

# CTX

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## From the Editor

As international engagement in the Afghanistan conflict winds down, SOF and CT specialists are paying closer attention to irregular conflict and extremist activity in the rest of the world. The sad news is, of course, that there is much to pay attention to.

A multifaceted extremist insurgency has affected much of the southern Philippine archipelago for several decades now. To help the Philippine armed forces deal with these terrorist groups, the US Special Operations Command conducts a number of routine Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events in the Philippines every year. Because of a lack of rigorous planning, execution, and assessment, writes Major Emmanuel G. Cabahug of the Philippine Army, these trainings are failing to live up to their potential, and an opportunity is being wasted. Fortunately, he concludes, these problems could be fairly easily corrected with a change in focus and the implementation of a plan for evaluation, assessment, and incorporation of lessons learned. The separatist insurgency that Turkey faces is also decades old. Turkish Army First Lieutenant Mehmet Kanmaz describes the many ways in which the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a group that uses terrorist tactics against the Turkish state, ensures its financial survival. Like a criminal syndicate, the PKK relies on drug and human smuggling, extortion, money laundering, and other illegal and quasi-legal activities to keep the money flowing and stay in business. Kanmaz suggests a number of steps Turkey should take to improve its counterterrorism operations and cut off the PKK's money supply if the state is going to prevail.

From the Golden Crescent, we move to central Africa, where Ugandan Army Major David Munyua delves into the command structure of one of the most notoriously vicious terrorist groups in the world, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Since its beginnings as a militant political splinter group in the late 1980s, the LRA has devolved into a chronic insurgency that emerges from its hideouts in the forests and mountains of central Africa to kidnap, kill, and mutilate. Munyua considers who the next generation of LRA leaders will be, as its first generation commanders die, defect, or are pushed out of power, and what vulnerabilities these new leaders might exhibit.

Looking to the future from a somewhat different angle, Lieutenant Colonel Fabian Sandor of the Hungarian Army believes that most militaries are still living in the past and have not yet grasped the looming significance of hybrid warfare. In his brief essay on the development of NATO SOF, Sandor cautions against relying on—and paying for—legacy systems and legacy thinking to counter opponents' asymmetric and irregular strategies and tactics.

For the final feature article in this issue, we bring you a report about the first of what is planned to be an annual symposium hosted by the Special Operations

Research Association (SORA). SORA is a think tank based in the United States, devoted to research on special operations and related topics. The symposium, which took place on 24–25 October 2014 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, brought together more than 100 experts, military specialists, and other interested participants to hear presentations and discuss aspects of “Special Operations and Strategic Implications.”

For our CTAP interview, Dr. Doug Borer of the US Naval Postgraduate School spoke with Dr. Michael Noonan of the Foreign Policy Research Institute about Noonan’s experiences as a member of a military transition team in Iraq. Deployed in 2006 to the district of Tal Afar, Noonan’s team was assigned to help an Iraqi battalion improve its staff operations and take control of the district’s security. Noonan speaks vividly about this difficult period of the Iraq War, when, he suggests, the seeds of the current fight for control of Iraq and Syria were sown.

George Lober, in his Ethics and Insights column, delves into the difficult questions of personal morality that are particular to fighters in times of conflict. In the first article of a two-part series titled “Making Decisions, Taking Ethical Responsibility,” Lober uses the examples of Jewish refugees in 1938 and Rwandan Tutsis in 1994, and concentrates on the very different decisions of two men, one a Swiss state police officer and the other a Belgian Army captain, when faced with a barrage of desperate people fleeing certain death.

We have two book reviews on offer this time. Major David Munyua discusses Idean Salehyan’s book *Rebels without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2009), which, as the title suggests, deals with the phenomenon of what Salehyan calls “transnational rebellion” (TNR) and its link to civil conflict. While praising the book as a welcome discussion of the TNR phenomenon and ways to counteract it, Munyua notes that some of the generalities Salehyan derives may require closer study. The second review, by Colonel Ian Rice, US Army, examines journalist Malcolm Gladwell’s newest work, *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants* (Little, Brown and Co., 2013). Rice lauds Gladwell’s ability to deconstruct difficult concepts related to personal or cultural prejudices and recommends the book for anyone who wants to deepen their understanding of the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

As always, JSOU has a couple of new studies on offer in our Publications section. We urge you to write a letter to the editor (CTXeditor@globalecco.org) and let us know what you think about what you’ve read in CTX, or anything else in the CT world that’s on your mind. You can also keep up on global CT news and comment on articles by “liking” Global ECCO on Facebook. If you are interested in submitting an article for possible publication, see our submission guidelines at <https://globalecco.org/ctx-submissions>.

## ELIZABETH SKINNER

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Patricia Blocksome** is assistant vice president for research with the Special Operations Research Association, where she is also the managing editor of *Special Operations Journal*. She teaches social science in the School of Advanced Military Studies at Army University and is completing her dissertation on the structural components of sub-state political violence at Kansas State University. Publications include, with Sam R. Bell, Amanda Murdie, and Kevin Brown, “Force Multipliers’: Conditional Effectiveness of Military and INGO Human Security Interventions” in the *Journal of Human Rights* 12, no. 4 (November 2013).

**Dr. Doug Borer** is an associate professor of Defense Analysis at the US Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Monterey, California. He earned his PhD in political science from Boston University in 1993. Dr. Borer’s academic postings include the University of the South Pacific, the University of Western Australia, Virginia Tech, National University of Malaysia, and the US Army War College. In 2007, he co-founded (with Dr. Nancy Roberts) the Common Operational Research Environment (CORE) Lab at NPS. In 2011, he and Dr. Leo Blanken created the Combating Terrorism Archive Project.

**Major Emmanuel G. Cabahug** is an active foreign military officer in the Philippine Army, currently working on his master’s degree in Defense Analysis at NPS. From 2009 to 2014, MAJ Cabahug served with the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Education and Training, OG8, Philippine Army, dealing with bilateral and multilateral training engagements with allied partners.

**First Lieutenant Mehmet Asım Kanmaz** is a gendarmerie officer in the Turkish Armed Forces. He graduated from the Turkish Military Academy in 2011 and earned his MA degree at NPS in 2014. His master’s thesis, titled “Countering Terrorist Financing: A Case Study of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party,” includes comprehensive research on the issue of terrorist financing. His primary research areas are terrorism, terrorist financing, and Middle Eastern politics.

**George Lober** guides US and international military students through the tricky terrain of ethics and critical thinking at NPS. He earned his BA and MA in English from the California State University system and has published in the journals *Eclectic Literary Forum* and *Red Wheelbarrow*. Lober became interested in the study of ethics in 1998 through a reacquaintance with both philosophy and critical thinking and joined the faculty of NPS in 1999.

**Dr. Christopher Marsh** is the president of the Special Operations Research Association and the editor-in-chief of *Special Operations Journal*. He is a professor of National Security and Strategic Studies in the School of Advanced Military Studies at Army University. Previously, he taught at the US Air Force Special Operations School, Hurlburt Field, and Baylor University. He is the author of several books on Russian affairs and comparative Russian-Chinese politics, including, with Nikolas Gvosdev, *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors* (CQ Press, 2013).

**Major David Munyua** is a Marine officer in the Uganda People’s Defence Force. He is currently working toward an MS degree in Defense Analysis from NPS.

**Colonel Ian C. Rice** is a US Army officer with over 24 years of active service. He has served in a variety of command, staff, and advisory positions in support of combined operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Korea, all of which concentrated on the challenges of irregular war. He is currently a PhD candidate in political science at the University of California, Los Angeles, where his research focuses on the impacts of military assistance activities on the institutional development of partner militaries and subsequent effects on domestic and regional politics.

**Lieutenant Colonel Fabian Sandor** is a Special Forces officer in the Hungarian Army, currently serving as the deputy director of the Force Readiness Directorate in the NATO Special Operations Headquarters in Mons, Belgium. In 2006, CPT Sandor participated in the creation of the Hungarian Special Forces Battalion as a Special Forces company commander. In early 2009, he was deployed to Afghanistan as the commander of the Hungarian Special Forces element. In June 2012, after receiving his MS degree at NPS, MAJ Sandor became the senior Special Forces advisor at the Operational Directorate of the Hungarian General Staff.

**Dr. Robert Tomlinson** is vice president of the Special Operations Research Association, and director of the Advanced Strategic Leadership Studies Program in the School of Advanced Military Studies at Army University. Dr. Tomlinson served 26 years in the US Air Force, retiring as a colonel. He was a certified Joint Specialty Officer, with service on the Joint Staff, and he commanded at the squadron and group level. Dr. Tomlinson’s research focuses on Shiite representation in Lebanon. He has published articles in *Proceedings* and the *Ventura County Star* on US policy in the Middle East.

### COVER PHOTO

Masked Sunni gunmen take up position in Fallujah city, western Iraq on 11 January 2014. EPA/MOHAMMED JALIL. Copyright Corbis.com.

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## SOF Joint Combined Exchange Training from a Host Nation's Perspective

*MAJ Emmanuel G. Cabahug,  
Philippine Army*

“VICTORY IN WAR STARTS IN TRAINING” IS AN APHORISM THAT RINGS true for every military, and even nonmilitary, organization.<sup>1</sup> Routine training events, in the form of SOF Joint Combined Exchange Trainings (JCETs), have taken place in the Philippines for more than two decades as part of the resolute US response to global terrorism.<sup>2</sup> Among other goals, the primary intent of the Special Operations Command, Pacific (SOCPAC) JCET is to provide Philippine security forces with the ability and competencies to thwart terrorist acts and to deny terrorists both sanctuary and training grounds for their activities in the Southeast Pacific region. After many millions of US dollars have been spent, however, has this program been effective?

In this essay, I explore how JCETs have affected the host nation's operational and training preparedness from my perspective as a Philippine participant.<sup>3</sup> Unless

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**ACQUIRED  
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WHO  
PARTICIPATE.**  
— — — — —





these trainings are thoroughly planned and programmed, conducted to a high standard, jointly assessed, and continually evaluated, they are not likely to result in the optimal training outcome. The term *optimal* is defined here as a function of the unit's performance (both individual and collective) during training and actual combat deployment. In other words, has the training improved the participants' knowledge and skills so that they are able to apply their newly acquired skills toward greater mission success?

## Overview of JCETs in the Philippines

Every year, the armed forces of the Philippines host approximately seven to ten JCETs with SOCPAC: three to four with the Philippine Army (PA); two to three with the Philippine Navy/Marines; and two to three with the Philippine Air Force. Each of these JCETs is service-centric and caters to the training needs of the Philippine security forces. The most serious obstacles to Philippine and US interoperability include constraints on doctrine and organization; differing tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs); incompatible communications equipment; a lack of well-established training facilities and adequate equipment in the Philippines; and insufficient funding from the Philippine government. Most of the PA JCET training activities are conducted directly in the field with units of 70 PA SOF personnel, on average.

More often than not, however, the JCET fails to include personnel from the various Philippine schoolhouses (the Special Forces School, Scout Ranger Training School, and Counter-Terrorist Training and Development School). If their personnel were able to participate, these schools could then integrate the best practices, TTPs, and lessons learned that were acquired during JCETs and similar bilateral training exercises into their programs of instruction. As it is, the acquired skill sets benefit only the unit and the individual soldiers who participate in a given JCET. The subsequent transfer of institutional knowledge and expertise is typically neglected because the JCET participants quickly become preoccupied with current operational requirements on the frontlines. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of resources to sustain the training and readiness of personnel on the frontlines. This is clearly a less-than-optimal arrangement, so why does it continue?

## The JCET Process: Programming, Coordination, Planning, Execution, and Evaluation and Assessment

Ideally, each JCET is programmed and incorporated into the yearly list of bilateral training activities of the Philippines-United States Mutual Defense Board (MDB)-Security Engagement Board (SEB).<sup>4</sup> The MDB, which was created to oversee the implementation of the bilateral 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, addresses the traditional security concerns of both parties. The SEB was created in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks primarily, but not exclusively, to deal with the nontraditional issues of counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance,



and disaster relief operations. The MDB-SEB meets twice a year (alternating between the Philippine capital, Manila, and Honolulu in the US state of Hawaii) to discuss and finalize the approximately 350 to 400 activities proposed for the succeeding year. The combined board is also supposed to assess all of the bilateral activities of the current year in order to sustain those programs that provide optimal outcomes and to enhance or refocus the ones that are not delivering the intended effects or benefits. Once the exercise plans are approved by their respective signatories (Commander, US Pacific Command, and Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines), both countries' points of contact (which include the SOCPAC Operations Directorate, the in-country security cooperation representative [Joint United States Military Assistance Group to the Republic of the Philippines], and the Philippine armed forces' executive agent) need to coordinate the dates for the predeployment site survey (PDSS) and initial planning conference (IPC) for a specific JCET.

Active monitoring and coordination among the two countries' points of contact are crucial to the success of the JCET, considering the timelines and other administrative requirements of both countries' participating units. The PDSS and IPC, which last from five to seven days, are conducted to survey suitable training sites and facilities, determine the logistical requirements of the exercise, determine the training events and timelines, and address other details for the JCET. Training normally takes place about six months after the PDSS and IPC are completed in order to ensure all the preliminary requirements have been met. A significant factor in the success of the exercise is how well prepared the host nation is in terms of its proposed training concept and the resources needed to realize the concept. Such preparations are therefore scrutinized during the PDSS and IPC. If the host nation planners have an extensive, well-developed training concept, it is easier for the US planners to refine the concept based on the skills and competencies of the designated US SOF team, and to anticipate the resources required for the specific JCET. The planners on both sides are expected to jointly draft the administrative procedures agreement, which lays out all the administrative and logistical arrangements that both parties will execute in order to ensure the successful conduct of the exercise. The IPC also produces a draft exercise plan and training calendar.

Because US law requires that more than 50% of the training benefits the US participants, US SOF personnel usually have the opportunity to undergo special training in jungle survival and stick and knife fighting. As time and budgets allow, US participants who are training on Luzon Island may also visit military and historical landmarks such as the Camp Pangatian Memorial Shrine (site of the Cabanatuan Raid), the Capas National Shrine (memorializing the Bataan Death March), and Corregidor Island.

The IPC includes a final planning conference and final site survey lasting three to five days, during which time the actual training dates are chosen, the administrative procedures agreement is confirmed, and the exercise plan and training calendar are refined. There are plenty of "nuts and bolts" details that must be dealt with, all the way from preparation to mission completion, and regular communication between all the concerned parties is vital for the process to work.

Often, legal pressure from anti-US organizations in the Philippines poses a serious challenge to the execution of the JCET. Because PA SOF units





that are projected to participate in the JCET are regularly involved in real-world operations, they have become the primary targets for legal harassment by organizations that want to discredit all military operations.<sup>5</sup> These organizations make their voices heard by routinely filing complaints, particularly on human rights matters, and appealing to leftist-oriented media outlets. Lawyers for these organizations know that by pursuing these actions, they will be able to impede the professional training and development of PA soldiers. This legal strategy relies heavily on the US Leahy amendment, which dictates that all foreign national SOF units and their respective training participants and unit commanders need to be approved by the US government for each JCET.<sup>6</sup> There have been instances in which the number of PA personnel expected to participate in the JCET was trimmed by almost half (e.g., from 70 personnel down to 40) due to these legal challenges. Moreover, the Philippine Scout Rangers, a critical combat unit, were denied permission to participate in JCETs from 2010 to 2012 because of standing legal complaints filed by these opposition groups. As a consequence, the Scout Rangers' training and operational readiness have been put at risk.



Last but not least, the MDB-SEB has largely failed to follow up with a serious evaluation and assessment of its bilateral military activities, including the JCETs. The absence of any candid assessments limits the ability of the JCET program to obtain its optimal outcome of improved interoperability. Therefore, some issues and concerns that have arisen during previous JCET exercises are reoccurring because they have not been taken into serious consideration and targeted for corrective action by the joint committees. An example of this recurring capability gap is the interoperability of the Philippines' armed services (Army, Navy/Marines, and Air Force) in the conduct of joint and combined arms training and operation. Close collaboration and synchronized efforts among Philippine security forces on the ground, in the air, and at sea are crucial elements that contribute to successful combat operations. The development of a combined PA-US evaluation and assessment report would be an essential tool to ensure continuity between previous JCETs and current and future JCETs. It is vital that both sides know where they left off in previous JCETs so they can build on the lessons learned and address the capability gaps. Unfortunately, the existing process is all too reminiscent of the movie *Groundhog Day*, in which the same difficulties happen over and over again without anyone seeming to understand why.<sup>7</sup>

### The Defining Factors of JCET: A Personal Reflection

From the second half of 2009 to the first half of 2014, I facilitated the conduct of the Army SOF JCETs and observed other sister-service (Navy/

Marines and Air Force) JCETs as well. In doing so, I noted not only the strengths of these exercises, but also the weaknesses and capability gaps that need attention. I consider three elements to be key if we are to optimize the conduct of JCETs in the Philippines: commitment, continuity, and resources.

### Commitment for JCET

A JCET must not be perceived merely as “business as usual” for the US and Philippine participants, but rather as an opportunity to interact, learn, and share the knowledge and expertise necessary to have a meaningful bilateral exercise. It must add a solid connective thread to strengthen the already existing cord of friendly relations between the two countries, even as it reinforces the host nation’s capacity and capability to address domestic and external challenges. From top to bottom, participants, commanders, planners, and decision makers must possess a firm commitment that includes a positive attitude, a willingness to acknowledge problems, and the ability to set serious goals for each bilateral training engagement. Senior commanders and decision makers on both sides should continually support these JCETs by articulating realistic goals that will address the capability gaps. This is especially important for the skill sets that the armed forces need to develop, improve, and sustain if they are to deliver effective blows against the enemies of the state and, ultimately, win and keep the people’s trust.

Training participants must always bear in mind that their actions are not only reflective of themselves and their armed forces, but also of the flags that they carry proudly on their shoulders. We (American and Philippine military personnel) can never avoid the scrutinizing gaze of the public, especially of those who are against the government. Any infringement of Philippine domestic laws by visiting US military personnel may imperil the already existing defense agreements of both countries and our bilateral ties as well. Although there have been some serious violations of domestic laws during exercises in the past, US SOF were not involved in those cases. Moreover, from a cultural perspective, Filipino soldiers usually respect US SOF as experts in their fields; therefore, any misconduct or perceived disrespect on the US side would have a tremendous negative impact on training outcomes. Every SOF operator must be sensitive to the host nation’s culture and, in turn, should not assume that Filipinos have a good grasp of the visiting forces’ culture.

### Continuity of JCET

JCET program continuity is vital to the strategic goal of enhancing bilateral ties between the United States and the Philippines, builds Philippine security





capabilities, and supports US security interests in the region. The JCET program should be integrated into long-term planning in a manner that supports the strategic intent of both countries. Too often, however, this has not been the case. The 2009 JCET, for instance, seemed to have minimal connections to the JCETs of the previous and succeeding years. The program should have a purposive engagement plan that lays out how it will help build and sustain the capability requirements of the Philippine security forces over time. One example is the Philippine-US exercise called “Balance Pistons,” which is conducted, on average, three times a year. The Balance Pistons training events tend to be similar to each other, with the main difference being the training audience/unit. The official objective of these exercises is to “enhance the war fighting capacity and capability of both forces.” Simply stated, that objective is too broad, making it difficult to set useful performance measures or measures of effectiveness. In addition to being based on subjective inputs, the evaluation and assessment portions of Balance Pistons have been poorly performed, with greater emphasis on quantity—the number of programmed activities—than on quality—the actual conduct of the training. These lapses might also be attributed to the absence of a cohesive and purposeful engagement plan from the Philippine side.

This need for continuity is the main reason why the PA SOF (a regular customer of the JCETs) has developed and initiated the Five-Year SOF Engagement Plan as a subset of the SOF Bilateral Training Roadmap. Among other objectives, the Training Roadmap will serve as a guide to connect each and every JCET conducted in the Philippines. It will deliberately involve the PA schoolhouses and key stakeholders in order to integrate the new TTPs and learning into all PA SOF domestic training, as well as into subsequent bilateral and multilateral training engagements. The intent is to institutionalize the TTPs and best practices acquired from the JCETs that can be readily applied on the battlefield.

### SOF Interoperability Training Exercise

The international SOF community must be persistent, deliberate, and forward-looking if it plans to develop regional coalition engagements, such as SOF CT/COIN-focused exercises with teams from partner nations like the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Other potential participants include Australia, New Zealand, and other interested allied countries. Such an exercise could fall under the rubric of an UPSMAINT (Uninterrupted, Persistent, Sustaining Move Against Insurgents, Narcotics, and Terrorism) SOF interoperability training exercise,

which would focus on the exchange of TTPs, best practices, and lessons learned to counter the latest trends and tactics used by terrorists, drug traffickers, and insurgents. This could take the form of a weeklong exercise during which each country shares its best practices and lessons learned regarding a domestic crisis or international event that affected that particular country.

This proposal may sound ambitious, but it could be done if the participants’ *commitment* were genuine. If concerned countries are genuinely committed to concerted efforts to face nontraditional security threats such as terrorism, they should not hesitate to participate in this kind of bilateral or multilateral SOF interoperability exercise. In return for their investment of time and resources, participants could expect to achieve maximum benefit from such an exercise.

This proposal

could also be included as an agenda item for consideration

SOC PAC’s annual Special Operations Conference (PASOC), held in the SOF community

at the Pacific Area Operations Conference in Hawaii and attended by leaders and decision makers in the Pacific theater. The SOF interoperability training exercise could serve as a practical application of SOC PAC’s initiative. Adopting these suggestions would go a long way toward eliminating the continuity lapses that I have witnessed during my five years as an SOF JCET insider.





## Resources for JCET

Resources are the most crucial determinant in the interoperability game. For the purposes of this article, my definition of *resources* is confined to the military scope that includes training facilities, equipment, and money to support the JCET. Every cent spent for the JCET counts. To avoid waste, the quantity or frequency

of bilateral engagements could be trimmed down, and a greater focus could be placed on the quality of the training. As both partners continue to experience financial constraints, they need to sustain the bilateral training programs that provide operational benefits and eradicate those programs that do not add sufficient value. The MDB-SEB must conduct thorough evaluations and assessments of all JCET activities to optimize the chances for a positive outcome. The quality and measurable outcomes of bilateral activities should be the primary concerns, not the quantity of the activities.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

SOF JCETs are an excellent opportunity for Philippine security forces to interact with US SOF, share knowledge and best practices, and exchange TTPs and lessons learned in warfighting and nontraditional operations.

