

AN INVISIBLE SCALPEL: LOW-VISIBILITY OPERATIONS
IN THE WAR ON TERROR

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General Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

AN INVISIBLE SCALPEL: LOW-VISIBILITY OPERATIONS IN THE WAR ON TERROR, by Charles R.V. O'Quinn, 81 pages.

The War on Terror (WOT) is actually a war against extremist insurgents comprised of numerous and varied organizations scattered across the globe. They are spurred to action by an extremist ideology that is nurtured, demonstrated, and led by al Qaeda and its leadership. This ideology serves as the insurgency's center of gravity whereby it gains all manner of support across a broad spectrum of functional resources in multiple operational domains. As operating environments change, these ideology-inspired decentralized insurgent organizations are able to quickly adapt their methods of operation. In order to defeat this evolving, ubiquitous yet elusive threat, the US must develop a comprehensive strategy that incorporates all instruments of US national power, as well as those of its allies. This strategy must also defeat or mitigate the enemy's center of gravity in order to have any chance of success. This thesis argues that as lead combatant command in the WOT, the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) should conduct continuous, global, preemptive low-visibility operations in order to disrupt insurgent operations. In order to accomplish its WOT missions, USSOCOM must effectively organize and array forces and resources to defeat insurgent functional resources across multiple operational domains.

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ACRONYMS

AO	Area of operations
COE	Contemporary operating environment
LOC	Line of communications
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
WMD/E	Weapon of Mass Destruction/Effect
WOT	War on Terror

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We actually misnamed the war on terror. It ought to be [called] the struggle against ideological extremists who do not believe in free societies and who happen to use terror as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world.

President George W. Bush, *Address to the Unity Journalists of Color Convention*,

Over the past decades and especially since 11 September 2001, there has been an enormous amount of information written in an attempt to describe and understand the terrorist threat and propose possible solutions. These works analyze the problem from various perspectives, to include globalization, culture, and religion to name a few. Some offer possible solutions using various models of organization, planning, and execution across the spectrum of available governmental, economic, and private entities. The purpose of this study is to further identify and refine key aspects of the current War on Terror (WOT) in order to provide a framework for establishing organizations, resources, and relationships between United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the joint, interagency, and multinational environment. This research will determine, should USSOCOM as lead combatant command in the WOT conduct continuous, global, preemptive low-visibility operations in order to disrupt insurgent operations? The secondary research questions are; how should USSOCOM organize to conduct global counterinsurgency and how should USSOCOM array resources to accomplish its global counterinsurgency missions?

Background

Several key strategies emerged after the attacks on 11 September 2001. From the National Security Strategy to the National Military Strategic Plan – War on Terror (WOT), these strategies have attempted to clearly define the ends, ways, and means to secure the United States and defend it against terrorism. While these documents indicate a willingness to pursue the defense of the nation using an offensive strategy, they fail to address some key aspects of how this strategy will be accomplished. The pending National Security Presidential Directive designating a lead federal agency for the WOT is one significant strategic hurdle. Additionally, although currently ongoing at the National Counter Terrorism Center, there is no integrated interagency WOT plan, and each agency has varying levels of WOT planning. From a military strategic perspective, the Unified Command Plan identifies USSOCOM as the lead combatant command for the WOT. This document is obviously limited to the military, which leaves USSOCOM with the military responsibility to conduct the WOT, but no one compelling its interagency partners with either integrated planning or execution or even coordination.

Little research is needed to understand that the US is not facing an easily identifiable or easily defeated enemy. The “Global War on Terror” is, in fact, a global counterinsurgency which demands a detailed and comprehensive understanding, as well as an appropriately detailed and comprehensive response. The US is indeed facing a global insurgency that is made up of many different associated and affiliated elements that have shown they are adaptive and evolutionary and, unlike the US government, have little or no bureaucratic processes or parochial baggage to hinder their training, personnel, or operations.

Regardless of whether a lead US federal agency is designated to plan, synchronize, and execute operations in the WOT, USSOCOM must develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses certain key aspects of the threat and operating environment. This strategy must be supported by units that are organized and resourced for the tasks to be accomplished. Anything less will no doubt lead to protraction of the already marathon efforts or, in the worst case, failure.

Research Methodology

Combined with creative thinking and critical reasoning, this thesis uses the doctrinal model for Army problem solving per FM 5-0, *Army Planning and Orders Production*, 2005, in order to understand and address these complex issues. By critically analyzing the terrorist threat(s) to the United States and clearly defining USSOCOM's role in defeating these threats, this thesis attempts to clearly and concisely define a strategy that is suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete.

Research Assumptions

These relevant facts, policies, and conditions will remain the same for the foreseeable future.

1. National security policy, specifically the National Military Strategic Policy – War on Terror, is an appropriate starting point for analysis. This document was published in June 2005 after numerous studies and military and intelligence operations in the WOT. It is a widely accepted document and the basis for USSOCOM's strategy in the WOT.

2. The WOT is actually a war against extremists (regardless of ideology base) who use terror tactics against unarmed civilian populations. The specific threat to US

national interests is that which advocates the overthrow of democratically elected nation states, specifically al-Qaeda and its associated network, which seek to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate stretching from west Africa to southeast Asia.

3. The United States must work with both partner nations and partners (elements that do not hold nation-state status, such as nongovernmental and private organizations) to accomplish operations in the WOT. That is, the bilateral nature of international political relations will not be completely supplanted by regional or global alliances.

4. There are historical examples of nation states (such as the US, Britain, France, and Israel) using low-visibility operations to accomplish counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns outside of their national boundaries. These operations must be studied in their own historical context in order to draw appropriate lessons learned. The US government can apply some of these lessons learned to today's operational environment and the global counterinsurgency.

Definition of Terms

Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (amended through 31 August 2005), defines low-visibility operations as, "Sensitive operations wherein the political-military restrictions inherent in covert and clandestine operations are either not necessary or not feasible; actions are taken as required to limit exposure of those involved and/or their activities. Execution of these operations is undertaken with the knowledge that the action and/or sponsorship of the operation may preclude plausible denial by the initiating power" (JP 1-02 2005, 322). For the purpose of this thesis, the term "low-visibility operations" describes a range of operations that fall below public awareness levels and include covert and clandestine

operations as options within a broader overarching spectrum of low-visibility operations. This broad definition provides an overarching concept that includes several types of operations. These operations may include information, computer network, financial network, human intelligence, and signals intelligence operations and may be comprised of covert and clandestine operations which conceal either the executor or the act or both. The term “preemptive” describes actions or operations that are not in response to terrorist actions or operations and aim to prevent terrorist acts before they occur. A glossary of frequently used terms is provided for common working definitions used throughout the thesis.

Limitations

The most significant limitation encountered in this research is the time available to conduct the study. This study was conducted in a ten-month period, which included the constant evolution of both the threat and the US response to that threat, particularly in regard to updated defense and interagency strategies, policies, and procedures. Research for this thesis was completed on 10 February 2006.

This thesis uses only unclassified documents and plans, although classified material was researched for context. There are surely numerous classified plans and documents that provide details of US and USSOCOM counterterrorism strategies and operations. This thesis is intended for use by the general public and thus avoids entering the classified arena.

The author has significant education, training, and experience in counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and low-visibility operations. Additionally, he has conducted numerous classified military operations in support of the WOT. While the author has

made all attempts to maintain an objective perspective in conducting this research, bias may exist due to the author's military background and perspective.

Scope and Delimitations

Although this research attempts to recommend concrete methods for USSOCOM to successfully conduct operations in the WOT, this thesis is not an operation plan. Significant additional detailed planning and synchronization are required to derive a plan of operations from this strategy. This research provides a framework for understanding the issues USSOCOM faces and possible solutions to mitigate those issues.

Although some conclusions may be drawn from the research, this study does not attempt to answer the question of which US federal agency should have the lead for conducting the WOT. While most insurgency and terrorism experts agree that political organizations and police forces must maintain primary roles in defeating insurgents and terrorists, they are discussing insurgencies in a given country rather than a global insurgency. Indeed, it would be unwise for countries to divest their political organizations of all executive power during an insurgency and place all decision-making power in the hands of the military. When assessing the capability to synchronize multiple lines of operations across all instruments of national power on a continuous basis, however, the DOD, and USSOCOM in particular have the education, training, experience, and command and control systems to accomplish this Herculean and complex task. This statement does not stem from professional bias or parochialism, given the US public and political leadership in Congress proposed DOD lead in disaster response in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, when local, state, and federal government agencies were incapable of conducting synchronized response operations.

This thesis attempts to provide a strategy that is suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete. Regional and especially local political and military considerations will require specific mission analysis to tailor the strategy appropriately for local conditions. Indeed there may be situations where this strategy cannot be implemented due to current conditions.

This thesis also does not discuss tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for conducting low-visibility operations. These operations are some of the most sensitive conducted by the US military and thus cannot be detailed in this unclassified forum. Instead, broad generalizations are used to describe and illustrate these types of operations to inform the reader and allow conclusions to be drawn as to their relevance. Further research and training can be conducted to develop effective TTP for conducting successful low-visibility operations.

Significance of the Study

To date, the author could find no study which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the threat and providing a practical and comprehensive approach to address it over the long term. This research attempts to provide USSOCOM and its interagency partners a framework of understanding key aspects of the threat and addressing those aspects using new and nontraditional methods of operation. The author is not so naïve to think that this is the only way to conduct operations, but merely regards it as an additional capability that should be pursued in order to address a complex and evolving enemy.

In this complex and evolutionary operating environment, traditional models for dealing with the threat will not work in all instances. New paradigms and new solutions

must be sought. Using this research as a departure point, the vast knowledge and experience that exists throughout the military and other instruments of US national power can be brought to bear using innovative organization, planning, and execution in the WOT. Understanding and fully exploiting low-visibility operations could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of existing and future national resources.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is organized to identify and review major research on the US military's current operating environment, terrorism and counterterrorism, insurgency and counterinsurgency, US national counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategy, US counterterrorism and counterinsurgency doctrine, and various articles and theses written about terrorism, insurgency, and US response.

Over the past several decades, much has been written about the issues surrounding the primary and secondary research questions. While much has been written, little research has distilled the key aspects of the WOT as they pertain to USSOCOM and proposed concrete, comprehensive recommendations. This chapter identifies all main works and various perspectives consulted during research. It also attempts to isolate the most current and applicable sources in an attempt to highlight the primary resources that answer the research questions.

The Threat and Current Operating Environment

In order to gain context for the ongoing WOT, this research consulted several works regarding current and predicted trends in world affairs. The subject of these works included various opinions on globalization, "clashes of civilization," and war and conflict in the twenty-first century. Works dealing specifically with al Qaeda and its affiliates are also included in this research.

Harvard professor Samuel Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996, provides an alarming if not depressing perspective on

future conflict. Huntington's argument that the shifting balance of power between the West and other civilizations is important to understand, given the nature of the underlying conflict of ideals in the WOT. An equally disturbing book, Robert D. Kaplan's *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, 2000, poses a similar argument regarding impending future conflicts as nations and lesser groups fighting for an ever-dwindling pool of resources.

Thomas L. Friedman's book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, 2000 edition, is one of the seminal works on globalization, a topic that definitely drives the Islamic extremist desire to fight the West and its allies. To further enable this understanding, Thomas P. M. Barnett's *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century*, 2004, is consulted to map globalization and its fallout from a geographic perspective. Both books serve to place the current WOT in the greater context of current world affairs.

Several works are considered for their analysis of current and future military conflict. Martin van Creveld's *Transformation of War*, 1991, offers a viewpoint on the failure of current strategic thinking to identify the nature of future conflicts. Although written in 1991, this book remains relevant today in that Van Creveld believes current strategic thinking is mired in an outdated "Clauswitzian" model and militaries that continue this flawed thinking will be unable to wage organized warfare as they should. Alvin and Heidi Toffler's *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century*, 1993, is an alternative look at future conflict through the eyes of two renowned social thinkers and futurists. A most appropriate book to consider for perspective on current and future conflict is Colonel Thomas X. Hammes' *The Sling and The Stone: On*

War in the Twenty-First Century, 2004, an analysis of fourth generation warfare and a look at past and recent examples of this “evolved form of insurgency” (2004, 2).

Three works are considered for their insights on Islam and current Islamic extremist viewpoints: Bernard Lewis’ *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, 2003; John L. Esposito’s *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, 1999 (third edition); and Jessica Stern’s *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, 2003. All of these works are instrumental in understanding why religious terrorists conduct their operations.

Two specific works on al Qaeda and its affiliates were consulted in this research. Rohan Gunaratna’s *Inside al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, 2003, is probably the most comprehensive study on the al Qaeda organization. Additionally, *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants* (The al-Qaeda Training Manual), edited by Jerrold M. Post of the US Air Force Counterproliferation Center, is considered as a primary source in understanding al Qaeda training and organization.

Strategic Documents

There are numerous strategic documents dealing with the defense and security of the United States. Of course, the office of the president offers an overall security strategy for the US, but there are several other strategies that deal with security written by individual agencies within the US government. One has to wonder how many national security strategies are needed and which one is most appropriate or current.

One answer could lie in the way that national strategies are written. The bureaucratic process for writing, staffing, validating, and publishing is a long and complex process, given the size of the US government and its agencies and departments.

Another answer could lie simply in the publishing date of the document. One could argue that the most recent is the most relevant, but this would be an oversimplification. In conducting research for this thesis, all the major national strategic documents on security were considered. These included: *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 2005; *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 2003; *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2002; the *Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2004-2009*; and *Aligning Diplomacy and Development Assistance*, 2003, from the United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development. All of these documents provide insight into the US government's assessment of the current threat and operating environment, but, not surprisingly, the document that most accurately and succinctly addresses the WOT is the *National Military Strategic Plan-War on Terror (NMSP-WOT)*, 2005. It is the most appropriate to consider as a primary source not only because of its specificity, but also because it has developed over four years of sustained conflict in the WOT since 11 September 2001. In this situation, the bureaucratic process may have provided the US an objective, well-reasoned, and comprehensive strategic document that is devoid of much of the seemingly "emotional response" that may bias the earlier documents. The *NMSP-WOT* is a classified document and the unclassified version is awaiting publication by the joint staff. An unclassified executive summary and brief is available on-line and is the reference used for this thesis.

