future operational environment is worth considering in order to both evolve U.S. Army doctrine to account for the role of Special Forces and to ensure Special Forces operational requirements are accurately reflected and resourced. Special Forces Detachments will continue to take the lead for U.S. actions in uncertain environments, and they must be manned in a manner that enhances their capability.

As long as there have been Special Forces Soldiers, there has been debate about what type of Soldier was best suited to work in complex environments. The first Special Operations Forces (SOF) truth is that Humans are more important than Hardware.<sup>3</sup> If we want to select and train the right humans, we need to analyze and attempt to understand where they will go, what we expect them to achieve, and how we might select and train the right people. Visualization of the environment is a critical component in driving Special Forces recruiting with an operational focus, vice a process driven by bureaucratic concerns for efficiency, or anecdotal and outdated perceptions of effectiveness.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a framework for the future operating environment in terms that might help to illuminate Special Forces operational and organizational requirements for manpower. The specific type of manpower required will be used to identify approaches for recruiting, and selecting Special Force Soldiers.

#### Domains...The Domain Framework Needs Some Does Work

US military power today is unsurpassed on the land and sea and in the air, space, and cyberspace. The individual Services have evolved capabilities and competencies to maximize their effectiveness in their respective domains. Even more important, the ability to integrate these diverse capabilities into a joint whole that is greater than the sum of the Service parts is an unassailable American strategic advantage.<sup>4</sup>

This observation that the United States Military is unsurpassed in the domains listed by Admiral Mullen (former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)) might leave lingering doubts about the veracity of U.S. doctrine. Are the domains, as joint doctrine has defined them, limiting our ability to properly identify and prepare for threats to U.S. national interests? Are the domains useful aside from serving as a framework for Title 10 resourcing, and Department of Defense budget battles? If the domains are useful, and if the United States can dominate the domains, as indicated by the former CJCS, and yet we still find decisive victory illusive...then, are we missing a domain? A thorough description of the domains will accurately drive the resourcing cycle within the Department of Defense. Missing even a single component of the environment, or to use the existing framework omitting a domain will lead to an unbalanced military force. Enemies of the United States will often capitalize where we are least prepared, and while we might prefer our enemies to fight us in “regular” fight they would be foolish to do so.

The irregular fight, described in the 2010 edition of the JOE, frustrates the traditional elements of military power, designed to operate in the traditionally defined physical domains (Air, Sea, and Land).

The second scenario of particular significance confronting the Joint Force is the failure to recognize and fully confront the irregular fight that we are in ... What is of critical importance in irregular war is the ability to provide security to the local population with the purpose of denying the enemy the ability to survive among the people, allowing local police and military forces to build up sufficient strength to control their area of responsibility. Moreover, the Joint Force should contribute to the development of political legitimacy so that local police and military forces are acting with the support of the local population and not against it. The security side of the mission requires a deep understanding of local culture, politics, history, and language. In all cases the use of firepower will be a necessary feature, but will be balanced with non-lethal activities. Equally important will be the provision of high quality advisors to indigenous forces.<sup>5</sup>

The current U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Odierno, has been referring to a domain not currently described in Joint or Army doctrine. He underscored the importance of this new domain, the human domain, in his speech at the George C. Marshall Leadership seminar in April 2012.

We must remain engaged around the world. We must also remember that conflict is a human endeavor, ultimately won or lost in the human domain. The Army operates in this human domain which is the most important factor in a complex environment, and you will all be leaders in that domain.<sup>6</sup>

The former Commanding General of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Major General (MG) Bennett Sacolick, further defined the human domain in an article in Army Magazine in June of 2012.

The human domain is the totality of the physical, cultural and social environments that influence human behavior to the extent that success of any military operation or campaign depends on the application of unique capabilities that are designed to fight and win population-centric conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to defining the human domain, MG Sacolick opines further in the article, “Special operations-critical capabilities and associated doctrine prepare our Soldiers to work among diverse populations in a culturally attuned manner.”<sup>8</sup> These senior leader statements are not just passing thoughts, or intellectual musings without purpose. These statements were intended to provide guidance, and to drive doctrine writers in a new direction. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) recognized the requirement for a new construct with a statement in the latest Army Capstone Document: “Current doctrine does not adequately address the moral, cognitive, social, and physical aspects of human populations in conflict.”<sup>9</sup> The capstone document also recognizes that (a) the Army must account for the human aspects of war to operate more effectively in the land domain; (b) the current doctrinal construct for unified land operations does not fully account for activities that build partner capacity and capability or build long term defense relationships that shape the operational environment; and (c) the Army must achieve special operations and conventional forces interdependence to more effectively counter future threats and shape the operational environment.<sup>10</sup>

The TRADOC document, despite a reluctance to add the human domain to the existing framework, is closely nested with USSOCOM. The Commander USSOCOM, Admiral McRaven, has described the human domain as “the totality of the physical, cultural and social environments that influence human behavior. Success in this domain, however, will not be dictated by traditional formations of ground, naval or air forces. Instead, success of any peacetime operation or wartime mission in the human domain will depend on establishing trust between partners. Once trust is established,

one can then apply unique capabilities that are designed to assess, analyze, operate and prevail in population centric struggles.”<sup>11</sup>

A separation of the land and human domains might allow the U.S. Army to focus forces for manning, training and equipping while retaining interdependence of General Purpose Forces and Special Operations Forces. A further visualization of the complexities of the human domain will be helpful in framing the environment to drive human requirements.