The interoperability portion of the training, however, has been neglected. That is why, since

2012, the PA side has proposed that a

Philippine-US interservice JCET (called “Joint Piston”) should include the objective of SOF *joint and combined* arms planning and execution. Unfortunately,

this concept has not materialized. I am not convinced that claims of a lack of funding for JCETs on both sides is the real issue; rather, I suspect that a firmer commitment by both parties and their SOF stakeholders is necessary. There are other activities listed in the MDB-SEB that were not carried out due to lack of commitment and perseverance on the part of the event coordinators. The armed forces of the Philippines, and perhaps US forces as well, are still blinded by their service-centric lenses. The Philippine security forces need to enhance their skills and competencies, specifically in the area of joint and combined arms operations, in order to effectively neutralize enemies of the state. US SOF assistance with this concern would be extremely valuable. Perhaps one way of addressing this joint-combined gap is to reduce the iterations of other JCET programs (e.g., Balance Piston) from three per year to two, and funnel these funds to support a future Philippine-US Exercise Joint Piston 01-2016, that would include all Philippine and US SOF. Philippine National Police SOF units should also be invited to participate in order to add more complexity and fluidity to the concept of a joint, interagency, and law enforcement training exercise.

**A FIRMER  
COMMITMENT  
BY BOTH  
PARTIES AND  
THEIR SOF  
STAKEHOLDERS  
IS NECESSARY.**

In sharing these thoughts, I anticipate a positive future for Philippines SOF international relations as the Philippines continues to adapt to the changing security landscape in the region and confronts the domestic difficulties brought about by terrorists, insurgents, and other criminal elements operating in the Philippines. Although some may perceive JCET programs as generating only a small benefit, in my experience, JCETs make a genuine difference in regional security and stability. Sometimes called the “sick man” of Asia, the Philippines is determined to stand up against the various internal and external challenges facing it. With continued US government support and assistance, particularly from SOCPAC, the Philippines security forces will be better able to protect the people against traditional and nontraditional security threats, secure the nation’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and earn a well-respected image as a strong US partner in the Pacific region. Finally, it takes a firm commitment, persistent training engagements, and the wise use of resources to ensure optimal outcomes and the successful attainment of SOF JCET objectives. ❖

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**MAJ Emmanuel G. Cabahug** is an infantry officer in the Philippine Army.

## NOTES

- 1 The views stated here are solely those of the author and do not represent official Philippine government policy or that of any official entity.
- 2 Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) is one aspect of a wide range of US international military training and education programs. For a recent report on these programs, including JCET, see Department of Defense and Department of State, *Foreign Military Training: Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009*, Joint Report to Congress, Vol. 1: II-2: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/152778.pdf>
- 3 Major Emmanuel G. Cabahug was assigned to the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Education and Training, OG8, Philippine Army, from 1 June 2009 to 16 June 2014. In this capacity, he dealt specifically with bilateral and multilateral training engagements with allied partners, including Army SOF JCETs with US Special Operations Command, Pacific.
- 4 See Thomas Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and US Interests*, RL 33233 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service [CRS], 5 April 2012): <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33233.pdf>
- 5 See, for example, Rubi Del Mundo, “Election ‘Hotspots,’” National Democratic Front of the Philippines, 31 January 2007: [http://www.philippinerevolution.net/statements/20070131\\_election-hotspots](http://www.philippinerevolution.net/statements/20070131_election-hotspots); Karapatan Alliance for the Advance of Human Rights, *Oplan Bantay Laya: Blueprint for Terror and Impunity*, 2009 Year-End Report on the Human Rights Situation in the Philippines (Quezon City, Philippines: Karapatan Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights, 2009): <http://www.scribd.com/doc/23837013/Karapatan-2009-Human-Rights-Report#scribd>; Dabet Castañeda, “Soldiers Vent Wrath on Civilians,” *Bulatlat* 5, no. 12 (1–7 May 2005): <http://bulatlat.com/news/5-12/5-12-soldiers.htm>; and “Scout Rangers Face Charges for Manhandling Farmworker,” *GMA News Online*, 3 September 2008: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/120058/news/regions/scout-rangers-face-charges-for-manhandling-farm-worker>
- 6 The Leahy Amendment, or “Leahy Law,” forbids the US military from providing assistance or training to foreign militaries that are known to violate human rights. See Nina M. Serafino et al., “*Leahy Law*” *Human Rights Provisions and Security Assistance: Issue Overview*, R43361 (Washington, D.C.: CRS, 29 January 2014): <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43361.pdf>
- 7 In this Hollywood movie, an ambitious TV weatherman (played by Bill Murray) is angry at being sent, for the fourth year in a row, to cover Groundhog Day, an event featuring a famous weather-forecasting rodent. On awakening in his hotel room on the day “after” the event, he discovers that it is again Groundhog Day. He eventually realizes that he is doomed to spend the rest of eternity in the same place doing the same thing every day, unless he can learn a personal lesson. See *Groundhog Day* (Columbia Pictures, 1993), Internet Movie Database, n.d.: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0107048/>

## Turkey's Fight to Shut Off the Flow of PKK Finances

*LT Mehmet Asım Kanmaz,  
Turkish Armed Forces*

A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, LIKE ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION, MUST struggle to secure adequate financial resources if it is to survive and continue its primary activity: carrying out acts of violence. As terrorism finance expert Michael Freeman notes, if terrorist groups do not have enough money, their violence will have to come to an end.<sup>1</sup> Martha Crenshaw, a noted scholar of terrorism studies, points out that the ability to act is vital for terrorist groups' survival: "Acts of terrorism may be motivated by the imperative of organizational survival. ... Survival is the minimal goal of any organization."<sup>2</sup> To achieve this minimal goal, terrorists therefore must have an organizational structure that supports financial stability. Sustaining a terrorist organization over the long term is more difficult than founding one, because an existing terrorist group has to meet the needs of its members, such as shelter, food, clothing, and medication, as well as provide the materiel and weaponry required for operations.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, terrorist organizations need to find lucrative, reliable, and consistent resources to continue their activities.

Freeman suggests a typology that divides the sources of terrorist group financing into four categories: state sponsorship, illegal activities, legal activities, and popular support.<sup>4</sup> The usefulness of each type of resource varies from one group to another. A country's efforts to interdict terrorist financing are an essential part of its overall counterterrorism strategy because successful interdiction will prevent terrorist groups from sustaining their activities or possibly even surviving. Additionally, successful countermeasures against terrorist financing would support other political and military countermeasures. Because terrorist groups take advantage of a variety of funding streams—drug trafficking, human smuggling, extortion, legal businesses, popular support, and state sponsorship—it can be difficult to get at the core of their finances. Furthermore, every terrorist organization has its own favorite funding source. To produce effective results, countermeasures therefore must address each terrorist organization separately and focus on each group's particular financing sources, especially the most lucrative and prevalent ones.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanî-PKK) is one of the most notorious terrorist groups to emerge in the late twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Since the PKK began operating in Turkey in the early 1980s, it has been a significant threat to Turkey's national integrity and security. To sustain its activities, the PKK has benefited from all four of the aforementioned types of finance, including state sponsorship by the Soviet Union. When such support decreased due to the collapse of the USSR in 1990, the PKK adapted by shifting to illegal activities to compensate for the financial loss.

The PKK would be considerably weakened if Turkey were able to interrupt the group's diverse, lucrative sources of revenue. Turkey is a regional power and important trade partner in the Middle East and Europe. By utilizing international

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cooperation and insight from its past experiences, Turkey could minimize or even terminate the PKK's financial activities by taking effective countermeasures. This article first examines the PKK's financial resources according to Freeman's typology, and then focuses on Turkey's possible countermeasures against the PKK's funding streams.

## State Sponsorship

Due to the covert nature of state sponsorship, it is hard to obtain precise numbers on the states that support terrorist groups.<sup>6</sup> According to Mitchel P. Roth and Murat Sever, the PKK enjoyed a great deal of state sponsorship until the early 2000s.<sup>7</sup> Although some of Turkey's neighbors, such as Iraq, Iran, and Syria, have been the PKK's main supporters by providing safe haven, funding, and weapons to the terrorist organization, the PKK has had sponsors throughout the world, including, at various times, the Soviet Union, Cuba, Bulgaria, Libya, Greece, Cyprus, and Armenia.<sup>8</sup> Ninety percent of the PKK's financial aid came from three countries: the USSR (and later the Russian Federation), Greece, and Syria. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the few remaining communist countries generally stopped supporting terrorist groups, while other state sponsors, such as Iraq, Iran, and Syria, decreased their support for terrorist organizations due to Turkey's increasing power and trade volume in the region.<sup>9</sup> The PKK leadership therefore realized that the group could not rely solely on state sponsors to survive; it had to find independent and consistent financial resources.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, even though state sponsorship has always been an easy and lucrative source of funds for terrorist groups like the PKK, there was always the possibility that a state sponsor would coerce the beneficiary groups to act within the state's interests. Terrorism expert Faruk Ekmekci cogently explains this view: "It seems that for many states terror is nothing but war by other means. ... Terrorist organizations have provided many states a less costly alternative to direct confrontation with the enemy in both economic and political terms."<sup>11</sup> By using terrorist groups to do their bidding, in other words, some states have been able to achieve their interests at a fraction of the cost of a conventional war. In recent years, terrorists have sought different funding sources to replace the state sponsorship they lost with the end of the Cold War.

Although the PKK suffered deeply from the decrease in communist state sponsorship, it was luckier than other terrorist organizations because several countries, including Syria, Iran, and Iraq, continued to support it.<sup>12</sup> Researchers Gokhan Bacik and Bezen Balamir Coskun observe, "In terms of enjoying international opportunities, the PKK should be cited as an exceptional case that has been tolerated almost as a legal entity."<sup>13</sup> Adding to this, Özdemir and Pekgözlü contend that the PKK would not have been able to survive for over 30 years if it had not had continuous foreign support, even if such support has decreased in recent years.<sup>14</sup>

Iraq, for instance, has provided the terrorist group with safe haven within its borders since the group's inception, as a means to weaken Turkey.<sup>15</sup> The PKK benefited from the turmoil caused by the 2003 US invasion of Iraq by increasing its safe havens and acquiring new camps in the northern part of the country, specifically in the Qandil Mountains. Iran also provided safe haven to the PKK, and Iranian officials let PKK terrorists travel freely within Iran's borders. In return for its aid, Iran has asked the terrorists to provide intelligence about Turkish and



**“FOR MANY  
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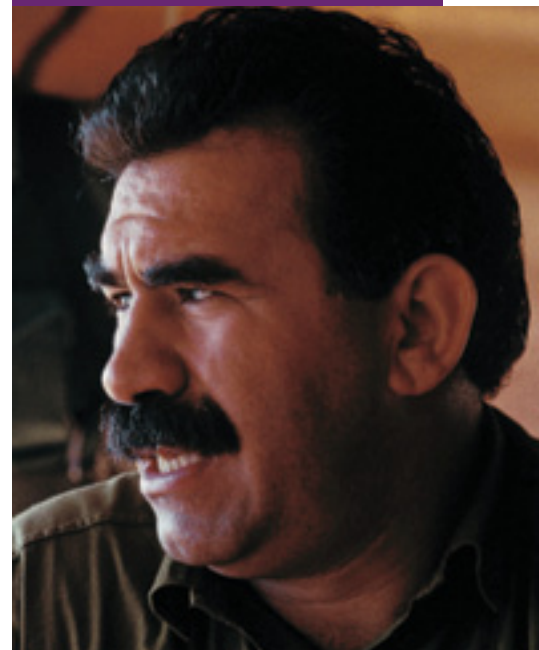


Guerrilla fighters of the PKK, or Kurdistan Workers' Party, train in their clandestine camp in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, 1991. This camp no longer exists.

US military sites in the region.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Greece helped the PKK by providing logistical support and training for the group's members and attempted to spirit PKK founder and leader Abdullah Öcalan to asylum in 1999. Carrying a Greek-Cypriot passport, Öcalan was captured by Turkish agents at the airport in Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>17</sup> Syria was another leading state sponsor of the PKK until 1998, when Ankara and Damascus signed the Adana Agreement, which explicitly forbade Syria from aiding the PKK. The PKK's one critical training camp, known as the Mahsum Korkmaz Academy, was located in the Bekaa Valley on the border of Syria and Lebanon. Until the 1998 accord was signed, PKK leader Öcalan had lived and traveled in Syria without any restriction. In a 1991 interview, Öcalan stated that of these three, the biggest supporter of the PKK was Syria, which was very hospitable to the terrorist organization. He also suggested that many European countries were just as hospitable as Syria.<sup>18</sup>

Syria's support for the PKK evolved out of its several disputes with Turkey surrounding water resources, territorial claims, and regional politics. "Two major elements of the enmity between Syria and Turkey have been Syrian irredentist claims over Alexandretta (Hatay), which joined Turkey in 1939, and disputes over sharing the waters of the Euphrates River, in which Turkey is the upstream country."<sup>19</sup> In addition to these disputes, a third problem was Turkey's improving relations with Israel, which was (and is) regarded as an enemy by Arab states in the Middle East. Other than these international disputes, Syria had little reason to support the PKK. Because the PKK is an ethnic terrorist organization that aims to build a Kurdish state in the region, and because Syria has a substantial Kurdish population within its borders, Syria would be expected to consider the existence of a Kurdish terrorist organization as a threat against its territorial and

Abdullah Öcalan, the Turkish-born founder of the PKK, 1991.





A Kurdish peshmerga fighter plants the Kurdish flag on top of a hill in the disputed territories, 2012.



## THE PKK IS INVOLVED IN EVERY PHASE OF THE REGIONAL DRUG TRADE.



Kurdish peshmerga pose in front of destroyed artillery in Maxmur, Iraq, 2014.

demographic integrity. Aiding the PKK, which is an enemy of its enemy, however, apparently seemed more profitable and logical to Syria than trying to eradicate the group.<sup>20</sup>

Rising tension between Turkey and Syria eventually made Syria follow a more careful policy toward the PKK. In 1998, after Turkey had warned Syria many times to stop its aid to the PKK, Turkey deployed an additional 10,000 troops to the Syrian border. Syria was forced to step back due to the high cost of engaging in a war with Turkey, and the two countries signed the Adana Agreement on 20 October 1998. After this agreement came into effect, Syria expelled PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, closed the PKK's training camps, and stopped its logistical support of the PKK.<sup>21</sup> The loss of Syrian support and the imprisonment of Öcalan shortly thereafter damaged the PKK, and as a result, its terrorist activities declined between 1999 and 2002.<sup>22</sup>

Turkey's increasing military, economic, and political weight in the region dissuaded other neighbors from aiding the PKK as well. Iran, Iraq, and Russia, for example, saw that their aid to the PKK adversely affected their trade volume with Turkey. Ultimately, the cost of the aid became greater than its benefit to these countries. Moreover, the militant Kurdish group Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê [Party of Free Life of Kurdistan] emerged as a threat to Iran around 2004. Iraq and Russia began to cooperate with Turkey against the PKK, while Iran signed a security agreement with Turkey and declared the PKK to be a terrorist organization.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the PKK's financial resources from state sponsors decreased substantially yet again between 2004 and 2006. To survive, the PKK had to find a way to compensate for the losses and consequently has come to rely on illegal activities to sustain its operations and its existence.

### Illegal Activities

The PKK's geographical location is a critical factor in facilitating its involvement in illegal activities, for several reasons. First, the PKK is active in the southeastern region of Turkey where it borders Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Second, this part of Turkey is largely mountainous, which makes it more difficult for security forces to control the area. Third, the PKK's territory is close to the Golden Crescent countries of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, which are the biggest heroin producers in Asia. Finally, Turkey is in the middle of the primary heroin and opium trafficking route, which starts in the Golden Crescent countries and ends in Europe.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, engaging in illegal activities that include drug trafficking, smuggling, and extortion is an easy and independent way for the PKK to raise a substantial amount of funds. Researchers note that "the PKK's annual income derived [solely] from criminal activities was estimated as 86 million US dollars at its peak in the 1990s."<sup>25</sup> Although it is difficult to determine precise numbers on the PKK's current income due to the covert nature of its activities,<sup>26</sup> it can be assumed that its income has remained substantial because of these illicit revenue streams.

### Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking is a lucrative resource for terrorists, and the PKK has involved itself in every phase of the regional drug trade.<sup>27</sup> "A kilogram of heroin can be bought for between \$1,000 and \$2,000 in Thailand or Afghanistan. As it moves through the drug hierarchy to market, the value rises to \$6,000–\$8,000



in Turkey, before reaching Germany where it wholesales for \$20,000–\$80,000, with a street value of \$200,000.”<sup>28</sup> To maximize the amount of money that the PKK can make, it has formed an organizational structure that allows it to engage in more drug trafficking activities.<sup>29</sup>

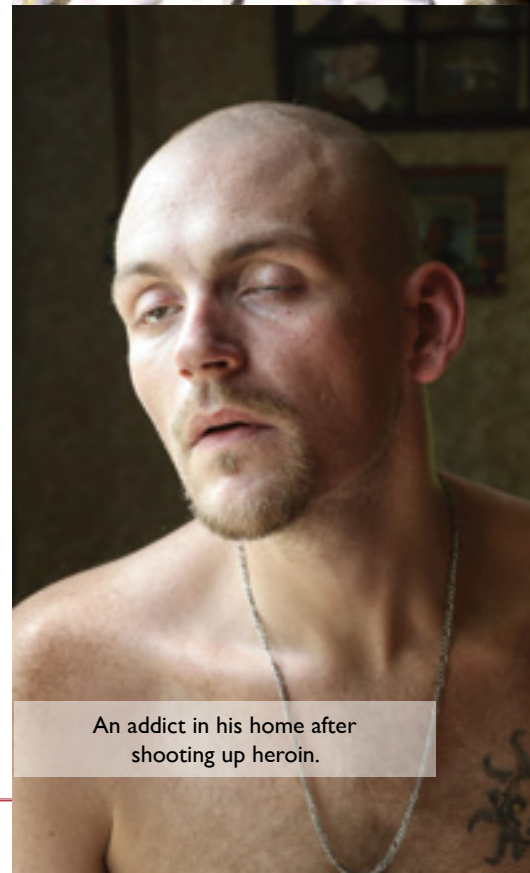
In the PKK’s early drug trafficking days, its only income was the protection money it demanded from drug smugglers. When the PKK noticed that it could acquire even more money by involving itself more actively in the drug trade, it started producing, distributing, and transporting narcotics, primarily heroin and opium, from the Golden Crescent countries to Europe. To become more effective at this enterprise, the PKK recruited people from the Kurdish diaspora in Europe to distribute drugs in the streets of European cities.<sup>30</sup> Due to the vast number of these recruits, the PKK is widely active in countries such as England, Germany, the Netherlands, and France.<sup>31</sup> Haydar Karaman explains this change for the PKK:

In most cases, these groups [like the PKK] do not engage in drugs during the initial stage of their combat. However, due to an increasing number of cadres and operations, during the enlargement stage, this necessity compels them to get involved in drug trafficking. Their success in terms of enlargement is related to the funding demands of the organization.<sup>32</sup>

Since state sponsorships began to drop off in the early 2000s, drug trafficking has become the PKK’s most profitable and popular financial resource for several reasons. First, it is easy to transport and hide narcotics because they can be divided into tiny packages.<sup>33</sup> It is difficult for law enforcement officers in Turkey, both gendarmerie and police officers, to find hidden narcotics without any prior intelligence or notice from citizens. Since there are many methods and places to hide the narcotics, sometimes even trained dogs cannot find them. Second, drug trafficking brings in a huge amount of money in a short time because the production of the drugs is relatively easy, and they are in high demand. Third, large-scale narcotics trafficking requires international links.<sup>34</sup> This requirement is not a problem for the PKK because the Kurdish diaspora extends across Europe and helps it sell the goods. In 2001, Michael Radu estimated that there were 800,000 Kurdish immigrants in Europe, mainly in Germany,<sup>35</sup> and that a number of these people were involved in the PKK’s drug distribution network. According to another report, “Germany’s chief prosecutor asserted that eighty percent of the drugs captured in Europe have been linked to the PKK.”<sup>36</sup> The same report says that the PKK uses money acquired from the drug trade to purchase weapons.<sup>37</sup>

## Human Smuggling

The geographical location of the PKK’s territory also provides opportunities for human smuggling. The PKK reportedly has joined a network with criminal groups in other countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Hungary, and Italy, which enables it to smuggle people from the Middle East and Asia into Europe.<sup>38</sup> Three routes are most frequently used by the PKK and its partner organizations for human smuggling: Istanbul to Milan, Istanbul to Bosnia to Milan, and Turkey to Tunisia to Malta to Italy.<sup>39</sup> The PKK’s human smuggling activities have provided three main benefits for the terrorist group: a considerable amount of money, new recruits in Europe, and increased power in the region.<sup>40</sup>



An addict in his home after shooting up heroin.

Human smuggling has been the next most lucrative source of funds for the PKK after drug trafficking. Roth and Sever report that in the mid-1990s, the PKK demanded between 2,000 and 3,000 euros for each person they transported to Europe. An Italian police report reveals that the PKK was connected with the smuggling of 9,000 Kurdish people from Anatolia to Europe in 2001. In another case in 2005, Romanian police uncovered a branch of the PKK's human smuggling operation in Romania, along with a cache of fake passports and bank documents. Furthermore, the undocumented immigrants the police caught confirmed that the smugglers demanded 6,000 to 7,000 euros per person to go to Berlin, Vienna, Paris, or London.<sup>41</sup> In addition to its smuggling activities, the PKK also threatens rival smugglers to force them to cooperate with it and demands that they pay a regular protection fee.<sup>42</sup> Given the numbers of smuggled people and the money each one pays, the PKK can be assumed to be making a substantial income from its human smuggling network.

Another benefit of human smuggling activities, as mentioned earlier, is that they provide recruitment opportunities and help the PKK increase its influence among the undocumented immigrant populations in Europe. According to reports, the PKK forcibly incorporates the immigrants it brings to Europe, including Kurdish children from 10 to 14 years old, into its drug trafficking activities.

In one such case, an 11-year-old child who was arrested in Hamburg in 1993 confessed that he was smuggled into Germany and forced to sell drugs by the PKK. These children are too young to face criminal liability, which makes them attractive to the PKK for its illegal activities.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in addition to the financial gain from human smuggling, the PKK increases its power in Europe by recruiting and controlling these illegal immigrants, who are unable to turn to the authorities for help. Despite the PKK's listing as a terrorist organization, only a few European countries so far have moved to prosecute it for its organized crime activities on the continent.

## Extortion

Another popular financial resource for the PKK in Europe and the Middle East has been extortion, which the group tries to hide by calling the funds "revolutionary taxes" or "voluntary contributions." Extortion can be carried out through kidnaping for ransom or by threatening to destroy people's properties and businesses. In north London, for

instance, many restaurants pay "insurance fees" to the local PKK to prevent them from damaging the restaurants, in a manner reminiscent of the "protection rackets" run by the Mafia. The PKK also extorts drug traffickers and smugglers by forcing them to pay so-called "taxes" on their activities. In addition, the PKK demands a "membership fee" from undocumented immigrants in European countries who work under a PKK front organization. Until recently, with the fear of arrest and deportation hanging over them, these victims were unwilling to complain to the authorities about these extortion activities.<sup>44</sup> Since the United States and the European Union designated the PKK as a terrorist organization in 1997 and 2002 respectively, however, the PKK began to lose some of the leverage to extort Kurdish people with violence and threats as it had in the past.