While not published as a strategic document, research included *The 9/11 Commission Report* for its objective interagency review of the events leading up to 11 September 2001. Several recommendations from the report have already been instituted and others are still under consideration for implementation. Still other recommendations

have been reviewed and considered by various agencies and either adopted with changes or dismissed. This research uses some of the conclusions from the report and amplifies them for either or both further consideration and recommendation.

Terrorism and Insurgency

Over the past several decades, many experts have written on the subjects of terrorism and insurgency. In an attempt to gain a broad understanding of various “classical” schools of thought in regard to terrorism and insurgency, this research included works by Roger Trinquier, David Galula, Sir Robert Thompson, LTC John Nagl, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Bard O’Neill. All of these individuals demonstrate a wealth of comprehensive research in the field of terrorism and insurgency and several bring first-hand experience as well. This research attempts to identify and highlight key aspects of these analyses to identify considerations for US counterinsurgency operations conducted through, by, and with partner nations and partners.

Trinquier served in the French Army from 1931 to 1961 and, after experiencing insurgencies in both French Indochina and Algeria, penned *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, first published in France in 1961 and later translated into English by Daniel Lee and published in Great Britain in 1964. Trinquier influenced the study of counterinsurgency for a number of decades. His description of “modern war” portrays the battle between traditional armored warfare between nation states and the newer insurgencies using terrorist tactics to fight governments. While this work is essential reading for gaining insight into counterinsurgency and terrorism, it is focused on internal operations at the nation-state level.

Galula also served in the French Army, from 1940 to 1967 and published *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* in 1964. This book provides a detailed look at the characteristics of insurgencies and counterinsurgencies and is highly regarded as a primary work in the field. Like Trinquier, Galula spent much of his professional military career dealing with insurgency in both Indochina and Algeria. Galula decided to write from experience in order to provide a “compass” for the counterinsurgent. His book provides concrete and practical lessons and steps to conduct successful counterinsurgency operations, but again is focused at the nation-state level.

Sir Robert Thompson served in the British Army during the insurgency in Malaya from 1948 to 1960 and another three and one-half years in Vietnam from 1961 to 1965. His book, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, published in 1966, is a description of “the theory of counterinsurgency as applied on the ground in both countries by a communist insurgent movement” and “the basic theory of counterinsurgency as it should be applied to defeat the threat in those and similar situations” (Thompson 1966, 9). Although this book is obviously oriented toward communist insurgents, it provides another framework for analysis of insurgencies and is grounded in tactical and administrative aspects of counterinsurgency operations.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu provides another realistic and personal view on terrorism and insurgency in his book *Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat the International Terrorist Network*, originally published in 1995 and republished in 2001. Mr. Netanyahu has been intimately involved in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations since his early adulthood. After serving in an elite Israeli counterterrorism unit, as the Israeli ambassador to both the United States and the United

Nations, and then as the prime minister, he became involved in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency from the tactical to national strategic level as a soldier, diplomat, and politician. Netanyahu's work is focused mainly on democratic societies' responses to internal and external terrorist threats. As such it includes several remedies that are important to analyze from both a US homeland defense perspective and a global counterinsurgency perspective.

While all of these individuals have a high degree of intimate personal involvement fighting insurgency and terrorism, their studies are focused primarily on that historical experience. This serves to create perspectives that, while they are not exclusive, do not include either more recent developments in the field or a comprehensive look at the various types of insurgencies or both.

Bard E. O'Neill's revised edition of *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse* (2005) is an update of some of the premier research on insurgency and terrorism and is arguably the most comprehensive look at insurgency and terrorism today. Mr. O'Neill is the Director of Insurgency and Revolution Studies at the National War College and has spent the past several decades researching, writing, and teaching the subjects. This volume provides a framework for identifying key aspects of insurgencies and is updated with current analysis of al Qaeda and the WOT.

Marc Sageman presents an interesting perspective on terrorist networks in his 2004 book, *Understanding Terror Networks*. Dr. Sageman is a former CIA foreign service officer with extensive experience working with Islamic fundamentalists and Afghanistan's mujahedin during his posting in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 1986 to 1989. After leaving the CIA in 1991, he went on to practice forensic psychiatry and currently

advises several branches in the US government on terrorism. His work provides insight on the social aspects of the terrorist network, to include the motivations behind their extremist viewpoints and actions.

Dr. Bruce Hoffman is the director of the Washington, D.C., office of the think tank RAND, and currently holds their corporate chair in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. He is one of the leading experts on terrorism and counterterrorism in the US and was the founding director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He has served as a member of the US Department of Defense Counter-Terrorism Advisory Board and has been a consultant for the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence. His book, *Inside Terrorism*, published in 1998, describes terrorism from the Reign of Terror after the French revolution to modern day. It offers a detailed description of the motivations and methods of terrorist organizations ranging from Communist movements to nationalist elements. Hoffman presents his information in an unbiased way in describing European, Islamic, Japanese, and even US-based terrorist organizations.

Hoffman provided an update to *Inside Terrorism* during his 29 September 2005 testimony presented before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, titled *Does Our Counterterrorism Strategy Match the Threat?* Much of this testimony is excerpted from a revised and expanded edition of *Inside Terrorism*, to be published in the US in July 2006. This testimony provides a detailed review of al Qaeda and affiliate actions since 2001. It describes the multiple dimensions of al Qaeda, the ongoing insurgency in Iraq and the WOT, and a proposed realignment of US counterinsurgency strategy with the current

threat. When combined with *Inside Terrorism*, this testimony provides a comprehensive review of current information regarding al Qaeda and its associates and affiliates.

US Military Doctrine and Directives

This research sought to understand counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations from a doctrinal standpoint. Several different references were consulted for the US military viewpoint on insurgency and terrorism and the best methods of conducting operations to defeat them. Doctrine is currently being updated to reflect lessons learned from ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and could therefore reflect some very different perspectives than those currently captured in US manuals.

A review of current doctrine and directives dealing with counterinsurgency and counterterrorism includes: US Army Field Manual (FM) 1, *The Army*, 2005; Joint Publication 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)*, 2004; FM (Interim) 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 2004; FM 3-05 (currently published as FM 100-25), *Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces*, 1999; FM 3-05.20, *Special Forces Operations*, 2001; FM 3.05-202, *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense Operations* (currently published as FM 31-20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Forces*, 1994); FM 3-07 (formerly FM 100-20), *Stability Operations and Support Operations*, 2002; FM 3-57 (formerly FM 41-10), *Civil Affairs Operations*; and DOD Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, 2005. Although these manuals are necessary references for research, important discrepancies or evolutions were noted in the common definition of key terms. Of particular note is the description of “Support to Insurgencies” as a “stability operation” (p.1-2,1-4) in FM 3-07,

Stability Operations and Support Operations, 2002. While it may be feasible in the narrowest of senses to consider a regime change “stabilizing” in nature, it would seem more accurate to describe “support to insurgencies” as offensive unconventional warfare operations meant to “destabilize” a situation (i.e., regime change). Even more disturbing is the mere nine paragraphs the manual devotes to counterterrorism, given its direct ties to counterinsurgency operations.

From a historical perspective, this research also reviewed the US Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, 1940. The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) was both prescient and prescriptive in writing and publishing its *Small Wars Manual*. This book is a “Ranger Handbook” for low-intensity conflict and is as relevant now as it was sixty years ago. It provides a summary of the key aspects of low-intensity conflict, as well as practical tactics, techniques, and procedures for dealing with the inherent complexities of this type of conflict. The introduction of the manual is quite comprehensive in addressing the general characteristics of small wars, the strategy involved in small wars, the psychological aspects of both friendly and enemy elements in small wars, and the USMC and its relationships with the State Department and local civil governments. The definition of small wars and the statement as fact that the USMC will be involved in these conflicts in the future are essential to understanding the breadth of information and the prescriptive nature of the remainder of the book.

Historical Analysis

Historian Max Boot’s book, *The Savage War of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, 2002, is a historical look at the American tradition in “small wars,” a term that Boot describes as “necessarily an elastic, inexact term.” Boot is a senior fellow

in national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, with expertise in national security, military technology, military history, US foreign policy, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and the media. His book describes some of the over 180 small-scale engagements involving the US military since 1800. This book is consulted due to the breadth and depth of US military experience dealing with counterinsurgency and terrorism that is documented in its pages. Most importantly it illustrates that these types of conflict are the norm rather than the exception for the US military.

Dr. Andrew Birtle, a historian at the US Army Center of Military History, has written an important book showing the history of US Army counterinsurgency operations. *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* (1998) examines the multiple occasions the Army has conducted operations outside of the normal or conventional realm. He begins the book citing examples of operations in the American Revolution and the following Indian Wars. He then discusses various aspects of operations in the US Civil War and Reconstruction period, and frontier actions of the late nineteenth century. Birtle also examines operations in Cuba and the Philippines at the turn of the century, as well as multiple operations during the Wilson administration. He ends his book with observations and analysis of the period between the world wars.

Birtle no doubt wrote this book for the military professional, although it includes many practical lessons for government officials and politicians. While military professionals and the general public probably share the misconception that the majority of Army operations are conventional, involving enemies facing one another on a linear battlefield, history proves that irregular or asymmetric warfare is more common. The

detail and inclusiveness of the work is essential in understanding the scope of counterinsurgency and contingency operations in Army history. Birtle does an excellent job of not only identifying the numerous counterinsurgency and contingency operations, but also analyzing how Army officers and government officials either quickly embraced the reality they faced or learned their lessons after repeated failures. The lessons learned by the Army in contingency operations are as useful today as they were when first passed among generations of Army leaders.

Additional Research

Multiple theses and articles were consulted for varying considerations and perspectives on current and future operations, task organizations, and interagency networking. Many of these works were written by currently serving special forces officers and other military experts from the National War College, Army War College and Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), to name a few institutions.

One such study is “Closing the Gaps: A Strategy for Gaining the Initiative in the War on Terror,” 2003, by John Arquilla, Major Jeremy Simmons, Chief Warrant Officer Chris Manual, and others from the Naval Postgraduate School, Special Operations Curriculum. Their recommendations include improving networking within the SOF community, empowering US nodes and cells, and understanding the importance of information strategies and their effect on lethal operations. Although written in 1986, Douglas H. Dearth’s “Terrorism: Challenge and Response: The Search for National Strategy” has applications in the current WOT in that it advocates preemptive operations from forward locations in order to reduce or mitigate response time in counterterrorism operations.

Two appropriate journal articles for consideration are Colin S. Gray's "Thinking Asymmetrically in Times of Terror" (*Parameters* 2002), which advocates a "low-key" response to terrorist operations, and General Gregory S. Martin's, "US National Security Strategy and the Imperative of 'Geopresence'" (*Air and Space Power Journal*, Summer 2003), which advocates the forward stationing of US forces to enhance bilateral relationships with key WOT partner nations and secure access for staging and basing future operations.

Similar Methodologies

Several previous studies have reached conclusions that are important to this thesis. These studies concentrate on some aspects of the WOT and do not address the same issues as this thesis. These works have very important recommendations that can and should be included in any comprehensive WOT strategy.

A study conducted in 2003 at the Naval Postgraduate School by US Army Special Forces majors Philip L. Mahla and Christopher N. Riga, titled, "An Operational Concept for the Transformation of SOF into a Fifth Service," arrives at interesting conclusions. In particular, their study advocates forward positioning of SOF forces, a "holistic engagement process," and networking with US and foreign government agencies to better conduct operations in the WOT. As this thesis describes, these items are paramount for successful global counterinsurgency operations.

Another study, "Manhunting: A Methodology for Finding Persons of National Interest," 2005, conducted by NPS Special Operations Curriculum students Major Steven Marks, Captain Thomas Meer, and Major Matthew Nilson, advocates a law enforcement framework and methodology to locate, pursue, and detain individual terrorists.

Additionally, they propose an organization with “manhunting teams” able to holistically integrate intelligence and law enforcement capabilities to find their targeted fugitives. A similar strategy is proposed in Lieutenant Colonel Chadwick Clark’s, “Personnel Targeting Operations,” 2003, where “high performance organizations” are assembled to pursue and either capture or kill individual terrorists. Both of these studies propose important recommendations for specific types of operations in the WOT.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Effective doctrine fosters initiative and creative thinking. In so doing, it helps adaptive and flexible leaders make good decisions and stimulate a culture of innovation. (2005, 4-10)

FM 1, *The Army*

Combined with critical reasoning and creative thinking, this thesis uses the doctrinal models for Army problem solving per FM 5-0, *Army Planning and Orders Production*, 2005, and elements of operational design per FM 3-0, *Operations*, 2001, in order to understand and address these complex issues. The complex nature of the contemporary operating environment requires a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the issues. Due to the socio-political nature of this research, qualitative analysis is primarily used and is supported, when possible, with quantitative evidence and analysis. Detailed doctrinal definitions and explanations are provided in this chapter in order to ensure this analysis is understood by all readers without access to numerous military reference manuals.

FM 5-0 defines critical reasoning as, “the purposeful, self-regulating judgment that includes interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference that leaders use to solve problems . . . getting past the surface of the problem and thinking about the problem in depth. It means looking at the problem from several points of view instead of being satisfied with the first answer that comes to mind” (2005, 2-2 to 2-3). FM 5-0 defines “critical thinking” as “the kind of thinking that leads to new insights, novel approaches, fresh perspectives, and whole new ways of understanding and conceiving things” (2005,

2-4). This thesis attempts to use both of these techniques in order to offer commanders and their staffs viable solutions to complex problems in the WOT.

This thesis uses only six of the seven doctrinal steps of the Army problem-solving model, as the last step is “make and implement the decision” (FM 5-0 2005, 2-6), which is beyond the scope of research and enters the realm of command. This final step is reserved for the staff and commander once they are presented with the findings of this thesis. Therefore, this research uses the following steps of the Army problem-solving model as defined by FM 5-0: “1) **identify the problem** (who, what, when, where, and why); 2) **gather information** (determine facts, assumptions, and opinions); 3) **develop criteria** (screening and evaluation); 4) **generate possible solutions** (suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete); 5) **analyze possible solutions** (benchmark: does the solution achieve the desired end state?); 6) **compare possible solutions** (determine the best solution)” (2005, 2-4).

