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From the Editor

The Lernaean Hydra of Greek mythology was a multi-headed snake-like monster that preyed on the people and livestock of villages near the lake of Lerna, where the monster lived. If one of the Hydra's heads was cut off, two others would grow in its place, making the monster almost impossible to kill. Only the hero Herakles (aka Hercules) was finally able to destroy the monster, and even he needed help from another hero and a goddess to prevail.

The Hydra seems an apt metaphor for the violent ideological extremism, embodied in such groups as al Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, Abu Sayyaf, and many others, that has become a prominent driver of both domestic and international politics in the twenty-first century. Al Qaeda's 11 September 2001 attack on the United States not only complicated the world's system of air travel and increased many people's tolerance for infringing on civil rights in the name of security, it also led to vicious metastatic civil wars that continue to rage seventeen years later. Cutting off the head of al Qaeda in Iraq led to multiple extremist outgrowths, and ultimately to the seemingly unstoppable monster called ISIS, which appeared poised to take over the Middle East in 2014.

Although ISIS has been forced out of its once-extensive territories in Syria and Iraq, no one who is paying attention believes it is defeated. A suicide attack in Syria on 16 January 2019 that killed 19 people and was quickly claimed by ISIS reinforced this reality. What happens once ISIS is forced from its last Syrian stronghold is anyone's guess, but we would be fools to imagine that the Hydra of ideological terrorism is dead.

This issue begins with an account of Finland's first Special Operations Surgical Teams (FINSOST), told by LTC Arto Hilden, who helped create the FINSOST program, and Dr. Antti Lahdenranta, a SOF reservist who served as a surgeon on one of the inaugural teams. The authors begin by describing the painstaking ten-year process to design team requirements and train the medical personnel to function in a battle zone. They then discuss the work the teams did and the obstacles they faced as they supported Iraqi and coalition troops in the months-long fight to free Mosul from ISIS.

In the next article, authors MAJ Rick Breekveldt and Dr. Martijn Kitzen use the Philippines' decades-long fight against violent insurgencies and extremist

ideologies as a case study to examine the value of traditional state-on-state coercion theory for use against non-state actors. Several Philippine provinces are home to a variety of insurgent groups with goals that range from economic and human rights to outright secession. The authors suggest that the Philippine government and its US ally should consider using non-traditional coercive tactics that target the groups' weaknesses but also offer them a way to cooperate in achieving long-term peace.

The third article describes another kind of innovation in CT partnerships, the Localization Strategy. Belgian SOF officer Pierre Dehaene and his team, along with several other specialized SOF teams, were tasked to train Nigerien armed forces in counterinsurgency and counter-extremism tactics and strategies, but with a difference. Instead of imposing European methods and equipment onto the host nation forces, the Belgian SOF team worked with the Nigeriens and other partner nations to leverage local capabilities so that the Nigerien forces would be fully self-sustaining when the foreign advisors departed.

Finally, researcher Ryota Akiba reminds us that extremists have carried out a number of attacks on Japanese citizens working abroad over the past several decades. In each instance, Japan has had to rely on the host nation's police and military to respond, with mixed, sometimes tragic results. Akiba proposes that Japan should develop the legislation and capabilities to set up a Japan Special Operations Command that is specifically empowered to handle hostage situations and other crises that threaten the lives of Japanese citizens overseas.

Our book review comes from LTC Flemming Haar, who discusses an anthology of essays on the value of SOF for small countries. This volume, notes Haar, seeks to fill a yawning gap in the existing literature on SOF, which has focused primarily on countries with large militaries such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

Be sure to look over the latest offerings from JSOU in our Publications Announcements. If you're in Monterey in March, you might be interested in attending the Special Operations Research Association's annual Symposium. See the announcement on p. 53.

We'd love to hear from you at CTXEditor@GlobalECCO.org or on Facebook whenever you read something in *CTX* that sparks your interest, raises questions, or demands a response. As always, we encourage you to send your article and review submissions to CTXEditor@GlobalECCO.org.

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Inside This Issue

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Major Rick Breekveldt currently serves in the Netherlands Special Operations Command. He holds a master's degree in Strategic Studies and is a research fellow at the Netherlands Defence Academy, with a specialization in counterinsurgency. Major Breekveldt has served in various command and staff positions in Army SOF, and Air Assault and Attack Helicopter units, and has deployed to Afghanistan.

Pierre Dehaene is a PhD candidate at King's College London. After university and six years of theological studies, he joined the Belgian military and served in the Special Forces Group for three years. Dehaene then left the military to study intelligence and international security at King's College London. He returned to his unit before embarking on his PhD program, which focuses on the strategic repercussions of resource-poor approaches to war in complex environments.

Lieutenant Commander Flemming Haar joined the Danish Naval Special Forces in 1997, and served in several deployments as both a staff officer and a commanding officer. He was subsequently assigned to the Danish Special Operations Command and is currently earning his Master of Science degree in Defense Analysis from the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS).

Lieutenant Colonel Arto Hilden joined the Finnish Defence Forces in 1991 and the Finnish Special Operations Forces (FINSOF) in 1997. He has extensive experience in capability building for FINSOF, and was deployed to Afghanistan as a task force commander. LTC Hilden's most recent active position was as SOF liaison officer for the Finnish Army Command's planning and support operations in Iraq.

Dr. Martijn Kitzen is an assistant professor of war studies at the Netherlands Defence Academy. While serving as a military officer, he was involved in pre-deployment training for several nations, was in-theater advisor for the Netherlands' Task Force Uruzgan, and served as academic advisor for the revision of NATO's AJP 3.4.4 (counterinsurgency). A prolific author, Kitzen is currently preparing a new book about the Netherlands' campaign in Afghanistan's Uruzgan province.

Dr. Antti Lahdenranta is an orthopedic and trauma surgeon and a reservist in Finland's SOF Utti Jaeger Regiment. He served as the trauma surgeon on one of the first Finnish Special Operations Surgical Teams during Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq.

Finland's Special Operations Surgical Team in Action

LTC Arto Hilden and Dr. Antti Lahdenranta, Finnish Defense Forces

The dust…. dust is everywhere. You try to avoid it, but somehow it finds its way inside the room. Outside, you can hear loud voices and distant explosions competing with long bursts from machine guns. Here, inside someone's living room, a small group of people is working with bloody hands. On the table in front of the silent medical team lies an injured fighter from the Iraq security forces, and the team is trying to save his life by any available means. This time, the effort is worthwhile; the fighter survives, and he will be transported to another place to recover and get more specialized treatment. The dust flies in again when somebody opens the door, the next patient arrives, and treatment begins anew.

This scene describes working conditions for the Finnish Special Operations Surgical Team (FINSOST) during the Mosul liberation campaign in Iraq in 2016 and 2017. Creating these Finnish units was not an easy mission: it took ten years to prepare qualified teams for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in Iraq. The authors played significant roles in delivering this first FINSOST to the battle for Mosul. Since 1997, Arto Hilden has been a member of the Finnish SOF (FINSOF) Utti Jaeger Regiment, where the idea of the SOST originated. He served as the on-duty SOF liaison to the Finnish Army Command in support of Finnish SOF on the ground during OIR, briefing superiors, assisting the regiment, and working with Army logistics officers to arrange material support to the operational area. Dr. Antti Lahdenranta, a civilian physician and army reservist, went through the long, intensive training required to become a SOF surgeon. During the campaign to liberate Mosul, he served on one of the first FINSOSTs.

Early resuscitation and damage control surgery are critical components of modern combat casualty care.[1] Nine out of ten battlefield deaths occur before the patient reaches a medical treatment facility or receives surgical care.[2] The speed and quality of the treatment a Tactical Combat Casualty Care (T3C) medic provides matters, but so does the whole chain of care from the field to the treatment facility (see figure 1). The medical term "the Golden Hour" refers to the first hour after injury: patients who have a traumatic injury have a higher chance of survival if they are delivered to a treatment facility within one hour.[3] One study estimates that 25 percent of battlefield deaths are potentially preventable if the injured person receives surgical care in time.[4] A SOST or Surgical Resuscitation Team (SRT) is meant to fill the gap between T3C and the definitive care that is provided by a Role 2, 3, or 4 facility.[5] In most SOF missions, early damage control surgery and care could be delivered through a mobile SOST/SRT.[6]

The Development of a Finnish SOF Medical Capability

Before the 2001 war in Afghanistan began, all Finnish SOF medics were individually trained for their jobs, but there was no proper, certified training system in place. SOF units require medical personnel who can shoot, move, and communicate with other operators, but these medics also must have excellent, highly

> On the table in front of the silent medical team lies an **injured fighter,** and the team is trying to **save his life by any available means**.

GOLDEN HOUR

Point of Injury (POI)
Self Aid/Buddy Aid

Tactical Combat
Casualty Care (T3C)

Evacuation

Casualty Collection Point
(CCP)
Damage Control Surgery
(DCS)

Special Operations
Surgical Team (SOST)/
Surgical Resuscitation
Team (SR)

Evacuation
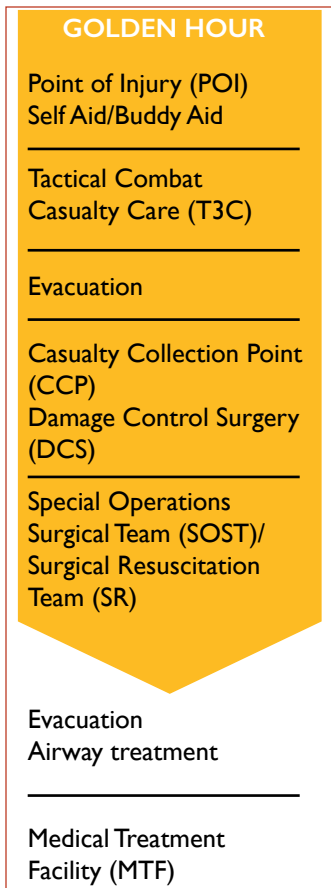Airway treatment

Medical Treatment
Facility (MTF)

Figure 1: An illustration of the Simplified Tactical Casualty Care Chain, from point of injury to medical treatment facility, as it was used during the 2016-2017 Mosul offensive.

The background work to develop a surgical capability for the FINSOF continued for over ten years.

mobile medical abilities with a small footprint. It was possible to train medics with more SOF-specific skills, but all military doctors had to be drawn from Finland's reserve forces because there are no military hospitals in Finland. In fact, at present, the only way for medical providers to develop and maintain the medical skills they need for acute patient care is to work in civilian high-volume trauma centers.

The first Finnish T3C training was held in 2003, in response to calls from SOF units for a better training system for medics and more suitable medical equipment. SOF units began to receive individual first aid kits in that same year. In 2006, Finland sent two Army Forward Surgical Teams (FSTs) to the European Union mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (EUFOR RDC). Because the nature of the operation was peacekeeping, the workload was not heavy. During their four-month deployment, the FSTs treated only 12 patients, in part because the teams operated in an area where troops had access to a Role 2 hospital.[7] Despite the limited activity, however, the FSTs gained experience from working in a multinational peacekeeping operation that would be useful for future FSTs, such as the suitability of equipment and ways to handle the deployment process.[8]

The Finnish SOF who deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 expressed the need for their own highly educated medical team, to provide the initial response in a chain of care from the point of injury (POI) through damage control resuscitation and surgery, up to the next level of care for conventional troops—transport to a Role 2 medical facility or strategic evacuation. The Afghanistan operations also taught us that all combat personnel must be able to start treating themselves and their buddy if either becomes injured, and that each unit should include an operator who has specialized medical skills.

The background work to develop a surgical capability for the FINSOF continued for over ten years, as our staff collected all the details, data, requirements and so forth bit by bit from various sources. This time was not wasted: over this same period, key medical personnel trained to bring their skills up to the required levels. In 2011, NATO staff evaluated the first Finnish Special Operations Task Force to establish a set of standards for the development of a specialized SOF medical capability. The NATO evaluation and Finland's cooperation with NATO Special Operation Headquarters (NSHQ) made it possible to network with other countries that shared a similar interest in developing a certified SOF Medic course. With considerable effort and the help of NSHQ, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark held the first joint Nordic Special Operations Medical course (NNSOM). The course began to provide certified, highly skilled SOF medics to all the participating countries, with good results. The various modules are currently hosted across these four Nordic countries, and the course structure is tailored each year to offer specialized modules such as specific clinical medicine and T3C. Otherwise, the course content is quite similar to NSHQ's 24-week course, which includes ten different training modules.[9]

Multinational NATO exercises and bilateral Nordic exercises led to the further development of techniques, equipment, requirements, and tactics that domestic exercises alone could not achieve. These multinational exercises also furthered the FINSOSTs' understanding of a SOF task force's need for POI resuscitation and damage control surgery to save lives on the battlefield. During 2013 and 2014, a

few individuals from the Finnish Army medical staff and FINSOF worked on a study project that provided such information as equipment lists, optimal team configuration, and evaluations of the medical and other skills a SOST would require.

Many counties still debate the skillsets that SOST members such as surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurses should have, and most countries have their own set of requirements for SOF medical teams. We drew on all the available public and military sources with pertinent experience to make a list of the core capabilities and skillsets that we believed a SOST should have. One of these sources was the United States Air Force SOSTs, which have six-member teams composed of an emergency physician, a general surgeon, a nurse anesthetist, a critical care nurse, a surgical technician, and a respiratory therapist. Each specialized team offers four unique medical capabilities: advanced trauma resuscitation, tactical damage control surgery, post-op critical care, and critical care evacuation.[10]

As a consequence of this research, we had to start thinking differently about FINSOST's surgery capabilities. In Finland, it takes almost ten years after finishing medical school for a doctor to become proficient as a trauma surgeon in austere environments. To meet the medical competence needed by the SOST, we started fellowship and exchange programs with hospitals that treated a high volume of projectile/penetration trauma. We found one such facility in Johannesburg, South Africa, at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital (BARA). BARA is the third largest hospital in the world, and approximately 70 percent of its admissions are emergencies, including about 160 gunshot victims per month.[11] There were some suitable doctors in our reserve who already had SOF basic training, and BARA was exactly the kind of facility in which we wanted to place them. Some of the first Finnish physicians in BARA told us that any practitioner who could survive three months working in BARA could manage most battlefield injuries.

Besides improving their emergency medical skills, we wanted to put our medical practitioners in difficult and complex situations as a way to deflate their medical egos. In austere environments, personnel have to adapt to situations as they arise and be flexible enough to work outside their comfort zone. Situations on the battlefield are never going to be the way they are in a civilian hospital. This is why it is so important for SOST members to have both military and medical training, especially during the team and capability development period, but also when they are working together as a team on the battlefield. In addition, the FINSOST team had to learn international medical terminology to allow it to cooperate with other medical teams in complex situations. This combination of skills and abilities would help the medical team gain the trust of the unit commander and troops in the field.

Most of our SOST treatment protocols and skills were learned in civilian medicine and simply transferred to function in the military environment, but the SOST members were the first Finnish medical personnel to adopt certain new medical skills and medications, such as lyophilized plasma, whole blood "buddy transfusion," and resuscitative endovascular balloon occlusion of the aorta. Some skills—for example, the use of lyophilized plasma—were proven and rehearsed during pre-deployment training, used in the field, and only afterward adapted to civilian medical care.

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Operation Inherent Resolve and FINSOST

In spring 2016, after discussions with Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministerial Committee on Foreign and Security Policy, President Sauli Niinistö decided that Finland would participate in Phase II of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq. The main base for the Finnish armed forces was in Erbil. Their primary mission was to train and advise the Kurdish security forces that were fighting to defeat ISIS and would later retake parts of the city of Mosul; this effort was later expanded to include the training and advising of Iraqi forces.[12] We recognized that Operation Inherent Resolve would be an opportunity to use our new SOST capability. Preparation for the mission meant not only fulfilling basic military requirements but also standardizing medical procedures and practices within the SOST. Now we used our knowledge of our medical personnel to hand-pick the teams for the mission. Each member had to know every other member's individual capabilities beforehand and acquire any skills that were still needed. Helsinki University physicians helped the SOST members training there to learn and implement the newest and most advanced protocols, while training times for reservists were carefully planned around their civilian jobs. The plan was to send one team at a time into the operational area and rotate the other teams in over at least a one-year period.

> We recognized that **Operation Inherent Resolve** would be an opportunity to use our new SOST capability.

Finland offered three vital SOST capabilities to Operation Inherent Resolve: the ability to (1) operate on one patient at a time while sustaining one to two ventilated patients for up to 24 hours; (2) evacuate two critically injured patients simultaneously; and (3) perform surgery on three body cavities or stabilize two extremities or stabilize one pelvic fracture by external fixation, without resupply. After analyzing the mission and time requirements—e.g., surgery must be initiated in less than 20 minutes from the patient's arrival—we staffed each SOST with five members: the team leader, who was an NCO with both medic and team leader experience, two experienced trauma surgeons, one anesthetist specializing in trauma and emergency care, and one emergency care nurse or a nurse anesthetist with trauma experience.

Deployment to a theater of operations with such a highly prepared surgery team was unique in Finnish military history. We didn't know exactly how we were going to do our job on the battlefield, or whether we would cover all the aspects of combat medicine taught, for example, in the NNSOM course. We were confident in our medical skillsets, but we could not predict how we would use every procedure, technique, and tactic in action. We were mentally prepared to "fix things as we went" and be as adjustable, adaptable, and flexible as possible. When the siege of Mosul started, the team was ready to support Finnish and coalition troops on the field as part of a military assistance mission, and also to support local forces or act as supplementary staff for a coalition Role 2 hospital. From the beginning, the idea was that the team would be able to move independently with two vehicles and be self-sustaining for up to two weeks. The first team was able to start working after it received essential anesthesia and surgical equipment and had contacted other coalition counterparts, such as a Canadian Role 2 hospital, to set up a clear evacuation chain plan.

The FINSOST started from Erbil along with other Finnish troops. Our SOST's mission was to provide a surgical capability at casualty collection points (CCPs), designated locations where injured fighters received medical care and were

prepared for evacuation. At the CCP, our primary mission was to provide surgical care to wounded coalition troops who were carrying out their missions within the "golden hour" radius of the CCP. Our team also brought several extra sets of medical equipment to the CCPs because we assumed that most of the initial casualties would be local troops. Other countries were responsible for most of the T3C supplies.

These CCP missions lasted approximately 3 to 14 days, after which FINSOST pulled back to base for one or two days to refit. At other times, FINSOST supported Finnish and coalition troops when they were conducting high-risk operations or missions in areas far outside the one-hour medevac radius. We switched out SOST units a few times during this high-intensity campaign, and found that these transitions went smoothly, in part because all the personnel in the different rotations knew one another, and we had time to brief everyone on the current situation during the transitions.

