

# **Leveraging Operational Preparation of the Environment in the GWOT**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## Abstract

LEVERAGING OPERATIONAL PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE GWOT  
by MAJ Michael T. Kenny, U.S. Army, 65 pages.

USSOCOM's effective execution of operational preparation of the environment (OPE) is a critical component in the strategy for winning the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). OPE is a series of activities that seek to enable future operations by allowing U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) personnel to enhance their situational awareness and understanding within an area of interest and improve operational responsiveness. Joint Publication 3-13 defines OPE as "non-intelligence activities conducted to plan and prepare for potential follow-on military operations" conducted under Title 10 authority.

Through predictive analysis and preemptive action, the United States can identify potential terrorist support areas, enhance situational understanding of these regions, and set the conditions to find, fix, and finish terrorists in these locations as or even before they take root. Conducting OPE in concert with our host and partner nation allies in areas of current or potential future terrorist activity is the means by which we can unobtrusively enhance our situational understanding and expedite the targeting and destruction of terrorist networks.

OPE does fulfill key requirements outlined in the various national strategies to include disrupting and destroying terrorist organizations of global reach, denying safe haven, sustaining our intelligence advantage, and posturing for strategic uncertainty. It is an excellent method of achieving situational awareness and understanding, extending operational reach and responsiveness, and ultimately shorting the time between find to finish.

Maximizing the effectiveness of OPE in support of the GWOT will require the following measures. Although USSOCOM has in fact developed a comprehensive unconventional warfare campaign plan and an OPE planning framework it would benefit from having an OPE specific campaign plan that operationalizes OPE in an effort to both guide its conduct and synchronize its effects. A comprehensive OPE campaign plan would synchronize preparation activities while subsuming regional specific OPE programs into one unified global effort thus ensuring that preparation activities are more than just isolated tactical actions. Using an effects-based campaign planning framework within the context of operational design has several advantages. It focuses on effects leading to the desired end state. These effects may be kinetic (capture or kill) or non-kinetic (shaping or influencing). Also, the system-of-systems analysis is an excellent methodology for understanding and exploiting insurgent networks and their inherent weaknesses. Additionally, the EBO framework might be more easily understood and better received within the interagency arena. A final requirement to fully leverage OPE is *strategic preparation of the environment* to set conditions for operational preparation of the environment. OPE cannot be fully exploited without improvements in two key areas: regional engagement in key areas of concern and enhanced interagency interoperability.

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## CHAPTER 1

USSOCOM'S effective execution of operational preparation of the environment (OPE) is a critical component in the strategy for winning the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). OPE is a series of activities that seek to enable future operations by allowing U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) personnel to become "familiar with the area in which [they] might have to work" thereby enhancing their situational awareness and understanding.<sup>1</sup> Joint Publication 3-13 defines OPE as "non-intelligence activities conducted to plan and prepare for potential follow-on military operations" conducted under Title 10 authority.<sup>2</sup> Described in U.S. News and World Report as "Pentagon-speak for gathering information in trouble spots around the world to prepare for possible missions," it facilitates intelligence collection in potential "hotspots" around the globe that could potentially be used as terrorist support areas.<sup>3</sup>

OPE has three key components: orientation activities (OA) aimed at providing area familiarization and developing plans, information, and operational infrastructure that enable future operations; target development which seeks to acquire real-time target-specific information to facilitate potential target prosecution; and preliminary engagement of the target to find, fix, track, monitor, or influence the objective prior to conduct of operations.<sup>4</sup> In areas of operation where hostilities have commenced OPE paves the way for successful future combat operations. In regions where hostilities are expected to occur in the future, OPE is more valuable. It is in these future areas of concern that OPE has the potential to produce great benefits.

Through predictive analysis and preemptive action, the United States can identify potential terrorist support areas, enhance situational understanding of these regions, and set the

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<sup>1</sup> Linda Robinson, "Plan of Attack, The Pentagon Has a New Strategy For Taking on Terrorists- and Taking Them Down." *U.S. News and World Report*, 01 Aug 05, 3, <http://ebird.afis.mil.ebfiles/e20050725381513.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Publication 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*. Washington D.C: Department of Defense, 1998, V-2.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations*, V-2.

conditions to find, fix, and finish terrorists in these locations as or even before they take root. It is far better to have a capability in place beforehand rather than waiting until a crisis is imminent. Conducting OPE in concert with our host and partner nation allies in areas of current or potential future terrorist activity is the means by which we can unobtrusively enhance our situational understanding and expedite the targeting and destruction of terrorist networks.

## **Background**

In response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the United States began to lead the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) in an effort to disrupt and destroy the terrorist elements that committed this atrocity and prevent further such attacks in the future. As the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks, Usama Bin Laden, along with his Al-Qaeda terrorist network and its affiliates, have been the focal point of this campaign. Realizing their inability to contend with America in the conventional military, economic, or political arenas these Islamic extremists sought to engage the United States indirectly. They capitalized on the inherent weakness of our open society and the anonymity it afforded them. They were able to operate with impunity both in and outside the United States to plan, resource, and execute their operations. The use of our own infrastructure to strike a decisive blow to our economic stability demonstrates the high degree of competence and resourcefulness that has become the hallmark of Al-Qaeda. The suicidal execution of this operation manifests a level of commitment and anti-American fanaticism that is almost unfathomable to the average Westerner. We are facing a highly motivated enemy who is fully capable of discerning and exploiting our weaknesses through the implementation of unconventional modes of warfare.

The asymmetric threat posed by these emerging Islamic terrorist groups presents a significant challenge to DOD. These non-state actors are often not affiliated with traditional nation states nor do they need state sponsorship to prosecute their operations. These elements are decentralized, elusive, and devoid of the vulnerabilities associated with those of a typical peer



competitor. These competitors lack a discernable center of gravity that can be decisively attacked. Conventional military methodologies are severely limited in their ability to deal with these asymmetric threats and this dynamic in general. Standard doctrinal templates do not apply. Due to the unconventional nature of their training and methods, US Special Operations Forces (SOF) are the logical choice for contending with this asymmetric threat. USSOCOM has been given the task to synchronize all DOD elements in pursuit of the GWOT.<sup>5</sup> A key weapon at USSOCOM's disposal is OPE.<sup>6</sup>

### **USSOCOM takes the lead with OPE**

Operational preparation of the environment is the range of activities that facilitate future combat operations.<sup>7</sup> They include activities that enhance or enable intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) such as the conduct of area assessments and area familiarization, leveraging human intelligence (HUMINT) networks, and emplacing collection assets. Additionally, the development of operational infrastructure provides a pre-established architecture from which to prosecute operations in an expeditious and unobtrusive manner if needed. USSOCOM's conduct of operational preparation of the environment (OPE) in potential terrorist support areas is one of the most effective preemptive measures DOD has at its disposal to set the conditions for the detection, disruption, and destruction of terrorist cells and activities. OPE enables SOF to contend with the unconventional nature of the enemy threat. The both the advantages afforded by indigenous local area knowledge as well as sovereignty considerations mandates that OPE is orchestrated through, by, and with host nation forces where applicable.

