

# THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE WASHINGTON, DC 20319-5078



## UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND IN THE 21ST CENTURY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

ELECTIVE COURSE 6056

### SYLLABUS

Academic Year 2020-2021 (Fall)

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

<b>Topic Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>
1	14 Sep 20 1230-1430	<b>Course Introduction &amp; Historical Perspective (Focal Point In-Brief)</b>
2	21 Sep 20 1230-1430	<b>Nunn-Cohen &amp; the Future of United States Special Operations Command</b>
3	28 Sep 20 1230-1430	<b>U.S. Special Operations Forces Core Activities</b>
4	5 Oct 20 1230-1430	<b>Special Activities – Classified Session</b>
5	19 Oct 20 1230-1430	<b>Special Operations Authorities &amp; Resourcing</b>
6	26 Oct 20 1230-1430	<b>Interagency Collaboration, Cooperation, &amp; Coordination</b>
7	2 Nov 20 1230-1430	<b>SOF, Law Enforcement and Networked Threats</b>
8	9 Nov 20 1230-1430	<b>Special Operations &amp; Great Power Competition I</b>
9	16 Nov 20 1230-1430	<b>Special Operations &amp; Great Power Competition II</b>
10	30 Nov 20 1230-1430	<b>Special Operations Case Study</b>
11	7 Dec 20 1230-1430	<b>Future SOF Issues</b>
12	11 Dec 20 1230-1430	<b>Student Presentations</b>

## Course Overview

### **Introduction:**

The United States Special Operations Command in the 21st Century Security Environment elective is designed to provide the national security strategist a baseline understanding of Special Operations Forces (SOF) capabilities, limitations and structure along with a perspective on key issues shaping the force for the future. Additionally, the course will look at United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) as both a global combatant command and a service-like organization as well as the sometimes misunderstood resources and authorities that go along with its uniqueness in the Department of Defense. This knowledge will provide the national security strategist options to consider when searching for opportunities to achieve objectives across the range of conflicts. SOF – with their ability to operate unilaterally, by, with and through international partners, in conjunction with interagency partners, or as part of operations involving larger general purpose forces – are likely to remain frequently relied upon given the dynamic nature of the 21st century security environment.

Entering the third decade of the 21st century, USSOCOM has its largest force structure and its largest budget since its inception in 1987. After almost twenty years of an almost myopic focus on counter-terrorism, what is the role of SOF as the Department of Defense shifts its focus toward great power competition? What is the strategic utility of special operations? What ways and means do special operations bring to a practitioner of national security strategy? These are among the questions that will be explored in this elective course.

We begin this course by developing a perspective on the history of American SOF by examining the culture, structure and relationship of SOF with general purpose forces and other agencies. This will involve examining historical legislation and the current/future legislative dynamics that impact the ability of SOF to contribute to national security.

With this essential foundation, we will examine in more detail SOF core activities and the authorities and resourcing involved in organizing, training, equipping and employing SOF in support of national security objectives.

Next, we will examine and discuss the role(s) of special operations in addressing great power competition. We will then discuss a contemporary case study in special operations and close out the course sessions with a discussion on future special operations issues and student presentations.

### **Approach:**

The course consists of twelve sessions that will analyze issues covered in the readings (and occasional videos) through group discussion. Student presentations, guest lectures, and visual graphics/handouts and video clips as appropriate will augment the discussion on occasion and as specifically scheduled in the syllabus; the goal is an unconstrained environment that will foster insightful analysis from all perspectives.

**The main texts are:**

1. Christopher J. Lamb and David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
2. William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995).
3. Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, Fourth Edition (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, June 2015).
4. Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Interagency Reference Guide*, Fourth Edition (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, April 2020).
5. Christopher Marsh, James D. Kiras, & Patricia J. Blocksome, eds., *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020). Available through NDU eBook.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

The course has 3 principal learning objectives:

1. Analyze the legislative, structural and cultural dynamics that impact SOF's ability to contribute to national security.
  - a. Examine the evolution of U.S. SOF from its roots prior to the American Revolution.
  - b. Comprehend the activities that SOF are able to bring to bear to support national strategies, global campaign plans, and theater plans.
  - c. Assess the legislative underpinnings of SOF in light of current and future roles.
2. Evaluate the strategic utility of special operations in historical cases and assess why special operations force did/did not successfully "contribute to the course and outcome of a conflict."
3. Assess how SOF capabilities can be brought to bear to support national interests and achieve national security objectives across the spectrum of competition, conflict, and war.

**Assessment**

Students must meet all stated course objectives to pass this course. In determining the student's final grade, the faculty seminar leaders will evaluate seminar performance, as evidenced by preparation, and active weekly participation in discussions (30%).

In addition to active participation, students will write a 6-8 page course paper addressing at least one of the course objectives. Course paper topics are due to the Faculty Seminar Leader no later than November 2, 2020 and the final paper is due on December 7, 2020 (40%).

Additionally, each student will conduct an in-class presentation of his or her course paper. Each presentation will be strictly limited to 10 minutes with additional time allotted for questions. Each student will prepare a one-page executive summary of his or her paper for distribution to

the seminar one week prior to the presentation. Both the presentation and executive summary are part of the assessment. Presentations will be conducted on the last two scheduled elective days. (30%).

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Paper Topic – 2 Nov 20	-
Course Paper – 7 Dec 20	40%
Presentation – 11 Dec 20	30%
Class Contribution	30%
Total	100%

The following grading scale will be used:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>
A	Exceptional Quality	4.00
A-	Superior Quality	3.70
B+	High Quality	3.30
B	Expected/Acceptable Quality	3.00
B-	Below Expected Quality	2.70
C	Unsatisfactory Quality	2.00
P	Pass	0.00
F	Fail/Unacceptable Quality	0.00
I	Incomplete	0.00

Students must meet all stated course objectives to pass this course.

Students who fail to complete all course requirements in the time allotted will receive an overall grade of Incomplete (I), and students who cannot meet all course objectives will receive an overall grade of Fail (F). In both cases, the student will enter a remediation program in an effort to bring the student's performance up to passing standards.

Any student may appeal any course grade. First, within a week of the release of the grade, request a review by the course director. Should this review not lead to a satisfactory resolution, submit a written petition to the NWC Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs within two weeks of the release of the grade. The Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs will convene a faculty panel to conduct a formal review; the decision of that panel will be final.

