

ARSO

OPERATING CONCEPT

2022



26 September 2014

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

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United States Army Special Operations Command
Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28310-9110
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Commander's Foreword

*From the Commanding General
United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)*

For more than a decade of continuous combat operations, special operations forces (SOF) have emerged as one of the most cost-effective “weapons systems” in the U.S. military arsenal and a major source of strategic advantage for the nation. This concept looks beyond the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, where we see a complex, ill-structured, intractable future operating environment. We note the major global social, political, informational, and economic trends underway and the converging competition between nation-states and nonstate actors. These forces are intertwined and compete for relative superiority over the physical, cognitive, and moral security and adequate governance of key populations—a competition that will increasingly occur in militarily significant urban terrain. We note that we do not choose the domains we compete and fight in—they choose us. Our adversaries are preparing.

The recent Russian incursion in Ukraine, the activities of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, social unrest and civil war in parts of the African continent, and China’s use of coercive influence against its neighbors speak to the challenges that irregular warfare poses to U.S. national security interests. In these conflicts, success will depend increasingly on our ability to work through like-minded groups or governments and to be as precise as possible in our unilateral application of force. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) are optimized to develop and accrue a deep cultural relationship, a knowledge of partner capabilities, and a decisive situational understanding within a given country or region and are thus uniquely positioned to operate in the human domain and generate persistent influence to counter such irregular warfare threats to the nation.

The effectiveness of today’s Army special operators at the tactical level is unmatched in any setting or environment. However, to provide the nation with the expanded range of strategic options the future will demand, we must hone our capabilities at the operational level—specifically, our ability to design, plan, and conduct discrete multiyear special operations campaigns that integrate the full suite of SOF; conventional forces (CF); joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM); and partner capabilities with the objective of shaping the operating environment to counter threats and advance U.S. interests.

This *ARSOF Operating Concept (AOpC)* emphasizes the importance of holistic applications of the two pillars of ARSOF: special warfare and surgical strikes. The *AOpC* underscores the human domain as the preeminent and necessary battleground of the present and the future. And—most importantly—it reaffirms the primacy of educating, training, equipping, and supporting the most highly selected, culturally astute, and operationally proficient operators and teams to execute missions in a future operating environment that is characterized by uncertainty.



CHARLES T. CLEVELAND
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1-1. Future Operating Environment

As ARSOF protect our nation today while shaping tomorrow's operating environment, national leadership faces three vitally important considerations. First, fiscal limitations now form a basic planning assumption. Second, beyond the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, we see a complex, intractable future operating environment that is ill-structured. Third, warfare's fundamental character and conduct continue to evolve as operations occur around the globe. Therefore, the anticipated future security environment is framed by diminishing defense resources and increasing complexity featuring a greater number and variety of threats.¹ As in the past, landpower will prove critical to long-term operational success, as decisive engagement still occurs on land. In the future, the emerging strategic quality of landpower will be further enabled by campaigns originating from the left side of the operational continuum (Figure 1-1).

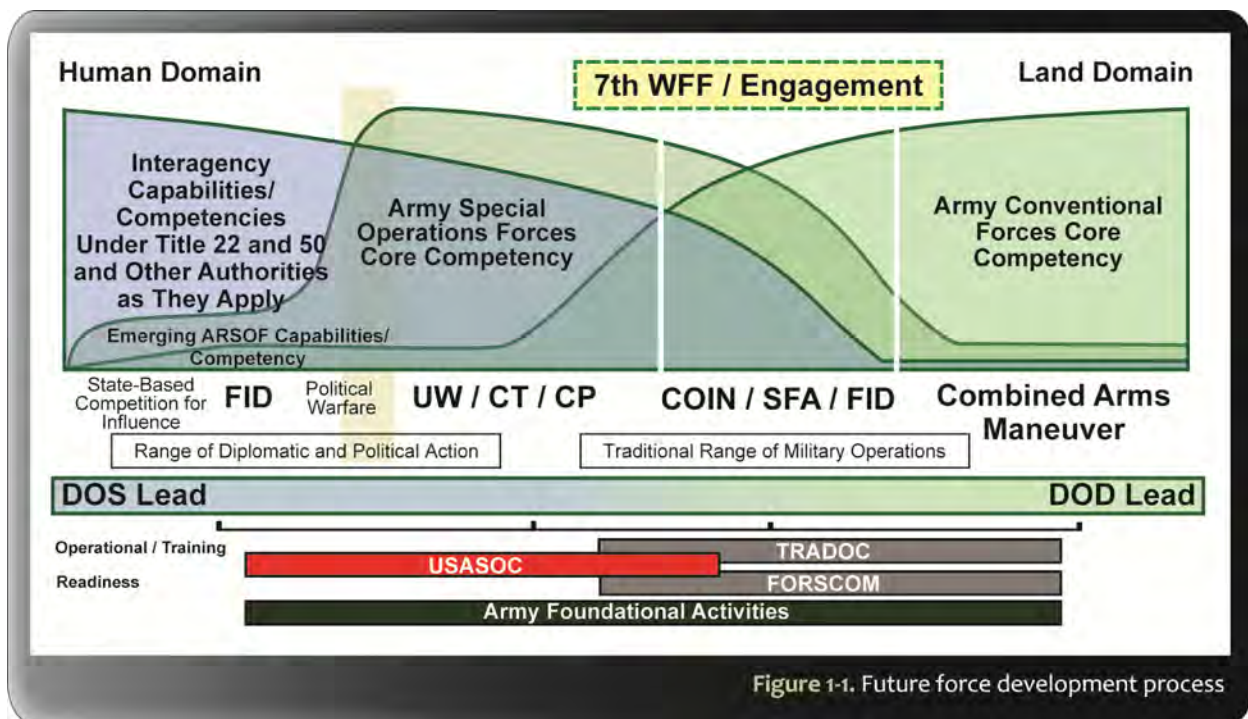


Figure 1-1. Future force development process

1-2. The Dominant Reality: Fiscal Austerity and Uncertainty

- a. Since the 11 September 2001 attacks, national defense has absorbed a tremendous share of America's resources. Absent major game-changers, U.S. citizens are unlikely to sustain this level of expenditure. Throughout the government and the joint force, budget austerity has become the norm.² Recognizing the need to embrace austerity actively, U.S. strategic guidance cautions us that future U.S. forces will no longer be sized for large-scale, prolonged operations. The U.S. military will become smaller and leaner, but at the same time will prove agile, flexible, and better prepared, going so far as to improve readiness in areas that by necessity were deemphasized

over the past decade.³ The U.S. military therefore seeks innovative, low-cost and small-footprint engagements across the globe as the central feature of safeguarding our nation's security.⁴

- b. ARSOF too must recognize the implications of increasing fiscal constraint and adjust to the new demands of the future security environment (Figure 1-2).



1-3. The Threat Environment: Irregular, Hybrid, and Diverse

- a. As observed daily in the Ukraine, in Iraq, in Syria, and around the globe, the emerging operating environment combines an ever-broadening array of irregular and hybrid threats, to include states, nonstate groups, and independent actors. In the future, our enemies will intermingle in fluid combinations to oppose U.S. interests at home and abroad. Countering them will require campaigns that mix conventional and unconventional approaches and embrace the cyber and information environment. While adversary centers of gravity will remain land-based, the destruction of enemy units and the domination of territory may no longer be decisive. Instead, strategic landpower must emerge from and enable durable relationships with local security and governance actors, as well as populations. These relationships will result in a global network of partners who can provide policymakers with better strategic options to meet common challenges.⁵
- b. Cooperation in new and durable ways with friendly state and nonstate partners is therefore the cardinal principle of future operations. Establishing and sustaining this cooperation requires preparing local partners to collaborate in shared security efforts. Much of that burden will fall

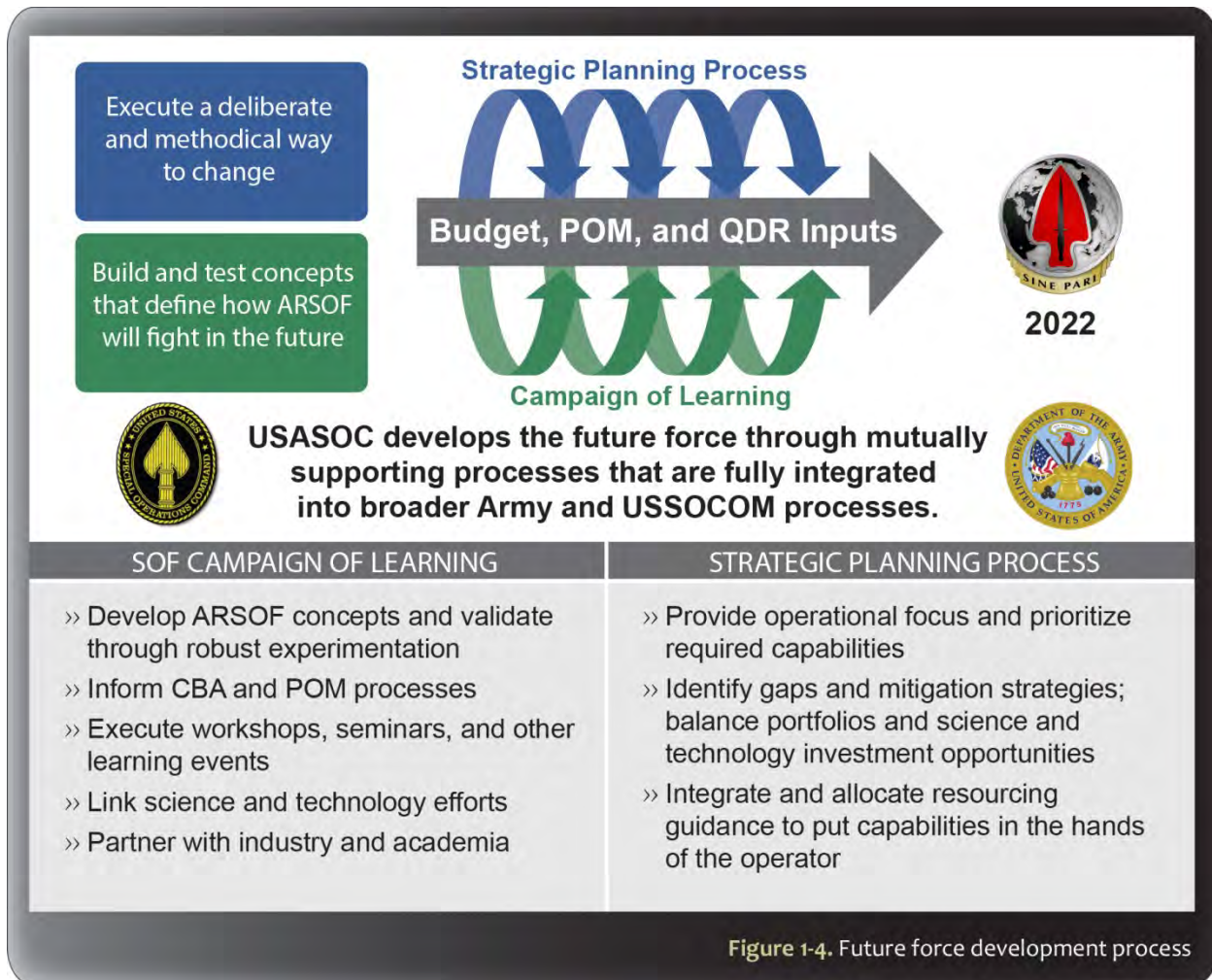
on ARSOF operators who master the human domain.⁶ Indeed, it is an innate SOf quality to both understand populations where they operate and then take meaningful action to effectively influence human behavior toward achieving outcomes aligned with U.S. interests (Figure 1-3).⁷



1-4. Sustaining and Enabling ARSOF: The Operating Concept

- a. As fiscal austerity and hybrid threats converge, the United States requires a force of uncommon agility whose operators possess endurance and wisdom based on experience and maturity. Fluent in the human domain and practiced in “wars amongst the people,” SOf operators will also build and maintain relationships with regional partners, providing our national leadership with flexible responses to any challenge.⁸ When needed, ARSOF will also wield timely precision lethality to protect American lives and interests (Figure 1-4).
- b. A global network including joint, interagency, and international partners will enable these capabilities, but that network itself is not enough. The U.S. military must place supreme value in its operators, who will be constantly challenged through the most demanding education, training, and developmental assignments. Our operators’ capabilities also rely on strong and healthy families, supported by the broader ARSOF and Army community.

- c. Through seamless collaboration with all United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) components and in cooperation with unified action partners (UAPs), ARSOF will continue to provide joint force commanders with optimal tools to assess, shape, and influence foreign environments. At the same time, ARSOF will maintain a unilateral ability to achieve



U.S. objectives. This is what the defense of the American people and the preservation of U.S. national security interests require; this is what ARSOF will be.

- d. As we work together to develop ARSOF over the next decade, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has reminded us that we must think differently with regard to force structure, interagency outreach, and multinational partnering.⁹ Consistent with this approach, ARSOF will embrace intellectual rigor throughout our organizations and programs. ARSOF will spearhead initiatives to help USSOCOM develop, combine, and employ emergent SOF capabilities across the spectrum of joint force requirements. Embodying the SOF ethos of a regionally postured, globally networked, ever-flexible force, ARSOF and its USSOCOM components will continue to lead the way in interagency and international cooperation.¹⁰
- e. We highlight USASOC's role as the proponent for a unique portion of the Army's range of military operations, with emphasis on campaigns originating on the left side of the operational continuum and USASOC's unique FORSCOM- and TRADOC-like responsibility within the

foundational Army activities. The *AOpC 2022*, in support of the USSOCOM *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept (SOFOC)*, is intended for Army Special Operations Forces at all levels, providing a unique roadmap to the collaborative effort of sustaining and augmenting ARSOF capabilities. A coherent and comprehensive concept for dealing with the irregular and hybrid enemies that we will continue to face, the *AOpC* explores how ARSOF must function in the broader SOF and joint community in support of U.S. national security interests.¹¹

1-5. Linkage to Strategic Landpower

Strategic landpower is an initiative that advocates for the protection and advancement of national objectives through the improved integration of joint capabilities during campaigning. The strategic landpower initiative proposes that the joint force should better employ forces that operate on land to gain a positional, political, and psychological advantage by understanding and influencing behaviors and perceptions among key populations and actors. It advocates for developing a broader range of strategic options for policymakers across the range of military operations. The *AOpC* contributes to the understanding of strategic landpower by describing how special warfare and surgical strike activities work in concert with other elements and activities of the joint force to achieve national security objectives.

1-6. Linkage to the USSOCOM Special Operations Forces Operating Concept

The *SOFOC* provides a vision of the future strategic environment and describes the key elements and critical capability areas USSOCOM will require in 2020 and beyond. The central idea of the *SOFOC* is that “SOF conduct core activities with a focused, balanced approach through small-footprint distributed operations to understand and influence relevant populations.”¹² USSOCOM will optimize and exploit the global special operations forces network (GSN) to support U.S. Government efforts to enhance stability, prevent conflicts, and, when necessary, fight and defeat adversaries.¹³ The *AOpC* supports and implements *SOFOC* by describing how USASOC will enable ARSOF operators to execute special warfare and surgical strike activities as an integral part of the GSN.

1-7. Linkage to The United States Army Operating Concept

The United States Army Operating Concept (AOC) describes how Army forces operating as part of joint, interorganizational, and multinational combined arms teams accomplish the mission and win in a complex world. Army forces are prepared to do more than fight and defeat enemies; they must possess the capability to translate military objectives into enduring political outcomes. Army forces must have the capability and capacity¹⁴ to accomplish assigned missions while confronting increasingly dangerous threats and complex operational environments. The *AOpC* contributes to the *AOC* by providing the conceptual foundation for special operations as an Army core competency and by emphasizing the necessity for building relationships and networks with interorganizational and multinational partners to accomplish U.S. national security objectives.

Chapter 2

The Future Operating Environment

It is virtually impossible to rank, in terms of long range importance, the numerous, potential threats to U.S. national security... it is the multiplicity and interconnectedness of potential threats and the actors behind them that constitute our biggest challenge.

– James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence¹⁵

2-1. Introduction

The U.S. military is at a strategic inflection point in its history. We see a future that will likely challenge the effectiveness of some forms of military power and completely checkmate others. The cessation of a decade of major land warfare, a national sentiment to avoid large expeditionary campaigns, and a congressional mandate for fiscal constraint all influence the future direction of the U.S. national security strategy. Future trends and strategically gifted adversaries competing in cognitive space will drive an environment defined by influence in its broadest application. In order to provide low-cost, small-footprint options to U.S. decision makers as viable alternatives, ARSOF must first understand and then continually adapt to the evolving global operating environment.

2-2. A Multipolar World

- a. *Global Trends 2030* contends that global political leadership will likely be more diffuse, with no single country or alliance playing a dominant role.¹⁶ The countries with the greatest potential to substantially increase their relative power during the forecasted period include China, India, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, and Turkey.¹⁷ This predicted multipolar world presents a persistent challenge for U.S. national leadership as they employ the elements of power, including low-intensity military options, in an international environment of dynamic alliances and adversarial relationships.
- b. Competition in the global commons will revolve around maintaining the security of key populations in militarily significant urban terrain. The sheer mass and scale of urbanized humanity will be amplified by the intersection of informationally aware, smartphone-enabled urban populations and their satisfaction—or lack of satisfaction—with local, regional, and even global conditions.
- c. In the coming decades, failed states and ungoverned areas will become sanctuaries for extremist, criminal, and terrorist organizations to flourish. Vacuums emerging from the weakened nation-state model of 19th and 20th centuries will not elicit new forms of government, but only a proliferation of preexisting forms. The significant difference will be the greater ability of nonstate actors to defend themselves, and to influence or attack other populations, due to the diffusion of weapons and communications technologies down to subnation groups. All these trends speak to the emerging strategic quality of landpower and our contribution to this capability.