During the offensive on Mosul, there was a great need for light, highly mobile surgical teams with a small footprint. The Iraqi security forces faced fierce resistance: battles were heated and the troops' advance into the city slowed to urban warfare, fighting from one block to the next. Because the ISIS fighters used snipers, heavy weapons, and bombs, the Iraqi security forces sustained severe losses. The stationary Role 2 medical facilities were left far behind or became otherwise hard to reach as the operation advanced deeper into Mosul. The threat level was quite high for the coalition's advise-and-assist and advise-assist-and-accompany teams, and evacuation from the hostile urban environment of Mosul took a long time. Our mobile surgical team was able to move quickly to where the need was the greatest, bringing highly skilled medical treatment close to the frontline. FINSOST's working conditions varied from day to day, and the threat level kept all of us constantly on alert. On more than one occasion, for example, our forces (luckily) destroyed vehicle-borne IEDs only a block away from where we were working, causing the ground to tremble and shaking surgical equipment off tables. At the CCPs, we usually had one space prepared for surgical patients, and on some occasions we used the resuscitation area as another operating theatre if we still had a patient in our main treatment room. An experienced team medic usually ran triage.[13] Because we had two surgeons on each team, we were able to manage two simultaneous

> During the offensive on Mosul, there was a great need for light, **highly mobile surgical teams** with a **small footprint.**

operations, which was very valuable during periods of intense fighting.

Because there were a number of coalition partners involved in this phase of Operation Inherent Resolve, the FINSOST often acted as a force multiplier: once other countries' medics had reached the limit of their skills, they could immediately consult with the FINSOST or even bring our team in to assist for a short while before resuming care themselves. We also worked with the Iraqi Army and Kurdish fighters, helping them to establish an evacuation chain in places where there was none, teaching them T3C skills, and taking care of local civilians as needed. As Dr. Warner D. "Rocky" Farr wrote, "SOF medics need to learn the skills of native health care providers and, in turn, train local nationals to provide optimal health care and combat trauma care to indigenous soldiers at their level of medicine."[14] This is a principle FINSOST carried into the field. The team's adaptability proved to be an important asset because its members had to be ready to do whatever job they were called on to do each day, from single patient care to mass casualties. In all, FINSOST managed about 600 patients, including coalition casualties, during this first eight-month deployment, with an overall survival rate of more than 90 percent.

What to Bring Back Home

FINSOST proved that it could save lives in highly demanding environments, and that having such a team available near the battle can decrease pre-hospitalization deaths. The success of FINSOST in Operation Inherent Resolve had a strategic impact for Finland, by increasing the credibility of the Finnish defense system in the eyes of coalition partners. By demonstrating its professional capacity to treat all kinds of patients on the battlefield, FINSOST proved its value and won the trust not only of other coalition forces and the Iraq security forces, but also of the local Iraqis and Kurds.

What also became clear, however, was that we were not prepared logistically for the large number of casualties resulting from Operation Inherent Resolve. We used up our supplies sooner than we expected, and almost always lacked some equipment or supplies. Fortunately, special operations personnel are flexible and innovative by nature: the troops on the battlefield helped each other and made it possible for us to perform our tasks as planned. We improvised when certain critical supplies ran short, and on one

occasion were able to take surgical equipment from a former German hospital's supplies. When it comes time to plan the next SOST operation, medical experts must be included in the planning process, and we must make sure that spare equipment is packed up at the home base and ready to deliver to the battle zone when it is needed.

The flexibility of the teams and their innovative and committed personnel made FINSOST's success possible. It was vital that the team's members were able to rely on their professionalism and commitment and work together under pressure. Building each team separately and handpicking team members was the right choice, because it ensured that everybody on a team knew each other. The training they received, from special operators to surgeons, also proved to be well-planned. Medical personnel can't be mass-produced, and it takes a long time to train and prepare suitable personnel for this kind of mission. In the future, we need to have an ongoing program within the regular medical training process to train the right people for a possible SOST role, and to foster collegial ties and cooperation with civilian hospitals and the international community.

FINSOST has shown that a small country like Finland can provide a skillful, relatively low-cost, highly capable medical team to an international crisis zone, to the scene of a national defense conflict, or to a domestic emergency. All that such a country needs is trust in its responders' ability to work in high-risk areas, a pool of highly skilled individuals to draw from, and the political will to support such an effort. It is important for leaders to remember that these kinds of high-quality capabilities cannot be mass-produced, and that they must be available when they are needed—not at some future date after the crisis has passed. For the future of FINSOST, it is our job to use what we know and what we have learned to make Finnish SOF medicine better. We owe that to our brothers-in-arms, their families, and the country. ◈

> **When it comes time to plan the next SOST operation, medical experts must be included in the planning process.**

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NOTES

1   Brian J. Eastridge, Mark Hardin, Joyce Cantrell, Lynne Oetjen-Gerdes, Tamara Zubko, Craig Mallak, Charles E. Wade, John Simmons, James Mace, Robert Mabry, Rose Bolenbaucher, and Lorne H. Blackbourne, "Died of Wounds on the Battlefield: Causation and Implications for Improving Combat Casualty Care," *Journal of Trauma: Injury, Infection, and Critical Care* 71, no. 1 (July 2011).

2   Howard R. Champion, Ronald F. Bellamy, Colonel P. Roberts, and Ari Leppaniemi, "A Profile of Combat Injury," *Journal of Trauma: Injury, Infection, and Critical Care* 54, no. 5 (May, 2003): S19.

3   *Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health*, Seventh Edition: https://medical-dictionary. thefreedictionary.com/golden+hour ; see also Russ S. Kotwal, Jeffrey T. Howard, Jean A. Orman, Bruce W. Tarpey, Jeffrey A. Bailey, Howard R. Champion, Robert L. Mabry, John B. Holcomb, and Kirby R. Gross, "The Effect of a Golden Hour Policy on the Morbidity and Mortality of Combat Casualties," *JAMA Surgery* 151, no.1 (January 2016): 15-24: https:// jamanetwork.com/journals/jamasurgery/fullarticle/2446845

4   Brian J. Eastridge, Robert L. Mabry, Peter Seguin, Joyce Cantrell, Terrill Tops, Paul Uribe, Olga Mallett, Tamara Zubko, Lynne Oetjen-Gerdes, Todd E. Rasmussen, Frank K. Butler, Russ S. Kotwal, John B. Holcomb, Charles Wade, Howard Champion, Mimi Lawnick, Leon Moores, and Lorne H. Blackbourne, "Death on the Battlefield (2001-2011): Implications for the Future of Combat Casualty Care," *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery* 74, no.2 (February 2013): 706.

5   "The term 'Role' or 'Echelon' is used to describe the stratification of the four tiers in which medical support is organised, on a progressive basis, to conduct treatment, evacuation, resupply, and functions essential to the maintenance of the health of the force. The treatment capability of each role/echelon is intrinsic at the higher level, e.g. a role 3 facility will have the ability to carry out role 2 functions." See *NATO Logistics Handbook*, "Chapter 16: Medical Support," October 1997: https://www.nato.int/docu/ logi-en/1997/lo-1610.htm

6   "Damage Control Surgery (DCS) is a surgical intervention where the completeness of the immediate surgical repair is sacrificed to achieve haemorrhage and contamination control, in order to avoid a deterioration of the patient's condition. It consists of emergency surgical procedures and treatment to stabilize casualties, in order to save life, limb or function, including rapid initial control of haemorrhage and contamination, temporary closure, and resuscitation. These procedures depend largely on the ability to provide advanced intensive care and are therefore an interdisciplinary effort rather than a surgical challenge." *NATO Standard AJP-4.10, Edition B, Version 1, Allied Joint Doctrine for Medical Support* (May 2015): 1-15.

7   "A Role 2 Basic [medical treatment facility] must provide the surgical capability, including damage control surgery and surgical procedures for emergency surgical cases, to deliver life, limb and function saving medical treatment. The surgical capability

should be provided within medical timelines. . . . A Role 2 Enhanced [medical treatment facility] must provide all the capabilities of the Role 2 Basic, but has additional capabilities as a result of additional facilities and greater resources, including the capability of stabilizing and preparing casualties for strategic aeromedical evacuation. Depending on the mission, specific Enhancing Modules or Complementary Contributions will be added to the seven Core Modules." Ibid., 1-41

8   Lauri Handolin and Teemu Elomaa, "The Finnish Forward Surgical Team Experience During EUFOR Operation RD Congo in 2006," *European Journal of Trauma and Emergency Surgery* 33, no.3 (2007): 245–250: https://link.springer.com/ article/10.1007/s00068-007-6209-3

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13   "Triage refers to the evaluation and categorization of the sick or wounded when there are insufficient resources for medical care of everyone at once. Historically, triage is believed to have arisen from systems developed for categorization and transport of wounded soldiers on the battlefield." Melissa Conrad Stoppler, *Medical Triage: Code Tags and Triage Terminology*, MedicineNet. com: https://www.medicinenet.com/medical_triage_code_tags_ and_triage_terminology/views.htm

14   Warner D. Farr, *The Death of the Golden Hour and the Return of the Future Guerilla Hospital*, JSOU Report 17-10, (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: JSOU Press, 2017): 10: https:// prolongedfieldcare.org/2017/11/22/free-jsou-e-book-the-death- of-the-golden-hour-and-the-return-of-the-guerilla-hospital-col- ret-warner-d-rocky-farr-m-d/

Coercion and Non-State Actors: Lessons from the Philippines

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THE COMPLICATED NATURE OF OUR CONTEMPORARY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT requires states to deal with state and non-state threats alike.[1] However, while there are sound and substantiated frameworks for understanding state interactions, and extensive research regarding non-state actors in insurgency has enhanced counterinsurgency theory, the understanding of coercion's utility vis-à-vis non-state actors is still lagging behind. Moreover, the available studies of coercion theory regarding non-state actors are rather narrow in scope, focusing mainly on the deterrence of terrorism, and drawing on experiences from the recent wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, and from Israel's multi-faceted crisis involving Palestinian terrorism. Some scholars who consider coercion to be an ineffective strategy against certain terrorist groups argue that different actors might adhere to different normative systems and therefore might not evaluate perceived costs and benefits on the same scale. Death, for instance, might not be considered alarming by extremists who cherish the prospect of eternal life, making coercive threats against them less effective. While some discount the value of coercion for use against non-state actors, however, others urge that existing theory be adapted to the challenges of the contemporary security environment.[2] This article explores the question of how coercion theory can be applied to non-state actors by analyzing the coercive aspects of the fight against extremist groups in the Philippines over the past 25 years. This includes an examination of the indirect role the United States has played as an external actor in the conflict.[3] Our contribution may help to shed light on the underlying question of whether coercion may be a useful strategy in the fight against groups such as al Qaeda, Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and others.

Although a single case study is insufficient as a basis for wider theory development, the Philippines' protracted, complicated struggle with multiple non-state actors—all with their own interests—offers a unique opportunity for assessing the utility of coercion against such groups. What is more, the interaction between the US and Philippine governments as they fought against Muslim extremism in the post-9/11 era makes this case particularly useful for studying the relevance and applicability of coercion theory today.

The following section illustrates some novel approaches for broadening the application of traditional coercion techniques against non-state actors. Non-kinetic deterrents and the indirect ways in which they might be deployed can be valuable additions to the conceptual coercive toolbox. The theory should include the deterrence of cooperation between different non-state armed groups and between non-state armed groups and the population through, for instance, delegitimization. It can also involve tactics to compel one group of non-state actors to operate against another—probably more extreme—group by applying sanctions, withholding aid, and/or threatening the use of force. Finally, the indirect use or non-use of force should be embedded in coercion theory. Contrary to traditional coercion theory, coercing non-state actors does not necessarily require an explicit threat of force combined with ultimatums; such a tactic

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could even prove counterproductive if it bolsters the status of hostile groups or individuals. An indirect or low-key approach might suffice to win cooperation.

Traditional Coercion Theory

When formulating a strategy for prevailing over an opponent, actors can opt for a consensual, coercive, or controlling approach to achieve their objectives.[4] The purpose of a coercive strategy is to resolve crises and armed conflicts without escalating to full-scale war. This is achieved through either *compellence* or *deterrence*.[5] In the first case, the opponent is compelled to do something, such as halt an ongoing attack, while in the second case, the opponent is induced to *not* do something—for instance, to not initiate a ground offensive.[6] In other words, compellence seeks to change the current situation, while deterrence seeks to maintain the status quo. Consequently, the exact goals of deterrence strategies are usually more clear and easier to identify by all involved actors than are those of compellence. Both of these sub-strategies can be realized through two methods: punishment and denial. Punishment seeks to influence behavior through the application of threats that potentially raise the costs of defiance for an adversary, while denial involves reducing the perceived benefits of the adversary's actions.[7] It is important to note that, despite the apparently dualistic descriptions, the policies and practices of deterrence and compellence are inextricably co-dependent and can be difficult to distinguish in practice.[8]

Coercion is the use of threats and limited force to influence an adversary's choices, with the intent to obtain compliance while the opponent can still make a choice; in other words, a coercive strategy seeks to tip the balance of an opponent's cost-benefit calculation in favor of the coercer.[9] Thus, the difference between limited use of force and a controlling strategy of overwhelming force is not in the amount of force used but in the degree of choice left for the opponent. Because the opponent's calculations depend on his perception of potential dangers, profits, and the probability that any of these outcomes will occur, the effectiveness of any coercive strategy boils down to the coercer's ability to pose a *credible* threat, with realistic costs for resistance and rewards for compliance, that will compel an adversary to comply.[10] Resistance costs include the costs for defiance imposed by the coercer and the costs of trying to prevent the coercer from executing his threat. Complying with the adversary's demands can also entail certain costs, however, such as the loss of supporters or other benefits.[11]

The coercer also must consider several things when attempting to influence the adversary's cost-benefit calculus. First, there is the price of enforcement, which encompasses all costs of executing a punishment or denial strategy.[12] Second, inducements can be an important aspect of coercive strategies; they increase the value of concessions and decrease an adversary's political and tangible costs for compliance.[13] Third, leaders have to take into account their audiences—at home as well as abroad—because they might pay a price for reneging on promises or for not fulfilling threats. This concern also relates to the aspect of *reputation*, which, if damaged, might affect future attempts at coercive diplomacy. A solid reputation for keeping promises of benefit or harm, coupled with the target's compliance out of a belief in those promises, can have a long-term effect on the coercer's future activities.[14] This explains why coercive threats are often issued not only to influence a specific target, but also to impress domestic audiences and influence other external actors. Finally, a coercer always has to take into

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account the possibility of counter-coercion. Coercion is, typically, a highly dynamic contest in which opponents continuously strive to identify pressure points and influence each other.[15]

Making Coercion Work

How does leadership put a successful coercive strategy into practice? In his work on coercive diplomacy, Peter Jakobsen introduces what he terms an *ideal policy*, which summarizes the most relevant aspects of traditional coercion theory to form a practical framework for its use.[16] According to this ideal policy, successful coercion depends on the use of ultimatums, a credible and clearly communicated threat of force, credible assurances, and incentives for compliance. Jakobsen further stresses that for coercion to be successful, the coercer must be able to deny adversaries their objectives as quickly and with as little cost to the coercer as possible. The coercer must also avoid "upping the ante" by exceeding initial demands in further negotiations.[17] These generic aspects of traditional coercion theory offer a starting point for understanding the utility of the concept against non-state actors, and are illustrated by the coercive aspects of the counterinsurgency strategy applied against Muslim extremists in the Philippines.

Background: The Origins of the Philippine Conflict

After the United States took sovereignty over the Philippines from Spain in 1898, the administrative authorities had trouble controlling the southern island of Mindanao, the archipelago's second largest island and home to various groups of ethnic Muslims that were striving for autonomy from the largely Catholic state.[18] When the Philippines gained independence in 1946, the new Philippine government inherited this conflict. Discontent in Mindanao continued to grow as a consequence of persistent poverty, neglect by Manila, and official corruption under permanent martial law. When economic growth in the 1990s led to an improvement in Mindanao's situation, the Muslim separatists lost ground there; however, inequality, economic weakness, and social discontent in the region persisted.[19]

Even more important, prosperous economic conditions allowed the government to move against what it perceived as the main threat to national unity, a protracted communist insurgency that had emerged in the early days of the Cold War.[20] Although communist violence was never completely eradicated from the islands, the mitigation of this threat permitted officials to open peace talks with one of the main Muslim separatist groups, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).[21] The MNLF had popularized calls for a separate Moro state consisting of Mindanao and other southern islands of the Sulu archipelago and Palawan.[22] After the two sides reached an agreement in 1996, Nurlaji P. Misuari, leader of the MNLF, became governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), encompassing four Mindanao provinces.[23] While the agreement formally ended the open conflict, however, tensions within the region's population persisted due to continued economic neglect and ethnic persecution, and several other Muslim separatist groups came to the foreground to replace the MNLF.[24]

MNLF Flag

One was the influential Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a splinter group under the leadership of Hashim Salamat that broke away from the more secular MNLF in the early 1990s.[25] The MILF grew in influence and independence, and soon was considered a more formidable fighting force than the MNLF, which made it appealing to many MNLF members who blamed the Misuari administration for not delivering on promised reforms.[26] A 1995 Misuari-brokered settlement between the government and the MILF led to a formal recognition of the group as one of the leading Muslim movements, but peace talks were inconclusive, and sporadic violence continued despite cease-fires and other conciliatory gestures.[27]

The government was also confronted with radical extremist groups, of which Abu Sayyaf ("Father of the Swordsman") has been the most important.[28] This group was founded by Abdurajak Janjalani, a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan War of the 1980s and an acquaintance of Osama bin Laden, who supported the group.[29] Abu Sayyaf's uncompromising aim is to establish a purely Islamic state in the southern Philippines, and its methods have been extremely violent.[30] Prior to 9/11, Abu Sayyaf was known for its role as "a major player in the international Afghan network—veteran Islamic fighters who have been involved in holy wars (jihads) in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Pakistan, Algeria and Sudan, to name but a few."[31] The group has also drawn support from countries like Libya, Iran, and Pakistan. After founder Janjalani was killed by police in 1998, a leadership vacuum arose and the organization atomized into several smaller armed groups.[32] As a consequence, Abu Sayyaf's strategy and "actions have been inconsistent over time, shifting in accordance with its relative strength, resources and the vision of its leadership." This has resulted in both "ideologically-based operations focused on the establishment of an autonomous Muslim state in the Philippines governed according to Sharia law" and "attacks with the sole purpose of banditry and criminality."[33]

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The Role of the United States

After the Philippines gained independence in 1946, the United States retained strategically important naval bases in the archipelago. This changed in 1991, when a new Philippine government terminated those base rights; by 1994, US forces had completely withdrawn from the Philippines. The 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which brought US military forces back onto Philippine soil for training

and large-scale exercises, was unsurprisingly controversial, but China's expansionist threat toward the Spratly islands and its support for the communist insurgents led the Philippine government to conclude that a US presence was vital to the national interest.[34] Thus, the current conflict environment has been shaped not only by historically rooted local struggles, but also by the renewed presence of US troops.