## **Absence Policy**

(1). Students must notify their assigned college's leadership and the course professor/instructor of absences in accordance with the College Absence/Leave Policy.

(a). Foreseen absences (e.g. student travel) require prior notification.

(b). Unforeseen absences (e.g. sudden personal injury or illness; sudden injury, illness, or death in the family, etc.) requires notification as soon as possible, but no later than the first day the student returns to class.

(2) It is the student's responsibility to complete any reading and coursework missed during the absence.

(3) It is the student's responsibility to complete additional assignments as required by the professor/instructor.

(4) Students who accumulate 4 or more foreseen or unforeseen absences will be required to participate in a performance review by the course's host college.

## Topic 1:

### Course Introduction & Historical Perspective (Focal Point In-brief)

Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*Special operations require unique modes of employment, tactics, techniques, procedures, and equipment. They are often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically and/or diplomatically sensitive environments, and are characterized by one or more of the following: time-sensitivity, clandestine or covert nature, low visibility, work with or through indigenous forces, greater requirements for regional orientation and cultural expertise, and a higher degree of risk. Special operations provide JFCs [Joint Force Commanders] and chiefs of mission (COMs) with discrete, precise, and scalable options that can be synchronized with activities of other interagency partners to achieve United States Government (USG) objectives. These operations are designed in a culturally attuned manner to create both immediate and enduring effects to help prevent and deter conflict or prevail in war. They assess and shape foreign political and military environments unilaterally, or with host nations (HNs), multinational partners, and indigenous populations. Although special operations can be conducted independently, most are coordinated with conventional forces (CF), interagency partners, and multinational partners, and may include work with indigenous, insurgent, or irregular forces. Special operations may differ from conventional operations in degree of strategic, physical, and political and/or diplomatic risk; operational techniques; modes of employment; and dependence on intelligence and indigenous assets.*

~ Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*, 16 July 2014

#### Overview

Special operations forces (SOF) have received significant publicity over the course of the past two decades and are entering what could be considered an inter-war period with unprecedented respect. The force is relatively well manned, equipped, resourced and, in contrast to previous post-conflict drawdowns, is faring well in comparison to its parent Services. The capabilities that SOF can bring to bear, as well as its flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness, make it a critical tool that can be utilized across a broad range of security issues. However, despite (and to some extent because of) these positive circumstances there is great risk in SOF being misunderstood and poorly employed, putting people, resources and most important, national objectives, at risk.

The purpose of this course is to provide the national security practitioner an understanding of SOF's utility, as well as perspective on the issues shaping the future of SOF. It will seek to address, through the course objectives, questions to include "what are special operations?" "what makes special operations forces 'special'?" and, crucially "how can SOF best be utilized to achieve national objectives."

The purpose of this introductory topic is to review course requirements and objectives and also to develop perspective on the history of American SOF. This historic foundation is essential to understanding SOF culture, structure, and their sometimes tense relationship with general purpose forces and other agencies.

### **Objectives**

1. Review course objectives and requirements.
2. Examine the evolution of U.S. SOF from its roots prior to the American Revolution and assess the impact that this history has on the special operations community's focus and culture.
3. Receive CJCS FOCAL POINT in-brief.

### **Key Questions**

1. What are the major themes that describe the history of SOF in the United States, and what is the impact of these themes from a national security perspective?
2. How has the history of U.S. SOF shaped the 5 "SOF Truths" identified in the SOF Reference Manual?
3. How does Lamb differentiate between 'special' and 'elite?' Do you agree with his parsing of terms?
4. How have the missions that special operations forces conduct evolved over the years? Are these missions "special," using Lamb's paradigm?
5. Do you perceive irregular threats as being the most crucial to contemporary national security? Why or why not, and what are the implications of your perspective on how to posture special operations forces?
6. Dr. Lamb notes that "in its effort to recover from Vietnam, the military came to blame the vogue of counterinsurgency for many of its problems there." Is a similar dynamic emerging in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan? How might this affect SOF posture?

### **Required Readings (65 pages)**

1. Syllabus pp. i-iv. (4 pages)
2. Christopher J. Lamb and David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 2007). Read pages 69-106 and 145-147. (Student Issue). (41 pages)
3. Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, Fourth Edition (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, June 2015). Read pp. 1-1 to 1-5, 2-1 to 2-3, 2-12 to 2-13, 2-21 to 2-30. (Student Issue). (20 pages)

### **Supplemental Reading (Optional)**

1. Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, Fourth Edition (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, June 2015). Read pp. 2-4 to 2-11, 2-14 to 2-20 (15 pages). (Student Issue).

## **Topic 2:**

### **Nunn-Cohen & the Future of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)**

**Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430**

#### **Overview**

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-433, 1 Oct 1986) was a watershed moment for the Department of Defense, strengthening the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, clarifying the responsibilities of Combatant Commanders, and improving management of joint officers. Before the President's signature was dry on Goldwater-Nichols, however, a second piece of legislation was signed into law; the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act of 1987. This legislation further amended Title 10 of the United States Code, adding Section 167 and calling into being the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Subsequent legislation was required to adequately resource the Command and establish the position of Assistant Secretary for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD-SO/LIC) (Section 1211 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 1988 and 1989) but Section 167, as amended over the years, remains the cornerstone legislation for USSOCOM.

The history leading up to Nunn-Cohen is well established: the decline in SOF capability through the 1970's capped by strategic failure during Operation RICE BOWL and the less strategic, but still telling, failures during Operation URGENT FURY. Yet, while the creation of USSOCOM, its unique funding authority (Major Force Program 11: MFP-11), and a political appointee within OSD redressed many of the faults contributing to the problems highlighted during RICE BOWL and URGENT FURY, it stopped short of creating a separate Service, as some hard-liners had desired. To date, USSOCOM relies on the Services for a significant portion of its funding and resources, and despite having Service-like 'organize, train and equip' responsibilities it has minimal control over management of special operations personnel.