2-3. Threat Evolution

- a. Conflicts and warfare will persist. The adoption of irregular warfare tactics by both state and nonstate actors as a primary mode of warfighting will be a common characteristic of conflicts beyond 2022. The diffusion among nonstate and subnational groups of advanced weaponry and of information and communication capabilities historically held by nation-states will significantly increase the threat posed by irregular forms of warfare. Forces will compete for relative superiority over the physical, cognitive, and moral security and adequate governance of key populations, which will increasingly unfold in militarily significant urban terrain.
- b. Highly resilient and adaptable violent extremist organizations (VEOs) are expected to grow in number and to expand their spheres of influence. In the future, even small-sized groups will have access to lethal and cyberspace weapons able to significantly weaken a number of the world's governing regimes. This will make it possible for a government to outsource mayhem, with a high degree of deniability, while relying upon VEOs that operate in undergoverned spaces and plan attacks from undetected locations.
- c. The decline of the regulated nation-state order and the increased prominence of VEOs suggest that, over the next few decades, individual empowerment may prove critical as it gives greatest meaning to these other trends discussed here. At the same time, the diffusion of weapons and information technology will encompass greater numbers of empowered individuals, while the cyber domain offers them several advantages over other forms of warfare. These advantages are derived from the anonymity and relatively low cost provided to disaffected individuals by cyber-based tools that seek to create havoc with off-the-shelf equipment.¹⁸ Even more disturbing is the diffusion of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) down to individuals. Anthrax attacks in the United States demonstrate the ability of a single person to employ biological or chemical weapons against civilian populations.

2-4. Implications for ARSOF

- a. We would characterize the SOF operational environment as a composite of the domains with emphasis on the human domain and its physical, cognitive, and moral influences aggregated within a given operational area. This environment will increasingly require the enduring employment of SOF capabilities and CF, JIIM, and partner capabilities to continually shape desired environmental conditions to advance U.S. national interests. This complex operational environment—with varying degrees of stability, security, governance, intractability, and problem clarity—will demand purposeful collaboration and nesting of stakeholder plans and expertise to maximize desired conditions for U.S. interests.¹⁹
- b. *ARSOF in 2022: The Future Operating Environment* concludes that future trends can converge to generate a strikingly nonpermissive, actor-rich operating environment typified by high degrees of sociopolitical volatility and fragmentation. In order to be successful, ARSOF must have the capability to deal with a wide variety of threats in increasingly challenging environs. Doing so will require enhanced mission command capabilities; a deep understanding of the culture, relationships, and capabilities of partners; decisive situational awareness; and the ability to generate persistent influence to counter irregular warfare threats to the nation.
- c. Dealing with transnational and hybrid organizations requires a high level of ongoing, real-time cooperation with JIIM organizations reliant on established responsibilities understood by all participants. Hybrid teams consisting of military, law enforcement, and composite

authorities will become the new norm to counter transnational and hybrid threats. SOF operational design will be optimized in the human domain and in operations not led by the Department of Defense (DOD).

- d. Future ARSOF operators and teams will need to be even more culturally astute, better-trained, and more adaptable to an ever-faster pace of operations.²⁰ Irregular warfare, which comprises more than three-quarters of the conflicts in the world today, can be expected to predominate in future decades. SOF will thus continue to be the force of choice to confront the irregular threats to the U.S. homeland and U.S. national security interests abroad.

Chapter 3

Providing Our Nation With the World's Premier Special Operations Units

In the coming decade, ARSOF will be called upon to provide balanced and fully integrated special operations capabilities to the nation. Our force must maintain its high degree of professionalism complemented by cutting-edge training, world class education, and the balanced use of state-of-the-art and indigenous equipment.

Our formations must be organized, postured, and networked in a manner that enables them to anticipate and prevent or rapidly respond to regional contingencies or threats to the stability of our allies.²¹

– LTG Charles T. Cleveland

3-1. Introduction: Where Do We Stand?

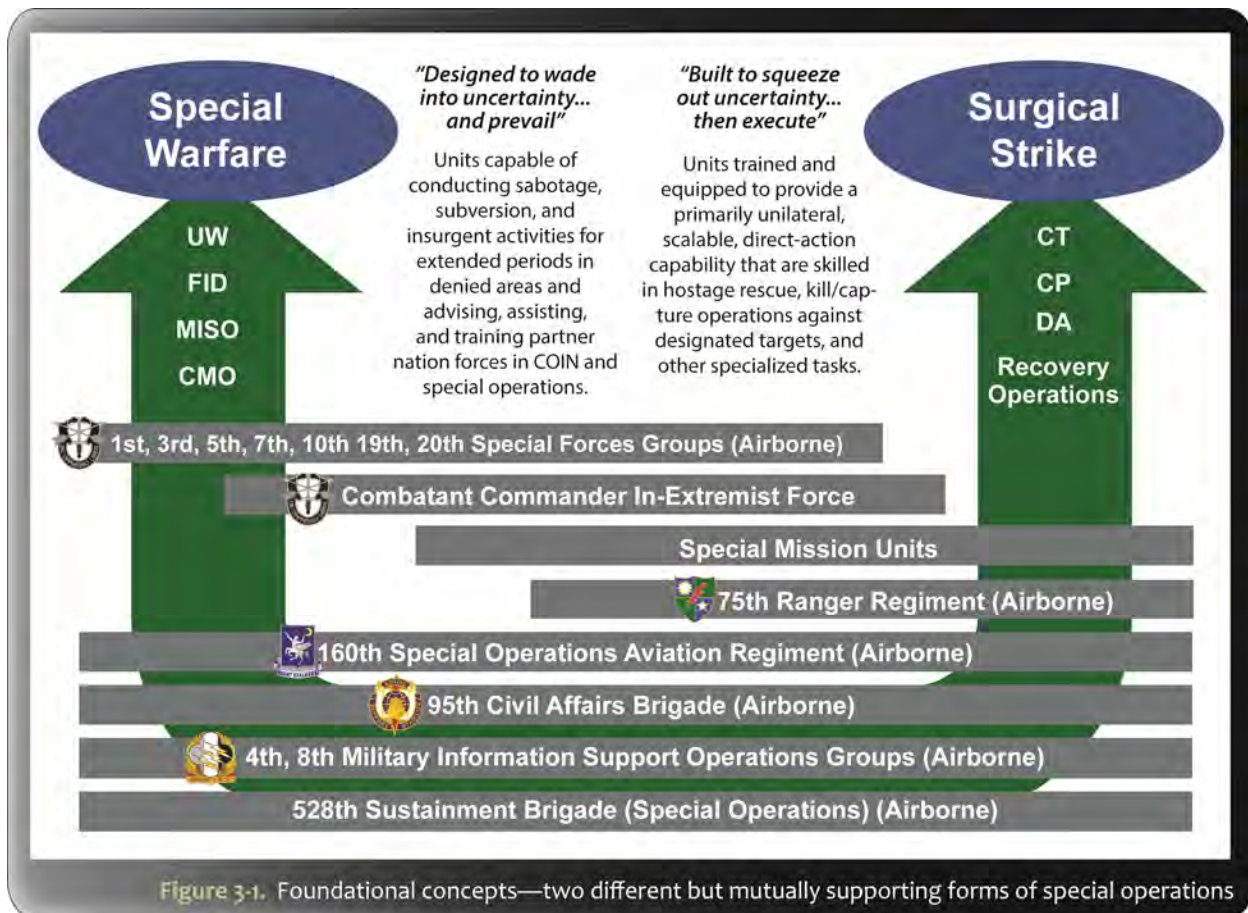
- a. As the American Way of Warfare adapts to the realities of the 21st century, the Global Special Operations Forces Campaign Plan (GCP-SOF) enabled by the GSN will play a significant role. In particular, the GCP-SOF will change the prevailing paradigm of warfare's character and conduct, based since the 1980s on the CF-dominated six-phase (phases 0 through 5) joint construct. The emerging concept of strategic landpower provides a unique perspective to this process of change, as it emphasizes the population itself as a principal security objective. This emphasis will lead to military and nonmilitary forces whose ability to destroy is accompanied by the decisive ability to understand populations in the operational environment in order to act meaningfully to influence human behavior toward achieving the desired outcomes. ARSOF will be uniquely postured to operate in the human domain and generate persistent influence to counter irregular threats to the nation (Figure 3-1).²²
- b. Just as the paradigm of warfare is evolving, so too are the tools of warfare. To wage the Global SOF Campaign, a new suite of capabilities will be required. To provide a glimpse of these capabilities, Chapter 3 discusses the central idea of making both the GCP-SOF and the GSN fundamental realities through special warfare and surgical strike. Chapter 3 also examines those significant changes needed to restructure ARSOF to meet the demands of the future security environment.

3-2. Problem Statement

How will future ARSOF provide the United States with the world's premier special operations units, capable of prosecuting the most sensitive special warfare campaigns and executing the most difficult surgical strike operations during an era of fiscal austerity?

3-3. The Central Idea

- a. USASOC provides the nation with two exquisite and unique critical capabilities: special warfare and surgical strike (Figure 3-1). Through these complementary capabilities, ARSOF units execute activities across the range of military operations to support national policy and specific theater requirements. These two critical capabilities of ARSOF can reduce the U.S. footprint in foreign territories and increase the effectiveness of larger-scale military alternatives.



- b. **Surgical Strike.** Surgical strike involves "the execution of activities in a precise manner that employ special operations forces in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets, or influence threats."²³ Executed unilaterally or collaboratively, surgical strike extends America's operational reach and influence by engaging global targets with discriminating precision. To do this, surgical strike applies detailed analysis and precise employment to reduce operational uncertainty and collateral damage.
- (1) ARSOF units need to execute multiple, synchronized, and simultaneous surgical strikes in depth against interconnected and geographically dispersed targets all while maintaining the element of surprise. The war on terror has shown that terrorist networks targeted with decapitation operations can quickly promote new leadership. Rather, disabling multiple nodes and leaders has a much greater effect on disrupting or destroying the organization. Additionally, today's threat networks

can disperse rapidly when warned of attacks against other threat organizations. To counter the evolution of threat network connectivity and survivability, ARSOF must prevent VEO elements from going to ground when one node or leader is attacked.

- (2) Serving regional and national objectives, future ARSOF units will be required to execute surgical strikes across the spectrum of war and conflict while supporting special warfare. At the tactical level, surgical strikes will serve desired effects beyond the capabilities of conventional or surrogate forces. At the operational and strategic levels, surgical strike units will operate either in concert with other Services and capabilities or unilaterally in complex or denied environments. They will have the ability to conduct forcible entry operations up to the regimental level combined with the ability to prosecute one or more follow-on targets. Such targets will comprise command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence nodes; terrorist command and control nodes; hardened sites from air strikes; key logistical centers; integrated air defense systems; and key infrastructure (for example, power and transportation). Surgical strike units can also enable special warfare, weakening the enemy's grip on the population through direct action operations against critical mission command nodes and infrastructure. ARSOF must have capability for dynamic en route mission planning and communications between aircraft, ground forces, mission command elements, and interagency partners.
- (3) Collaborating with interagency and multinational partners, ARSOF's surgical strike employs the find, fix, finish, exploit, analyze, and disseminate (F3EAD) process to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets or influence threats. As targeting methodologies continue to evolve, surgical strike units can provide a more discreet, prioritized, and lethal capability to remove bad actors and disrupt threat networks with minimal collateral damage. Such operations complement special warfare activities conducted in the human domain. Future ARSOF surgical strike units must therefore maximize evolving technological capabilities to apply the F3EAD targeting methodology more precisely and faster than the enemy can develop counter technologies. In particular, ARSOF must evolve its capability to integrate and analyze all-source intelligence to improve targeting from the strategic level down to the tactical level, since decisive counterterrorism (CT) requires timely and reliable intelligence.

- c. **Special Warfare.** Special warfare is an umbrella term indicating operating force conduct of combinations of unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), military information support operations (MISO), CT, and counterinsurgency (COIN) through and with indigenous personnel.²⁴ With discreet, precise, politically astute, and scalable capabilities, ARSOF frequently undertake politically sensitive missions over extended periods of time in hostile, austere, and denied environments.²⁵ Here, ARSOF's deep language and cultural expertise enhance unit survivability through the recognition and understanding of emerging threats. Such capabilities also grant Army special operators influence over the human domain in pursuit of U.S. objectives, to avoid conflict, or to bring about a quick and enduring victory.²⁶ Likewise, ARSOF operators must be proficient in small-unit tactics and in building indigenous forces, alongside which they will fight in permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments.²⁷ Moreover, successful special warfare will require ARSOF's low-signature capabilities.

- (1) **Unconventional Warfare.** UW is the most sensitive of special warfare missions. While ARSOF's Special Forces (SF) were originally organized to conduct UW, the predominant forms of conflict in the post-Cold War world include fighting insurgencies and irregular wars and trying to impose order on foreign populations. Special warfare is most complex when conducting the UW activity. Units must be organized, trained, and equipped to perform their missions in an area where the enemy is at least nominally in control. It follows that ARSOF must possess unique low-signature capabilities to execute these sensitive activities. The early phases of UW are often the most difficult. Typically, while the resistance or insurgency is in its infancy, the adversary has the tightest control over both the territory and the population. This places a premium on the ability to operate in a low-signature manner to successfully meet operational requirements. Future ARSOF must therefore implement an operational survivability program developing critical skills to reduce mission and operator risk and enable UW in all environments.
 - (2) **Extended-Duration Unconventional Warfare.** Today, executing extended-duration UW remains the significant special warfare challenge.^{28, 29, 30} ARSOF must rapidly increase UW capabilities while maintaining its superior level of surgical strike capability in order to meet future conflicts' growing irregular threats. Indeed, in attaining U.S. strategic goals and objectives, ARSOF's ability to operate in the human domain through surgical strike and special warfare, especially extended-duration UW, will be at least as crucial as large-scale conventional action. Using indigenous security solutions may even surpass direct military action's importance due to the former's lesser expense and greater political acceptability. Hence, the United States possesses a singularly unique response to irregular threats in ARSOF's ability to lead discreet, scalable UW campaigns of extended duration by maximizing understanding of the human domain through cooperation with UAPs. In the future, the execution of extended-duration UW will also require ARSOF to develop, employ, and manage the most highly qualified military and civilian support personnel, encompassing a greater variety of branches and wider range of specialties than ever before. These support personnel must develop relationships with interagency counterparts, enabling effective support, sustainment, and redeployment of ARSOF operators conducting extended UW. To meet this challenge, ARSOF must develop a program to recruit, assess, train, employ, and manage the most highly qualified support personnel. The program must also receive the same emphasis as the operators they support.
- d. **Defining Characteristics of Special Warfare and Surgical Strike.** Special warfare and surgical strike are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. ARSOF will employ surgical strike activities to shape the operational environment or influence selected target audiences in support of broader strategic objectives. Although the typical strike can be short in duration, interagency and host nation partnerships can develop the target and facilitate postoperational activities—thus aiding the planning process focus on critical operational or strategic targets—that include counterproliferation, CT, and hostage rescue and recovery operations. Table 3-1 compares the characteristics of special warfare and surgical strike in light of four principal criteria: how the unit views the population, how the unit deals with the population, the focus of preparation of the environment (PE), and the time horizon.

Table 3-1. Characteristics of Special Warfare and Surgical Strike.

	Special Warfare	Surgical Strike
Population Viewed As	The Environment	An Obstacle
Population Dealt With By	Engagement	Avoid/Control
PE Focus	Enduring Network Development	Target Centric
Time Horizon	Mid to Long Term	Short to Mid Term
Speed of Execution	Gradual	Near Instantaneous
Prime Requirement	Patience	Speed
Communications	Low Signature	Robust
Measure of Effectiveness	Systemic Change	Threat Eliminated
Risk Tolerance	Significant	Minimal

3-4. Common Areas of Emphasis

- a. **Strategic Correlation of Power.** We continue to internalize the January 2012 marching orders from the 38th U.S. Army Chief of Staff as we integrate ARSOF's contribution within the Army's suite of capabilities. A key consideration in the current environment will be building strategic depth in terms of how we support the arrangement of military actions in time, space, and purpose to maximize relative combat power. In the future operating environment, we must maximize the strategic depth within the human domain as we address its physical, cognitive, and moral aspects as part of a larger calculus of a strategic correlation of power.
- b. **Special Reconnaissance Activities.** A SOF core activity, special reconnaissance (SR) is employed during both special warfare and surgical strike in support of the operational or strategic objectives of the theater special operations command (TSOC) and geographic combatant commander (GCC). SR is defined as "reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or diplomatically and/or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces."³¹ Additionally, SR supports the execution of other SOF core activities. Future ARSOF must therefore develop and employ cutting-edge SR technologies, tactics, techniques, and procedures to support surgical strike and special warfare in all environments.
- c. **Preparation of the Environment.** The DOD defines PE as "an umbrella term for operations and activities conducted by selectively trained special operations forces to develop an environment for potential future special operations."³² An essential precondition for UW, PE consists of three components: operational preparation of the environment, advance force operations, and intelligence operations.³³
- d. **Special Operations Aviation.** ARSOF must have responsive, dedicated, and specialized aviation support with the latest technologies in communications, navigation, capacity, firepower, range, stealth, and speed. Supporting requirements will entail balancing stationing requirements for global reach versus the rotation requirements to support ongoing efforts. Budget constraints will challenge acquisition and upgrading of ARSOF air assets, requiring a balance of capability, budget, and asset demand.

- e. **Regionally Aligned Forces.** To support surgical strike and special warfare missions, ARSOF must incorporate regionally aligned forces (RAF) into the TSOC. As the U.S. Army fields RAF to theaters to support geographic combatant commands, these forces are expected to become regionally engaged and culturally aware. ARSOF must develop integrated SOF-CF solutions to achieve GCC objectives based on the characteristics of the RAF. SOF-CF initiatives could enhance intelligence, optimize resources, increase operational capability, enable persistent presence, and contribute to decisive situational understanding.