The Fight Against Extremism in the Post-9/11 Era

Despite improved domestic and political stability, the Philippines still faced significant security problems at the turn of the twenty-first century. The threat from dissatisfied Maoist and Muslim groups—including some of those with whom the government had sealed peace agreements—had not evaporated, and terrorism and criminality still posed serious challenges.[35] The 9/11 attacks and subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq gave the Philippine government's fight against Islamist extremism a tremendous boost when Operation Enduring Freedom came to include the Philippines (OEF-P). The United States deployed a mobile training team in August 2001 to support the development of a Philippine national-level counterterrorism capacity. This effort was augmented with a SOF team that conducted area assessment surveys down to the village level and helped develop an operational plan.[36] In 2002, US Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) deployed to the archipelago to assist the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the fight against the al Qaeda-affiliated Abu Sayyaf, which was among the first foreign terrorist organizations to have their assets frozen by the US government.[37] At the same time, the United States supported peace negotiations with moderate Muslim secessionist groups. While the main goal of these efforts was to prevent the Philippines from becoming a terrorist sanctuary, they also supported the United States' strategic goal of retaining influence in the Philippines in the face of a rising China.[38]

Abu Sayyaf

The OEF-P planners developed a strategy to counter the insurgent threat "by, with and through" the efforts of indigenous forces, because the operation's rules of engagement did not permit US forces to take a direct combat role.[39] JSOTF-P immediately started to train and advise

the AFP, and provided intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets and command and control during actual operations.[40] The task force also engaged in peace-promotion activities and basic development programs to enhance good governance and diminish local support for militant groups. These activities provoked a propaganda counter-offensive by Abu Sayyaf, which claimed that its members were fighting for freedom and the right to self-determination. At the same time, it was offering followers money as a way to increase its support among the local population.[41] Furthermore, the annual combined *Balikatan* ("Shoulder-to-shoulder") exercise, which followed the VFA, was incorporated into the fight against terrorism and has become a permanent part of OEF-P. The 2002 *Balikatan* exercise on the small island of Basilan saw an increase in US personnel from 600 to over 2,500, with deployments of six months to a year.[42] Some observers even hailed this particular exercise as the unofficial opening of a second front in the fight against terrorism.[43] *Balikatan* 2002 seemed to be a thin cover for an operation to eliminate Abu Sayyaf and bring social stability to the islands, which were explicit goals.[44] Live-fire "field tests," for example, were conducted during the 2002 exercise to rescue two civilians who had been kidnapped by the group.[45] *Balikatan* 2002 was considered a success when one of Abu Sayyaf's top commanders was killed, and the decimated group was driven out of Basilan. US-funded civic and humanitarian projects then helped to restore a sense of order to the island's population.[46] Overall, however, Abu Sayyaf's leadership remained largely intact and the use of force likely acted to radicalize survivors as well as those with ties to the several hundred extremists killed.[47] Coupled with the exercise's focus on the island of Basilan instead of the wider region—which David Maxwell, the commander of the initial battalion that deployed in OEF-P, identified as a strategic error—this allowed Abu Sayyaf to relocate and regroup in Jolo, the primary island of Sulu Province.[48]

Although Abu Sayyaf had drifted from its original goal of gaining Muslim autonomy into criminality in the late 1990s, a new campaign of violence

reinvigorated the group's fight for an independent Islamic state.[49] Soon the government and its security forces, as well as civilians and private companies, came under renewed attacks, while local politicians were often co-opted by offers of revenue from Abu Sayyaf's illegal activities.[50] The February 2004 bombing of a commercial ferry and bombings in several cities on Valentine's Day in 2005 were grim testimonies to the group's ability to inflict mass casualties.

While Abu Sayyaf has always rejected the MNLF's and MILF's non-violent approach of engaging in peace talks, it is increasingly cooperating with both of these groups to counter AFP operations.[51] The need for such cooperation has been a consequence of the increased effectiveness of the government's counterterror campaign. The AFP had gradually stepped up operations, culminating in Operation Ultimatum (August 2006–April 2007), a JSOTF-P-supported offensive against Abu Sayyaf on the island of Jolo.[52] This campaign proved to be an unprecedented success that included the mopping up of various terrorist camps and the killing of six key leaders. Among these was Khaddafy Janjalani, the younger brother of the movement's founder. His death was a particularly severe blow because without him, Abu Sayyaf lost its ties with international Muslim terrorist organizations.[53]

The government's consolidation and exploitation of this victory, however, were thwarted by renewed communist insurgent violence and the collapse of negotiations with the MILF, which triggered the redeployment of AFP troops to several parts of the archipelago.[54] It became clear that the AFP's earlier loss of momentum had allowed the extremists to regroup in various locations, including Basilan, Zamboanga, and Sulu. The AFP launched a second large offensive, Operation Tuparin, against Abu Sayyaf in Basilan that lasted from mid-2009 until mid-2011. This reinvigorated counterterrorism campaign delivered swift results: in 2010 the AFP, with the help of the JSOTF-P, successfully targeted key leadership and severely degraded Abu Sayyaf's capabilities.[55] The extremists reacted with a series of attacks on AFP and US forces and by adopting ferocious insurgent tactics such as the use of improvised explosive devices, impersonating local security forces, and killing, maiming, and mutilating soldiers and civilians. None of this, however, could prevent the weakening of the organization.[56] Moreover, tactical victories such as an October 2011 ambush in which 19 soldiers were killed proved to be Pyrrhic: Abu Sayyaf's influence and capabilities continued to diminish as the AFP campaign gained renewed impetus.[57]

Aftermath of a bombing carried out by Abu Sayyaf on Valentine's Day, 2005.

Followers of MNLF rebel leader Nur Misuari gather to declare that they will again fight for independence (Sept 2013).

The Moro National Liberation Front and the Misuari Renegade Group

Although the war on terror in the Philippines focused on Abu Sayyaf, the threat from other Muslim groups was never far away. Despite the 1996 peace agreement, ARMM governor and key MNLF figure Nurlaji P. Misuari called for rebellion as a ploy to secure his renewed appointment to the governorship, causing a rift within the MNLF. After his bid for office failed, a faction calling itself the Misuari Renegade Group (MRG) broke away, allegedly at Misauri's instigation, and reverted to the use of force against the AFP. Joining forces with Abu Sayyaf and MILF, the MRG started to target AFP bases on Jolo in 2005. Government forces reacted by raiding MRG strongholds, in addition to their operations against Abu Sayyaf. Skirmishes continued well into 2007, but MRG has not conducted any major operations since 2008. Nevertheless, the MRG threat remains because the movement has the potential to align discontented MNLF and MILF extremists.[58]

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front

In 2002, as a means to coerce the MILF into ending violence against civilians, the United States threatened to include the organization on its international terrorist list and withhold aid to the territory under MILF control.

At the time, the Philippine government received US support for arresting terrorists within MILF-controlled areas. To demonstrate its good intentions, the MILF signed a ceasefire with the government in 2003.[59] Although the death of MILF leader Hashim Salamat that same year caused the group to fragment—mainly along tribal and ideological lines—its cooperation with the government was institutionalized in an Ad Hoc Joint Action Group.[60] This enabled *inter alia* intelligence sharing and joint operations against Abu Sayyaf. Although some of its splinter groups decided to rebel, the MILF's collaboration with the government was the overall norm.

A more serious increase in violence occurred in 2008, after government and MILF negotiators failed to conclude a peace agreement. Although peace talks had failed before, this time a fairly comprehensive agreement looked close at hand until the government began to reconsider its position out of fear of undermining the existing peace accord with the MNLF.[61] This perceived breach of trust provoked radical MILF elements to align themselves with Abu Sayyaf and engage in atrocities such as beheading and mutilating captured soldiers.[62] This violence hampered further negotiations by casting serious doubt on the authority of the MILF's more moderate central command. The pragmatic attitude of the group's leadership, however, ensured the support of the majority

President Rodrigo Duterte (Sept 2016)

of its members, and its decision to favor extended autonomy for the Muslim-majority regions over outright independence cleared the road for new talks with the government. In 2012, a framework agreement was reached, followed by the March 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, which has served to provide an underpinning for lasting peace.[63] Nevertheless, the leadership's decision again triggered the formation of another violent splinter group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), which continued to fight for full independence.[64] Moreover, the MNLF's attempts to restore its influence in the region continue to threaten stability.[65] From the perspective of the MNLF, which is more radical than the MILF, the MILF peace deal could potentially sideline the MNLF because it "encroaches on the autonomy they were granted under their own pact."[66]

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Recent violent upheavals in the Mindanao region illustrate the nature of the continuing extremist threat. In 2016, one of Abu Sayyaf's key leaders, Isnilon Hapilon, swore allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and consequently was designated ISIS's emir for Southeast Asia despite his limited religious knowledge and poor Arabic language skills.[67] This promotion allowed Hapilon to reconcile and rally an array of extremist factions under the black banner of ISIS.[68] In May 2017, the newly forged coalition executed an unprecedented attack on the city of Marawi, which provoked President Rodrigo Duterte to reimpose martial law in Mindanao.[69] After a 150-day siege, Duterte claimed victory over ISIS-affiliated groups in Marawi, but the region remained unsafe until March 2018.[70] More than a thousand people were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced during this battle, which was the highest number of victims of violence in recent Philippine history.[71]

The fight against extremist movements in Mindanao continues today. As a result of lessons learned in the siege of Marawi and other major insurgent offensives,

the AFP established a Special Operations Command that integrates all security services' special operations capabilities under a unified command.[72] Analysts have warned that the defeat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria might lead to more violence in the Philippines and elsewhere if, as expected, combat-hardened terrorists relocate or return to the region with an urge to demonstrate ISIS's continuing global potential.[73] Some observers hold an optimistic view of the government's current negotiations with secessionist groups, in which President Duterte "basically promised all things to all people."[74] There is a real danger, however, that these promises cannot be fulfilled and that they, together with Duterte's infamous vigilante counterdrug policy, are likely only to increase popular discontent. The conflict in the Philippines, therefore, is far from over; a resurgence of violence seems only a matter of time.

Traditional Coercion Theory in the Philippine Context

The fight against violent non-state actors in the Philippines offers a unique context for analyzing the relevance of coercion theory. While our analysis alone is insufficient to fully rebut traditional views on the use of coercion, which emphasize a credible and clearly communicated threat of force combined with an ultimatum, assurances, and incentives for compliance, it provides interesting insights into some of the most fundamental aspects of coercion theory.

First, it is debatable whether clearly communicated threats coupled with strict ultimatums are a prerequisite for successful coercion of violent non-state actors. Aside from the important role that tacit communications can play in coercion efforts, overtly threatening extremists might lead to negative reactions, including mass casualty attacks.[75] As the Philippine case has repeatedly demonstrated, radical elements might deliberately take a defiant stand to attract dissatisfied followers from more moderate groups. The resulting fragmentation of less violent groups and the bolstering of extremist factions complicate conflict resolution and might even trigger new waves of violence. This has happened on several occasions in the post-9/11 Philippine conflict. Misuari's rebellion, for example, benefited from his defiance and led to a rift in the MNLF. Even worse, after the radical MRG broke away, it started to cooperate with likeminded splinter groups from the MILF and Abu Sayyaf to launch a new armed campaign against government forces. Abu Sayyaf itself offers the clearest example of this problem: the group thrived on its hardline posture, which appealed to other radical extremists, including some members of the MNLF and MILF. Therefore, issuing threats against and imposing ultimatums on this type of violent non-state actor might prove counterproductive. Moreover, such a policy might be viewed by local and international audiences as testimony to the insurgent group's relevance and legitimacy, and thus enhance its ability to mobilize support. This contrary result also strongly relates to the labeling of opponents, a common practice since 9/11 that has often propelled more moderate groups into the hands of extremists such as the Taliban or al Qaeda in Iraq.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001–2010) resisted US pressure to brand the MILF as a terrorist group because she understood that doing so would only drive this relatively moderate group away from peace negotiations.[76] Arroyo was unable to avoid using the term when dealing with Abu Sayyaf, however, because this group was of "vital interest" to the United States due to its affiliation with al Qaeda, and the two allied governments have publicly dismissed

US attempts to move toward the "controlling" end of the policy spectrum were thwarted by Filipino public outcry.

the option of negotiations.[77] In reality, however, the AFP and JSOTF-P did not resort to a purely controlling strategy of pursuing the enemy's complete defeat, but instead have limited the application of force in time, location, and method, while simultaneously conducting "inducement" activities such as development projects to mitigate local grievances.[78] US attempts to move toward the "controlling" end of the policy spectrum were thwarted by Filipino public outcry against the direct participation of US forces in counterinsurgency operations.[79] It is probably fair to conclude that leaving Abu Sayyaf intact, dismissing negotiations, and simultaneously bolstering the group's national and international posture by publicly acknowledging its link to al Qaeda helped Hapilon emerge as ISIS emir for Southeast Asia, despite his limited competence for such a position.

A second aspect of traditional coercion theory that might need revising is the assumption that a credible threat of force is an imperative for successful coercion. The evidence from the Philippines suggests that non-use of the threat of force, restraint, or the indirect use of force may be alternative paths to success. It should be noted, however, that Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (2001–2014) served as a clear demonstration of US willingness to use force against extremist organizations. This lesson reverberated among Philippine insurgent groups such as the MILF, which repeatedly stated that it did not want to fight the United States.[80] The annual joint Balikatan exercises provided sufficient credibility for the threat of force in the Philippine theater. This was not only because of the large number of US troops who were deployed to regions plagued by terrorism, but also due to the nature of the exercise, which allowed US forces to support the AFP in combating extremism. A more overt use of force by US personnel, however, could have provoked a backlash against the United States because anti-Americanism thrives among large sections of the Filipino Muslim community.[81] Moreover, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled that the direct use of force by US personnel conflicted with the Philippine Constitution. Framing the "second front" in the global counterterrorism campaign as a joint military exercise was, therefore, crucial to its acceptance because this designation both limited media attention and mostly avoided the negative connotation of US interference in Philippine sovereignty. Subsequently, JSOTF-P's highly visible civil and humanitarian operations made US troops more welcome among the Muslim populations.[82]

In practical terms, US intelligence and other support strongly contributed to the AFP's fight against extremist groups, and was crucial in the effort to clean out terrorist strongholds.[83] Some analysts prudently conclude, nevertheless, that even such indirect use of US force through combined operations—which were mainly directed against Abu Sayyaf—probably brought more negative than positive consequences.[84] They point to the fact that refraining from force might be a better choice, as was the case with the MILF: the AFP and the United States did not launch operations against the MILF and ultimately were able to reach a peace agreement with the group. At the same time, Abu Sayyaf is a far more radical and less amenable opponent, which has repeatedly stated that it is not willing to negotiate.

Implications for Developing Coercion Theory

Our analysis of the fight against extremist groups in the Philippines demonstrates that effective methods for coercing non-state actors may be different from those that are effective against states. This finding has wider relevance for recent scholarship that seeks to adapt coercion theory for use against non-state

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actors. Coercion theory includes both deterrence and compellence, and while in practice the difference between the two can be difficult to distinguish, both can theoretically be broadened in the context of non-state actors.

Deterrence

According to some research, there are three characteristics of terrorist organizations that complicate the use of coercive strategies against them. First is the apparent "irrationality" of some fanatical ideologies, which can make extremists hard to deter. Second, the political motivations of terrorist groups make them less sensitive to threats against aspects of personal well-being such as life and property. Third is the lack of a "return address"—terrorists are often difficult to locate.[85] Terrorism specialist Alex S. Wilner proposes some adaptations that might directly or indirectly help to overcome these problems and render coercion theory more applicable to non-state actors.[86] First, the traditional concept of deterrence through threat of punishment should be broadened to align deterrent threats with the terrorists' core values, such as publicity, religious legitimacy, and personal glory. This idea gains credibility from the fact that the current CT emphasis on decapitation, i.e., targeting the leadership of violent non-state groups, has brought mixed and even counterproductive results.[87] Second, deterrence should be strengthened through denial. This can be achieved by improving structural defenses—securing and hardening likely targets, for example—and improving "behavioral defenses" by placing security checkpoints in random locations and otherwise creating a perception of an overwhelming security presence. Such measures can impede terrorists' planning by increasing their uncertainty about whether their activities will have the intended effects. Another way to undermine terrorism's impact is to mitigate the consequences of attacks through a robust emergency response and measures to build both societal resilience and the public's confidence in government. Third is deterrence through delegitimization, which means using countermessaging to attack the political, ideological, and religious rationales that guide terrorist behavior. Examples include publicly ridiculing or otherwise undermining the terrorists' goals and condemning the use of suicide terrorism by religiously inspired groups. Governments should make the case to their publics that suicide terrorism is "a theological perversion relying on unjustifiable forms of violence (indiscriminate mass killing) and suicide (a sin)."[88]

Wilner's suggestions help to broaden coercion theory (and more specifically deterrence), but they are only a starting point for adapting and further developing the theory. Our analysis offers further insights into the use of coercion as a CT strategy. Violent extremist groups in the Philippines have frequently formed ad hoc coalitions with one another. Deterring such cooperation is a potentially valuable strategy that needs to be explored further in coercion theory. The moderate majority of the MILF, for instance, refrained from cooperating with radical extremist groups because the MILF leadership both hoped for a favorable peace deal with the Philippine government and feared US retaliation.[89] In the same way, popular support for Abu Sayyaf sharply declined as a consequence of US military cooperation with the AFP and the offer of humanitarian assistance to areas affected by insurgent violence.[90] This combination of "hard" and "soft" coercion could be combined with the policy of deterrence by delegitimization—attacking the political, ideological, and religious foundations of violent non-state actors—that Wilner proposes. Such measures would also help to further exploit inter-group rivalry.

> The current CT emphasis on **decapitation, i.e.,** targeting the leadership of violent non-state groups, has brought **mixed** and even **counterproductive results.**

The government must demonstrate both its legitimacy as the ruling authority and its intention to meet the needs of the local population. These policies require not only the deployment of security forces to protect civilians, but also an effective judiciary that is capable of enforcing rights and upholding laws. Improvements in the educational system and access to essential services are also vital tools for delegitimizing radicalism and healing sectarian divisions. These efforts are even more successful when they are supported by countermessaging, a tactic the Philippine government has used that highlights atrocities committed by extremists (such as the beheading and maiming of soldiers and civilians and the targeting of fellow Muslims during religious celebrations). The Philippine case also demonstrates that external actors can indirectly help to design and implement such a delegitimization campaign. JSOTF-P, for instance, played a crucial role in organizing and training the AFP, conducting peace-promotion and development programs, and encouraging good governance—lines of effort that JSOTF-P supported with a successful information operations campaign.[91]

Compellence

Compellence of non-state actors should be incorporated in the coercive toolbox alongside deterrence. The Philippine case shows that a vulnerable opponent might be compelled to operate against a more radical group, as the MILF did against Abu Sayyaf. This strategy goes beyond the deterrence of cooperation between non-state actors, which was mentioned earlier in the discussion of deterrence strategies. Sanctions, withholding aid, or even a threat of force might be needed to compel such cooperation with the coercer, but at the same time, the coercer should be careful not to alienate its new "ally." For the MILF, the prospect of accommodation by the government, combined with the US threat to place the group on its terror list, were sufficient to compel cooperation, as institutionalized in the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group. The breach of trust that followed the 2008 collapse of peace talks caused a setback in the collaboration, but fortunately that obstacle proved to be temporary. Although compelling a violent non-state actor to cooperate might be difficult, it should not be disregarded as a possibility because it offers an indirect approach to coopting less dangerous movements that are in proximity to the main threat.

Another avenue for broadening coercion theory concerns the indirect or non-use of the threat of force. As discussed earlier, some authors have argued that the Philippine case demonstrates that the limited use of force was imperative for success, and that using force on a larger scale with fewer restrictions, or using US military power directly, would not have achieved the same objectives. Moreover, unlike traditional coercion theory, coercing non-state actors does not necessarily require an explicit threat of force combined with ultimatums or other diplomatic efforts; an indirect or low-key approach might suffice. This finding is supported by President Arroyo's refusal to label the MILF as a terrorist organization and her decision to conduct peace negotiations. Furthermore, overt threats could even prove counterproductive, as was likely the case when Abu Sayyaf leader Hapilon used government threats to boost his status.