With respect to national security, our nation is at an inflection point. Major combat operations which have occupied it for almost twenty years are winding down; the nation is dealing with the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; significant budget restrictions are anticipated across the board and the Department of Defense is attempting to grapple with these while at the same time structuring a force to meet national security needs in a rapidly shifting world. Amidst these changes, and given the constraints inherent in 10 USC § 167, what are the ramifications for USSOCOM and SOF? Will the Command be able to adequately compete for resourcing and manpower in order to provide an adequately trained and equipped force? Should additional legislation be sought to enhance the authorities of the USSOCOM Commander, and what would the ramifications of such legislation be?

#### **Objectives**

1. Analyze the legislative, structural and cultural dynamics that impact the ability of SOF to contribute to national security.
2. Assess the legislative underpinnings of SOF in light of current and future roles.

3. Understand the role of HQ USSOCOM and assess its strengths and limitations in meeting those responsibilities.

### **Key Questions**

1. What institutional shortfalls did the Nunn-Cohen Amendment attempt to resolve?
2. What was the impact of Nunn-Cohen on special operations forces?
3. Are the authorities inherent in 10 USC § 167 sufficient to allow the USSOCOM Commander to meet the responsibilities identified in that legislation? Why or why not?
4. What was the intent of the formation of ASD SO/LIC? Is this position still necessary? Is it sufficient?
5. What are the respective roles of USSOCOM and ASD SO/LIC?
6. What are some unique characteristics of SOF at the political level?
7. In his Small Wars Journal article, Yasotay argues that "...perhaps USSOCOM has outlived its usefulness." Do his arguments have merit, or would they, in implementation, drive a less capable special operations force??

### **Required Readings (71 pages)**

1. USSOCOM History and Research Office, United States Special Operations Command History, 6th Edition, 2008. Read pp. 5-22. (18 pages)
2. Title 10, Subtitle A, Part I, Chap 6 § 167: Unified Combatant Command for Special Operations Forces (As amended). (8 pages).
3. "Implementation of Special Operations Forces Reorganization," National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989, Title XII, Part B, Section 1211. (3 pages).
4. 10 USC § 138 - Assistant Secretaries of Defense. (2 pages).
5. James Roberts, "Need Authorities for the Gray Zone?" *Prism*. 2016, Vol 6 Issue 3, pp. 21-32. (12 pages)
6. Andrew Feickert, "U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress," CRS Report for Congress, (11 March 2020). (11 pages)
7. John Friberg, "ASD/SO/LIC – Reform Needed Within DoD?" SOF News (17 March 2020), <https://sof.news/defense/solic/>. (2 pages)
8. Mark Mitchell, Zachary Griffiths and Cole Livieratos, "America's Special Operators Will Be Adrift Without Better Civilian Oversight," *War On The Rocks* (18 February 2020), <https://warontherocks.com/2020/02/americas-special-operators-will-be-adrift-without-better-civilian-oversight/>. (6 pages)

9. Yasotay, "Does the United States Still Need a U.S. Special Operations Command?" Small Wars Journal, 2009. Read pp. 1-6. (6 pages)

10. Steve Balestrieri, "Operation Eagle Claw, Disaster at Desert One Brings Changes to Special Operations," SOFREP Media Group (24 April 2017), <https://sofrep.com/specialoperations/operation-eagle-claw-disaster-desert-one-brings-changes-special-operations/> (3 pages)

### Topic 3:

#### U.S. Special Operations Forces Core Activities

Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*USSOCOM organizes, trains, and equips SOF for special operations core activities, and other such activities as may be specified by the President and/or SecDef. Special operations missions may include more than one core activity.*

~ Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*, 16 July 2014

#### Overview

A basic question that all practitioners of national security strategy should ask is “what are the ways and means I have available to achieve strategic objectives?” One answer, with respect to special operations, is to look at core SOF activities. Some of these activities are identified in Title 10 Section 167, and others have been promulgated based on the determination that specialized skills, equipment and training are necessary to conduct them effectively. These activities reflect the capabilities of all SOF (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines), not of any single component, and multiple activities may need to be integrated to achieve a desired effect. As an example of this latter point, counterinsurgency will likely require a mix of many special operations activities, to include Direct Action, Foreign Internal Defense, Military Information Support Operations, etc. From a USSOCOM perspective, core activities focus investment and prioritization of resources: by law (Title 10, Section 167), and the USSOCOM Commander is responsible for ensuring that U.S. SOF are capable of accomplishing these activities. From a strategist’s perspective, they provide some understanding of the means available to achieve national security objectives. As a cautionary note, it is worth asking if it is wise to constrain the utility of SOF to a discrete number of core activities, or if there is something deeper in the nature of SOF that makes it capable of a significantly greater variety of tasks.

One way of looking at special operations activities is through the lens of direct and indirect activities. In essence, direct activities can be considered as those whose purpose is directly attacking an adversary or his capabilities, whereas indirect activities are those which achieve effects by influencing indigenous forces, populations, and the environment.

Those activities that are considered to be more ‘direct’ in nature include:

- Direct Action
- Special Reconnaissance
- Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Counterterrorism
- Hostage Rescue and Recovery

These ‘direct’ activities constitute only a small fraction of what special operations forces can do (though they perhaps get much more press and attention than indirect activities). On any given day, special operators can be found in 80 plus countries around the world, largely conducting activities that are more ‘indirect’ in nature, to include:

- Unconventional Warfare
- Foreign Internal Defense
- Security Force Assistance
- Counterinsurgency
- Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
- Military Information Support Operations
- Civil Affairs Operations

The distinction between direct and indirect activities, however, is not without its critics. As Chris Lamb notes, “This general categorization of SOF missions as direct or indirect is not perfect; it is merely useful.” Linda Robinson has greater concerns, calling the terms “vague” and noting inconsistency in how these terms are used. In attempting to provide greater coherence, the US Army Special Operations Command has placed these core activities on a continuum, ranging from Special Warfare to Surgical Strike, a paradigm which includes the concept of “operating in the Human Domain.” The key for today’s topic is to grasp the range of activities conducted by the special operations community, assess why it is difficult to categorize those activities, and begin to evaluate the utility of SOF in serving the nation’s strategic interests.

### **Objectives**

1. Assess how SO core activities can be brought to bear in support of U.S. national security interests.
2. Consider aspects of special operations that contribute to a unique culture among special operations forces.