### The Complexities of the Human Domain

The definition of war in the land domain, driving Army doctrine, was always closely tied to a framework describing war between Westphalian states (with standing Armies). The GPF Army’s *raison d’être* was thusly explained in the latest capstone document as the “principal land force, organized, trained, and equipped for prompt and sustained combat operations to defeat enemy land forces and to seize, hold, and defend land areas.”<sup>12</sup> The more complex reality of the wars that the U.S. Army has fought and will continue to fight, against insurgent groups and non-state actors are wars against a diverse set of individuals that defy the traditional applications of military force. These individual actors commit acts of aggression against the United States in multiple domains with various and tenuous legal and military status, and they will continue to both frustrate our ability to prosecute, target, and to determine treatment of individuals that are arrested, or captured. The Army and USSOCOM must capture battlefield solutions, and retain them in a doctrinal framework that allows consistent application of Army/USSOCOM resources to man, train and equip for both the traditional concept of the land domain, and the “something else” that senior military leaders are wrestling with. In this particular case, the human domain is a conceptual framework to retain hard

earned lessons against elusive enemies. The Army has often developed wartime concepts to deal with the realities of insurgencies, illegal combatants, guerillas, and radical ideologies, but the Army has never integrated the solutions into the domain framework. Expanding the doctrinal definition of land power and the land domain to include the totality of human interactions stretches the Army too thin. These concepts have also previously eluded our Doctrine, Organization, Training, Leadership and education, Material, Personnel and Facilities (DOTMLPF) reviews and acquisition strategies to properly man, train and resource the totality of units to generate land power for the land and human domains. If we are able to capture the complexity that is the human domain, it will be a recognition that at the edges of human competitiveness, and belligerent behavior in the land domain is a complex mix of actors and motivations that require adaptive and uniquely crafted organizations specifically optimized for the human domain. The GPF Army must be no less adaptive, but they require specific solutions to dominate the land domain, and attempts to redesign them for the human domain or to stretch their doctrine and training concepts to cover the entire spectrum of human and land domains will both rob the Army of capability and diffuse scarce resources unnecessarily.

The USSOCOM Commander is quick to point out that operating in the human domain is a SOF core competency. In his words, “it is where our language training, cultural skills and small military footprint all lend themselves to developing the military-to-military trust necessary for success.”<sup>13</sup> The Army may sometimes struggle to land the heavy right hand based on complex human factors, but the heavy right hand is still required. The evolution of Army doctrine to include the human domain must come with a

simultaneous realization that Heavy Brigade Combat Teams, Stryker BCTs, Airborne BCTs, and Special Operations Forces should not try to cover the same ground. This ludicrous statement referencing the range of capability within units is intended to drive home the point that every Army unit should not be tasked to train against the full spectrum of conflict.

Army doctrine has been unsatisfying and at times unhelpful with regard to the aspects of the complexities involved in the human domain, and where these complexities fit in the doctrinal framework. The human domain is complex, but terms like low intensity conflict and operations other than war miss the mark. The world is often a nuanced set of ill-defined categorizations of individual actors committing acts of war and/or criminal acts that affect U.S. interests and influence U.S. policies. The pervasive presence of news-media, citizen-generated news content, and social media create a powerful force for change in a world with failing states, state like actors, powerful transnational groups, and radicalized ideologies. Complex and rapidly changing information, and a complex mix of individual actors require adaptive organizations with unique skill sets. The nature of the actors affecting U.S. national interests often eludes targeting criteria and frustrates the application of land power. Clarity is required to understand the nature of who or what the U.S. might be fighting when declaring war (*jus ad bellum* concerns), and in order to ensure that the various elements of U.S. natural power are used effectively and justly to deal with the various threats to national interests (*jus in bello* concerns). A detailed understanding of the nature of the modern battlefield, and the interdependence of military units with varied domain capabilities, is a requirement. The ability to identify, understand and develop strategies for individuals in



at least the following ten categories will serve as a point of departure for understanding the complexities of building partner capacity and applying military force:

- 1) Combatant/Soldier: A member of a recognized Army, this individual is subject to attack at any time (unless wounded or captured), and has war rights if captured.<sup>14</sup>
- 2) Guerilla: A member of an insurgency; when they wear uniforms, carry arms openly (or) have the mass support of the population they are combatants, but if they do not meet these criteria then they are either an illegal combatant or an assassin.<sup>15</sup> If they meet identified criteria, then are treated as a Combatant/Soldier with regard to war rights.<sup>16</sup>
- 3) Illegal Combatant: Individuals that seek to engage in the hostilities of war, or commit acts of aggression without submitting to the risks associated with the status of identification as a combatant, and that may be killed or wounded and, if captured, may be tried as war criminals for their violations. Illegal combatants are often confused with unlawful combatants or unprivileged combatants/belligerents. These later categories are civilians that directly engages in armed conflict in violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and may be detained or prosecuted under the domestic law of the detaining state for such action.<sup>17</sup> This definition by the International Committee of the Red Cross is incomplete, and requires a more robust legal underpinning for true illegal combatants.
- 4) Assassin: A person engaged in the targeted killing of Soldiers, party leaders or public official without protection from the rule of law or rights of war.<sup>18</sup>