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<sup>5</sup> Rowan Scarborough, "Special Operations Forces Eye Terrorists, Command Draws Up War Plan", *The Washington Times*, 12 Aug 05, pg 1, <http://ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20050812384965.html>.

<sup>6</sup> USSOCOM OPE Conference (12-15 Sept 05) held at USSOCOM Headquarters, MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida. The purpose of this conference was to provide visibility of OPE initiatives worldwide and outline USSOCOM's basic plan for synchronizing OPE in pursuit of the GWOT. It involved the major participants from the Theater Special Operations Commands and various interagency representatives worldwide.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

These activities are performed to set the conditions to find, fix, and finish the enemy. OPE is best achieved as part of pre-crisis activities (PCA). The intent is to have these mechanisms in place prior to the commencement of hostilities, well in advance of when they might be required. This requirement implies that an OPE program is directed by a comprehensive assessment of various areas of responsibility (AOR) that can ascertain the regions most likely to be used as terrorist support areas. An assessment, based on incident reports and predictive analysis, guides the conduct of OPE activities in focus areas that require further development with the intent of enhancing situational awareness, filling gaps in intelligence, and earmarking locations for the establishment of operational infrastructure. The proactive nature of OPE supports DOD's requirement for taking preemptive measures to root out terrorists before they strike.<sup>8</sup>

This thesis will attempt to answer the following question: Is USSOCOM fully leveraging operational preparation of the environment as an effective operational enabler in pursuit of terrorist target sets in the Global War on Terror (GWOT)? Since this paper will be unclassified, I will not discuss specific methods for conducting OPE. Instead, my intent is to touch upon the basic concept of preparing the environment and how it applies to the guidance outlined in the national strategies. Additionally, I will suggest a basic methodology for "operationalizing" OPE. Finally, I will discuss the existing shortfalls in the military, political, and interagency environment that prevents USSOCOM from fully exploiting the potential benefits of preparing the environment.

The method by which I shall determine USSOCOM's effectiveness in leveraging OPE will be by answering three subordinate questions.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael S. Repass, "Combating Terrorism With Preparation of the Battlespace." Strategy Research Report, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2003. COL Repass' paper is one of the few open source documents available that outlines the unclassified facets of OPE. Both his paper and my own experience are the basis for the description of critical elements of OPE outlined in this paragraph.

Firstly, is OPE a significant strategic enabler for operations in support of the Global War on Terror? In order to answer this first question, we will ask whether OPE is an appropriate tool for combating terrorism on a global scale. The paper determines if OPE meets the requirements outlined in the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism.

Secondly, if OPE is an appropriate technique for the GWOT, has USSOCOM established a standardized OPE operational methodology with which to both guide its conduct and globally synchronize its effectiveness? Answering this research question forces us to discuss how USSOCOM has “operationalized” OPE as a method for fighting global insurgency.

Thirdly, the study examines if the conditions are set to maximize OPE’s effectiveness for use in the GWOT. Reviewing USSOCOM’s global situational awareness/understanding and its operational capability to rapidly develop and exploit actionable intelligence will help answer this third research question. In addition, we will look at U.S. access to potential terrorist support areas or safe havens and the effectiveness of interagency cooperation and synchronization in the conduct of GWOT operations.

The research will assess USSOCOM’s ability to fully leverage OPE in pursuit of the GWOT based upon analysis in each of these areas. It will make suggestions for improvement where applicable. A chapter is devoted to answering each of the above questions.

## CHAPTER 2

OPE is a critical strategic enabler for GWOT operations and fulfills multiple requirements outlined in the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism with regard to combating terrorism. This chapter will look specifically at those requirements that are related to fighting terrorism and global insurgency, and is not intended as a comprehensive analysis of the national strategies.

### **National Security Strategy**

The National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS) is the overarching strategic document from which most others are derived. It is written by the President as his strategy for defending the nation. It outlines America's various political, economic, security, and social goals aimed at achieving "political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity".<sup>9</sup> With regard to combating terrorism the NSS stipulates that,

"Our priority will be first to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. This will have a disabling effect upon the terrorists' ability to plan and operate".<sup>10</sup>

OPE enables DOD's ability to find, fix, and finish the terrorist target sets outlined in the NSS<sup>11</sup> by anticipating future trouble spots and events.<sup>12</sup> The NSS mentions that Afghanistan was a low planning priority prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and that the United States had to establish an operational capability throughout this remote region in pursuit of GWOT

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<sup>9</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, D.C. : The White House, September 2002, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>11</sup> The target sets or critical nodes outlined in the NSS are leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. Targeting of these and other critical nodes using the OPE methodology will be discussed in chapter 3.

<sup>12</sup> COL Kent Bolster, J3X, Unconventional Warfare, USSOCOM OPE Conference 12-15 Sept 05. Keeping our eyes on the "next ridgeline". This is an observation made by COL Bolster at the USSOCOM conference regarding the need to stay a step ahead of our adversaries in order to gain the initiative and be less reactionary.

objectives. The NSS also states that the U.S. must be prepared for similar deployments in the future and outlines various capabilities necessary to ensure success in future operations such as advanced remote sensing, long-range precision strike, and transformed maneuver.<sup>13</sup>

A key stipulation in the NSS is that we need to “develop new methods for collecting information to sustain our intelligence advantage.”<sup>14</sup> OPE fulfills this requirement by leveraging, via the host nation, an indigenous HUMINT capability well-suited for combating terrorism. Likewise, OPE seeks to enhance operational maneuver and precision strike capability by providing situational awareness through area orientation with regard to both the target and the environment and expedites the movement to and from the objective area by enhancing situational understanding, area familiarization, and target development. An example of this is the rescue of U.S. Embassy personnel in Somalia in 1991 in which a Marine contingent almost assaulted the wrong compound were it not for a team member, who had recently surveyed the embassy, informing the group of the changed location.<sup>15</sup>

Cooperating with allies is another means of attaining an operational advantage. By working through, by, and with our host and partner nation allies to prepare the environment in regions of concern we can leverage strengthened alliances, use our forces innovatively to maximize the utility of our operations and manpower, and improve our ability to find and fix the enemy to ultimately enable the destruction of terrorists and their networks.<sup>16</sup> Our allies can augment our capabilities with their invaluable regional expertise.

## **National Defense Strategy**

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) is the Department of Defense document that describes how DOD plans to implement the policies outlined in the NSS. In the foreword to the

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<sup>13</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>15</sup> Robinson, 4.