### **Key Questions**

1. How can the SO ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ activities addressed in this topic be utilized to serve a current national security interest?
2. Is SOF culture shaped by the core activities it is legislatively required to be able to conduct? How?
3. Are SO, by nature, inherently strategic?
4. Are SO best employed as stand-alone operations, or to support conventional operations?
5. Are these activities unique to SOF? How would they shape SOF selection, training, and culture (specifically consider unconventional warfare)?
6. Identify historical examples of ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ activities. Did the examples you can think of have strategic impact (i.e., shift the course and/or outcome of a conflict)?
7. Which paradigm for special operations do you find more compelling: direct vs. indirect activities, or the special warfare/surgical strike continuum? Why?

### **Required Readings (78 pages)**

1. U. S. Department of Defense. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Pub 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, 16 July 2014. All read pages II-1 – II-18. (18 pages)
2. Christopher J. Lamb and David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 2007). Read pages 8-17, 28-36, and 153-174. (Student Issue). (40 pages)
3. Linda Robinson, “The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces” Council on Foreign Relations Report No. 66 (April 2013) Pp. 10-15 & Endnotes. (6 pages)
4. Homer W. Harkins, “The Resurgence of Special Warfare,” in *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows*, eds. Christopher Marsh, et.al. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020), Pages 53-60. PERMALINK: (8 pages)
5. Army Doctrine Publication 3-05, Army Special Operations, July 2019. Read pages 1-3 “Core Competencies.” (3 pages)

### **Supplemental Reading (Optional)**

1. Christopher J. Lamb and David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 2007). Read pages 2-8, 17-28, 36-38. (Student Issue).
2. Franklin A. Lindsay, “Unconventional Warfare,” (January 1962).
3. ATP 3-05.1, “Unconventional Warfare,” September 2013. Pp. 1-1 – 1-5 (Overview through U.S. Military Small Scale Involvement Scenarios), 2-8 – 2-15 (The Seven Phases of Unconventional Warfare).
4. Octavian Manea, “The Need to Understand and Conduct UW,” *Small Wars Journal* (25 May 2015). (5 pages)

## Topic 4

### Special Activities – Classified Briefing

Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*Special Mission Unit. A generic term to represent an organization composed of operations and support personnel that is task-organized to perform highly classified activities. Also called SMU.*

~ Joint Publication 1-02, 8 November 2010

#### Overview

Post 9-11 operations against terrorists, as well as operations conducted in both Afghanistan and Iraq, led to cooperation and coordination between various government departments and agencies in a manner not seen in decades. The melding of the unique capabilities and authorities inherent in U.S. special operations forces with those of other governmental entities has led to enhanced capability and capacity, but has also pushed the boundaries of U.S. policy and oversight of operations. This topic seeks to provide greater depth of understanding regarding those capabilities, their use and limitations, as well as to highlight some of the policy and oversight issues that remain contentious.

#### Objectives

1. Understand how U.S. SOF is postured to achieve national security objectives.
2. Comprehend the breadth of capabilities that SOF is able to bring to bear to support national strategies, global campaign plans, and theater plans.

#### Key Questions

1. What capability do special mission units provide the United States in addressing national security objectives? What are the limitations?
2. How have operations over the past two decades shaped policy with respect to special activities, and what are key points of contention?

#### Required Readings: (75 pages)

1. Andru E. Wall, “Demystifying the Title 10 – Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action.” *Harvard National Security Journal*. 2011, Vol. 3 Issue 1, pp. 85-142. (58 pages)
2. Michael E. DeVine, “Covert Action and Clandestine Activities of the Intelligence Community: Selected Definitions in Brief,” Congressional Research Service Report R45174 (14 June 2019). (10 pages)
3. U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District of New York, “Guilty Plea Unsealed in New York Involving Ahmed Warsame, a Senior Terrorist Leader and Liaison Between al Shabaab and al

Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, for Providing Material Support to Both Terrorist Organizations,” (25 March 2013). Pp.1-2. (2 Pages)

4. Douglas A. Livermore, “Passing the Paramilitary Torch from the CIA to Special Operations Command,” Small Wars Journal (2 September 2019), <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/passing-paramilitary-torch-cia-special-operations-command> (5 pages)

### **Supplemental Reading**

1. James Igoe Walsh, “The Effectiveness of Drone Strikes in Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism Campaigns,” United States Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2013. Pp. 5-23, 38-53.

2. John A. Gentry (2017) “Intelligence Services and Special Operations Forces: Why Relationships Differ,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 30:4, 647-686, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2017.1337442>

## Topic 5

### Special Operations Authorities and Resourcing

Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

#### Overview

Authorities and resourcing are essential and complementary elements for employing the military instrument. Having the authority to conduct activities without the appropriated resources is as problematic as having the resources to act without the appropriate authority. So, what are the key authorities and resources that exist with respect to special operations and what are the shortfalls? As USSOCOM moves forward with a vision that includes helping our nation to win, building relationships, providing the GCC's with more robustly resourced Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs), and providing sustained global capacity building, we must ask if the resources and authorities are sufficient (and sufficiently structured). Major Force Program 11 (MFP 11) is, of course, critical to SOF equipping but what are its limitations? Too, MFP-11 is only one of the many sources of resources and authorities that SOF draws upon. Others can be found in different legislative acts that include (but are not limited to):

- 10 USC §127e Support of Special Operations to Combat Terrorism
- 10 USC §284 Support for Counterdrug Activities
- 10 USC §322 SOF: Training with Friendly Foreign Forces
- 10 USC §333 Foreign Security Force; Authority to Build Partner Capacity
- 10 USC §345 Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship
- 10 USC §346 Distribution to certain foreign personnel of education and training materials and information technology to enhance military interoperability with the armed forces
- FY18 NDAA §1202 Support of Special Operations for Irregular Warfare

It is essential for the SOF strategist to understand the resources and associated authorities that are available, and perhaps even more important to understand their respective limitations and the different perspectives that exist regarding authorities to conduct special operations activities.

#### Objectives

1. Understand the concerns of Congress regarding MFP-11 funding
2. Understand the different perspectives on train/equip authorities held by the State Department and the Department of Defense.
3. Identify different resource/authorities available for special operations use.
4. Assess the limitations of these resources in context of SOF activities.