This thesis reviewed a cross section of previously conducted research on the US military’s COE, terrorism and counterterrorism, insurgency and counterinsurgency, US national counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategy, US counterterrorism and counterinsurgency doctrine, and various articles and theses written about terrorism, insurgency, and US response **to identify the problem** and **gather information** to determine facts, assumptions, and opinions. Together, these terms can be considered the “key aspects” of the problem. This thesis attempts to describe these “key aspects” by using common elements of operational design (from both threat and friendly perspectives) in order to **generate possible solutions** or “key tasks” that must be accomplished for mission success.

FM 3-0 defines the “operational design” as “a conceptual linkage of ends, ways, and means. The elements of operational design are tools to aid designing major operations. They help the commander visualize the operation and shape their intent” (2001, 5-6). The WOT is a complex environment requiring a breadth and depth of understanding across multiple realms of religion, culture, politics, and military force, as well as the instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic--DIME). Therefore the elements of operational design seem appropriate for use in this research because, as per FM 3-0, “The elements of operational design are most useful in visualizing major operations. They help clarify and refine the vision of operational-level commanders by providing a framework to describe operations in terms of task and purpose. They help commanders understand the complex combinations of combat power involved” (2001, 5-6).

The elements of operational design are: “1) end state and military conditions; 2) center of gravity; 3) decisive points and objectives; 4) lines of operations; 5) culminating point; 6) operational reach, approach, and pauses; 7) simultaneous and sequential operations; 8) linear and nonlinear operations; and 9) tempo” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-6). In order to ensure relevance of these tools to the research and clearly identify the ways they are being used, it is extremely important to clearly define these elements. Although cumbersome and somewhat tedious, these elements must be doctrinally defined for the reader and are as follows:

End State: “At the operational and tactical levels the conditions that, when achieved, accomplish the mission. At the operational level, these conditions attain the aims set for the campaign or major operation” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-6).

Center of Gravity: “Those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight.” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-7).

Decisive Points and Objectives: “A geographic place, specific key event, or enabling system that allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an enemy and greatly influence the outcome of an attack.” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-7).

Lines of Operations: “Lines that define the directional orientation of the force in time and space in relation to the enemy. They connect the force with its base of operations and its objectives” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-8). The most appropriate application of this tool in this research is further described: “When positional reference to an enemy or adversary has little relevance, commanders may visualize the operation along *logical lines of operations*. Commanders link multiple objectives and actions with the logic of purpose--cause and effect. In a linkage between objectives and forces, only the logical linkage of lines of operations may be evident. . . . Commanders synchronize activities along multiple lines of operations to achieve the desired end state. Logical lines of operations also help commanders visualize how military means can support nonmilitary instruments of national power” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-9).

Culminating Point: “In the offense, that point in time and space where the attacker’s effective combat power no longer exceeds the defender’s or the attacker’s momentum is no longer sustainable or both. In the defensive, that instant at which the defender must withdraw to preserve the force” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-9 to 5-10). More appropriately refined for this research, “In operations where stability or support predominate, culmination may result from the erosion of national will, decline of popular

support, questions concerning legitimacy or restraint, or lapses in protection leading to excessive casualties. Operational culmination in a stability or support mission usually occurs when the force is spread too thinly to control the situation, from a lack of resources, or from the inability to supply resources when needed” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-10).

Operational Reach: The distance and duration across which a unit can successfully employ military capabilities (FM 1-02 2004)

Operational Approach: The manner which a commander attacks the enemy center of gravity (FM 1-02 2004)).

Operational Pause: A deliberate halt taken to extend operational reach or prevent culmination (FM 1-02 2004)).

Simultaneous and Sequential Operations:

ARFOR commanders synchronize subordinate unit actions in time, space, and effects to link the theater strategy and design joint major operations to tactical execution. Without this linkage, major operations deteriorate into haphazard battles and engagements that waste resources without achieving decisive results. . . . When possible, Army forces conduct simultaneous operations throughout the AO. They seek to employ combat power against the entire enemy system. Army forces concurrently engage as many decisive points as possible. Simultaneity exploits depth and agility to overwhelm enemy forces. . . . Sequential operations achieve the end state by phases. Commanders concentrate combat power at successive points over time, achieving the mission in a controlled series of steps. Often the scale and scope of the campaign or major operation, together with the resiliency of the enemy, compel commanders to destroy and disrupt the enemy in stages, exposing the center of gravity step by step. (FM 3-0 2001, 5-11)

Linear and Nonlinear Operations:

In *nonlinear operations*, maneuver units may operate in noncontiguous areas throughout the AO. . . . Nonlinear operations typically focus on multiple decisive points. Simultaneity overwhelms opposing C2 and retains the initiative. Nonlinear operations proceed along multiple lines of operations--geographical, logical, or both. . . . Situational understanding, coupled with precision fires, frees commanders to maneuver against multiple objectives. Swift maneuver against several decisive points--supported by precise, concentrated fire--induces paralysis and shock among enemy troops and commanders. . . . In *linear operations*,

maneuver units normally operate in contiguous AOs. . . . Each combined arms force directs and sustains combat power toward enemy forces in concert with adjacent units. The ratio of forces to space and the array of maneuver forces emphasize geographic position and tend to create a contiguous forward line of troops (FLOT). This protects and simplifies LOCs. Protected LOCs, in turn, increase the endurance of Army forces and ensure freedom of action for extended periods. . . . Nonlinear and linear operations are not mutually exclusive. Depending upon perspective and echelon, operations often combine them. (FM 3-0 2001, 5-11 to 5-12)

Tempo: The rate of military action (FM 3-0 2001, 5-12).

Some of the most important aspects of this element of operational design as they relate to this thesis are identified in the following statements:

“Commanders complement rapid tempo with three related concepts. First, operational design stresses simultaneous operations rather than a deliberate sequence of operations. Second, an operation may achieve rapid tempo by avoiding needless combat. This includes bypassing resistance that appears at times and places commanders do not consider decisive. Third, the design gives maximum latitude to independent action and initiative by subordinate commanders. Army forces generally pay a price for rapid tempo through greater fatigue and resource expenditure. . . . [Commanders] design the operation for various tempos that take into account the endurance of the force,” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-12).

As stated above, this study uses these elements of operational design from both an enemy and friendly perspective in order to generate possible solutions for the research questions using the Army problem-solving model. Once these possible solutions are identified, this study uses the five commonly applied **screening criteria** in Army problem solving to ensure the solutions being considered can solve the problem.

“**Suitability**: Does the proposed solution solve the problem and is it legal and ethical?

Feasibility: Does the solution fit within available resources? **Acceptability**: Is the

solution worth the cost or risk? **Distinguishability** [*sic*]: Does the solution differ

significantly from other solutions? **Completeness**: Does the solution contain critical aspects of solving the problem from start to finish?” (FM 5-0 2005, 2-9).

Using the Army doctrinal problem-solving method and elements of operational design, this thesis should provide USSOCOM and other decision makers with the best possible solution for conducting operations in the WOT. It is understood that this research is conducted in the theoretical realm and that many practical aspects must be applied to the proposed “best solution” in order to ensure it is appropriate for different missions. However, this solution should be considered during future military decision-making processes and mission analysis in particular to more appropriately plan, organize, and execute future WOT missions.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Never confuse enthusiasm with capability.

GEN Schoomaker, CSA, *Arrival Message*

This chapter uses the research methodology outlined in chapter 3 to identify the key aspects of the WOT using the Army problem-solving method and generate possible solutions using Army elements of operational design.

Step 1: Identify the Problem

General Schoomaker's quote (above) refers to the US hostage rescue mission in Iran in 1980 that failed in part due to the ad hoc task organization and mission resources that service elements endured in making the daring attempt. Today, USSOCOM finds itself in a similar situation, trying to develop comprehensive joint, interagency, multinational plans and conduct joint, interagency and multinational operations in the WOT. The 2005 Unified Command Plan designated USSOCOM as the lead combatant command for the WOT, responsible for "planning, synchronizing, and, as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks" (Unified Command Plan 2005,13). This mission seems logical, given USSOCOM's global responsibility and expertise in special operations, specifically counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. While USSOCOM is shouldering its responsibility by establishing its Center for Special Operations (CSO) to provide a war-fighting capability to integrate intelligence, current and future operations, and joint interagency coordination, it is meeting with an operational and political reality in that it is not fully mandated or

resourced for the WOT. Furthermore, USSOCOM is not currently postured to accomplish key tasks in the WOT if, in fact, it were mandated and resourced adequately.

As this thesis will later illustrate, although USSOCOM has the largest number of professionally educated, trained, and experienced counterterrorism and counterinsurgency personnel in the US government, the complex aspects of the WOT battlefield demand the full capacity and capability of all instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic-DIME). In this environment USSOCOM must ensure it does not confuse enthusiasm with capability, particularly in regard to nonmilitary instruments of national power. Given this complex situation, how should USSOCOM conduct operations? How should it organize forces and array resources to conduct these operations?

Step 2: Gather Information (Determine Facts, Assumptions and Opinions)

Key Facts

No single US federal agency has the full capability and capacity of all instruments of national power. The corollary to this is that interagency cooperation is absolutely necessary for successful US government global operations. It is imperative that the US government and its agencies fully integrate all instruments of national power to establish and maintain effective global operations in the international arena. In fact, as COL Michael Repass advocates in his study, “Combating Terrorism with Preparation of the Battlespace” (2003), “interagency integration . . . a significantly greater degree of cooperation than ‘coordination’” is needed to “synchronize efforts and support operational planning on a global scale” (2003, 21). This seems obvious, given the organization and responsibilities of the various agencies within the US government, but it

is particularly important to remember the limitations of any one instrument of national power. This has significant relevance when considered along with the key assumptions developed later in this chapter. This key fact must shape the manner in which the US government both organizes and conducts global operations.

USSOCOM's expertise in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency is a result of its mandated missions and that of its subordinate commands, to perform these operations, their institutionalized education and training programs (like those at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS)), and the routine involvement of USSOCOM personnel in counterterrorist, antiterrorist, counterinsurgency, foreign internal defense, and unconventional warfare operations during both conflict and peace. Neither the US State Department nor the Central Intelligence Agency has either the formalized training structure or the number of personnel to rival USSOCOM's level of collective expertise. In fact, in fiscal year 2005-06 at the US State Department's George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center, Foreign Service Institute there was only one three-day class dealing with terrorism available to State Department employees (FSI Schedule of Courses 2005, 144).

Key Assumptions

We actually misnamed the war on terror. It ought to be [called] the struggle against ideological extremists who do not believe in free societies and who happen to use terror as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world.

President George W. Bush, *Address to the Unity Journalists of Color Convention*

Global Insurgency: Al Qaeda and its violent Islamic extremist affiliates comprise a global insurgency aimed at destroying existing governments and establishing an Islamic caliphate. In order to understand this assumption, key differences in common terminology used to describe terrorism and insurgency must be delineated. FMI 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (2004), uses the joint definition of insurgency: “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict” (JP1-02). It is a “protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control. Political power is the central issue in an insurgency” (FMI 3-07.22 2004, 1-1). Given this definition and the fact that al Qaeda has repeatedly stated its intention to create a global caliphate (Islamic state) by removing current governments and replacing them with a government practicing Islamic sharia law, it is prudent to consider al Qaeda and its affiliates’ global insurgents.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that terrorism is a tactic or form of warfare employed by some insurgencies, particularly al Qaeda and its affiliates, to accomplish their ends. Bard O’Neill of the National War College better delineates terrorism and insurgency by stating, “The violent aspect of insurgency is manifested in different forms of warfare. A *form of warfare* may be viewed as one variety of organized violence emphasizing particular armed forces, weapons, tactics, and targets. Three forms of warfare have been associated with insurgent conflicts: terrorism, guerilla war, and conventional warfare” (2005, 33). Another key distinction for this research is that “for a group like Al Qaida, the world at large is a battlefield. Such attacks by nonstate actors are herein referred to as *transnational terrorism* to distinguish them from similar behavior on

the part of individuals or groups controlled by sovereign states (*international terrorism*)” (O’Neill 2005, 34). Armed with these definitions and a review of key al Qaeda statements, such as Osama bin Laden’s fatwahs (Islamic decrees) advocating both the destruction of non-Islamic regimes and the establishment of a caliphate “according to the prophecy” (Post 2005, 19), a key assumption is that the US and many countries of the world face a global insurgency.

This is a valid assumption, given the number of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency experts who have expressed the same conclusion. In a statement to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on 2 February 2006, the Director of National Intelligence, Ambassador John D. Negroponte, stated, “Thanks to effective intelligence operations, we know a great deal about al Qa’ida’s vision. Zawahiri, al Qa’ida’s number two, is candid in his July 2005 letter to Zarqawi. He portrays the jihad in Iraq as a stepping-stone in the march toward a global caliphate, with the focus on Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Israel. Zawahiri stresses the importance of having a secure base in Iraq from which to launch attacks elsewhere, including in the US Homeland” (Negroponte 2006, 3). In his testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation on 29 September 2005, Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Director of the Washington office for the RAND corporation, stated, “Rather than viewing the fundamental organizing principle of American national defense strategy in this unconventional realm as a GWOT, it may be more useful to re-conceptualize it in terms of a global counterinsurgency (GCOIN). Such an approach would a priori knit together the equally critical political, economic, diplomatic, and developmental sides inherent to the

successful prosecution of counterinsurgency to the existing dominant military side of the equation” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 11-12). This viewpoint is echoed by Steven Metz and Raymond Millen when they state, “The Global War on Terrorism has all of the characteristics of an insurgency: Protracted, asymmetric violence, ambiguity, dispersal, the use of complex terrain, psychological warfare, and political mobilization designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in their favor; avoidance by insurgents of battlespaces where they are weak and a focus on those where they can compete, particularly the psychological and the political” (Metz and Millen 2004, 24-25).