Jakobsen's ideal concept for coercive diplomacy already includes inducements and reassurances for complying.[92] Our findings suggest that non-kinetic deterrents could be a valuable addition for adapting this coercive toolbox to non-state actors. The Philippine case contains many examples in which violent non-state

> The Philippine case demonstrates that the **limited use of force** was imperative for **success.**

Former Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo

actors have been coerced to cooperate when the government has engaged either the local population or affiliated armed groups. These effective coercive methods would not have been recognized by traditional theory. Therefore, an ideal policy for coercing non-state actors should include not only non-kinetic deterrents but also the indirect ways in which these might be used.

Conclusion

While there is a significant body of work in the field of counterinsurgency studies, academics have paid less attention to the applicability of coercion theory to non-state actors. Using Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines as a case study, this article contributes to coercion theory by showing that coercion can be used successfully against violent extremist groups in a complicated security environment. Sources of unrest such as economic inequality, criminality, and poor governance can make purely military solutions (including control strategies) a poor choice because they fail to address the root grievances that extremists exploit to mobilize support.[93] The many examples of splintering and cooperation among the different Filipino insurgent groups, along with the overlap of criminal, insurgent, and terrorist activities, demonstrate that, although it might be possible to defeat a single group, the remaining extremists have many ways to continue their struggle. In this environment, a coercive strategy offers the Philippine and US governments several options for influencing the cost-benefit calculations of violent extremist groups and their supporters: the restrained or indirect use of force, non-kinetic deterrents, and incentives for compliance. The successful application of these measures forced the insurgents to respond to the government's demands. Thus, this study of counterinsurgency in the Philippines illustrates the utility as well as the validity of applying coercion theory to violent non-state actors.[94]

While the basic tenets of traditional coercion theory remain relevant in CT, direct communication and reliance on the threat of (limited) force to pose a credible threat should be adapted for CT strategies. In our analysis, the non-use or indirect use of force against Filipino terrorist groups proved to be relatively successful, while overt threats brought adverse consequences. Furthermore, our study shows the value of testing novel coercive approaches, such as deterring cooperation between violent non-state groups and compelling specific groups to cooperate with the coercer vis-à-vis other, perhaps more extremist, groups.

The insights gained from this case study of Philippine counterinsurgency are echoed in other research that aims to broadening the application of coercion theory, but they are only a start. More research is needed to develop a complete framework for applying coercion against non-state actors. Further studies should not only focus on widening the traditional concept of deterrence through non-kinetic methods, but also aim to better explain the exact role and utility of force in countering violent extremism. Decapitation through leadership targeting, for instance, might be a more effective tool when understood and practiced in a broader context. Researchers also need to capture the dynamics of compelling more peripheral groups to cooperate against the main threat. This indirect approach holds promise as a way to coerce some of the most elusive violent non-state actors in our contemporary security environment, such as the Islamic State, al Qaeda, and al Shabaab. Finally, coercive diplomacy should be adapted to incorporate the delicate practice of communicating threats, and to help define the interaction between non-kinetic and kinetic deterrents, inducements, and reassurances. In this regard, Jakobsen's ideal policy as described earlier might offer a valuable starting point for broadening the traditional approach to coercion. Violent non-state extremism has become an ever-increasing threat to our modern, globalized world, and we need to develop a robust framework to address the phenomenon. We can achieve this by applying the rich evidence from recent experiences in the field to the further development of a theory for coercing non-state opponents. ◈

> A coercive strategy offers the Philippine and US governments several options for influencing the cost-benefit calculations of violent extremist groups.

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NOTES

1   This article reflects the personal opinions of the authors and not necessarily the opinion of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence.

2   Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Terrorism and the Fourth Wave in Deterrence Research," in *Deterring Terrorism,* ed. Andreas Wenger and Alex Wilner (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012), 21.

3   A number of authors have analyzed the fight against extremists in the Philippines from a counterinsurgency perspective, but the conflict also lends itself to research on coercion. See, for instance, Zachary Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism: The Return of Abu Sayyaf* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005); Stephen C. Cohn, *Countering the Lingering Threat of the Abu Sayyaf Group* (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, September 2007); Rick Breekveldt, *Countering Muslim Insurgencies in the Philippines: A Philippine Fillip to Paths to Victory's Panacea* (Netherlands Defence Academy, 2015); Antonio R. Lastimado and Arturo G. Rojas, *The Armed Forces of the Philippines and Special Operations* (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2004); Alan R. Luga, *Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao, Philippines* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2001); Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2013); Leonardo I. Peña, *Finding the Missing Link to a Successful Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy* (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2007); Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review* 86, no. 6 (2006): 2-12; David S. Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines: What Would Sun Tzu Say?," *Military Review* 84, no. 3 (2004): 20–23; and Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling," *Special Warfare* 18, no. 2 (2005).

4   Lawrence Freedman and Srinath Raghavan, "Coercion," in *Security Studies: An Introduction,* ed. Paul D. Williams (London: Routledge, 2013), 207.

5   Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 69–78.

6   Freedman and Raghavan, "Coercion", 208.

7   Ibid., 211–212.

8   Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7–8.

9   Significant attempts have been made to (mathematically) model this coercive balance, the costs and benefits involved, and probability of outcomes, based on the game theory modeling proposed by John Nash in "Non-Cooperative Games," *Annals of Mathematics* 54, no. 2 (1951): 286–295. See, for instance, the work of Branislav Slantchev for an extensive explanation. Branislav L. Slantchev, *Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 65–155.

10   Byman and Waxman explain four basic elements of coercive threats: costs, benefits, perceptions, and probabilities. Coercion is aimed at altering decision-making processes, so it does not deal with actual costs and benefits, but rather with what actors *perceive* to be the costs and benefits of their choices, coupled with the perceived probability of whether any of these outcomes will accrue. Byman and Waxman find this model debatable because it assumes a unitary actor, without sufficiently explaining the ultimate goals of decision making. Byman and Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion*, 11–12. The effects of coercion can be compounded by the limits of rationality and the influence of emotion on decision makers, which leads some authors believe that the rational actor model itself may be a false starting point because rational acting is more likely to be the exception than the rule. For an overview of cognitive processes and how emotion influences decision-making, see Janice Gross Stein, *Deterring Terrorism, Not Terrorists,* in *Deterring Terrorism*, ed., Andreas Wenger and Alex Wilner (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012), 51–58.

11   Freedman and Raghavan, "Coercion", 213–214.

12   Ibid., 213–216.

13   Byman and Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion*, 9.

14   Freedman and Raghavan, "Coercion", 217–219.

15   Schelling explains the dialectic of this interrelationship and how reciprocal expectations—either tacit or articulated—influence the course and outcome of a (bargaining) strategy. Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 53–74.

16   Jakobsen bases his ideas on the works of Thomas Schelling, Alexander George, and William Simons, among others. Peter V. Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy After the Cold War* (London: MacMillan, 1998), 106–107. On the relevance of military threats for state interaction, see Slantchev, *Military Threats,* 255–258.

17   Schelling also stresses that there should be a clearly identifiable boundary for the compromise or concession. If this is not the case, conceding to demands might be interpreted as capitulation, with additional negative consequences. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict,* 71.

18   Luga, *Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao*, 1.

19   *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, *Southeast Asia* IHS Inc., 2000: 331–334.

20   The communist New People's Army (NPA), the military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), traditionally had the aim of overthrowing the Philippine government with a protracted Maoist-style people's guerrilla campaign. The threat posed by the CPP-NPA declined after the CPP was politically legitimized in the 1990s, but a peace agreement was never reached. Peace talks were reopened under President Benigno Aquino III (2010-2016) and continue under President Rodrigo Duterte. The talks serve as a form of conflict management, keeping violence at a low intensity and building trust, while the military focuses on civil-military operations and development activities. NPA violence continues, however, and a short-term solution seems unlikely because of the contrast between communist values and the Philippines' current oligarchic political system. *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia,* IHS Inc., 2014: 478–517.

21   *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia,* 2000: 331–334.

22   *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia,* 2014: 481–482

23   *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia,* 2000: 349–350

24   Ibid., 331–334; Amy L. Freedman, "Islamic Extremism in Southeast Asia," in *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Security Studies*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, Andrew Scobell, and Joseph Chinyong Liow (New York: Routledge, 2010), 270.

25   *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia,* 2000: 349–350.

26   Ibid., 331–334, 349–350.

27   Ibid., 331–334.

28 Luga, *Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao*, 48. According to Rommel C. Banlaoi, Abu Sayyaf has often been mistranslated into "bearer of the sword," while it actually translates into "father of the swordsman." Rommel C. Banlaoi, *Al-Harakatul Al-Islamiyyah: Essays on the Abu Sayyaf Group* (Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, 2012), 18. The "father of the swordsman" translation is also used by Diane Chido, "Intel Brief: The Abu Sayyaf Model," The International Relations and Security Network, 2008: http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/specialinterest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/en/services/digital-library/articles/article.html/91937 . The Arabic noun 'فيﺎس' is translated as both "swordsman" and "executioner."

29 *East Asian Strategic Review, 2008, Chapter 4,* The National Institute for Defense Studies Japan, 117: http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/pdf/2008/east-asian_e2008_04.pdf

30 *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia* 2000, 349. Abu Sayyaf's and MILF's leadership have been influenced by the works of Syed Qutb (1906–1966), an Islamist scholar who is considered the ideological champion of modern Islamist extremism, and whose theories underpin the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology. His writings proclaim "perpetual religious war (jihad) against all religions other than Islam" and consider democracy, capitalism, communism, Christianity and Judaism to be aspects of a conspiracy against Islam and the Ummah. In his most influential work, *Milestones*, published in 1964, he describes Islam as the sole legitimate spiritual regime and Islamic religious law, shari'a, as the principal source of legislation. In Qutb's view, the ideal Islamic society calls for violent revolutions to impose rigorous adherence to Islam based on the first successors of the Prophet, and total rejection of non-Muslim cultures. Stephen E. Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Modern Worldwide Extremists and Extremist Groups,* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), 214–215, 260–261; Adiel Suarez-Murias, " 'Jihad Is The Way And Death For The Sake Of Allah Is Our Highest Aspiration': A Narrative Analysis Of Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones*" (master's thesis, Wake Forest University, May 2013); Joseph D. Bozek, "Sayyid Qutb: An Historical and Contextual Analysis of Jihadist Theory" (master's thesis, Grand Valley State University, August 2008), 77–80.

31 *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia,* 2000: 350.

32 Luga, *Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao, Philippines*, 53–54.

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35 *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia*, 2014: 477.

36 Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation," 6, Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines"; Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling," 10–11.

37 Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism,* 9; Audrey Cronin, *Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, Congressional Research Service, RL32223, October 2004, 4.

38 *East Asian Strategic Review, 2006, Chapter 1,* The National Institute for Defense Studies Japan, 20: http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/east-asian/e2006.html

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40 *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia* 2014: 558–561.

41 Freedman, *Islamic Extremism in Southeast Asia*, 271; Jimmy D. Larida, *Isolating the Terrorists: The Abu Sayyaf Case Study* (master's thesis, Marine Corps University, 2011), 9–10.

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44 Radics, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia," 117–124; Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines," 20–21.

45 Radics, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia," 117–124.

46 Marco Garrido, "The Evolution of Philippine Muslim Insurgency," *Asia Times Online*, 6 March 2003; Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation," 8–9.

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48 Robert F. Trager and Dessislava P. Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2006): 119; Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines," 21–23.

49 *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*, 2014: 478–486.

50 Ibid.: 485–486.

51 See Luga, *Muslim Insurgency in Mindanao*, 75; Abuza, *Balik-Terrorism*, 14-18; Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 22.

52 Cohn, *Countering the Lingering Threat of the Abu Sayyaf Group*, 45–46.

53 Chido, *Intel Brief: The Abu Sayyaf Model.*

54 *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, Southeast Asia*, 2014: 484–485.

55 Ibid., 480.

56 Ibid., 484–485.

57 Ibid., 478–486.

58 Ibid., 482.

59 Trager and Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism," 116-117; Rita Camilleri, "Muslim Insurgency in Thailand and the Philippines: Implications for Malaysia's Cross-Border Diplomacy," *UNEAC Asia Papers*, no. 27 (Special Issue, September 2008): 77: http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/10530/20081020-0006/www.une.edu.au/asiacenter/No27.pdf

60 Trager and Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism," 117-118.

61 Freedman, "Islamic Extremism in Southeast Asia," 270.

62 *East Asian Strategic Review, 2008, Chapter 4*, 118.

63 The term *Bangsamoro* refers to Filipino Muslims. The Bangsomoro Autonomous Region of Mindanao has the largest Muslim population in the Philippine archipelago. Rosemarie Francisco and Manuel Mogato, "Philippines, Muslim Rebels Sign Final Peace Deal to End Conflict," *Reuters*, 28 March 2014: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-rebels/philippines-muslim-rebels-sign-final-peace-deal-to-end-conflict-idUSBREA2Q1W220140327

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72 IHS Jane's Defence Weekly, "AFP Activates Unified Special Operations Command," 12 April 2018, http://www.janes.com/article/79225/afp-activates-unified-special-operations-command

73 Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, *Pro-ISIS Groups in Mindanao and their Links to Indonesia And Malaysia,* IPAC Report no. 33, 25 October 2016: 21.

74 Ibid., 20–21.

75 As such, this is different from Schelling's emphasis on the concept of tacit bargaining and communication—for instance, suggestion

76 Garrido, "The Evolution of Philippine Muslim Insurgency." In hindsight, a similar US approach that did not overtly designate al Qaeda a global terrorist organization might have lessened the group's efficacy.

77 Daniel L. Byman, "Friends Like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terror," *International Security,* 31, no. 2 (2006): 109–112.

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79 Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia,* 204–205.

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81 A US presence abroad can promote the spread of extremist ideologies. Trager and Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism," 120. See also Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005); Eland, "It's What We Do"; and *East Asian Strategic Review, 2007, Chapter* 2, 51–56.

82 Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation," 7–10.

83 A June 2002 operation provides a good example of the role the US military plays in combating terrorism in the Philippines. A senior Abu Sayyaf leader had been under surveillance by US special forces for weeks, and a transponder was planted in the foam padding of his backpack. US personnel used an airborne laser designator to direct a Philippine patrol boat, manned by AFP soldiers who were equipped with US-supplied night-vision goggles, to the rebel location, where they killed the rebel leader. Cohn, *Countering the Lingering Threat of the Abu Sayyaf Group,* 37–38.

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85 For a detailed account of how these problems can be met, see Trager and Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism," 91–111.

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89 Matthew Kroenig and Barry Pavel, "How to Deter Terrorism," *Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2012): 26–27.

90 Cohn, *Countering the Lingering Threat of the Abu Sayyaf Group,* 39.

91 Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation," 10.

92 Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Coercive Diplomacy," in *Contemporary Security Studies,* ed. Allan Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 227–229; Wilner, "Deterring the Undeterrable," 5–8.

93 Benedict Kerkvliet even debates whether the Muslim and communist insurgencies should be branded as social justice insurgencies. He finds that their basic causes are not Muslim or communist secessionism, but rather economic and political marginalization, physical insecurity, threatened identity, and people's perception that the government is responsible for these conditions. Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "A Different View of Insurgencies," HDN Discussion Paper Series, Human Development Network, No. 5, 2010, 3–6: https://www.scribd.com/document/186933462/A-Different-View-of-Insurgencies

94 See also Trager and Zagorcheva, "Deterring Terrorism," 112-113.

and signals—which can also have a powerful influence on the outcome of a strategy. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict,* 53–80.

The Localization Strategy: Strategic Sense for Special Operations Forces in Niger

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In early 2018, President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger gave Colonel Major Moussa Salaou Barmou, the director of Niger's *Commandement des Operations Spéciales* (Dir COS—Special Operations Command) the tremendous task of setting up 12 *Bataillons Spéciaux d'Intervention* (BSI) over five years.[1] At this time, troops from a number of Western partner nations were already training, advising, and assisting the Nigerien armed forces at various levels, but each partner nation had its own bilateral agreements with Niger and there was little synchronization or standardization among them. SOF from the United States, Canada, Belgium, Germany, and Italy set up an informal multinational "fusion cell" in the capital city of Niamey, and this group began to work together with COL MAJ Barmou to assist in the SOF force generation project.

The approach that the group developed and utilized is a sovereign, horizontal, agile model based on empowerment and trust, that is guided by a unified strategic vision called the Localization Strategy (LS). This strategy, which will be described in further detail below, had been in development since 2015, but had never been used at a tactical level. The resulting command structure, which is based on bilateral agreements with a number of partner countries, avoids the common shortfalls of formal coalitions and maximizes the individual strengths of each partner.[2] This approach may provide a blueprint for future SOF operations in fragile or failing states, and may be worth exporting throughout the wider Sahel region from Chad to Mauritania, where it could stimulate the resilience of security forces by reinforcing a shared strategic purpose.

The LS takes a deep look into fragile and/or instable social systems to find ways to invigorate and enhance the existing social fabric—building endemic resilience—while avoiding actions that might further weaken it. Resilience is not the same as stability. Stability implies balance in the present environment, while resilience implies balance in the *forecasted* environment. The term "forecasted" is used here deliberately to reflect the intrinsic unpredictability of the future. Resilience involves bolstering the bounce-back capabilities of a stressed social system, which is predominately a matter of reorienting people's minds by stimulating new ways of thinking, acting, and reacting. This is not to say that the material environment is irrelevant; it is to say that material resources are too often squandered without first developing the necessary social structures that allow for a deep and enduring impact.

Background

In late 2017, the Belgian Special Forces Group (SF Group) arrived in Niger to carry out a standard military assistance mission of building partner capacity. The only particularity of this mission was that it would utilize the Localization Strategy; in other words, Niger would be a testing ground for a strategy that was designed to generate systemic resilience through long term-thinking and the application of a series of sequenced principles.

> Localization Strategy takes a **deep look** into fragile and/or instable social systems to find ways to **invigorate** and enhance the **existing** social fabric.

The Life Saving Kit, which was developed by the Belgian SF Gp in coordination with Nigerien and French staff working in the *École du Personnel Paramédical des armées de Niamey*, offers a concrete and simple example of the underlying philosophy of the SOF force generation project that Niger's government has initiated with international partners. These kits will become the standard Nigerien army Individual First Aid Kits, and will be used by the police, fire department, and gendarmerie as well as the army.

The kits are made in the markets of Niamey, the capital city, with locally available material. The leather (first generation, top of photo on left) or synthetic (second generation, top of photo on right) pouches have "Made in Niger" printed on them in French, Hausa, or Zarma. The kits include two "Louna" bandages and two "Sahel" tourniquets, and a triangular bandage (not shown). A 16-hour *Sauvtage au Combat* (SaC—Combat Rescue) medical course, and instruction videos that include a full-continuum-of-care excerpt made specifically for Nigerien soldiers, feature the tailored Life Saving Kit and the local environment: role-players, hospitals, clinics, ambulances, stretchers, and so on. The indigenously designed Life Saving Kit can be made, bought, and adapted by the Nigeriens themselves, a practical step to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers and enhance the Nigerien military's systemic resilience. The instruction videos and SaC course have dropped the acronym-based naming protocol (e.g., ABC–airway, breathing, circulation and MAR–massive bleeding, airway, and respiration) in favor of numbers (1–5). Given the many regional languages in Niger, this numbering protocol eliminates the difficulty of making universally understood acronyms and builds on the fact that most Nigeriens are able to count in several regional languages.