Extortion brought a great deal of money to the PKK: "In 1993 alone the PKK extorted 2.5 million pounds from Kurdish immigrants and businessmen within Great Britain."<sup>45</sup> During Operation Sputnik, a coordinated

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BELGIAN FRANCS  
PER MONTH.**

police crackdown across several European countries which took place in 1996, Belgian police learned that the PKK was taking in almost 300,000 Belgian francs (a bit less than US\$10,000) per month through extortion in Belgium alone. Similarly, in relation to the Belgian operation, German police discovered that the PKK acquired almost 250 million deutsche marks per month from its extortion ac-

tivities in Germany.<sup>46</sup> PKK founder Öcalan claimed in 1999 that the PKK's annual income from its extortion activities in European countries was 30 million deutsche marks.<sup>47</sup> More recently, the German Ministry of Interior Report for 2006 and 2007 noted that "the PKK collected 1.4 million Euros as protection money from Kurdish people in the North Rhine-Westphalia state, Germany."<sup>48</sup> Although the group continues to collect a great deal of money from extortion, its income from such activity declined in recent years due to its terrorist designation. For this reason, it began to increase its legal activities in Europe, which are described in further detail below.

## Money Laundering and Other Financial Activities

Money laundering, counterfeiting, and smuggling in all its various forms have brought significant income to the PKK. As part of Operation Sputnik, for example, Scotland Yard and the Belgian Police seized 350 million Belgian francs after they discovered that Med TV, a PKK-affiliated broadcasting company, was being used for money laundering.

Even though this business shut down in 1999, the PKK founded another broadcasting company, Medya TV, the next year.<sup>49</sup> In addition, “banks in Belgium, Cyprus, Jersey [in the UK], and Switzerland provide privacy for PKK funds; monetary transactions are carried out through the hawala system or by cash couriers.”<sup>50</sup> Of these countries, Cyprus is especially known as the PKK’s money laundering center. Furthermore, in the mid-1990s, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) uncovered the PKK’s involvement in making counterfeit stamps and banknotes. The terrorist group also engaged in cigarette and arms smuggling in Turkey’s southeastern region.<sup>51</sup> Blood smuggling is another illegal resource for the PKK. Researchers Roth and Sever contend that in a period up to and including 2005, the PKK collected 3,000 blood donations from Kurdish people under the so-called Kurdish Red Crescent organization. The terrorist group claimed that it collected this blood from the Kurdish people for charitable aims, but the PKK smuggled the blood out of Turkey, sold it abroad, and profited from people’s kindness. Ultimately, the PKK benefited from selling the blood both for use in patients and to foreign laboratories for analysis.<sup>52</sup>

### Semi-Legal Business Activities

The PKK conducts legal business through legitimate media, trade, and cultural organizations that it has set up or affiliates within Europe. For example, Roj TV, the PKK’s leading broadcasting company, located in Denmark, broadcast ideological programs for Kurdish people, and Kurdish businessmen supported the TV station by sponsoring commercials. Nevertheless, even though Roj TV was considered a legal business entity, the PKK founded it with money obtained from drug trafficking.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, some authorities regard Roj TV as an illegal business. In 2012, Roj TV was indicted in Danish court and fined 5.2 million Danish crowns (US\$894,800) for spreading terrorist propaganda: “The court said that between February 2008 and September 2010 the TV channel had ‘one-sidedly and uncritically disseminated (PKK) messages, including incitement to revolt and to join the organization.’”<sup>54</sup>

In addition to its broadcasting company, the PKK has several publications in Europe and Turkey. The terrorists forcibly sell these publications, especially to the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, with threats of violence. The selling prices reportedly depend on the buyers’ level of income: the PKK charges a higher price to people who make more money.<sup>55</sup>

The PKK founded its trade and cultural organizations in Europe with the initial support of European countries. In addition to serving as financial and political bases, these organizations also spread the PKK’s ideology and cover its illegal operations. They organize social activities in which the PKK compels Kurdish people to participate.<sup>56</sup> In other words, these legal organizations are serving as illegal extortion operations in practice by forcing people to donate to them.

### Popular Support

The PKK wants to utilize the European Kurdish diaspora’s loyalty, just as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) exploited Irish-Americans.<sup>57</sup> For this reason, it has set up charity organizations, such as the Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê [HSK]), that collect donations from people in Europe, especially from the Kurdish diaspora. Headquartered in Germany, the HSK has a website that allows it to collect donations worldwide, ostensibly to distribute funds to poor



**LEGAL ORGANIZATIONS  
SERVE THE PKK  
AS ILLEGAL  
EXTORTION  
OPERATIONS.**



CEO of the Kurdish Roj TV, Imdat Yimmaz (c), flanked by defence attorney Bjorn Elmquist (l) and chairman of the board Jamil Bozo (r), speaks during a press conference in Copenhagen, 13 January 2012.



Kurdish people. In reality, however, it gives the money raised from these charitable donations to the PKK. The HSK commercials on Roj TV (which has changed its name to Stêrk TV) and advertisements in *Ozgur Politika* (Free Policy) newspaper, reveal the organization's connections

and cooperation with the terrorist group.<sup>58</sup> Öcalan claimed that, in the early 1990s, the PKK collected two million deutsche marks as donations in one campaign alone in Germany.<sup>59</sup> Due to the lack of public knowledge about the connection between the charity

## PRO-PKK MAYORS SUPPORT THE PKK THROUGH MUNICIPAL FUNDS.

organizations and the PKK, the terrorists benefit from the goodwill of the Kurdish people and mislead them into supporting the terrorists even if they are not sympathizers of the PKK. Moreover, it is suspected that pro-PKK mayors support the PKK through municipal funds and institutions, which means that people's taxes are being diverted to serve as another financial resource for the PKK while the citizens suffer from a lack of municipal services.<sup>60</sup>

The PKK also exploits the religious responsibilities and activities of Kurdish people to increase its popular support and recruitment. Because most of the Kurdish people are Muslim, they have several religious responsibilities during the year, such as *sadaqat alfitr* and *zakat*—to tithe and give money to poor people. Even though the group's Marxist-Leninist ideology contradicts religious beliefs, the PKK established the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan, or Hereketa Islamiya Kurdistan (HIK), to collect this religious aid. For this reason, there are few people who know about the connection between the HIK and the PKK, including even some members of the PKK.<sup>61</sup>

### Possible Countermeasures Turkey Can Use against the PKK's Funding Methods

Turkey has been dealing with PKK terrorism for over 30 years. Even though Turkey almost brought an end to the PKK's operations several times, it could not completely succeed due to the substantial support the group was receiving from its state sponsors. The decrease in state support in recent years, however, has weakened the PKK's power while

strengthening the impact of Turkey's countermeasures against the terrorist group. Accordingly, the efforts Turkey makes to undermine the PKK's funding—by countering drug trafficking and human smuggling, stopping state and popular support, and closing the PKK's so-called legal businesses—will significantly help Turkey achieve its goal of ending PKK terrorism.

In the effort to shut down terrorist financing channels, states can benefit from studying the past experiences of other countries in addition to their own. The experiences of Spain, the United Kingdom, Colombia, the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan demonstrate that countermeasures have been most effective when they include cutting off state aid to terrorist groups. Examples of state aid to foreign insurgencies include French assistance to the Basque separatist group known as ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna), indirect American aid through the Irish diaspora to the IRA, and Pakistan's support of the Taliban.<sup>62</sup> The foremost action these countries undertook to counter terrorist financing methods was to build a strong and strict legal framework that: gave authorities the



power to freeze, block, and confiscate the assets of terrorists; mandated stricter reporting requirements for banks; made it illegal to engage in business with terrorists or their supporters; increased the power of judges and law enforcement officers; required government officials to be trained in terrorist financing and investigation methods; and obliged financial institutions to verify their customers' lack of any relationship to terrorist groups before providing service. In addition to increasing the numbers of terrorism financing experts and improving coordination between domestic government agencies, international cooperation and alliances have strengthened all efforts to counter terrorist financing.<sup>63</sup>

### Curtailing the Drug Trade

Since the PKK's primary financial resource is drug trafficking, Turkey should first concentrate its counter-efforts on preventing or minimizing this method of funding.<sup>64</sup> Some scholars suggest cost-effective methods that require countering only a specific phase of terrorists' drug trafficking activities to bring the whole enterprise down.<sup>65</sup>

Because the PKK organization engages directly or indirectly in every phase of drug trafficking, from cultivation and manufacturing to transport and sale, however, Turkey's countermeasures should separately address every phase of drug trafficking activities.<sup>66</sup> The cost of such countermeasures should be of secondary importance to Turkey because the continuation of PKK terrorism costs more than the projected countermeasures, especially considering the lives of the thousands of young people that have been lost to terrorist acts, crime, and drug addiction.

To produce better countermeasures against opium cultivation, Turkey should cooperate with Afghanistan, which is the center of the world's opium production but lacks the ability to tackle the problem on its own. A chronic lack of security, economic opportunity, and government control in large areas of Afghanistan are the primary reasons for widespread drug production in the country.<sup>67</sup> Another reason is because, as researcher Feroz Khan explains, "opium cultivation is a usual way of living for local people."<sup>68</sup> Because many Afghans make their living by cultivating opium, they do not consider the morality of their work.

Afghanistan and Turkey are almost sister countries and enjoy a decent and strong relationship that should ensure effective cooperation and significant benefits for both countries if they work together on drug control. Therefore, Turkey should cooperate with Afghanistan in an outreach program to change people's minds about opium production. Since the level of literacy is low in Afghanistan,<sup>69</sup> television broadcasting may be a better tool than internet sources, books, and magazines to reach individuals. Moreover, Afghanistan should more strictly implement its legal countermeasures to minimize opium cultivation. Although Afghanistan's government has attempted to substitute wheat for opium production, its efforts are not close to achieving this objective. Turkey should share its experience and data with Afghanistan to increase wheat production by lowering the profits of opium cultivation through strong countermeasures, providing crop subsidies to farmers, deploying agricultural engineers to assist farmers to make the transition to licit crops, and creating a more suitable environment for wheat production and marketing.

Turkey's involvement in eliminating drug manufacturing labs in Afghanistan can also significantly contribute to reducing the drug trade. Afghanistan is a safe haven for many drug labs, so traffickers need to bring in the precursor chemicals required to manufacture heroin from raw opium. Preventing these chemicals from reaching





A Turkish forces' armoured vehicle patrols the Turkey-Syria border.



A peshmerga border guard directs traffic in the road while a driver waits.



Afghanistan therefore is as crucial as stopping the transportation of the manufactured drugs. Even though there is a UN convention that addresses precursor chemicals (called *dual-use* because they have many legitimate uses besides the processing of illegal drugs), this convention lacks legally binding requirements for countries to strictly control their production and sale, and many countries have no corresponding domestic laws. Afghanistan does not have a legal framework or an effective system of control for precursor chemicals, which allows traffickers to easily and securely transport them within the country.<sup>70</sup> Mark Colhoun, technical advisor to the UN International Narcotics Control Board, reports, “From the cases we have seen, [precursor chemicals] are being smuggled [into Afghanistan] as well. Why they are smuggling them in is a mystery because they are not controlled, so they could just ship them over a border.”<sup>71</sup>

To address this lack of control, Turkey should encourage and help Afghanistan to enact laws to regulate the circulation of dual-use precursor chemicals within the country. In addition, Turkey could assign experienced military and law enforcement personnel to Afghanistan to share its experience in controlling and preventing the diversion of dual-use chemicals. Furthermore, traffickers’ communication with industrial suppliers creates vulnerabilities, which make it possible for Afghan officials to gather intelligence on traffickers’ activities.<sup>72</sup> As a trusted ally, Turkey can also request particular intelligence and GPS data from the United States to allow Afghan forces to conduct instant operations that target opium fields and mobile labs.<sup>73</sup> Thus, by causing substantial damage to both drug production and manufacturing activities, Turkey and Afghanistan can undermine drug trafficking at the beginning of the process. By helping Afghanistan, in turn, Turkey would also be preventing the PKK from funding itself through the drug trade.

### Border Security

To forestall the PKK’s drug trafficking and human smuggling, Turkey also needs to improve the effectiveness of its border security system. Because smuggling—human smuggling in particular—is often conducted through the Mediterranean Sea, “border security system” in this context refers to both land and marine border security. The prevention of human and other smuggling is as critical as the prevention of drug trafficking, because extorting smugglers is another of the PKK’s fundraising methods.

The mountainous geography of Turkey’s southeastern border region is a serious challenge for border security, especially because terrorists and smugglers typically conduct their activities under the cover of darkness, which makes visual detection very difficult. To eliminate this disadvantage, security officials should have access to a variety of current technological equipment, including thermal imaging cameras, night vision scopes and goggles, x-ray control devices, and mobile surveillance systems, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Turkey already uses UAVs in surveillance activities, but it should increase their numbers and the number of operators to improve overall surveillance capabilities on the borders. Additionally, x-ray car scanners that are able to scan big and long trucks are essential at every border crossing. These machines are quite useful in detecting contraband goods, and they save valuable time and help increase security at busy, crowded border crossings. Longer wait times can

also negatively affect the flow of trade. Dogs trained to search for narcotics are significantly effective in finding contraband, but they are able to work for only a limited time—approximately 30 minutes once or twice a day—so increasing their numbers at border crossings could be even more helpful. Finally, border security officials should have an extensive archive of statistics available to them. With the help of this kind of information, officials could pinpoint days or weeks when the capture rates for narcotics have historically been high, identify border posts that have detected specific types of prohibited items or have particularly high rates of interdiction, and detect when transit density increases at certain crossing gates. Making this data available to border personnel could greatly improve the effectiveness of border security.

### The Power of Media

To undermine the PKK's drug trafficking activities, Turkey should also use the power of outreach. Drug trafficking ultimately causes serious harm to human health, so terrorist organizations like the PKK do not want the public, especially their supporters, to know about the group's involvement in the drug trade.<sup>74</sup> Although the PKK's drug trafficking is well known to government officials, the military, and police officers, the civilian population in Turkey is largely unfamiliar with this aspect of its affairs. To increase people's awareness of the PKK's criminal activities in the region, Turkey's government could produce documentaries and TV series that expose the PKK's covert activities. Broadcast channels can allocate a significant amount of time to cover the PKK's criminal activities. Many people in Turkey watch TV shows and the news on a daily basis, so informing people through these broadcasts would be fast, easy, and effective. In addition, government officials and senior leadership can disclose the PKK's involvement in illegal activities in their speeches. Increasing public awareness of the PKK's connection to the drug trade would cause the terrorist group to lose credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of its supporters and sympathizers and consequently, much popular support.

Eliminating the PKK's money laundering activities and limiting its financial transactions can have a profound impact on the group's financing. After making inordinate amounts of money from its illegal fundraising methods, the PKK must convert its funds into "legitimate" resources through laundering. Turkey should enact strict laws against money

laundering, as has been done in a number of countries, including Spain, the UK, Colombia, and the United States. Accordingly, Turkey should revise its current money laundering laws to improve law enforcement's ability to freeze, block, and confiscate the assets of suspected or known terrorists, and it should require the reporting and recording of large bank transactions to prevent citizens from doing business with terrorists or their supporters. This reporting requirement would increase scrutiny of existing terrorist bank accounts as well. Writing these laws is not enough, however; the laws must then be enforced. The lack of prosecutions and convictions related to money laundering crimes up until recently seems to indicate that Turkey is failing in this area.<sup>75</sup>

The Turkish government needs to coordinate the implementation of anti-money-laundering laws among its institutions to ensure the effectiveness of such financial countermeasures. As a member of the multinational Financial Action Task Force (FATF),<sup>76</sup> Turkey should increase its international cooperation efforts. Turkey currently falls within the category of Improving Global Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Terrorist Financing Compliance.<sup>77</sup> Taking the further countermeasures recommended here would serve to improve Turkey's ranking and categorization within the FATF and further enable it to counter the PKK's financing. Also, Turkey's efforts to follow Spain and Colom-

## DOCUMENTARIES AND TV SERIES COULD EXPOSE THE PKK'S COVERT ACTIVITIES.

bia's leads in increasing its number of counterterrorism experts would contribute to the success of the country's anti-money-laundering activities. For this reason, Turkey should improve the national security and counterterrorism departments in its universities and increase the number of these departments nationwide. Finally, Turkey should implement effective financial oversight of the municipal expenditures of its city mayors, to prevent pro-PKK mayors from abusing their authority by diverting public funds to the PKK.<sup>78</sup>

### Ending State Sponsorship

Finally, the experiences of Turkey itself and other countries prove that the prevention of state sponsorships is pivotal to ensuring the effectiveness of countermeasures. The decrease in state support in the late 1990s and early 2000s diminished the PKK's strength and subsequently the number of its terrorist attacks, but the PKK has continued to enjoy some forms of state aid.<sup>79</sup> Turkey should follow a zero-tolerance policy against state aid. The PKK's camps



in Iraq and Syria prove that these countries serve as safe havens. Turkey can implement sanctions against the state sponsors of the PKK by leveraging its considerable political and economic power in the region. In spite of state sponsorship's covert nature, Turkey's National Intelligence Agency should be able to identify the countries that support the PKK directly or indirectly. Furthermore, Turkey should be wary about the role that Western countries have given the Kurds to combat extremist groups such as the so-called Islamic State (aka ISIS or ISIL) in the Middle East, because aid to the Kurdish people can become a new type of financial resource for the PKK.<sup>80</sup>

### Ending the Flow of Charity Money

Because the PKK uses its drug trafficking money to create so-called legal businesses and charity organizations, Turkey should also take precautions against these entities' support for the PKK. As described earlier, the Kurdish Red Crescent (HSK), which collects donations from people in Europe, does not use the collected money to help poor and needy Kurdish people. Instead, it delivers the money directly to the PKK terrorists and its supporters. If people knew about the relationship between the two organizations, they probably would not donate to the HSK. Turkey should therefore take steps to increase people's awareness through a media outlet that broadcasts in Turkish, Kurdish, and English. The Turkish authorities should encourage broadcasters to promote special programs regarding the PKK's so-called charity and business organizations. Moreover, magazines, newspapers, and journals should be encouraged to talk about the PKK's relationship with these organizations. Although these so-called legal organizations have been operating in Europe, European countries are not responding adequately to stop them. Turkey should inform European countries about the HSK and other organizations' relationship with the PKK by providing documents and intelligence data and increasing its partnership and cooperation with Europe. Turkey should also appeal to the EU to conduct stricter oversight of suspect organizations and close those organizations that are affiliated with the terrorist group.

### Conclusion

Like any other organization, the PKK needs to look for ways to survive and continue its activities. Therefore, it tries to maintain stable, lucrative financial sources to sustain it. As changing regional and global conditions over the past 30 years caused state sponsorship to diminish, the group was forced to look for new funding sources, primarily from illegal activities. Its success in making this shift reflects the PKK's strong organizational ability to adapt to changing conditions to survive, just as other human communities do. Stanley Milgram explains the role of survival in human behavior:

Behavior, like any other of man's characteristics, has through successive generations been shaped by the requirements of survival. Be-

haviors that did not enhance the chances of survival were successively bred out of the organism because they led to the eventual extinction of the groups that displayed them.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, the requirements of PKK's survival shaped its choices of funding sources, such as drug trafficking, human smuggling, and extortion.

To counter the PKK's funding streams, Turkey can benefit from the experiences of other countries that have fought against terrorism and adopt a broad strategy that begins with a robust legal framework and related regulations. Experience shows that financial countermeasures can begin to work when state support to

terrorist organizations is stopped. Turkey should aim to disrupt the PKK's drug trafficking operations, the group's most lucrative resource, by targeting every phase, from cultivation and manufacturing to trafficking and selling. To achieve this objective, it should form partnerships to ensure regional and international cooperation. Turkey also needs to improve the effectiveness of its border security by employing more advanced technology, increasing the authority of its government officers, and enacting stronger laws. To decrease the popular support of the PKK, Turkey should use the power of media to inform the public of the PKK's involvement in the drug trade and reveal the illicit

## IRAQ AND SYRIA STILL SERVE AS SAFE HAVENS FOR THE PKK.



YPG, the Syrian branch of the PKK,  
Aleppo 2013.

relationships between quasi-legal businesses and charity organizations, and the terrorist group. The PKK's operations as a transnational criminal organization are a threat for European countries as well. Therefore, Turkey should convince European countries to cooperate with it to counter the PKK's influence within Europe.

In conclusion, the struggle to close down financing sources is vital to combating terrorism. Although attacking its funding alone might not stop the PKK's violence, success in this area would support other military, political, and social countermeasures, and perhaps finally end PKK terrorism in Turkey. ❖

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A Turkish special police officer walks near the ship *Atlantic Cruiser* in the port of Iskenderun.



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LRA victim of mutilation



A victim of the Lira district attacks by members of the LRA.



## The Movers and Shakers of the Lord's Resistance Army

*MAJ David Munyua,  
Uganda People's Defence Force*

**T**HE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY/MOVEMENT (LRA/M OR SIMPLY LRA), founded in the late 1980s, is a Ugandan insurgent group that operated primarily out of the northern and eastern part of Uganda until 2006. After 2006, under pressure from counterinsurgency operations, the group relocated to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and eventually moved into the Central African Republic (CAR) via the Republic of South Sudan. Based on reports of its activities, the LRA is also suspected to be present in Sudan and southeastern Chad (see figure 1). Most of the LRA's fighters, including leader Joseph Kony, come from the Acholi tribe of northern Uganda, and the insurgents received passive support from tribal communities for many years. Local popular support dried up, however, when the LRA started committing atrocities against its own tribal members. The heinous violence the LRA unleashed against the Acholi earned the insurgents the status of a terrorist group according to both Uganda and the United States' definitions of terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

By 2014, the LRA's fighting capacity had been largely degraded by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), working jointly with the militaries of South Sudan, the CAR, and the DRC in an alliance called the African Union Regional Task Force (AURTF). The LRA does not pose as great a threat to Uganda as it did 10 years ago. However, it continues to commit atrocities against the people of the countries in which it is currently located. The greatest obstacle in the fight against the LRA is the lack of a front line where the LRA can be located and destroyed. By operating in scattered groups of three to 12 fighters, each with its own commander who determines the movements and operations of the group, the LRA has effectively become invisible.<sup>2</sup> This has made tracking and destroying even the weakened LRA a very daunting task.

The purpose of this article is to identify the most influential players in the current LRA command structure. Knowing the identities of the individuals who are most responsible for the LRA's survival will help counterinsurgency planners devise the best possible strategies to finally end the LRA menace in the region.