3-5. Solution Synopsis

Future ARSOF will operate in a complex operating environment. They must be able to:

- Provide joint force commanders with scalable ARSOF units containing operators with high levels of tactical skill, language capabilities, and cultural expertise.³⁴
 - Provide units with regional and UW expertise to support insurgencies serving U.S. policy objectives.
 - Provide precise and advanced asymmetric capabilities that support both traditional warfare and irregular warfare.³⁵
 - Establish persistent and distributed human and technical networks through the GSN.³⁶
- a. **Mission Command.** Across the spectrum of SOF core activities in the future, enabling distributed mission command will prove a challenge. Employing small technologically-enabled mission command nodes, ARSOF must maximize reachback to the continental United States (CONUS) base while working with indigenous partners and UAPs. Further, senior leadership must adopt new expectations of the type and volume of communications exchanged with operationally engaged ARSOF units. These new expectations will involve accepting risk and empowering junior leaders to execute mission-type orders.
- b. **Mission Authorities.** ARSOF operates in a complex legal environment. In the future, ARSOF will continue to conduct operations under Title 10 Authorities, Title 50 Authorities, and the Ambassador's Title 22 Authorities. ARSOF must be educated to understand the scope and limitations of these authorities. Furthermore, ARSOF must identify and perform assignments that will complement decision-makers' understanding of ARSOF support requirements, as well as those processes necessary to obtain authorities as the needs arise.³⁷
- c. **Mission Alignment.** The effort to sustain the high tempo of operations (OPTEMPO) in the past 12 years has led to units assuming responsibilities for missions not traditionally aligned with their core capabilities. Demanding mission requirements and high OPTEMPO led to an extensive overlap during the past decade. In the years ahead, units must focus on the core activities for which they were designed.

3-6. Components of the Solution

The USASOC Commander's priorities that fulfill the vision and intent of *ARSOF 2022* include:

- Optimize SOF-CF and interagency interdependence.³⁸
- Operationalize the CONUS base.
- Develop SOF capabilities at the operational level.

- Facilitate SOF mission command.
- a. **Optimize SOF/CF and Interagency Interdependence.** ARSOF must seek to expand partnerships with the Army, joint, and interagency community.³⁹ By bridging critical seams among SOF, CF, and interagency partners, ARSOF will contribute effectively to unified action in the 21st century and facilitate the blending of capabilities between the DOD and the interagency, providing U.S. policymakers a continuum of options.
- (1) **Global SOF Network.** The GSN is the USSOCOM program to further SOF, CF, and JIIM interdependence. Such interdependence must include unity of effort and shared situational awareness; harmonized future doctrine manifested in common networks; and the establishment of memoranda of agreement/understanding (MOAs/MOUs). Indeed, a recent study noted that “enhancing partner capacity will provide more SOF capacity across the globe, greater insight regarding conditions on the ground, allowing SOF to more effectively shape the environment and better enable U.S. partners to face their own security threats.”⁴⁰
 - (2) **Unified Action Partnerships.** At the heart of the GSN is the principle, “You can’t surge trust.”⁴¹ The GSN will provide the persistent person-to-person working relationships necessary to build trust with indigenous forces and JIIM partners.⁴² Such trust is increasingly important given a reduction of forces and declining DOD budgets, as well as increasing complexity of conflicts where SOF must leverage the GSN.⁴³ Sustaining and growing the GSN, and making it equally valuable to our allies, will thus significantly enhance ARSOF’s global presence with a reduced footprint, tying operational capabilities to theater and national strategies and objectives.
 - (3) **Strategic Landpower Initiative.** Strategic landpower bridges the seams among UAPs. It is an effort to connect interagency players, military services, and partner militaries. Greater connectivity can directly contribute to achieving overarching national or multinational security objectives and improve guidance for a given military campaign or operation.⁴⁴ Second, strategic landpower invests in developing the military’s understanding of the emerging human domain. While the effects of the human domain can be very important in conventional warfare, they are often critical to our efforts to maintain population control or to wage conflict in irregular warfare. To maintain relevance, ARSOF must remain at the forefront of developing multiservice concepts involving the human domain and strategic landpower.⁴⁵
 - (4) **Law.** Smart application of the Code of Laws of the United States of America (U.S.C.) can sharpen SOF and interagency interdependence. ARSOF must understand the parts of the U.S.C. that provide the authorities for special warfare and surgical strike activities. Future operations hinge on understanding legal limitations as well as the means to seek appropriate authorities when conditions call for conduct of special warfare and surgical strike. For maximum operational flexibility, ARSOF must develop the requisite business practices to institutionalize the desired culture and mindset aligned with the U.S.C. Laws need to be clearly articulated to protect ARSOF, especially in the conduct of special warfare aspects of irregular warfare. Improved understanding of authorities related to the U.S.C. will permit commanders to plan and conduct missions while fully protecting future operators.
- b. **Operationalize the CONUS Base.** The CONUS base provides a wealth of resources to assist ARSOF commanders in forward-deployed regions around the globe. Considering the talent

resident across ARSOF, U.S. Government agencies, nongovernment organizations, academia, and think tanks, the potential to access expertise within the homeland is significant. Organizing the force to access this capability is essential and can greatly enhance future ARSOF performance. By establishing mechanisms and leveraging information technology in the future, ARSOF will harness CONUS-based capacity to support TSOCs and regional or country campaigns and operations. Like artillery in combined arms maneuver, regionally expert forces should not be “left in reserve” in the conduct of special operations. The following are essential capabilities to operationalize the CONUS base.

- (1) **Military Information Support Operations (MISO) Effects.** In order to increase the depth of operational and strategic influence capacity of TSOCs and GCCs without increasing forward physical posture, ARSOF seek a MISO capability to harness the influence entities and information-related capabilities resident in stateside military and UAP formations. Acting off demand signals from forward warfighters, the MISO effects group will enable TSOC/GCC initiatives and operations by pulling forward intellectual, technical and organizational capabilities as a warm influence network. The effects group will also coordinate internal collaborative sessions to develop innovative solutions to specialized problems at the request of TSOCs and GCCs.
- (2) **Civil-Military Support.** Given the U.S. military’s assigned responsibilities in the areas of stability and governance, future joint formations will need to address shared interests as part of a unified action effort.⁴⁶ Doing so necessitates a system to procure, classify, marshal, and employ the appropriate civilian expertise to execute stability tasks. ARSOF will thus generate integrated civil-military planning capabilities to better inform TSOCs, GCCs, and chiefs of mission.⁴⁷ ARSOF will require the means to collect and share TSOC, GCC, DOD, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) regional perspectives in order to collectively link resources to requirements.⁴⁸
- (3) **Civil-Military Advisory Capability.** ARSOF must develop a broader capability to receive and share information and coordinate activities prior to times of crisis to better inform strategy development across the spectrum of conflict. The range of organizational support to be provided by this capability ranges from country teams and partner nation ministries in humanitarian assistance (HA)/disaster relief situations to informing TSOC, GCC, and other campaign planning process over the long term. A civil-military advisory capability would be built on four key pillars: 1) operational reachback to relevant partners; 2) analysis and fusion of country-by-country civil information; 3) advisory and planning support to leaders, namely U.S. Ambassadors and military commanders; and 4) standing expertise from plank holders, to include the Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization or Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, USAID, and ARSOF. Over the long term, the coordination process should involve the entire civil affairs and humanitarian response community.
- (4) **Military Support to Governance.** Given the U.S. military’s assigned responsibilities in the areas of stability and governance, future joint formations must address shared interests and enhance host nation governance, security, economic development, and the rule of law.⁴⁹ Doing so necessitates a system to procure, classify, marshal, and employ the appropriate civilian expertise to support or lead execution of stability tasks aligned with national security objectives. The ability of ARSOF to provide highly skilled, deployable civilian talent will be vital to enabling the U.S. military’s support to governance within foreign countries and will highlight the military’s success in employing RAF to achieve policy objectives.⁵⁰

- c. **Develop Holistic SOF Capabilities at the Operational Level.** To meet this requirement, ARSOF must improve its capability to do two things. First, it must design and plan long-duration, low-visibility, SOF-centric contributions to campaigns that link tactical SOF capabilities to strategic objectives. Secondly, it must seamlessly integrate SOF operations with JIIM operations. ARSOF must be concerned with what occurs during steady-state security cooperation activities as much as what occurs during a crisis response or limited contingency operation.

- (1) **Campaign Planning.** To meet the challenges of the future operating environment, ARSOF must develop and provide experienced campaign planners to the operational headquarters of JIIM partners in order to maintain relationships and knowledge enabling a unity of effort to execute and support special warfare and surgical strike operations. The *USASOC Planner's Handbook* must become an integral part of training. By 2022, ARSOF's operational planners and leaders will thus need to routinely mesh special warfare and surgical strike capabilities through reliance on cognitive approaches derived from SOF operational art. ARSOF must also improve the TSOC direct support liaison elements by developing sustainment planners who prepare for the delivery of Army Services. Additionally, ARSOF must develop and assign operational-level civil-military operations/stability operations planners at TSOCs (Figure 3-2).⁵¹

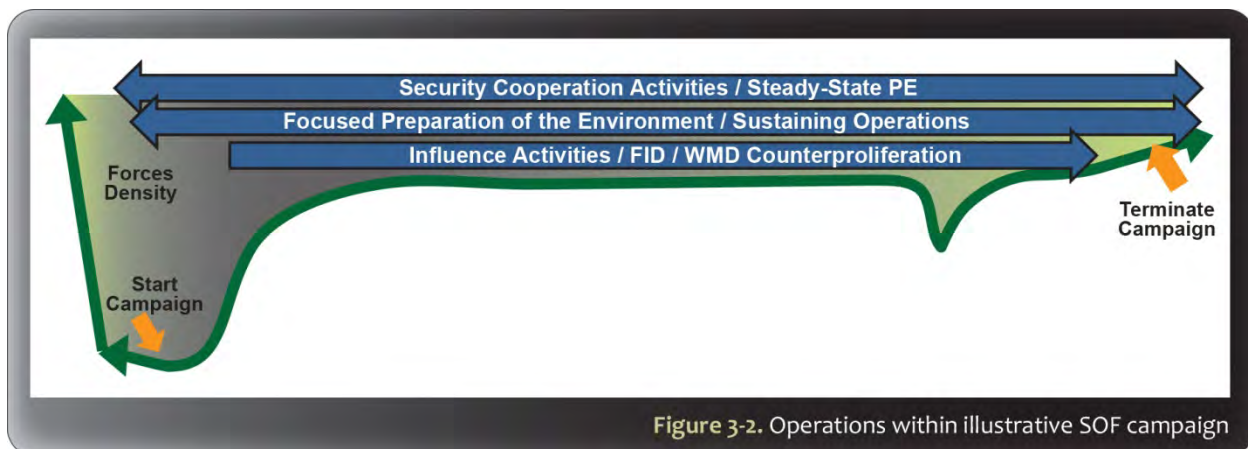


Figure 3-2. Operations within illustrative SOF campaign

- (2) **Partner Nation Rotary-Wing Capability.** The 2012 defense strategic guidance provides instructions to the U.S. Armed Forces with specific guidance for improvements. It emphasized the need to build partnership capacity abroad to focus on sharing security costs and responsibilities; emphasized innovative, low-cost, small-footprint approaches⁵²; and reaffirmed the intent of the 2010 *National Security Strategy* to strengthen the capacity of partner nation security forces. As a result of this guidance, ARSOF will develop partner nation rotary-wing capability.
- (3) **Sustainment.** The USSOCOM *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept* provides a future vision for combat support operators. "By 2020, each SOF group, regiment and brigade must have a full set of deployable, tactical combat support operators permanently assigned or attached as part of task-organized, multidiscipline SOF teams. Planned skill sets will include expertise in communications, intelligence, logistics, explosive ordnance disposal, canine handling, and tactical cyber operations. SOF teams will routinely train, deploy, and operate with the same combat support operators. The USSOCOM Service components provide these operators with basic SOF skills and train them to apply their military occupational specialties to SOF operations and activities.

Combat support operators will complete an initial extended assignment with a SOF unit and then return to their parent Service before competing for repetitive SOF assignments. When a specific population is large enough to sustain a separate Service “closed loop” career path, SOF combat support operators remain assigned or attached to SOF units for the remainder of their careers.”⁵³

- (a) **Logistics Collaboration.** As members of the joint force, ARSOF must work to ensure that CF retain essential capabilities to sustain long-term, SOF-led campaigns in hostile, austere, and denied environments. ARSOF must communicate sustainment needs to the military Services and explore nonstandard means of obtaining sustainment. ARSOF must be fully interoperable with CF, interagency players, and multinational partners in terms of logistics support, field services, communications, and long-term sustainment. Of note, during an extended duration UW campaign, logistics has been observed as having the potential to be the single point of failure.
- (b) **Nonstandard Logistics.** The future operating environment requires ARSOF to operate in politically sensitive, austere, or denied environments. Future campaigns will be joint, long-duration operations that require sophisticated support from JIIM and local forces. In order to succeed in this environment, ARSOF must leverage the full spectrum of long-duration UW sustainment capabilities, from lethal to humanitarian, that both U.S. and partner forces provide.⁵⁴ Much of the footprint in past operations has come as the result of the sustainment capabilities U.S. forces traditionally bring to the area of operations.⁵⁵ Local procurement or foregoing discretionary comfort items may become necessary. To further skills in nonstandard logistics, ARSOF must develop education and training while leveraging other government agencies’ programs. For example, selected logistical personnel may attend interagency support courses to learn how the interagency supports their personnel globally.

d. **Facilitate SOF Mission Command.**

- (1) **Scalable Structures.** As noted in *ARSOF 2022*, “The greatest single challenge facing SOF today is outdated command and control structures.”⁵⁶ Future SOF mission command must be scalable, adaptable, able to span multiple echelons, and able to evolve with conflicts. SOF mission command must also incorporate all UAPs while interfacing with all external UAP structures.⁵⁷ Modernized structures are essential for ensuring that ARSOF mission command meets future operational environment challenges, to include low-footprint operations and those in hostile or denied areas.⁵⁸
- (2) **Hybrid Structures.** Past SOF mission command structures have been ad hoc.⁵⁹ The future national security challenges will increasingly require SOF-centric solutions reliant on unique combinations of SOF-CF capability and SOF operational-level mission command. New structures should experiment with operational and division-level headquarters providing mission command for low-footprint special warfare activities. This experimentation should include exploring a scalable command structure capable of conducting global special warfare missions in support of TSOC and national objectives. Surpassing current headquarters elements, this structure requires an organization to provide the oversight and administrative support that extended-duration UW campaigns will demand. This approach maximizes ARSOF capabilities to operate in hostile or denied environments. As a logical step in developing the strategic landpower initiative, USASOC,

the Army, and the Marine Corps should experiment with hybrid (SOF-CF) corps-level headquarters to address many of the challenges inherent in irregular warfare.⁶⁰ Of note, the U.S. Army confronted a tremendous capability deficit at the point of success during transitions following the coalition occupation of both Kabul and Baghdad in 2002–2003. A hybrid mission command capability must be defined by considering organic partners, as well as interagency and intergovernmental plug-ins designed to conduct COIN, HA, FID, and limited combined arms maneuver. Such a hybrid mission command structure could tie into the joint special warfare command concept discussed above.

3-7. Supporting Ideas

- a. **Recruit, Assess, Select, and Train the Army's Finest Soldiers.** SOF Truths include the following:

- Humans are more important than hardware.
- Quality is better than quantity.
- Special operations forces cannot be mass produced.
- Competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur.
- Most special operations require non-SOF support.⁶¹

These truths require ARSOF to be the most well-educated and well-trained force within the DOD.⁶² They also imply recognition that a wide array of knowledge, skills, and abilities are necessary for success in the future operating environment, thus driving USASOC to expand the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the force. Doing so requires ongoing attention to three crucial processes: recruitment and selection of the Army's finest Soldiers, continual training encompassing formal courses and on-the-job learning, and retention to minimize the loss of highly trained personnel.

- b. **Emphasize Advanced Clandestine and Low-Signature Capabilities.** The common ground of special warfare and surgical strike is minimized-visibility operations. In order to infiltrate, exfiltrate, operate, and remain in the operations area, research and development efforts must find the means to defeat or mitigate pervasive urban and rural surveillance.⁶³ Where impossible to remain completely undetected, ARSOF personnel will need to remain unidentified through evolving biometric knowledge and techniques.

- c. **Position Low-Signature Operations as the Defining Hallmark of Special Operations.** *SOFOC* discusses the concept of the "invisible operator."⁶⁴ ARSOF will need to examine both the accession and training of ARSOF operators constantly to ensure they are capable of operating in low-visibility modes. This requirement evokes several subareas:

- (1) ARSOF must develop the capability to support operational convergence on selected locations for surgical strikes. Surgical strike missions must have multiple options for ingress and egress of personnel.
- (2) ARSOF must maintain an ability to communicate within hostile territories.
- (3) Techniques, technical means, and biomedical augmentation need to evolve to render ARSOF operators and their equipment invisible to adversary tracking. Biometric identification and tracking through advanced data processing and communications

technologies have rendered past techniques ineffective, leaving SOF operators vulnerable worldwide.⁶⁵

- d. **Inform and Influence Populations.** ARSOF possess a diverse range of low-visibility, culturally astute means to access populations and operate in denied areas regardless of the nature of the human population.⁶⁶ The importance of operating within the human domain will surpass the importance of direct military action.⁶⁷ In addition, our nation's ability to use indigenous security solutions is less expensive and more politically acceptable. ARSOF are central to the tasks of first understanding the human domain and then shaping it in accordance with U.S. objectives. The GSN will be a decisive weapon in population-centric battles. The ability to shape in the human domain, like the ability to understand the forces at work there, is most effectively performed by people on the ground. Establishing trust, which is the glue of every human relationship, is ineffective from afar.
- e. **Retain the Technological Advantage.** ARSOF will leverage emerging technology to continue to develop innovative, low-visibility means and, when required, appropriately attributable materiel solutions that enable new means for ARSOF to discriminately engage the most sensitive targets around the globe.⁶⁸ The last decade of warfare has provided the United States with leading battlefield technologies in several areas, such as unmanned reconnaissance. Future ARSOF will need ever-more-capable organic and nonorganic systems to support the special warfare and surgical strike capabilities through the phases of premission planning, mission execution, and postmission assessment. The following technology areas will be critical to future Special Operations.
 - (1) Successful ingress/egress for surgical strike and joint forcible entry operations requires the capability to defeat an integrated air defense system (IADS) that is active in a target area. Alternatively, the disabling of an IADS may be a special operations mission as part of a larger conventional campaign.
 - (2) Surgical strike and special warfare forces will benefit from the emerging space and cyber capabilities in the execution of tactical operations.
- f. **Preserve Operational Medical Excellence.** To mitigate risk for its forces, ARSOF preserve its advantage of having the most highly trained medical personnel within DOD. It is important to continue the momentum gained in field-level triage and battlefield trauma treatment by increasing organic medical capabilities through deployable, scalable surgical teams modeled after the Joint Medical Augmentation Unit.⁶⁹ ARSOF must also leverage existing medical technology, as well as indigenous capabilities.