- 5) Terrorist: A person engaged in the random killing of innocents as a way of avoiding engagement with military forces.<sup>19</sup> Based on recent history, and U.S. actions to date, this individual's rights and protections are dependent on location of act, uniformed status, and severity of act; individual can be a criminal, illegal combatant or combatant committing war crimes.
- 6) Criminal/murderer: A person who kills one or more ordinary civilians.<sup>20</sup>
- 7) Supporter (materiel, intelligence, financial) of illegal combatant /terrorist/assassin: The legal status of the illegal combatant requires further clarification to precisely establish the status of their supporters. These individuals are often ill defined during military attacks with the subsequent negative repercussions in the strategic narrative. The inability to accurately describe terrorists and assassins as combatants or illegal combatants gives these individuals a claim to noncombatant status that they do not deserve. The radicalized ideology and criminal nature of their support clearly cancels and claim they have to noncombatant immunity.
- 8) Supporter of a Guerilla: An individual that knows who the guerillas are, and provides direct support.<sup>21</sup> If in support of true Guerilla, then they are afforded the same rights as a noncombatant, or national support worker.<sup>22</sup>
- 9) National support worker (in a plant materially contributing to a war effort): Cannot be targeted by military attack, but may be injured or killed based on their proximity to legitimate military targets.<sup>23</sup>
- 10) Noncombatant: A person with rights that cannot be used for a military purpose.<sup>24</sup> This category also includes the innocent bystander of battle in

whom war takes an interest without asking consent.<sup>25</sup> A person that has done nothing, and is doing nothing that entails the loss of their rights.<sup>26</sup>

The exact nature of conflict and the status of individuals require attention to detail and advanced problem solving to operate in a manner consistent with U.S. policy while staying in concert with both our national values and national interests. This environment is still extremely lethal, may require the presence of Army GPF combat power, partner nation capability and capacity, and trust that enables the interdependence of the various organizations with their unique capabilities. Army GPF must be prepared to deal with lethal threats while operating in concert with organizations that operate against no less lethal but more elusive threats in the nooks and crannies of the human domain. The U.S. is in several distinct battles simultaneously; battles with insurgent guerillas, criminal enterprises posing as insurgents, near peer competitors in large formations, all the while targeting terrorists and a mixed bag of ideological juntas looking for territory to control. The U.S. military's most pressing concerns in the human domain are individuals that are hard to define. In the field, they are often illegal combatants that seek to blur the moral codes that guide the application of traditional land power while they attack both civilian and military targets and attempt to make defenseless civilians subject to retaliatory violence by legitimate military forces. It is a struggle to identify combatants when political power, criminal activity and military action are intimately fused with the citizenry. The most powerful land force in the world can become mired in this type of environment. This merger of political leaders, illegal soldiers and radicalized citizens is a theoretical collapse of Clausewitz's famous trinity into a single line.<sup>27</sup> When the dynamics and balance of Clausewitz's people, government and army do not exist, land

power can become frustrated. The U.S. Army has struggled with focusing traditional land power on the destruction of an opposing military force along Lines of Operation (LOOs) when the military forces will not stand and fight in a manner consistent with outdated notions of a stand-alone land domain.

The trans-national actor's ability to obfuscate the truth combined with our inability to correctly label their activity, and to determine our method of prosecution or targeting continues to hamper our efforts in harnessing land power. Organizations that declare war on the U.S. and then change tactics avoid the domains in which we are clearly dominant. Enemies of the United States simultaneously use a wide variety of tactics against U.S. interests: 1) they use terrorism tactics against our citizens, and those of our allies; 2) they use a guerilla war of movement against our military in the field when necessary; 3) they chose asymmetric guerilla tactics such as sabotage, assassination, ambush and subversion against the government and military when advantageous; 4) they initiate cyber and financial attacks against our economic interests; and 5) they finance their war effort with criminal activity.

#### The Domain Framework Expanded

The U.S. Army is moving to address, and expand, our outdated notions of land power in the land domain. The long outdated definition and characterization of the nature of war as in extremis politics between Westphalian states, will change as we codify and adjust our doctrine to the new realities of war against non-state actors. Our doctrine cannot allow our adversaries to identify and exploit a seam in our strategic framework and subsequent operational design. What is the role for GPF designed to dominate and win in the Land Domain when shaping operations are continually required? The U.S. Army is asking too much of GPF forces to be prepared for missions

across the spectrum of conflict, and to operate in completely different domains. When GPF are still required to deal with large-scale threats and to create deterrence for potential near peer competitors, it is infinitely more useful to cultivate and rely on the interdependence of GPF and SOF to truly dominate domains. It is time to write the doctrine and to design specific capabilities that enhance and support each other (interdependent) to deter and defeat near peer competitors in the land domain, and to shape, influence and defeat the mixed bag of threats in the human domain.

Does SOF, and more specifically for the purpose of this paper Special Forces, require specific human capability or capacities to conduct operations in human domain? If we need a special type of person, or special group of people, are we getting them? If not, how can we get them? These three questions will be answered in the final three sections of this paper.