#### Key Questions

1. How are resources and authorities interlinked?
2. What resources exist outside of MFP-11 for SOF use?

3. Building the capacity of partner nations has received significant focus over the past decade, particularly in documents such as the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy. This is a role that special operations forces frequently fill, and one in which there is contention as to who calls the shots. Summarize the key points in the debate between the Departments of State and Defense regarding train and equip authorities. Is there common ground on which to craft a resolution to these debates?
4. Should special operations forces be engaged in countering transnational crime and narcotics? Why or why not?
5. What changes to the discussed authorities would enhance the ability of SOF to achieve national security objectives? What are the arguments against such changes?

**Required Readings: (77 pages)**

1. Bill Heniff Jr., “Overview of the Authorization-Appropriations Process,” CRS Report for Congress (26 November 2012). (2 pages)
2. Brendan W. McGarry and Heidi M. Peters, “Defense Primer: Future Years Defense Program (FYDP),” CRS Report for Congress (28 January 2020). (2 pages)
3. Tom Jasper, LtCol, “SOF Fiscal Authorities,” Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, HQ, USSOCOM (January 2020). (2 pages)
4. HQ USSOCOM/SOFM, “Funding For and Support to Special Operations Forces (SOF) Fact Sheet,” (18 February 2020). (12 pages)
5. Public Law 107-40, September 18, 2001, Joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States. (1 page)
6. Public Law 107-243, October 16, 2002, Joint resolution to authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq. (5 pages)
7. Statement of General Richard D. Clarke, U.S. Army, Commander, United States Special Operations Command before the House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee, April 29, 2019. (10 pages)
8. Liana W. Rosen, “The Defense Department and 10 U.S.C. 284: Legislative Origins and Funding Questions,” CRS Insight IN11052, (20 February 2019). (3 pages)
9. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87–195), Sections 622-623, As Amended (Feb 2019). (1 page)
10. James M. DePolo, “Foreign Internal Defense and Security Force Assistance,” in *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows* by Christopher Marsh et al, eds., (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 2020), 137-164. PERMALINK (28 pages)
11. Jason A. Purdy, “United States Special Operations Command Acquisition Authorities,” CRS Report for Congress R45252, (9 July 2018), pps. 1-11. (11 pages)

### **Supplemental Reading (Optional)**

1. Review: Title 10 U.S. Code § 167. Unified Combatant Command for Special Operations Forces. Sections (e) through (i). (3 pages)
2. Jessica Michek, “What the AUMF Is and Why You Should Care,” Bipartisan Policy Center, (18 April 2018), <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/what-the-aumf-is-and-why-you-should-care-2018/>. (2 pages)
3. Susan B. Epstein and Liana W. Rosen, “U.S. Security Assistance and Security Cooperation Programs: Overview of Funding Trends,” CRS Report for Congress R45091, (1 February 2018). (31 pages)
4. Jason A. Purdy, “United States Special Operations Command Acquisition Authorities,” CRS Report for Congress R45252, (9 July 2018), pps. 12-15. (3 pages)

## Topic 6

### Interagency Collaboration, Cooperation, and Coordination

Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*National security is a team sport.*

~ Dr. Michael Vickers, former USD-I and ASD/SOLIC

#### Overview

Despite the universal recognition that U.S. government departments and agencies must work together, many barriers hinder such collaboration. These include ineffective structural mechanisms to coordinate interagency strategy, planning and execution; inadequate understanding of different agencies' authorities and capabilities; cultural differences between agencies that lead to different perspectives on security issues; fears of encroachment upon cherished agency authorities; and inadequate resources, to name just a few. USSOCOM recognizes that effective prosecution of its core operations requires meshing the authorities and capabilities of special operations forces with those that reside in other agencies.

This topic will explore the interagency process and how USSOCOM gets after the interagency collaboration conundrum. This includes a network of liaisons, support teams, and robust participation in interagency organizations. In particular, we will explore the Interagency Partnership Program (IAPP) and its Special Operations Support Teams (SOST). Authorized by the 2006 Unified Command Plan, SOST personnel "[provide] military representation to U.S. national agencies and international agencies for matters related to global operations against terrorist networks..." While terrorism still remains a key focus for the SOSTs, they quite appropriately find themselves dealing with a broad range of issues, including capacity-building, threat financing, counter-narcotics, development, and stability operations.

#### Objectives

1. Understand the history of the interagency process
2. Comprehend the equities USSOCOM shares with other government agencies, to include those with diplomacy, development, and law enforcement responsibilities.
2. Assess the effectiveness of USSOCOM's efforts to facilitate interagency collaboration.
3. Understand how USSOCOM can support and be supported by other government agencies.

#### Key Questions

1. What are the impediments to interagency collaboration?
2. From your interactions here at the National War College or in previous assignments, do you agree with the assertion that "Personal relationships are often the key to effectiveness" in the interagency?
3. Why is it important to know who runs individual agencies or agency component parts?

4. What is the purpose of the Interagency Partnership Program (IAPP) and how can it be leveraged to enable special operations?
5. How does the IAPP support the Theater Special Operations Commands?
6. What are some examples of SOF serving in a supporting role to other government agencies?
7. How can other government agencies support special operations?
8. What are some of the pitfalls inherent in networking with other agencies?

### **Required Reading (81 pages)**

1. Jon J. Rosenwasser and Michael Warner, "History of the Interagency Process for Foreign Relations in the United States," in *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth*, 2nd ed. by Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishkoff, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017). Pages 13-30 (18 pages)
2. Christopher Lamb, "Global SOF and Interagency Collaboration," *Journal of Strategic Security* 7, no. 2 (2014). Pages 8-20 (13 pages)
3. Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Interagency Reference Guide*, Fourth Edition, April 2020. Pages 1-1 to 1-8, 2-1 to 2-12, and 3-1 to 3-26 (46 pages)
4. Carl J. Schramm, "'The Interagency' Isn't Supposed to Rule," *Wall Street Journal* (5 December 2019). (2 pages)
5. Interagency Partnership Program Fact Sheet (2 pages)

### **Supplemental Reading**

1. Joint Guide for Interagency Doctrine, Supplement to Joint Publication 3-08 Interorganizational Cooperation Appendices (4 November 2019).
2. Joint Staff J7, Deployable Training Division, "Interorganizational Cooperation: Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper," Fifth Edition (April 2018).
3. Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Interagency Reference Guide*, Fourth Edition, April 2020.
4. Christopher Lamb, "Redesigning the White House and Interagency Structures," in *Civilian surge: Key to Complex Operations*, edited by H. Binnendijk and P.M. Cronin, (Washington, DC: Published for the Center for Technology and National Security Policy by National Defense University Press (2009)). Pp. 33-60.