<sup>16</sup> National Security Strategy, 14.

current NDS, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld accentuates the predictive and preemptive nature of the strategy by emphasizing “the importance of influencing events before challenges become more dangerous and less manageable.”<sup>17</sup> It outlines a “global approach that acknowledges the limits of our intelligence,...anticipates surprises, and positions us to handle strategic uncertainty.”<sup>18</sup> The NDS mentions that uncertainty is a critical factor in the current strategic environment. It specifically states that “while we work to avoid being surprised, we must posture ourselves to handle unanticipated problems- we must plan with surprise in mind.”<sup>19</sup> This can be accomplished through the pre-crisis activities that are an integral part of a comprehensive OPE program. The enhanced situational awareness and understanding facilitated by the presence and activity of U.S. forces conducting OPE in areas of interest provides the necessary means to minimize surprise and manage uncertainty by leveraging host nation HUMINT capability, as well as various other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets.

The intent of the NDS is to provide a range of options and preventative actions that seek to deny the terrorists the strategic initiative, thereby preventing catastrophic attacks on American soil.<sup>20</sup> One critical task, disrupting and attacking terrorist networks, is especially well-served by OPE.<sup>21</sup> The specific subtasks are to identify, target, and engage terrorist networks which correlates exactly to the find, fix, and finish methodology which guides preparation of the environment. The strategy acknowledges that various ungoverned or under-governed areas present ideal conditions for insurgent sanctuaries and specifies the need to “prevent [their] exploitation by terrorist organizations...”.<sup>22</sup> It “points to the need to reorient our military capabilities to contend with such irregular challenges more effectively.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, D.C. : The White House, March, 2005, iii.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 3.

The predictive and preemptive nature of OPE is well suited to meet these challenges and is facilitated by our partners and allies. By gaining access to areas of concern we can be postured to detect, deter, and destroy terrorist elements before they are fully operational, thus mitigating surprise and strategic uncertainty and retaining the strategic initiative. The United States must defeat the most dangerous threats far forward with an active, layered defense before they mature.<sup>24</sup> Preparing the environment in anticipation of future challenges is the means by which to accomplish this task.

A key operational capability outlined in the NDS is “denying enemies sanctuary.”<sup>25</sup> It specifies the need to develop the capability to rapidly move forces from strategic distances to deny the enemy their support areas and specifically mentions the need for “discrete Special Operations Forces (SOF).”<sup>26</sup> Additionally, it stipulates a variety of capabilities required to deny sanctuary such as persistent surveillance, operational maneuver from strategic distances, and joint combat operations in and from austere locations.<sup>27</sup> OPE facilitates persistent surveillance as part of target development activities by exploiting regional and local expertise and leveraging ISR assets to find and fix target sets. It enhances operational maneuver in an area through orientation activities (OA) by providing the commander with the required situational awareness and knowledge of existing infrastructure available to move forces to and from the objective in the most expeditious and unobtrusive manner possible. Preparing the environment in austere locations can be done by establishing caches and conducting area assessments of local infrastructure to determine if and where U.S. forces might obtain supplies and establish local contracts if should a need arise. This is done with an eye toward enhancing U.S. capability to rapidly move strategic distances by shortening the time from find to finish through infrastructure development with the goal of denying the enemy sanctuary.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

## National Military Strategy

The National Military Strategy (NMS) derives its objectives and joint operating concepts from the guidance afforded by the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy. Its focus is on those military activities and capabilities stated by the Joint Chiefs and the Combatant Commanders (COCOMs) as necessary to “protect the United States against external attacks and aggression, prevent conflict and surprise attack, and prevail against adversaries.”<sup>28</sup> Operational preparation of the environment supports objectives, leverages initiatives, and enables capabilities outlined in the NMS in the following manner.

The NMS addresses the desire for our armed forces to function effectively in “a more complex and distributed battlespace” specifically mentioning the “arc of instability” that extends from the Western Hemisphere, through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and terminates in Asia.<sup>29</sup> These areas provide sanctuary to terrorists, allowing them to operate in relative security. To contend with these safe havens and the activities that they support, the United States must adopt an active defense in-depth that allows America to strike at any objective around the world using CONUS (continental United States) based or forward deployed forces.<sup>30</sup> The NMS notes that operations in such a complex environment may not be the high intensity missions for which our armed forces are currently well suited, but may instead be precise engagements that seek to minimize collateral damage and to mitigate 2nd and 3rd-order effects by being able to “precisely locate, track, and destroy discrete targets”.<sup>31</sup> OPE target development, which is a set of activities that acquire and pinpoint a target set, fulfills this requirement excellently by integrating various ISR means to maintain observation of the target and potentially assist terminal guidance to whatever method the United States chooses to engage the target set.

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<sup>28</sup> The National Military Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2004, iv.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



A key stipulation by the NMS with regard to the national military objectives is that we “cannot rely solely on reactive measures” to accomplish our security goals, but instead must adopt a “posture of anticipatory self-defense, which reflects the need for **prepared** [emphasis added] and proportional responses to imminent aggression.”<sup>32</sup> In order to protect the United States, the strategy points to two goals; countering threats close to their source and creating a global anti-terrorist environment.<sup>33</sup> Both of these NMS goals are assisted by the various Theater Security Cooperation Programs (TSCP), working through, by, and with our host nation counterparts. The NMS states that our “theater security activities...provide access to information and intelligence critical to anticipating and understanding new threats,” and that this access “supports the ability of the United States to project power against these threats” as well as help reduce the conditions that foster terrorism.<sup>34</sup>

OPE, in conjunction with theater engagement and security cooperation activities, improves our ability to apply force as an enhanced function and capability required by the NMS. By developing target information and situational understanding through engagement and persistent presence, OPE activities facilitate “strikes against time-sensitive and time critical targets” and “ensure[s] capabilities are positioned and ready to conduct strikes against these targets”.<sup>35</sup>

OPE can leverage the access afforded through the TSCP to work in conjunction with host nations to engage terrorist targets in pursuit of countering threats close to their source thus helping create a global anti-terrorism environment.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 15.

## National Strategy for Combating Terrorism

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) expounds upon the terrorist related aspects of the other national strategies and outlines an offensive plan that seeks to defeat terrorists and their organizations, deny sponsorship and sanctuary to terrorists, diminish the underlying conditions that terrorist seek to exploit, and defend U.S. citizens and interests at home and abroad.<sup>36</sup> By reducing terrorist capability and the scope of their operations, the intent is to relegate them to nothing more than an unorganized, localized, non-sponsored anomalous criminal element.<sup>37</sup>

OPE facilitates particularly well the following two stated goals: defeat terrorists and their organizations, and deny sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists.<sup>38</sup> Specifically, OPE activities support the stated objectives which are to identify (find), locate (fix), and destroy (finish) terrorists and their organizations.<sup>39</sup> OPE area orientation activities are meant to improve situational awareness and understanding to both enhance our ability to detect and identify the enemy and to provide area familiarization for the expeditious conduct of operations against particular target sets. Target development fulfills the locate or fix objective by conducting activities and posturing assets that aim to acquire and pinpoint a target. Preliminary engagement is facilitated by persistent surveillance which enables forces to rapidly exploit time-sensitive windows of opportunity and also provides terminal guidance onto the target for precision engagement. Thus, all facets of OPE support the requirements outlined in this particular goal in the NSCT.