It is important to note that this assumption of global insurgency is not solely American. It is significant that, in a later testimony before the same House Subcommittee on 27 October 2005, Ambassador Henry A. Crumpton, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the US State Department, referred to analysis offered by a retired Royal Australian Army officer when making his case that,

In the case of al-Qaida and affiliates, we confront a loose confederation of extremist networks targeting the United States, its allies and interests, and the broader international system. According to Australian strategist David Kilcullen, this confederation has many of the characteristics of a globalized insurgency. Its aim is to overthrow the existing international system and replace it with a radical, totalitarian pan-Islamic ‘Caliphate.’ Its methods include intelligence collection, analysis, counterintelligence, deception, denial, propaganda, subversion, terrorism, insurgency and open warfare. So, while we speak of ‘terrorists’ we must focus not only on ‘terrorism,’ but rather on all the methods they employ. We must also focus on their strategy, and attack that as well. (Crumpton, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/55745.htm> last accessed 8 FEB 06)

Another non-American viewpoint expressing similar conclusions is Rohan Gunaratna’s statement, “As defined by Osama, Al Qaeda has short, mid- and long-term strategies. Before 9/11, its immediate goal was the withdrawal of US troops from Saudi Arabia and the creation there of a Caliphate. Its mid-term strategy was the ouster of the

‘apostate rulers’ of the Arabian Peninsula and thereafter the Middle East and the creation of true Islamic states. And the long-term strategy was to build a formidable array of Islamic states-including ones with nuclear capability – to wage war on the US (the ‘Great Satan’) and its allies” (Gunaratna 2003, 119). This research considers these viewpoints, along with al Qaeda statements, to arrive at the key assumption that the WOT should be considered a global counterinsurgency.

Cellular Network: The global insurgency is comprised of loosely affiliated groups with limited independent capabilities. It is important to understand that al Qaeda is a complex organization that is constantly evolving. At one time it may have been a clearly defined hierarchical organization made up of individuals with close personal ties. Now, the organization has evolved into more of a movement than a particular structured organization. It is as though al Qaeda has finally achieved the full value of its moniker, translated as “the base” or “the foundation” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 4).

There are **several** perspectives that echo the above key assumption. Rohan Gunaratna describes al Qaeda in his book *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* as

characterized by a broad-based ideology, a novel structure, a robust capacity for regeneration and a very diverse membership that cuts across ethnic, class and national boundaries. It is neither a single group nor a coalition of groups: it comprised a core base or bases in Afghanistan, satellite terrorist cells worldwide, a conglomerate of Islamist political parties and other largely independent terrorist groups that it draws on for offensive actions and other responsibilities. Leaders of all the above are co-opted as and when necessary to serve as an integral part of Al Qaeda’s high command, which is run via a vertical leadership structure that provides strategic direction and tactical support to its horizontal network of compartmentalized cells and associate organizations. (2003, 72-73)

He goes further to say, “The constituent groups of Al Qaeda operate as a loose coalition, each with its own command, control and communication structures. The

coalition has one unique characteristic that enhances its resilience and allows force to be multiplied in pursuit of a particular objective: whenever necessary, these groups interact or merge, cooperating ideologically, financially, and technically” (2003, 76). He also states, “Al Qaeda pursues its objectives through a network of cells, associate terrorist and guerilla groups and other affiliated organizations, and shares expertise, transfers resources, discusses strategy and even conducts joint operations with some or all of them” (2003, 127). He provides a look at how extensive and broad this network is when he states that, “As of mid-2001, Al Qaeda’s permanent or semi permanent presence had been confirmed in seventy-six countries, including those without discernable Muslim communities but which are suitable for procurement, e.g., Japan, Bulgaria, Slovakia” (2003, 105).

In his book *Fighting Terrorism*, Benjamin Netanyahu describes al Qaeda and its affiliates as “a *terror network* whose constituent parts support one another operationally as well as politically.” He goes on to say that, “The success of terrorists in one part of the terror network emboldens terrorists throughout the network” (2001, xiv-xv). While Netanyahu’s book concentrates on state-sponsored international terrorism versus transnational terrorism, it is important to note his extensive knowledge and understanding of the cooperative nature among the terrorist organizations, between terrorists and their state sponsors, and also among the state sponsors themselves. This symbiotic relationship promotes and sustains al Qaeda and its affiliates in their quest for an Islamic caliphate.

In his testimony before the US House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation on 29 September 2005, Dr. Bruce Hoffman stated,

The al Qaeda movement therefore is now best described as a networked transnational constituency rather than the monolithic, international terrorist organization with an identifiable command and control apparatus that it once was. The result is that today there are many al Qaedas rather than the single al Qaeda of the past. The current al Qaeda therefore exists more as an ideology that has become a vast enterprise--an international franchise with like-minded local representatives, loosely connected to a central ideological or motivational base, but advancing the remaining center's goals at once simultaneously and independently of each other. Hence, unlike the hierarchical, pyramidal structure that typified terrorist groups of the past, the current al Qaeda movement in the main is flatter, more linear and organizationally networked. Nonetheless, it still retains some important characteristics and aspects of a more organized entity: mixing and matching organizational and operational styles whether dictated by particular missions or imposed by circumstances. (p. 4)

He goes on to say that al Qaeda is currently comprised of four “distinct but not mutually exclusive, dimensions.” They are: “al Qaeda central,” comprised of the remaining core members and new leaders since 11 September 2001; “al Qaeda affiliates and associates,” made up of established insurgent or terrorist organizations that have received spiritual, training, or materiel assistance from al Qaeda; “al Qaeda locals,” consisting of those with some terrorism experience or training in a jihadist campaign supported by al Qaeda; and the “al Qaeda network . . . home-grown Islamic radicals- from North Africa, the Middle East, and South and South East Asia – as well as local converts to Islam mostly living in Europe, Africa and perhaps Latin America and North America as well, who have no direct connection with al Qaeda (or any other identifiable terrorist group), but nonetheless are prepared to carry out attacks in solidarity with or support of, al Qaeda’s radical jihadist agenda” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 4-7).

Jessica Stern provides a different but similar perspective when she states,

Al Qaeda and the IIF [International Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders] are not only changing their mission over time in response to new situations and new needs, but also their organizational style. With its corporate headquarters in shatters, Al Qaeda and the alliance are now relying on an ever shifting network of sympathetic groups and individuals, including the Southwest

Asian jihadi groups that signed bin Laden's February 1998 fatwa; franchise outfits in Southeast Asia; sleeper cells trained in Afghanistan and dispersed abroad; and freelancers such as Richard Reid, the convicted "shoe bomber", who attempted to blow up a plane. Lone wolves are also beginning to take action on their own, without having been formally recruited or trained by Al Qaeda. (2003, 269-270)

Additionally, it must be considered that the very nature of each of these insurgent organizations is cellular. Insurgencies must rely upon the collective capabilities of several elements in their organizations in order to accomplish their missions. These elements are clandestine in nature and rely upon secrecy to maintain their security. They currently cannot mass in normal military formations to wage a war of maneuver. These conditions, along with the various descriptions of al Qaeda, provide the basis for the assumption that the global insurgency network is comprised of loosely affiliated groups with limited independent capabilities.

Nine Functional Resources: The global insurgency relies upon nine functional resources comprised of leadership, safe havens, finance, communications, movement, intelligence, weapons, personnel, and ideology (NMSP-WOT 2006, 5).

These nine resources are identified in the unclassified NMSP-WOT, 1 February 2006, and are considered "critical requirements" or "nodes" in the global insurgency network (NMSP-WOT 2006, 5). It is important to have a full understanding of these various functional resources in order to develop appropriate strategies and operations to defeat them. The NMSP-WOT defines these resources as:

Leadership – provides the motivation and energy necessary to maintain coherent progress toward a goal. Most terrorist extremist groups have a central figure who embodies the cause and several operational leaders/coordinators who provide leadership on a functional, regional, or local basis. Adaptive organizations have a "bench" of leaders prepared to assume greater responsibilities, if required.

Safe Havens. One of the most important resources to extremists is safe haven. Safe havens provide the enemy with relative freedom to plan, organize, train, rest, and conduct operations. Safe havens can be physical or non-physical.

Finance. Extremists fund operations by using unofficial banking systems, legitimate businesses, front companies, wealthy backers, state sponsors, non-governmental organizations, and criminal activities. Drug trafficking is a growing source of criminal funding for many enemy organizations.

Communications. The ability to receive, store, and/or disseminate information.

Movement. Extremists must move and have supporting documentation to elude detection, maintain flexibility and access targets. Terrorist access to targets includes the ability to move weapons to desired target locations.

Intelligence. Extremist networks require specific and detailed information to achieve their ends. They gather this information from open sources, human contacts (both witting and unwitting), reconnaissance and surveillance, and technical activities. Terrorists use the resulting intelligence to plan and execute operations, and secure what they need to operate and survive.

Weapons. Extremists employ existing technology (explosives, small arms, anti-tank missiles, and other weapons/devices) in conventional and unconventional methods to terrorize and achieve mass effects. In addition, terrorists may use non-weapon technologies as weapons.

Personnel. This critical capability incorporates terrorist recruitment, indoctrination, and training of enemy operatives.

Ideology. Extremist ideology motivates violent action and inspires individuals to provide material resources. (NMSP-WOT 2006, 14-18)

Ideology is the Center of Gravity: Ideology can be considered the global insurgency's center of gravity as it is the key functional resource and enabler to influence global, regional, and local populations to gain all manner of support. Al Qaeda may have originally been comprised of a core group of leaders, along with a mass of foot soldiers ready to defeat both the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and later the US immediately after the Gulf War in the early 1990s. Since then, however, and more recently after 11 September 2001, al Qaeda has morphed into something much more nebulous and dangerous. Dr. Bruce Hoffman describes this transition: "In the time

since 9/11, however, bin Laden and his lieutenants have engineered nothing short of a stunning makeover from a unitary organization to something more akin to an ideology that is true to its name and original mission- the ‘base of operations’ or ‘foundation’ or, as other translations more appropriately describe it, as the ‘precept’ or ‘method’” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 4). He further illustrates the importance of the ideology by stating, “The principle of jihad is the ideological bond that unites this amorphous movement: surmounting its loose structure, diverse membership and geographical separation” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 12). While not using military terminology, Hoffman identifies ideology as the global insurgency’s center of gravity when he states, “Hence, al Qaeda and the wider movement’s resiliency-if not, longevity-will thereby be predicated on its continued ability to recruit new cadre, mobilize the Muslim masses, and marshal support – both spiritual and practical – for jihad.” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 14)

The 9/11 Commission report describes the threat in a similar manner by stating,

Our enemy is twofold: al Qaeda, a stateless network of terrorists that struck us on 9/11; and a radical ideological movement in the Islamic world, inspired in part by al Qaeda, which has spawned terrorist groups and violence across the globe. The first enemy is weakened, but continues to pose a grave threat. The second enemy is gathering, and will menace Americans and American interests long after Usama Bin Laden and his cohorts are killed or captured. Thus our strategy must match our means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism. (2004, 363).

Rohan Gunaratna elaborates further on the centrality of the insurgency’s ideology when he states, “Terrorism is only one of Al Qaeda’s tactics. As a multidimensional group, it can engage the enemy on several fronts simultaneously. The long-term strategic threat that it poses to international security is the politicization and radicalization of Muslims. . . . Needless to say, if governments and civil society respond only to Al

Qaeda's military threat and not to its ideological challenge, in the long run the organization will have no difficulty in recruiting more terrorists from successive generations of disenchanting Muslim youths" (2003, 123). He goes further to say, "Within the organization itself, the notion of brotherhood ingrained in Islam helps Al Qaeda cohere. Osama is regarded as the elder brother and no one disputes his leadership of the wider 'Islamic family' of the modern era. What gives Al Qaeda its global reach is its ability to appeal to Muslims irrespective of their nationality, giving it unprecedented resources. . . . As the world succumbs to the forces of globalization, becoming more culturally diverse, so have Al Qaeda's reach and depth of penetration increased" (2003, 129). Finally, identifying the paramount importance of al Qaeda's ideology he states, "Above all Al Qaeda's ideology must be countered, in order to deflect and lessen its appeal to serving members, fresh recruits and actual or potential supporters" (2003, 310).

Not surprisingly, this assumption of ideology as a center of gravity for al Qaeda is most directly identified in the NMSP-WOT when it states, "At the strategic level, the AQAM's [al Qaeda Associated Movement] center of gravity is its extremist ideology" (2006, 14). "Ideology is the component most critical to extremist networks and movements and sustains all other capabilities. This critical resource is the enemy's center of gravity, and removing it is key to creating a global antiterrorist environment" (NMSP-WOT 2006, 18).

Multiple operational domains: The global insurgency operates in multiple domains (geographical, informational--to include Internet, media, and education--and financial). This assumption might at first seem obvious. Given the extensive nature of the network and the impact of ideology on the organization, however, it is important to

review several different viewpoints. Dr. Bruce Hoffman gives a holistic and almost surreal description of the network when he states “the movement’s strength is not in geographical possession or occupation of a defined geographical territory, but in its fluidity and impermanence” (Hoffman Testimony 2005, 3). Bard O’Neill provides a more detailed description of al Qaeda’s operational domains when he states,

In a major break with past insurgencies, Al Qaida’s main focus is not concentrated within the borders of a given country. Instead the entire globe is considered a battlefield, with attacks possible anywhere. This transnational campaign is envisaged as a long struggle that emphasizes violent attacks carried out by Al Qaida’s own agents and various regional affiliates and mavericks. It is not conceptualized within the framework of progressive stages, as is the case with the protracted-popular-war strategy. Nor does it stress the establishment of complex shadow governments. It does, however, envisage the need to takeover at least one key country early in the struggle, preferably Saudi Arabia, which can then be used as a base to continue the global insurrection. Accordingly, the strategy of Al Qaida is best viewed as a military-focus one with a global theater of operations. (O’Neill 2005, 66)

The NMSP-WOT identifies the more nebulous operational domains of the global insurgency when it states, “Non-physical safe havens for terrorists can exist within cyber, financial, and legal systems. These ‘virtual’ safe havens allow enemy networks to enjoy relative freedom from disruption, as in physical sanctuaries, since states often make them available or unable to deny their use. These areas may create opportunities for cooperation by criminal elements and extremists” (2006, 15). These virtual domains appear to have as much or more significance for al Qaeda, as Dr. Bruce Hoffman elaborates: “For al Qaeda, the Internet therefore has become something of a virtual sanctuary: providing an effective, expeditious and anonymous means through which the movement can continue to communicate with its fighters, followers, sympathizers and supporters world-wide” (2005, 18).