This article has five sections. First, I describe the background of the LRA insurgency in Uganda and the reasons it has flourished in central Africa; second, I clearly define the objectives and limitations of my research; and third, I structure, analyze, and evaluate the data that I collected in the course of my research, using social network analysis tools. In the fourth section, I use the results of my analysis to devise strategic options, and in the final section, I draw conclusions and offer recommendations for the way forward. While social network analysis tools are not an end in themselves, their use can contribute important information for crafting winning strategies against intractable problems such as the LRA.

THE LRA  
HAS EFFEC-  
TIVELY BECOME  
INVISIBLE.

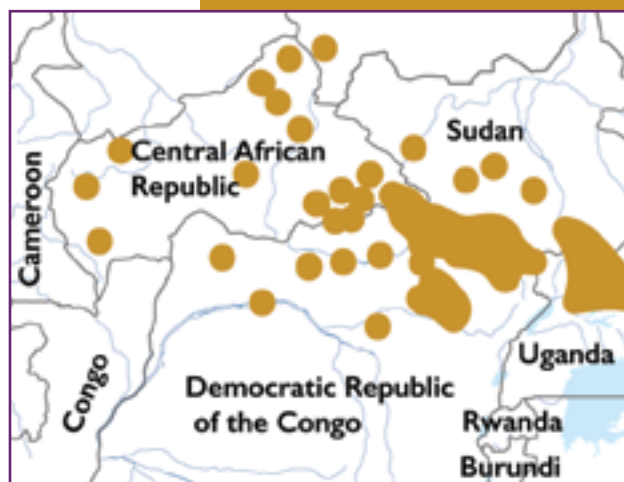


Figure 1: Countries Affected by the LRA Insurgency<sup>3</sup>



## IN 1986, ALICE “LAKWENA” FORMED THE HOLY SPIRIT MOVEMENT.



Alice Auma (r) and follower



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni

### An Abbreviated History of the LRA Insurgency

In 1986, the insurgent National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA), led by Yoweri Museveni, overthrew the Ugandan government of Tito Okello. Okello, an ethnic Acholi, fled the country, and many of his tribe members took refuge in neighboring Sudan. These displaced people later regrouped as the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) and launched a counteroffensive against the NRA government in Uganda with the support of the Sudanese government.<sup>4</sup>

In that same year, 1986, as the NRA was still trying to settle in as a government, an Acholi priestess called Alice Auma formed a separate rebel group. Auma called herself “Lakwena,” meaning “messenger,” because she proclaimed herself to be a mystical spiritual conduit to the Acholi people. Her Holy Spirit Movement (also called the Holy Spirit Mobile Force) fought against the NRA and captured a substantial part of eastern Uganda. In 1987, however, Lakwena's army was defeated, and Lakwena and some of her followers fled to Kenya, where she died from illness in 2007.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the UPDA continued the fight against the NRA government until 1988, when its leaders finally decided to sign a peace agreement that disbanded the UPDA. Per the terms of the agreement, members of the UPDA were incorporated into the government military forces. This agreement also temporarily halted Sudanese support to the Ugandan insurgent group.

Some individuals within the UPDA nevertheless did not accept the terms of the agreement and decided to form a breakaway UPDA force. Joseph Kony, who was the commanding officer of the UPDA's so-called Black Battalion and a relative of Alice Auma Lakwena, was one of these dissidents. He formed the Uganda People's Democratic Christian Army, which was partly an offshoot of Lakwena's rebel group. In 1992, Kony's rebel army and some of the other UPDA breakaway members decided to form a united front against the NRA. The Lord's Resistance Army thus came into being with Joseph Kony as its leader.<sup>6</sup>

The LRA reactivated its connection with the Sudanese Armed Forces so as to receive military supplies and special training from the Sudanese government. Ugandan president Museveni was a former classmate of John Garang, the leader of the Sudanese insurgent group called the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and the two of them also renewed their ties. In essence, the insurgencies turned into a proxy war, with the LRA and Sudanese Armed Forces fighting against Kampala, while the SPLA and Uganda's NRA fought together against Khartoum. This status persisted until 2005, when the game finally changed.<sup>7</sup>

On 8 October 1995, Uganda enacted a new constitution that transformed the NRA forces into a national military called the Uganda People's Defence Force.<sup>8</sup> This was primarily a change of name; the force's operations and routine activities remained unchanged, and it continued the fight against the LRA.



Joseph Kony (l) and Vincent Otti (r)

The comprehensive peace agreement that was signed between the Sudanese government and the SPLA in 2005 finally changed the status quo in the proxy war. The LRA not only lost its ally, but the cross-border sanctuary that LRA fighters had been using to escape from the Ugandan military shifted to the control of the SPLA—an enemy of the LRA by extension. LRA leaders thus had to choose between entering into peace talks with the Ugandan government or relocating to yet another safe haven. They chose both options but prioritized relocation. Given how events unfolded thereafter, one may plausibly argue that the LRA used the peace talks to make good their escape.<sup>9</sup>

While peace talks were being held in Juba, South Sudan, in 2006, attended by the LRA's so-called "external wing," the LRA's fighters quietly relocated to Garamba National Park in the DRC. By late 2007, the peace talks had concluded with an agreement that was to be signed in Juba. To the astonishment of many, including the LRA negotiators, however, Kony decided to abandon the agreement at the last minute. The International Criminal Court had issued a warrant for the arrest of Kony and his top four commanders in July 2005, and Kony wanted the charges against him and his commanders dropped before he put his signature to the agreement. There were also reports that Kony was not actually interested in the peace agreement but was using it to buy time for his forces to regroup. He therefore had to find a reason to avoid signing, and this was the best excuse he had.<sup>10</sup>

In 2008, Uganda responded by launching a concerted attack, dubbed "Operation Lightning Thunder," on the LRA positions in the DRC. The LRA was dispersed, and some of its members fled into the CAR, Sudan's Darfur region, and parts of Chad. At the time of this writing, LRA members are suspected to be located in these three countries as well as parts of South Sudan.<sup>11</sup>



**THE LRA USED  
THE PEACE  
TALKS TO  
MAKE GOOD  
THEIR ESCAPE.**

## The Structure of this Study

There are a lot of data about the LRA in open sources, which makes it easy for researchers to get "lost in the weeds" if they are not very clear on what they want to know about the terrorist group. For this article, I focus on the LRA's commanders (also called actors here) and command structure. Even with the wealth of open-source information about the most influential LRA commanders, however, it can still be difficult to find the most recent roll of their names. Furthermore, the group has been in hiding for so many years that previously important commanders are aging out of their positions, while others may be dead. I therefore suspect that the LRA has developed a new generation of commanders—most likely those individuals who were born and/or raised in the bush as child soldiers. The bad news is that there is very little public information available about these feral younger men, and because the only "normal" life they know is bush life, it will be harder for counterinsurgency forces to deal with them.

I used social network analysis software to process the available data on the LRA command structure.<sup>12</sup> My goal was to identify the most influential commanders within the LRA, especially because they are the ones who most likely have been responsible for the terrorist group's survival in the bush over the past quarter century. This kind of data analysis may also provide hints about the next generation of LRA commanders. As a result, CT planners should also be able to derive working strategies to counter and eventually end the LRA insurgency.

## Structuring, Analyzing, and Evaluating the Data

Social network analysis tools require the researcher to code and enter the data in a format that is understandable to and can be manipulated by the tools. Once this step is completed, the researcher can analyze the same data in a number of different ways. For this study, I coded two datasets specifically on the LRA commanders. The first set is based on the relationships among the commanders, both the command positions to which they are appointed by the senior LRA leadership, and their relationships to each other through friendship or other affiliation. As in a regular army, LRA commanders do not choose the unit or subgroup they will command; Kony alone decides who will command which group and also assigns the fighters to their units within the LRA organizational structure. Outside of the command structure, however, the commanders tend to form “cliques” based primarily on personal ties of friendship and loyalty. Understanding how these two groups relate and differ will help researchers identify the most influential commanders and their close affiliates.

The second set of data that I coded concerns two specific attributes for each commander. First is the current physical status of the individual commander: alive, dead, alive and captured, or alive and surrendered. Those in the latter categories of captured or surrendered are useful to study

because they may still have some influence on their former cadres, especially if they become part of the government’s outreach programs. The second attribute is the LRA officer’s function within the command structure: is he a field commander or in some non-command–related position such as staff officer? Those who are still alive and are, or were, in positions of command over the fighting forces are the ones I focus on for further study.

The analysis process typically starts with basic descriptive statistics about the LRA command network: first a calculation of correlations between the two relational datasets (command structure and personal cliques), and then an aggregated version derived from the two. The results show that the relational datasets are highly correlated and that all the LRA commanders are linked to each other regardless of how the LRA leadership deploys them. In other words, I should get similar results when I analyze any one of the relational datasets independently of the others.

The second step in the analysis is the topographical analysis. This analysis is based on the overall structure of the networks (the relational datasets) and is designed to ascertain the density (interconnectedness) and the centralization (hierarchical arrangement) of the networks. The result of the analysis shows that the LRA’s networks

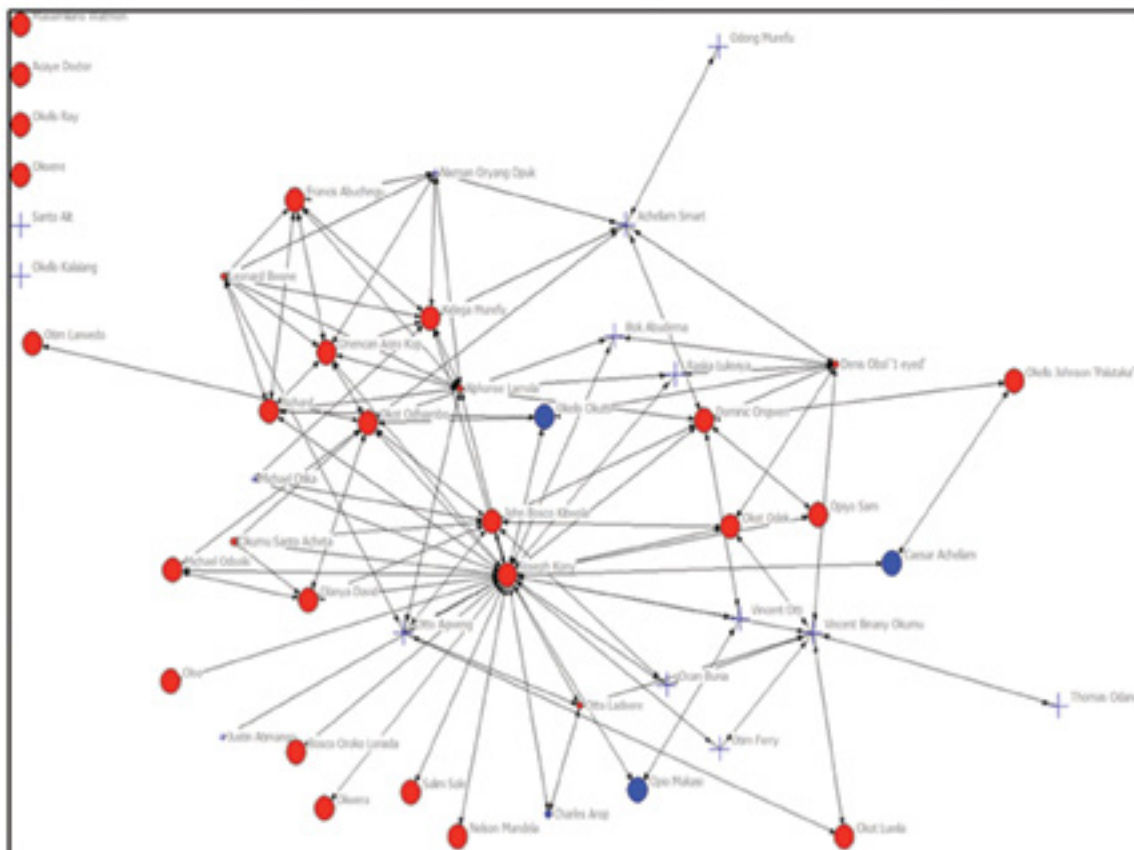


Figure 2: A Sociogram of the LRA Commanders' Network<sup>13</sup>



are generally not very dense but are relatively centralized; in other words, the command structure is not closely integrated at the personal level, but it is fairly hierarchical. The sociogram in figure 2 is a summary map of the entire LRA command structure, 48 persons in all, based on the information available from open sources. The blue nodes indicate actors who are no longer a threat, that is, commanders who are either dead, captured, or surrendered. The red nodes indicate actors who are still a threat because they are alive and free. The symbols indicate three things; first, the large “+” sign indicates an actor who is deceased; second, the large red and blue circles denote actors who fill or filled the role of commander; and third, the small “+” and small red and blue circles denote actors who are not (or were not) commanders.

The third step in the analysis process is to determine the centrality of each commander in the network. For this step, I used four different types of centrality measures: (1) degree centrality, which measures the number of other people an actor is linked to; (2) closeness centrality, which measures how close an actor is (based on path distance), on average, to all other actors in the network; (3) betweenness centrality, which measures how “central” each actor is to the network—in other words, the degree to which he lies on the shortest path to all other actors in the network; and (4) eigenvector centrality, which is based on the assumption that actors who are tied to highly central actors are more important than those who are tied to peripheral actors. This analysis, therefore, weighs the sum of an actor’s ties to other actors by his centrality scores.<sup>14</sup> Table 1 shows the output of the centrality measures from an analysis of an extract of LRA commanders who are known to be alive, regardless of whether they are still in the bush or in custody.

Degree			Closeness		Betweenness		Eigenvector	
Rank	Actor	Value	Actor	Value	Actor	Value	Actor	Value
1	Joseph Kony	1.375	Joseph Kony	0.716	Joseph Kony	0.523	Joseph Kony	0.519
2	Okot Odhiambo	0.500	Okot Odhiambo	0.487	Okot Odhiambo	0.067	Onencan Aciro Kop	0.219
3	Alphonse Lamola	0.438	Alphonse Lamola	0.477	Dominic Ongwen	0.057	Alphonse Lamola	0.280
4	Onencan Aciro Kop	0.438	Dominic Ongwen	0.468	Alphonse Lamola	0.033	Okot Odhiambo	0.272
5	Dominic Ongwen	0.375	Onencan Aciro Kop	0.468	Onencan Aciro Kop	0.032	Richard	0.248
6	Richard	0.375	Richard	0.458	Richard	0.023	John Bosco Kibwola	0.227
7	John Bosco Kibwola	0.375	John Bosco Kibwola	0.458	Okello Okutti	0.020	Kidega Murefu	0.222
8	Francis Abuchingu	0.313	Okello Okutti	0.449	Caesar Achellam	0.016	Olanya David	0.206
9	Leonard Bwone	0.313	Kidega Murefu	0.441	Kidega Murefu	0.015	Dominic Ongwen	0.190
10	Olanya David	0.313	Olanya David	0.432	John Bosco Kibwola	0.013	Leonard Bwone	0.186

Table 1: Centrality Measures for LRA Commanders' Network<sup>15</sup>

The seven individuals whose names are marked in red consistently rank within the list of the top 10 actors for all the centrality measures. The first category includes Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, and Dominic Ongwen, which is not surprising because these individuals are all LRA commanders who are on the International Criminal Court’s wanted list.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, the names in the second category, which includes Alphonse Lamola, Onencan Aciro Kop, Richard (no last name), and John Bosco Kibwola, were surprising to me, because the first three in particular had not appeared in news reports about LRA activities. Kibwola only started to show up in the news in 2007, following the collapse of the Juba peace negotiations.

When I narrowed the group of the most influential living LRA actors in table 1 down to those who are active commanders, mostly the same names showed up. The exceptions were Alphonse Lamola, who was excluded because he is not a commander, and Olanya David, a new entrant in the top seven, who is Kony’s paternal half-brother. David scored low in

betweenness centrality, however. There is a report that he was demoted by his brother Kony after impregnating one of Kony's wives, which may explain his inability to maintain close ties to other important actors.<sup>17</sup>

One interesting item that emerged from this analysis is the structure of two competing factions that exist within the LRA leadership. One is led by Dominic Ongwen and the other by Joseph Kony. These two fell out after Kony ordered the execution of his longtime deputy, Vincent Otti. Otti had indicated that he was willing to talk peace with the Ugandan government. Kony, who was against the idea, feared that peace talks would cause the LRA to disintegrate. Ongwen had been very loyal to Otti, and many of Otti's followers in turn became loyal to Ongwen.

## Strategic Options

Nancy Roberts and Sean Everton, in their paper "Strategies for Combating Dark Networks," outlined two broad categories of strategic options that can be used to disrupt a terrorist or insurgent network. The first is a kinetic approach, which is a proactive and aggressive action against enemy combatants and their supporters with the intent to neutralize, capture, or kill them. The kinetic approach targets the key actors directly or uses third-party agents to do the targeting. In both cases, the ultimate goal is to remove central nodes or brokers, or it may involve breaking key ties within the network to disrupt the rest of the network.<sup>18</sup>

A Ugandan soldier hunts LRA rebels.

**THE SECOND  
APPROACH  
INVOLVES A SUBTLE  
AND PATIENT USE  
OF NATIONAL  
POWER.**

The second approach is nonkinetic, and thus less aggressive. It involves a more subtle and patient use of national power, including diplomacy, information, and economic incentives, with the intent to undermine the dark network through cooperation and collaboration with partners, while emphasizing a flexible rather than prescriptive approach. The overall objective of this strategic approach is to secure the safety and support of the population while undermining the dark network's influence and control over them.

## The Kinetic Approach

The LRA commanders who may be considered for targeting are the eight whom I identified as being the most important through the use of social network analysis tools: Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, Dominic Ongwen, Onencan Aciro Kop, Richard, John Bosco Kibwola, Olanya David, and Alphonse Lamola. Because these individuals are very influential in the LRA network, it is likely that if they were captured or killed, the LRA would not be able to continue the insurgency or even survive. There are two possible approaches to a kinetic solution: the AURTF can continue

to hunt the men directly, or it can try sending surrendered LRA fighters back into the bush to "take them out" one at a time. Although many LRA commanders have been killed by regular forces over the past 20 years or so, direct targeting has become less effective since the LRA went into hiding and became "invisible." Without a front line where the AURTF can face off with the LRA, the fight has become a game of hide-and-seek. The option to have surrendered LRA members sneak back in and kill the commanders is a recommendation that is yet to be tested.

## The Nonkinetic Approach

The nonkinetic strategies that are applicable in the fight against the LRA are institution building, psychological operations, and rehabilitation.<sup>19</sup> Information operations will not work against the group because, since 2009, the LRA has not used any traceable form of electronic communication.



The commanders rely on runners to communicate among themselves, which has rendered the use of high-tech systems like satellite tracking to locate them irrelevant.<sup>20</sup>

*Institution building* involves empowering local communities with strong administrative systems that can organize citizens to resist the insurgents. It also involves giving the villages the means to call in immediate military help when they need it. One of the difficulties facing villagers in the DRC, CAR, and South Sudan is the lack of any reliable means to quickly report LRA attacks to the AURTF. Most of the time, such information reaches the AURTF long after the LRA has committed its atrocities and disappeared again.<sup>21</sup> As part of the institution-building strategy, each village would need to have a minimum of two fast-link communications systems to connect with the AURTF. This also implies that the AURTF should have the capacity to reach every village as quickly as possible. The deplorable roads and dense jungle terrain of the region, however, are likely to impede the implementation of this strategy.

*Psychological operations (PsyOps)* involve the dissemination of selected information for the purpose of influencing the emotions, perceptions, attitudes, objective reasoning, and, in the end, the behavior of the targeted individual or group. The ultimate aim here is to align the thinking and behavior of the targeted group or individual with that of the institution projecting the PsyOps.<sup>22</sup> This strategy can be used to counter the propaganda LRA leaders use to influence their forces against the Ugandan government. For example, captured LRA fighters have asserted that while in the jungles without access to other sources of information, their commanders would tell the fighters that they would be killed if they surrendered or happened to be captured by the UPDF. To counter this misinformation, Uganda is now using captured and surrendered commanders and fighters to talk to their former LRA colleagues through radio talk shows. The aim here is to discredit the LRA propaganda and at the same time influence LRA fighters to consider surrendering to the UPDF or AURTF.<sup>23</sup>

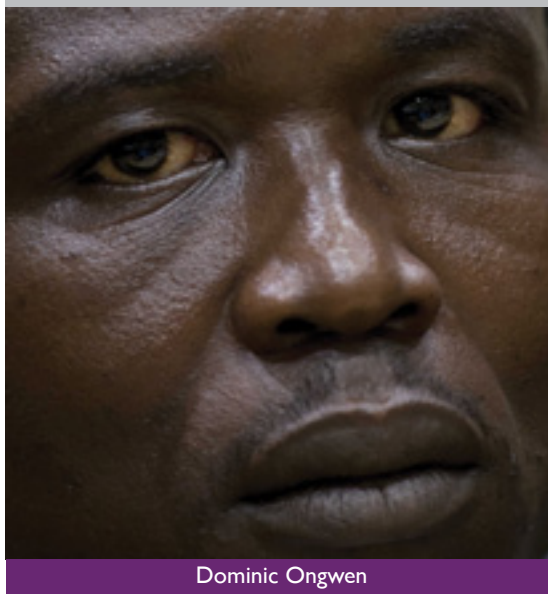
As mentioned earlier, my social network analysis identified two rival factions within the LRA. The faction led by Dominic Ongwen could be influenced to push against the Joseph Kony faction, which would thus destabilize the LRA leadership network. This can be achieved by promising Ongwen, a more liberal commander, that he will be given amnesty if he gives up fighting and returns home with his group. Alternatively, the Ugandan government could announce over the radio that it is in contact with Ongwen or Okot Odhiambo, another potential rival. Kony is likely to believe the deception and react by turning against these

key commanders, which could result in the disintegration of the LRA. If there is infighting within the LRA leadership, the number of fighters who choose to surrender will likely increase.

*Rehabilitation* of captured or surrendered members of the LRA's dark network would help to ideologically reorient the fighters away from extremism and reintegrate them into civil society.<sup>24</sup> Uganda is already using this strategy. All of the captured and surrendered LRA combatants who apply for amnesty are given ideological reorientation, trained in vocational institutions to empower them with social survival skills, and assisted with funds to start private businesses, if that is what they wish to do. The Acholi also have a cultural cleansing ritual that the LRA combatants go through before they are reintegrated into tribal society. Those who wish to join the military are taken through military training, a process that

includes ideological reorientation, after which they are integrated and deployed just like other UPDF personnel.<sup>25</sup>

## ONGWEN COULD BE INFLUENCED TO PUSH AGAINST KONY.



Dominic Ongwen

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Although social network analysis tools have limitations, they can be used effectively by coupling information derived from the tools with other research and analysis. For instance, intelligence reports are normally inconclusive, but with the support of tools such as those used for this study, a commander would be able to identify the “movers and shakers” of a target organization and develop effective



## DOMINIC ONGWEN HAS SURRENDERED. THIS NEWS IS A GAME CHANGER.

strategies on how to solve a network-related problem. If counterterrorism operators have a plan in place to target individual commanders within the LRA, this paper has clearly defined the priority list.