## Topic 7

### SOF, Law Enforcement and Networked Threats

Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*Network: an interconnected or interrelated chain, group or system*

*Threat: an indication of something impending*

-Merriam-Webster

#### Overview

In a 2016 discussion on maritime security, Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, commander of the US Southern Command, declared that “amorphous, adaptable, and networked threats...are the real threat to our nation’s security...” The nexus of transnational organized crime and violent extremist organizations provide challenges previously unseen in the national security arena which require a re-examination of the use of the means and ways available to achieve our national security objectives. This topic seeks to address the unique capabilities that SOF can bring to bear against networked threats and how SOF can integrate with other government agencies to address them. We will also explore the legal questions raised by employing SOF against extra-national threats that overlap domestic law enforcement.

#### Objectives

1. Understand how the unique capabilities possessed by special operations forces can be utilized against networked threats.
2. Assess the utility of special operations forces in addressing networked threats.
3. Understand the domestic legal implications of employing SOF against networked threats.

#### Key Questions

1. What role, if any, should special operations forces play with respect to law enforcement and networked threats?
2. How can SOF best serve national interests as we look toward the future?

#### Required Reading: (78 pages)

1. William F. Weschler and Gary Barnabo, “The Department of Defense’s Role in Combating Transnational Organized Crime,” in *Convergence: Illicit Networks and National Security in the Age of Globalization*, edited by Michael Miklaucic and Jacqueline Brewer (Washington D.C: Center for Complex Operations, 2013). Pp. 233-242. [AVAILABLE AS E-BOOK FROM NDU LIBRARY] (10 pages)

2. Russell D. Howard and Collen Traugher, “The Nexus of Extremism and Trafficking: Scourge of the World or So Much Hype?” (MacDill Air Force Base: The JSOU Press, 2013). Pp. 1-9; 11-13 (Human Trafficking); 15-17 (Weapons Trafficking); 20-22 (Drug Trafficking); 29-31 (Contraband Trafficking); 39-59. (42 pages)

3. Paul Rexton Kan, “Forces of Habit: Global SOF’s Role in Countering Illicit Drug Trafficking,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 7.2 (Summer 2014). Pp. 21-28. (8 pages)
4. Steven R. Johnson, “Combating Transnational Organized Crime,” in *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows* by Christopher Marsh, et al, eds. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020), pages 165-179. (15 pages)
5. Miles Hidalgo, “Beyond the Conflict Zone: U.S. HIS Cooperation with Europol,” *CTC Sentinel*, Vol 11, Issue 2 (Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, February 2018), pp. 25-27. (3 pages)

### **Supplemental Reading**

1. U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District of New York, “Guilty Plea Unsealed in New York Involving Ahmed Warsame, a Senior Terrorist Leader and Liaison Between al Shabaab and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, for Providing Material Support to Both Terrorist Organizations,” (25 March 2013). Pp.1-3.
2. Special Agent Christopher Tafe, “International Smuggling & Trafficking of Firearms,” Homeland Security Investigations, National Security Division, Washington, D.C., Slideshow, [https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/Firearms%20Smuggling\\_HSI%20Presentation.pdf](https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/Firearms%20Smuggling_HSI%20Presentation.pdf).

## Topic 8

### Special Operations & Great Power Competition I

Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*The world, to quote George Shultz, is awash in change, defined by increasing global volatility and uncertainty with Great Power competition between nations becoming a reality once again. Though we will continue to prosecute the campaign against terrorists that we are engaged in today, but Great Power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of U.S. national security.*

~ Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis

#### Overview

“The current National Security, Defense, and Military Strategies identify great power rivalries from Russia and China as two of the main challenges facing the United States for the foreseeable future.” This shift in focus from non-state threats to potential existential state threats from rising, revisionist rivals poses fundamental questions as to how to organize, train, equip and resource the Department of Defense, other interagency organizations, and United States Special Operations Command. This topic and the next will address the concept of great power competition in general, Russia and China as “competitors” more specifically, and then question and explore what the role of special operations may or may not be in confronting future challenges in an era of great power competition.

#### Objectives

1. Understand and assess the concept of Great Power Competition.
2. Understand the challenges posed by great power rivals, particularly China and Russia.
3. Assess the utility of special operations forces in addressing challenges in an era of Great Power Competition.

#### Key Questions

1. What is great power competition? Is there agreement on the concept?
2. What are the United States national interests at stake?
3. What are the intentions of great power rivals, particularly China and Russia?
4. What role will, should, or can partners and allies play in the challenges posed by competition from great rivals?
5. What role will, should, or can SOF play in an era that will be increasingly overshadowed by great power competition?
6. How should the Department of Defense, interagency partners and USSOCOM posture to fulfill expected roles in an era of great power competition?

7. As the United States shifts its focus to great power competition, how will the nation address the issue of violent extremist organizations? What role will, should or can special operations play?

### **Required Readings (67 pages)**

1. Michael J. Mazarr, et al., “Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives,” RAND Corporation RR2726 (2018), [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2700/RR2726/RAND\\_RR2726.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2700/RR2726/RAND_RR2726.pdf). Pp. 6-11, 15-16 (8 pages)
2. Elbridge A. Colby and A. Wess Mitchell, “The Age of Great-Power Competition: How the Trump Administration Refashioned American Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2020), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-12-10/age-great-power-competition>. (6 pages)
3. Michael Mazarr and Hal Brands, “Navigating Great Power Rivalry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *War on the Rocks* (15 April 2017), <https://warontherocks.com/2017/04/navigating-great-power-rivalry-in-the-21st-century/>. (4 pages)
4. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “The Evolution of China’s Great Power Competition,” *The National Interest* (13 December 2019), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/evolution-chinas-great-power-competition-105092>. (1 page)
5. Marrian Zhou, “US defense chief prepares for ‘great power competition’ with China,” *Nikkei Asian Review* (14 December 2019), <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Aerospace-Defense/US-defense-chief-prepares-for-great-power-competition-with-China>. (1 page)
6. Hal Brands, “Six Propositions about Great-Power Competition and Revisionism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *The Future of the Global World Order Colloquium* (Perry World House, University of Pennsylvania, Fall 2017), <https://global.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/go-six-propositions-brands.original.pdf>. (4 pages)
7. Liu Xiaobo, “Great Power Competition and China-U.S. Military Relations,” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, (18 March 2020), <https://amti.csis.org/great-power-competition-and-china-u-s-military-relations/>. (2 pages)
8. Kai He and Mingjiang Li, “Understanding the dynamics of the Indo-Pacific: US-China strategic competition, regional actors, and beyond,” *International Affairs* Vol. 96, Issue 1 (January 2020), <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/96/1/1/5697498>. (7 pages)
9. Julia Gurganus and Eugene Rumer, “Russia’s Global Ambitions in Perspective,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (20 February 2020), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/02/20/russia-s-global-ambitions-in-perspective-pub-78067> (8 pages)
10. Charles K. Bartles, “Russia’s Response to the New Western Way of War,” in *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows* by Christopher Marsh et al, eds., (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2020), pp. 113-123. PERMALINK (11 pages)