In the physical world, al Qaeda uses some nontraditional or asymmetric domains for waging its insurgency. These domains can include religious and seemingly secular organizations, as well as schools. The NMSP-WOT identifies some of these areas when it states, “Extremists use religious facilities, schools, refugee camps, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the media as vehicles for recruitment, reinforced by the educational and indoctrination efforts” (2006, 18). Jessica Stern provides further disturbing realism when she identifies that, “Foot soldiers are likely to be found in schools or mosques, and only the best and brightest make it to the top” (2003, 250). Given these numerous operational domains, it appears that the global insurgency network is ubiquitous.

Continuous operations: The global insurgency is continuously planning, preparing, and conducting operations ranging from intelligence collection to direct action. While it may appear to the casual observer that terrorism is sporadic or infrequent, the enormous amount of planning and preparation needed to conduct a single terrorist operation must be considered. Terrorist operations are meticulously conceived and planned with operational secrecy paramount at conception. As they progress through reconnaissance of a target and further development of the plan, the terrorist organization must remain constantly vigilant to prevent tipping its hand to authorities or alerting some suspicious neighbor. As the plan is refined, preparation for the operation must also occur under an equal amount of secrecy. Financing must be arranged to allow the perpetrator access to the target. Weapons and equipment must be transported, assembled, and readied for action while rehearsals and a final reconnaissance are conducted to ensure the plan will work. Only the execution of the operation draws public awareness at the most

opportune time. This complex string of events may take years to play out, and it is important to realize that during this sequence of events, a terrorist operation is actually underway. A terrorist operation does not begin when the bomb explodes. A review of al Qaeda and affiliate operations since the first World Trade Center bombings in 1993 demonstrates this fact. It is also important to realize that during this sequence, al Qaeda and its affiliates are learning and evolving to modify their operations to ensure maximum effectiveness and operational security. It must also be considered that the terrorist organization is conducting numerous operations to ensure that at least one of them has a chance of ultimate success. This means that stopping one event in the sequence, while important, does not necessarily stop the operation, nor does it stop the entire terrorist organization or network.

Dr. Bruce Hoffman illustrates this fact when he states:

Al Qaeda's 'operational durability' thus has enormous significance for U.S. counterterrorism strategy and policy. Because it has this malleable resiliency, it cannot be destroyed or defeated in a single tactical, military engagement or series of engagements – much less ones exclusively dependent on the application of conventional forces and firepower. . . . For al Qaeda, accordingly, Iraq has been a very useful side-show: an effective means to preoccupy American military forces and distract U.S. attention while al Qaeda and its confederates make new inroads and strike elsewhere. . . . What will be required today and in the future to ensure continued successes, therefore, is a more integrated, systems approach to a complex problem that is at once operationally durable, evolutionary and elusive in character. The U.S. . . . will need instead to adjust and adapt its strategy, resources, and tactics to formidably evolutionary opponents that, as we have seen, are widely dispersed and decentralized and whose many destructive parts are autonomous, mobile, and themselves highly adaptive. (2005, 8-11)

Ultimately, in order to be successful in identifying and preventing terrorist operations, the US must also learn and evolve at least as quickly as the terrorists. Metz and Millen drive this point home when they state, "One of the core dynamics in insurgency and counterinsurgency is the 'learning contest.' Insurgents tend to be highly adaptable and

flexible, at least at the tactical and operational levels. To match them, counterinsurgents must also be adaptable and quick to learn” (2004, 25).

Thus, there are numerous key facts and assumptions that require consideration when formulating a response strategy for the global insurgency. Figure 1 is offered to summarize these key facts and assumptions in order to address them with appropriate solutions later in the chapter.

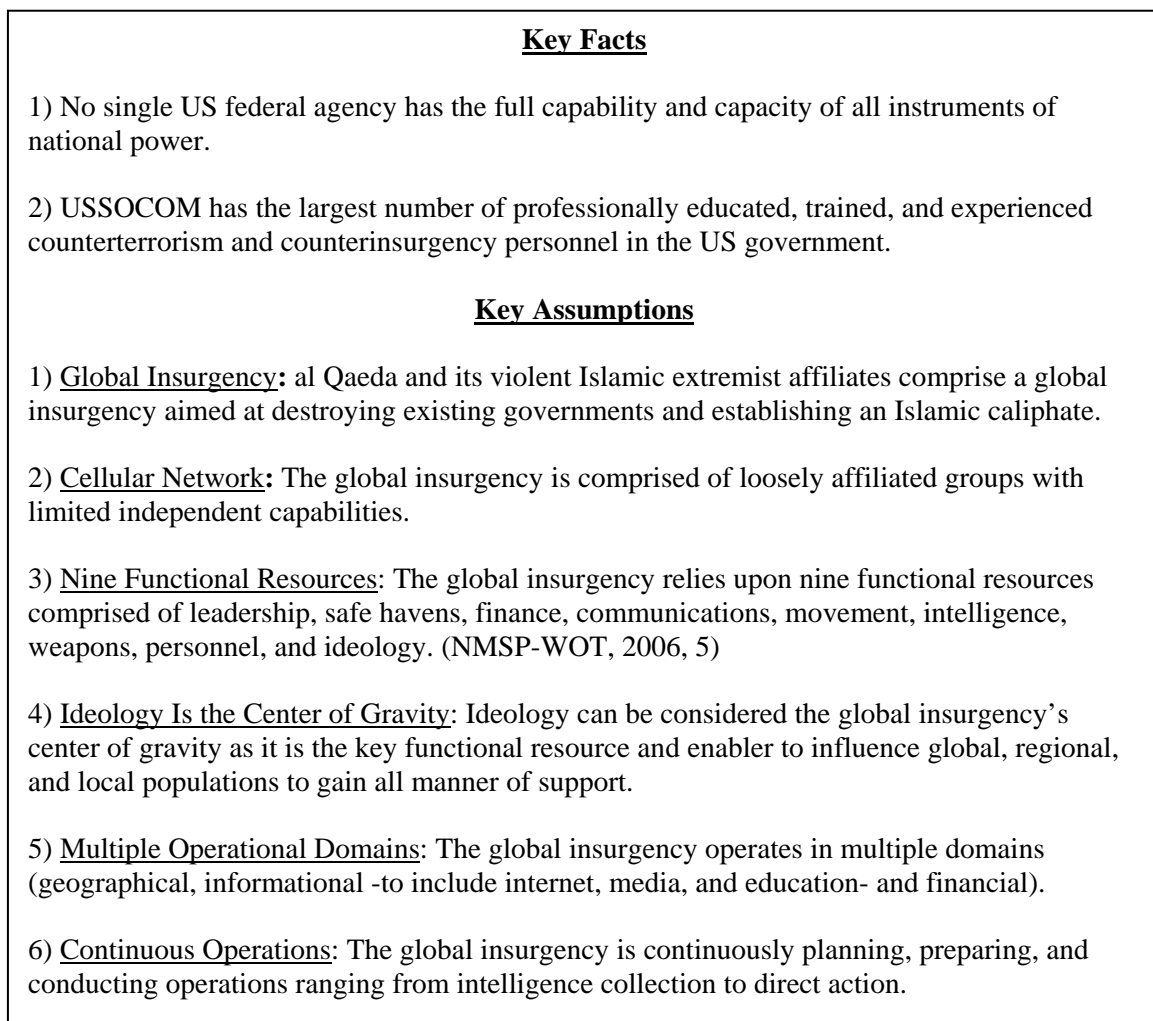
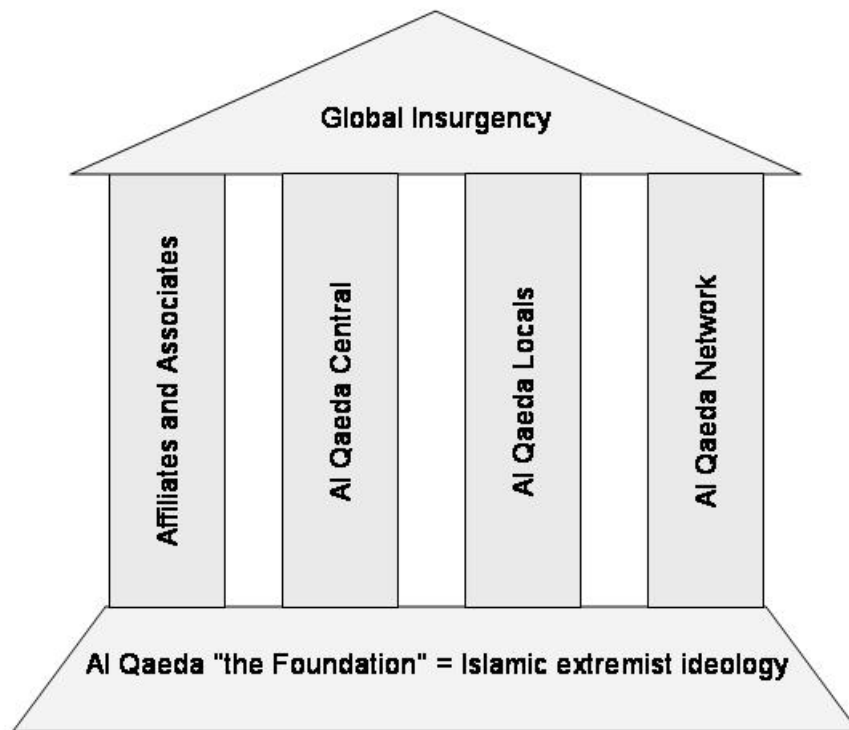


Figure 1. Response Strategy Key Facts and Assumptions

Lost in translation? Al Qaeda in US Terms

To understand the threat and develop accurate and adequate solutions, it is sometimes helpful to attempt to explain the enemy's viewpoint in familiar terms. In an attempt to clearly define the global insurgency's strategy and operations using US Army doctrinal elements of operational design, the figures 2, 3, and 4 are offered. These methods of illustration are currently used in mission analysis at the US Army Command and General Staff College.



* This construct is based on an analysis of Dr. Bruce Hoffman's testimony before the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation on 29 September 2005

Figure 2. al Qaeda and Related Organizations That Comprise the Global Insurgency
The true base or foundation of the insurgency is Islamic extremist ideology
Source: This construct is based on an analysis of Dr. Bruce Hoffman's testimony before the House International Relations Committee.

Al Qaeda	
<u>Goals</u> - Destruction of the US and “apostate regimes” - Establishment of the Caliphate - Islamic rule of the world under sharia law	<u>Center of Gravity</u> Islamic extremist ideology
<u>Capabilities</u> Mass of support (personnel and logistic) Suicide bombers WMD?	<u>Vulnerabilities</u> Limited conventional warfare (guerrilla) capability Communication Movement

Figure 3. Goals, Capabilities, Center of Gravity, and Vulnerabilities of al Qaeda

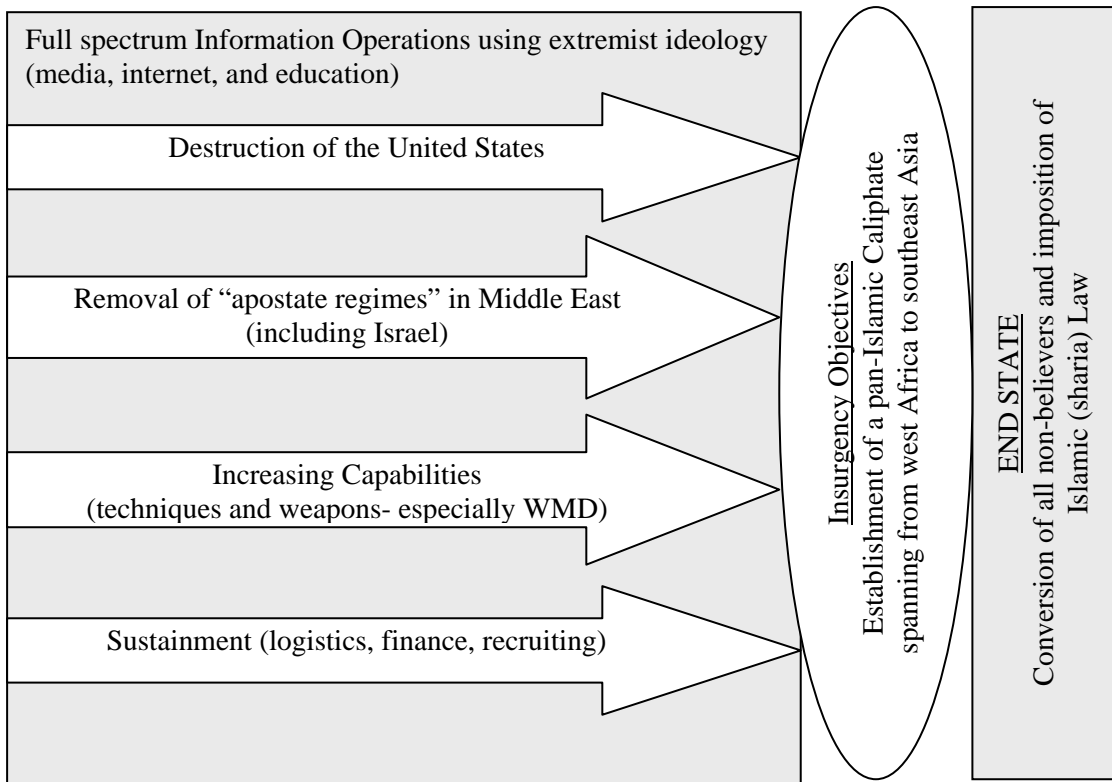


Figure 4. al Qaeda’s Logical Lines of Operations

Source: This chart was developed using analysis of al Qaeda statements and messages, as well as research conducted by other counterterrorism and counterinsurgency scholars.