In the Human Domain, What Type(s) of Person (or People) will be Successful

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?<sup>28</sup> The Shadow knows.

Unfortunately we do not have an unlimited supply of wealthy young men about town like the Shadow to take on evildoers, but in the absence of an ability to clone the Shadow we still have the need to know what evil lurks in the hearts of men to succeed in the human domain. Major General Robert B. Brown, Commanding General U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, has posited that the human domain is the only domain that can lead to victory.<sup>29</sup> MG Brown identified five characteristics required to dominate the human domain:

- 1) A holistic understanding of complex human networks on the ground,
- 2) Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational communication, cooperation, and collaboration along both lethal and non-lethal lines,

- 3) An understanding of who the enemy is, even as the enemy reduces our technological and mass advantage as they blend in difficult and urban terrain,
- 4) A knowledge of the chaotic and continuously changing environment on the ground, and
- 5) A reliance on bottom-up information and intelligence to identify all the pieces of the puzzle from tactical, operational and strategic.<sup>30</sup>

These characteristics point to a requirement for humans on the ground in small units able to provide bottom up information and intelligence, and operate in a culturally attuned manner that maximizes their ability to achieve tactical successes. These tactical successes of course must be intimately connected to the current operational campaign and the strategic end state. These units will need to leverage the capabilities of the interagency and joint team to fill gaps in capacity and capability to both impact the human domain and realize the cross domain synergies required. The Special Forces Operational Detachment – Alpha (SFOD-A) is a primary tool to operate in the chaotic world of diplomacy, expert judgment, and problem solving. Special Forces have demonstrated expertise at blending direct and indirect approaches using lethal and nonlethal means while remaining both dependent on and adept at leveraging the cross domain power of the entire joint team’s traditional domination of land, sea and air domains.

An SFOD-A is an organization that is placed in ambiguous and dangerous environments with the expectation that it will accomplish something of value for the United States, even if its mission is poorly defined (or defined at all). The human domain is certainly an environment where problem solving is at a premium. Special Forces

operations in this domain are about the ability to solve problems while building trust in a domain that does not present a clear fit for conventional military units. This application of an organization to an ill defined mission without conventional resources, with hard to define actors and motivations while understanding the requirement to minimize political blowback requires very complex problem solving.

It has been shown in several scientific studies that complex problem solving is enhanced by diversity.<sup>31</sup> Diversity might increase the power of the SFOD-A, but in order to maximize the impact, it is necessary to define the types of diversity that enhance problem solving and organizational effectiveness.

If you ask someone in The Army to describe diversity, the definition they come up with will likely rest solely on the differences in people's ethnicity or sex. This type of diversity is referred to as identity diversity.<sup>32</sup> This is in fact one type of diversity, but cognitive diversity is another important type of diversity. Research has shown that groups with cognitive diversity are better at solving problems than groups without diversity, and diverse groups even outperform experts in many instances.<sup>33</sup> Cognitive diversity includes four characteristics:

- Diverse Perspectives: ways of representing situations and problems
- Diverse Interpretations: way of categorizing or partitioning perspectives
- Diverse Heuristics: ways of generating solutions to problems
- Diverse Predictive Models: ways of inferring cause and effect<sup>34</sup>

In order to make sense of these characteristics, and to fully understand what kind of diversity we might want to use in recruiting we need to understand some diversity traps that derail organizational efforts to harness the power of diversity. In Harvard Business

Review, David Thomas and Robin Ely summarized several studies of diverse group performance. Their research reinforced that a collection of people with external physical differences does not equal the type of diversity that improves organizational performance, but they developed a model to maximize the power of diversity.<sup>35</sup> The two perspectives they identified as misguided diversity initiatives: the discrimination-and-fairness paradigm and the access-and-legitimacy paradigm. The researchers noted that discrimination-and-fairness (DF) leaders were quick to subvert differences in the interest of preserving harmony, and access-and-legitimacy (AL) leaders attempted to push staff with niche capabilities into differentiated pigeonholes without trying to understand the capabilities.<sup>36</sup> The approach that maximized human potential and the power of diversity, they labeled the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm (LEP). The LEP paradigm incorporated aspects of early attempts at increasing organizational diversity but also connected diversity to organizational approaches to work: They realized that it was “how” a company defined diversity, and “what it did” with the experiences of being a diverse organization that delivered on the promises of maximizing problem solving and performance.<sup>37</sup>

Identifying the DF and the AL diversity paradigms as failed approaches is important, as they are the easiest to enact and both approaches will likely prevail with organizational change driven by a visualization of why diversity is important. Both of these approaches could be set in motion with quotas for certain racial, sexual, ethnic or language capabilities. These approaches could give the appearance of equality, fairness and operational access without really helping the organization. In order to increase Special Forces capability, diversity must increase operational access,



language capability, and cultural awareness while increasing the cognitive power of small units to deal with the complexities of the human domain. Recruiting for diversity on an SFOD-A should be focused on: a) individuals with diverse sets of cognitive abilities to enable problem solving, b) diverse cultural knowledge and ethnic awareness, c) diversity in native language skills.

Diverse organizations are better at solving problems, and diverse organizations have a greater likelihood of containing skills that will allow a wider range of capability. The current Special Forces recruiting process is focused on individual expertise and not on organizational diversity when both are required. SF absolutely requires individuals that are cognitively and physically well developed, but the environment also demands an ability to attract and harness the power of diversity.