When it comes to choosing strategies to undermine the LRA, I recommend using the PsyOps and rehabilitation strategies concurrently. The chief problem with the PsyOps strategy is establishing communication with the LRA combatants. Currently, the Ugandan government is only assuming that the LRA actually listens to the radio talk shows it broadcasts. Although captured and surrendered LRA combatants have attested to the fact that active LRA members do listen, only a few of these might actually have access to broadcast radio receivers. Kony's ban on the use of electronic gadgets might also apply to radios. Nevertheless, this option remains the single most potentially effective strategy for Uganda to rely on. Kinetic strategies have been tried before and are still in place, but because the LRA commanders have gone underground, it has become increasingly difficult to implement such strategies.

Another obstacle I foresee will arise when the younger LRA commanders take up the mantle of the LRA from the existing, aging leadership. Kony has already appointed his son, who was born and raised in the jungles, as his deputy, and may be in the process of transforming the leadership of the LRA.<sup>26</sup> The bad news about the younger commanders is that most of them were either abducted when they were very young or born in the bush. That means they have no more than a faint idea of what life is like in towns and villages, and it will be that much harder to talk them out of the jungles. Some of them do not have any family members left, so the incentive for them to return home is limited, if not entirely absent. Others simply fear retribution from people they hurt during the conflict if they were to return home.

The open-source literature on the LRA is silent about this younger generation of LRA commanders. As the years go by, the commanders discussed in this paper are becoming older and less effective. It is therefore incumbent upon the CT community to strive to know the next generation of LRA commanders and keep abreast of developments in the LRA structure, so as to develop better strategies to counter them.

As I finished writing this article, I saw press reports that Dominic Ongwen had surrendered to US Army Special Forces working with African forces in the CAR.<sup>27</sup> This news is a game changer: as this study makes clear, Ongwen was an influential actor within the LRA who could be used to bring more LRA fighters out of the bush—if the Ugandan government chooses to use him in that way. ❖

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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LTC Fabian Sandor,  
Hungarian Army

## Hybrid Warfare Revisited

*Do not fight the war that fits your organization and weapon, but choose your way of fighting, then build your system.<sup>1</sup>*

SINCE THE CURRENT UKRAINIAN CRISIS BEGAN IN FEBRUARY 2014, “hybrid warfare” has become a hot topic once again.<sup>2</sup> The term was coined and gained traction in military strategic thinking after Hezbollah’s success against Israel in the Second Lebanon War in 2006. In preparation for that conflict, Hezbollah constructed artfully concealed fortified positions, tunnel systems, underground medical centers, and large caches of pre-positioned weapons and ammunitions.<sup>3</sup> Because the war had no direct effect on European nations or the United States, however, the hybrid warfare concept did not receive much attention at the time.

Now, with the reemergence of an expansionist Russia and its nontraditional approach to warfare at Europe’s doorstep, the situation seems to have changed dramatically. Russia’s leaders have adapted and simultaneously applied both conventional and unconventional methods, including traditional and irregular forces that are supported by new technologies and the state’s political and economic power, while allowing Moscow to maintain some degree of plausible deniability. NATO members, along with several countries outside of the alliance, have been showing great interest in the Russian concept of hybrid warfare because of their increasing fear that the pattern of aggression used against Ukraine is the harbinger of a new mode of armed conflict, for which none of them is prepared.

As a result of the increasing prevalence of hybrid warfare, Western academics and think tanks have been trying very actively to define the term and identify its core principles. In 2006, the authors of the *US Quadrennial Defense Review* formally recognized the existence of a hybrid threat, but there still is no consensus on how to understand or define what that means.<sup>4</sup> To establish a conceptual framework for the discussion in this article, it is useful to examine some of the existing definitions.

Back in 2007, strategist Nathan Freier proposed a “quad chart” of four threat types: traditional, irregular, catastrophic terrorist, and disruptive; a hybrid threat would be some combination of two or more of these.<sup>5</sup> Counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen envisions hybrid warfare as “the best description for today’s modern conflict,” but unlike Freier, “he emphasizes combinations of irregular modes of conflict, including civil wars, insurgency, and terrorism.”<sup>6</sup> Retired Army Col. Jack McCuen’s description of hybrid warfare focuses on the asymmetric battle, “fought on three decisive battlegrounds ‘within the conflict zone population, the home front population and the international community.’” This definition highlights the importance of the “battle of the narratives” and emphasizes modern information technology and mass mobilization.<sup>7</sup> In their recent study on hybrid warfare for the Joint Special Operations University,

“HYBRID  
WARFARE”  
HAS BECOME  
A HOT TOPIC  
ONCE AGAIN.



Timothy McCulloh and Richard Johnson describe hybrid war theory as “a form of warfare in which one of the combatants bases its optimized force structure on the combination of all available resources—both conventional and unconventional—in a unique cultural context to produce specific, synergistic effects against a conventionally-based opponent.”<sup>8</sup>

Besides the theorists’ ideas, there are numerous official definitions as well. British military doctrine describes hybrid warfare as a variation of irregular warfare.

Hybrid warfare is conducted by irregular forces that have access to the more sophisticated weapons and systems normally fielded by regular forces. Hybrid warfare may morph and adapt throughout an individual campaign, as circumstances and resources allow. It is anticipated that irregular groups will continue to acquire sophisticated weapons and technologies and that intervention forces will need to confront a variety of threats that have in the past been associated primarily with the regular Armed Forces of states.<sup>9</sup>

Israel defines hybrid warfare as a method of social warfare. According to the Israeli vision, “hybrid threats not only gain a physical advantage through the combination of conventional technology and organization with unconventional tactics and applications, but also gain a cognitive advantage by the very lack of social restrictions that conventional state forces must adhere to such as the Law of Land Warfare, Geneva Convention, and Rules of Engagement.”<sup>10</sup>

For its part, NATO draws on several of these ideas to define hybrid threats broadly as “those posed by adversaries, with the ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives.”<sup>11</sup> This article proposes an alternative approach for Eastern European countries to counter the Russian hybrid threat and therefore draws on the NATO definition.

At its summit in Wales in 2014, NATO conducted in-depth discussions on the topic of hybrid warfare and came up with its own ideas to effectively counter this threat, such as the Readiness Action Plan, a policy document outlining measures primarily to shore up defenses in the member states that lie closest to Russia, and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF).

The Readiness Action Plan agreed [to] by Heads of State and Government at the Wales Summit is a response to the changed and broader security environment in and near Europe. It responds to the challenges posed by Russia and their strategic implications. It also responds to the risks and threats emanating from our southern neighborhood, the Middle East and North Africa. Its implementation will significantly enhance NATO’s readiness and responsiveness and will ... strengthen both NATO’s collective defense and crisis management capability.<sup>12</sup>

The VJTF is envisioned as a “spearhead” force within the existing NATO Response Force, “able to deploy at very short notice, particularly at the periphery of NATO’s territory. The VJTF should consist of a land component with appropriate air, maritime and SOF units available.”<sup>13</sup> These initiatives and countermeasures

## ISRAEL DEFINES HYBRID WARFARE AS A METHOD OF SOCIAL WARFARE.

THE EMERGING  
FORM OF  
WARFARE MAY  
LACK A  
DEFINITIVE  
ARMED ATTACK.

demonstrate a commendable level of adaptation, but they also share one common theme: they seek to counter Russia’s hybrid warfare concept through existing defense structures, and they are based on our current understanding of warfare. General Valery Gerasimov, chief of the Russian General Staff, recently described the changes in the character of armed conflicts from a Russian perspective (see figure 1). In light of his points, it becomes clear that NATO’s ap-

Traditional Military Methods	New Military Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Military action starts after strategic deployment (declaration of war).</li><li>■ Frontal clashes between large units consisting mostly of ground units.</li><li>■ Defeat of manpower, firepower, taking control of regions and borders to gain territorial control.</li><li>■ Destruction of economic power and territorial annexation.</li><li>■ Combat operations on land, air, and sea.</li><li>■ Management of troops by rigid hierarchy and governance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Military action starts by groups of troops during peactime (war is not declared at all).</li><li>■ Non-contact clashes between highly maneuverable interspecific fighting groups.</li><li>■ Annihilation of the enemy’s military and economic power by short-time precise strikes in strategic military and civilian infrastructure.</li><li>■ Massive use of high-precision weapons and special operations, robotics, and weapons that use new physical principles (direct-energy weapons—lasers, shortwave radiation, etc.).</li><li>■ Use of armed civilians (4 civilians to 1 military).</li><li>■ Simultaneous strike on the enemy’s units and facilities in all of the territory.</li><li>■ Simultaneous battle on land, air, and sea in the informational space.</li><li>■ Use of asymmetric and indirect methods.</li><li>■ Management of troops in a unified informational sphere.</li></ul>

Figure 1: Russia’s New Generation Warfare <sup>14</sup>

proach will not necessarily meet the challenges posed by this new form of threat.

Taking all of the characteristics described by Gerasimov into account, it is paramount for the Eastern European members of NATO to not only sustain their NATO membership, but also to review their national security strategies and develop a more self-reliant approach than the one they currently depend on. Most, if not all, of NATO’s Eastern European allies have been simplifying their defense policies and reducing the size of their militaries in the expectation that NATO will “roll in” to guarantee their sovereignty in the event of invasion. The characteristics of Russia’s future conflicts, as described by Gerasimov, however, might prevent such action. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO’s founding document, states that “the Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.”<sup>15</sup> As Russian operations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine since February 2014 have demonstrated, the emerging form of warfare may lack a definitive armed attack. If a NATO member were to find itself in a situation similar to Ukraine’s, to what extent would NATO’s legal framework and instruments be able to handle it? The North Atlantic Treaty could easily produce a situation whereby some of NATO’s military forces were willing to fight for a member’s sovereignty, but were unable to do so because they lacked the military capacity or political will to do so.<sup>16</sup> Despite—or because of—these potential obstacles to coordinated


action, those nations that border Russia must develop a strategy that ensures their sovereignty even without the alliance's help.

To do this, these nations' leaders must change their way of thinking about defense and reconsider the methods they use to fight wars. They should understand that "traditional military hardware—tanks, armored cars, high performance aircraft, and warships—would become largely peripheral and increasingly irrelevant. Conventional measures of military capability—manpower, firepower, etc.—also fall by the wayside."<sup>17</sup> There is no longer any distinction between what is and is not a battlefield. Physical spaces, including the ground, the sea, the air, and outer space, are all potential battlefields, but social spaces such as political, economic, and cultural spheres; cyberspace; and even the psyche are also at risk. Based on this new reality, Eastern European countries' conventionally organized, hierarchical, and doctrinally rigid militaries are not capable of facing the multi-faceted threats of this new form of warfare. They need to develop unfamiliar characteristics such as proactivity, flexibility, and adaptation.<sup>18</sup>

Eastern European countries are spending large amounts of money on defense budgets to maintain weapons systems that are obsolete even for a conventional war—such systems have become completely irrelevant in this new operational environment. Military hardware such as T-72 tanks, BTR-80 and BRDM-2 armored personnel carriers, MI-8 helicopters, and so on are more than 30 years old, and cannot support modern communications equipment and night vision capabilities or protect from chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack. The ever-growing difficulty of getting spare parts to keep these weapons serviceable further reduces their utility and exposes the countries that depend on them to possible Russian influence. At the same time, Eastern European countries are trying to mitigate the security risk posed by these older systems by acquiring newly developed high-tech weapons from wealthy allies such as the United States. The price tag of such systems, however, is extremely high. Some major items, such as fighter jets and transport aircraft, can cost US\$100 million apiece or more, not counting maintenance, training, and operational deployment costs. Paying for such hardware is an obstacle even for the bigger, wealthier countries, while for small countries it is clearly impossible. Although these smaller countries may manage to buy some quality hardware now and again, they cannot afford a whole, cohesive, interoperable system.<sup>19</sup> Even if they could afford it, they would be missing the point. It is obvious that these countries are still trapped in the idea of fighting the fight that fits their existing organization and weapons and are unable or unwilling to implement fundamental changes to catch up with the realities of the twenty-first century.

If there has ever been a time in history when military strategist Frank Hoffman's statement that "the incentives for states to exploit non-traditional modes of war are on the rise"<sup>20</sup> was true, then today is that time. As retired Lieutenant General David Barno, US Army, described the problem,

Our military today is in a sense operating without a concept of war and is searching desperately for the new "unified field theory" of conflict that will serve to organize and drive military doctrine and tactics, acquisition and research, training and organization, leader development and education, materiel and weaponry, and personnel and promotion policies in ways that could replace the legacy impact that Cold War structures still exert on all facets of the military. Today, no agreed-upon theory of conflict drives all of these critical vectors toward a commonly



**THERE IS NO  
LONGER ANY  
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IS NOT A  
BATTLEFIELD.**



understood paradigm; the result is a profusion of disparate outlooks leading toward the risk of professional incoherence.<sup>21</sup>

Many contemporary researchers have concluded that unconventional tactics, techniques, procedures, and protracted ways of warfare belong to the “weak” side of conflicts, most frequently to non-state actors, that is, groups that do not have any other means to fight their adversaries. But we should not allow ourselves to be limited by such thinking. The Eastern European countries must ask whether they can develop a comprehensive, nontraditional security strategy that will enable them to face either a conventional or a hybrid threat, with or without the support of NATO. These nations must abandon the idea of fighting the fight that fits their weapons; they must first choose *how* they will fight and then build the weapons they need for that fight. To implement such a concept, it is imperative to reverse the process by which a revolution in weapons technology precedes a corresponding revolution in military affairs. Eastern European states should modify the fundamentals of their defense structure to be able to meet future challenges.

## NATIONS MUST FIRST CHOOSE HOW THEY WILL FIGHT.

First, it is paramount that these countries redesign their approach to security decision making by subordinating all national security–related decision making to a single coordinating body. This does not necessarily mean the actual merging of individual organizations, but rather, as described by national security expert Janis Berzins, “the coordination of all national bodies of executive power to the Ministry of Defence and the National Armed Forces’ General Staff in matters of defence and national security.”<sup>22</sup> Second, these states should realign all of their conventional military units into irregular formations, according to John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt’s “swarming” theory.<sup>23</sup> This restructuring has to be supported by a new kind of conscript system: a combination of the Swiss and Israeli models that expects all capable citizens to help defend their country when needed as members of the irregular units. Third, unit commanders must have sufficient autonomy to decide when and how to respond to an attack without a formal presidential or parliamentary authorization. It is also imperative to require each citizen to resist the aggressor, including by military defense, guerrilla warfare, civil disobedience, noncollaboration, and other means. Fourth, the countries have to prepare their infrastructure to best support the new way of warfare, similar to the way Hezbollah prepared its positions prior to the Second Lebanon War.<sup>24</sup>

The fifth and most important step of this concept is to operationalize all other instruments of national power, including the “weaponization” of the media to support the proposed approach. Some people may find that several elements of this plan go against national traditions and democratic norms, and could imply putting the entire world on a total war footing. No doubt they are right. Those nations that are facing the new form of Russian aggression on their borders, however, might be quite willing to consider concepts that could ensure their national survival. For Eastern European countries, the time for “thinking outside of the box” should be over, and the time for “thinking without the box” must begin. Eastern European countries should exploit hybrid warfare for their own benefit, so that it can become the way of the smart and nimble instead of the instrument of the weak. ♦

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Patricia Blocksome, Dr. Christopher Marsh, and Dr. Robert Tomlinson, *Special Operations Research Association*

## Report on the 2014 Special Operations Research Association Symposium

SORA  
SEEKS TO  
STRENGTHEN  
THE NASCENT  
SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS  
RESEARCH  
COMMUNITY.

ON 24–25 OCTOBER 2014, THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (SORA) sponsored an inaugural academic symposium at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, which focused on special operations and related topics. The SORA symposium brought together approximately 40 attendees from a number of countries, who represented the spectrum of the community of interest, including academics, military and interagency practitioners, and policy analysts. For two days, symposium attendees participated in discussions on the current state of the special operations research field, as well as opportunities for future study.

Founded in 2013, SORA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting research across academia, the military, and the SOF community on the nature, conduct, and sources of success of special operations. SORA is the home of the peer-reviewed *Special Operations Journal*, published in collaboration with the academic press Routledge–Taylor & Francis.<sup>1</sup>

SORA's mission is to promote research in special operations and SOF to more fully comprehend their nature and utility, and the factors contributing to mission success; to better understand both how special operations are planned and conducted and the part special operations play in the policy making process; and to enhance appreciation of the unique role of special operations and SOF in national strategy. In line with this mission, SORA not only publishes the *Special Operations Journal* but also collaborates with government and nongovernment entities on related topics. It further seeks to develop a community of researchers, planners, and practitioners who share insights and thinking on special operations, and will engage in funded research on topics of particular importance. SORA's purpose in organizing an annual symposium was, therefore, not only to promote research on all aspects of special operations but also to further strengthen the nascent special operations research community.

The overall theme for the 2014 symposium was “Special Operations and Strategic Implications,” which participants addressed from a variety of perspectives. The symposium's keynote speaker, RAND senior policy analyst Linda Robinson, gave a speech entitled “The Future of Special Operations: Enhancing the Strategic Impact of SOF.”<sup>2</sup> This speech was based on her study of the topic of special warfare as a strategic and operational approach by which the United States can exert influence in the “missing middle”: that potential area of operations between the costly and indefinite commitment of conventional forces and the limitations posed by distant-strike options, such as drones and cruise missiles.<sup>3</sup> The talk was extremely well received by the more than 100 conference attendees, including staff and faculty of the US Army Command and General Staff College and its large SOF contingent.

During the symposium, panelists presented papers discussing their current research on the future of special operations. Seven panels, each consisting of



multiple presentations, were organized thematically to provide diverse perspectives on a common topic. The panels on “Future Issues Facing SOF” and “The Utility of SOF Power” addressed the ways that special operations can provide options for diplomacy, partnership, and national security initiatives. They also identified cultural and institutional limitations on the uses of special operations and noted that these limitations can vary by country and over time, although the reasons for these variations are understudied. These panels emphasized how recent changes in US SOF force structure may be influencing both the options and limitations of US SOF deployment.

The “Winning Special Warfare,” “Unconventional Approaches to Contemporary Challenges for SOF,” and “Case Studies in Special Operations” panels all addressed the ways in which special operations and special warfare models provide insight into and compare with actual military campaigns and guerrilla strategies. As panelists pointed out, there are a number of abstract models that have real-world implications. These mental frameworks vary by case and shape the way that participants act. Panelists noted the need for further analysis and refinement of special operations models, with particular attention paid to how these models influence planning for and responses to special operations campaigns.

A very interesting—and timely—panel, “Special Operations and Russia,” was devoted to the situation in Ukraine and Russian unconventional warfare. Major Antonius Selhorst, Netherlands Army, presented his research on the evolution of Russia’s “new generation” warfare, based on his analysis of Russia’s post-Soviet conflicts with Moldova, Estonia, Georgia, and now Ukraine. MAJ Selhorst persuasively argued that this new model of warfare has evolved slowly over the past two decades, and that lessons learned in the earlier conflicts influenced significant modifications to it. These modifications are now appearing in the Ukraine conflict.

The panel that generated perhaps the most discussion and calls for further research was titled “Developing a Theory of SOF.” Participants on this panel debated the benefits and disadvantages of such a theory. Some participants, notably Dr. James Kiras of the US Air Force School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, argued very persuasively that no special theory of SOF or special operations is needed, and that the field of special operations research

can continue—indeed, might more fruitfully develop—without a set theory for guidance. As Dr. Kiras pointed out, in the spirit of physicist and philosopher Thomas Kuhn, paradigms do as much to constrain new research as they do to promote it.<sup>4</sup> Colonel Jeff Goble of the Joint Special Operations University, however, argued equally persuasively that such a limiting structure is precisely what the nascent field of special operations research needs. Strategists thus far have failed to articulate any sort of coherent theory of what special operations are, leaving it to doctrine writers and those who designate military units to determine what is “special” and what is not. Members of the audience seemed to find value in both perspectives and agreed that this was an issue not likely to be settled anytime soon.

In addition to the panels, the symposium included two roundtables. The first was on “The Art and Design of the Special Operations Campaign.” Chaired by Dr. Kiras, the roundtable included Lieutenant Colonel Mike Kenny, US Army; Dr. Christopher Marsh; Patricia Blocksme; and keynote speaker Linda Robinson. Before a packed auditorium, this group debated the value and utility of SOF-specific campaign planning as opposed to planning all campaigns the same way, whether special operations-focused or not. The presenters generally agreed that the art and design of the special operations campaign require a different conceptual model from those used for conventional campaigns, but whether this conceptual model actually required different planning tools, campaign support plans, and campaign plans was an issue that the panel widely disagreed on. There was, however, an implicit agreement that special operations campaigns can no longer be looked at as merely supporting efforts for conventional campaigns or phase zero “shaping operations.” This roundtable was notable for its broad audience participation, with valuable input coming from all those present, ranging from academic specialists to special operators with decades of experience. Again, this was an issue that the audience agreed would not be settled anytime soon, but the opportunity to share ideas and debate the topic’s merit was of great value in and of itself.

The second roundtable centered on the issue of the use of intelligence in special operations. The debate here included important concerns such as the different responsibilities

**PARADIGMS DO AS  
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and duties of the various intelligence agencies. For instance, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is charged with providing strategic intelligence for the US president and other policy makers. The requirement to accomplish this sometimes conflicts with the tactical or operational intelligence required by special operations teams. The major issue that seemed to come out of the discussion was the need for a proper understanding of the differences between the tasks assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and those assigned to the CIA. The roundtable resulted in a very robust discussion among panelists and audience members, who ranged from CIA and DIA senior officers to special operators with experience (often frustrating experience) working with these and other agencies in the intelligence community.

Following the symposium, attendees were encouraged to fill out a survey of their experience. Respondents reported attending this conference for a number of reasons: to pursue research interests in the area of special operations studies, to receive feedback on their research, to engage with the research community, to learn more about SOF, to learn more about and interact with SORA, and for professional development. All respondents said that the conference had fulfilled their reasons for attending.

When asked what they saw as the best part of attending the SORA symposium, a majority of respondents listed the roundtables, which encouraged open discussion between subject matter experts and conference attendees. Several noted that it is not often that a senior noncommissioned officer or junior field grade officer has the chance to engage in a theoretical discussion with such established subject matter experts as were present at the meeting. Additionally, some of the attendees who came from a more purely academic environment, and thus had less interaction with the special operations community, found it equally valuable to engage with present and past special operators

on their topics of research. Other highlights of the symposium included informal conversations, networking, and engagement opportunities. Several respondents noted that the community-building that went on at the symposium was invaluable, and they urged that more time be dedicated to this aspect at future symposia. The broad variety of panels and topics presented at the conference also garnered favorable remarks.