Al Qaeda Elements of Operational Design

End State and Military Conditions

The establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate spanning from west Africa to southeast Asia to enable the conversion of all non-believers and subjugate them to sharia law.

Center of Gravity

Radical extremist Islamic ideology that draws recruits, finance, and support from the disaffected masses and jihadists who are willing to die for the cause.

Decisive Points and Objectives

Decisive to this operation is the establishment of a geographical base of operations to form the nucleus of the caliphate, build capacity and capability for future operations to remove apostate governments, destroy the west, and eventually subjugate the world to sharia law.

Lines of Operations

Increase capabilities, sustain the movement, remove apostate regimes, and destroy the west all while conducting full spectrum information operations to garner support from the Muslim masses.

Culminating Point

The inability of radical Islamic extremist ideology to sustain functions of the global movement.

Operational Reach, Approach, and Pauses

Operational reach can remain global as long as extremists can merge funding, weapons, and access to targets. These operations must remain indirect in approach in order prevent force-on-force engagements with superior forces. Operational pauses are necessary to gather intelligence and resources to act at the right time and place to ensure large return from limited resources.

Simultaneous and Sequential Operations

Operations must occur simultaneously across the globe to stress western capability and leverage limited resources. Sequential operations may be necessary to achieve limited objectives toward the end state (e.g. securing a base of operations to establish the caliphate).

Linear and Nonlinear Operations

Operations must remain nonlinear until a mass of guerilla units can be established to offer mutual support across the battlespace. Cells may conduct linear operations when they can provide support to other cells adjacent to their battlespace (e.g. operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan).

Tempo

Operations must be maintained at the highest tempo that befuddles enemy response, maintains operational security and maximizes resources.

Figure 5. al Qaeda Elements of Operational Design

Step 3: Develop Criteria (Screening and Evaluation)

The doctrinal Army screening criteria have been selected to determine whether the research solution is appropriate. Once again, these criteria are: “**Suitability**: Does the proposed solution solve the problem and is it legal and ethical? **Feasibility**: Does the solution fit within available resources? **Acceptability**: Is the solution worth the cost or risk? **Distinguishability** [*sic*]: Does the solution differ significantly from other solutions? **Completeness**: Does the solution contain critical aspects of solving the problem from start to finish?” (FM 5-0 2005, 2-9) These criteria are levied against the proposed solution later in this chapter.

Step 4: Generate Possible Solutions (Suitable, Feasible, Acceptable, Distinguishable and Complete)

This thesis attempts to describe the “key aspects” of global counterinsurgency by using common elements of operational design (here from a friendly perspective) in order to generate possible solutions or key tasks that must be accomplished for mission success. Once again, the elements of operational design are: “1) end state and military conditions; 2) center of gravity; 3) decisive points and objectives; 4) lines of operations; 5) culminating point; 6) operational reach, approach, and pauses; 7) simultaneous and sequential operations; 8) linear and nonlinear operations; and 9) tempo” (FM 3-0 2001, 5-6).

End State and Military Conditions

The classified version of the NMSP-WOT establishes four termination objectives for the military strategic end state. However, to better understand the end state for the purposes of this thesis, the unclassified version of the NMSP-WOT identifies the US

national strategic aims as: “defeat violent extremism as a threat to our way of life as a free and open society, and create a global environment inhospitable to violent extremists and all who support them” (2006, 22). If even possible, this end state requires an enormous undertaking, especially when shaping the global environment. It requires global participation by all countries, some of which do not have the capacity, capability, or desire to contribute to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. These gaps must be addressed by the US and its allies to have any chance in achieving the desired end state.

Center of Gravity

Support for the United States has plummeted. Polls taken in Islamic countries after 9/11 suggested that many or most people thought the United States was doing the right thing in its fight against terrorism. . . . By 2003, polls showed that “the bottom has fallen out of support for America in most of the Muslim world. Negative views of the U.S. among Muslims, which had been largely limited to countries in the Middle East, have spread.” (9/11 Commission 2004, 375, quoting the Pew Global Attitudes Project Report, 3 June 2003)

Defeating the enemy center of gravity is usually seen as the key to victory. But how can the US defeat an ideology? Perhaps the best strategy is for the US not to fight on the same terms, that is, the best strategy might lie in undermining the effectiveness of the ideology or at least not adding to its effectiveness through the conduct of US operations rather than an open assault using a competing ideology.

If the enemy center of gravity is ideology and enemies of the US exploit situations within populations and use ideology to win support for their cause, then, as the end state alludes, an enemy critical vulnerability is a global population that has been inoculated from Islamic extremism, thus reducing the pool of enemy operatives and support. Successful counterinsurgency practices show that this population must be inoculated

through good governance. It is also imperative, however, that the moderate Muslim voice carries its message to those who might be influenced to conduct or support global insurgent or terrorist operations. While it is important for the US to be an advocate, the US cannot be seen as a ventriloquist of the moderate Muslim voice, nor can it be viewed as an imperialistic puppet master of nations that lack their own capacity and capability for governance.

The Need for Low-visibility Operations

The US finds itself in a precarious situation in trying to counter Islamic extremism. This is especially highlighted when considering the use of military force. Jessica Stern states, “Our military action becomes the evidence our enemies need to prove the dangers of the New World Order they aim to fight. It creates a sense of urgency for the terrorists seeking to purify the world through murder. . . . [W]henever we respond with violence of any kind, we assist the terrorists in mobilizing recruits. . . . Anytime military action is contemplated, its effect on terrorist recruitment and fund-raising must be weighed. To the extent that covert action is possible, it is preferred for this reason” (2003, 280-290). This is further amplified by Michael Scheuer in his book, *Imperial Hubris*, when he states, “What we as a nation do, then, is the key causal factor in our confrontation with Islam” (2004, 9).

Considering this observation in the age of fast-paced global media, the US must first consider the political and mass popular fallout from any planned future operations. This applies to not only local populations closest to the operation, but global populations as well. Metz and Millen provide guidance as to how to accomplish military tasks under intense global scrutiny: “The more the local government and security forces are seen as

proxies or subordinates of the United States, the more difficult it will be for them to establish legitimacy. This process will entail having the local government and military forces take the lead in projects and operations whenever possible (even if they might approach them differently than the United States)” (2004, 21). They go on to say that “over the long term, a small military footprint supporting a larger law enforcement effort is an effective solution that crushes the insurgency without giving the insurgency a nationalist rally cry against an occupying power. In general, the smallest effective military presence is the best” (2004, 31).

The NMSP-WOT identifies the ways of the US national strategy to “lead an international effort to deny violent extremist networks the components they need to survive” by use of “three critical crosscutting enablers. . . . Expanding foreign partnerships and partnership capacity; strengthening capacity to prevent terrorist acquisition and use of WMD, and institutionalizing domestically and internationally the strategy against violent extremists” (2006, 5-6). It further defines the ways of the military strategic approach using “both direct and indirect approaches. Direct approaches primarily focus on protecting our interests while attacking the enemy. Indirect approaches primarily focus on establishing conditions for others to achieve success” (2006, 6). Furthermore, the strategy states, “The conduct of military operations should avoid undercutting the credibility and legitimacy of moderate authorities opposed to the extremists, while limiting the extremists’ ability to spread their ideology” (2006, 7-8).

The US cannot accomplish all missions in the global counterinsurgency alone, if for no other reason than resource constraints. The US must rely upon partner nations and partners (groups without nation-state status) to develop and employ their own capability

and capacity to deal with elements of the global insurgency in the partner nation's sphere of influence. As identified earlier, a critical aspect of both capacity and capability is *legitimacy*. Partner nations and partners must be seen by their constituents, the insurgents, and the world at large as having capability and capacity independent of US involvement. In fact, overt US involvement (influence or participation in operations) in providing this capacity undermines the very legitimacy the partner nation seeks to develop. This is true regardless of the geographic location of the partner nation (for example, European vs. African countries). For example, the Italian government has faced intense popular scrutiny as recent press reports discuss possible US involvement in the capture and detention of terror suspects in Italy in 2005. In the eyes of media-influenced masses, overt US unilateral operations limit partner nation legitimacy and provide fuel for Islamic extremist ideology. Indeed, the mere presence of US troops on the Arabian Peninsula is a stated reason for terrorist attacks, aimed at the removal or reduction of US presence in the region. US involvement in partner nation and partner capability, as well as US unilateral operations, must be conducted as low-visibility operations in order to accomplish missions while not becoming self-destructive in terms of legitimacy and fueling of extremist ideology.

Low-Visibility Operations

FM 3-05.20, *Special Forces Operations*, 2001, describes low-visibility operations as, "Operations planned and conducted to avoid unnecessary public attention are categorized as low visibility. . . . Security classifications, compartmentalization, and clandestine or covert techniques are not employed to achieve low visibility during operations. The presence of SF units operating unilaterally or in conjunction with

indigenous or coalition forces may or may not be clandestine or covert but may remain low visibility” (2001, 1-14 to 1-15). This description starts out very clearly but gets confusing in the last sentence when including covert and clandestine operations. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (amended through 31 August 2005), defines low-visibility operations as, “Sensitive operations wherein the political-military restrictions inherent in covert and clandestine operations are either not necessary or not feasible; actions are taken as required to limit exposure of those involved and/or their activities. Execution of these operations is undertaken with the knowledge that the action and/or sponsorship of the operation may preclude plausible denial by the initiating power”(2005, 322). A more useful definition would describe a range of operations that fall below public awareness levels and include covert and clandestine operations as options within a broader overarching spectrum of low-visibility operations. This broad definition provides an overarching concept that includes several types of operations conducted without public scrutiny, where either US involvement or the operation itself or both are not discovered.

First and foremost, low-visibility operations must be conducted in a way that creates the illusion that a partner nation or partner conducted the operation unilaterally. The partner nation is seen handling its own problems and providing for the safety of its citizens. This solidifies the appearance of legitimacy of the partner nation’s capacity and capability, regardless of the true state of affairs. These operations must also take place with little or no media coverage and minimal or no US “on-the-scene” presence. Examples of operations that are normally accomplished in a low-visibility manner are computer network operations (CNO), financial network operations (FNO), psychological operations (PSYOP), and intelligence operations. Other types of operations that should be accomplished in the same low-visibility manner are civil affairs, legal (to include

investigation, apprehension, and possibly even trial), information, foreign internal defense (FID), and direct action (DA) operations.

Obviously, some of these operations are more easily conducted in a low-visibility manner, and there may be instances where both the partner nation and the US government wish to be seen working together to solve a problem. However, most if not all of these operations must be conducted at the minimum level of visibility in order to prevent the disclosure of US involvement and reduce the effectiveness of any enemy information campaign against partner nation legitimacy. Additionally, the full range of the above operations can be conducted covertly or clandestinely. This is an especially important consideration in instances and operational environments where the US government has no partner or partner-nation capability but must act unilaterally in order to preempt terrorist or insurgent operations.

All low-visibility operations are not as unsuccessful as the failed US hostage rescue attempt in Iran. There are numerous examples of successful low-visibility operations in history. British-trained and employed surrogate teams in the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya (Hoffman and Taw 1992, 97) and the clandestine Israeli capture and exfiltration of Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann from unwitting Argentina are two of the most successful low-visibility operations.

Decisive Points and Objectives

There will be innumerable decisive points and objectives in any US strategy to conduct a global counterinsurgency. One of the earliest and most critical is the proper positioning of forces and resources to successfully conduct both initial and future operations. Correct and early positioning of forces is critical due to the continuous nature

of enemy operations. If the US and its allies are unable to correctly position counterinsurgency efforts early, the global insurgency network will maintain operational freedom of maneuver and be able to continue planning and preparation without fear of disruption.

A critical US objective must be the defeat of any global Islamic insurgent attempts to gain and maintain control of a government and its geographic boundaries to establish the planned caliphate. This may be precarious, given the recent election of a Hamas government in Palestine. The US has long advocated the free and fair democratic election of governments around the world. In the Hamas example, a known terrorist group has waged a political insurgency to gain control of the Palestinian government. If Hamas' goals change or are influenced by other elements in the global insurgency, Palestine could conceivably become the center of the new Islamic caliphate.

Other decisive points may be the establishment of good governance and counterinsurgency capacity and capability in key partner nations. These key nations might be unwilling or have no ability to eradicate key pockets of insurgency functional resources. They might be located at the crossroads of transportation or lines of communications for insurgent operations. The establishment of capable willing partners in the global counterinsurgency in these key areas may be decisive to disrupting or defeating elements of the global movement.

Ultimately, the US and its allies will have multiple objectives and decisive points in the WOT. Some of these may be strategic, but the majority will certainly be operational or tactical in nature. The key to success in these objectives and decisive points will be a thorough understanding of the local needs for counterinsurgency and

counterterrorism capacity and capability. Without this understanding, decisive points and objectives will certainly be misaligned or absent.

Lines of Operations

Several researchers and US strategic documents identify numerous lines of operations necessary for US operations in the WOT. Taken from the NMSP-WOT, the “ways” of the strategy could be considered appropriate lines of operation. These include:

- Deny terrorists what they need to operate and survive.
- Enable partner nations to counter terrorism.
- Deny WMD/E proliferation, recover and eliminate uncontrolled materials, and increase capacity for consequence management.
- Defeat terrorists and their organizations.
- Counter state and non-state support for terrorism in coordination with other US government agencies and partner nations.
- Contribute to the establishment of conditions that counter ideological support for terrorism. (2006, 23-24)

While these ways could be considered logical lines of operations for the US, they must be encompassed by overarching full spectrum information operations, similar to the logical lines of operations for the global insurgency (figure 4). Here is the rub. These all-encompassing information operations must project the right messages of good governance, legitimacy, and moderate Islam. This will only be effective and successful if the other “encompassed” lines of operations do not undermine the message. These must not be considered US lines of operations. They must be considered legitimate lines of operations of the partner nation. If they are not, they lose any chance of effectiveness, as they will be considered imperialistic maneuvering on behalf of the US.