OPE is an effective tool for enhancing our ability to “deny sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists” by disrupting and interdicting material support and denying support areas

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<sup>36</sup> National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Washington, D.C.: The White House, February 2003, 15-24. These are the specified goals of the NSCT.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 15-17.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

to terrorists.<sup>40</sup> Regional engagement is one vehicle through which to exploit the opportunity to prepare the environment through, by, and with our host nation counterparts thus setting the conditions to detect, disrupt, deny, and destroy terrorist networks. By “positioning forces and assets to deny terrorists access to new recruits, financing, equipment, arms, and information” we can shape the environment so that it becomes non-permissive for insurgent activity.<sup>41</sup> The anticipatory nature of OPE makes it an ideal method for achieving this goal. Predictive analysis drives the focus of preparation of the environment with the intent of gaining the strategic initiative by setting operational conditions during the pre-crisis phase of operations. Denying sponsorship and eliminating terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens is best accomplished in this manner by shaping the operational environment before insurgent activities take root.

This assessment of the requirements outlined in the various national strategies with regard to combating terrorism suggests that OPE provides USSOCOM many of the requisite capabilities necessary for fighting global terrorism.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. ,17-22.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 21.

## CHAPTER 3

As a result of national policy decisions, USSOCOM has been given the task of synchronizing the Global War on Terrorism. As a functional Combatant Command (COCOM) with worldwide responsibilities, USSOCOM provides a global perspective on military operations. Its role as global synchronizer has been well received by the combatant commanders and the services.<sup>42</sup> USSOCOM has been developing procedures for how it will work with the various Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) to hunt for terrorists.<sup>43</sup>

To best guide the conduct of OPE, USSOCOM must develop a baseline operational framework that synchronizes operations, assets, and resources in a global campaign that seeks to shape the environment in our favor by setting the conditions to facilitate successful counterinsurgency operations while creating an unfavorable environment for terrorists. This begs the question, “Has USSOCOM *operationalized* OPE?”

Currently, USSOCOM is developing its ability to plan, prioritize, and synchronize the GWOT. This capability is steadily maturing and evolving as USSOCOM develops a planning framework for the conduct of OPE which it will disseminate to the TSOCs in an effort to provide a degree of standardization for OPE plans.<sup>44</sup> Some of the TSOCs caution that USSOCOM should resist the temptation of trying to direct specific OPE activities and instead focus on the synchronization of critical resources and provide constructs such as a global campaign plan.<sup>45</sup> Establishing a campaign planning framework would be a significant step toward operationalizing OPE because it would require the TSOCs to describe the effects they seek to achieve in each of their respective theaters in support of USSOCOM’s global campaign.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Rowan Scarborough, *Special Operations Forces Eye Terrorists, Command Draws Up War Plan*, Washington Times, 12 Aug 05, pg 1, <http://ebird.afis.mil.ebfiles/e20050812384965.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> CDR John R.Hoyt, J3X, USSOCOM, OPE conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>45</sup> LTC John Deedrick, SOJ3X Current Operations, SOCPAC OPE conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

## USSOCOM'S Planning Framework

USSOCOM has asked the geographic Combatant Commanders to develop regional and country specific OPE programs which will be planned and orchestrated through the TSOCS. USSOCOM will prioritize SOF assets in support of these programs. USSOCOM, the other COCOMs, and the TSOCS will then periodically assess the efficiency of OPE efforts and adjust future plans accordingly.<sup>47</sup>

USSOCOM's overall planning framework divides the global OPE effort into three phases: assess and prepare, operational employment, and effects-based sustainment. Within these phases USSOCOM intends to prioritize, coordinate, and synchronize assets and activities. An additional critical step is assessment planning in order to gauge the effectiveness of future activities. The assess and prepare phase prioritizes and allocates OPE assets and activities based upon analysis of potential areas of concern. Operational employment denotes the commitment, employment, and monitoring of OPE assets and activities. The effects-based sustainment phase seeks to maintain essential capabilities in critical locations in order to produce or have the potential to produce desired effects.<sup>48</sup>

USSOCOM's framework for country-level OPE plans has five components. The first, defining the current threat situation, is the justification for the application of an OPE program and commitment of assets in a particular area of operations (AO). The second component, defining current capabilities, addresses existing resources and capabilities available to prosecute terrorist targets in the AO. Third, defining OPE objectives, depicts what capabilities need to be developed in order to find, fix, and finish terrorists. The fourth step, develop OPE methodology, outlines the basic preparation plan by articulating the actions and steps required to accomplish OPE objectives. The final component, define OPE force and support requirements, highlights

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<sup>47</sup> A USSOCOM operations officers, OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. This is a summary of USSOCOM's planning framework.

manpower, capability, and resource requirements or deficiencies that need to be addressed in order to conduct the required actions.<sup>49</sup>

USSOCOM has provided the TSOCs with an excellent planning template that allows them ample freedom and initiative to develop effective regional and country specific plans without micromanaging their efforts. To assist in the synchronization and prioritization of global efforts, USSOCOM should also provide an overarching, effects-based OPE campaign planning framework that addresses desired effects, the nodes these effects will target, the actions required to achieve these effects, and the resources necessary to conduct the required actions. This framework can incorporate and subsume the existing regional and country specific plans. Likewise, it ensures that these activities are nested, both horizontally and vertically, so their effects are synergistic and not isolated. Otherwise, USSOCOM runs the risk of formulating a plan that encompasses numerous tactical activities that are unrelated and not linked to strategic and operational objectives.

### **OPE Campaign Planning Framework Within the EBO Context**

This portion of the monograph lays out a generic OPE campaign planning framework that incorporates multiple elements of operational design within the context of effects-based planning and operations. This framework serves two purposes. First, it suggests a methodology to synchronize (horizontally and vertically) the global OPE effort. Second, it provides a baseline planning template that is flexible enough for subordinate elements to tailor to regional-specific needs while ensuring synchronization and synergy in a global counterinsurgency plan.