#### The Current Special Forces Recruiting and Selection Process

By the time the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was published the operational tempo for Special Forces Soldiers following 9/11 had led to a 25% increase in Special Forces Soldiers. This increase in practical terms, meant that all five of the active Special Forces Groups (the equivalent of an Army Brigade Combat Team without engineers, artillery, and smaller portions of other Combat Support/Combat Service Support formations) would grow from three SF Battalion comprised of 18 x SFODA to four SF Battalions. Each Special Forces Group now has 72 x SFODA, up from pre 9/11 authorizations for 54. The increased use of Special Forces as an element of U.S. power placed an increased burden to produce Special Forces Soldiers for Operational Detachments.

In the last section of this paper I indicated that the kind of Special Forces Soldier required was both well developed as an individual, but needed to be recruited with

diversity of a cohort group in mind. This operational perspective was never designed into the recruiting or selection process. The recruiting and selection process was designed to look not for a diverse set of experts, but a specific type of expert.

The first two critical assumptions made by the Special Warfare Center, the organization responsible for selecting and training all Special Forces Soldiers, that drive recruiting kills diversity before it has a chance. These two assumptions are that the right types of people will both want to serve in Special Forces, and that they have already attained a certain skill set that will allow them to perform well in the selection process. Soldiers must be both volunteers, and they must possess an Airborne Infantryman's basic tool kit (in order to perform well enough in Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) to get selected). The preference for Airborne Infantrymen will be born out in the demographics of those selected by the Special Warfare Center, but first we need to look at the guiding regulations and how the system evolved this preference.

The current basic requirements for a Special Forces candidate to attend SFAS are a GT score that exceeds 107 and an Army Physical Fitness Test that exceeds 240. These two requirements were implemented to ensure that the volunteer is sufficiently bright enough to be trainable and physically fit enough to avoid injury. The candidate is also given additional psychological and educational screening in the Special Forces Assessment and Selection phase to ensure that Soldiers with potential psychological disorders are screened about before training, and to further identify any learning disabilities or educational shortfalls in candidates. The remainder of SFAS is ostensibly designed to see if the individual can get along with others on a small team and if the candidate has "heart." If the Soldier can endure repeated physical and mental stresses

while being deprived of adequate food and sleep, and if he possesses the basic social skills to perform as a member of a team under stress he will be well on his way to being selected for training. The Special Warfare Center's primary goal, as the organization that selects and trains every member of the Special Forces Regiment, is to select a Soldier that can successfully complete the Special Forces Qualification Course and be awarded MOS 18 in the numbers required to the manpower requirements of the Special Forces Regiment. SWC has designed their internal processes to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in training. The Special Warfare center produces very capable Green Berets to man SFOD-As. The potential increased operational effectiveness of a SFODA with diversity is a mission enhancement that is not included in the decision process used to drive the recruiting requirement.

The Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB), which recruits every active duty officer and enlisted candidate to attend SFAS, examines the recruiting requirement in the precise mission statement that it receives from the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC). To the SORB a prospective Special Forces Soldier is a Soldier that meets the requirements established in Army Regulation (AR) 614-200 in the numbers directed by USAREC.<sup>38</sup> In addition to the detailed requirements from the AR, the SORB also uses a mandated scoring system to assess the "quality" of the recruits that meet the basic requirements. This scoring system assigns values in six categories: General technical (GT) score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), Score on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), Years of Service, Airborne Qualification, Ranger Qualification, and Infantry MOS (11B).<sup>39</sup> All of the six categories have a maximum score of 3 with a combined maximum score for any one candidate

being 18. The first three categories have a range of GT Score, APFT Score and Years of Service that result in a candidate being rated 1, 2 or 3. The last three categories are binary, as you either are Airborne, Ranger or Infantry qualified or you are not qualified. This scoring systems ranks the most qualified candidate in the Army as an Airborne, Ranger qualified 11B with less than three years of service, a GT score above 120, and an APFT score that exceeds 246; a Soldier with those qualifications would score the maximum score of 18. A non-airborne non-Ranger qualified medic (68W) that speaks three languages with a GT score of 130, an APFT of 300 and four years of service gets a 10. The quality metric pushes for a homogenous Soldier that has a high degree of military skill, and will likely graduate the Special Forces qualification course based on physical ability and mental aptitude. None of the qualifications, screening criteria or guidance given to the SORB would lead them to target diversity of any type, cognitive, identity or Army MOS diversity. Even if the guidance given to the SORB led them to target diversity, and even rewarded it, without a corresponding change in SFAS at SWC the system would still be out of balance. If the inputs are asked for in a recruiting document, but not accepted in the selection process the change would be pointless.

The Soldiers currently being selected will predominantly be Caucasian and the only language they will speak at the time they are selected is English. Certainly these young men are physically fit, dedicated and have the heart to succeed. The required GT scores also indicate that they are trainable, so they will have both the physical and mental faculties required to make it through the Special Forces Qualification course. In many cases they will also retain their desire and motivation to succeed throughout the course and into their Special Forces career. All of this sounds incredibly positive. The

missing ingredients in this scenario fall into two large categories. The first problem is that getting enough Soldiers to fill the operational requirement is getting increasingly more difficult. The second problem is that this recruiting and selecting methodology does not take the operational requirement for diversity into account.