Based on the responses from the survey, as well as those from conversations with symposium attendees, the conference organizers were able to develop a working list of topics for future gatherings. These topics encompass the span of special operations research, ranging from the historical, to the tactical, to contemporary issues of global concern: SOF theory; SOF as an element of foreign policy; special operations history, including multinational perspectives on SOF strategy, doctrine, and force development; coordinating special operations and enabling activities across joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational organizations; and contemporary challenges in the deployment of SOF. Planning for the 2015 SORA Symposium is already underway. The meeting will tentatively be hosted in the fall at Hurlburt Field, Florida, home of the US Air Force Special Operations Command. ♦

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**Patricia Blocksom** is the assistant vice president for research of the Special Operations Research Association (SORA).

**Dr. Christopher Marsh** is the president of SORA.

**Dr. Robert Tomlinson** is the vice president of SORA.

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## NOTES

- 1 More information on the *Special Operations Journal* can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uops20>
- 2 Linda Robinson is author of *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013).
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## THE CTAP INTERVIEW

### Dr. Michael Noonan, Foreign Policy Research Institute

*Interviewed by Dr. Doug Borer,  
US Naval Postgraduate School*

This interview is taken from the collection of the Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP).<sup>1</sup> On 22 January 2015, Dr. Doug Borer sat down with Dr. Michael Noonan of the Foreign Policy Research Institute to talk about Noonan's experiences as a member of a military transition team in Iraq's Tal Afar district and his career as a scholar in the field of counterterrorism.<sup>2</sup>

**DOUG BORER:** Mike, please begin by telling us about your military service in Iraq.

**MICHAEL NOONAN:** I received a reserve commission through ROTC<sup>3</sup> and graduated from the University of Scranton in 1993. While I was in graduate school at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, I served with 1st Squadron, 322nd Cavalry Regiment, 5th Cavalry Training Brigade. When I completed my coursework and my exams, I moved to Philadelphia and worked at the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) from 1995 to 1997, while continuing to serve with other reserve units. In 1997 I went back to graduate school, then started my coursework toward a doctorate in political science from Loyola University in Chicago. In 2000, after I finished my coursework, I returned to Philadelphia and FPRI. I went into the individual ready reserve and then found another training unit in Philadelphia.

That was the unit I was in when I was mobilized in 2006. I was sitting at my desk working when I received a phone call from our operations noncommissioned officer (NCO) telling me that I had been mobilized and had a week to report to Fort Hood. I was assigned to a Military Transition Team (MiTT) and trained at North Fort Hood from May until late June 2006. We were among the last teams that went through this kind of training at Fort Hood before the program was moved to Fort Riley, Kansas. Most of the training focused on individual-level skills, communications, weapons, and other such things. At the time, there was very scant training for those who had advisory duties. Our team was set up a little bit differently from most. There were four majors, and I and another guy were assigned as the two captains on the team. The teams were mostly a hybrid of reservists and active duty soldiers, but some other teams had National Guard members. We had three active duty soldiers on the team: a fire support officer, a forward observer NCO [13F military occupational specialty], and our medic.

At the end of June, we deployed to Kuwait, where we did about two weeks of training, getting acclimatized to the desert, zeroing our rifles, that sort of thing. We were then in Baghdad for a day or two before going to the Phoenix Academy in Taji, which is a kind of counterinsurgency school. There we familiarized ourselves with the electronic warfare systems that we would use for our vehicles and some of the communications gear, and learned more about Iraqi culture and how the Iraqi Army was set up. From there we deployed up to Tal Afar. We were working with 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, and our unit was located about six kilometers [five miles] outside of Tal Afar at a place called Fort Tal Afar, along the Mosul-Sinjar Highway—Route Santa Fe

A PHONE  
CALL TOLD ME  
I HAD A WEEK  
TO REPORT TO  
FORT HOOD.



A Black Hawk flies over the Iraqi desert as it returns from a mission on Forward Operating Base Sykes in northern Iraq, 2009.



in American military parlance. Our battalion's area of operation reached from the northeastern section of the city up toward the Syrian border and then down along the oil pipeline road. Ours was the third team that had been embedded with the battalion. This was about a year after the Battle of Tal Afar, when the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and other units went and cleared out insurgents from the city.

Tal Afar sits in a saddle between two ridgelines of what's called the Sheikh Ibrahim mountain range. The city itself, which has a large Ottoman castle in the center, was a waypoint on an historic trade route that ran through the region. That part of the country is a very interesting ethnic region. It's largely a mix of Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen—ethnic Turks, both Sunni and Shi'a. [Former Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein had relocated a large number of former soldiers of Turkmen background along the Mosul-Sinjar Highway in the northern part of the city to help bolster his control over that key line of communication from Mosul to Sinjar. We had heard that in the late 1980s and 1990s there started to be more Salafist-inspired Sunni influence there, and it was part of Saddam's plan to use Islam as a way to help bolster his regime.<sup>4</sup>

The battalion we worked with was an infantry battalion in the Iraqi Army. About a third of it was ethnic Kurds, many of whom had been seconded from the peshmerga.<sup>5</sup> Up in the north, all of the division and brigade commanders were Kurds, and most, although not all, of the battalion commanders were Kurdish officers as well. The battalion commander whom we worked with was a Kurdish officer, who has since left the Iraqi Army and is now back with the peshmerga. A very bold and effective commander, he would use a large proportion of the battalion to go out on operations, everyone down to clerks and cooks. If they needed combat power, he would basically send everybody out.

Our mission was several-fold. Our primary mission was to help the Iraqi battalion improve its staff operations. Other transition teams had already worked on the basic rifle marksmanship and those kinds of things, so we were trying to

**TAL AFAR IS  
LARGELY A  
MIX OF ARABS,  
KURDS, AND  
TURKMEN.**







Residents of the city of Tal Afar, Iraq, gather in the late afternoon at the site of a massive truck bomb explosion on March 27 in a city market area.

## WE WERE ALONE WITH THE IRAQI BATTALION FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS.

help the Iraqis with operations, logistics, personnel matters, and intelligence. I was the headquarters services company advisor, but a lot of my work was also dealing with personnel issues such as pay, promotions, and so on. I had no previous experience working in these areas, so not only did I have to self-teach myself about the Iraqis' personnel issues, but I also had to deal with personnel issues for the team itself—pay, promotions, awards, and such things. The team also went out as a coalition liaison element when the Iraqis were conducting operations that were larger than company-sized, or we would go out on operations with the battalion commander to provide close air support or medical evacuation if needed.

The battalion itself was fairly active in the area. The team that we replaced had taken some casualties during the Battle of Tal Afar, and so they hadn't gone out with the battalion in a while. When we showed up there, we had a lot of work to do, and our team chief decided that we would go out a lot with the Iraqis to see what they were doing. We also would do things for the coalition units in the area. If there were suspected IEDs, we would go out, and if we confirmed that there were devices out there, we'd call back for explosive ordnance disposal support. There were other coalition units with us when we first got there, but eventually they went away. We were alone with the Iraqi battalion for a period of about six months before the battalion moved up to the Al Kisik Military Base (AKMB), about 20 kilometers away from our location.

**BORER:** Did you move with it?

**NOONAN:** We eventually moved up to AKMB, but that was at the very end of our tour, in late May or early June 2007, before we redeployed back to the United States. Our replacements came in at that time, and we worked with them, telling them about the peculiarities of the Iraqi battalion. The Iraqi battalion system is kind of interesting because a quarter of the battalion may be on leave at any time. The battalion was 30 percent Kurds, about 20 percent Sunni Arabs, with some Yezidis and other groups also mixed in, and about half of the battalion were Shi'a from the south. So personnel going home on leave would be gone



about a week, because it would take them a couple of days to get down south, especially if they were from Basra. This caused another problem, because the battalion commander would be gone for a week to 10 days every month as well, and while he was a very good and effective officer, his XO [executive officer], who took command in his absence, was not. The XO was a Shi'a officer from Diyala Province, who was politically very well connected in the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. He had the worst combination of characteristics: a coward in the field and a bully in garrison. He was very old school. He believed in the practices of the former Iraqi Army [before the 2003 invasion], and we had a lot of issues with him. We reported up the MiTT chain of command all of the time about how he was not really fit to be a commander, but nothing changed.


**BORER:** Can you give an example? For instance, did you witness routine corruption? When you say he was a bully, was there a clear profit motive for him?

**NOONAN:** The XO would use the euphemism “to use power” on someone, which meant that he was going to beat up a person. We stopped him a few times when we found out that he was abusing prisoners, but he would just wait until he thought we weren't around to do his bullying. For another example, the Iraqi power grid was very spotty, so we would have maybe one or two hours of electricity a day, but there was also a diesel generator available. Our team had our own little generators to keep our tactical operations center (TOC) going, so our radios and other equipment would work when the power went down, but we didn't have lights or anything extra. This officer had it set up so that his section of the officers' quarters always had power no matter what time of day it was. It got very cold up there in the north, but his section was all lit up no matter what the conditions were, while the rest of the battalion was in the dark and in the cold. Some of the local Iraqis jokingly referred to this section as “the Green Zone”—a reference to the walled-off American-controlled district in Baghdad.

**BORER:** Earlier you mentioned your on-the-job training. Did you think that situation put you at a disadvantage, or were you and your fellow team members able to quickly figure out what you needed to do? Did you always have a sense of “We're not really sure what we're doing”?

**NOONAN:** I think it depended a lot on the individuals. I tried to help out as much as I could, and I think we made some progress on some things, but I think a lot of it depended on each person's level of comfort dealing with the Iraqis. There were certainly people on my team who weren't very comfortable working with the Iraqis and probably did the bare minimum job. I just happened to have a good relationship with my counterpart and with the other people in the personnel section, so that is where I focused a lot of my time. The medic and some of the other communications guys worked with the headquarters services company elements, which were about a seven-platoon structure. Our medic worked with the Iraqi medical platoon a lot. We also had a Navy corpsman with us. Because the battalion didn't have a surgeon or a nurse or a doctor to work with him, he would prescribe medication and deal with medical issues. So yes, I think it was a very individual reaction.

**BORER:** What happened when you left Iraq and demobilized? You were an individual augmentee, so were you just shipped back to your regular life? Was it as if your time in Iraq was nothing more than an interesting experience? Or were you able to pass your knowledge along to another reserve unit back in the States?



THE IRAQI  
XO WAS A  
COWARD IN  
THE FIELD AND  
A BULLY IN  
GARRISON.

The author and colleagues (faces intentionally blurred).



## DINNER WAS EITHER RICE AND CHICKEN OR CHICKEN AND RICE.



The author and his Iraqi Army counterpart (face intentionally blurred).

**NOONAN:** My cohort were the last reservists who went through North Fort Hood for predeployment training. The Army changed to a different system after that, using mainly active duty personnel. So the people who replaced us were active duty personnel who were either asked to serve on a MiTT or were “voluntold” to report for that duty. There was no real screening for this type of duty. It all came down to fit of personality and willingness to work with Iraqis. I have taken some umbrage over the years with people who criticized the reservists and others who were sent to Iraq. It’s not like we had a choice in the matter. I think most of us tried to do the best we could in the situation—our team, for example, lived with our Iraqi counterparts the whole time. Particularly when active duty officers would say, “Well, you weren’t the right guys for the job,” it felt like a slap in the face, because there were always opportunities for those officers to volunteer to serve on a transition team and they chose not to do so. The MiTT was seen as a dead-end posting for the average career-competitive active duty officer.

**BORER:** When you say that you lived with the Iraqis, do you mean that you were in the same housing and shared the same chow [meal] lines? You mean you were always reliant on the Iraqis and they relied on you, in an integrated fashion?

**NOONAN:** Yes, we lived in the same fort. When the last coalition unit left our location, the squadron commander in the area had some workers put up a few steel gates to provide extra security for the long L-shaped corridor where we lived. We would keep the gates open during the day, but at night we would lock up, as an added force protection measure. The Iraqi Army is a strange duck, because it has a very heavy British influence, but it also has these peculiar Soviet traditions. For instance, much like in the British Army, there is a big social distance between officers and enlisted personnel, but the battalion allowed our NCOs to eat in the Iraqi officers’ chow hall. We would go down there to get, if nothing else, some cucumber, tomato, and onion salad and some chicken. We always joked, “What was for dinner tonight?” because it was either rice and chicken or chicken and rice, but it was good, and better than eating MREs<sup>6</sup> or other packaged things. I think the fact that we didn’t hold ourselves above our Iraqi counterparts and ate meals with them helped build rapport as well. During Ramadan, we would sometimes share *Iftar* [the evening meal] with them, or if there was a holiday or similar thing we would share a big celebration dinner with the Iraqis.

**BORER:** Have you been able to or had an interest in maintaining a connection with any of the people you served with, either Americans from the South Carolina unit or any Iraqis?

**NOONAN:** Yes, I have kept in touch with some guys who were on the team and also with my Iraqi counterparts, particularly on Facebook. It was a very depressing period for me last summer, when I was seeing the places where I had been on the news. This was during the big ISIS offensive up in Nineveh and other places. ISIS is basically a direct outgrowth of al Qaeda in Iraq, and there were some Iraqis who perpetrated some terrible, terrible events when we were there. There was a big bombing in the southern market of Tal Afar in March 2007 that indiscriminately killed more than 120 people just because they were Shi’a and therefore, apostates to al Qaeda in Iraq. So it was disheartening to see that these militants were on the march there. I have kept in touch with my counterpart, who is still in the Iraqi Army and the Kurdish former battalion commander who rejoined the peshmerga. He was active in helping recapture the Mosul dam from

ISIS. And I have kept in touch with our interpreters. One of them has immigrated to the United States, and I have been able to keep in touch through Facebook with another guy who was my favorite interpreter and is still in Iraq.

**BORER:** Do you have any understanding of the reasons for the collapse of the Iraqi forces in the face of ISIS? When I hear that Americans are going back to train and equip Iraqis today, I wonder whether the secret of their collapse is that they had poor training and equipment, or was it because of corruption. Did your connections give you any explanation?

**NOONAN:** I think one of the big problems that arose after coalition forces left Iraq is that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki tried to “coup-proof” himself by asserting the dominance of the Shi’a narrative in Iraq. Unlike in the north, where for political reasons there were a lot of seconded peshmerga officers in command positions, Maliki put politically connected or politically safe commanders in charge of the Iraqi Army units. When you look at the correlation of forces between Iraqi and ISIS numbers up in the north, the Iraqi Army should have been able to stand on its own against ISIS. The Iraqi forces had numerical superiority. But too many of these officers were chosen for

their political acumen or connections rather than their tactical abilities. So when push came to shove, and the Iraqi security forces saw these 1,000 fanatics in pickup trucks and armored vehicles coming at them, they decided to leave. If you are a *jundi* [enlisted soldier] from Basra and you see your commanders leaving, there is not really a lot of incentive for you to stick around and hold the ground.

In a couple of cases, Iraqi soldiers tried to put on civilian clothes and quietly exfiltrate, but the ISIS fighters found and killed them, purely on the grounds that the Iraqi forces were apostate Shi’a and therefore weren’t really Muslims. This led to a kind of rolling collapse throughout the country, and then the Kurds decided that they were going to take Kirkuk, which had long been an objective of theirs.<sup>7</sup> If Iraq were to dissolve as a viable political entity, then the Kurds want Kirkuk’s oil to sustain their own economic future. We can hope that the new Iraqi government is taking a longer view with regard to how it treats its Sunni and Kurdish citizens, but it’s still a very messy situation. Obviously, the United States is trying to help out as much as it can in Iraq, but the Iranians are also on the ground there and have their own interests and considerations with regard to Iraq. Unfortunately, I think the outcome is going to depend on what *modus vivendi* can be struck to satisfy

Baba Gurgur  
oil field in Kirkuk, 2010.





as many interests as possible and try to keep the country together. Or everyone may just decide at a certain point that Iraq is going to fall apart.

**BORER:** Do you think that the Iranian influence in Iraq may actually be in parallel with American interests? Or, do you think that they are another issue of contention?

**NOONAN:** I think that sometimes interests will align and sometimes they will be contentious. One way to look at the situation is to say that the Iranians gained great influence in Iraq after coalition forces left and Maliki basically handed the keys over to the Iranians. There are reports, for instance, that Qasem Suleimani, the Quds Force commander, was able to get a lot of money through the Iraqi government for his international activities, such as support for the Assad regime in Syria, or Hezbollah and Hamas.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, because the Iranians were so involved in Iraq, they share responsibility for the problem with ISIS. So, on the one hand I think Iran's involvement hurt

our interests in Iraq, but on the other hand it burdens the Iranians with being responsible for the outcome.

I think Iran and the United States definitely have an alignment of interests concerning the dangers of ISIS—it's just a matter of what can be made from that, and whether the two sides can strike some kind of modus vivendi or whether things continue to get worse. The whole situation in Syria and Iraq could create further regional instability. There have already been some incidents along the Saudi border, and if the contagion of ISIS and the radical takfiri view spreads, then things could get a lot worse very rapidly, especially in places like Bahrain and in the eastern oilfield region where a lot of Shi'a Arabs live. There could be some real problems in the future.

**BORER:** Mike, I would like to take you back now, to when you reentered the world of the United States. What happened then?



**NOONAN:** When our replacements arrived, I was able to train up my replacement early on, and then I went to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Sykes on the western outskirts of Tal Afar. I stayed there for about five days, which allowed me a little bit of time to decompress. There wasn't much at FOB Sykes, but it also was not a place like Mosul, where there were a lot of indirect fire attacks. On one of the scarier days I spent in Iraq, I was in Mosul when part of FOB Diamondback, which was the airfield in Mosul, was hit by 26 82 mm mortar rounds within about a 20-minute timespan. FOB Sykes never really took indirect fire, so going there gave us a little bit of time to relax. After that we went to Kuwait for a couple of days, and then we went back to Fort Hood. But when we got to Fort Hood, our demobilization became a very rushed process. I think we reached Fort Hood on a Tuesday afternoon, and the people there told us we had to get out and go home by Friday. They also told us that we were still under General Order Number 1, so we weren't supposed to drink alcohol. I think a lot of that was just "CYA" on the part of the people who were administering the demobilization station there.

**BORER:** What's CYA?


**NOONAN:** "Cover your ass."

**BORER:** Okay.

**NOONAN:** We were at Fort Hood for a few days, and then on Friday we were told, basically, "Here is your plane ticket, get out." So I went from being in a war zone 10 days or even less prior to being back home. I had about three weeks of accrued leave. My wife was working at an immigration law firm at the time, and it was a very busy season so she couldn't take time off. When I first got back, however, my employer gave me another two weeks of paid vacation, thank goodness. Although I didn't see a lot of action in Iraq, I did see some, so it took some time to get used to doing simple things like driving without worrying about litter on the street, without scanning for IEDs. I lived in South Philadelphia at the time, which was a very built-up area, so it took a while for me to shut off the impulse to scan every rooftop when I was walking down the street, or react to loud noises and other things. My wife would go to work, and I would just kind of chill out during the day until she came home. It was good in that sense to have time alone—me and my cats just hanging out, watching baseball and drinking beer.

In the fall of 2007, after going back to work at FPRI, I wrote a piece in the journal *The American Interest* called "The Business We've Chosen."<sup>9</sup> The title is a famous line from the movie *The Godfather: Part II*, in which the characters Hyman Roth and Michael Corleone are talking about some people who had been killed.<sup>10</sup> Roth tells Corleone, "This is the business we've chosen." Don't take things too personally, it's just business.

The hard part for me wasn't that the business I had chosen was to go to Iraq; the hard part was that the business I had chosen for my career was to work at a think tank. So when I came back to work, I felt as though I were in a fishbowl: everybody was constantly asking me, "What's happening in Iraq, what's going on there?" The battalion I was tactically embedded with operated in a pretty small battlespace in terms of the overall war, and we tended to look at things "through a soda straw": we were seeing only what was happening in our own area. I didn't have enough information at the time to "zoom out" and see the bigger picture of the war. The article "The Business We've Chosen" was really about me and about



**"THIS IS THE  
BUSINESS WE'VE  
CHOSEN."**

what it was like to work at a think tank, where it is our job to focus on such events, while I was still coming to grips with what I had just experienced.

The questions from my colleagues led me to think about advisory missions and working with host-nation partners and indigenous forces. I had taken a couple of years' leave of absence from my doctoral program and was working on a dissertation on US civil-military relations and the use of force at a macro level—the high-end decisions about the use of force that are made by military and political officials. When I came back from Iraq, I decided that first, all of the low-hanging fruit on that topic had been picked by that time, and second, the topic just didn't really interest me anymore. Although I obviously did not receive anything like the level of training or instruction that people in the SOF community receive, my experience serving on an advisory team had me thinking about how to work with host-nation governments on their own particular security issues. So I started to research US experiences in places like El Salvador, and in Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines and Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara. I was thinking about the best ways to deal with a country's security problems—not at the Iraq level where you are talking about sending in 140,000 troops, but on a much smaller scale. A lot of my thinking about the use of smaller scale advisory missions was based on the geostrategic environment at the time [2007 and 2008]. Events of the past few years have convinced me that the use of such advisory missions will certainly be an issue for the foreseeable future, especially when I think about the transnational foreign fighters from the West and elsewhere who are going into the Iraq-Syria region, or myriad other security concerns.

We held a conference at FPRI a few years ago at which a military historian, Robert Mackey, talked about the post-Civil War era in the United States, and about Confederate guerillas who couldn't return home again after the war because they were too psychologically damaged to function in peacetime civil society. A lot of these exiled former soldiers, like Cole Younger, turned into outlaws in the Wild West.<sup>11</sup> I think this is what we are seeing now, with this third flow of foreign fighters. This problem goes back to the Afghan-Soviet war (1978–1989), when the veterans of that conflict went to places like Algeria, Egypt, Chechnya, Dagestan, and the former Yugoslavia and started militant groups such as Algeria's Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.<sup>12</sup> Wars and insurgencies produced

these veterans, who then went and asserted themselves in these other places and mostly made things worse. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars that began after 9/11 drew these veterans in, and now the foreign fighters in Syria are a much bigger problem than we have ever seen before.

No matter how any given conflict turns out, once the fighting's over, there will be veterans who go to other places and take advantage of security problems there, whether it be in nations in the original conflict region or back in the United States and Canada, or in Western Europe. We have seen this with the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* and the kosher supermarket in Paris and the killings at the Jewish Museum in Brussels.<sup>13</sup> Now we are also seeing a reassertion of great power politics in places like Ukraine, where Russia

was able to foster subversion in historically orthodox and pro-Russian sections of the country. The United States has enduring interests with regard to China as well, but Washington is in a period of budget sequestration and is finishing up two big wars that cost a lot of money. So there are debates within American politics about what role the United States

should play in the world. The solution to US foreign policy problems is not always going to be 140,000 troops—sometimes it is going to be something much smaller.