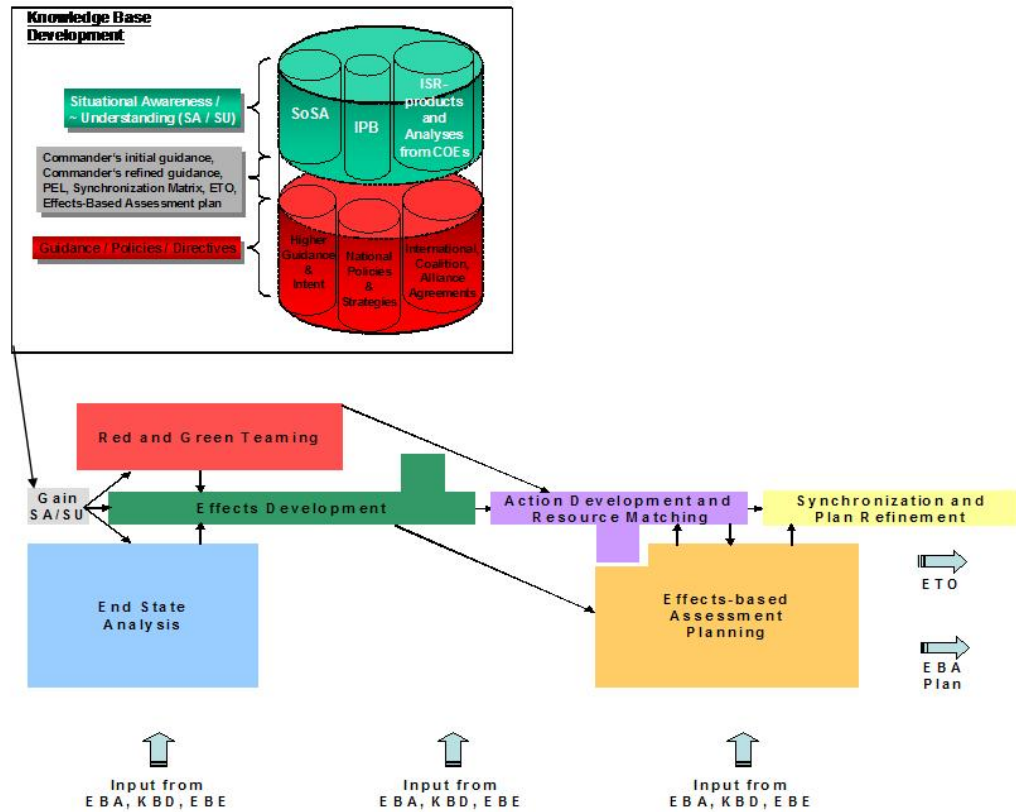
Figure 1 is a diagram combining the knowledge base development diagram and the core effects-based planning process model with associated steps all taken from the Joint Forces

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<sup>49</sup> A USSOCOM operations officer, OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

Command Effects-Based Operations Process.<sup>50</sup> This is the EBO framework used throughout this chapter.

## **Effects-Based Planning Process**



**Figure 1: Effects-Based Planning Process**

Figure 2 is a generic OPE mission analysis storyboard designed within the context of effects-based operations. It depicts the steps of EBO that correlate to the mission analysis portion of the military decision making process (MDMP). These are: gain situational awareness and understanding (SA/SU), red and green teaming, and end state analysis. The diagram also reflects an example planning process and the corresponding product deliverables a planner might use while developing an OPE campaign plan.

<sup>50</sup> The Effects-Based Process, Concept of Operations, Version 0.6, Joint Forces Command, Joint Experimentation Directorate, EBO Prototyping Team, 15 Oct 04, 10.

# OPE Mission Analysis Storyboard within EBO Context

## Gain SA / SU, ONA Refinement, Red & Green Teaming, End State Analysis

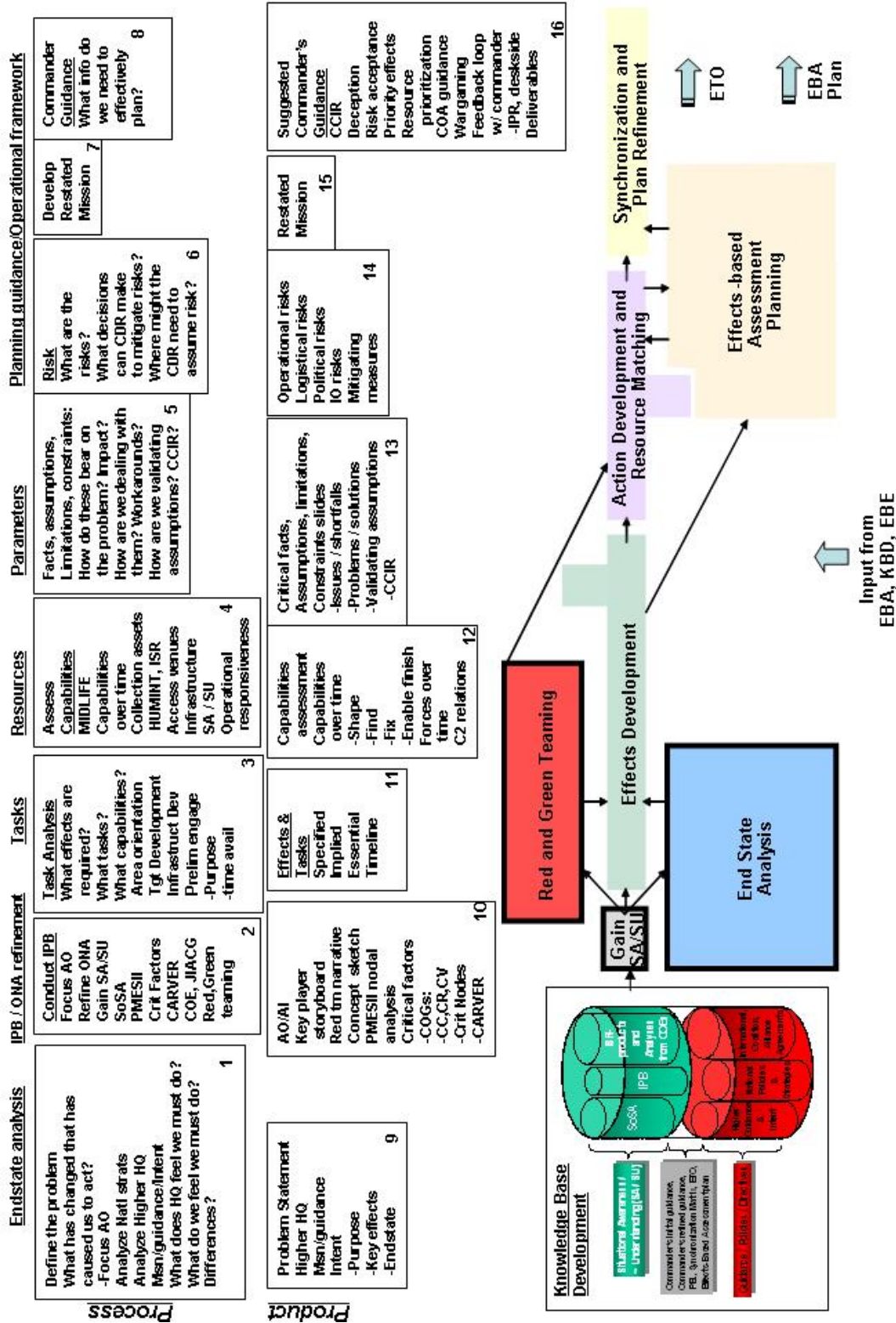


Figure 2: OPE Mission Analysis Storyboard



Figure 3 is an OPE course of action (COA) development storyboard also within the EBO context.