11. Christopher Marsh, et al, “Special Operations Forces in an Era of Great Power Competition,” in *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2020), pp. 183-197. PERMALINK (15 pages)

**Supplemental Reading (Optional)**

1. Michael J. Mazarr, et al., “Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives,” RAND Corporation RR2726 (2018), [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2700/RR2726/RAND\\_RR2726.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2700/RR2726/RAND_RR2726.pdf). Pp. 1-5, 12-14, 17-34.

## Topic 9

### Special Operations & Great Power Competition II

Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

#### Overview

This topic and the previous address the concept of great power competition in general, Russia and China as “competitors” more specifically, and then question and explore what the role of special operations may or may not be in confronting future challenges in an era of great power competition.

#### Objectives

1. Understand and assess the concept of Great Power Competition.
2. Understand the challenges posed by great power rivals, particularly China and Russia.
3. Assess the utility of special operations for addressing challenges in an era of Great Power Competition.

#### Key Questions

1. What is great power competition? Is there agreement on the concept?
2. What are the United States national interests at stake in an era of great power competition?
3. What are the intentions of great power rivals, particularly China and Russia?
4. What role will, should, or can partners and allies play in the challenges posed by competition from great rivals?
5. What role will, should, or can SOF play in an era that will be increasingly overshadowed by great power competition?
6. How should the Department of Defense, interagency partners and USSOCOM posture to fulfill expected roles in an era of great power competition?
7. As the United States shifts its focus to great power competition, how will the nation address the issue of violent extremist organizations? What role will, should or can special operations play?

#### Required Readings (69 pages)

1. David A. Broyles and Brody Blankenship, “The Role of Special Operations Forces in Global Competition,” CNA Analysis & Solutions (April 2017), [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/DCP-2019-U-020033-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DCP-2019-U-020033-Final.pdf). (17 pages)
2. Spencer Meredith, ed., SOF Paradigm in Great Power Competition, Strategic Multilayer Assessment, Future of Global Competition & Conflict Effort, National Defense University

(October 2017), [https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SOF-Paradigm\\_Invited-Perspective\\_FINAL3.pdf](https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SOF-Paradigm_Invited-Perspective_FINAL3.pdf). (42 pages)

3. John Taft, et al., “Special operations forces and great power competition: Talent, technology, and organizational change in the new threat environment,” Deloitte (17 June 2019), <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/future-of-special-operations-forces-great-power-competition.html>. (7 Pages)

4. James Jay Carafano, “Technology and Great Power Competition: 5 Top Challenges for the Next Decade,” The Heritage Foundation (28 January 2020), <https://www.heritage.org/technology/commentary/technology-and-great-power-competition-5-top-challenges-the-next-decade>. (3 pages)

## Topic 10

### Special Operations Case Study: Village Stability Operations & Afghan National Police

Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

*This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity. Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will mean an even larger safe haven from which Al Qaeda would plot to kill more Americans.*

~ U.S. President Barack Obama

#### Overview

U.S. operations in Afghanistan started auspiciously with the effective (but not decisive) unconventional warfare operations that commenced in October 2001. The CIA and U.S. SOF partnered with the Northern Alliance in the north and select Pashtu tribes in the South and rapidly defeated the Taliban. The Bonn Agreement signed that December laid a foundation for Afghan governance and for a limited NATO security force (International Security Assistance Force—ISAF) to help maintain stability, while U.S. counterterror operations continued to pursue remnant Al Qaeda forces and mop up what remained of the Taliban. For a period of several years Afghanistan remained a relatively permissible environment for the NATO forces, and the creation of an Afghan government and Afghan security forces proceeded at a leisurely pace. The assumption that the Taliban were a defeated force proved to be incorrect, however, and by 2005 the security situation had deteriorated significantly. Taliban infiltration and the establishment of shadow governance began to plague many districts and provinces and casualty rates began to climb dramatically among Afghan and ISAF forces. While ISAF was aware of the need to focus on the population, and even was planning for such operations by 2008, resources were not available to support the counterinsurgency plans being considered. The exit plan for the coalition largely remained developing an Afghan Security Force large enough and capable enough to take over the country's security, and the focus of the coalition combat forces continued to be on the enemy, not on the Afghan population. By 2009 the deterioration of security in Afghanistan reached crisis levels in the eyes of the U.S. Administration. General David McKiernan was fired and replaced by General Stanley McChrystal, who warned that "Failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near term (next 12 months) — while Afghan security capacity matures — risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible." At this juncture the Obama Administration decided to pursue a troop surge and focus on population security (vs. simply targeting the Taliban and Al Qaeda—the so-called counterterrorism option).

With a commitment to a COIN strategy, a difficult question remained: how to enhance long-term security at the local level in areas threatened by or under Taliban sway? At various times in the preceding eight years attempts had been made at developing local police and local militias, and all had been disbanded. In 2010 a new initiative once again attempted to harness the ability of villages to provide their own security, though this effort was more robust in scope, requiring not just a focus on building local security forces, but also on enhancing effective governance and development. This initiative in population-centric counterinsurgency, known as the Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police (VSO/ALP) program, was conceived, orchestrated

and largely executed by U.S. Special Operations Forces. As the largest special operations program since the Vietnam War, VSO/ALP was a significant commitment of SO resources.