Arriving in theatre, the Belgian team quickly connected with the US Army Special Forces through the US Special Operations Forces Liaison Element (SOFLE) and Advanced Operating Base. Through this informal partnership, Belgian and US personnel worked closely with Dir COS Barmou to help stand up the 12 BSI President Issoufou had called for. The plan was to equip and train these battalions to be mobile interdiction elements to counter the threat of transient violent extremist groups and the illegal transportation of both goods and people. This mission aligns closely with European countries' interest in countering violent extremism, contraband smuggling, and human trafficking within and from outside Europe.

The Security Challenge in Niger

The land-locked country of Niger has been in the eye of the region's political storms for several years, with winds of violence and instability swirling around its frontiers. Its 5,697 kilometers of border with Burkina Faso, Mali, Algeria, Libya, Chad, Nigeria, and Benin place Niger at a confluence of migration, weapons trafficking, and incursions by armed groups (mainly from Nigeria and Mali in the south). These regional threats are in addition to banditry (predominately in the north), and both inter- and intra-communal conflict spurred by dwindling resources such as water and arable land.[3] Despite these difficulties, Niger is not a failing state. Relatively stable

since a 2010 *coup d'état*, it is instead considered to be a stable fragile state, but its government will need to work to overcome the security challenges that the country faces at the crossroads of the region's most violent conflicts.

The Nigerien government has become a major partner with both African and other countries in developing counterterrorism strategies. It is currently engaged in what might be the world's largest force generation project involving special operations.[4] This project, which will be discussed in further detail below, has provided an exceptional opportunity to develop a strategic approach to special operations that considers complexity, systemic resilience, and ends, ways, and means that are tailored to the local context.

Developing Niger's SOF Capabilities

Until recently, each of Niger's international partners had its own bilateral agreement with the Nigerien government, which meant that there was never any formal structure in place through which these different entities could cooperate. For years, each SOF partner has been training Nigerien forces using its own manuals and techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs). In Diffa, for example, the Belgian SF Group trained elements of the 61st BSI in marksmanship, navigation, small unit tactics, and so on, using methods that were different from those used by

Canadian and US SOF when they had previously trained the same battalion. In the realm of materiel, the Individual First Aid Kit (IFAK) illustrates the lack of any formal system of cooperation (figure 1).

Each partner nation also taught the medics' course somewhat differently, using its own acronyms, order of protocols, techniques, and materials. Furthermore, the kits that soldiers received from one of these partners would be useful for only a few months at best, because there was no Nigerien resupply system in place. Oftentimes, soldiers would simply avoid opening their IFAKs because the kits were considered to be a status symbol or a kind of fashion item that only the few and lucky could wear. It goes without saying that this lack of coordination did little to raise the overall readiness level of the *Forces Armées Nigeriennes* (FAN, Nigerien Armed Forces). Furthermore, the training and materials ignored the Nigerien ways and means of doing things, and demonstrated a certain lack of thought on the part of the partner forces.

Setting up the Fusion Cell

The new LS-based mission to support Niger's force generation project took a different and unique approach. Niger's international SOF partners came together informally in what they termed a "fusion cell" with the intention of combining their bilateral efforts and designing a strategic map that is both resilient and fully "Nigerienized." The ideas that come out of this group are first discussed within the group and then presented to the Dir COS, who amends and incorporates them into a consolidated plan.

Fusion cell participants quickly determined that the first step toward a coordinated system would be to develop a standardized program of instruction along with detailed TTP manuals.[5] Dir COS Barmou and the Director of the *Commandement des Organismes de Formation des Forces Armées Nigériennes* (Dir COFFAN; COFFAN is analogous to the US Training and Doctrine Command) agreed that this program would consist of 11 modules that constitute the technical phase of an initial qualification course (Q-course) for BSI soldiers and cadres.[6] A follow-on six- to eight-week program at the planned SOF training center in Arlit will qualify these battalions as SOF. The technical phase of training will take seven weeks, including one week of specialty training, and will be followed by another seven-week-long tactical phase that will focus on company-level

mission tasks carefully selected with the advice of former BSI and *Compagnies Spéciales d'Intervention* (CSI) commanders. These mission tasks will be specific to Niger's geography and demographics, and to the distinctive combination of asymmetric threats that the country faces. The focus on essential mission tasks will allow the Q-course to be completed within the timeframe specified by the Dir COS.

The Localization Strategy: Stimulating Systemic Resilience

The Belgian SF Group was directed by Brussels to utilize the Localization Strategy in its mission to support Niger's force generation project. Designed to enhance the resilience of unstable social systems, the LS is a rather elaborate strategy that uses creativity and imagination to tailor plans that are specific to the problem set faced by local security forces. It is typified by connectedness and complexity, and asks a basic question at every decision point: Will this act or plan enhance resilience in the overall system? Simply stated, the LS is a full-spectrum way of thinking about security, with long-term local resiliency as its ultimate objective. The Belgian SF Group communicated this vision of resiliency and reliance on indigenous strength to its partners from the beginning. The other nations adopted the LS's logic and gave it their full support.

> The LS is a full-spectrum way of thinking about security, with long-term local resiliency as its ultimate objective.

The LS is based on four underlying principles: locally adapted strategies/approaches, less reliance on authority, minimalism as a way to inspire creative thinking, and a constant clear purpose of stimulating psycho-social and structural (i.e., organizational) resilience.[7]

Localization

The available *means* with which the LS is established are essentially immaterial, in the sense that the strategy will make use of whatever means are there to be used, such as equipment, methods, perceptions, and so on.[8] They are determined by conducting a thorough *etic* and *emic* analysis of the local human domain, which encompasses everything that influences human behavior. Understanding the human domain helps to generate the creativity and imagination necessary for security forces to navigate and maneuver in a volatile, uncertain, and ambiguous conflict ecosystem. In countries like Niger, European and US assumptions of reality must be recognized as a possible source of distortion. Strategic planners should consider the

value of both minimalism as a way to stimulate resourcefulness while avoiding intrusiveness, and complexity as a way to encourage adaptability.[9] Minimalism and complexity are important building blocks of societal resilience because they help planners adapt the insights gained from the human domain to the volatile nature of modern conflicts and confrontations.

The LS rests on six pillars: local strengths, relationships, positive behavior modification, problem solving, resourcefulness, and local networks (see figure 2). Developing these human resources helps to increase the resilience of a social system, regardless of whether that system is fragile to begin with. The *ways* to develop indigenous resilience come from identifying and seizing opportunities that were generated by the human domain analysis and then strengthening as many of the six pillars as possible.[10]

Harvest local strengths and skills. These resources develop in a society over time as a result of the ways in which the society interacts with its physical environment. They involve symbiotic survival skills and localized knowledge, and can be used to facilitate coping and recovery in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment.

Strengthen local and regional relationships. This can be done by identifying social networks, prominent community influencers, strategically prominent groups, perceptions of legitimacy, and building on themes and messages that resonate with the population. Relationships are the key to overcoming destabilization. Local leaders and communities can be linked through programs and activities that are mutually aligning and mutually beneficial, and that can be used to enhance confidence and self-esteem. As analyst Joshua Cooper Ramo put it, "If we are dealing with a system profoundly affected by changes external to it, and continually confronted by the unexpected, the constancy of its behavior becomes less important than the persistence of relationships."[11]

Promote positive behavioral adaptation. Teaching groups new ways of dealing with adversity can increase their "anti-fragility."[12] For example, instead of following attacks with reactive violence and upheaval, trained security forces and less volatile societies will be able to produce a rapid reorganization that strengthens vulnerabilities exposed by the attack. Positive behavioral adaptation also promotes a sense of self-efficacy. According to psychologist Albert Bandura, this is important because "people's beliefs in their efficacy play a paramount role in how well they organize, create, and manage the circumstances that affect their life course."[13] Leadership training is an important component of societal hardiness, and can be the glue that holds traumatized societies together when the assistance forces eventually leave. Understanding the power of beliefs is also critical. By offering a framework from which to draw meaning and answer the "why" questions of life, a common religion or set of spiritual beliefs can greatly enhance a society's ability to bounce back and overcome hardship.

> In countries like Niger, European and US assumptions of reality must be recognized as a possible source of distortion.

Figure 2: The Six Pillars of the Resilience Temple

One way to visualize LS is through the analogy of a temple, in which resilience is built on a number of pillars that stand on a base of minimalism, complexity, and the human domain. The analogy works its way from the *means*, which are at the base and which create the potential, through the *ways*, which identify and seize opportunities, to the *ends*, which are the desired outcomes—in this case, resilience.
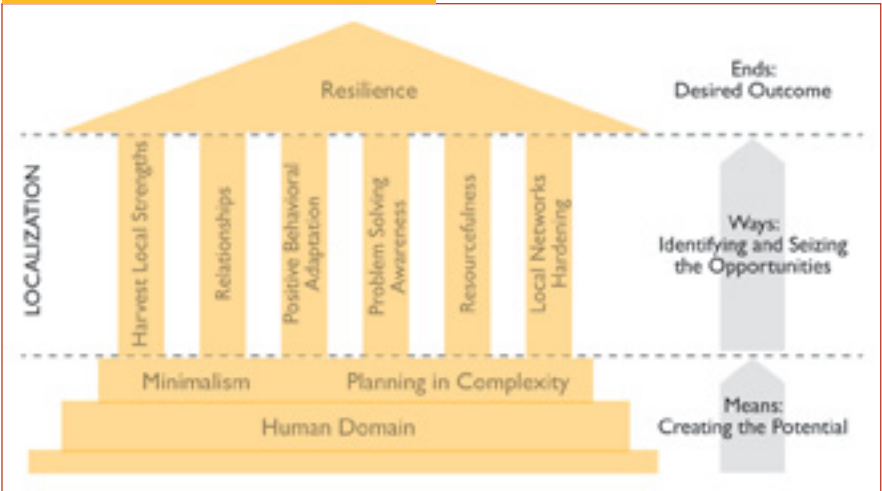
Enhance problem-solving awareness. Such awareness allows impulses and feelings to be managed, and places regional conflicts within a larger picture. Some people are able to see problems—and solutions—only through their own eyes and need to be taught how to understand an event on different levels at the same time. If an actor uses force in a way that complies with its notions of justice, such as following a local tribal code, but offends observers' or supporters' assumptions about justice, then that actor will lose legitimacy. In war—especially in these days of constant media attention—everyone must consider how the media (or allies, or partners, or neighbors) will decide to frame actions and reactions. Problem-solving awareness utilizes reason, emotion, and especially morality in warfare to strengthen local and international legitimacy.[14]

Increase resourcefulness. Sustainability can be cultivated by demonstrating and practicing resourcefulness, particularly since complex systems can be very sensitive to inputs, including new technologies, goods, money, and ideas. Resourcefulness can both reduce the partner nation's dependency on outside help and counteract the defeatist attitudes that can arise from a perceived lack of the "right" resources. By cultivating an adaptive mindset, a society becomes less susceptible to the intrusion of foreign ideas and assumptions.

Harden local networks. This involves identifying the vulnerabilities of networks to a wide range of possible future disruptions, "paying particular attention to the interfaces between networks, the boundaries between organizational responsibilities, and the connections with the public being served by these services."[15] What are the societal, economic, and political connection points that allow for formal and informal "flow" (as defined by counterterrorism expert David Kilcullen in his book *Out of the Mountains*)?[16] It is vital to consider the potential vulnerabilities and opportunities in cyber, telecommunications, and other critical infrastructure, and take steps to reinforce them where needed.
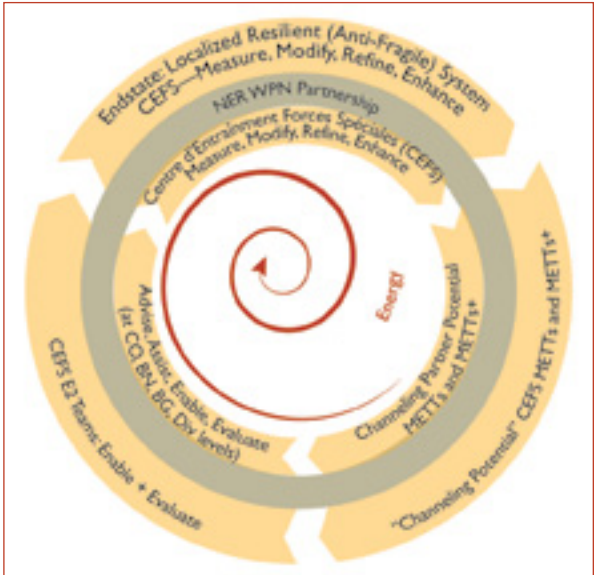
These six pillars should be understood as guiding principles that will provide what could be called "on-the-ground strategic direction" (or what the Belgian SF Group refers to as "strategic-tactics") to assistance or intervention forces. Fleshing out each of these principles and determining how they can become actionable depends largely on the information provided by the human domain analysis and an abundance of creativity and imagination.

The ECARe Cycle: A Long-Term, Localized Resilience Model for Niger's SOF Force Generation Project

ECARe stands for Enhance, Channel, Assist, and Refine, and refers to the entire process of planning, training, and institutionalizing a Nigerien special forces capability. The ECARe Cycle (see figure 3) has three parts: (1) Channelling Partner Potential (CPP)—the phase where Mobile Education and Training Teams (METTs) come into play; (2) Advise, Assist, Enable, and Evaluate teams (A2E2), which work with partner forces at all levels from companies to divisions; and (3) the SOF training center, *Le Centre d'Entrainement Forces Spéciales* (CEFS), which is responsible for, among other things, measuring, modifying, refining, and enhancing the lessons identified from the A2E2 teams' evaluations. The CEFS will then modify

> **Leadership training is an important component of societal hardiness, and can be the glue that holds traumatized societies together.**

Figure 3: The ECARe Cycle

the program of instruction and course lessons so that they rapidly feed back into the ECARe Cycle. Tight feedback loops are critical for a resilient system in a complex environment, because constant change requires constant re-evaluation. The goal of the ECARe model is to create a training system designed for rapid adaptation. These three aspects of the ECARe Cycle merge into one another in a continuous forward flow of learning, developing, and evaluating that is guided by a collective strategic purpose. The circular energy of the model generates its own momentum, and at some point Western partner support will no longer be necessary to maintain the system. Sustainable self-sufficiency is what will define strategic victory for the development of Nigerien SOF. The first iteration of this cycle as it encounters the reality of the Nigerien environment will likely be a grinding process with unforeseen frictions at each step. An adaptive mindset will be necessary for all concerned. Enough momentum or energy flow will eventually allow this conceptual system to overcome unforeseen obstacles and enable its users to adapt rapidly to a protean enemy.

Part 1: Channeling Partner Potential

CPP is most often referred to by partner forces as Building Partner Capacity (BPC). The change in terminology to CPP is quite deliberate. Philosophically, it reflects the spirit of the Localization Strategy.[17] The term "building capacity" reinforces the idea that the partner nations are extending a hand down to the African partner and building the partner up from an inherently inferior position. This language carries a certain condescension, however unintentional it might be, and may reflect an unconscious bias.[18]

Additionally, the change in terminology encourages reflection on the deeper meaning of the terms and emphasizes certain nuances with significant implications, especially regarding attitudes. CPP is conceptually about stimulating resilience, which implies that partners should plan this training with a "working myself out of a job" mindset, taking advantage of material, ideas, and methods that are native to the environment and therefore self-sustaining and whose source is locally dependable. It involves earmarking Nigerien cadres who excel at teaching and training, and using Nigerien ways and means. If the means need to be modified, they should use locally available material that is cost-effective, like the Life Saving Kit (see figure 1 above), which was designed in the artisan markets of Niamey and uses materials found throughout the country.

The ECARe Cycle is about increasing the energy in the Nigerien SOF training system to overcome friction and reach critical mass so that the system becomes self-sustaining. CCP is about finding the existing energy within the host force's structure and channelling it—making the coordination and processes between the three parts of the cycle as fluid as possible. The energy is provided by each part as it works with the others to create a continuous loop. Keeping the energy moving and building will be the primary responsibility of the CEFS (see figure 3). The potential is already there; it is only a matter of finding it, understanding it, and learning how to channel it in the most effective way.

Part 2: Advise, Assist, Enable, and Evaluate Teams

The only way for the new Nigerien SOF teams to gain useful measures of effectiveness following their training in the ECARe Cycle is to be present and assist

> **Tight feedback loops** are critical for a resilient system in a complex environment, because constant **change** requires constant **re-evaluation.**

when "the rubber hits the road" in actual CT and counterinsurgency operations. The A2E2 teams will deploy with the companies trained by the METT and assess whether the tactical skills taught by the METT are optimal in the reality of combat. The A2E2 teams will communicate any shortfalls and gaps they identify to the CEFS staff, who will modify and refine the programs of instruction and tactical course manuals. These adapted programs and course manuals will then be sent to the METT so that the lessons identified can be added to the training and education. The A2E2 teams thus allow continuity in the ECARe Cycle while also providing enabling capabilities to the Nigerien forces, such as drones, explosive ordnance disposal specialists, electronic warfare and psyops specialists, and joint tactical air controllers. For the first two years or so, the METT, A2E2 teams, and the faculty at the CEFS will be staffed primarily by partner nations, which will become less and less involved over time. The role of the partner A2E2 team should eventually be taken over by a host nation E2 team, as shown in the outside circle of figure 3.

It is important that SOF partner forces show genuine commitment in assisting the Nigeriens as they face the reality of combat and war. Genuine commitment goes beyond helping when it is safe to do so, especially when partner nations' own security concerns are involved; it means standing beside your partners, not behind them, when things get "real." Doing so demonstrates trust and political support in a region with significant strategic importance, amidst illicit migration, trafficking, desertification, fragile states with exploding demographics, and tenuous institutions.

Part 3: *Le Centre d'Entrainement Forces Spéciales* (CEFS)/SOF Training Center

In 2019, thanks to a generous grant from Germany, the physical construction of this SOF training center will begin. It will be located in the city of Arlit, in the north-central region of Niger. CEFS will become central to the ECARe Cycle, as it assumes responsibility for, among other things, modifying and enhancing the evaluations from the partner A2E2 teams, and later, from the Nigerien E2 teams that will take their place.

CEFS will also eventually host CSIs for six- to eight-week training programs on fires and maneuvers. These programs will keep the CSIs' training up to the required level and allow them to remain certified as SOF-capable companies. After the initial Q-course delivered by the METTs with the standardized POIs and course manuals, the CSIs will be deployed without being fully qualified SOF units. Once the CEFS is up and running, these established CSIs will complete the Center's six- to eight-week program and become fully qualified SOF companies and battalions. Thus, CEFS will be both an institution for learning and refining SOF studies, in close cooperation with the COFFAN, and a training center for all future CSIs.