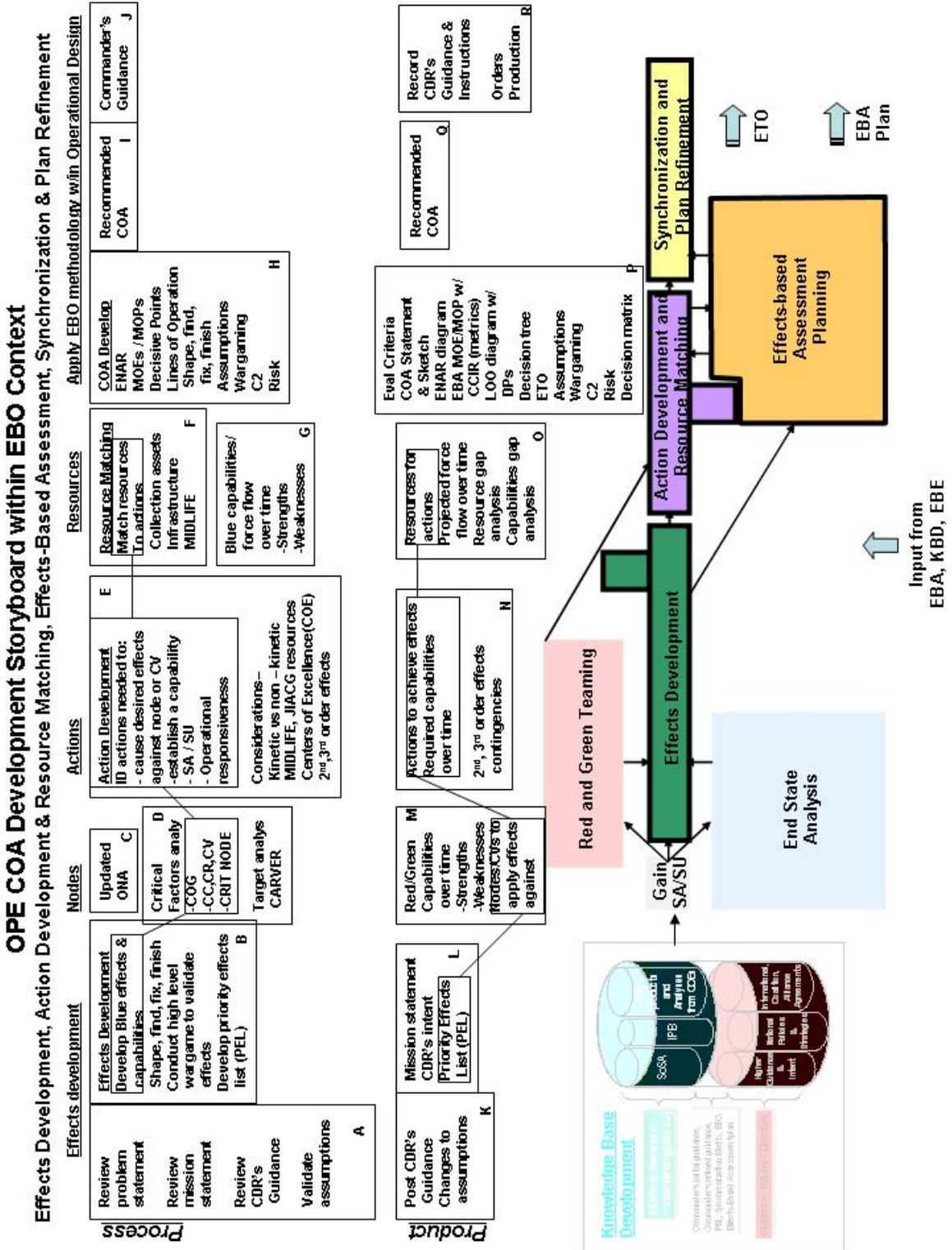


Figure 3: OPE COA Development Storyboard

It depicts the following EBO focus areas: effects development, action development and resource matching, effects-based assessment planning, and synchronization and plan refinement. This correlates to the COA development and selection portion of the MDMP. It is here that the elements of operational design and effects-based planning combine to assist the operational artist in designing a campaign plan that accomplishes strategic objectives. Again, a generic EBO planning framework is used to illustrate the application of operational design to OPE campaign planning.

This chapter will refer to these figures throughout as a “handrail” to guide the discussion concerning a proposed OPE operational design framework. This chapter will not outline every specific facet of EBO, but instead will apply an EBO and critical factors based template to OPE. Likewise, the following campaign outline is not a comprehensive OPE campaign plan, but instead is intended as a vehicle to demonstrate a planning template and methodology that incorporates elements of EBO and operational art and design.

## Operational Art and Operational Design

Operational art is the creative driving force behind campaign planning. It is defined as “the employment of military forces to achieve strategic and/or operational objectives...”.<sup>51</sup> It considers the commander’s desired end state, the effects necessary to achieve operational objectives, the required sequence of actions to achieve desired effects, and resource allocation.<sup>52</sup> Through the planning, integration, and conduct of various military activities, whether kinetic or non-kinetic, the commander translates his vision and desired end state into operational design. The end result of the effort is the campaign plan.

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<sup>51</sup> Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*,. Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, revision, third draft, 10 August, 2005, IV-3

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, IV-3 ,IV-4.

Operational design helps the commander and planners visualize the construct of a campaign plan to achieve the end state articulated in the commander's intent. The elements of operational design are shown in figure 4.<sup>53</sup>



**Figure 4: Elements of Operational Design**

While all of these elements are vital to a comprehensive campaign plan, the planning methodology discussed in this monograph will emphasize a select few within the effects-based planning model. They are: systems perspective of the operational environment, centers of gravity (COG), lines of operations, direct versus indirect (as they relate to attacking COGs), and decisive points (decisive operations). The remaining elements of the operational design model are important aspects of an OPE campaign, but will not be the focus of this chapter and will not be discussed in order to focus on the aforementioned tenets.