Chapter 4

ARSOF Core Operations

Our “new normal” is a persistently engaged, forward-based force to prevent and deter conflict and, when needed, act to disrupt and defeat threats.

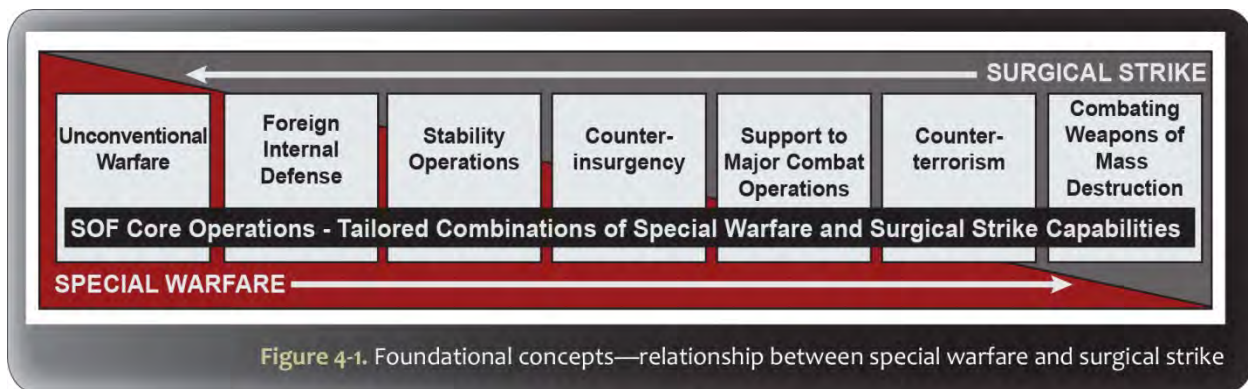
Long-term engagement is a hedge against crises that require major intervention, and engagement positions us to better sense the environment and act decisively when necessary. The “new normal,” however, translates into increased demand for SOF.

The pace of the last ten years is indicative of what we expect for the next ten years.⁷⁰

– Admiral William H. McRaven

4-1. Introduction

This chapter discusses some of the core activities that ARSOF will perform in the future operating environment of 2022 to 2030. These core activities will be tailored to identify the required capabilities critical to the execution of special warfare and surgical strike operations in support of regional and national objectives.⁷¹ Although this chapter will discuss each of the core activities individually, these operations are generally interrelated during execution (Figure 4-1).



4-2. Unconventional Warfare

- a. UW will be conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.⁷² Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, establishes two forms of warfare: traditional and irregular.⁷³ While applicable in traditional warfare contexts, UW will be employed with particular effect to induce change in a foreign government’s behavior in support of U.S. national objectives; to isolate, destabilize, or undermine a hostile foreign government; to overthrow a hostile regime; or to force the withdrawal of an occupying power by supporting or fomenting an insurgency.⁷⁴

- b. To wage successful UW campaigns, ARSOF will need to excel in the human domain while ensuring persistent human and technical presence in designated areas during steady state. Phase 0, Shaping, will be critical. Persistent presence remains essential to conduct area assessments, establish early warning systems, identify indigenous personnel that support U.S. objectives, and establish the UW mechanisms and infrastructure for potential operations.⁷⁵ Persistent engagement and PE activities will minimize the potential demand to execute a “cold start” UW campaign. These persistent engagement activities require ARSOF to develop, sustain, and leverage the GSN.⁷⁶
- c. SOF, CF, and JIIM interdependence will be critical to the success of ARSOF’s future extended-duration UW campaigns, necessitating interagency and intergovernmental relationships at the national and country team levels to support the GSN. ARSOF will maintain persistent engagement with interagency partners to coordinate UW activities to meet theater and U.S. national objectives.
- d. ARSOF will face several challenges in the future operating environment to effectively execute the full range of UW operations. ARSOF must design and field new capabilities to operate in denied areas. ARSOF must develop and implement specialized training for operators to work in denied areas, focusing on enhanced language skills, low-signature capabilities, nonstandard logistics capability to supply resistance forces, and low-signature communications capabilities. Further, ARSOF must determine the operator and support requirements in order to restructure and prioritize the employment of the force within future manning constructs.

4-3. Foreign Internal Defense

Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.⁷⁷

– Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, January 2012

- a. FID will involve participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.⁷⁸ The 2010 *National Security Strategy* guides the U.S. military to strengthen its capacity to partner with foreign counterparts, to train and help security forces, and to pursue military-to-military ties with a broad range of governments.⁷⁹ It emphasizes the need to support ongoing efforts of host nation governments. U.S. policy includes the indirect use of military force in concert with the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power.
- b. FID will require persistent, long-term engagement to be effective. Trust between the host nation and the U.S. must be developed at the highest echelons and at the operator level. This activity requires a persistent and disciplined approach. As the USSOCOM Operating Concept states, “You Can’t Surge Trust.”⁸⁰ ARSOF must strive to build trust, slowly and deliberately, before a crisis occurs. Executed by, with, and through the host nation, FID efforts, like UW, must focus on the human domain, continue to be inclusive and balanced, and evolve to meet the demands of the future operating environment. ARSOF elements will need to maintain

close contact with the lead agency in the operational region to posture themselves for rapid realignments of U.S. military support.

4-4. Stability Operations

Stability operations will involve various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the U.S. in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment while providing essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.⁸¹ U.S. defense strategy envisages a move towards dispersed, small-footprint operations and emphasizes enabling partners in new ways.⁸² Especially in the area of stability operations, the benefits of small-footprint operations are multifold when considering the impact of U.S. force presence on the indigenous population and the willingness to accept U.S. aid in a war-torn region.⁸³ The U.S. defense strategy entails a larger role for SOF to create capable partners and to advance stability operations throughout the world. Fulfilling this role at a higher level of finesse will enhance stability abroad and provide a more favorable return on U.S. investment.^{84, 85}

4-5. Counterinsurgency Operations

COIN will involve comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances.⁸⁶ COIN represents a tailored combination of ARSOF's special warfare capabilities and will become a more prominent operational requirement during the 2022–2030 period due to increases in undergoverned and ungoverned spaces, direct competition between nonstate actors and legitimate nation-states, and significant off-the-book economic activity by dark networks.⁸⁷ ARSOF must therefore continue to expand its understanding of insurgencies, build on lessons learned from past conflicts, and evolve doctrine and its application at a faster pace than their adversaries.

4-6. Support to Major Combat Operations

- a. Supported by other instruments of national and multinational power, major combat operations (MCO) will permit a U.S. joint force to conduct synergistic, high-tempo actions in multiple domains. These actions can shatter the coherency of the adversary's plan and dispositions and render him unable to militarily oppose the achievement of our strategic objectives.⁸⁸ ARSOF supports MCO by providing GCCs with specially trained forces uniquely competent in languages, cultures, history, governments, and security forces in areas where conflicts can occur.⁸⁹ ARSOF support GCC security cooperation plans by developing relationships and improving mutual understanding with partner country governments and their security forces.⁹⁰ ARSOF routinely participate in multinational exercises and security force assistance missions to reassure allies and friends while deterring adversaries.⁹¹
- b. Though successful MCO will defeat enemy forces, they do not guarantee that the victory will persist. In future conflicts, the importance of the indirect battle within the human domain will surpass the importance of direct military action. The fight for a target population will transform into the primary focus of a campaign and regional strategy. Both the kinetic and nonkinetic capabilities of ARSOF are as necessary to a positive, enduring outcome of MCO.

4-7. Counterterrorism

- a. CT is defined as actions taken directly against terrorist networks and indirectly to influence and render global and regional environments inhospitable to terrorist network.^{92, 93} CT will remain a SOF core activity. CT is a component of the surgical strike form of special operations.⁹⁴ ARSOF's value-added capability is the conduct of offensive measures, nested within the DOD's overall CT efforts. ARSOF possess the capability to conduct these operations in environments that may be denied to CF because of political or threat conditions.
- b. Maintaining proficiency in surgical strike during a period of constrained resources will challenge ARSOF in the 2022–2030 period. ARSOF must therefore optimize the GSN as a seamless fluid network to aid in identifying and locating adversaries with adequate precision to allow effective surgical strike operation in an increasingly urbanized, digitally networked world.⁹⁵ Indeed, this will require ARSOF to optimize SOF/CF/JIIM interdependence to apply seamless combat power against terrorist organizations while minimizing duplication of effort.⁹⁶

4-8. Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction

- a. Countering WMD and their means of delivery will be one of the greatest challenges the United States faces. WMD have the potential to severely disrupt and damage the United States, its forces, its allies, its multinational partners, and other friendly nations. Adversaries may use WMD to inflict casualties on civilian populations, degrade the instruments of our national power or counter U.S. military superiority.⁹⁷ WMD proliferation networks are multifunctional and multidimensional. They consist of state and independent nonstate actors who are dynamic and adaptive and who operate in secrecy to avoid detection and counteraction.⁹⁸
- b. In support of the joint force, ARSOF contributes to countering WMD by providing a scalable package of highly trained and specially equipped personnel who are globally responsive and can respond on extremely short notice.⁹⁹ Future ARSOF will rely on the development of innovative means to increase organic capabilities to employ the F3EAD targeting cycle. Finding and fixing a WMD enemy can be streamlined by building, sustaining, and employing the GSN. The GSN enables a networked force of SOF, CF, allies, and interagency partners who rapidly and persistently address regional contingencies. In contributing to countering WMD, ARSOF must possess capability across a wide spectrum of threats, ranging from sophisticated nation-states with advanced anti-access, cyber, and defensive capabilities to VEOs operating inside failed nation-states.¹⁰⁰

Chapter 5

Training, Education, and Leader Development

5-1. Introduction

ARSOF anticipate a future operating environment with significant challenges to U.S. national interests and security. Future conflicts will be more complex, with increasing numbers of nonstate actors in heavily urban areas and will involve far greater uncertainty than has been experienced in the recent past. Additionally, during an era of fiscal constraint, ARSOF may face challenges in recruiting, training, managing, and retaining a force of operators. With these challenges, ARSOF must develop innovative solutions to train, educate, and retain the world's premier SOF and meet the demands of the future security environment.

5-2. General

- a. Training must instill in ARSOF operators the need to understand threat capabilities and anticipate intentions purposefully and continuously. ARSOF must train to prevail against hybrid threats that employ regular forces, irregular forces, and criminal elements to achieve their objectives through an ever-changing variety of conventional and unconventional tactics. ARSOF must remain cognizant of how these threats might evolve and anticipate the training required to neutralize adversary advantages.
- b. **Language and Cultural Training.** ARSOF operators must receive comprehensive language and cultural training to succeed in the future operating environment. In an era characterized by war amidst populations, personal interactions in the human domain determine victory or defeat. ARSOF operators and leaders must be confident when interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds and able to apply cultural considerations in the planning and execution of operations. Training must also extend to understanding and interoperating with JIIM partners as a team prior to deployment. The greater the understanding of JIIM culture, the more effective ARSOF will be in maximizing and integrating JIIM capabilities into operational plans.
- c. **Operationalize the CONUS Base.** Networked, web-based training solutions will enable ARSOF operators to rapidly leverage capabilities of centers of excellence, combat subordinate commands, and command subordinate units. Technology must be leveraged to enable dynamic training among geographically separated units. To optimize training, new capabilities will be needed in all of the training environments: live, virtual, constructive, and gaming. Improved management of training enablers and their supporting architecture, as well as deployment of mobile capabilities (for example, role players, instrumentation, and observer/controller support) to increase training base support, will also be required.

5-3. Sustaining Surgical Strike

- a. The future will involve many occasions where national leadership may need viable alternatives to execute surgical strikes in support of U.S. objectives. Maintaining the edge in surgical strike capabilities requires a continuous evaluation of training programs, training areas, and facilities. ARSOF will ensure the training programs and training areas evolve to

meet challenges in future weapons capabilities and technological advancements and instill flexibility in adapting to new tactics, techniques, and procedures. This includes more urban training venues to address the trend toward megacities around the globe. ARSOF will leverage new technologies in virtual environments that allow scenario simulations training.

- b. Future ARSOF surgical strike units will require training to execute multiple, synchronized, and simultaneous strikes in depth against geographically dispersed targets. Strike units must be capable of conducting strike missions at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels in support of national or strategic objectives. At the tactical level, they must support achieving desired effects beyond the capabilities of conventional or surrogate forces. At operational and strategic levels, strike units will be trained to operate unilaterally or in concert with other Services or interagency partners or operate unilaterally in complex or denied environments. This includes the ability to conduct forced entry operations up to the regimental level and the ability to prosecute one or more follow on targets such as command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence nodes, terrorist mission command nodes, hardened sites from air strikes, key logistics centers, integrated air defense systems, and key infrastructure. In the context of special warfare, strike units can conduct DA operations against critical mission command nodes and infrastructure to weaken the enemy's grip on the population.
- c. Future surgical strike units must be trained continually on the ever-improving technologies and techniques that support the F3EAD targeting methodology. ARSOF training is needed to improve the speed of lethal or nonlethal effects, including advancing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and analysis capabilities to find and fix the target, sustaining a superb force for finishing the target, improving site exploitation techniques and procedures, and improving the timeliness of analysis and dissemination of exploited information.

5-4. Evolving Special Warfare

- a. While ARSOF must provide ongoing and evolved training to retain the current proficiency in surgical strike operations, greater emphasis must be placed on special warfare to raise the level commensurate with surgical strike proficiency. In SOF education, as in other areas, ARSOF will rebalance the force and tenaciously embrace indirect operations.
- b. Mastery of the language and culture of a target environment is an essential prerequisite in special warfare. This type of warfare works by, with, and through the indigenous population. Establishing trust within the human domain will require an understanding of the local language and a nuanced appreciation for the cultural and political environment. This is particularly true for UW because of the demands of extended missions in denied or hostile environments with minimal communications or other support. ARSOF will expand language and cultural immersion training opportunities to leverage multiple venues during a period of constrained resources. ARSOF will also develop advanced training programs focusing on the preparation of UW campaigns and the survivability of UW operators in politically sensitive and hostile environments.¹⁰¹ Additionally, recruitment initiatives will include a wide ethnic and cultural range of U.S. citizens, including first-generation Americans with innate foreign language capability and cultural knowledge in specified regions.
- c. **SOF Campaign Planners and Operational-Level Capabilities.** To develop holistic capabilities at the operational level, ARSOF will design and plan long-duration, low-visibility, SOF-centric contributions to campaigns that bridge tactical SOF capability to strategic objectives.¹⁰² The planning process will integrate SOF operations with partner operations and

priorities, including other Services, allies and U.S. Government agencies. The sophistication needed for this level of planning requires formal training, education, and incentives in order to develop and retain SOF campaign planners and operational-level capabilities. The *USASOC Planner's Handbook* must become an integral part of training. ARSOF will develop partnerships with the School of Advanced Military Studies and the Army's Functional Area 59 strategic planners branch to mature SOF operational art and design. Curricula developed for SOF campaign planners will encourage critical thinking skills and emphasize innovative approaches to campaign design.

- d. **Military Governance.** Army Civil Affairs (CA) units rely on expertise to effectively implement military governance at district, province, state, and national levels. In the future, ARSOF will fill those expertise needs in a manner similar to how the Army obtains medical and legal professionals. Working with the Army, ARSOF will develop a training pipeline for new direct-appointment officers. The training program will be a combination of distance learning and classroom instruction. Training venues may include basic officer leadership training to regional orientation. Further, an established institute to support military governance may contribute to developing policy, doctrine, and training for the new military occupational specialty.

5-5. Common Areas of Training Support

- a. **Cyber.** To conduct special warfare and surgical strike, ARSOF operators must understand how their core activities are enabled and impacted by the cyber domain. ARSOF will develop basic, intermediate, and advanced training capabilities to facilitate cyber-enabled operations. This effort will provide ARSOF with a recognized ability to mitigate cyber threats and to use the cyber domain for core activities. Identifying, developing, and managing cyber talent will remain essential. ARSOF will leverage the expertise of other Interagency and DOD partners to enhance its training capabilities.¹⁰³
- b. **Logistics.** Training for the logistics support function will need to impart proficiency in two specific areas. The first includes processes used by CF for their equipment acquisitions and maintenance to maximize commonality and minimize costs. The second focuses on nonstandard logistics for the sustainment needs unique to SF in areas where it is necessary to avoid attribution. The training should support the planning, coordination, integration, and execution of all ARSOF operations and activities, as well as the delivery of logistics in permissive, uncertain, or hostile environments. Such training will be applicable for both surgical strike and special warfare capabilities.
- c. **Military Information Support Operations.** MISO must be capable of analyzing the social dynamics of insurgency elements to determine appropriate insurgents to support U.S. engagement. MISO education must emphasize the ability to develop campaigns to move an audience from one behavior to another using culturally relevant steps and programs.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, MISO personnel will be encouraged to pursue education in operational research and analysis and core lab and social media analysis, as well as cultural anthropology and psychology. ARSOF will explore the potential for an institute to foster development of social theory, doctrine, and capabilities needed for special warfare.