The quantity issue was first addressed in 2001 when the Special Warfare Center directed the recruiting of Infantry Soldiers in the rank of Privates First Class directly from Infantry One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, Georgia. This program was later modified and became an initial accession branch for enlisted Soldiers with a program called 18X. These Soldiers enlist for the opportunity to attend Special Forces Assessment and Selection after attending 11B One Station Unit Training (OSUT) and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. These Soldiers also attend a course that regular Army candidates do not. 18X Soldiers attend the Special Operations Preparation Course (SOPC) to provide them with skills they have not learned at OSUT or Airborne School. The physical hardening, and obstacle course techniques taught in SOPC greatly enhance the graduation rate of the 18X candidate. In fact, very few Soldiers that remain in the 18X track through OSUT and Airborne school, and make it to Fort Bragg, fail SFAS. The 18X program was initially designed to be an adjunct to the regular Army recruiting program, but as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continued the regular Army candidates began to fair worse during the selection process. Even with the influx of candidates directly from the streets of America through the 18X enlistment option diversity in terms of ethnic and language diversity continues to lag behind the Army. The 18X recruit lacks Army skills from a feeder Military Occupational Specialty,

and in terms of cognitive diversity they are only marginally different from the 11B community targeted by the recruiting apparatus for in-service recruits.

The demographics of the Special Forces MOS 18 would not shock a recruiting professional. Informally, the old hands in the USAREC operations section divide the recruiting market into two large categories of thrill seekers and skill seekers. These large informal segments are further divided in USAREC doctrine into more formal market segments, but for my purposes the two larger categories will serve the intended purpose. Thrill seekers typically enlist in the Army for training options involving combat arms with little direct translation to the civilian job market outside the military, while their skill-seeking peers look for Army training that may directly apply to a civilian career. In the manner described individual preference counts first, and needs of the Army come second as an adjunct influencer to an individual's upfront preference. Admittedly individuals exit recruiting stations with differing levels of satisfaction and comfort in their preference match, but preference counts as a big factor that drives future Soldiers to become Infantrymen (11B), Cavalry Scouts (19D), Preventive Medicine Specialists (91S) or Satellite Communications Systems Operators (25S). It is an individual's preference that is the most important factor for unlocking the potential for recruiting cognitive diversity, as differing preferences is the most easily identifiable and agreed upon means to distinguish this most useful form of diversity.<sup>40</sup> People seek out (show preference for) jobs and other opportunities based on the way they see and interact with the world. Army Training, all training and education, reinforces individual preference, and this creates a specific and entrenched trap for the Special Forces recruiter. If the most preferred active duty candidate is an 11B then he is targeting a population that has

both displayed similar preferences for picking a job, and has been trained with the same models and institutional heuristics. The chances that the individuals being recruited with this methodology will be cognitively similar is more likely than not. Compound this small recruiting aperture with a cadre of Soldiers at SFAS cut from the same cloth and you will further reduce the chances that a Soldier that thinks differently will survive the Special Forces selection process.

### How Do We Identify and Target Diversity?

The first step to creating a workable recruiting system is to align the recruiting and selecting functions under the same commander. The system of identifying requirements from the Special Warfare Center through United States Army Special Operations Command to the Army G1 to USAREC and then to the SORB is both overly bureaucratic and inherently inflexible to the operational requirements that should drive Special Forces recruiting.

With the recruiting apparatus aligned under SWC, the SORB could target specific Military Occupational Specialties to increase cognitive diversity using flexible recruiting goals established, changed, and evaluated by SWC. The Soldiers in CS/CSS career fields, traditionally less successful in completing SFAS, could be allowed the opportunity for extra training in SOPC at SWC's discretion. SOPC is very effective at preparing 18X candidates, and should be used to prepare Soldiers that need extra training not available in their units of assignment. These targeted Soldiers get extra training to increase their chance of success because they meet an identified requirement. This MOS approach could be supplemented with specific incentives to target native language capability and/or ethnicity to enhance ongoing and future operations. The SORB would be responsive to the fluctuations in both the selection process and the

operational requirements to recruit the required cohort in terms of numbers and diversity. The SORB would no longer recruit a requirement identified 12 months in advance that have been stripped of all operational relevance in order to make it fit a USAREC recruiting model.

### Why the Human Domain, and Why is Diversity the Answer?

The U.S. military will continue to be used as an instrument of national power in complex environments requiring units that can build trust with our allies while increasing capacity and capability where required. The premier unit in the U.S. military for operating in a culturally attuned manner with a politically acceptable small footprint and able to solve complex problems and apply lethal military force discreetly is a Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha. A review of current U.S. Army and USSOCOM doctrine is required to properly man, train, equip and employ these SFODAs in the future. The human domain is a potential adjunct to the current domain framework that will permit DOTMLPF reviews to both codify the requirements and drive the doctrine of SOF and GPF interdependence. The complexities of the human domain, and the power of diversity to enhance operational effectiveness in this complex environment, should be used to drive Special Forces recruiting.

Charles Darwin noted that organisms that are the most adaptable to changes in their environment would succeed.<sup>41</sup> Diversity enables adaptability, and adaptability wins...