A holistic systems perspective of the enemy and the operational environment is critical to determining exploitable enemy vulnerabilities and, correspondingly, centers of gravity, lines of operation, and decisive points in developing a concept of operations.<sup>54</sup> This leads us to the

<sup>53</sup> Joint Publication 5-0, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*. IV-6, fig IV-2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, IV-11.

effects-based operations methodology, the first portion of which is knowledge base development through operational net assessment (ONA) and system of systems analysis (SoSA).

### Effects Based Operations: Effects Based Planning

Effects based operations are developed with a holistic understanding of the operational environment with the intent of changing system behavior by leveraging all elements of national power to achieve political ends.<sup>55</sup> An effect is the “physical or behavioral state of a system that results from military or non-military actions”.<sup>56</sup> Campaign planning and operational design integrate various actions, military or otherwise, in time and space to achieve desired strategic and operational outcomes. The effects achieved through the conduct of various activities are linked directly or indirectly to critical enemy nodes or vulnerabilities that, once exploited, diminish enemy operational capability. This is the essence of EBO.

EBO is broken down into four primary components: knowledge superiority, effects based planning, dynamic and adaptive effects based execution, and accurate and timely effects based assessment.<sup>57</sup> This chapter will focus on the knowledge superiority and effects based planning aspects of EBO.

Knowledge superiority is achieved through a comprehensive knowledge base development and operational net assessment (ONA) that seeks to pull from all-source intelligence and various subject matter experts (SME) to gain a better understanding of the adversary as a complex system. ONA is defined as the “integration of people, processes, and tools that use multiple information sources and collaborative analysis to build shared knowledge of the

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<sup>55</sup> Joint Warfighting Center Joint Doctrine Series, PAM 7, *Operational Implications of Effects-Based Operations*, Suffolk, VA: Doctrine Division, Joint Warfighting Center, United States Joint Forces Command, 17 November, 2004, 17 Nov 04, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*. Washington, D.C: Department of Defense, Revision Second Draft, 29 April 2005, IV-36.

<sup>57</sup> Joint Warfighting Center Joint Doctrine Series, PAM 4, *Doctrinal Implications of Operational Net Assessment (ONA)*, Suffolk, VA: Doctrine Division, Joint Warfighting Center, United States Joint Forces Command, 24 February 2004, 2.

adversary, the environment, and ourselves.”<sup>58</sup> ONA is intended to enhance the commander’s situational awareness (SA) and situational understanding (SU)<sup>59</sup> In this respect there is a symbiotic relationship between ONA and OPE in that they both provide useful inputs to each other.

Likewise, for both to be of maximum benefit, both ONA and OPE need to be established during the pre-crisis stage of an event, not after hostilities commence. ONA seeks to determine how to best understand the operational environment, the enemy as a complex adaptive system, and our own capabilities in order to effectively influence the adversary and shape the environment in our favor. This begins with a comprehensive system of systems analysis (SoSA) in the pre-crisis stage.<sup>60</sup> Understand that this is a baseline assessment and that further refinement will be needed during the intelligence preparation portion of the planning process specific to the mission at hand.

### System of Systems Analysis (SoSA)

A system of systems analysis views the adversary from a systemic perspective to identify critical functions or nodes and the linkages between those nodes. From this, it is possible to discern critical vulnerabilities that can be affected directly or indirectly, thus shaping an adversary’s behavior or diminishing his ability to act. This perspective accurately correlates with the composition and operations of terrorist networks which can be modeled as a series of functional nodes linked to one another as a system of systems. A SOCSOUTH Theater planner aptly noted at the USSOCOM OPE Conference, “To work against a network you must have visibility of the nodes of that network.”<sup>61</sup> Hence, SoSA is a key enabler in determining where to

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>60</sup> JWFC PAM 4, 11

<sup>61</sup> CW4 Charles Radke, SOCSOUTH Theater Planner, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

focus OPE activities in an effort to set conditions and shape the environment against terrorist organizations.

SoSA organizes system nodes into the following broad categories: political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information (PMESII). The analysis seeks to determine the criticality of each PMESII element and their relationships “in order to assess the systemic vulnerability of the various elements and how we can exploit them to achieve desired effects.”<sup>62</sup> As the TSOCs or other subordinate elements tailor PMESII analysis to their own particular regions, they may add other subcategories to achieve more specificity or increased granularity.

SOC PAC, for instance, is using the following breakdown which can be rolled up under the PMESII categories: recruiting, training, communications, transportation, infrastructure, marketing, and finance.<sup>63</sup> Linda Robinson’s article in U.S. News and World Report, “Plan of Attack,” mentions eight “pressure points” that USSOCOM is looking to target based on the National Defense Strategy: ideological support, weapons, funds, communications and movement, safe havens, foot soldiers, access to targets, and leadership.<sup>64</sup> These too can be categorized under PMESII and also broken down further to enhance fidelity with regard to regional, cultural, ethnic, and other considerations.

Another perspective is that of social influence networks which are comprised of political, academic, criminal, business, technological and other categories. This type of analysis focuses on influence links and human nodes which are essential when targeting human terrain systems.<sup>65</sup> The point is that each command can, and should, develop the elements upon which it bases the SoSA for its region or subregion.

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<sup>62</sup> JWFC Doctrine Pam 7, 17 Nov 04, 10