5-6. Optimize Human Capital

- a. **Recruitment.** Future ARSOF will require a steady pipeline of specially recruited, assessed, selected, trained, employed, managed, and retained personnel to maintain expected capabilities. As the pool of potential recruits becomes smaller, the Services, the government, and the private sector will compete for the most qualified recruits. Likewise, career and financial enticements and the stress of high operational tempos in austere environments will expose ARSOF to increased attrition of talent. ARSOF must develop new incentives and recruiting campaigns to compete for the best candidates and to maintain trained operators.
- b. **Retention.** The time and expense required to create “the best educated, trained, and equipped special operations formation in the world” makes retaining experienced SOF personnel much more important than recruiting new people.¹⁰⁵ In the U.S. military, nonadvancing personnel are not retained. Accordingly, it is a high priority to manage the careers of all grades of ARSOF personnel to afford equal or greater opportunities for advancement compared to less selective military specialties.
- c. **Talent Management.** Leader development is a deliberate, continuous, and progressive process to grow ARSOF operators and Army civilians into competent, committed professional leaders of character. Leader development is accomplished through the career-long synthesis of the operational, institutional, and self-development domains. Our leader development approach must be all-encompassing and continuous. In the future, ARSOF must emphasize a form of talent management ensuring highly skilled personnel are trained at the right time and serving in the right positions. This will provide the GCCs with the best special operators in the world. Such an approach will also provide the best planners and advisors on special operations missions to joint and Army staffs and other U.S. Government agencies and departments. Defense leaders and policymakers will thus see viable alternatives for small-footprint and low-exposure solutions to national security challenges. These highly trained, culturally astute, agile SOF teams and operators also provide unique capabilities to achieve U.S. objectives with small costs and small exposure. Through their understanding of the human domain in many of the most sensitive countries, ARSOF operators also set the foundation for informed future U.S. policies and decisions.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Fiscal realities, political conditions, and the changing character of warfare will challenge the U.S. military's ability to engage in large expeditionary land wars in the next decade. In contrast, irregular warfare and limited conflicts are certain to persist around the globe and will influence the future of the United States and its allies. We note that major global social, political, informational, and economic trends are underway along with the converging competition between nation-states and nonstate actors. These forces are intertwined and compete for relative superiority over the physical, cognitive, and moral security and adequate governance of key populations—a competition that will increasingly unfold in militarily significant urban terrain. To prevail in future low-intensity conflicts, the United States will require agile, adaptive, and culturally astute SOF operators and teams—the best educated, trained, and equipped special operations formations in the world.¹⁰⁶ U.S. Army special operators must provide the nation with an expanded range of strategic options, and we must hone our capabilities to design, plan, and conduct multiyear special operations campaigns that integrate the full suite of SOF/CF/JIIM and partner capabilities.

For more than 60 years, ARSOF have remained at the tip of the spear in the defense of our nation. ARSOF has maintained contact with the enemy while making tangible contributions to the nation through extraordinary sacrifice from our regiments and our families. The future of ARSOF are built upon the foundation of past experience, customs, traditions, and proven employment concepts among the diverse organizations that make up USASOC. ARSOF have always functioned as a strategic bridging force, serving as the connective tissue: among indigenous forces and populations, within our military, and inside the interagency community. While that cannot change, we are not content to maintain the status quo. Even while in the fight, we must become students of not only our adversaries but also of our past to build on lessons learned from previous engagements. We also must grasp the future in order to develop the techniques and strategies necessary to remain the force of choice for decision-makers. It is imperative that we be prepared to meet these challenges head-on.

By embracing the changes outlined within the AOpC, we will be prepared to thrive in the complex operating environment of the 21st century. By honing our special warfare and surgical strike capabilities and matching them with state-of-the-art technology used by educated and culturally savvy operators, we can ensure the defense of our nation and aid that of our partners.

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Required Capabilities

B-1. Mission Command

- a. Future ARSOF require a comprehensive SOF mission command capability in the joint operational environment that spans multiple echelons, is scalable and adaptable, incorporates SOF-CF, and fully interfaces with the interagency community structures in order to be agile and effective and to respond rapidly in increasingly complex environments.
- b. Future ARSOF require the ability to strengthen interagency partnerships and further leverage the private sector in order to operationalize expertise resident in governmental agencies, academic institutions, and commercial entities that cannot be replicated in small-footprint, forward-postured mission command elements.¹¹⁰
- c. Future ARSOF require expertise in SOF operational art that enables operational-level headquarters in their effort to tie tactical capabilities to regional or national strategies in order to eliminate the seams and coordinate efforts within the interagency community.¹¹¹
- d. Future ARSOF require the capability to improve SOF campaign coordination at the National Security Council level and to include formulating, advocating, and promulgating SOF-centric plans and operations for consideration to provide national leadership options to achieve U.S. objectives using small-footprint, low-visibility, and low-attribution activities.^{112, 113, 114, 115, 116}
- e. Future ARSOF require the ability to share mission command systems and a common operating picture¹¹⁷ (from SF, CA, Psychological Operations [PSYOP], and so on) that bridges SOF and CF mission command in order to rapidly share information, integrate, and work with a special operations joint task force headquarters in the joint operational environment. All participants should be on a common network that provides seamless visibility and crosstalk.¹¹⁸
- f. Future ARSOF require a range of secure communications capabilities (voice, data, imagery, and video) using traditional and nontraditional means to provide integrated, timely, and relevant information in a joint operational environment.¹¹⁹
- g. Future ARSOF require a civil-military advisory capability that can leverage the U.S. government's civil-sector expertise to establish global civil-military coordination in a joint operational environment.
- h. Future ARSOF require the capability to synchronize Army capabilities, other Service capabilities, and capabilities of international expeditionary partners, properly incorporating and synchronizing the efforts of other government departments, agencies, and U.S. and international nongovernment agencies in order to effectively coordinate operations in the joint operational environment.
- i. Future ARSOF require the capability to synchronize special warfare operations globally to effectively prioritize and deconflict special warfare assets and support.
- j. Future ARSOF require the capability to seamlessly integrate the GSN's support to TSOC efforts in support of the geographic combatant command through the synchronization of regional activities and planning in the joint operational environment.

B-2. Intelligence

- a. Future ARSOF require full intelligence data federation and interoperability with CF, interagency partners, joint forces, and—to the maximum extent allowed by policy—with multinational partners in order to provide a common operating picture and permit information exchange among stakeholders globally.¹²⁰
- b. Future ARSOF require the development and maintenance of an ARSOF intelligence common operating picture, integrating national Intelligence, GCC, SOCOM, TSOC, open-source, SF, CA, and Military Information Support (MIS) information to provide holistic situational understanding and support analysis of the operating environment.¹²¹
- c. Future ARSOF require active partnerships and close working relationships with the U.S. intelligence community organizations in order to tactically exploit and analyze national intelligence capacities, including space-related technologies; better clandestine tagging, tracking, and locating; and cyber and social media capabilities in conducting special operations.¹²²
- d. Future ARSOF require cyberspace domain-enabled intelligence capabilities through establishment of open-source capability, including social media exploitation and analysis, in order to enhance intelligence fusion in threat network analysis, human terrain mapping, sentiment analysis, trend analysis, pattern-of-life analysis, and predictive analysis.¹²³
- e. Future ARSOF require capabilities to provide timely sociocultural information to any globally deployed SOF (operators, units, headquarters, and campaign planners) from CONUS experts—including DOD, U.S. Government agencies, and academia—to provide needed information to campaign and operational planners and individual teams and operators.
- f. Future ARSOF require organic F3EAD capability in order to prosecute, analyze, and exploit assigned targets in a joint operational environment in a timely manner.
- g. Future ARSOF require a capability to analyze information and accumulate intelligence that result from peacetime and wartime operations in order to increase and use resultant situational awareness and knowledge over the duration of special warfare campaigns.

B-3. Movement and Maneuver

- a. Future ARSOF require the ability to mitigate and defeat advanced biometric identification and verification technologies to mitigate adversary tracking in any environment.¹²⁴
- b. Future ARSOF require the ability to mitigate and defeat ubiquitous urban surveillance and advanced surveillance in order to survive and operate in anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) environments.¹²⁵
- c. Future ARSOF require the capability to maneuver to a position of advantage in all environments in order to insert forces, employ forces, influence relevant audiences, or control or deny significant areas in order to generate or enable the generation of effects in all domains and the information environment.
- d. Future ARSOF require the ability to execute personnel recovery on short notice in order to recover personnel in every deployed environment.

- e. Future ARSOF require the ability to facilitate indigenous maneuver in order to leverage both surrogate and partner force contributions to achieve U.S. objectives.

B-4. Fires

- a. Future ARSOF require the capability to selectively engage individual personnel or items of equipment with a man-portable, low-signature, low-visibility weapon system in both urban and rural environments and in all weather conditions to effectively execute special warfare and surgical strike operations.
- b. Future ARSOF require the capability to observe the operational area under all light and environmental conditions to conduct SOF core activities.

B-5. Protection

- a. Future ARSOF require the capability to infiltrate, operate, and survive in denied areas for an extended duration in a low-visibility fashion—with a minimal burden of equipment bulk, weight, and mass—in order to execute UW operations.¹²⁶
- b. Future ARSOF require the ability to provide organic medical capabilities, to include deployable, scalable surgical teams that will leverage advanced medical technology in order to mitigate risk for its forces during training and operational missions worldwide.¹²⁷
- c. Future ARSOF require the ability to develop and support individual alternate personal identities in order to retain covert capabilities, especially during UW activities in denied, hostile, or politically sensitive areas.
- d. Future ARSOF require the ability to leverage and adapt individual defensive technology, such as advanced body armor, in order to enhance survivability in high-threat areas, especially during surgical strike operations.
- e. Future ARSOF require an enhanced ability to locate, mitigate, and neutralize improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in threat areas to enhance survivability during surgical strike and special warfare operations.
- f. Future ARSOF require unmanned, remotely controlled capabilities in threat environments in order to lessen exposure of mounted or dismounted personnel to landmines and IEDs.

B-6. Sustainment

- a. Future ARSOF require the capability to provide logistics and sustainment to special operations and integrate CF sustainment of sizes ranging from small teams to large formations, inclusive of components and services, in conditions ranging from permissive to denied, to sustain the required operational tempos in joint, interagency, and multinational environments.
- b. Future ARSOF require the ability to obtain appropriately attributable indigenous weapons and ammunition for predeployment training and operations in denied areas in the conduct of covert or clandestine capabilities.

- c. Future ARSOF require the capability to sustain multiple simultaneous operations by TSOCs with direct support by ARSOF liaison elements to ensure Army Service Component Command fulfillment of ARSOF requirements in low-signature campaigns and named operations.
- d. Future ARSOF require the ability to plan, coordinate, synchronize, optimize, and execute the delivery of non-unit-related cargo (supplies and equipment) and non-unit-related personnel via all transportation modes (air, ground, and sea) in order to leverage these assets to deploy, resupply, and sustain special operators and indigenous personnel and forces.
- e. Future ARSOF require the capability to leverage Army and joint theater logistics capabilities worldwide in order to minimize sustainment costs and expand nonstandard logistics capability.
- f. Future ARSOF require the capability to develop and manage the administration of support personnel required to sustain operators on specific missions in order to enable low-signature operations under all conditions in all environments.
- g. Future ARSOF require a sustainment training capability to be established with joint and interagency partners to develop professionals capable of sustaining the full spectrum of special warfare and surgical strike operations in all environments.
- h. Future ARSOF require the ability operate collaboratively within a networked Joint Supply Enterprise in order to identify and select supply sources, schedule deliveries, and receive and manage supplies and equipment in the joint operational environment.

B-7. Engagement (Influence)

- a. Future ARSOF require the capability to recruit, train, and educate—including in-country resident programs—SOF operators with native language abilities and cultural knowledge in all critical languages and dialects in order to plan, advise, and conduct nuanced and effective inform-and-influence activities throughout the globe.
- b. Future ARSOF require the ability to create interdependent relationships with the full array of indigenous and non-U.S. entities that impact its area of operations in order to coordinate the objectives and all activities that impact the area of operations.
- c. Future ARSOF require the ability to understand and develop regional relationships, understand cultural and language barriers, plan for and execute the control and influence of populations and resources, and develop professional development programs that develop regional expertise before a crisis erupts to grow and nurture allies and thereby continue U.S. leadership and influence in the globe.
- d. Future ARSOF require the ability to apply subject matter expertise in the effects of MIS operations, to include marketing, persuasive and traditional communication, and use of social media and other cyber-based tools in order to integrate and synchronize long-duration, whole-of-government influence efforts for each region and globally.¹²⁸
- e. Future ARSOF require the ability to develop a global network of host-nation relationships, activities and footprint of facilities and forces in order for the United States to retain the ability to influence world events long-term.

- f. Future ARSOF require the capability to address shared interests and enhance partners' security, governance, economic development, rule of law, and other critical functions to nurture partners who share or advance U.S. interests and objectives.
- g. Future ARSOF require the capability to conduct SOF engagement that is more purposeful, more enduring, and more consistent, with the same people and units engaging over time (years, not weeks) in ways that slowly and deliberately build and sustain enduring relationships based on mutual trust and confidence in order to establish and nurture partners who share or advance U.S. interests and objectives.
- h. Future ARSOF require the capability to execute a diverse range of low-visibility, culturally astute means to access populations in order to operate in denied areas regardless of the nature of the human population.
- i. Future ARSOF require the capability to employ social media mapping that enables predictive behavioral analyses and both precision and mass-target engagement to support special warfare and surgical strike operations with no or delayed attribution.

Appendix C

Special Warfare

C-1. Introduction

- a. **Purpose.** This appendix provides a future depiction of special warfare as a key pillar of ARSOF. It also provides an understanding of how special warfare capabilities must evolve and be employed by ARSOF to support future national objectives.
- b. **Definitions.** Special warfare is an ARSOF critical capability that supports joint force commanders and the Army through “the execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.”¹³¹ ARSOF provide a discreet, precise, politically astute, and scalable capability and as such they frequently undertake politically sensitive missions.

C-2. Scope

- a. **Future Special Warfare Forces.** Special warfare is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of SOF core activities or operations¹³² that emphasize working with host nations, regional partners, and/or indigenous populations in a culturally attuned manner to transform conditions in the environment.¹³³ Key to understanding special warfare is recognizing that the United States plays a supporting role. SF, PSYOP, CA, SOF aviation, Rangers, and sustainment personnel provide the essential leadership for U.S. special warfare activities. These activities include UW,¹³⁴ FID,¹³⁵ COIN,¹³⁶ stability operations,¹³⁷ SR,¹³⁸ and security force assistance.¹³⁹ However, regardless of the activity, the host nation, regional partner, or the indigenous population are the key drivers of success.
- b. **Future Irregular Threats and Capabilities.**
 - (1) The future threat environment is a world that is less constrained by boundaries than ever before. The advances in communications, cyber, and space technologies have expanded state and nonstate actors’ influence and activities from the local level to achieving regional and global effects. Nation-states will use surrogate networks regionally or globally in support of national interests. VEOs and criminal organizations are displaying transnational reach and establishing regional and global networks to support their operations. These organizations will combine disparate capabilities into hybrid threats using one another’s networks when mutually beneficial. For example, narcoterrorist organizations in South American can leverage VEO or criminal networks in Africa to move product to the European market. The VEO or transnational criminal organization in Africa can provide protection and transportation for money benefiting both organizations.
 - (2) The past decade of war has shown state and nonstate actors how the United States operates against these types of nascent threats. As a result, leadership in these organizations will be harder to identify, as they generally operate in a decentralized manner. The recent history of U.S. operations has been predicated on killing or capturing

leadership of VEOs, representing a centralized spider-like network approach where attacking the head of the spider/organization will eliminate the problem and the organization will dissolve. The reality is that these organizations are becoming more resilient and resembling a decentralized starfish-like network. Attacking a perceived centralized leader of an organization often turns out to be an arm of a starfish-like organization. The organization regenerates because the root of the problem was not identified correctly. To address these starfish-like organizations, the U.S. military requires an established global network to counter or destroy a global network. Future ARSOF will counter these starfish-like networks by executing multiple and simultaneous operations in-depth globally.

C-3. Evolving Conceptual Aspects of Special Warfare

a. Executing Multiple Simultaneous Operations In-Depth.

- (1) In order to address the threats, challenges, and opportunities of the future operating environment, ARSOF require the capability to execute multiple simultaneous operations in-depth globally. As it does today, USSOCOM provides global integration with surgical strike operations. It also provides strategic direction for ongoing special warfare activities.
- (2) At the theater level, TSOCs integrate special warfare activities into the disparate elements of the various theater campaign or engagement plans. They also direct operations unless a special operations joint task force exists to cover a specific operation such as a humanitarian relief effort. USASOC may also provide the nucleus of a headquarters to prosecute a special warfare campaign that overlaps geographic combatant command boundaries.
- (3) ARSOF will set the conditions for successful special warfare predominantly during steady-state. However, ARSOF will use individuals and organizations capable of operating with a minimal signature to gather operational data and establish unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral mechanisms regardless of the environment. Doing so will allow ARSOF to maintain the information edge over potential adversaries.
- (4) Whether during a theater campaign or within the narrower confines of a specific special warfare activity, part of SOF operational art will be to appropriately integrate surgical strike capabilities. When a commander—SOF or CF—identifies a “single point of failure” within an adversary organization, ARSOF can execute a surgical strike that could cripple the adversary while avoiding collateral damage and its negative propaganda value.

b. New Conceptual Approach.

- (1) Driven by the speed of change in the future operating environment, ARSOF will explore new conceptual approaches. Distinct concept changes can lead to a better orchestration of the traditional seven special warfare activities into an improved time-phased, globally integrated, regional campaign. ARSOF will enhance its legacy of low-signature, small-footprint and behind-the-scenes work necessary to excel in special warfare. This will run from USSOCOM through the TSOCs to the units and individual operators on the ground.
- (2) An example of a new conceptual approach is Counter UW. More than simply FID, Counter UW is a strategy by which ARSOF exposes and attacks the strategy of a threat insurgency

primarily through an indigenous force. Counter UW posits that terrorism is a tactic used by an adversary within an overall UW strategy. Using elements of their ability to conduct multiple simultaneous operations, ARSOF or their GSN partners assist the indigenous forces in counterorganizing and conducting remote-area operations. Through JIIM, ARSOF connects the indigenous forces with law enforcement and intelligence in sanctuary countries to deprive the threat of any safe haven.

- (3) Much as USSOCOM currently has the authority to fight VEOs without respect to GCC boundaries, in the future it should have the authority to conduct special warfare campaigns globally. Doing so would not represent a duplication of effort. Current organizations are optimized for surgical strike—as they should be. They address problems primarily through kinetic means. Special warfare concentrates on influencing the human domain to achieve its ends as part of a partnership with host nations, regional partners, and/or indigenous populations.

c. Building and Leveraging the GSN.