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *The Special Forces Association Home Page*, <http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/about/sf-history/> (accessed 15 January 2013).



<sup>2</sup> *The Special Forces Association Home Page*, <http://www.specialforcesassociation.org/about/sf-history/> (accessed 15 January 2013).

<sup>3</sup> *The United States Army Special Operations Command Home Page*, <http://www.soc.mil/USASOC%20Headquarters/SOF%20Truths.html> (accessed 15 January 2013).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3.0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), III-1.

<sup>5</sup> United States Joint Forces Command, *Joint Operating Environment* (Norfolk, VA: USJFCOM, Joint Futures Group (J59), February 18, 2010), 62.

<sup>6</sup> General Ray Odierno, "Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Remarks at the George C. Marshall Leadership Seminar," April 17, 2012, [http://www.army.mil/article/78060/April\\_17\\_2012\\_CSA\\_Remarks\\_at\\_the\\_George\\_C\\_Marshall\\_Leadership\\_Seminar/](http://www.army.mil/article/78060/April_17_2012_CSA_Remarks_at_the_George_C_Marshall_Leadership_Seminar/) (accessed January 29, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Major General Bennet S. Sacolick and Brigadier General Wayne W. Grigsby Jr., "Special Operations/Conventional Forces Interdependence: A critical Role in Prevent, Shape, Win," *Army Magazine*, June 2012, 40, [http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2012/06/Documents/Sacolick\\_0612.pdf](http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2012/06/Documents/Sacolick_0612.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Capstone Concept*, TRADOC Pam 525-3-0 (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, December 19, 2012), 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Michael Coleman (USSOCOM Commanders Action Group), e-mail message to author, February 8, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> TRADOC, *Capstone Concept*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> LTC Michael Coleman (USSOCOM Commanders Action Group).

<sup>14</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York, NY: Basic, 1977), 138.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-185.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>17</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, "The relevance of IHL in the context of terrorism", <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/terrorism-ihl-210705.htm> (accessed 27 November, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 183.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>27</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* / edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 89.

<sup>28</sup> *The Film Noir Foundation Home Page*, <http://www.filmnoirfoundation.com/sentinel-article/NoirCity-emag-Shadow.pdf> (accessed 7 December, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Major General Robert B. Brown and Major Ronald W. Sprang, "Human Domain: Essential to Victory in Future Operations," white paper, Fort Benning, GA, Maneuver Center of Excellence, page 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Scott Page, *The Difference: How the power of diversity creates better groups, firms, schools, and societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2007), 237, Kindle e-book.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 363.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 414.

<sup>35</sup> D.A. Thomas and Robin Ely, "Making Differences Matter: A new Paradigm for Managing Diversity," *Harvard Business Review* 74, September-October, 1996, 79.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Enlisted Assignments and Utilization Management*, Army Regulation 614-200 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 26, 2009/RAR October 11, 2011), 30. **5–5. Special forces assignments (policy and selection criteria).**

*a. Initial Accessions Program.* Males desiring to volunteer for ARSOF duty should contact the nearest recruiting office provided they—

(1) Are 20 years of age by ship date to CMF 11 OSUT and have not reached their 30th birthday prior to ship date.

(2) Qualified for, and volunteer for, airborne training (must have airborne stamp on physical).

(3) Are a U.S. citizen (nonwaiverable).

(4) Have a minimum general technical (GT) score of 107 and minimum combat operation score of 98.

(5) Are a high school diploma graduate (tier 1). (High school senior authorized for Delayed Entry Program only. Must have high school diploma prior to ship date).

(6) Must be eligible for a SECRET clearance.

(7) Must volunteer to attend airborne training after the completion of OSUT.

(8) Must successfully complete all pre-basic training tasks required by the USAREC prior to ship date. The Army physical fitness test (APFT) must be completed within 10 days of ship date. Individuals will be enlisted in pay grade E-3 (based on HQDA exception for this option). Those individuals who fail to successfully complete any pre-basic training tasks will have their contract renegotiated and only authorized advanced promotion based on provisions of AR 601-210.

(9) Those individuals already MOS qualified as 11B and airborne qualified, will enlist under option 18 (U.S. Army First Assignment-No Training Enlistment Option) with assignment to Fort Bragg, NC, and once in processed will start training with the special operations preparatory and conditioning (SOPC) course.

(10) Complete the Defense Language Aptitude Battery test within 30 days of Delayed Entry Program with a minimum score of 70 (waiverable by the Director, Special Forces Proponency, USAJFKSWCS for enlisted personnel who are native speakers) or a Defense Language Proficiency Test with a minimum of 1/1 reading and listening score, given within the last 6 months.

(11) Must have a physical profile rating of no less than 111221 and meet additional requirements for eyes and vision in accordance with AR 40-501, paragraphs 5-3g(3) and 5-3g(4).

*b. 18X Training Path.* Individuals who are nonprior Service, days of Service/prior Service and require retraining will enlist under Option 3 (U.S. Army Training of Choice Enlistment Option), MOS 18X, will ship to Fort Benning, GA and follow the training path listed below:

(1) In processing through the reception battalion.