Culminating Point

It could be argued that if the US reaches a culminating point in the WOT, it would not be from lack of resources. The Cold War demonstrated the ability to defeat an ideology using the strategic might of the US economic instrument of power. A culmination point in the WOT would surely have to result from the majority of the world refusing to believe the US or moderate Islamic standpoint and siding with the Islamic extremists. In theory at least, this could result in the establishment of the caliphate and a larger and more destructive war of maneuver, with Islamic governments waging open conventional war against the US and its allies. This is probably the worst case scenario; however, a closer look reveals some important considerations.

Before reaching the worst-case scenario, multiple governments might fall to Islamic extremist rule. This is not impossible, given the Taliban's rise to power and subsequent rule in Afghanistan. Given the precarious stability of some nations in the world, Pakistan being one example, as well as the total lack of functioning nation-states in areas such as Somalia, there exists the possibility that the US and its allies might have to face another maneuver war against Islamic-extremist-installed militaries, if not governments. This fact is significant in a Pakistan-like scenario, where nuclear weapons are under national control. In this situation, are the US public and, more importantly, the world community willing to wage continuing conventional and possibly nuclear war against states espousing Islamic extremism? History has demonstrated diplomatic apathy before in cases like the Balkans War and the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan. Given the right level of required effort, whether diplomatic or military, to resolve future problems with an Islamic extremist nation, US and world apathy or fear of political risk at home

might bring about a culmination point much like the US withdrawal of forces from Vietnam or Somalia.

Operational Reach, Approach, and Pauses

Global Operations

The cellular nature of the threat network, its operational domains, and the extent and geographic locations of its functional resources require that USSOCOM conduct global operations. On 11 October 2005, the US Department of State identified the forty-second globally operating foreign terrorist organization. In order to address the scope of this widespread threat, USSOCOM's response must be geographically comprehensive. Given al Qaeda's ability to leverage and even combine capabilities with local terrorist cells and organizations, the US must conduct operations against these local cells and organizations with like or better capabilities. This will require individuals with, among other skills, local cultural and language expertise. In the words of Rohan Gunaratna, "To challenge Al Qaeda and its associate groups successfully, the international community must develop a multipronged, multiagency, multidimensional and multinational response" (2003, 295). In order for these efforts to be effective, however, Metz and Millen offer, "Every insurgency is so different that overarching concepts and doctrine must be tailored to specific situations and cultures. That can only be done by an innovative and adaptable force. Empowering and entrusting junior leaders to find durable solutions in their unique environments is the only effective way to combat dynamic insurgents" (2004, 33).

Thus, the US reach must be global. Its approach must be indirect in that operations must be first and foremost conducted through, by, and with partner nations. In

some cases where nations are not partners due to their unwillingness to work with the US or its allies, the US must also use the direct approach and conduct unilateral operations. Even then, these should be conducted using low-visibility operations for the reasons already mentioned.

When dealing with an evolutionary and adaptive enemy, US operational pauses should be kept to a minimum and then only pursued when absolutely necessary. As identified earlier, in the contemporary operating environment, terrorist operations are always underway and the chances to disrupt these operations are fleeting, if they exist at all. In this environment, operational pauses must be saved for instances where partner nation legitimacy or the ability to conduct low-visibility operations is at stake.

Linear and Nonlinear Operations

The global counterinsurgency must entail both linear and nonlinear operations. The global nature of the conflict demands nonlinear operations focused at the “local” nation-state level. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, counterinsurgency capacity must also reside with US partners who do not hold nation-state status. Examples of this type of partner might include ruling tribes or clans in ungoverned regions such as Somalia or the frontier or tribal regions of Pakistan, or nongovernmental and private organizations and businesses who have access or influence in certain key regions of the world. It could be argued that one such organization is the United Nations (UN). In the contemporary operating environment, where the UN might be called upon to negotiate, mediate, arbitrate or make and enforce peace, ad hoc UN peacekeeping forces would certainly require expertise in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. Lacking at least some

modicum of counterinsurgency capability (such as policing or securing a refugee camp), these organizations may, in fact, contribute to the problem rather than reduce it.

At the same time as nonlinear operations may be occurring, linear operations may be effective in the global counterinsurgency. This is especially important at the tactical level inside a partner nation, but may also apply at the operational level, where neighboring partner nations sit astride insurgent strongholds. This is, in fact, the situation in the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Here the remnants of al Qaeda's senior leadership exploit ungoverned regions of both countries. Linear operations between mutually supporting elements on both sides of the border are necessary for effective counterinsurgency operations. Without linear operations, insurgents are able to escape to safe havens to refit and prepare for the next fight, as witnessed along the Cambodian border during the Vietnam War.

Simultaneous and Sequential Operations and Tempo

These two elements of operational design are best discussed together, as defeating the adaptive enemy requires a complex synchronization of counterinsurgency efforts. This is particularly important given the vast operational domains and speed of evolution for the global insurgency. Simultaneous and sequential operations must be conducted at a high tempo in order to disrupt terrorist operations. As Secretary of State George Shultz stated on 4 July 1984 at the second conference of the Jonathan Institute in Washington DC:

Can we as a country, can the community of free nations, stand in a purely defensive posture and absorb the blows dealt by terrorists? I think not. From a practical standpoint, a purely passive defense does not provide enough of a deterrent to terrorism and the states that sponsor it. It is time to think long, hard, and seriously about more active means of defense – defense through appropriate

preventive or preemptive actions against terrorist groups *before* they strike. (Netanyahu 2001, 69)

It is significant that Secretary of State Shultz made this statement over twenty years ago. It is particularly disturbing when considered along with the 9/11 Commission's report of US failure to act preemptively to disrupt the events of 11 September 2001. Given that Secretary Shultz made his observation so long ago and the 9/11 Commission reached similar conclusions in 2004, what is the prescription to disrupt future terrorist operations?

Continuous, Preemptive Operations

Al Qaeda and its associates provide a demonstration of the validity of COL John Boyd's information and decision-making system of "observation, orientation, decision, and action (OODA) loop" in their terrorist operations. Al Qaeda and its associates have planned, resourced, and conducted lethal terrorist operations, to include the first attempt to destroy the World Trade Center in 1993, the bombing of the Khobar Towers in 1996, the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the USS *Cole* bombing in 2000, the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001, the nightclub bombing in Bali in 2002, the train bombings in Madrid in 2004, the Australian embassy bombing in Jakarta in 2004, and the London subway bombings in 2005. Although some al Qaeda associates have formations of uniformed military forces, al Qaeda and its associated network currently have no ability to mass forces to wage a global war of maneuver. Therefore, in order to leverage their limited capabilities at the correct time and place for greatest effect, they must conduct continuous planning, preparation, and execution of operations to attack global targets. US counterinsurgency operations must be directed at

the enemy's decision cycle in order to disrupt these operations. This disruption is most necessary should the enemy plan, resource, and execute an operation using weapons of mass destruction. This concept of preemptive operations can be found in most, if not all, of current US national strategic security documents.

In order to be truly responsive to intelligence leads in this conflict, capabilities must be positioned and prepared to conduct operations with limited lead time. Intelligence gained on a planned enemy operation cannot wait for forces to arrive after deployment from the continental US (CONUS). An inevitable conundrum will be the determination of whether to conduct an operation against an insurgent cell versus waiting and watching in hopes of gaining further intelligence. Ultimately though, the decision to act to prevent or preempt a terrorist act should have priority over the desire for intelligence. In these situations all is not always lost. Overwatched appropriately, the operation has a chance of creating new intelligence by shaping the environment and forcing an enemy reaction.

Echoing the idea of preemption, Metz and Millen state, "The United States, along with global and regional partners, needs better methods for early warning of insurgency, preventative actions, and the creation of early-stage support packages. One of the ironies and problems with insurgency is that the regime facing one often does not recognize it or denies it until the insurgency has had time to coalesce and develop" (2004, 22). They go on to say, "U.S. intervention for counterinsurgency support is most likely to succeed at an acceptable cost before an insurgency reaches critical mass (however hard that may be to identify). U.S. involvement after an insurgency has reached the 'point of no return' where it cannot be defeated at a reasonable cost is likely to be ineffective. . . . The military

component of a counterinsurgency must seize the initiative as quickly as possible” (2004, 27).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research is to determine whether USSOCOM, as lead combatant command in the WOT should conduct continuous, global, preemptive low-visibility operations in order to disrupt insurgent operations. The secondary research questions are: how should USSOCOM organize to conduct global counterinsurgency and how should USSOCOM array resources to accomplish its global counterinsurgency missions? This chapter includes a review and assessment of key findings from the previous chapter. Additionally, it discusses recommendations for further study and actions on the part of USSOCOM and government agencies. This chapter proposes possible solutions to problems identified in the earlier chapters and hopefully serves as a starting point for further study and discussion.

Key Facts, Assumptions, and Tasks

This thesis has identified several key facts and assumptions that are necessary to understand the threat and operating environment facing the US government and its allies in the global counterinsurgency. In order to address these facts and assumptions, several possible solutions have been presented that can be considered key tasks for the US government to accomplish in order to be successful in the global counterinsurgency. Figure 6 provides a summary of key facts and assumptions with correlating key tasks.

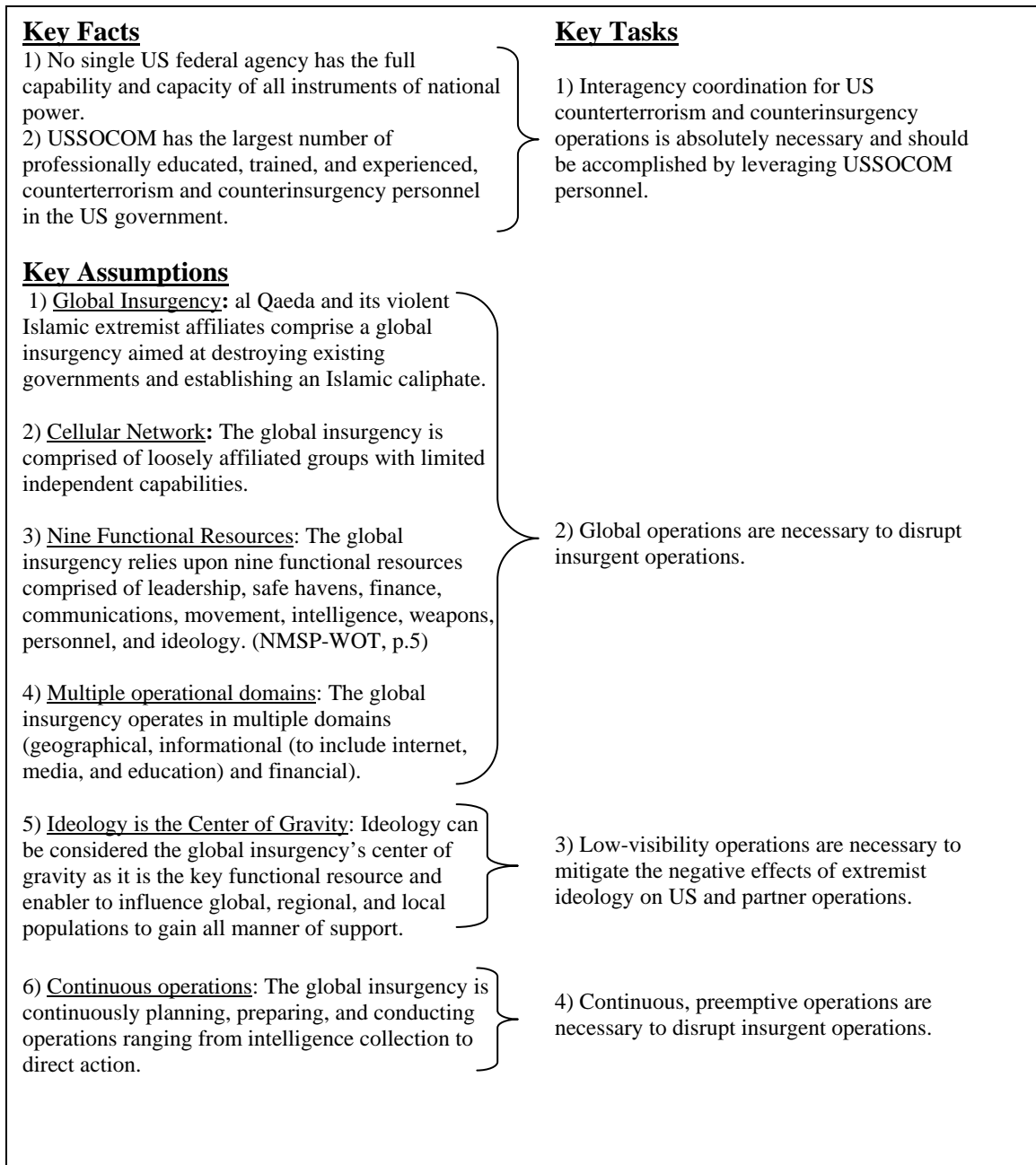


Figure 6. Summary of Key Facts and Assumptions With Correlating Key Tasks

Taken together, these key tasks answer the research question in the affirmative. As lead combatant command in the WOT, USSOCOM should conduct continuous, global, preemptive low-visibility operations in order to disrupt insurgent operations.

USSOCOM is uniquely qualified to lead these operations due to its number of personnel who are professionally educated, trained, and experienced in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency.

Recommendations for Implementation

The following recommendations for implementation answer the secondary research questions of this thesis. Together with the answer to the primary research question, they identify possible solutions for USSOCOM to accomplish key tasks in the WOT. This fulfills step five of the Army problem-solving methodology, “analyze possible solutions (benchmark: does the solution achieve the desired state?)” as well as step six, “compare possible solutions (determine the best solution)” (FM 5-0 2005, 2-6).

How should USSOCOM organize to conduct global counterinsurgency?