- (1) The very nature of the future operating environment demands that ARSOF combat state-sponsored or global VEOs with a global network. It takes a network to fight a network. ARSOF leverages the local knowledge and presence of the individual components of the GSN to achieve results which might not be possible individually. ARSOF recognizes that it is better to support the local GSN component for a relatively long time as it addresses a problem rather than yield to the temptation to step in and solve the problem with U.S. forces.
- (2) The GSN cannot defeat global networks by itself. ARSOF will synchronize the efforts of the GSN participants, RAF, and the networks of our JIIM partners. Such an approach will make more efficient use of resources yet still allow swift, decisive action to prevent or react to crises around the globe. Also, it will allow sufficient time for the United States to activate reserve forces, if needed.
- (3) Mirroring the GSN, the regionally aligned CF establish their networks with other partner nation CF, building capabilities and the capacity to defend their country or to act as an expeditionary force in support of global challenges. The RAF network must be coordinated and synchronized within a theater to achieve desired regional and global effects. The addition of United States Marine Corps ground forces will yield a mature strategic landpower network that can leverage UAPs to react in a timely manner to regional or global issues, reducing the requirement for large-scale U.S. combat formations.

d. Developing Hybrid Structures.

- (1) Strategic, operational, and tactical conditions will continue to drive SOF and CF structures and capabilities that continually adjust to changing environments. A hybrid force structure often allows for the greatest flexibility to react to crisis or contingency around the world. Future ARSOF special warfare operations may be SOF-specific, SOF-centric, or CF-centric. As the operations in northern Iraq and Afghanistan showed, ARSOF can transition from SOF-only to SOF-centric to CF-centric very quickly. Therefore, ARSOF will employ hybrid mission command structures to enable the transition.
- (2) An example of a SOF-centric scenario is a special warfare campaign that was initially a small-footprint operation requiring very limited CF support. Over time, the campaign

expands into a larger area that requires more CF capabilities for stability operations, which the hybrid mission command structure integrates into the campaign under SOF mission command.

- (3) Future adversaries will continue, as a matter of course, to attack organizational weak points, of which seams are a prime example. One of the distinct advantages hybrid structures convey to ARSOF in the future is the avoidance of such seams. But the advantages are not purely defensive. Integrating SOF and CF capabilities in a hybrid structure allows commanders to apply combat power precisely to attain country, regional, or global objectives.

e. Operationalizing the CONUS Base.

- (1) Two primary factors drive the need to operationalize the CONUS base. The first is the relative scarcity of necessary forces and expertise. The second factor—demand—is a function of the persistent nature of special warfare and the global nature of the problem. Problems can arise anywhere, so it requires a globally dispersed element as well as a means of reinforcing its efforts as the situation dictates.
- (2) ARSOF CONUS-based forces provide continuous regional expertise to forward deployed forces conducting special warfare. USASOC routinely provides operational planner expertise to the TSOCs to more effectively plan and execute special warfare campaigns. The ARSOF CONUS-based forces use their proximity to interagency partners, subject matter experts, and academia to provide the best solutions to achieve unified action.
- (3) In order to address the shifting social and economic conditions of the future operating environment, ARSOF leverage CONUS-based capabilities in MISO and CA operations. Doing so mitigates the relative scarcity of CA and PSYOP units. CONUS capabilities also include one-of-a-kind facilities and institutions that provide global special warfare support, recognizing their vital role in special warfare.

f. Expanding JIIM Coordination.

- (3) Countering future threats will require a coordinated and synchronized JIIM effort. Such an approach is both resource-efficient and operationally effective. This matured JIIM interface identifies global challenges early and allows decision-makers the ability to address the challenge with the appropriate tools to influence and deter conflict. Furthermore, the matured JIIM interface provides expeditionary action in times of crisis, responding to humanitarian disasters or acts of war.
- (4) To maximize the operational effectiveness of JIIM cooperation, ARSOF will use an improved system of communication. This system is modeled on the national response framework and provides a context for how the JIIM community works together. It consists of a common suite of communications equipment, a common lexicon, and a set of communication and network protocols. It also recognizes decision points that mark, for example, the transition from an approach led by the DOD to one led by the Department of State.
- (5) To decrease the friction attendant with any cooperative effort, ARSOF seeks and obtains the necessary authorities to conduct JIIM cooperation. This effort concentrates primarily on Titles 10, 22, and 50 of the U.S.C. In some cases, this involves streamlining authorities; in other cases, it involves expanding or clarifying authorities.

C-4. Conclusion

Future ARSOF forces provide scalable, regionally expert forces capable of executing the most difficult special warfare campaigns in all global environments to accomplish national objectives. Future ARSOF forces execute global special warfare campaigns through globally networked UAPs to shape, deter, and defeat adversaries and to build UAP capabilities and capacity for country, regional, and global objectives. Successful special warfare campaigns integrate surgical strike, JIIM, and CF capabilities to achieve decisive strategic landpower actions.

Appendix D

Surgical Strike

D-1. Introduction

- a. **Purpose.** This appendix provides a brief description of surgical strike as one of the two key pillars of ARSOF. It also explains the need for ARSOF to evolve and enhance its already formidable surgical strike units and capabilities to support future national objectives.
- b. **Definition.** Surgical strike is defined as “the execution of activities in a precise manner that employ special operations forces in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets or influence threats.”¹⁴⁰ Currently ARSOF provide the world’s premier strike force, capable of rapidly deploying globally and successfully executing the complete spectrum of surgical strike capabilities unilaterally or collaboratively with precision, low visibility, and minimal collateral damage. The scope of a surgical strike operation can vary from a single sniper to a Regiment executing the forcible takeover of an enemy airfield.¹⁴¹ The common characteristic is the precision nature of the operation when compared to conventional operations.

D-2. Scope

- a. Future ARSOF surgical strike forces must rapidly plan, prepare, synchronize, and execute surgical strike missions in a fluid environment within a narrowing window of opportunity for planning and execution against increasingly capable adversaries, as explained in the next section.
 - (1) In addressing the threats, challenges, and opportunities of the future operating environment, ARSOF require the capability to execute multiple simultaneous operations in-depth, globally. As it does today, USSOCOM provides global integration with surgical strike operations. It also provides strategic direction for ongoing special warfare activities.
 - (2) At the theater level, the TSOCs will integrate all SOF activities into the disparate elements of the various theater campaign or engagement plans. They also direct operations unless a special operations joint task force exists to cover a specific operation. USASOC may also provide the nucleus of a headquarters to prosecute a special warfare campaign that overlaps geographic combatant command boundaries.
 - (3) Future ARSOF strike forces will require expanded authorities and global responsiveness, as well as cutting-edge technologies, surrogates, and GSN partners. These activities could be conducted unilaterally or executed in support of (and often supported by) other elements of a broader joint and/or special operations force with a nexus of situational awareness and special operations expertise in the TSOCs.
- b. The future operating environment will be complex and demanding. Adversaries and threats beyond 2022 may include conventional and unconventional forces, irregular militias and paramilitaries, terrorist groups, and criminal/nation/surrogate hybrid organizations. The threat may be networked vice hierarchical and may be independent of a sovereign,

functioning state. Threats will be complex and adaptive and may be equipped with sophisticated technology. WMD technologies will proliferate, and information and communications technology capabilities will expand among actors of all types. The threat will try to asymmetrically oppose our efforts and will leverage an increasingly complex and urban human domain. Threats will use A2/AD strategies to restrict our global posture. The last twelve years has shown that defeating networked, complex, nontraditional threats requires a flattened mission command structure capable of providing near-real-time situational awareness to support decentralized operations. The conditions in the future operating environment will make it increasingly difficult to engage global targets discriminately and precisely due to the complexity of environment and the ubiquity of mobile communications.

D-3. Evolving Conceptual Aspects of Surgical Strike

- a. **National Strategy Implications.** Against this backdrop of evolving threats, the United States is entering an era of fiscal austerity with the expectation of military budget cuts and personnel drawdowns. This fiscal climate and the nation's experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have shifted national objectives and global engagement so that military campaigns are less likely to be large-scale conventional operations. And while global trends and enduring conflicts present the future operating environment as complex, dangerous, and unpredictable,¹⁴² the United States is currently without any overall national security strategy.¹⁴³ The result is a premium placed on highly agile and adaptive forces, especially at the low end of the range of military options.
- b. **Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination.** Over the next decade, ARSOF will sustain and evolve the existing surgical strike capability into a more lethal, responsive, and flexible force structure capable of leveraging the JIIM spectrum and GSN partners and incorporating advanced technologies to conduct strike missions against the most difficult of targets globally. The GSN is an interdependent, worldwide network of SOF strategically stationed and employed with enhanced forces, capabilities, infrastructure, and support. In addition, there are numerous U.S. interagency and intergovernmental partners operating both at home and abroad. The number of ARSOF liaisons with these partners, CONUS and outside CONUS, is severely limited compared to what the GSN will require. These partners can enhance SOF regional understanding and cultural awareness. Cross-pollination of liaisons between TSOC staffs and corresponding interagency and intergovernmental partners would greatly facilitate information exchange and provide mutual support during time-sensitive surgical strike operations conducted in support of theater campaign plans or crisis intervention. This would allow the TSOC to streamline information flow, enhance situational awareness, and leverage all possible national assets during a surgical strike mission.
- c. **Mission Command Authorities.** During a crisis, the process to gain approval authorities can be highly time-consuming. The approval process must evolve and be time-sensitive and streamlined, sufficient to keep pace with the rapid dynamic changes that will occur in the global security environment. The TSOCs will require enhanced authorities for TSOC commanders to facilitate ARSOF surgical strikes and actualize the responsiveness from future ARSOF strike units.
- d. **Strategic Landpower Concept.** Future SOF capabilities to execute surgical strikes mesh well with evolving landpower concepts, including Integrated Distributed Operations. Surgical strikes to disable an active integrated air defense system may be part of a larger conventional campaign. Rapid advancements in A2/AD technologies "will limit the ability of CF to fly

combat air missions, maneuver at sea, gain lodgments ashore, establish secure forward operating bases, communicate at long ranges, and sustain themselves logistically” and will therefore drive an ongoing need for ARSOF to understand and evolve to keep viable surgical strike options ahead of those defensive capabilities.

- e. **The Air-Sea Battle Concept.** This concept has increased in relevance due to the shift of U.S. strategic focus to the Pacific and the Middle East. The concept’s vision of “networked, integrated, and attack-in-depth operations requires the application of cross-domain operations across all the interdependent warfighting domains (air, maritime, land, space, and cyberspace), to disrupt, destroy, and defeat A2/AD capabilities and provide maximum operational advantage to friendly, joint, and coalition forces.” While it minimizes the use of landpower, it does not eliminate the need for land forces. Similar to the strategic landpower concept, some future A2/AD environments require land forces—and, specifically, surgical strikes—to help strip away some elements of an adversaries A2/AD mechanisms. ARSOF must work to remain relevant in order to provide the capabilities needed for SOF-led expeditionary campaigns in support of the Air-Sea Battle Concept.
- f. **Multiple, Simultaneous Engagements.** The war on terror has shown that decapitation of a terrorist network has limited effectiveness since the network will quickly promote new leadership. It has also shown that disabling multiple nodes and leadership has a much greater effect on disrupting or destroying the organization. Threat networks today can disperse rapidly when warned of ongoing attacks against other threat organizations. Sequential activities thus lessen the impact of operations against VEO networks. To optimize its effectiveness, ARSOF will develop the capability to conduct simultaneous attacks against multiple, geographically dispersed targets. The limiting factor for response times is often strategic lift or the requirement to have co-located lift assets. ARSOF’s surgical strike capability will need to include sufficient capacity to perform several simultaneous operations in different locations, which will preclude other elements going to ground when one node or leader is attacked.
- g. **Global Response and Engagement.**
 - (1) Some theatres have forward deployed ARSOF crisis response forces, some have forward deployed ARSOF crisis response forces on a rotational basis, and some ARSOF crisis response forces are CONUS-based. The dedicated strike forces based in CONUS increase response times to crises and restrict the military options available to decision-makers due to time and distance. Organizing all ARSOF crisis response forces as a forward deployed package under the TSOC would provide robust surgical strike packages that are globally postured and responsive to contingencies and capable of supporting CONUS-based assets during deliberate operations.
 - (2) The likelihood of the employment of a WMD by nonstate or surrogate actors increases over time. WMD proliferation networks are multifunctional and multidimensional; consist of state and, increasingly, independent nonstate actors; are dynamic and adaptive and can be transnational; have differing motivations and desired end states; and operate in secrecy to avoid detection and counteraction.¹⁴⁴ WMD counterproliferation and reaction activities are also primary examples of the necessity to maintain and leverage GSN and JIIM interrelationships.
- h. **Partner Nation, Indigenous, and Surrogate Forces.** There are numerous national level partner forces, both military and civilian, with whom ARSOF does not engage nor have an

enduring relationship. Future surgical strike forces will engage partner nation security forces through exercises and other venues to increase mutual understanding and cooperation in defeating threat networks. This will also provide insights and awareness of the partner's capabilities, limitations, threats, and supporting assets. These relationships will pay off during a crisis intervention or a surgical strike with enhanced situational awareness and the ability to synchronize and mutually support operations, or to support surrogate strikes that further U.S. interests. This effort can be synched and nested with other ARSOF partnership building efforts across the GSN.

- i. **F3EAD Requirements.** Surgical strike units will use a robust capability to fuse intelligence functions and operations to accomplish national and theater objectives. These cells will enable commanders to establish target priorities; anticipate and predict adversarial actions; identify, locate, and target opposition forces; and perform intelligence analysis and exploitation. This will enhance understanding of the operational environment and possible threats, facilitate the development of concept plans/operation plan for future contingencies, and increase opportunities to successfully execute time-critical strikes. Organic F3EAD capability allows TSOCs to operate in a more responsive and unilateral manner as required when faced with a crisis or contingency.
- j. **Communications.** Surgical strike forces will use real-time simultaneous Top Secret-level text communications “chat” with dozens of participants, to include strike-trained personnel, ARSOF regional/country experts, U.S. Army CF, and applicable intelligence community experts. To maximize the operational effectiveness of JIIM cooperation, ARSOF require a system of communications modeled on the national response framework. This consists of a common suite of communications equipment, a common lexicon, and a set of communication and network protocols in order to provide the basis for the JIIM community working together.
- k. **Technology Requirements.**
 - (1) In the future, many technology advancements will be readily available to the public and may be used by adversaries. Joint and cooperative research efforts will leverage significant advancements for surgical strike applications and will develop counters to advancements by adversaries in areas including the following:
 - Cyber.
 - Electronic warfare.
 - Directed energy.
 - Information technologies.
 - Kinetic penetrators.
 - Nonlethal munitions.
 - Sensors.
 - Robotics.
 - Space.
 - Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.
 - Unmanned ground vehicles.

- Energy storage.
- Low-visibility stealth technologies.

And research will continue provide to special operations “the classics,” such as advanced weaponry¹⁴⁵ and improved body armor.

- (2) Command elements and teams preparing for, supporting, and executing surgical strikes will be able to receive and produce imagery of the objective areas worldwide.

D-4. Conclusion

The operating environment beyond 2022 will be uncertain, complex, and multidimensional, encompassing numerous variables. U.S. national security strategy is likely to be dynamic and—when force is authorized to achieve national objectives—minimization of collateral damage and the effects on nontarget personnel and facilities is likely to be critical. To meet these challenges, ARSOF must continuously evolve a sophisticated range of surgical strike options for decision-makers. Doing so will require identifying opportunities to enhance concepts, methodologies, and partnerships and adopting emerging technologies over the next decade to ensure that ARSOF strike forces remain the most agile and effective in the world.

Appendix E

Special Operations Forces-Conventional Forces Interdependence

E-1. Introduction

This appendix to The ARSOF Operational Concept 2022 describes how ARSOF will integrate SOF and CF into future campaigns to achieved unified land operations worldwide.

Challenge: ARSOF must bridge the critical seams of SOF-Conventional Force and SOF-Interagency relationships to effectively contribute to unified action in the 21st century by partnering with the Army to meet its Title 10 collective training responsibilities.

2022 Vision: ARSOF will create an integrated training environment to improve USASOC's ability to provide trained and ready operational-level SOF to ground combatant commanders worldwide, while promoting increased SOF-CF interdependence.

– ARSOF 2022

E-2. Importance and Definition

- a. Special operations provide joint force commanders and ambassadors with discreet, precise, and scalable forces through unilateral activities or working with and through indigenous forces. The last decade of war has shown the importance of SOF-CF interdependence to achieve tactical, operational, and strategic objectives. The joint operational environment and fiscal constraints moving into the future will make SOF-CF interdependence even more important.
- b. Interdependence is defined as “the deliberate and mutual reliance of one unified action partner on another’s inherent capabilities to provide complementary and reinforcing effects.”¹⁴⁶ SOF-CF interdependence enables joint force commanders to select the optimal force composition across the range of military options to achieve national objectives. The size of threat, operational environment, and political sensitivity will determine if operations are SOF-specific, SOF-centric, or CF-centric.

E-3. SOF-Specific Campaign

- a. Future SOF-specific campaigns or operations will have a small-footprint force structure executing surgical strikes or special warfare campaigns through and with indigenous forces in politically sensitive, hostile, or denied areas. These campaigns or operations will typically use lethal and nonlethal force to accomplish strategic, operational, and tactical objects. Future surgical strikes may have unilateral direct action missions executed in a low-visibility or clandestine manner to kill or capture VEO personnel, rescue hostages, interdict WMD, recover personnel or equipment, and damage or destroy designated targets.¹⁴⁷

- b. Future SOF-specific special warfare campaigns may execute small-scale, long-term UW activities through and with indigenous elements to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power or conduct FID activities in politically sensitive environments.¹⁴⁸ Another element of future SOF-specific campaigns is surgical strike and special warfare interdependence leveraging each other's capabilities to achieve desired effects. One example is a surgical strike conducted in support of a UW campaign for a specific desired effect. In addition, future SOF-centric campaigns and operations will be synchronized by the TSOC and have a SOF mission commander.