One final point needs to be made about the ECARe Cycle. The process assumes that partner nations will gradually phase themselves out as the host nation takes ownership of the entire cycle. The Belgian SF Group sees an ongoing level of involvement for itself vis-à-vis the Special Forces paracommandos throughout the cycle.

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> The ECARe Cycle assumes that partner nations will gradually **phase themselves out** as the host nation **takes ownership** of the entire cycle.

Ambition: Applications and Benefits Beyond Niger

The Dir COFFAN has been highly supportive of this project because it addresses general training standardization, which is something he has identified as a chronic shortfall in the Nigerien military. Because more that 80 percent of Niger's armed forces are deployed at any given time, FAN cannot afford to maintain a permanent cell of instructors, and so must often rely on ad hoc instructors who work with modules provided by partner nations. The Localization Strategy utilized by the Belgian SF Group relies strongly on solutions that are tailored with local energy and logic. Accordingly, the course manuals are produced with enough detail that any cadre, with or without background experience, will be able to deliver the standardized training. The manuals, which were approved by the Dir COS with the support of the Dir COFFAN, all have the same layout and structure, and their associated photos and videos show Nigerien soldiers using Nigerien materials. The content and terminology of the manuals have been crosschecked with existing Nigerien TTPs to ensure that there is synchronization between the old materials and the new.[19]

Once this LS model demonstrates success in Niger, it can be gradually exported to the wider Sahel belt from Mauritania to Chad, beginning with Burkina Faso. Each of these countries could stand up specially tasked units responsible for countering the threat of violent extremist organizations and the illegal transportation of substances and people. These battalions or units could be trained over a 14-week period using the same standardized qualification course used in Niger. If the 11 POIs and course manuals that have been developed for Niger were adopted throughout the region, this would also serve to enhance regional interoperability for both the host nations and their partners. Governments could establish security zones within their borders while partner nations establish SOF Liaison Elements in central locations to coordinate and liaise simultaneously with their hosts and other partners. Each partner nation could make bilateral arrangements directly with and under the guidance of the host nation, keeping command horizontal. Figure 4 shows prospective SOFLE sites in Niger (the large black dots) and the security zones (the green shaded areas) that would ultimately be covered by the teams that are training and/or assisting the local security forces. The smaller black dots represent zonal outposts of the Special Operations Task Units.

Figure 4: Map of the Sahel Region, with Proposed SOF Liaison Elements and Security Zones
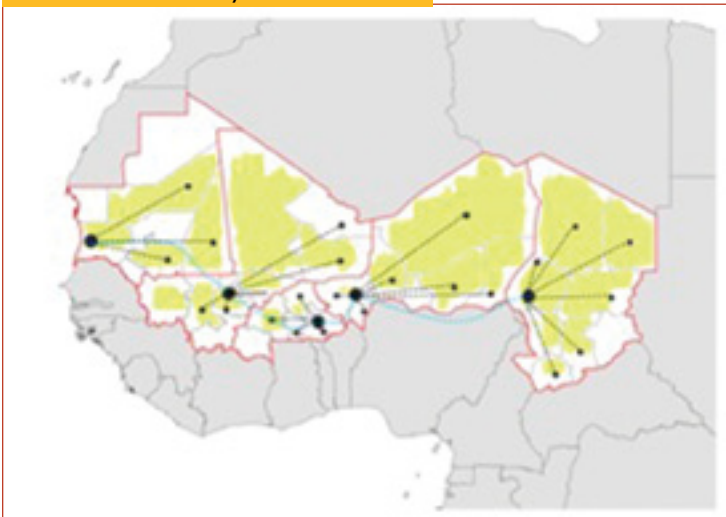
This model would greatly enhance flexibility. One partner nation's limitations or restrictions would not necessarily dictate the terms of the partnership, because another nation with fewer or different restrictions could step forward as necessary. Such an informal coordinated SOF effort would maximize strengths, and the host nations could support it from various angles, as is currently the case in Niger. The partnerships' bilateral nature means that every partner nation would continue to be engaged directly with the host nation, which would potentially bring out more ideas and perspectives through coordination meetings between the SOFLE and the host nation. This horizontal cooperation should circumvent the vertical command structures that often accompany formal

coalitions, and thus avoid those layers of control and authority that can slow down decision-making and lessen agility.

Such a model involves a change in vision that replaces the notion of Command and Control with Coordinate and Communicate. The members of the informal coalition currently working on the SOF force generation project in Niger have been able to work together and support each other with a common purpose without being subject to command and control from a distant and complicated organizational mechanism. In this model, the strengths of all parties within the coalition can be more fully utilized.
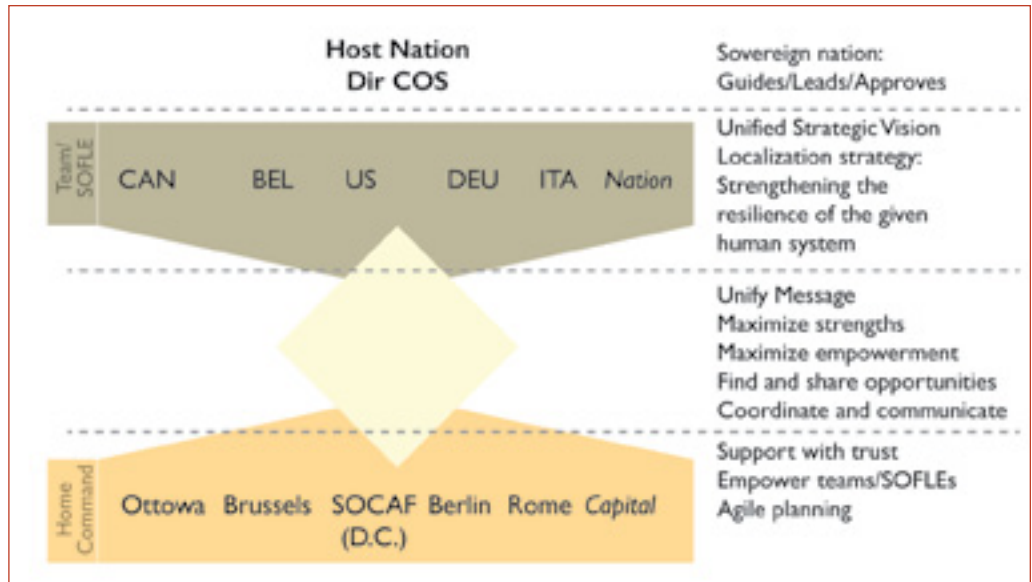
Figure 5: Structure Utilized by the Current Fusion Cell in Niger

The new structure that results from the Coordinate and Communicate model is depicted in figure 5. It inverts the typical command organization that formal coalitions often create, which envisions the lead nation—often a partner nation—on top, the other partner nation capitals below that, SOF or SOFLE teams below them, and finally, at the bottom, the host nation's command structure. Although this traditional structure provides for coordination with the host nation at various levels, the model depicted in Figure 5 turns tradition on its head. In the case of Niger, it is the Dir COS who is giving direction and the teams that are providing further momentum. Willing partner countries then provide the support the Nigerien forces need to maximize this momentum. This process is carried out with a clear and unified strategic vision to stimulate local resilience in a non-intrusive way so that the social system within the host country can confront and overcome both known and unknown obstacles and threats.

We know from experience that development and institutional resilience can flourish only if there is a safe and secure environment for them to take root in. Security is the first step to development. The Localization Strategy has many similarities to practices in the development sector, with its population centricity, its resilience-generating strategic tactics, and its non-intrusive/non-authoritarian methodology. The entire Sahel region would benefit from the harmonious civil-military approach and vision offered by the Localization Strategy. ◈

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

1. Several *Compagnies Spéciales d'Intervention* (CSI) had already been trained and equipped by WPNs before the presidential order. These have provided a basic structure with which to facilitate growth and reinforcement. SOF who have worked with the Nigeriens in the past have made note of their unusual strength of character and mind.

2. For example, one nation may have many assets but little political will to deploy them, while another is willing to act but lacks the necessary assets to be effective. Another nation may be willing to provide a surgical capability, but is unwilling to deploy mobile education and training teams. The result of the multilateral approach in Niger has meant that one partner's limitations or restrictions do not become every nation's limitations or restrictions, as is often the case with lead-nation coalitions.

3. Savannah de Tessières, *At the Crossroads of Sahelian Conflicts: Insecurity, Terrorism and Arms Trafficking in Niger* (Geneva, Switzerland: Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2018): 14.

4. The term "SOF" as a highly capable and equipped fighting force must be understood within the context of the host nation, where SOF units may face limitations in time, equipment, and institutional support.

5. The standardization of POIs and course content means that adaptations can be made efficiently and systematically throughout the whole system. The standardized course manuals each have a caption in the top right corner of the first page with an edition number and revision number so that *Le Centre d'Entrainement Forces Spéciales* SOF training center can easily communicate modifications by referencing edition or revision numbers.

6. These 11 modules are marksmanship, navigation, close quarter combat, countering improvised explosive devices, small unit tactics, mobility, communications, asymmetric warfare, planning and leadership, combat first aid, and close combat and physical training.

7. Minimalism is a key component in the LS formula. It is predicated on the idea that if you have less, you will think more, and is, at base, about inspiring the kind of thinking that will generate resilience. Generally, people who lack physical resources tend to think in creative and imaginative ways. Those with little authority are obligated to understand the human environment better and to develop the skills and knowledge that will allow them to navigate and maneuver in that environment. Such knowledge allows one to identify and seize opportunities.

8. The Localization Strategy does not rely on material assets to be effective. If, for example, the Belgian government decided to give the SOF Group very little material/money, the team would still be able to use the strategy effectively by working with the local forces to enhance their psychological strength and agility.

Material means can enhance effectiveness if properly used, but they are not absolutely necessary to make a difference.

9. When a partner cohort comes into a host country "light"— without a lot of stuff to use and share—both the partner and the host have to rely on a different way of thinking, one that depends less on what the partner has and more on what the host has.

10. These include perceptions of reality, informal governance structures, chosen tribal traumas and tribal glories, sources of communal institutional resilience, and so on. James J. F. Forest, "Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria," JSOU Report 12-5 (May 2012): 118.

11. Joshua Cooper Ramo, *The Age of the Unthinkable* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2009), 176.

12. As defined by Nassim Taleb, fragility is *sensitivity to disorder*. See Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan* (New York: Random House, 2010).

13. Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 35.

14. Emile Simpson, *War From the Ground Up: 21st Century Politics as Combat* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 188. The author speaks of the Aristotelian notions of using the logos, pathos, and ethos to be persuasive in rhetoric.

15. David Omand, *Securing the State* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 2010), 77.

16. David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 2013).

17. In the author's experience, BPC has lacked strategic purpose, at least from a tactical perspective. CPP is an example of how the LS turns what are simply tactics into *strategic-tactics*. It asks, "How can what I am doing even at the lowest level be guided by an overall purpose?" Even the manner in which a course is given should align with the principles of the LS, focusing on whether the content and method will stimulate local resilience in the long term.

18. In a world that is essentially forced to Westernize in order to modernize, there can be an ultrasensitivity to Western attitudes. See Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).

19. For example, the Close Quarter Combat course manual was tested on a platoon of officers in their second year at the officer school in Tondibiah. These officers were given the draft manual and lesson sheets, and told to teach the information to their colleagues on the following day. The feedback from this test was positive, including many compliments from the director of the school, who declared that this was an excellent method of learning and instruction for his officers. He expressed the hope that he will have access to all our modules in the near future.

The Development of a Special Operations Command for Japan

Ryota Akiba

In 2014, the cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe determined that the Japanese government would develop what it called the Seamless Security Legislation (SSL; 切れ目のない安全保障法制), to ensure the future survival of Japan and its people.[1] This legislation filled a gap in the existing Self Defense Law by providing the necessary authorization for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to "seamlessly" fulfill an evolving set of roles and missions. The following year, the prime minster and his Liberal Democratic Party promoted their New Security Legislation (NSL; 平和安全法制), which the National Diet then signed into law.[2] Among other provisions, the NSL expands the role of the JSDF in conducting rescue operations for Japanese nationals, allied forces, and partner workers on foreign soil.[3] During the 2017 Cobra Gold multinational military exercises, the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force demonstrated rescue and escort capabilities developed as a result of the NSL's mandate.[4] The question remains, however: Why does the JSDF need such an expansion of its roles and missions?

The immediate answer is that the JSDF lacks a special operations capability, and the reason for this can be found in Japan's postwar history. The precursor to the JSDF, the National Police Reserve (NPR), was established in 1950 at the request of the Allied Command's General Headquarters to preserve public safety and security after a large part of US occupation forces in Japan was transferred to the Korea front. Its units initially functioned as subordinate paramilitary assets of the regular police force. In 1954, the post-occupation Self-Defense Force Law (SDFL; 自衛隊法) reorganized the NPR into the JSDF, whose roles and missions were and remain delineated by what is known as a "positive list" approach: the JSDF may not acquire or undertake activities that are not specifically outlined in law.[5] Conventional military forces in most other countries, by contrast, are governed by a "negative list," which means they can in principle do whatever is not specifically prohibited by law. This negative list shapes their doctrine and gives the military leeway to respond to developing situations. Thus, the key difference between the JSDF and other more traditional military forces is a result of Japan's legal framework and underlying military doctrine. Even though the modern security environment has changed since the postwar Japanese constitution and the JSDF were established, the JSDF still works under strict constitutional and legal requirements, and the SDFL must be updated on an ad hoc basis to respond to various emerging and nontraditional threats, such as terrorism. Some JSDF officials complain that because the restrictions in the SDFL limit the JSDF's doctrinal development, capabilities, functions, and standard operating procedures, they interfere with the force's ability to react in a timely manner to emergencies.[6]

Risk Exposure Involving Japanese Nationals Overseas

Terrorism involving Japanese nationals is not new. From the early 1950s until the 1990s, Japan experienced a number of extremist and radical student movements. The Japanese Red Army, a radical communist group that became active in 1971, operated internationally and coordinated closely with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The Japanese Red Army had an expansive

> The **key difference** between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and other more traditional military forces is a result of **Japan's legal framework** and underlying military doctrine.

operational portfolio that included several hijackings for ransom and mass casualty attacks. Those who participated in these operations either defected or surrendered themselves to countries that had not ratified the Hague Hijacking Convention, such as Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Algeria, where they could continue to operate.[7] In the early 1990s, Aum Shinrikyo, an apocalyptic millenarian cult, manufactured and weaponized sarin gas for use in terrorist attacks. The group was responsible for the 1994 Matsumoto attack and the 1995 Tokyo subway attack, both of which used sarin to cause mass deaths and injuries.[8] In 2015, ISIS took two Japanese citizens hostage in Syria and eventually killed them when its demands were not met.

The following three case studies illustrate the risk Japanese nationals face from terrorism when they live and work overseas: the 1977 Japan Airlines Flight 472 hijacking crisis; the 2013 attack at In Amenas, Algeria; and the July 2016 attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Each of these crises involved Japanese nationals being taken hostage by terrorists in complex operational environments. These cases further highlight the need to carefully consider the development of the JSDF to meet the challenges of the contemporary global threat environment.[9]

Japan Airlines Flight 472

Five members of the Japanese Red Army—Osamu Maruoka, Haruo Wako, Norio Sasaki, Kunio Bando, and Jun Nishikawa—hijacked Japan Airlines Flight 472 on 28 September 1977 and took its 137 passengers and 14 crew members hostage in an attempt to coerce the government to release imprisoned comrades. The flight, which departed from France's Charles de Gaulle airport, was diverted from its destination in Tokyo and forced to land in Dhaka, Bangladesh. At the time of the hijacking, the Japanese Red Army had close ties with the PFLP and was supported by Soviet covert operatives, so the hijackers were well-trained, and their operation was well-organized and sophisticated. Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda decided to concede to the hijackers' demands for US $6 million and the release of nine jailed Red Army members to save the hostages' lives.[10] The government organized a group of delegates led by the parliamentary vice-minister of the Ministry of Transportation, Hajime Ishii, and dispatched them to Bangladesh with the task of negotiating and resolving the situation.

Until the Japanese delegation's arrival, Bangladeshi Chief of the Air Staff Abdul Gafoor Mahmud oversaw negotiations with the hijackers. When the delegates arrived, however, the terrorist group refused to negotiate with them.[11] On 2 October, some members of the Bangladeshi military force deployed at the airport tried to take advantage of the situation and seize the ransom that was meant for the release of the hostages. The situation devolved into a firefight

> The Japanese Red Army hijackers were **well-trained, and their operation was well-organized and sophisticated.**

JAPANESE RED ARMY

No. 1 BANDO, Kunio 10.1.1947 (165cm)
No. 2 SASAKI, Norio 27.8.1948 (170cm)
No. 3 MATSUDA, Hisashi 30.8.1948 (173cm)
No. 4 OKUDAIRA, Junzo 9.2.1949 (175cm)
No. 5 DAIDOJI, Ayako 20.10.1948 (162cm)
No. 6 NIHEI, Akira 1.3.1945 (171cm)
No. 7 OKAMOTO, Kozo 7.12.1947 (161cm)

between the army and the rogue forces that encompassed the entire airport. The delegates escaped unscathed despite having no security escorts—they had never expected to get involved in such a situation. During this combat, 11 Bangladeshi military officers lost their lives, but there were no casualties among the delegates or on the hijacked plane. The fighting ended later that day, but the president of Bangladesh ordered the hijacked plane to depart immediately to avoid additional raids from insurgents. The terrorist group released most of the remaining passengers before heading to its final destination in Algeria.

In this case, the terrorist group successfully accomplished its operation, and Japan recovered all the hostages without casualties. Nevertheless, the situation took six days to resolve and cost too many lives. After the incident, the Japanese government sent a special envoy to Dhaka to express Japan's gratitude for the mediation conducted by the Bangladeshi military. The envoy also apologized for the slow government response, which allowed the uprising to develop and led to the loss of 11 Bangladeshi military personnel.[12]

Even in light of this event, Japan did not develop SOF with the capability to operate internationally. The government did, however, create tactical units within the police force known as Special Assault Teams (SAT), based on Germany's Grenzschutzgruppe 9, which could operate domestically to deal with terrorism and hostage situations.[13]

The 2013 In Amenas Hostage Crisis

On 16 January 2013, the al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam (Those Who Sign With Blood Brigade), an al Qaeda-affiliated militant group led by Emir Belmokhtar, attacked and took control of a multinational gas plant located on the In Amenas gas field in the Algerian Sahara.[14] A number of Japanese citizens were among the 132 foreign nationals who appeared to be the attackers' main targets. The Japanese government considered launching a rescue operation, but the Ministry of Defense declined due to the legal restrictions imposed by the SDFL. The hostage situation lasted for four days, until Algerian SOF units were able to recapture the site. Ten Japanese workers and 28 other foreign nationals lost their lives before the final assault that ended the crisis.[15] After this incident, Japan's government expanded the role of the Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas (TJNO; 在外邦人等の輸送) to include the ground transportation of Japanese nationals overseas, but conducting rescue operations abroad was still not part of the government's planning at the time.[16]

Islamic jihadists who attacked the Algerian gas site of Tinguentourine are seen in a photograph taken by an unnamed hostage with his mobile phone on 16 January 2013 at In Amenas, Algeria.