(2) One station unit training for MOS 11X. Must achieve an APFT score of 240, minimum 60 points in each event, based on the Soldier's age group upon completion of OSUT.

(3) Airborne training.

(4) The SOPC course (Fort Bragg, NC). This course is 2 weeks in duration, consisting of physical conditioning, land navigation, and small unit team building. Individuals must obtain an electrocardiogram prior to their arrival at SOPC course.

(5) Once Soldiers meet all criteria, they will be scheduled for SFAS (3 weeks, 3 days) as outlined in the ATRRS course catalog.

*c. In-Service recruits.* Male Soldiers (SPC/CPL through SFC) desiring to volunteer for ARSOF duty should contact the special operations recruiter battalion (SORB) (Commander, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (AOJK-SP-R), FT Bragg, NC 28307-5200 or direct inquiries to the recruiting center at commercial:

910-432-1818 or Defense Switched Network (DSN): 239-1818) provided they meet the following requirements:

(1) Must be an AD male Soldier.

(2) Must be a U.S. citizen (nonwaiverable).

(3) Must be a high school graduates or have general education development (GED) certificates.

(4) Must have a GT score of 107. The GT minimum score is waiverable by the CDR, Special Operations Recruiting Battalion for AD enlisted based on yearly guidance from the CG, USAJFKSWCS in order to meet annual production goals.

(5) Must be airborne qualified or volunteer to attend airborne training.

(6) Must be able to swim 50 meters wearing boots and battle dress or Army combat uniform prior to beginning the SFQC. All Soldiers will be given a swim assessment at the SFAS course.

(7) Must achieve an APFT score of 240, minimum 60 points in each event, based on the Soldier's age group.

(8) Must be able to meet medical fitness standards as outlined in AR 40-501.

(9) Must be eligible for a SECRET security clearance.

(10) No Soldier, regardless of MOS or basic branch will be recruited, if he is unable to reclassify from his current MOS or basic branch into CMF 18.

(11) Not currently serving in a restricted MOS or branch.

(12) Must take the Defense Language Aptitude Battery test and achieve a minimum score of 70 (waiverable by the CDR, Special Operations Recruiting Battalion in order to meet annual production goals) or a Defense Language Proficiency Test with a minimum of 1/1 reading and listening score, given within the last 6 months.

*d. Additional criteria exclusive to enlisted applicants:*

(1) Stabilization of current DSs and detailed recruiters will not be broken.

(2) Specialists, CPLs, and SGTs that successfully complete the SFAS course will normally have their retention control points waived to attend the SFQC. Upon successful completion of SFQC, they will be allowed continued Service. Staff sergeants approaching their retention control points will not be allowed to apply. SPC/CPL through SSG must have no more than 14 years TIS when volunteering for SFAS. Sergeants first class must have no more than 12 years TIS and 9 months time-in-grade when applying for the SFAS course and they must be either airborne or ranger qualified. Sergeants first class must attend the SFAS course within 90 days of volunteering and also be able to have a PCS to the SFQC within 6 months of selection from the SFAS course.

(3) Soldiers on assignment will not be allowed to attend the SFAS course without their branch's prior approval. Soldiers on orders to a short tour area will be allowed to attend the SFAS course, if a deferment is not required. These individuals will be scheduled for the next available SFQC after their DEROS. Soldiers who volunteer for the SFAS course prior to receiving assignment notification will be deferred to allow for SFAS course attendance.

(4) Outside the continental United States based Soldiers may attend the SFAS course in a TDY and return status anytime during their tour. Upon successful completion of the SFAS course, Soldiers will be scheduled for the next available SFQC provided they have completed at least two-thirds of their overseas assignment obligation and have received approval from the HRC for curtailment of the remainder of their overseas tour obligation. Soldiers serving on a short tour will not have their assignment curtailed.

(5) Continental United States based Soldiers may attend the SFAS course in a TDY and return status anytime during their tour. Upon successful completion of SFAS, Soldiers will be scheduled to attend SFQC ensuring that they will have completed at least 1 year TOS prior to PCS.

(6) Must have a minimum of 24 months remaining TIS upon completion of the SFQC.

<sup>39</sup> SF RECRUIT MERIT/QUALITY SCORE

1. GT SCORE or FA (use the higher of the two)
  - GT/FA less than 112 = 1 pt
  - GT/FA 112 to 120 = 2 pts
  - GT/FA 121+ = 3 pts
2. PT SCORE PT
  - PT score less than 228 = 1 pt
  - PT score 228 to 245 = 2 pts
  - PT score 246+ = 3 pts
3. Years of Military Service Yrs Served
  - Years served four plus = 1 pt
  - Years served three – four = 2 pts
  - Years served less than three = 3 pts
4. Airborne Qualification ABN
  - NOT Airborne qualified = 1 pt
  - IS Airborne qualified = 3 pts
5. Ranger Qualification RANGER
  - NOT Ranger qualified = 1 pt
  - IS Ranger qualified = 3 pts
6. MOS 11B MOS 11B

NOT an 11B = 1 pt  
IS an 11B = 3 pts

<sup>40</sup> Page, *The Difference*, 3786, Kindle e-book.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species*, (London: John Murray. 6th edition; with additions and corrections, 1872), 411, <http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?itemID=F391&viewtype=text&pageseq=1> (accessed 10 January 2013).