Metz and Millen provide an appropriate framework with which to answer this question: “The history of counterinsurgency shows that the full integration of all government agencies under unified control (and preferably unified command) is the only way to synchronize the elements of national power effectively. This is considered one of the reasons for British success in Malaya and for the lack of French and American success in Indochina” (2004, 29). While it is important to understand the interconnectivity and scale of the threat, regionalizing the network does little to address the local nature of the insurgent elements. Additionally, the political reality of the nation state model of international organization demands that the US interact bilaterally with partner nations around the world. The Levant region, where governments interact differently with the US, as seen by relations with Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon,

typifies the complex nature of US bilateral engagement in a region. Few political programs can blanket such a diverse political region, and thus no one can expect blanket military programs to work either. The US embassy country team must be the first-line interface with any partner nation to ensure legitimacy of any bilateral program. Currently, US embassy country teams, depending on the size of the US mission, have representatives of most if not all of the instruments of national power. However, few if any of these representatives have formal education, training, or experience in counterterrorism or counterinsurgency operations. Function-based organizations located at the US embassy would provide both capability and capacity to address key aspects of the global insurgency (cellular network, operational domains, and functional resources).

How should this reality be addressed? Models for functional organizations do exist. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) is a good organization to examine for the national strategic level. Created by the *Intelligence Reform Act of 2004*, the NCTC conducts intelligence fusion, incident tracking, and integrated interagency strategic and operational planning and information sharing. This is progress; however, by law the NCTC does not and should not address tactical mission planning and execution.

The designation of USSOCOM as the lead combatant command in the WOT for the Department of Defense (DOD) is good organization at the strategic level, although USSOCOM is still not a fully operational war-fighting headquarters. USSOCOM is synchronizing WOT planning across the geographic combatant commands but it must fully integrate planning and operation execution staffs with interagency partners to ensure seamless, comprehensive functional integration. This cannot be fully accomplished through the mere exchange of liaison officers. Without the mandate of the DOD, the

National Security Council, or a presidential directive, there will remain little consistent integrated interagency operational planning and execution.

Joint interagency task forces (JIATFs), joint interagency coordination groups, , and joint intelligence operations commands are all good examples of interagency integration at the operational level. However, these organizations do not address the local or tactical level of operations, where the intelligence/operations cycle and the enemy OODA loop demand timely, accurate, and appropriate responses. Furthermore, unless these entities are integrated with partner nation capabilities, they can only achieve limited effectiveness.

An excellent model for organizing US DIME assets in the global insurgency is described as a high performance organization in LTC Chad Clark's 2003 US Army School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, "Personnel Targeting Operations." In this model, all elements of the DIME are utilized at the local level through operators and their enablers. This model is closely linked to the doctrinal civil-military operations centers (CMOCs) delineated in Army field manual (interim) FMI 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 2004. However, the doctrinal model fails in that it identifies neither the need for low-visibility operations nor the command relationships within the team. Additionally, it is implied, but never stated, that the director works directly for the US ambassador.

Metz and Millen offer important considerations in arraying instruments of national power to conduct counterinsurgency operations when they state:

Adaptability can be maximized by an institutional culture which stresses it and gives maximum autonomy to lower level leaders; by refining methods for the collection, dissemination, and implementation of lessons learned; and by adopting

what the U.S. Marine Corps calls a ‘matrix organization’ of functionally organized teams from across the U.S. Government and, for military units themselves, a networked structure with central coordination but local autonomy. . . . When involved in backing an existing government, the U.S force package would be predominantly designed for training, advice, and support. In most cases, the only combat forces would be those needed for force and facility protection, more rarely for strike missions in particularly challenging environments. . . . When the United States undertakes counterinsurgency support, it should build an interagency force package from the beginning. (2004 25-30)

The best model would be a JIATF or CMOC-like structure consisting of appropriate representatives from US embassy country teams and headed by a USSOCOM SOF operator as director. Current US Army Special Forces officers with the education, training, and experience levels lend themselves to this role. The director would act as a deputy to the ambassador, responsible for all counterterrorism and counterinsurgency related planning, resourcing, and execution efforts for that partner nation or nonnation partner. This would place a trained and experienced advisor at the critical level working directly for the “tactical” diplomatic decision maker, ensuring complete interagency integration at the lowest level. As in the CMOC, there must be appropriate interface with the partner nation and various local and international nongovernmental and private organizations. All interaction must be conducted in a low-visibility manner to mitigate possible exposure of US involvement.

How should USSOCOM array resources to accomplish their global counterinsurgency missions?

Doctrine

No standardized interagency counterinsurgency doctrine currently exists. Most federal agencies outside of DOD teach through experience and do not codify their

knowledge. This being the case, the military is arguably the best organization for developing and maintaining doctrine to train and educate its personnel.

As the lead combatant command in the WOT, USSOCOM should spearhead the development and validation of joint interagency doctrine for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Within USSOCOM, the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) and the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School would be best suited to do so. This could be accomplished initially through working groups and symposiums that bring members from the interagency community together to share TTP and experiences. From this, a vetted doctrine could be developed to aid interagency understanding among operators, as well as their leadership. This can be accomplished immediately and become institutionalized to enable updates and lessons learned to educate other US organizations. Furthermore it could be integrated at the national strategic level through interface at the NCTC.

Personnel

The most important trait for personnel assigned to these teams must be their understanding of the imperative of interagency interoperability. Personnel with relevant counterinsurgency and counterterrorism expertise must be assigned to key billets as an interface within the joint interagency team. Experience in interagency operations should be a prime consideration in manning these teams. Over time, greater numbers of SOF operators will gain operational experience in this environment and provide a wider base of interagency professionals capable of working at all levels of the national power structure.

Additionally, USSOCOM should seriously consider the use of female special operators to access targets and populations. In most Arab societies and particularly those who espouse sharia law, women are regarded as second class citizens. They are often treated wholly inhumanely and considered almost inanimate or absent in some cultures. These female populations would seem ripe for the US and its allies to establish an insurgency within the insurgency. Once educated in their true human value and properly trained, indigenous female agents could conduct a broad array of operations, including sabotage, deception operations, SNO, FNO, human and signals intelligence operations, and even direct action operations. Thus female USSOCOM operators could wage unconventional warfare within the ranks and even homes of Islamic extremists and do so in a most indirect and low-visibility manner.

Training and Education

Metz and Millen identify the importance of proper professional education and training when they state,

Given the nature of counterinsurgency, professional education and training increasingly must be interagency and multinational. The interagency aspect is particularly important. Unless the Army learns with and trains with other agencies (to include ethical training), it cannot operate seamlessly in the high pressure, violent, ambiguous world of counterinsurgency. Leaders at all levels must understand and trust the capabilities of other agencies; otherwise they will never venture from the approved military solution. . . . [T]he U.S. Army may become the most proficient army in the world at counterinsurgency, but if the rest of the government does not develop equal capabilities, the United States will not be effective. (2004, 33-35)

Currently there is no standardized interagency training or education and there are few cooperative education or fellowship opportunities within the interagency community.

There is only one interagency student at the US Army Command and General Staff

School (CGSS) this academic year (2005-2006) and she comes from a DOD office. This is unfortunate, considering the fact that there are 193 sister service, National Guard, and reserve officers from the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, as well as seventy-eight officers from seventy nations in that same class. US Army officers stand little hope of truly understanding both their roles and those of their interagency brethren unless they all sit in the same nonattribution learning environments, such as those at CGSS.

JSOU courses are important for the cross-leveling of information within DOD, specifically within USSOCOM. However, these should be a minimum start point for operators within USSOCOM and personnel newly assigned to the command. The breadth and depth of experience in the interagency community must come from attendance at interagency schools and symposiums and ultimately from experience through interagency operations and assignments.

USSOCOM must sponsor attendance for SOF officers at other interagency schools. These officers cannot be limited to one specific rank or branch, but should include a broad cross section of skills and expertise. All SF officers should be mandated to attend a joint or interagency school prior to serving at an embassy. Additionally, USSOCOM should increase the number of officers and noncommissioned officers posted to fellowships and operational duty positions within the interagency community. This will ensure that professional interagency education will continue when operators are not posted in key interagency billets. At the same time, these interagency billets should count as key and developmental joint or interagency billets for career management and progression.

Materiel

Integrated interagency education, research and development, as well as current and future operations, will drive the need for better joint interagency integrated materiel. Standard joint equipment within the DOD is getting better but is not completely integrated, despite being mandated by Congress decades ago. The Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 mandates information sharing on similar systems among federal agencies, but this is only the beginning. The need for joint interagency compatible equipment will increase, and USSOCOM should be researching, developing, and procuring this equipment now.

Recommendations for Further Study

Although this thesis focused on the role of USSOCOM in the WOT, there are numerous related topics that fall out of this discussion. These topics include interagency responsibility, legal ramifications, administrative agreements, and operational and tactical mission analysis to address specific uses of low-visibility operations in a given scenario. These questions cannot be addressed in this limited study and could comprise full studies of their own.

The first question that does not fall within the scope of this study but must be determined for effective global counterinsurgency operations is which US federal agency should be designated as lead in the WOT? This question requires in-depth research on capabilities and capacities of ever-evolving agencies and institutions within the US government. Indeed the NCTC, as well as the individual agencies themselves, are currently attempting to refine their own roles and responsibilities as the US National Implementation Plan (NIP) is developed for the WOT. The NIP should prescribe which

agency has the lead in any given circumstance in the WOT, but until a presidential directive or some legislative action designates a chain-of-command and accountability process for the WOT, it is doubtful that significant headway will be made. A study that determines which US federal agency should be lead in the WOT could be helpful in identifying these important roles and responsibilities.

Another important question that arises from this research is what specific legal ramifications (if any) are there for USSOCOM to conduct continuous, global, preemptive low-visibility operations in order to disrupt insurgent operations? This thesis attempted to determine whether these operations were legal and ethical from the broad aspect of the Army “suitable” screening criterion. More detailed legal analysis is necessary to determine legalities in specific low-visibility operations. This is particularly important in regard to existing bilateral agreements between the US and partner nations and nonnation partners, as well as international agreements between nation-states. Another study might suggest a few examples or case studies of low-visibility operations and the specific legal aspects of those operations.

This thesis proposes a broad solution for USSOCOM’s involvement in the WOT that is suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete. Before USSOCOM determines to use the proposed solution in a given strategic, operational, or tactical-level operation, specific analysis using the Army screening criteria, as well as situation-specific evaluation criteria, must be applied. This analysis should occur during initial and subsequent mission analysis in order to address any changing conditions that might require or better leverage low-visibility operations. As in the paragraph above, further study could be conducted on suggested theoretical examples or historical case studies of

low-visibility operations in order to refine guidelines for implementation of the proposed solution across the spectrum of low-visibility operations.

Another equally important research question that could not be addressed within the scope of this thesis is what specific agreements, title authorities, funding allocations, etc. are necessary to allow USSOCOM to position personnel in US embassies as permanent party personnel. The interagency community is rife with regulations that require cooperative administrative and accounting agreements and procedures in order to work together while meeting the letter of the law. These regulations and their full ramifications are well beyond the scope of this research and could be addressed in part through further study. Implementation of specific recommendations in this study must be addressed in light of these interagency or service administrative and legal requirements.

One of the most important questions arising from this study but beyond the scope of this thesis is what interagency education and training are necessary to facilitate US global counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, as well as interagency communication and integration, for successful future US operations. There are several entities in the US government that are currently discussing interagency education. The DOD joint staff is developing an interagency education model for the DOD while the State Department has identified key educational and training requirements for its foreign service officers serving in the newly created Office of Stability and Reconstruction. These efforts are important for agencies to identify specific requirements for their personnel, but unless directed or compelled by a higher authority (legislation, for example) to achieve true integration, these individual agency efforts may miss the mark.

Further studies might identify a course curriculum or career education process to mitigate any gaps in current and future US interagency operations.

Summary and Conclusions

A dedicated, continuous, cooperative interagency integration from the national strategic to tactical levels must be fostered and maintained. The US cannot wait for congressional mandates to establish the mechanisms to accomplish these missions because the adaptive enemy continues to plan and operate against US interests without any such political hindrance. USSOCOM must be given the full mandate of the DOD and joint staff at a minimum and assume the mantle of responsibility as the lead planner and synchronizer for joint, interagency, multinational global counterinsurgency operations. In this role, USSOCOM must ensure full integration across all resource domains of doctrine, organizational design, training strategy, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) within the interagency community. These recommendations must occur whether or not a federal agency is designated as lead in the WOT. Relevant experience and expertise must reside at key locations in the US and abroad.

Understanding that different organizations will assume the lead or main effort at different times during operations, qualified personnel must be present to ensure full US capability and capacity is brought to bear in a responsive and timely low-visibility manner against the dynamic asymmetric threat. As Rohan Gunaratna identifies, “As Al Qaeda poses a durable long-term threat to Muslims worldwide, it is the Muslim elite who must stand up and fight the threat it represents. The West can help, but is a battle that can be best fought and won by Muslims against Muslims” (Gunaratna 2003, 318). This thought has precedence in B.H. Liddell Hart’s conclusion that, “the indirect is by far the

most hopeful and economic form of strategy . . . [preferring rather] to face any unfavourable condition rather than accept the risk of frustration inherent in a direct approach”(Hart 1967, 145-146). In light of the need for continuous, global, preemptive low-visibility operations to disrupt insurgent operations, the famed modus operandi of President Theodore Roosevelt to “speak softly and carry a big stick” should change with today’s complex operating environment. The new US mantra should be, “remain silent as we help our partners carry their own big sticks.”

GLOSSARY

Area of operations. Areas of operations are defined by the joint force commander for land and naval forces. Also called AO (JP 1-02 2005, 44)

Clandestine operation. An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. (JP 1-02 2005, 89)

Covert operation. An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. (JP 1-02 2005, 125)

Line of communications. A route, either land, water, and/or air, that connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called LOC. (JP 1-02 2005, 309)

Operational level of war. The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. (JP 1-02 2005, 391)

Overt operation. An operation conducted openly, without concealment. (JP 1-02 2005, 399)

Strategic level of war. The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. (JP 1-02 2005, 509)

Tactical level of war. The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. (JP 1-02 2005, 526)

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