The July 2016 Dhaka Attack

At around 9 pm on 1 July 2016 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, seven men armed with AK-47s and improvised explosive devices stormed into the Holey Artisan Bakery, located in the city's diplomatic mission district, and took as hostages approximately 50 patrons of the café—mostly foreigners, including eight Japanese nationals. According to survivors, the perpetrators treated Muslim customers well while targeting non-Muslims.[17] The eight Japanese hostages, only one of whom survived the attack, were from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, whose mission in Bangladesh was to provide development assistance. In total, 22 lives were taken: nine Italians, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshi police officers, one US citizen, and one Indian. More than 50 people, including Bangladeshi first responders, were injured.[18]

In response to this terrorist attack, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe assembled the National Security Council and dispatched the Emergency Response Team, special members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who are tasked with responding to crisis situations. By this time, legislation in the NSL that allowed the JSDF to conduct rescue operations overseas had already passed the National Diet, yet no JSDF members were dispatched to respond to the situation. The rescue operation was fully directed by Bangladeshi security and military forces. The JSDF only provided the government with an aircraft that was used to transport the victims' bodies and their families back to Japan.

These three cases are useful in examining how Japan's government has responded to such crises, and they suggest how Japan's special operations capabilities—specifically, liaising capability and limited direct-actions—could be used during an overseas hostage situation.

Hybrid Warfare: A Clear and Present Danger

Japan is also at risk of hybrid warfare at home. In late 2017 and early 2018, Japanese media outlets covered stories about a number of wooden North Korean fishing boats that reached the northern coast of Japan. Three North Korean crew members of one such boat, which was eventually confirmed as belonging to Korean People's Army Unit 854, were arrested by Japanese police and convicted of stealing electronic appliances, generators, motorcycles, and other goods worth about US$50,000 from some uninhabited fishing shacks on one island.[19] By December 2017, 83 of these North Korean boats had reached Japan, and such boats continue to arrive on Japanese shores.[20] Most of the boats have been empty, but dead bodies have been found in some of them.

These wooden boats evoke memories of the Japanese citizens taken in a series of raids in the 1970s and 1980s, when North Korean covert operatives penetrated Japanese communities and abducted 17 people.[21] The victims were assigned to educate North Koreans, particularly in Japanese language and culture. It is not impossible to imagine North Korean covert operatives with Japanese language proficiency and cultural intelligence infiltrating modern Japanese society and working to disrupt Japan's political stability by supporting radical movements and even using terrorism. Such instability would provide enough reason for North Korea and other neighboring countries to intervene.

Despite Japan's extensive experience with terrorism, its counterterrorism measures remain underdeveloped. Japan's Self-Defense Forces are struggling to catch up in a new global security environment in which "gray zone" conflict and hybrid warfare have become the norm. The term "gray zone" was introduced by Japan's government to describe the long-running territorial dispute between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands (尖閣諸島) in the East China Sea—a situation that is neither war nor peace.[22] But this term doesn't encompass the complexity of low-intensity conflict and hybrid warfare—more diverse, blended, and multidomain than traditional warfare—that is being experienced by countries and regions around the world.

> **Japan's Self-Defense Forces are struggling to catch up in a new global security environment in which "gray zone" conflict and hybrid warfare have become the norm.**

The *NATO Review* defines hybrid warfare as "a type of warfare widely understood to blend conventional/unconventional, regular/irregular, and information and cyber warfare," exemplified by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.[23] The so-called "little green men"—Russian special operations personnel without insignia who began to appear in Crimea ahead of any official action—apparently coordinated with the Russian military to enlist the support of Crimea's pro-Russia community and destabilize the Crimean government before the main invasion.[24] Their goal was to pave the way for Crimea's annexation by delegitimizing the local government and taking advantage of Ukraine's military weakness, using hybrid warfare tactics, such as false information and cyberspace operations, that are deliberately difficult to identify and counter.

Japan's "gray-zone" is more similar to low-intensity conflict, which the US Army Field Manual describes as "a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states."[25] Japan has given insufficient attention to identifying and analyzing China's operations in the South China Sea, which leverage both the Chinese Coast Guard and fishing fleets to weaken Japan's security short of kinetic warfare. In addition to identifying China's encroachment as a gray-zone conflict, Japan must understand how the situation developed and what means China used to generate it.

Hybrid warfare and gray-zone tactics have emerged as common threats facing nation-states and raise the question: what are the requirements of the SSL and how can they be satisfied? The government needs to expand its knowledge of potential hostile actors to better understand the contemporary threats facing Japanese interests abroad. Some Islamist militant organizations, for example, offer foreign fighters opportunities to learn tactical and operational techniques, the use of weapons, and most importantly, an extremist ideology.[26] A sufficient framework for response must therefore account for the ideological tenets and military capabilities of non-state actors.

The New Security Legislation (平和安保法制)

The term *terrorism* (テロリズム) in the Japanese language is too vague to serve as the basis for a counterterrorism policy. Due to the pacifist ideology prevalent in Japanese society, Japan lacks the kinds of substantial security studies that are key to describing the contemporary security environment and to developing corresponding policies. On 16 May 2016, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released the document, "Japan's Counterterrorism Measures," which articulates the eradication of terrorism.[27] According to US Joint Publication 3-26, *Counterterrorism*, "terrorism is not in and of itself an ideology or a form of war," and thus, "there will never be a complete eradication of terrorism."[28] Without a systematic, clear identification and definition of terrorism, or more precisely, an idea of what it is exactly that the government is working to counter, Japan's counterterrorism measures will continue to fall short. Therefore, Japan needs further discussion and debate regarding the definition, identification, and features of terrorism.

In light of the transformation of the security environment, the Japanese government saw an urgent need to develop relevant security policy that will help ensure the country's safety and security. The emergence of transnational terrorism involving Japanese nationals overseas is one of the conditions that existing security legislation can no longer sufficiently address. The 2015 New Security Legislation (平和安保法制) makes a series of changes that include Article 84-3, "Protection Measures for Japanese Nationals Overseas," which supplements Article 84-4, "Transportation of Japanese Nationals Overseas". Because the JSDF's activities are based on the SDFL, the addition of this legal principle allows the JSDF to conduct rescue, escort, and evacuation operations seamlessly, while previously they could conduct only the non-combat transportation of Japanese nationals overseas. To initiate the protective provisions of the new legislation, the following three requirements must be satisfied:

> In addition to identifying China's encroachment as a gray-zone conflict, Japan must understand how the situation developed and what means China used to generate it.

- In the area of operation, the host nation is responsible for maintaining the country's public safety and order, and for assuring that the JSDF does not encounter a combat situation.
- The host nation agrees that the JSDF may conduct operations to rescue and protect Japanese citizens within the host nation's territory.
- The host nation's authority assures liaison and coordination with the JSDF to mitigate both expected and unexpected risks during the JSDF's operations.

Despite this new legislation, however, there are still no legal countermeasures for hybrid warfare, an issue that the government needs to address.

The development of a special operations command within the JSDF, as this article proposes, offers a viable solution. A Japan Special Operations Command (JP-SOCOM) would be responsible for organizing, training, equipping, deploying, and sustaining the JSDF's special operations capabilities.[29] Within complex security environments, the JP-SOCOM would respond primarily to international crises—including hostage situations, hijackings, and terrain development operations—with the aim to establish connections to key figures on foreign soil by leveraging cultural, social, linguistic, and local familiarity; gaining intelligence; and establishing supportive relationships for future operations. Thus, a JP-SOCOM's mandate should include, at a minimum, liaison, limited direct-action missions, and doctrine development for the JSDF and the Japan Special Operations Forces (JSOF).

The legal framework to meet an international crisis is in place, but Japan's government lacks the assets to satisfy these requirements and respond to uncertain situations overseas. The development of a Japan Special Operations Command capability is vital to fill this gap between the legislation and reality. Such a capability would also serve to defend the Japanese homeland from the threat of hybrid warfare. The following capabilities should be considered necessary for a fully functional JSOF:

> The legal framework to meet an international crisis is in place, but Japan's government lacks the assets to satisfy these requirements and respond to uncertain situations overseas.

I. **Liaising with Foreign Militaries and Law Enforcement**
   Due to the potentially uncertain security and political environments in host nations, members of the JSOF would need to understand the culture, politics, and society of the countries where Japanese citizens are working. Liaising capabilities could be developed prior to any incident through military-to-military diplomacy, providing knowledge that would facilitate the JSOF's ability to coordinate with local military and law enforcement, share intelligence, and conduct a joint operation if needed. JSOF could offer training for the host nation's security forces and provide appropriate education for the local host community on how to combat extreme ideologies, based on the JSDF's experience with international peacekeeping missions. JSOF liaising capabilities are a vital first step toward earning the host nation's trust and cooperation.

   On the domestic side, such liaising capabilities could also facilitate cooperation between Japanese law enforcement and JSOF. Due to the different jurisdictions of Japan's national security and domestic public safety laws, it might not be easy for JSOF to react to domestic

terrorism in the same way that it would operate in a foreign country. The knowledge and experience JSOF personnel might earn in the field, however, would better enable them to assist the domestic law enforcement community and contribute to preserving Japan's public safety and security.

2. **Limited Direct-Action Capabilities: Hostage Rescue, Extraction, and Facility Recovery**

A JSOF should invest a good portion of its time and effort in developing direct-action capabilities for operations overseas. The government of Japan traditionally has respected other countries' sovereignty and fully authorized the host nation to handle any crisis response involving Japanese nationals. As the July 2016 Dhaka crisis made clear, however, not every country is prepared to respond to a highly coordinated terrorist attack. The JSDF has an annual budget of approximately US$49 billion and frequently conducts joint military exercises with other countries, primarily the United States.[30] Why should such capable forces not react to terrorist attacks or work with the host nation's security forces to end a crisis that involves Japanese citizens? Japanese diplomatic outposts have no armed security personnel who can respond to a terrorist attack, as do the US Marines who guard US embassies or the Diplomatic Security Service of the US State Department.

In December 1996, for example, the insurgent group Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) raided the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru and took hundreds of hostages, including 24 Japanese nationals, some of whom were held for 126 days. The Peruvian Navy Special Operations Forces conducted the eventual rescue operation, known as Operation Chavín de Huántar. Despite the slow response in this incident, the death toll was limited compared to more recent attacks by radical militants and insurgents. Current terrorism incidents demand a quick reaction. Embassies and consulates, which are the key outposts of international diplomacy, should not be at risk of terror attacks. Weaknesses in diplomatic communications protocols that leave documents, sources, and exchanges between diplomats open to exploitation may expose two or more countries' vulnerabilities and open their facilities and personnel to terrorism. Additionally, these diplomatic outposts are typically designated as rendezvous points for evacuees in crisis, and therefore must be secure. The Japanese government may not feel comfortable conducting direct actions, particularly military operations, during a crisis situation on foreign soil, but a JSOF that is able to respond to crises overseas is highly desirable, considering the uncertain conditions in some host nations, as well as the speed with which a terrorist incident can unfold.

MRTA rebels in the Japanese ambassador's residence, Peru, 1996

Japan has already developed two JSOF units, the Special Boarding Unit and the Special Operations Group, known as JSOG. The Special Boarding Unit, which is a subunit of the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), was the first special operations force created in the JSDF and was tasked with seizing and boarding North Korean spy ships in the late 1990s. Its missions currently extend to counterpiracy and countertrafficking operations in the maritime domain. The role of the JSOG, which is a subunit of the Ground Self-Defense Force, is to counter attacks by guerillas, insurgents, terrorists, and hostile SOF on Japanese soil. But there are too few JSOF personnel to counter multiple coordinated attacks on Japan's homeland. The Japanese police have the primary responsibility for counterinsurgency operations, but at the same time, they are also tasked with escorting civilians out of danger to safe zones. Domestic law allows the JSDF to mobilize its forces only when the police can no longer respond adequately to a security situation. This division of roles between the forces is very unbalanced; the JSOF should be able to work alongside police forces within the police's jurisdiction in the early stages of an incident.

3. **Doctrine Development Capability for the JSDF and the JSOF**

The ability to formulate doctrine would enable the JSOF to sustain and build on what its personnel and leadership learn from the field. Instead of developing new doctrine to allow the JSDF to operate in nontraditional security environments, however, the government formulated an ad hoc legal framework within the SDFL based on the underlying constitutional restrictions. The JSDF traditionally highlights the tasks and procedures it will use to accomplish its missions within the relevant administrative regulation to ensure that its operations do not violate the SDFL. More importantly, the JSDF cannot operate outside of the provisions of the SDFL, which, as mentioned earlier, delineates what the force is permitted to do, no matter how legitimate or rational any additional actions may be. As a result, force vulnerabilities are exposed to any adversaries with proficiency in the Japanese language and knowledge of the SDFL. The territorial dispute between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands is a critical case in point: knowing the JSDF's operational limitations, China has been able to calculate Japan's legal and responsive capabilities and plan its own operations accordingly. For these reasons, the JSOF must be able to develop a doctrine that supports a creative and innovative force posture.

With a doctrine designed for a range of roles and missions, the JSOF would be able to respond to unexpected situations and crises without having to request and wait for exceptional permission from government leaders. Considering the speed with which terrorist incidents can unfold, a prompt reaction by responders is vital. A new doctrine based on a negative list of roles and missions for the JP-SOCOM would enable the JSOF to respond promptly to terrorist attacks and hostage situations involving Japanese nationals overseas. Such a doctrine would also maximize the ability of JP-SOCOM and JSOF to participate in joint operations, both domestically and internationally, with various service branches and law enforcement bodies. Shared operational standards sustained by this doctrine would enable the JSOF to respond in a consistent way to its allied partners and maximize its operational efficiency in conjunction with allied forces. For these reasons, a doctrinal development capability for JP-SOCOM should be a government priority.

Overcoming Practical Challenges

The United States Special Operations Command (US-SOCOM) has approximately 60,000 personnel, including active duty and reserve personnel, or approximately 4% of the entire 1.46 million active military force.[31] If JP-SOCOM were to comprise a similar 4% of the entire 227,339-strong JSDF, this would mean approximately 10,000 personnel: 5,000 from the Ground Self-Defense Force, 2,500 from the Maritime Self-Defense Force, and 2,500 from the Air Self-Defense Force. Most importantly, the JSDF must meet its mandate to protect the Japanese people and defend Japan's homeland from adversaries. In other words, the JSDF needs to sustain a defensive warfighting posture to maintain the regional power balance in the western Pacific. Having its own special operations command and SOF would both enable the Japanese government to better prepare for international and domestic crises and allow it to consider an active national defense posture.

Because a special operations force requires a warfighting structure, posture, and capabilities that are different from a strictly defensive force, JP-SOCOM would need to develop plans and protocols for special manning, training, equipping, and deployment apart from the conventional forces. Developing and sustaining special operations capabilities also requires a budget that is independent from the budget of JSDF conventional forces. USSOCOM, for example, receives approximately 2% (US$12.3 billion for FY2018) of the entire US defense budget. This allocation enables US SOF to maintain their capabilities and operate independently in 90 countries.[32] Japan's defense budget for FY2018 is approximately US$47 billion; of this total, approximately 4% ($2 billion) would be sufficient to man, train, equip, and deploy an initial JP-SOCOM force.

JP-SOCOM's likely missions would be liaison, limited direct action, and doctrine development. Its mandate would not extend to conducting worldwide manhunts, but even so, the current number of JSDF personnel is too low to respond to both international and domestic crises. With limited funds available to stand up JP-SOCOM, the JSDF should consider converting some of its existing conventional forces into a JSOF and expanding its roles and capabilities with the necessary training. Thus, the greater portion of the initial JSOF budget would be used for manning and training the first 10,000 troops, which means that the JSOF would have to rely heavily on the conventional force for equipping and deployment costs.

A robust and capable JP-SOCOM would require an annual budget of approximately US$2 billion over the next five to ten years. This is almost the same amount that Japan's government pays annually to maintain the US Forces Japan. Investment in a special operations training facility should be a future goal, but until it becomes a reality, Japan should leverage budget negotiations with the US government to allow the JSOF to use USSOCOM's facilities and environment to train JSOF personnel.

> JP-SOCOM's likely missions would be liaison, limited direct action, and doctrine development.

Conclusion: Impediments and Challenges for JP-SOCOM

The pacifist ideology that is codified in Article 9 of the Japanese constitution and widely supported by the Japanese public may be the largest obstacle to winning support for a JP-SOCOM. Because Japan is no longer a warfighting country and its security studies curricula are undeveloped, many citizens would probably be skeptical about the creation of a SOF and the value of its roles and missions. Although Japan faces dangers that include international terrorism and hybrid warfare, its people might not be aware of the national security environment and thus might suspect a JSOF of being an offensive rather than a defensive military force.

Another possible source of resistance from the Japanese public and political opposition parties would be the training and equipment needed to bring a JSOF up to international standards. The crash of a US Army MH-60 helicopter during a joint training exercise off Okinawa on 12 August 2015, which involved two JSOG service members, drew the attention of the opposition Japanese Communist Party.[33] Because this incident occurred while the National Diet was deliberating the NSL, leaders of the Communist Party claimed that the exercise was intended to practice SOF capabilities before the government had written enabling

legislation into the NSL. Misconceptions of the roles and missions of a SOF may be another issue that the JP-SOCOM needs to address.

In response to the emerging threats posed by nontraditional actors, the government of Japan should hasten the development of a Japan Special Operations Command by authorizing and preparing for liaising, limited direct-actions, and doctrinal development. Japan has experienced various crisis situations over the decades, and its response measures were demonstrably insufficient. Moreover, the Japanese responders were exposed to the risk of mission failure and further casualties because unforeseen circumstances within the host nation disrupted rescue operations. A JP-SOCOM's missions, functions, and capabilities would offer fully operational capabilities to policy makers and decision makers during a crisis. Well-trained and well-prepared SOF units would be able to deploy and respond in a timely manner both at home and abroad. The activities that would be performed by the JSOF in support of the SSL cover the full spectrum of environments, from peace time to crisis. Most importantly, the leaders of Japan need to understand that the use of special operations units demonstrates Japan's power to achieve its goals: to defend Japan's homeland and the lives of Japanese nationals overseas. ◈

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NOTES

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Reviewed by LCDR Flemming Haar, Danish Naval Special Forces

Special Operations from a Small State Perspective: Future Security Challenges

Gunilla Eriksson and
Ulrica Pettersson, eds.

New York: Palgrave Macmillan,
2017

Hardcover: US$119.00

198 pages

Few would argue that special operations constitute a critical element in modern warfare, which makes the relative scarcity of theoretical studies on the subject striking. Furthermore, according to the editors of *Special Operations from a Small State Perspective: Future Security Challenges*—and my own observation—the literature that does exist within this field focuses primarily on the utility of SOF for states with substantial military power.[1] The theoretical foundation for developing special operations capabilities in small states needs to be expanded, and this anthology is a useful addition to the field. It is one of the latest publications in a series titled *New Security Challenges* that addresses new approaches to the international security agenda from an academic point of view.[2] As the title indicates, the authors set out to explore how smaller states should organize and use SOF to cope with future security challenges.