All of these issues came together for me as I looked at things like civil-military relations, especially in an irregular warfare environment where military objectives aren't necessarily in the lead but usually play a supporting role to the political, social, and economic issues that are the primary tactical considerations on the ground in such conflicts. I think that the skills the US military hones in the special operations forces—particularly on the special warfare side in the Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations, and some selected forces in the other services—and the need to work with and through host nation governments and security forces, are aspects of military operations that are going to be with us for a long time to come. My experiences working with host nation forces in Iraq got me interested in the whole topic of advisors and their role in the national security strategy of the United States.

**BORER:** Right. We know that very few of our current decision makers, at least in the United States, have military service experience. From your understanding, do US leaders know about this resource: the advisory teams and special

## A LOT OF EXILED FORMER SOLDIERS TURNED INTO OUTLAWS.



operators who can go into a country and essentially project US interests and power with a very, very small footprint?

**NOONAN:** I think they have some knowledge about it, but I also worry about these big headline things like the Abbottabad raid and the *Maersk Alabama* takedown.<sup>14</sup> US direct-action forces are the best in the world at what they do, but even though these kind of direct-action tactical engagements, such as the raid that got Osama bin Laden, might have strategic or operational impact, they are not always going to be the right tool to use. If politicians become too enamored with such a tool they may use it places where it causes more problems than it solves. We now have a big security problem in Yemen, where Houthi tribal fighters have taken over the presidential palace, and where there is also al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. I think we focused too much on the direct-action portion of targeting and the use of drone strikes and such things. We spent our time mowing the lawn in Yemen, so to speak, rather than building up the gardening skills and the landscaping skills that would have allowed the host nation leaders to deal with these problems themselves. And then we take it upon ourselves to be a raiding force that goes in there.

A former Department of Defense official talked the other day about how Yemen highlights a kind of poverty of thought in the US administration's policy, which seems to rely on SOF and drone strikes as an antidote to some of these security issues. Drones and special operations might not have been the right tools to have on the ground there. The administration might have assumed that targeting and other kinetic actions were more valuable than building Yemen's infrastructure and helping it to develop the indigenous capability to provide its own security. If the United States relied less on military force alone, it could then focus more on the other country's social and economic needs, and build the host nation's institutions and forces that might be better for dealing with the problems on the ground. What was always interesting about working with the Iraqis was how innovative and creative they could be with what, to us, were inferior materials. The result wouldn't be up to our standards, but it was "Iraqi good enough." Sometimes you need to accept suboptimal solutions because they are what the locals can sustain, something that works for them in their culture, and within their resource constraints. You don't need a Ferrari all the time. A Kia or a Yugo might be just as effective for other people's needs, even if it might not be as flashy or high-performance as what you can bring to the table.

**BORER:** Mike, I would like to finish this interview with what I call the "king for the day" question. If you were king for the day and could make one or two instrumental, long-term structural changes to US forces, what would you do?

**NOONAN:** I would stand up a joint special warfare command that was coequal to Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and bring in a lot of rank horsepower and resources. If people think about SOF having two parts, surgical strike and special warfare, I think that the current command, resourcing, and rank structures encourage a degree of structural imbalance that might lead some people to favor JSOC and a more direct-action approach. This is not always appropriate for the jobs at hand. I don't mean to take anything away from those special operations guys—they are phenomenal at what they do. But at the same time, we need to think about special warfare and working with and through host-nation governments to deal with some of these security issues.

Armed Yemeni men loyal to the Shiite Houthi movement shout slogans during a tribal gathering.



**THE SOLUTION  
IS NOT ALWAYS  
GOING TO BE  
140,000 TROOPS.**



Yemeni Shi'ite Houthi fighters pose in Amran.

Such a policy will, first of all, lead to less dependence on the United States and second, allow us to work with the host nation to achieve regional objectives so that US forces don't have to be the guarantor of last resort or have to get involved in large overseas engagements. Such a joint special warfare command structure would enable the United States to work with other governments so that they could deal with their own security interests in their own region. I think that developing a command that was coequal to JSOC would be a way of developing future leaders at Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and other places. As

you know, Army Special Forces are the largest force provider in SOCOM, but there has never been a career Special Forces officer serving as the commander of SOCOM. Not to say that the position always has to have a career SF officer, but I think that this is a force structure problem that puts the special warfare-oriented SOF at a relative disadvantage to JSOC within the overall SOCOM system.

**BORER:** Thank you very much, Mike.

**NOONAN:** You're welcome. Thank you for having me. ❖

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## ABOUT THE INTERVIEWER

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## NOTES

- 1 The Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP) aims to collect and archive knowledge on strategy, operations, and tactics used by military and other security personnel from around the world in the twenty-first-century fight against global terrorism. Collectively, the individual interviews that CTAP conducts will create an oral history archive of knowledge and experience in counterterrorism for the benefit of the CT community now and in the future.
- 2 This interview was edited for length and clarity. Every effort was made to ensure that the meaning and intention of the participants were not altered in any way. The ideas and opinions of all participants are theirs alone and do not represent the official positions of the US Naval Postgraduate School, the US Department of Defense, the US government, or any other official entity.
- 3 The Reserve Officer Training Corps is a US military scholarship program in which college students undergo cadet training in one of the armed services while in school. On graduation, in exchange for having some or all of their college costs paid, the students are obligated to a specified period of duty with whichever service they joined.
- 4 See, for instance, Travis Patriquin, "Using Occam's Razor to Connect the Dots: The Ba'ath Party and the Insurgency in Iraq," *Military Review* (January-February 2007), 16–25.
- 5 The peshmerga are an irregular Kurdish military force formed in the late nineteenth century and organized as the national fighting force of the Kurdish people following the fall of the Ottoman Empire.
- 6 Meals Ready to Eat are prepackaged food kits issued to deployed US military personnel.
- 7 The oil-wealthy northern province of Kirkuk is currently under direct threat from ISIS forces, which have been held back primarily by the peshmerga. In February 2015, Kurdish President Massoud Barzani declared that Kirkuk was Kurdish territory and ordered the peshmerga to keep Shi'a Iraqi forces as well as ISIS out of the province. See "Fight for Kirkuk Goes beyond the Islamic State," Stratfor, 18 February 2015: <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/fight-kirkuk-goes-beyond-islamic-state>
- 8 See, for example, Dexter Filkins, "The Shadow Commander," *New Yorker*, 30 September 2013: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/09/30/the-shadow-commander>
- 9 Michael P. Noonan, "The Business We've Chosen," *American Interest* 3, no. 2 (November 2007): <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2007/11/01/the-business-weve-chosen/>
- 10 *The Godfather: Part II* is the second of three famous Hollywood movies about a Sicilian-American Mafia family, the Corleones. See *The Godfather: Part II* (Paramount Pictures, 1974), Internet Movie Database, n.d.: [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071562/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_4](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071562/?ref_=fn_al_tt_4)
- 11 Cole Younger (1844–1916) was a partner in the famous outlaw gang led by Jesse and Frank James. The James-Younger gang robbed trains, stagecoaches, and banks, purportedly at least in part, to exact revenge for the Union's treatment of Southerners during and after the American Civil War (1861–1865), a cause which brought the gang the support of many former Confederates. Carlynn Trout, "Cole Younger (1844–1916)," State Historical Society of Missouri, Historic Missourians: <http://shs.umsystem.edu/historicmissourians/name/y/younger/>
- 12 The Algerian insurgent group the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat is now known as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.
- 13 For information on the January 2015 attack on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, see coverage by the *Guardian*: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/charlie-hebdo-attack>; for more on the attack in Brussels, see "3 Dead in Shooting at Brussels Jewish Museum," *Times of Israel*, 24 May 2014: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/3-dead-in-shootout-near-brussels-jewish-museum/>
- 14 The Abbottabad raid refers to the covert SOF mission in 2011 that killed Osama bin Laden. The *Maersk Alabama* is a cargo ship that was hijacked by Somali pirates in 2009. A Navy SEAL operation recaptured the ship and rescued the crew.

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## ETHICS AND INSIGHTS

## Making Decisions, Taking Ethical Responsibility, Part I: To Tool or Not to Tool

George Lober,  
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I'M ALWAYS AMAZED AND A LITTLE DISHEARTENED WHEN SOMEONE IN A military or law enforcement organization whom I know and respect looks me in the eye and says, "I'm a tool," and yet I hear that self-assessment often. If offered in public, the comment is typically followed by snickers from the listeners. That's because in current American slang, the word "tool" refers to someone who is incapable of self-reflection—a factotum who possesses all the capacity for intellectual self-analysis of a pair of pliers.

I understand, however, that these members of the military or law enforcement who call themselves tools are not actually confessing that they're dense as doorknobs. To the contrary, they're saying something quite significant. They're telling me that after self-reflection, they have come to see themselves simply as instruments—the "tools"—of a greater organization, and the means by which some directive or policy or strategy or law will be carried out. I suspect they're also telling me that they see themselves as the tool through which society's will is enacted.

The problem I have with such a self-perception is that it implies an abdication of individual ethical responsibility. It also demands the question, "If that's the case, why should people who act as the tools of state power have to behave in an ethical way at all?" Put another way, if the primary role of such a tool is to obediently execute legal orders and intentions delivered from those higher in authority, why should that tool be bothered with the ethics of such orders? The obvious counters to that question, of course, are "What happens if the order results in something heinous? What if the law reflects the immoral will of a corrupt majority? What if ... , what if ... ?" While I agree that these are valid concerns, I believe that a much bigger question lies at their heart: should an individual who is personally charged with enforcing a law or following a legal order be held responsible for its unethical consequences? The answer, it strikes me, is complicated.

Let me explain why.

In 1938, following the Austrian *Anschluss*, Paul Grüninger, a Swiss commander of state police in St. Gallen, near the border between Switzerland and Austria, made a decision. A recent Swiss law had mandated that border police forcibly turn back undocumented Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi regime in Austria, despite the fact that they would likely face brutal detention and even death. When he was confronted, face-to-face, with the refugees' pleas for compassion, Grüninger did what he thought anyone else would do under such circumstances.<sup>1</sup> Rather than abide by the law, Grüninger chose to permit these refugees to remain in Switzerland. He even saw to it that they were issued illegally post-dated visas to secure their stay.<sup>2</sup> He later observed that, from his perspective, he had no choice but to fulfill his "human duty" to help them.<sup>3</sup> For his deeply moral decision and subsequent actions, however, Grüninger lost both his position and

WHY SHOULD  
TOOLS OF STATE  
POWER HAVE  
TO BEHAVE  
ETHICALLY?



## GRÜNINGER WASN'T EXPECTED TO CHOOSE COMPASSION.

his retirement benefits, was fined hundreds of Swiss francs, struggled thereafter to support his family, was falsely accused of scandal, and remained socially ostracized for the rest of his life.<sup>4</sup> This was all despite—or because of—the fact that he saved an estimated 3,600 lives.<sup>5</sup>

It's easy to say that Paul Grüninger made the right decision, regardless of the consequences he later endured. He certainly believed he had. But at the time, the moral clarity of his choice wasn't apparent to others, and frankly, I'm not so sure it would be today. Admittedly, there were powerful political and societal forces at play in Switzerland at the time: Bern was struggling to maintain its neutrality as war spread through Europe; anti-Jewish sentiment was on the rise across the continent; and there were fears that Germany, which had already annexed Austria earlier that year, would turn on Switzerland next. But one simple fact lay at the core of the backlash against Grüninger: a man charged with enforcing the law of the land took it upon himself to abandon that charge, ignore the law, and act according to his individual belief in what was right. At his sentencing, the court noted, "Such underhanded practices threaten the necessary trust and the respectability of authorities and the reliability of subordinates."<sup>6</sup> As a captain of the police, Grüninger wasn't expected to perform an ethical calculus and choose compassion; he was expected to obey the law and enforce it. For failing to do that, he was punished.

A second case from more recent history is similar, but also different. In April 1994, as the Rwandan genocide began, hundreds of Tutsis terrified for their lives sought the shelter and protection of a Belgian UN force under the leadership of Captain Luc Lemaire. The force, which was encamped at a local school, maintained its position during the first days of the killings, while Tutsis from the surrounding area sought the enclosed safety of the school grounds and the protection of Lemaire's armed soldiers. By the end of the first week, the number of villagers seeking protection at the school had swelled to over 2,000, and Hutus armed with machetes began to circle the school in vehicles, taunting and threatening the people inside. It was then that Lemaire's force received orders to pull back to the Kigali airport, because Belgium's leaders had made the decision to evacuate all Belgian nationals, civilian and military, from Rwanda.<sup>7</sup>



When the Tutsis at the school learned of the soldiers' imminent pullout, some begged Captain Lemaire and his men to shoot them. According to Lemaire, "They would rather be shot down by our machine gun than be murdered by machetes."<sup>8</sup> Lemaire did not, however, order his men to mercy-kill the Tutsis. Instead, he and his force pulled out of the school in their vehicles, while firing a machine gun over the pleading crowd to clear a path. Almost immediately upon their departure, Hutu gangs entered the school grounds and slaughtered the majority of the estimated 2,500 men, women, and children who had sought the protection of Lemaire and his men.

Two years later, in testimony before the International Criminal Trial for Rwanda, Lemaire cited the tactical situation on the ground, the lack of Belgian political will, and the inept United Nations bureaucracy for the fact that he “had no choice” but to abandon the Tutsis at the school.<sup>9</sup> He repeated that assertion in an interview for a PBS *Frontline* episode, “Triumph of Evil.” In the episode, Lemaire was asked if he and his platoon had feared for their lives. “Certainly not,” he replied, “because as soldiers we have to be ready to die at any moment.”<sup>10</sup> The interviewer then asked what Lemaire could say to the family who had entrusted him to protect their young daughter, “only for you to abandon her.”<sup>11</sup> Lemaire reiterated, “I cannot say anything because it was so, and we had no choice.”<sup>12</sup>

The case of Captain Lemaire is now often taught in military ethics courses, and his decision to abandon the 2,500 Tutsis under his protection is frequently denounced by students, as is his contention that he “had no choice.”

Taken together, the two cases, I believe, frame a debate. Both involve an individual entrusted with a legal directive: in Grüninger’s case a law handed down by society, in Lemaire’s case a military order from higher up. Both instances involved the distinct likelihood that innocent lives would be lost if the directive were obeyed, and both men personally faced the pleas of individuals who might be killed. Both men had to make a choice, and in so doing, each believed that he “had no choice.” Grüninger and Lemaire were expected by their societies to serve as the instruments of political authority and to enact the will of democratically elected leaders, who presumably enjoyed a far broader perspective on the ramifications of their orders than the two officers. Each man made exactly the opposite choice of the other, and yet both were subsequently condemned for their choices. Why?

One quick explanation for why the men chose differently may be that, at the moment when he had to decide the fate of others, Grüninger saw himself as human first and a tool of the state second, while Lemaire saw himself as an instrument of policy first and a human second. I think that’s probably a fair guess, but it’s probably also more than a bit facile. As to why they were condemned by their respective societies for their choices, again a quick explanation may be that both violated a prevailing ethos of their time. In Grüninger’s case, Swiss society was turned against Jewish refugees, while in Lemaire’s case, he violated a prevailing Western ethos that one does not knowingly abandon unarmed innocents to be hacked to death by mobs.

Still, I think there are deeper layers of complexity to consider. If Paul Grüninger had, as the law required, returned the 3,600 Jewish refugees he encountered to Austria, would he have been excoriated, then or later, as having acted unethically? I doubt it. There had to have been many civil officials in Switzerland who, to a greater or lesser extent, did just that, but unlike Grüninger, the names of these obedient individuals have been all but forgotten. By contrast, if Lemaire had refused to abandon the 2,500 lives under his protection, how would we now view his decision? I want to believe that we would nobly hold him up as an ethical exemplar, but realistically, I suspect the answer would depend on subsequent events and their outcome. If, on the one hand, such a decision forced Belgium and the UN to commit more armed troops to Rwanda and somehow precipitated a halt to the genocide, then I think his decision would be hailed as heroic. On the other hand, if he was simply relieved of command and his force pulled



Genocide memorials at the École Technique Officielle.

## “I’D RATHER BE WITH GOD AGAINST MEN.”



Aristides de Sousa Mendes

out anyway, or if the UN and Europe were dragged into an ongoing civil war in Africa because of him, I suspect the virtue of his decision would be lost in blame.

Who decides when individuals should respond as humans and when they should act as tools, and under what circumstances? Four years ago, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Milburn attempted to answer those questions in an article entitled “Breaking Ranks: Dissent and the Military Professional.”<sup>13</sup> Milburn wrote that when confronted with certain moral dilemmas, “a military officer is not only justified but obligated to disobey a legal order,” particularly when the ramifications of obedience to such an order would damage either the organization the officer serves or the nation as a whole. He nevertheless limited such an obligation to officers at “the strategic level of decision making.”<sup>14</sup> For his suggestion, Milburn was taken to task by Lieutenant Colonel Paul Yingling, whose printed riposte lumped Milburn into a cadre of “officers we should truly fear—those who skulk sullenly in corners with like-minded victims of alleged civilian malfeasance, drawing their wages while condemning the society that pays them.”<sup>15</sup> At his trial, Paul Grüninger no doubt heard something similar from the civilian lawmakers who were paying him.

For my part, I’d prefer that when confronted with such profound moral dilemmas involving human life, those who serve and protect act first as humans and second as tools. In saying that, I’m reminded of the words of the Portuguese consul-general Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who said, “If I am disobeying orders, I’d rather be with God against men than with men against God.”<sup>16</sup> That’s an easy thing to remember, but I bear in mind that it’s a much harder thing to do. ♦

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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### NOTES

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- 5 “Rescuer Story: Paul Grüninger,” Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, n.d.: <http://hmd.org.uk/resources/stories/paul-gr%C3%BCninger>
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## THE WRITTEN WORD

*Rebels without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*

Reviewed by MAJ David Munyua,  
Uganda People's Defence Force

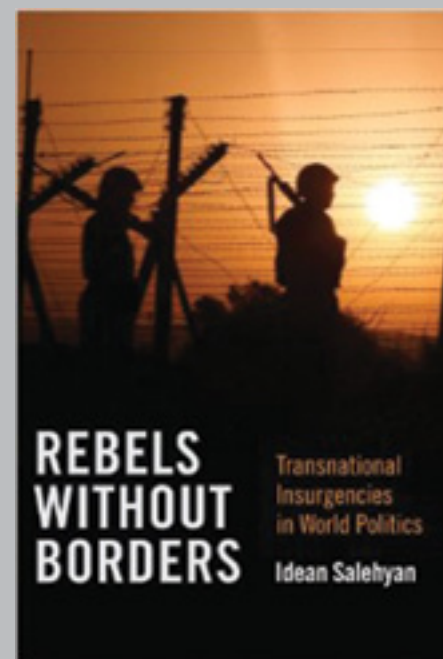
AS A YOUNG BOY GROWING UP IN THE CONFLICT-PRONE REGION OF East and Central Africa, in 1979 my family and I had to flee civil war in our country, Uganda, to seek refuge in the Sudan. We then had to flee back to Uganda in 1987 because of yet another civil war. Idean Salehyan's book, *Rebels without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*, which grew out of his doctoral dissertation, thus comes as a validation of my personal observation that most civil wars have at least some element of interstate conflict. Salehyan argues that civil wars and international disputes are not easily separable because they tend to be mutually reinforcing. This theory of transnational rebellion (TNR), as presented in *Rebels without Borders*, is a knowledgeable addition to the literature and enhances our understanding of both interactions between bordering states and the role of nonstate actors in these relations. For purposes of discussion, the book can be divided broadly into three parts.

The first part (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) systematically presents the theory of TNR. It begins with a critical review of the existing literature, which Salehyan tests and evaluates against his own extensive scholarship with the use of rich conflict data sets. The scientific paradigm that the author presents in this study is a valuable tool that he has used in previous work to augment knowledge in the disciplines of conflict studies, international relations, and political science.

One of Salehyan's primary arguments, which he supports with strong empirical evidence, is that when two unstable neighboring states are rivals, civil conflict is likely to develop in either state. This is because each rival state tends to provide sanctuary to insurgent groups that arise against the competitor's government. States, on their own, are unlikely to risk deploying their military and political forces beyond their sovereign territory for fear of breaking international law and thus attracting unnecessary condemnation. Insurgencies can thus be tacitly encouraged by rival governments as proxies to destabilize their neighbor. Salehyan, therefore, proposes that the best way to deal with TNR is for the affected states to cooperate and eliminate the insurgents from their respective territories, or else to work together toward a political settlement of the disputes between the state and the nonstate actors.

Salehyan also argues that states that are neighbored by weak states are more likely to have internal rebellions emerge because weak states typically lack control over all of their territory. TNRs are able to take advantage of a state's weaknesses to establish sanctuaries where they can organize, train, and launch attacks on the home state. Salehyan's quantitative analysis thus confirms earlier studies that claim that civil conflicts tend to be geographically clustered.<sup>1</sup>

Another statistically significant finding is that refugees who have fled to neighboring states tend to help prolong civil conflict in their home state, especially if they are located near the home country's border or if the host state fails, intentionally or through incapacity, to police the refugee camps. This is because such



*Rebels without Borders:  
Transnational Insurgencies in  
World Politics*

by Idean Salehyan

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University Press, 2009  
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US\$19.95  
216 pages

IN 1979 MY  
FAMILY AND I  
FLED CIVIL WAR  
IN UGANDA.

## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD FOCUS ON SAFE HAVENS.

conditions offer a friendly environment for insurgents to establish sanctuaries from which they can sustain their rebellion. The refugee camp becomes an extraterritorial base and a strategic asset to the TNR, and often plays a primary role in determining the longevity of the insurgency. Salehyan points out that when the refugee-hosting state is friendly to the home state, a TNR will find it hard to operate from the hosting state and the rebellion is likely to end. At the least, it will not cause interstate conflict.

The author's analysis also finds a strong relationship between the existence of ethnic groups whose territory is divided by an international border and the likelihood of internal rebellion. Because these ethnic groups have access to their neighbors across the border, a local insurgent group can easily find support and set up bases across the border from where it will operate. Unless the neighboring state is friendly to the home state, Salehyan postulates that ethnic groups located along borders are more likely to rebel and cause regional instability than those that live away from the frontier.

The second part of the book (Chapter 4) presents two long case studies, one of which focuses on the Contra War in Nicaragua (c. 1979–1989) and the other on the Rwandan Civil War of 1994, which brought the Rwandan Patriotic Front to power. Salehyan uses these case studies to further support his theoretical arguments and illustrate the relationship dynamics between states and nonstate actors during armed conflicts.