E-4. SOF-Centric Campaign

Future SOF-centric campaigns will be special warfare campaigns (FID and UW) and CT operations.¹⁴⁹ The three operations will be small-scale¹⁵⁰ with the majority of the ground forces being SOF. These SOF campaigns may be long-term in nature, requiring a continual rotation of forces in theater to accomplish long-term U.S. objectives. The TSOC will have operational control of all forces, and a SOF commander will have tactical mission command of operations. Another aspect of a SOF-centric campaign is CF supporting operations with key enablers. CF may provide intelligence assets, forces to provide security or training where SOF has limited expertise, medical support, transportation, sustainment, and more combat power as required. A future SOF-centric campaign may be a politically sensitive environment such as Yemen, requiring small-footprint SOF forces and limited CF enabler support.

E-5. CF-Centric Campaign

Future CF-centric campaigns and operations will be executed when an operation is beyond the capacity or the capabilities of SOF forces. CF-centric operations will encompass MCO, COIN, and stability operations.¹⁵¹ In CF-centric operations, CF will have the majority of forces on the ground, with a CF commander executing overall mission command. SOF support CF-centric operations by providing special operations capabilities to support unified action and unified land operations. SOF support to CF-centric operations may include operations and activities such as executing precision surgical strikes to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets; executing forcible entry operations to establish lodgment for inserting follow-on forces; and training, advising, and assisting indigenous forces.

E-6. Evolving Campaigns

Future campaigns may evolve from a SOF-specific to SOF-centric to CF-centric and transition back to SOF-centric or SOF-specific campaigns. Operation ENDURING FREEDOM–Afghanistan illustrates such a combination of the three operations (SOF-specific, SOF-centric, and CF-centric). The initial phase of the Afghanistan War was a SOF-centric operation with SOF elements infiltrating and linking up with the Northern Alliance forces executing an unconventional warfare campaign to remove the Taliban from power. The 5th Special Forces Group teams synchronized and assisted the Northern Alliance forces while conducting maneuver on horseback to the eventual liberation of Mazar-e Sharif.¹⁵² The operation continued to evolve with the addition of CF transitioning into CF-centric operations and mission command. SOF became the supporting force, training Afghanistan security forces and conducting counterterrorism surgical strikes. The Afghanistan future force structure could see a turn back to SOF-centric and even SOF-specific operations.

Glossary

Section I: Abbreviations

AOpC	ARSOF Operating Concept
ARSOF	Army special operations forces
A2/AD	anti-access/area denial
CA	Civil Affairs
CBA	capabilities-based assessment
CF	conventional forces
CMO	civil-military operations
COIN	counterinsurgency
CONUS	continental United States
CP	counterproliferation
CT	counterterrorism
DA	direct action
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
F3EAD	find, fix, finish, exploit, analyze, and disseminate
FID	foreign internal defense
FORSCOM	United States Army Forces Command
GCC	geographic combatant commander
GSN	global special operations forces network
HA	humanitarian assistance
IADS	integrated air defense system
IO	information operations
JIIM	joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational
MCO	major combat operation
MISO	military information support operations
PE	preparation of the environment
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RAF	regionally aligned forces
SF	Special Forces
SFA	security force assistance
SOF	special operations forces
SOFOC	Special Operations Forces Operating Concept
SR	special reconnaissance
TRADOC	United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
TSOC	theater special operations command
UAP	unified action partner
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
U.S.C.	United States Code
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	unconventional warfare
VEO	violent extremist organization
WFF	warfighting function
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

Section II: Terms

auxiliary

For the purpose of unconventional warfare, the support element of the irregular organization whose organization and operations are clandestine in nature and whose members do not openly indicate their sympathy or involvement with the irregular movement. (ADRP 3-05)

clandestine operation

An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities. (JP 3-05.1)

combined arms maneuver

The application of the elements of combat power in unified action to defeat enemy ground forces; to seize, occupy, and defend land areas; and to achieve physical, temporal, and psychological advantages over the enemy to seize and exploit the initiative. (ADP 3-0)

counterinsurgency

Comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes. (JP 3-24)

counterterrorism

Actions directly against terrorist networks and indirectly to influence and render global and regional environments inhospitable to terrorist networks. (JP 1-02)

covert operation

An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor.. (JP 3-05)

cyberspace

A global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent networks of information technology infrastructures and resident data, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers. (JP 3-12)

denied area

An area under enemy or unfriendly control in which friendly forces cannot expect to operate successfully within existing operational constraints and force capabilities. (JP 3-05)

foreign internal defense

Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. (JP 3-22)

guerrilla force

A group of irregular, predominately indigenous personnel organized along military lines to conduct military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held, hostile, or denied territory. (JP 3-05)

holistic

Refers to special operations planning or execution using surgical strikes in support of a special warfare campaign or operation, and special warfare activities to reduce the risk and increase the probability of success of surgical strike operations.

human domain

The totality of the physical, cultural, and social environments that influence human behavior to the extent that success of any military operation or campaign depends on the application of unique capabilities that are designed to fight and win population-centric conflicts. (*USSOCOM SOF Operating Concept*)

hybrid threat

The diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, terrorist forces, and/or criminal elements unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects. (ADRP 3-0)

invisible operator

An operator capable of conducting reduced-signature operations with no degradation of capabilities or support, regardless of location. (*USSOCOM SOF Operating Concept*)

irregular warfare

A violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). (JP 1)

low-visibility operations

Sensitive operations wherein the political-military restrictions inherent in covert and clandestine operations are either not necessary or not feasible; actions are taken as required to limit exposure of those involved and/or their activities. Execution of these operations is undertaken with the knowledge that the action and/or sponsorship of the operation may preclude plausible denial by the initiating power (JP 3-05.1).

major combat operations

The ability for a U.S. joint force, supported by other instruments of national and multinational power, to conduct synergistic, high-tempo actions in multiple domains to shatter the coherence of the adversary's plans and dispositions and render him unable or unwilling to militarily oppose the achievement of our strategic objectives. (Major Combat Operations Joint Operating Concept)

megacity

A very large city, typically one with a population of over ten million people. (Oxford English Dictionary).

military deception

Actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary, military, paramilitary, or violent extremist organization decision makers, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission. (JP 3-13.4)

special operations

Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk. (JP 3-05)

Special Operations Forces Truths

1) Humans are more important than hardware; 2) Quality is better than quantity; 3) Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced; 4) Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur; and 5) Most special operations require non-SOF support. (USSOCOM)

special warfare

The execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment. (ADRP 3-05)

stability operations

An overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. (JP 3-0)

strategic landpower

The application of landpower towards achieving overarching national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance for a given military campaign or operation. (General Raymond Odierno, General James Amos, and Admiral William H. McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*)

super-empowered individual

Because globalization has brought down many of the walls that limited the movement and reach of people, and because it has simultaneously wired the world into networks, it gives more power to individuals to influence both markets and nation-states than at any other time in history. Whether by enabling people to use the Internet to communicate instantly at almost no cost over vast distances, or by enabling them to use the Web to transfer money or obtain weapons designs that normally would have been controlled by states, . . . globalization can be an incredible force-multiplier for individuals. Individuals can increasingly act on the world stage directly, unmediated by a state. (Thomas L. Friedman, *Longitudes and Attitudes: Exploring the World After September 11*)

surgical strike

The execution of activities in a precise manner that employ special operations forces in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover or damage designated targets, or influence threats. (ADRP 3-05)

unconventional warfare

Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area. (JP 3-05)

underground

A cellular covert element within unconventional warfare that is compartmentalized and conducts covert or clandestine activities in areas normally denied to the auxiliary and guerrilla force. (ADRP 3-05)

unified action

The synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort. (JP 1)

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- 17 TRADOC Intelligence G-2 Support Activity (TRISA), *Operational Environments: The Strategic Environment for Unified Land Operations*, February 2012, p. 15.
- 18 National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, pp. 59, 64.
- 19 United States Army Special Operations Command, *SOF Campaign Planner's Handbook of Operational Art and Design*, Version 2.0, 16 September 2014.
- 20 The needs for "Enhanced Education and Training" as well as for "Increased Advantage Through Human Capital Development" are discussed in Chapter 5.
- 21 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 3.
- 22 Cleveland, Charles T. (LTG), and Stuart L. Farris (LTC), "Toward Strategic Landpower," *Army*, July 2013, pp. 21-22.
- 23 ADP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. GL-3.
- 24 ADP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. 9.
- 25 Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010, p. 103. An area under enemy or unfriendly control in which friendly forces cannot expect to operate successfully within existing operational constraints and force capabilities.
- 26 *Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats*, Department of Defense Joint Operating Concept, Version 2.0, 17 May 2010, p. 4. "In order to maximize the prospect of success, the joint force must understand the population and operating environment, including the complex historical, political, sociocultural, religious, economic, and other causes of violent conflict. The joint force must adopt collaborative frameworks to understand, plan, act, assess, and adapt in concert with U.S. Government (USG) interagency and multinational partners and the host nation. Adequate frameworks for such collaboration do not currently exist in any codified or institutionalized form, although a variety of ad hoc mechanisms have been used and various studies have proposed such frameworks."
- 27 ADP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. GL-3.

- 28 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 13.
- 29 United States Special Operations Command, (S/NF) *Unconventional Warfare Capability Shortfall Report* (U), 1 October 2012, stated "(U) Analysis of these capabilities revealed issues/symptoms/problems in each capability. None of these issues reflect a complete lack of capability, though no capability overmatch was identified. Analysis indicates that UW capabilities suffer from a lack of emphasis related to current demands for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations."
- 30 Joint Requirements Oversight Council Memorandum (JROCM) 098-11, (S/NF) *Unconventional Warfare DOTMLPF Change Request Recommendations* (U), 11 July 2011.
- 31 Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 8 November 2010, p. 342.
- 32 Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 8 November 2010, p. 342, paragraph 4.
- 33 Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 8 November 2010, p. 342, paragraph 5(a).
- 34 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 4. "The SOF Operator is a vital element of the Global SOF Network but cannot succeed without the enabling forces, capabilities, and infrastructure that also comprise the network."
- 35 Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 23 March 2013. Recognizes two forms of warfare: traditional and irregular. SOF must be capable of addressing both.
- 36 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 3. "SOF conducts their core activities through the Global SOF Network: a globally linked force of SOF and their strategic partners—joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, non-governmental, commercial, and academic. As described in *SOF 2020*, this network is a 'living and learning' system that remains agile, responsive, and adaptable as the strategic environment evolves. It is not a stand-alone or closed system. Rather, it functions within an interdependent web of networks operated by strategic partners."
- 37 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 2013, pp. 11–12.
- 38 *Unconventional Warfare Joint Integrating Concept (UW JIC), Version 1.0 (S/NF)*, JROCM 020-10, 1 February 2010, p. X. Listed among Key Required Capabilities "(U) Synchronize joint force activities with interagency partners' and irregular elements" and "Support interagency partners and irregular elements."
- 39 *Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats*, Department of Defense Joint Operating Concept, Version 2.0, 17 May 2010, p. 24, paragraph 4c. "The joint force will use fully integrated combinations of general purpose forces and special operations forces, and DOD combat support agencies (CSAs), usually in combination with interagency and multinational partners, to capitalize on the individual competencies of each component. These fully integrated components will employ the capabilities identified later in this document under the guiding principles described in this section to maximize the prospect of success."
- 40 Szayna, Thomas S., and William Welser IV, RAND Corporation, *Developing and Assessing Options for the Global SOF Network*, 2013, p. 1.
- 41 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 2013.
- 42 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 2013.
- 43 United States Army Special Operations Command, Silent Quest 13-2, Facilitated Wargame, Final Report, Version 1.2, 17 October 2013, p. 5.
- 44 Odierno, Raymond T. (GEN), James F. Amos (GEN), and William H. McRaven (ADM), *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, 6 May 2013, p. 1.
- 45 Cleveland, Charles T. (LTG), and Stuart L. Farris (LTC), "Toward Strategic Landpower," *Army*, July 2013.
- 46 United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, *The U.S. Army Capstone Concept*, 19 December 2012, p. 31.
- 47 United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Civil Affairs Capabilities Based Assessment*, Gaps 2, 4, 5, 11, 13, 1 May 2012.
- 48 While it would not create the shared awareness of the civil situation that is hoped for, 95th CA suggested that it would be helpful: *To combat this capability gap at the TSOC, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade could reorganize allowing for the placement of a Civil Affairs Planning Team (CAPT) within each TSOC from the aligned Civil Affairs Battalion.*
- 49 United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, *The U.S. Army Capstone Concept*, 19 December 2012, p. 31.
- 50 Area for further development: How do we recruit the senior SMEs (district Judges, CEOs of banking /financing, or senior members of industry) to participate and be part of the force. How do we recruit the expertise?
- 51 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 22.
- 52 United States Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, 3 January 2012, p. 3.
- 53 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 15.
- 54 United States Army Special Operations Command, Silent Quest 13-2, Facilitated Wargame, Final Report, Version 1.2, 17 October 2013, p. 5.
- 55 Athanasiadis, Iason, "No More Burger King on Afghanistan Base? Soldiers Grumble," *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 April 2010.

- 56 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 22.
- 57 United States Army Special Operations Command, Silent Quest 13-2, Facilitated Wargame, Final Report v1.2, 17 October 2013.
- 58 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 2013, p. 10. "A communications network is necessary to support the human SOF global network. Communication and information sharing must facilitate interconnectedness beyond the U.S.-only realm and improve partner nation capacity, interagency coordination, and stakeholder situational awareness by providing information technology infrastructure and communications services to unite U.S. and partner nation SOF, plus other mission partners. The command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence nodes of the Global SOF network consist of Command and Control and Distributed Command and Control locations; Distributive Data Centers, SOF Strategic Entry Points, and Mobile SOF Strategic Entry Points."
- 59 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 22.
- 60 Odierno, Raymond T. (GEN), James F. Amos (GEN), and William H. McRaven (ADM), *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, 6 May 2013, p. 5.
- 61 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 9.
- 62 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013.
- 63 Joint Requirements Oversight Council Memorandum 020-10 (U) *Unconventional Warfare Joint Integrating Concept (UW JIC), Version 1.0* (S/NF), 1 February 2010, p. 6. "(U) Military operations in the period addressed by this JIC will be aided and simultaneously complicated by technologies that create an increasingly interconnected world. The actions of future joint forces will be much more visible than in the past and will be interpreted and reacted to in a variety of ways. More than ever before, a premium will be placed on low-visibility operations, those in which our national security objectives can be accomplished with minimal U.S. military presence. While the United States needs to maintain the ability to conduct major combat operations, it also needs to be capable of addressing increasingly common situations in which conventional operations would be counterproductive. In such cases, the preferred option might be the focused use of more discreet and modest-sized forces, operating with or through indigenous irregular elements."
- 64 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 13. "Reduced-signature operations—operations that are clandestine, covert, or low visibility (i.e., non-overt) in their mode—are a distinguishing characteristic of SOF. Operators often live and work among non-Western foreign populations. Biometric identification and tracking through advanced data processing and communications technologies have rendered past techniques ineffective leaving SOF Operators vulnerable worldwide. However, USSOCOM continues to improve reduced-signature capabilities so SOF teams can operate less visibly than in years past, without any reduction in capabilities."
- 65 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 13.
- 66 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 19.
- 67 Odierno, Raymond T. (GEN), James F. Amos (GEN), and William H. McRaven (ADM), *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, 6 May 2013, p. 1. "After ten years of war, the Nation is rebalancing its national security strategy to focus on engagement and preventing war."
- 68 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 25.
- 69 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 26.
- 70 Thomas, Jim, and Chris Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2013, p. 45.
- 71 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 11.
- 72 Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*, April 2011, p. II-9.
- 73 Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of the Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010, p. 144. Irregular warfare is defined as "a violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s)."
- 74 *Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats*, Department of Defense Joint Operating Concept, Version 2.0, 17 May 2010, pp. 5, 23.
- 75 FM 3-05.231, *Special Forces Personnel Recovery*, 13 June 2003, p. 1-18. This includes developing unconventional assisted recovery mechanisms to contact, authenticate, support, move, and exfiltrate to friendly control isolated persons.
- 76 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 2013, p. 19. The Global SOF Network is "a robust and flexible global network of SOF, U.S. government partners, and partner nations."
- 77 United States Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, p. 3.
- 78 Joint Publication 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, 12 July 2010, p. ix.
- 79 United States Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, and FM 3-05.2, *Foreign Internal Defense*, 1 September 2011, pp. 1-1, 1-2.