To frame their discussion, the editors organize their collection around the Swedish Special Operation Forces (SWESOF). Chapters 2 and 3 describe how SWESOF evolved over the last decades, and the role that hybrid warfare—in particular, the tactics that Russia used against Ukraine in 2014—played in the force's development. The fourth chapter discusses ways to conceptualize SOF as distinct from conventional forces, and how to use this conceptualization as a guideline to develop a theory unique to SOF in small states. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 examine how the global SOF network, adaptive leadership, and talent management can amplify the human resource potential of SOF in small states. The final three chapters describe how cyber operations, irregular warfare strategies, and innovative intelligence gathering offer new perspectives on the traditional SOF tasks of Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, and Military Assistance that are emphasized in NATO doctrine.[3] The book offers a good introduction to the military characteristics of small states. The various authors draw on a number of prominent classical and contemporary military theorists to help develop an academic concept for addressing the challenges and possibilities facing SOF. Their analyses and condensation of academic knowledge work well together to make a cogent argument.

Chapter 4 is a good example of the book's overall style. The author begins with a brief literature review that focuses primarily on the work of Colin Gray and Robert Spulak, and then offers a considered and well-argued discussion of how their analyses and theories should be applied to ensure the optimal utilization of special operations by small states. The author highlights one of the essential arguments in the book's description of the challenges for SOF in small states, noting that the risk of not exploring the strategic use of SOF is that SOF will become an elite force only, rather than a special force that is better than conventional forces at carrying out certain kinds of missions.[4]

In contrast, the proposal by the author of chapter 8, that Vice Admiral William H. McRaven's theory of how SOF should conduct raids can also serve the purpose of reaching *methodological superiority* in cyber operations, seems far-fetched

to me.[5] I become a little concerned when McRaven's theory is applied outside the context for which it was developed. The author seems to be exploiting the theory to give more value to some general considerations about cyber operations, but his attempt neither simplifies his argument nor makes it more applicable to special operations; in fact, the contrary is true. This chapter would have been more interesting if the idea of using cyber operations in a SOF context were explored outside the context of an existing theory.

In chapters 3 and 9, the authors explore the work of Andrew Mack and Ivan Arrequin-Toft to propose that asymmetrical warfare can provide the "weak party" with an advantage when defending against an attack by a superior enemy.[6] Considering the geopolitical situation in the Baltic Sea region—where Russia aspires to become the dominant power once again—it is logical that the Baltic countries are preparing ways to deal militarily with the Russian threat. But it is unclear whether the authors are, in fact, suggesting that small states should prepare their SOF to fight an asymmetric war against an invading Russia, or whether the theories they present are merely a hypothetical framework on how to deter Russia from using hybrid warfare. I assume the authors are suggesting the latter, but if so, it makes less sense for them to use Mack's and Arrequin-Toft's ideas, because these deal exclusively with how an invading superior power can be defeated by a smaller but more determined force. The authors would have done better to present a clearer definition of the Russian hybrid threat and how it might unfold; this would help the reader understand what the authors see as SOF's unique contributions to countering Russia.

> The risk of not exploring the strategic use of SOF is that SOF will become an **elite force only,** rather than a special force.

Credit must be given to the editors for organizing the chapters in a logical order that guides the reader through a review of existing SOF theory and then into explorations of the innovative ways that small states can use SOF. They then summarize the chapters' findings in an easily understandable conclusion, so that the reader comes away with a solid knowledge of the challenges and opportunities that SOF in small states face. Overall, *Special Operations from a Small State Perspective* is an interesting read for military and non-military academics and practitioners who are involved in shaping special operation forces to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, and a useful reference source for future studies. While being a citizen of a small state might make it easier to relate to the authors' perspectives, I don't think it is a necessary precondition for appreciating the book's relevant theoretical insights on the value of SOF. ◈

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

1   Gunilla Eriksson and Ulrica Pettersson, eds. *Special Operations from a Small State Perspective: Future Security Challenges* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1-2.

2   The series *New Security Challenges* (Palgrave MacMillan) currently has 63 titles on a wide range of topics related to international security: https://www.palgrave.com/us/series/14732

3   One of the volume's authors, a former student in the US Naval Postgraduate School's Department of Defense Analysis, published an article in *CTX* on a similar topic. See Major Awe, "Trying to Work Smarter: Fusion Tools for a Small SOF TF Staff," *CTX* 6, no. 1 (February 2016): https://globalecco.org/trying-to-work-smarter-fusion-tools61

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Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin sits inside a T-90AM tank during a visit to an arms exhibition in the Urals town of Nizhny Tagil, on 9 September 2011.
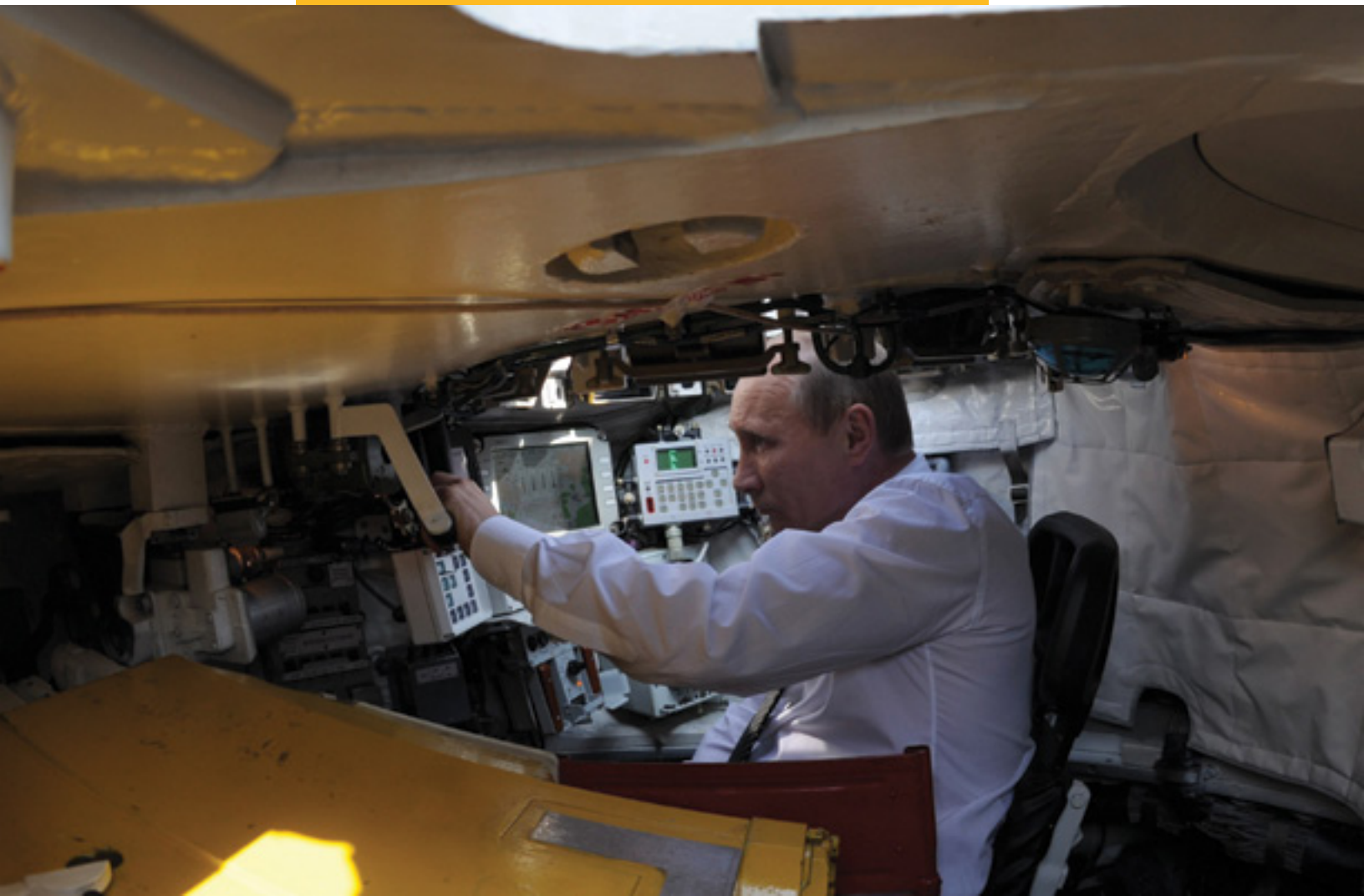
Symposium: The Role of SOF in an Era of Great Power Competition

The Special Operations Research Association and the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) are pleased to announce this year's annual academic symposium, which will be held March 8–9, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, near the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA.

This year's symposium theme is: The Role of SOF in an Era of Great Power Competition. In the 2018 National Defense Strategy, Defense Secretary James Mattis put "great power competition" at the center of the US defense posture. But what will this "competition" look like in the 21st century, and what role will special operations play?

Competition can be looked at through many angles, including: great power relationships, non-geographical communities of interest, alternate financial systems, new versus old international regimes, the return of multipolar politics, the rise of megacities, and information and influence operations.

Developing a conceptual understanding of what "competition" means for the 21st Century demands a wide-ranging discussion, but one important component of that is the role of SOF in great power politics. We hope to spur discussion and reflection on both the concept of competition and the implications for SOF at this year's annual symposium.

No registration is needed to attend. The event is free. For more information, please see http://www.specopsjournal.org/symposium.html.

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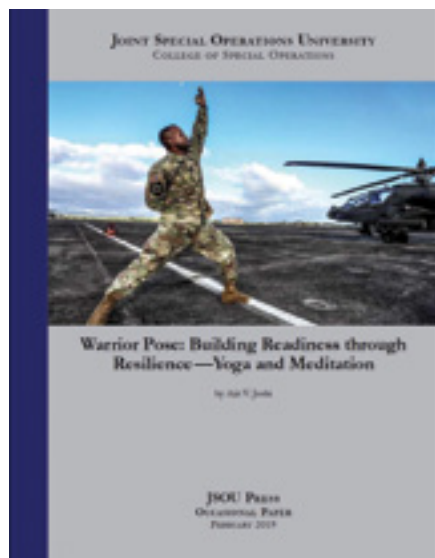
Warrior Pose: Building Readiness through Resilience—Yoga and Meditation
by Ajit V. Joshi

Mr. Ajit V. Joshi's award-winning research asserts that the foundation for readiness is resilience, which aligns with the warrior ethos and is an enduring quality of good leaders. A variety of techniques and practices including yoga, trauma sensitive yoga, systematic relaxation, breathing (pranayama), meditation, yoga nidra, and iRest Yoga Nidra are proven tools for improving the health and resilience of Joint Force service members and their families. It is vital for the Joint Force to adopt these tools for all service members' comprehensive physical, mental, and spiritual fitness in a world of increasing uncertainty, but barriers exist at both the individual and organizational levels. This paper defines relevant terms; reviews the extensive literature on the subject, with particular attention to the conclusions of studies conducted with veteran and military populations; examines the relevance of these tools to the modern warrior ethos and military culture; and makes specific recommendations regarding cultural and institutional change to facilitate program implementation. Mr. Joshi conducted this research while attending the US Army War College and received the US Army War College Commandant's Award for Distinction in Research for excellence in research and writing.
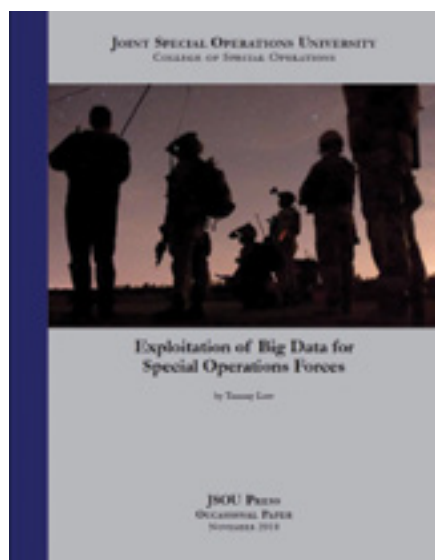
Exploitation of Big Data for Special Operations Forces
by Tammy Low

In this new occasional paper, US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Low examines "big data," which is characterized by extensive open source datasets that are too large to analyze using traditional analytic methods. Those datasets include data comprising news media, social media, and other open source information. By using innovative analytic tools and techniques, big datasets can be exploited to improve situational awareness and decision-making and directly increase SOF mission effectiveness. The author advocates for the exploitation of big data during SOF pre-conflict activities. She offers lessons learned and opportunities discovered by the United Nations Global Pulse program, which has used big data analytics since its establishment in 2012. Through that lens, the author describes how big data can assist SOF through greater situational awareness that then leads to increased understanding of sociocultural, political, and economic issues and events.

ISIS 2.0: South and Southeast Asia Opportunities and Vulnerabilities
by Namrata Goswami

Behind the headlines, social media, and fear-mongering lies an ISIS threat not of ideology but rather of opportunity. This ISIS is masterful at maximizing political instability and discontent and parlaying them into new potential strongholds and followers. In this monograph, Namrata Goswami expertly unmasks this underground version of ISIS and uncovers the vulnerabilities of potential ISIS targets in Bangladesh, Burma, India, and Indonesia. This monograph provides a much needed fact-based perspective that explains the success of ISIS in both spreading its ideology and expanding its recruitment base. Drawing upon historical examples and parallels, the author argues for a movement very strategic in its emphases. Even existing scholars of the region are apt to find new and invaluable insights into where the societal, cultural, and political variables of this region intersect with opportunities for ISIS.
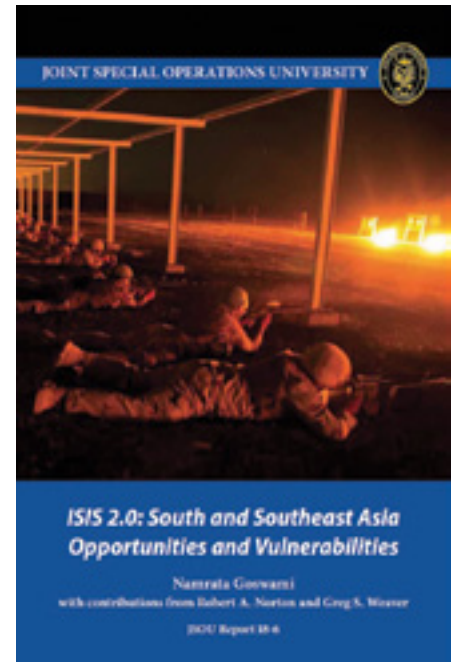
Countering Transregional Terrorism
Edited by Peter McCabe with a foreword by Lieutenant General Michael K. Nagata

Countering terrorism is very hard. Countering it across global and regional geographic boundaries is even harder. Also, as increasingly powerful technologies become available to terrorists, the consequences of failing to surmount their adaptability and agility become much larger. It is vital to recognize that, despite very impressive progress that the United States and the international community have made in combating terrorism since 9/11, we still struggle as a global community with the creation of durable, permanent solutions and outcomes against violent extremism. This important publication urges consideration of how we might be able to find better pathways, better solutions, and better designs into the future. The future will not wait for us.
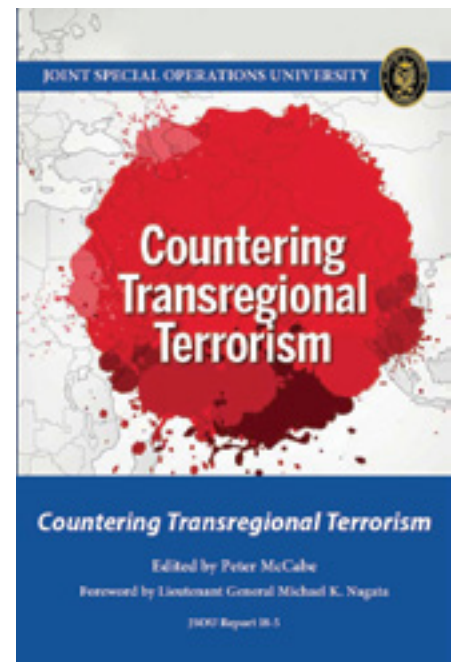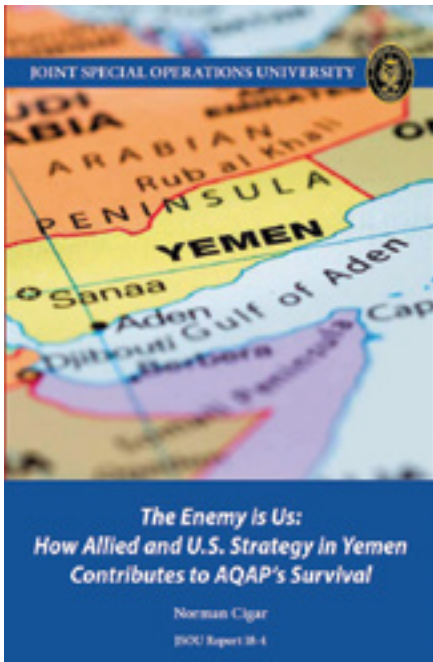
The Enemy is Us: How Allied and U.S. Strategy in Yemen Contributes to AQAP's Survival
by Norman Cigar

In this monograph, Dr. Norman Cigar provides Special Operations Forces (SOF) commanders and planners with an overview of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) operational framework and presence in Yemen. He analyzes the strategic and operational issues that confront policymakers as they respond to the threat posed by AQAP within Yemen's challenging social, political, and physical environment. This monograph presents the far-reaching implications for SOF, from recognizing the nuances of Yemen's tribal-based human terrain to understanding key relationships, rivalries, and competition between AQAP and other Yemeni players. AQAP will likely continue to represent a threat to US interests and regional stability for the foreseeable future.
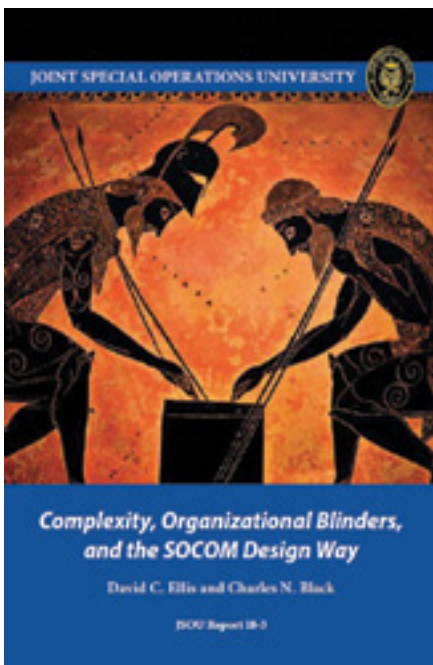
Complexity, Organizational Blinders, and the SOCOM Design Way
by David C. Ellis and Charles N. Black

Complexity, Organizational Blinders, and the SOCOM Design Way (SDW) takes on the monumental task of explaining why the complex world is so difficult to comprehend and provides a way for navigating through it. The authors accomplish this utilizing US Special Operations Command design techniques. This monograph is not just for the Special Operator or the Operational Planner. It is useful for anyone who is seeking a better way to address problems that seem to have no solution. Dr. David Ellis and Mr. Charles Black provide the tools necessary to define the problem and develop an approach. The SDW needs to be seriously considered and put into practice if the community desires to make progress on complex and wicked problems.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The *Combating Terrorism Exchange* (*CTX*) is a quarterly peer-reviewed journal. We accept submissions of nearly any type, from anyone; however, submission does not guarantee publication. Our aim is to distribute high-quality analyses, opinions, and studies to military officers, government officials, and security and academic professionals in the counterterrorism community. We give priority to non-typical, insightful work and to topics concerning countries with the most pressing terrorism and CT issues.

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