Today's case study on VSO/ALP seeks to assess the utility of special operations forces in addressing the insurgency in Afghanistan, looking at both the context of the war in Afghanistan and the capabilities that special operations forces can bring to bear.

### **Objectives**

1. Understand how the unique capabilities possessed by special operations forces can be utilized in a counterinsurgency environment.
2. Assess the utility of special operations forces in addressing the insurgency in Afghanistan.

### **Key Questions**

1. What core activities do special operations forces bring to bear in conducting VSO/ALP operations?
2. Given the context in Afghanistan, is VSO/ALP likely to be successful? Why or why not?
3. How would you describe VSO/ALP's role in the context of coalition strategy in Afghanistan? In essence, was it the strategy or was it part of the strategy?
4. How well does VSO/ALP mesh with the intent of General McChrystal's 2009 assessment?
5. What critical assumptions underpin VSO/ALP?
6. What role should general purpose forces play in a counterinsurgency?
7. Is VSO/ALP a 'population centric' program, or is it overly focused on the insurgents, as claimed by Jon Strandquist in his comparison between VSO/ALP and the Village Defense Programs in Vietnam?
8. What lessons should the special operations community take from the VSO/ALP program?
9. What do you take as the key lessons that special operations forces should draw from the VSO/ALP experience?

### **Required Readings: (92 pages)**

1. GEN Stanley A. McChrystal, "COMISAF's Initial Assessment," (20 Aug 2009), pp. 1-1 – 1-4. (4 pages)
2. Mark Moyar, Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police, (Joint Special Operations University Monograph, October 2014), pp. 1-69. (69 pages)
3. Jon Strandquist, "Local Defense Forces and Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan: Learning from the CIA's Village Defense Program in South Vietnam," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 26:1, 90-113 (12 Dec 2014), pp. 90-106. (17 pages)

4. Howard Altman, “Why dissolving the Afghan Local Police program troubles its American architects,” *Military Times* (27 May 2020), <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/05/27/why-dissolving-the-afghan-local-police-program-troubles-its-american-architects/>

### **Supplemental Readings (Optional)**

1. David Phillips, “VSO/Afghan Local Police: A Square Peg in a Round Hole,” 3 July 2015, 2 pages.

2. Sean W. O’Donnell, et al, “Operation Freedom’s Sentinel Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, January 1, 2020 – March 31, 2020.

3. William Knarr and Mark Nutsch, *Village Stability Operations and the Evolution of SOF Command and Control in Afghanistan: Implications for the Future of Irregular Warfare*, (Joint Special Operations University Report 20-2 (2020).

## Topic 11

### Future Issues for SOF

Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430

#### Overview

Special Operations Forces have experienced force structure growth and received significant positive attention based on almost two decades of overall successful operations. Although, recently, there has been increased focus on cultural and ethical issues that threaten the trust placed in these forces. As the force resets, USSOCOM has been aggressively pursuing changes to enhance the effectiveness of SOF as a force with both regional expertise and a global perspective. Much of this change is based on lessons learned over the past decades, and is also predicated on the future security environment and consequent military posture as envisioned in documents such as the 2018 National Defense Strategy. To meet its future roles, USSOCOM has been working to re-posture how it operates and meets its obligations to national security. This topic will address how SOF perceives the future and attempts to structure itself for success during a time of lean DOD budgets.

#### Objectives

1. Understand and assess USSOCOM current, proposed, and future roles in addressing national security threats.
2. Understand and assess cultural and ethical concerns regarding SOF.
3. Analyze the posture of Special Operations Forces to successfully address the future national security requirements envisioned in recent strategic guidance.

#### Key Questions

1. What do you see as the key trends that should shape how U.S. special operations forces are structured, and postured?
2. Given current Executive and DoD-level strategies, where do you assess USSOCOM should focus its efforts in terms of developing and posturing special operations forces?
3. How should special operations evolve or transform to remain special in future operating environments?

#### Required Readings (56 pages)

1. Andrew Feickert, "U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress," CRS Report for Congress (11 March 2020). Review Summary, pp. 1-3, 8-10. (6 pages)
2. James D. Kiras, "Future Tasks: Threats and Missions for SOF," *Special Operations Journal*, No. 5: 6-24. (17 pages)

3. Jim Garamone, "Special Ops Will Remain Integral to Strategy, Socom Commander Says," *Defense News* (13 May 2020). (4 pages)
4. Jon Harper, "Special Ops Command Faces Funding Cuts," *National Defense* (23 April 2020). (2 pages)
5. Meghann Myers, "Special operations has an entitlement problem. Here's how they intend to fix it." *Military Times* (28 January 2020). (4 pages)
6. Nick Turse, "US special operations troops are getting busier, and concerns about their behavior have only gotten worse," *Business Insider* (6 April 2020). (5 pages)
7. Richard Rubright, "The Strategic Paradox and Third Party Proxies," in *Special Operations: Out of the Shadows* by Christopher Marsh, et al, eds., (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publications, 2020): 99-111. (13 pages)
8. David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "How to Fix U.S. Special Operations Forces," *War on the Rocks* (25 February 2020). (5 pages)

**Supplemental Reading (Optional)**

1. Comprehensive Review, United States Special Operations Command (23 January 2020).

## **Topic 12**

### **Student Presentations**

**Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 1230-1430**

#### **Overview**

Each student will conduct an in-class presentation of his course paper. This presentation will account for 30% of the course grade and will be strictly limited to 10 minutes, with additional time allocated for question/answer and general discussion. Each student will prepare a one-page executive summary of their paper for distribution to the seminar due one week prior to this topic.

#### **Objectives**

1. Analyze the legislative, structural and cultural dynamics that impact SOF's ability to contribute to national security.
  - a. Examine the evolution of U.S. SOF from its roots prior to the American Revolution.
  - b. Comprehend the activities that SOF are able to bring to bear to support national strategies, global campaign plans, and theater plans.
  - c. Assess the legislative underpinnings of SOF in light of current and future roles.
2. Evaluate the strategic utility of special operations in historical cases and assess why special operations force did/did not successfully "contribute to the course and outcome of a conflict."
3. Assess how SOF capabilities can be brought to bear to support national interests and achieve national security objectives across the spectrum of competition, conflict, and war.

#### **Key Questions**

None

#### **Required Reading**

1. Student Executive Summaries