- 80 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. i.
- 81 Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations*, 11 August 2011, p. V-4.
- 82 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 6.
- 83 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 6.
- 84 Joint Requirements Oversight Council, Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the Global SOF Network 2020 (GSN 2020), 29 July 2013, p. 5.
- 85 Robinson, Linda, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Council on Foreign Relations, Council Special Report No. 66, April 2013, p. 26.
- 86 Joint Publication 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, 5 October 2009, p. GL-5.
- 87 Robinson, Linda, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Council on Foreign Relations, Council Special Report No. 66, April 2013, p. 26.
- 88 United States Department of Defense, *Major Combat Operations, Joint Operating Concept*, December 2006, p. 11.
- 89 TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The United States Army Operating Concept: 2016–2028*, 19 August 2010, p. 25.
- 90 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 5.
- 91 United States Government, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010, pp. 40–41.
- 92 United States Government, Title 10, U.S.C.
- 93 Joint Publication 3-26, *Counterterrorism*, 13 November 2009, p. v.
- 94 ADP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. 9.
- 95 United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 2013.
- 96 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 20.
- 97 Joint Publication 3-40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, June 2009, p. I-1
- 98 Joint Publication 3-40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, June 2009, p. xi.
- 99 USASOC as a subelement of USSOCOM provides WMD expertise per Joint Publication 3-40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, June 2009, p. III-3.
- 100 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, pp. 14–15.
- 101 See United States Special Operations Command, Capability Development and Programming Guidance 2015–2019 (S/NF), 31 October 2012, p. 126; also United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, p. 13.
- 102 “The SOF Operational Art Challenge is to build campaigns to Shape, Prevent, and Win in uncertain and politically sensitive environments where the threshold for significant force structure is limited, while achieving the required National-Strategic end state,” United States Army Special Operations Command, Silent Quest 13-2 Facilitated Wargame: Final Report, Version 1.0, Draft (S/NF), 11 October 2013.
- 103 United States Army Special Operations Command, *USASOC Cyber Enabling Concept*, 24 July 2013, p. 21.
- 104 Ceroli, Michael A. (COL), Commandant, Psychological Operations Regiment, United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, interview by writing team, Fort Bragg, NC, 5 November 2013.
- 105 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 18.
- 106 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 18.
- 107 United States Army Special Operations Command, *ARSOF 2022*, 2013, p. 22. ARSOF will possess a wide array of scalable and deployable command and control nodes, capable of projecting SOF mission command in the most austere and politically sensitive environments, with the requisite level of expertise, experience, and architecture to plan, integrate, and synchronize SOF operations and SOF campaigns at any echelon of joint command, in an interagency country team environment or with partnered indigenous forces of any size, including SOF operational headquarters above the TSOC level that are designed to conduct SOF-centric campaigns (p. 22, paragraph 5).
- 108 Comprehensive SOF Mission Command: The participants consistently identified the requirement to establish a comprehensive SOF mission command structure as part of the future operating concept. The SOF mission command will need to span multiple echelons, be scalable and adaptive as conflicts escalate and deescalate, incorporate Joint SOF and Global SOF, and fully interface with the interagency community structures (SQ 13-1 Final Report, p. 6, paragraph 2).
- 109 There is a need for a clear mission command structure that adapts and evolves across a long-term SOF campaign; clear and concise communication of SOF mission command is required; this is especially important when communicating outside of the special operations community (SQ13-2 Quick-Turn Executive Summary, Insight 2, p. 8, paragraph 3).
- 110 Military Support to Governance. Given the U.S. military’s assigned responsibilities in the areas of stability and governance, future joint formations will require the capability and capacity to “address shared interests and enhance partners’ security, governance, economic development, rule of law, and other critical functions, as part of unified action” (United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, The U.S.

Army Capstone Concept (Fort Eustis, 19 December 2012, p. 31). This necessitates a system to procure, classify, marshal, and employ the appropriate civilian expertise to support, or if required, lead the execution of stability tasks necessary to support prevent, shape, and win. A U.S. military developed system can leverage, under Title 10 authorities, the key civilian skills required to build partners and their capacities in the absence of other U.S. Government departments and agencies due to either staffing or security constraints. *The Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Institutionalizing Stability Operations within DOD, 2005*, addressed these concerns and provided two pertinent recommendations: “First, establish an organization capable of generating and leveraging our ‘fifth force’ provider—the private sector. Second, directly recruit professionals with the requisite skills and experience into the Army’s Reserve Civil Affairs.”

- 111 SOF Operational Art as an ARSOF 2022 Enabling Concept is defined as forces that provide expertise to enable operational level headquarters in their effort to tie tactical capabilities to regional or national strategies (USASOC Futures Brief to the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, 30 January 2013).
- 112 *ARSOF 2022*: Foster the development of ARSOF operational and strategic planners with the requisite experience and education to contribute in positions of increasing influence in Joint, Army, Interagency, and SOF operational headquarters (*ARSOF 2022*, p. 22, paragraph 4).
- 113 Career professional ARSOF operators need to attain sufficient rank and position to be able to present special warfare or surgical strike options at the level where decisions are made (AOpC Study, p. 5-25, paragraph 5-9. c). The current Pentagon situation short-changes the national leadership and disservices the American people because SOF solutions—which may or may not be approved by the national leadership—are not made available for their consideration. Some insightful historian will speculate on the possible differences in Afghanistan 2001–2014 if the war had remained a SOF-supported insurrection by the Northern Alliance, with the focus on the fractious human domain in that country, as opposed to the cost of U.S. lives and resources—and the long-term result—from the conventional campaign which was executed. A similar comparison of the enduring results between of the conventional campaign in Iraq versus a population-centered war of influence—while obviously speculative—could provide similar insights (AOpC Study, p. 5-25, paragraph 5-9.c[1]).
- 114 A senior ARSOF officer needs to be assigned at the Joint Staff J-5, not only for inclusion of SOF annexes and support to major conventional campaign plans, but especially to ensure development of plans for a variety of quick-response surgical strike operations and for the initiation or escalation of special warfare throughout the world (AOpC Study, p. 5-25, paragraph 5-9.c[2]).
- 115 The most senior ARSOF officers are needed where decisions are made that have great impacts to the country. Key billets throughout DOD need to be filled by those best able to understand the availability, limitations, and advantages of—
 - (a) Surgical strike options used in isolation against high-value targets.
 - (b) Surgical strike options used to open the option-space for larger/conventional military operations if so directed.
 - (c) Surgical strike options used in concert with CF in major campaigns.
 - (d) Surgical strike options as a tool within long-term special warfare campaigns.
 - (e) Information and civil affairs campaigns to achieve U.S. objectives in a country/region without kinetic warfare.
 - (f) UW as a mechanism to prepare a battle space for conventional campaigns.
 - (g) Information and CA campaigns to allow U.S. combat successes to persist after kinetic warfare concludes and conventional U.S. forces are withdrawn.
 - (h) Options for supported regimes to resist and defeat terrorist and insurgent groups.
 - (i) Special warfare (both in support of existing regimes and in support of insurgent forces) as the best mechanism to understand the political, economic, and cultural terrain within most of the nations on the globe, and thereby inform the nation’s foreign policy (AOpC Study, p. 5-26, paragraph 5-9.c[3]).
- 116 Examples of these key positions include the Vice J-3 on Joint Staff, the Deputy Director of Special Operations J-3 on the Joint Staff, XO to the JCS Chairman, and the XO to the Secretary of Defense. Officers should be groomed to effectively fill these positions with the objective to inform decisions and ensure SOF options are available to the actual national decision-makers (AOpC Study, p. 5-26, paragraph 5-9. c[4]).
- 117 Effective exercise of authority and direction will require that USASOC develop an integrated ARSOF mission command architecture that incorporates, analyzes, and displays a common operating picture from SF, CA, and MISO (AOpC Study, p. 3-32, paragraph 3-5.d[6]).
- 118 Successful synchronized operations in the future environment will depend “on the SOF information environment—an integrated, multilevel, global information technology infrastructure” (United States Special Operations Command, *Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, p. 12). Equally important is that the communication network must be compatible with other communication systems ensuring a common operating picture and database management enabling the “push” and “pull” of information (AOpC Study, p. 3-38, paragraph 3-6.n).
- 119 Tactical Communications includes the efforts needed to keep pace with the rapid evolution of communications means and methods sufficient to always provide a covert communications capability to/from ARSOF within denied and sensitive areas (AOpC Study, p. 3-37, paragraph 3-6.m). The future operating environment requires new methods of communication to operate in a denied area. The success of communicating in the future environment “depends on the SOF Information Environment—an integrated, multilevel, global information technology infrastructure.”

- (AOpC Study, p. 3-38, paragraph 3-6.n). Innovative ways for ARSOF operators to use indigenous commercial communication infrastructure securely and clandestinely must continually evolve. While communications are always minimized in clandestine operations, ARSOF operators must learn to use civilian networks to communicate with low-signature applications (for example, Internet, cellular systems, and so on) and will need to leverage advanced technology providing their own reduced-signature systems with low probabilities of detection and interception.” (Jim Thomas and Chris Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, p. 100) (AOpC Study, p. 3-37, paragraph 3-6.m). Some key attributes for future ARSOF communications include “range, bandwidth, wide-area coverage, low probability of detection and intercept, and resistance to jamming.” Equally important is that the communication network must be compatible with other communication systems ensuring a common operating picture (COP) and database manage enabling the “push” and “pull” of information. Also, *ARSOF 2022* outlines a system that provides low-visibility, reliable, secure, and seamless video, data, imagery, and voice services that provide integrated, on-the-move, timely, and relevant information (*ARSOF 2022*, p. 25, paragraph 6d).
- 120 This includes the capability to analyze and share multiple levels of classified information across all nodes within the GSN and with JIIM/UAP.
- 121 This intelligence common operating picture must feed the operations process and be accessible by SOF, CF, interagency partners, and joint forces globally and at the tactical edge.
- 122 Support of ARSOF by the national intelligence agencies also evolved during the Operation ENDURING FREEDOM/Operation IRAQI FREEDOM campaigns and must not revert to back to self-reliance and agency stove-piped assistance in the future. ARSOF will continue to require a close working relationship with the intelligence community “to tactically exploit national intelligence capacities including space-related technologies, better clandestine tagging, tracking and locating, cyber, and social media capabilities.” Additionally, the intelligence community is needed to “increase advanced technology and tools and substantially increase intelligence support, executing mass and precision influence missions in all environments” (*ARSOF 2022*, p. 27, paragraph 6g).
- 123 Additionally, ARSOF require cyberspace domain-enabled military source operations/counterintelligence activities, and cryptologic exploitation of cyberspace domain communication architectures. These cyberspace domain-enabled intelligence capabilities must adapt to rapidly emerging technological advancements to keep pace with commercial cyber domain advancements and adequately manage attribution.
- 124 ARSOF will need to stay abreast of the capabilities involved in performing, mitigating, and defeating biometric identification. Techniques, technical means, and biomedical augmentation capabilities need to evolve to render ARSOF operators and their equipment invisible to adversary tracking. “Biometric identification and tracking through advanced data processing and communications technologies have rendered past techniques ineffective, leaving SOF operators vulnerable worldwide” (*Special Operations Forces 2020*, p. 13, paragraph 5.4).
- 125 An important characteristic of the future operating environment is the explosion of information and communication technologies (ICT) (cell phone) cameras—often including video as well as still pictures—available and in use in every urban location.
- 126 Clandestine capabilities support all of the core ARSOF missions to a varying degree. DOD defines clandestine operations or activities as those “sponsored or conducted in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment of that operation or activity” (JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 8 November 2010, p. 56). Clandestine differs from covert in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation or activity rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor (JP 3.05.1, *Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*, and USSOCOM Directive 525.16, *Preparation of the Environment*).
- 127 ARSOF must continue to build on its ability to train and employ the most highly trained medical personnel within the DOD to mitigate risk for its forces during training and operational missions. Additionally, it is important to continue the momentum gained in field-level triage and treating battlefield trauma. This includes the imperatives to “increase organic medical capability including the establishment of deployable, scalable surgical teams modeled after the Joint Medical Augmentation Unit” and to “leverage existing technology such as freeze-dried plasma.”
- 128 “Man and resource the MEG [MISOC Effects Group] and UWSTA [Unconventional Warfare Social Theory Academy] appropriately as stand-alone organizations under the MISOC [Military Information Support Operations Command]. Enable the MEG... UWSTA continues research, theory development and testing, and policy formulation for the use of the Internet, social media, and emergent means of singular and mass communication technologies and capabilities” (*ARSOF 2022*, p. 21, paragraph 3).
- 129 Leverage partner capabilities for campaign continuity and consistency. Generating and applying SOF combat power must be approached from a campaign perspective. There is a premium placed on maintaining a consistent presence forward, but USASOC is not currently organized to fight that way. USASOC must leverage existing capabilities from its partners (that is, U.S. government agencies, academia, surrogates, and indigenous organizations) to break stovepipes and build out its network of resources (SQ 13-1 Final Report, pp. 21–22).
- 130 The USSOCOM GSN model needs to consider the required level of forces array in support of ellipse management to enable the force generation to be able to sustain steady-state, long-term engagements, as well as have capacity available to respond to contingency operations. (SQ 13-2 Final Report, p. D-1, paragraph 5.a.3).
- 131 ADP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. 9.

- 132 FM 3-05, *Army Special Operations*, 9 January 2014, p. 2-1. SOF core activities are Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, Security Force Assistance, Counterinsurgency, Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Counterterrorism, Preparation of the Environment, Military Information Support Operations, Civil Affairs Operations, Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief. AD RP 3-05 *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. 2-1, defines core activities as Security Force Assistance, Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Military Information Support Operations, Civil Affairs Operations, Preparation of the Environment, Hostage Rescue and Recovery, Interdiction and Offensive Weapons of Mass Destruction Operations, and Special Operations Forces Sustainment and core operations (tailored combinations of special warfare and surgical strike capabilities) as Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, Counterinsurgency, Counterterrorism, Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction, Stability Operations, and Support to Major Combat Operations and Campaigns.
- 133 FM 3-05, *Army Special Operations*, 9 January 2014, p. 1-10.
- 134 JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 18 April 2011, p. II-9. UW is "activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area."
- 135 JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, 12 July 2010, p. ix. Foreign internal defense supports the geographical combatant commander (GCC) or joint force commander through "participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security."
- 136 JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 22 November 13, p. GL-5. COIN is "comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes."
- 137 JP 3-07, *Stability Operations*, 29 September 2011, p. vii. Stability operations can be defined as the "various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief."
- 138 JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, p. GL-13. Special reconnaissance is "reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces."
- 139 JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*, p. GL-11. Security force assistance is "the Department of Defense activities that contribute to unified action by the U.S. Government to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions."
- 140 ADP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 31 August 2012, p. 9.
- 141 JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, 27 November 2012. p. GL-5. Referred to as a "Joint Forcible Entry" operation.
- 142 Description of the future operating environment is in Chapter 2.
- 143 Petit, Brian S., *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2013), p. x.
- 144 JP 3-40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 10 June 2009, p. xi.
- 145 Advanced weaponry would especially include high accuracy at extreme range.
- 146 TRADOC Pamphlet 525-8-5, *U.S. Army Functional Concept for Engagement*, Version 0.89 Draft, January 2014, p. 13. The concept further states that "integration and interoperability are subsets of interdependence." *The United States Army Operating Concept*, Version 0.7 Draft, 16 November 2013, p. 18, describes interdependence requiring "coordination and synchronization of planning, enhanced by the experiences of both forces and elimination of barriers between headquarters. Conventional and special operations interdependence is achieved at all echelons to increase strategic, operational, and tactical effectiveness."
- 147 The surgical strike killing Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, provides an example within the CT mission set of a SOF-specific mission.
- 148 The Special Forces Operation WHITE STAR in Laos from April 1961 to October 1962 provides an example of SOF-specific special warfare operations. The Special Forces mobile training teams conducted small-scale FID operations with the Royal Laotian army and UW operations with Meo and Kha tribes to combat the Pathet Lao communist insurgency. Finlayson, Ken, "Operation White Star: Prelude to Vietnam," *Special Warfare* 15, no. 2 (June 2002), p. 48.

Another example of a SOF-specific special warfare campaign is the El Salvador mission during the 1980s. SF advisors were capped at 55 soldiers providing technical and tactical assistance to Salvadorian army brigades combating the Marxist Farabundo Marti para Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) insurgency. The SF advisors training and expanding the initial constabulary force of about 12,000 men to a 60,000-man army over a period of 12 years, and the constant human rights training, made a more effective and legitimate El Salvadorian army that turned the tide and led to the FMLN signing a peace treaty with the Salvadorian government in 1990. See Burton, Paul S., and Robert Lee Wilson, "7th SF Group Provides Two Decades of Excellence in Latin America," *Special Warfare* 15, no. 2 (June 2002), p. 42; Pedrozo, Frank, interviewed by

Special Warfare, "Interview: Special Forces in El Salvador," *Special Warfare* 6, no.4 (October 1993), pp. 37–38; and Burton, Paul S., and Robert Lee Wilson, "7th SF Group Provides Two Decades of Excellence in Latin America," *Special Warfare* 15, no. 2 (June 2002), p. 43.

- 149 Operation ENDURING FREEDOM–Philippines provides an example of a SOF-centric special warfare campaign to train, advise, and assist Philippine security forces in counterterrorism operations targeting the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiya (JI) terrorists. The Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) manning was predominately SOF, with CF providing support in camp security, intelligence, logistics, and training in areas where SOF had limited capabilities (for example, 105 mm artillery expertise). In addition, the JSOTF-P trained, equipped and advised the new Philippine Army National Counterterrorism Force coined the Light Reaction Battalion with three Light Reaction Companies to execute CT operations.

Another SOF-centric operation is the special warfare campaign executing counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations in Columbia against the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). SOF's line of operation supporting the execution of Plan Colombia was "strengthening the armed forces and police to uphold the rule of law and restore security throughout the country." The SOF engagements between 1999 and 2001 were limited to the Colombian National Police counternarcotics elements and the Colombian Army Tactical Retaining Center. The U.S. government authorized additional U.S. forces in Columbia, and SOF expanded its role and support in the creation of the Colombian Special Forces Command and a Joint Special Operations Command. SOF's success in Columbia can be highlighted by the Colombian special operations forces executing a hostage rescue operation on 2 July 2008. The operation recovered three American hostages, a Colombian presidential candidate, and eleven police and soldiers from the FARC. See Teicher, Dario E., "The Colombian War and the Narco-Terrorists Threat," in *The Homeland Security Papers: Stemming the Tide of Terror*, ed. Ritz, Michael W., Ralph G. Hensley, Jr., and James C. Whitmire (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2004), p. 31; and Petit, Brian S., *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (Denver: Outskirts Press, 2013), pp. 128–129.

- 150 The Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines executing a special warfare campaign has an estimated 470 personnel, with the majority of personnel assigned SOF, and have conventional enabling forces in a supporting role. Department of the Army, "The Army as of DEC. 26," *Army Times*, 6 January 2014.
- 151 Operation DESERT STORM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM provide two examples of CF-centric operations supported by SOF. During DESERT STORM, CF comprised the main effort to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait, with SOF training Kuwaiti forces, advising coalition forces during the operation, and conducting deep reconnaissance operations in Iraq, contributing to the overall success of the mission. Likewise, in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, CF were the main effort launching from Kuwait moving north to seize Baghdad. SOF was a supporting effort in northern Iraq, partnering with the Kurds to conduct operations against northern Iraqi forces with the purpose of holding those forces from reinforcing Baghdad. After the fall of Baghdad, SOF continued a supporting role to CF in counterinsurgency operations, training Iraqi security forces and conducting a CT mission against high-value targets and terrorist groups.
- 152 Personnel of 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group, "The Liberation of Mazar-e Sharif: 5th SF Group Conducts UW in Afghanistan," *Special Warfare* 15, no. 2 (June 2002), pp. 34–35.

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