In the book's last part (Chapter 5), Salehyan summarizes and evaluates the findings of his empirical analyses. When rebels have the ability to mobilize outside the target state, he notes, armed conflict is more likely to erupt. Furthermore, rebels who can freely cross borders have a better chance of escaping state repression and therefore, of sustaining a stronger insurgency, because state boundaries inhibit government authorities from projecting their power across the borders. Salehyan also acknowledges other factors that play significant roles in the dynamics of the interaction between states and nonstate actors, such as bargaining. While such factors cannot be measured quantitatively, they play a significant role in the resolution of conflicts of all kinds. Nevertheless, he recommends that to effectively resolve both internal and cross-border armed conflicts, the international community should focus on dealing with the problem of safe havens for TNRs.

Salehyan suggests a number of interesting topics for further research. For instance: How does the support from members of their community who live abroad or from external well-wishers influence rebel groups' mobilization against the target state? How do these groups of insurgents differ from the TNRs that gain strength from establishing extraterritorial sanctuaries? In instances where the hosting state exerts control over the activities of the TNR, how is the armed conflict likely to play out? Salehyan provides strong evidence that poorly policed refugee camps facilitate the operations of TNRs. What happens in a situation in which refugees are spread among the populace instead of being congregated in camps?

The strength of *Rebels without Borders* lies in its first part, in which the author lays out his research and theories on how and why TNRs become entrenched. The methodical presentation of the material, its empirical testing, and the strong support the author gives each argument with illustrative case studies makes this book a worthwhile addition to the literature on insurgency. I found it to be both

well written and well referenced, and I think it should prove useful to students and scholars who seek a deeper understanding of global irregular conflicts.

Salehyan could have added value to *Rebels without Borders*, however, if he had explored some of the literature on why and when rebels make the strategic decision to go transnational. For instance, what theories of mobilization do insurgents and opposition elements use to embark on their actions against the state?<sup>2</sup> By adding this dimension to his discussion, he could have brought on board a wider audience of sociology and political science students and also made the book more self-contained, especially for readers who have limited background knowledge in theories of social movements.

Furthermore, Salehyan's finding that ethnic tribes living along borders are more likely to resort to rebellion than those that are located farther away from the borders needs to be taken with some caution. Another similar study by James Fearon and David Laitin shows that ethnicity, or any other form of demographic diversity, has no significant influence on the onset of most civil wars.<sup>3</sup> Further studies on ethnicity may be warranted to clear up this grey area.

I have personally experienced a situation in which rebellion in one state escalated into armed civil conflict in a neighboring state. Salehyan's findings are therefore not totally new to me, at least in practice, but he must be credited for conducting empirical tests on this assertion and thus coming up with the TNR theory. It seems to me, however, that the relationship between Sudan and its southern neighbor, Uganda, would not only illustrate the TNR theory much better than the Nicaraguan war does, but also would point out the exceptions to the model. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was Sudan's most prominent insurgent group, while Uganda had (and still has) the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as one of its many insurgent groups. The LRA found sanctuary in the Sudan for years, but the SPLA, although it had sympathizers in the Ugandan government, did not have sanctuaries in Uganda. This is an exception to the theory of TNRs, and an exploration of it would help deepen Salehyan's analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these limitations, *Rebels without Borders* overall is a good book for students of conflict studies, such as military leaders, strategic decision makers, and dons of conflict studies and political science. Graduate students who wish to see an example of a well-written and methodically presented project report may also find this book useful. ❖

## WHAT THEORIES OF MOBILIZATION DO INSURGENT ELEMENTS USE?

### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

**MAJ David Munyua** is a Marine officer in the Uganda People's Defence Force.

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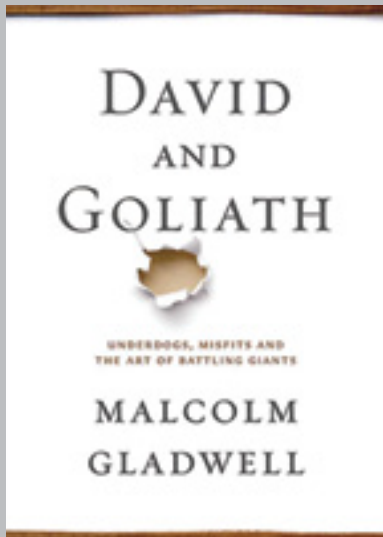
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## THE WRITTEN WORD

Reviewed by Ian C. Rice

## Not Just Another Airport Book



*David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*

Malcolm Gladwell

London: Little, Brown and Company, October 2013  
ISBN-13-9780316204385  
Hardcover: US\$22.99  
304 pages

DAVID SHOT  
GOLIATH  
WITH THE  
ANCIENT  
EQUIVALENT  
OF A .45.

THE AMERICAN-LED CAMPAIGNS IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ LED TO AN outpouring of thought and debate on the subject of irregular warfare. The most recent American military counterinsurgency doctrine, *Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies* (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33), definitively characterized such struggles as being asymmetric in nature, and insurgents as operating most often from a position of weakness.<sup>1</sup> But, if these actors are so weak, why is fighting irregular conflicts so difficult? On the assumption that understanding what makes a relationship asymmetric in the first place would help us better appreciate the nature of irregular conflicts, Malcolm Gladwell's *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants* is about understanding various asymmetries in the world around us.

Gladwell begins with an ancient Biblical tale that epitomizes the concept of a lopsided battle between a strong side and a weak side. A mighty and undefeated warrior named Goliath, wielding his massive war club, faced a mere shepherd boy named David, who was armed only with a staff and a sling. The two were to meet in individual combat to decide the fate of their respective tribes. The result, of course, was the classic "surprise" victory by the young and apparently out-matched shepherd, who struck down the towering Goliath with a single stone from his slingshot and cut off the giant's head, thus securing freedom for his people. As Gladwell points out, perhaps we have misunderstood this legendary tale all along: it was not in fact an uneven contest between the weak David and the mighty Goliath, but single combat between two different types of warriors. David simply shot Goliath with the ancient equivalent of a .45-caliber pistol, while Goliath had no weapons to match him at that distance.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps the first known use of "smart power" to defeat brute force in Western culture.<sup>3</sup>

Gladwell explores two central ideas in his book. The first is that lopsided contests that sometimes end with underdog victories may not actually be as they seem. In other words, we all may be failing to identify the true capabilities of our opponents, and are instead assessing them on attributes they might not themselves value. Second, we persistently regard only certain qualities as important (advantages) while failing to appreciate that the most valuable qualities may be born from adversity (disadvantages).

Gladwell maintains the same style as in his four prior best-selling books, each of which sought to explain other social phenomena.<sup>4</sup> *David and Goliath* continues this mission, presenting Gladwell's alternative perspective on asymmetries in the world around us through a mélange of exciting storytelling, history, and a large helping of social science theory. In a manner that quickly hooks the reader, Gladwell initiates each subject with a personal narrative that threads throughout the chapter. Yet, even as each story snags the reader's interest, Gladwell cleverly interweaves some social science theory that serves as the explanatory weft of his argument.

In “Part One: The Advantages of Disadvantages (and the Disadvantages of Advantages),” Gladwell asks whether we understand the true value of what we perceive to be advantages, and whether we can find anything positive in what we assume to be disadvantageous. More than a play on words, this first section presents three chapters that explore the famous maxim of Sun Tzu: “Know the enemy, and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.”<sup>5</sup> In the course of this exploration, Gladwell wonders: Are we asking the correct questions? Do we understand our own capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, and circumstances as well as those of our opponents? He answers these questions by examining the dynamics of some commonly accepted advantages, such as the notion that smaller is better when it comes to elementary school class size, and that conventional university rankings are a reliable measure of whether a student will receive a first-class undergraduate education.

In one of these stories, Gladwell describes a young woman’s struggle to succeed in a science and technology undergraduate program at an Ivy League university. Her story illustrates a behavior known as “relative deprivation.” Gladwell describes how those who work in elite environments become victims of their own success and lose confidence in their abilities because they compare their progress only to their close peers, those who are operating within what is a highly selective microcosm. This sense of relative deprivation often leads to disillusionment and failure versus appreciating one’s accomplishments and overall value on a more global scale.

For studying population-centric conflicts, the concept of relative deprivation may be instrumental to understanding the grievances people have on both the micro and macro scales. Do people in areas with regular public services, such as garbage pickup and sewage, complain more when services are discontinued due to conflict or crisis than those who have never had those services? If the theory of relative deprivation applies to perceptions of prosperity and government services, then the answer is yes. When conducting assessments of a population’s attitudes in conflict, being able to disaggregate actual from perceived grievances could be vital to preserving or rebuilding civil society. In other words, the needs of the people should be analyzed relative to both their immediate communities and the society at large.

“Part Two: The Theory of Desirable Difficulty” discusses the coping and adaptation mechanisms that evolve from disadvantages. Gladwell draws on a wide range of examples to illustrate that hardship and handicaps can breed resiliency and innovation, traits that allow people to achieve a degree of success that may not have been possible otherwise. He uses three examples—a child’s frustrations growing up with dyslexia, a research oncologist’s work treating childhood leukemia, and the daily struggles of organizing the civil rights movement in the American South—to illustrate how people can grow through adversity. The parallels to dealing with irregular conflicts abound. Military adaptations and innovations are a direct result of the opponent’s actions. For example, insurgent forces often suffer setbacks that appear to be defeats, but experience has shown that these setbacks frequently mean that the insurgency is changing and adapting to work around the obstacles erected by their opponents.

In particular, what happens when awe-inspiring force (such as bombing) is used against an opponent population? If not defeated outright, conventional logic



## GLADWELL CLEVERLY INTERWEAVES SOCIAL SCIENCE THEORY.

holds that the opponent will either give up in the face of overwhelming odds or just melt away. This logic has been found to be false. Studies such as Robert Pape's *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* and Jason Lyall's "Bombing to Lose? Airpower and the Dynamics of Violence in Counterinsurgency Wars" demonstrate that direct, overwhelming military coercion through aerial bombardment is ineffective in breaking the will of opponents, especially civilian populations.<sup>6</sup>

Gladwell draws the same conclusion, but where these other theories of coercion focus on state-on-state behavior and the workings of state military apparatuses, Gladwell discusses how horrific experiences may create resiliency in individuals. He cites studies of World War II bombing campaigns, which concluded that people who saw bomb blasts but were too far away to be in direct danger tended to become resilient in the face of further bombing, compared to those





who experienced a near miss and were naturally more traumatized.

So why were Londoners so unfazed by the Blitz? Because forty thousand deaths and forty-six thousand injuries—spread across a metropolitan area of more than eight million people—means that there were more remote misses who were emboldened by the experience of being bombed than there were near misses who were traumatized by it.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, military coercion, if used incorrectly, might actually inoculate populations to be more resistant to violence.

Using this analysis to explore the conventional wisdom regarding bombing could change how we understand some of the unforeseen consequences of heavy-handed military coercion. If Gladwell's analysis holds true for the modern use of precision guided munitions, then we would expect to see even more boldness in the face of military coercion. Each "smart bomb" produces a deadly and precise local effect, and thus, in turn, potentially hundreds of people will experience it as a remote miss. Under this logic, modern technology is essentially vaccinating opponents against trauma with each precision bomb dropped, and may actually embolden resistance.

In "Part Three: The Limits of Power," Gladwell directly engages asymmetries that are at the heart of why people rebel against authority—the very basis of irregular conflicts. Using Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr.'s *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* as a departure point, Gladwell asks the question: What are the limits to legitimate authority?

Leites and Wolf believed that all that counts are rules and rational principles. But what actually matters are the hundreds of small things that the powerful do—or don't do—to establish their legitimacy, like sleeping in the bed of an innocent man you just shot accidentally and scattering your belongings around his house.<sup>8</sup>

As he shows in case after case, the less force regimes use to administer their authoritarian power, the more readily will the population agree to be ruled. Gladwell cites

California's "three strikes" law and Britain's heavy-handed tactics in Northern Ireland to demonstrate that when state officials use coercive authority to lessen civil violence, their tactics often have the opposite effect. Both of those measures actually increased violence and crime. Gladwell suggests instead that programs that carry visible, but less coercive, signs of state authority will be more successful in reducing violence and unrest. To illustrate, he points to an innovative tactic used by police in a poor New York City neighborhood: in addition to targeting criminals, the police conducted community outreach to encourage youngsters to stay in school. They also made a practice of handing out hugs and turkeys on Thanksgiving to families of at-risk young people, as a visible sign that the state's authority was both legitimate and positive.

Can Gladwell's approach in *David and Goliath* help us disentangle current events? Two ongoing examples of asymmetric war are useful tests. The recent conflict in Ukraine between the government and Russian-backed

separatists is setting the stage for another misinterpretation of what is commonly valued as a strength. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has grown from 16 member states to 28 members since the end of the Cold War. This expansion naturally raises the question of whether NATO has grown too large to be effective. If one of its small new members is invaded or becomes politically unstable,

will this alliance of 28 states mobilize itself to defend that state's sovereignty, and perhaps risk a continent-wide war? Or, reflecting on Gladwell's analysis, did the returns on being a NATO member start to diminish with the addition of 12 new members in Eastern Europe? In other words, might strength through increasing numbers be the wrong way to counter potential military or political threats in Europe?

The second example of asymmetric warfare is also at the forefront of today's news: the meteoric rise of DAESH, the Islamic State of Iraq and Ash-Sham (the so-called Islamic State, aka ISIL or ISIS).<sup>9</sup> Beyond the near-daily reports of the medieval human rights atrocities its members commit, DAESH now appears to be a visibly functioning political entity—an actual state. The group's own news outlets, via online sites, stories, and videos, boast of its newfound political development and institutional capacity. But the question remains, has DAESH developed too quickly? Like NATO, will bigger also be better (e.g., will it promote

## MODERN TECHNOLOGY VACCINATES OPPONENTS AGAINST TRAUMA.

the emergence of state legitimacy?), or will this so-called “state” be short-lived because, if they are to actually administer a state, the agents of DAESH must leave the relative security that shadowy networks often provide?

Like any study, *David and Goliath* has its shortcomings. The personal stories Gladwell uses to illustrate his theoretical positions were selected because a general readership can easily connect to them, not because he uses them systematically to analyze a particular social phenomenon. In so doing, Gladwell successfully breathes life into what otherwise are niche interests in specific social science fields. Thus, a sharpened academic pen could poke holes in the examples, the findings, and the generalizable inferences that most readers will be tempted to draw from Gladwell’s analysis. The important point, however, is that *David and Goliath* will lead the reader to think differently about the concept of asymmetry and how the world identifies what are assumed to be advantages and disadvantages. ♦

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#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

**Ian C. Rice** is a US Army officer and a PhD candidate in political science at the University of California, Los Angeles.

#### NOTES

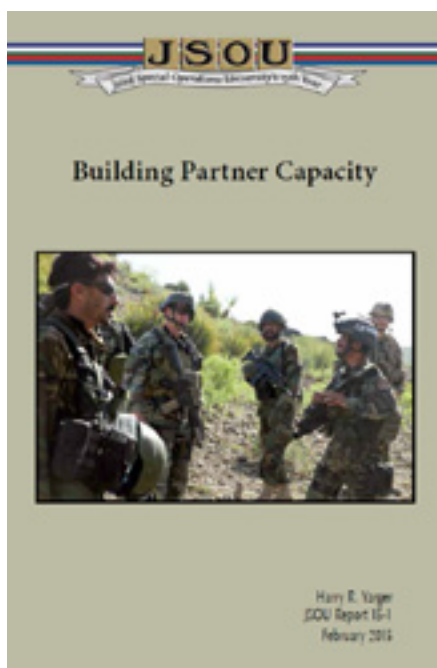
- 1 Irregular warfare is “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). ... Insurgency in the most basic form is a struggle for control and influence, generally from a position of relative weakness, outside existing state institutions.” Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 18 May 2014), 1-1, 1-2.
- 2 Gladwell, *David and Goliath*, 11.
- 3 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 22–24.
- 4 Books by Malcolm Gladwell: *Outliers: The Story of Success* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2011); *What the Dog Saw: And Other Adventures* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2010); *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2007); and *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2002).
- 5 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 84.
- 6 Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 25–27; and Jason Lyall, “Bombing to Lose? Airpower and the Dynamics of Violence in Counterinsurgency Wars,” working paper (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University), 9 August 2014, 2: [http://www.jasonlyall.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/AFGHAN\\_AIRSTRIKES.pdf](http://www.jasonlyall.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/AFGHAN_AIRSTRIKES.pdf)
- 7 Gladwell, *David and Goliath*, 132–33.
- 8 See Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham, Publishing Company, 1970).
- 9 DAESH is the Anglicized acronym for ad-Dawlat al-Islamiyya fi’l-‘Iraq wa’l-Sham. See David Stansfield, “What Does ISIS Really Stand For?” *Infowars*, 27 June 2014: <http://www.infowars.com/what-does-isis-really-stand-for/>



A University of California, Davis police officer peppersprays student protesters, November 2011.

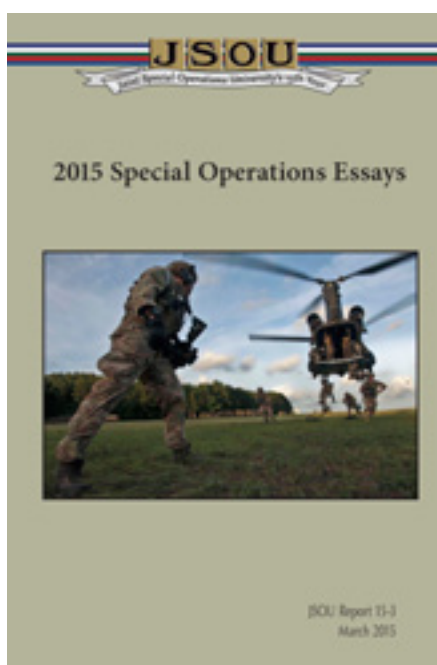
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### Building Partner Capacity by Harry R. Yarger Issue Date: February 2015

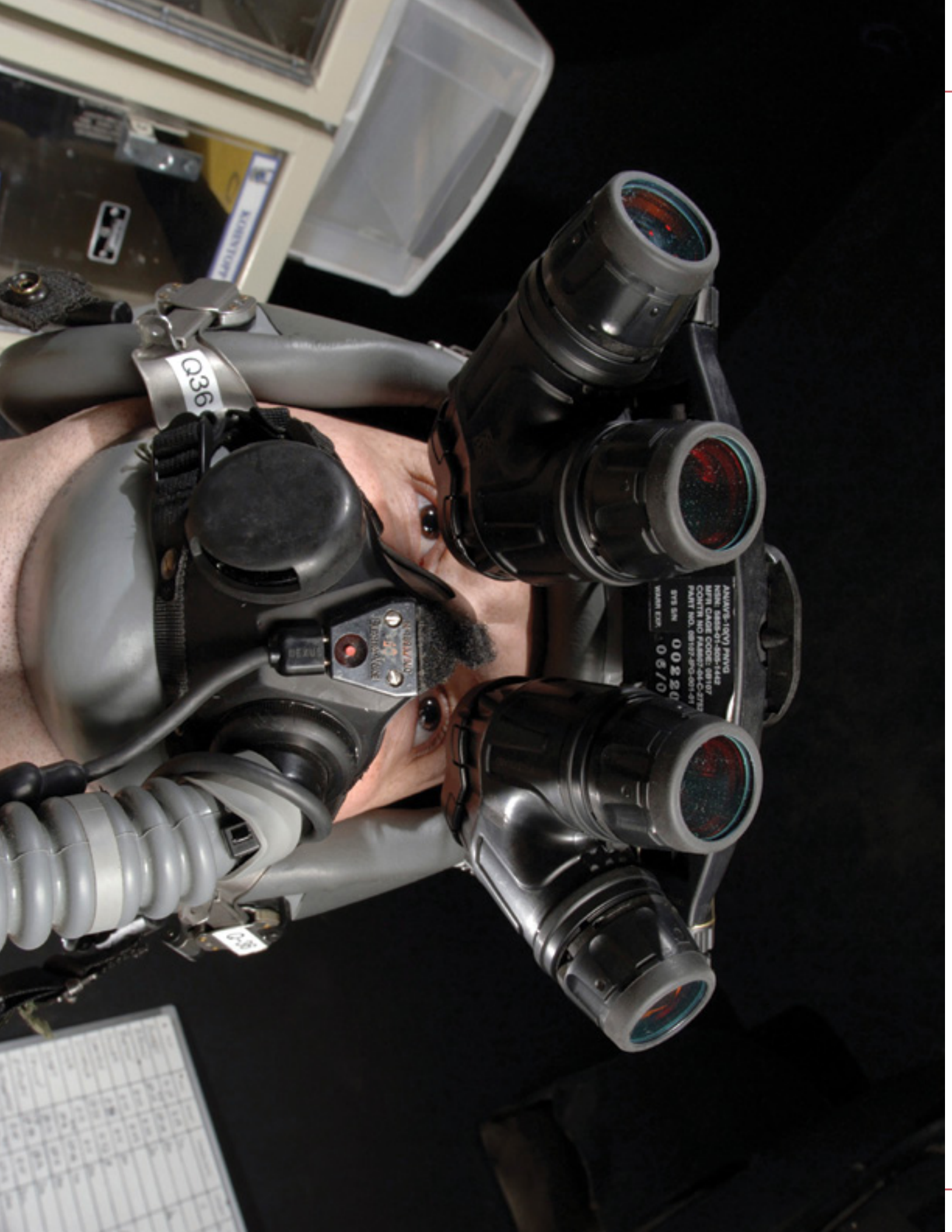
Dr. Rich Yarger describes Building Partner Capacity (BPC) as an essential concept for any practical US grand strategy. He discusses how SOF and others might think strategically about BPC in the 21st century environment and also what the implications of such thinking might be. Dr. Yarger notes that there are multiple ways of viewing the role of BPC and of SOF as part of a US grand or defense strategy. In order to best develop this grand concept, he urges decision makers, strategists, and planners to develop a high level of strategic understanding and the knowledge to distinguish between cooperation, partnering, and strategic partnerships among states and other international actors. While recognizing that the Joint Force and all the services and agencies play important roles in this larger picture of BPC, Dr. Yarger reasons that USSOCOM and SOF are presented with unique opportunities and challenges in pursuit of the grand strategy.



### 2015 Special Operations Essays Issue Date: March 2015

Each year, JSOU partners with the Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) chapter of the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) in sponsoring the annual special operations essay contest. The first-place winner is recognized each year at the NDIA SO/LIC Symposium and awarded a \$1,000 cash prize. The runner-up receives a \$500 prize. The competition is open to resident and nonresident students attending Professional Military Education (PME) institutions and has produced outstanding works on special operations issues. These essays provide current insights on what our PME students see as priority national security issues affecting special operations. JSOU is pleased to offer this selection of the top six essays from the 2015 contest. The intent of JSOU is that this compendium will benefit the reader professionally and encourage future PME students to write on special operations issues.





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