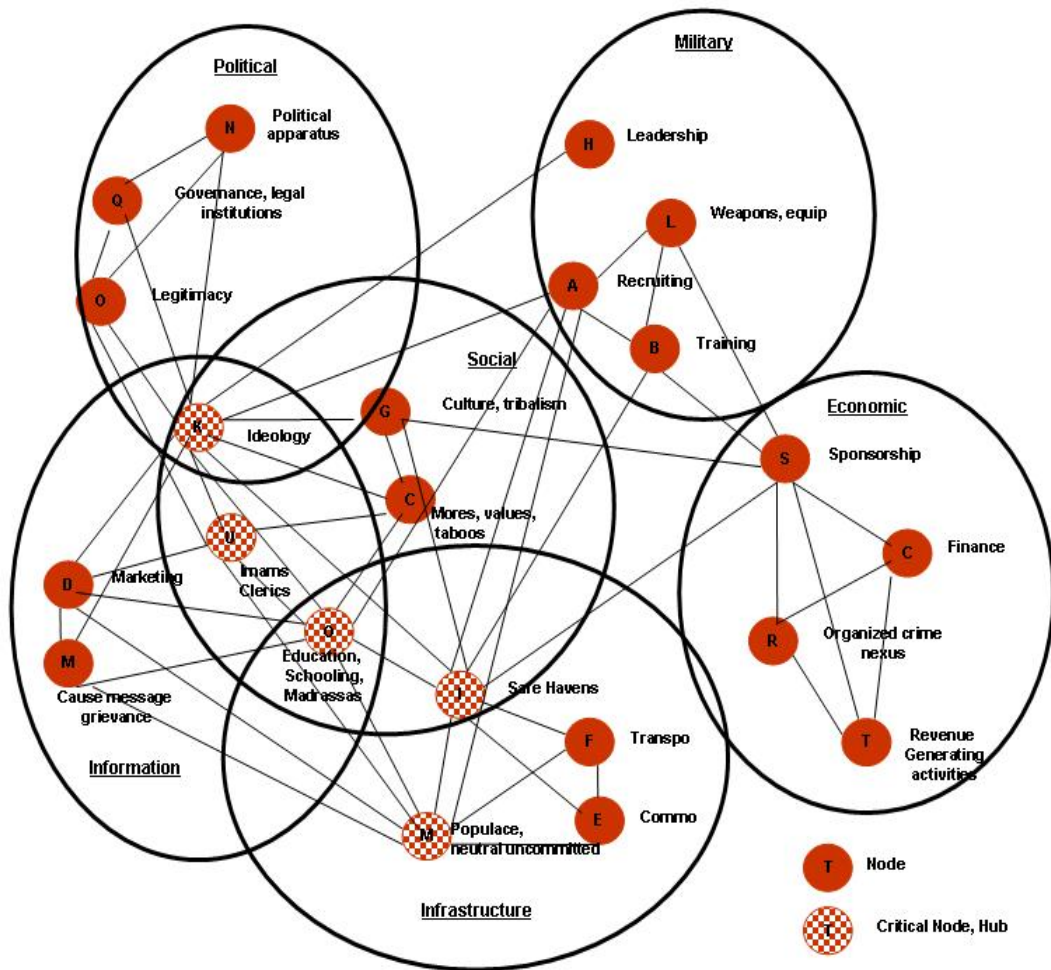
<sup>63</sup> MAJ Boris Robinson, SOJ3X, Intel planner, SOCPAC, USSOCOM OPE Conference 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>64</sup> Linda Robinson, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph D. Celeski, *Operationalizing COIN*, Joint Special Operations University Report 05-2, The JSOU Press, Hurlburt Field, Florida, Sept 05, 40.

Figure 5 shows a SoSA link diagram that reflects PMESII categories which encompass a variety of other subordinate nodes and the relationships between them. The links between them often prove to be as vulnerable as the nodes themselves and should be considered for exploitation as well. Of special interest are the nodes with multiple connections, described as hubs.

### SoSA Diagram



**Figure 5: SoSA Diagram**

These hubs, particularly the ones within a social system, are critical elements of a terrorist network.<sup>66</sup> Within a flat, horizontally networked system the removal of a significant

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<sup>66</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004, 137.

number of nodes may have little impact upon the functioning of the overall system, especially if the adversary has built in redundancy. However, if vital hubs are destroyed, “the network breaks down into isolated, non-communicating islands of nodes.”<sup>67</sup> In a social network these critical nodes can be mosques, imams, mullahs, clerics, etc. This is the primary means of interface an insurgent will have with the indigenous Muslim populace and is a convenient platform from which to recruit and spread his message. Likewise, a hub may be a person acting as the conduit between potential recruits and an insurgent organization. This recruiter, or “human bridge,” who reaches out to “cliques” of aspiring insurgents is vulnerable as a result of his exposure while conducting recruiting activities and communicating with the parent organization.<sup>68</sup> Replacing this hub, once destroyed, is far more difficult than finding another foot soldier. The need to recruit and generate manpower in support of the insurgent cause exposes the recruiter, thus leaving this critical hub vulnerable. For such a social network the “price of robustness is its extreme exposure to targeted attacks.”<sup>69</sup>

This nodal analysis, along with a critical factors evaluation, illuminates the adversary’s systemic weaknesses which can be exploited to attack his center(s) of gravity either directly or indirectly. Centers of gravity (COG) and critical factors analysis will be discussed later in the chapter.

## Red and Green Teaming

Red and green teaming are methods of viewing a situation through the eyes of the adversary (red teaming) or other involved neutral parties (green teaming). This process seeks to leverage the knowledge of various subject matter experts (SMEs) that reside within academic institutions, think tanks, corporate America, or various other centers of excellence (COE). These experts can convey key insights concerning the indigenous human terrain. This expertise

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>68</sup> Sageman, 141, 169.

<sup>69</sup> Sageman, 141.



provides the planner with critical analysis in the form of a cultural assessment prior to entering the area of operations in order to better understand ethnicity, regional history, religion, nationalism, and ideology.<sup>70</sup> This is a key enabler. Robert Kaplan, in his book “Imperial Grunts,” comments that “cultural and historical knowledge of the terrain is more likely than technological wizardry to dilute the so-called fog of war.”<sup>71</sup>

Green teaming provides the planner with an understanding of the key players (friendly, neutral) within the operational environment and an awareness of the relational dynamics at play which may impact decisions and operations. At the operational level this might be national political entities, lobby groups, administrations, host nation military and police, etc. Green team analysis might even focus, for example, on the U.S. Embassy and the country-team within an AO. In this case, the focus of the analysis might be to determine which key players within the interagency have influence over areas that are critical to a particular activity. Likewise, enhancing a DOD planner’s understanding of the goals and motivations of the various country-team participants within the embassy allows him to more effectively integrate and synergize operations while remaining sensitive to interagency equities.

### Centers of Gravity and Critical Factors Analysis

Joint Publication JP 5-0 states that centers of gravity (COGs) “comprise the characteristics, capabilities, and/or sources of power from which a system derives its freedom of action, physical strength, and will to fight.”<sup>72</sup> It is through preparation of the environment that we seek to deny the enemy this freedom of action. Dr. Joe Strange, in his monograph “Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities” defines a COG as a person or thing that offers physical and

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<sup>70</sup> Celeski, 40.

<sup>71</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts, The American Military On the Ground*, Random House, New York, 2005, 185.

<sup>72</sup> JP 5-0, IV-10.

moral resistance.<sup>73</sup> These can be more than one entity and may also shift during an operation or campaign. It is imperative to not only identify enemy centers of gravity, but also to anticipate where they might shift by understanding the second and third-order effects of neutralizing the initial COG. To do so “requires knowledge and understanding of how opponents organize, fight, make decisions, and their physical and psychological strengths and weaknesses.”<sup>74</sup> This information is garnered through a thorough system of systems analysis enabled by the enhanced situational understanding afforded by OPE. It is then necessary to determine the relationship between the multiple centers of gravity that exist at the strategic, operational, and tactical level and develop a campaign plan that targets them.<sup>75</sup>

An effective way to target these centers of gravity is by identifying a critical vulnerability that leads to the COG. Having identified the COG, the next step is determining the critical capability (CC) it affords the adversary in the given situation (support, survival). Next, ascertain the critical requirements (CR) necessary for the capability to be fully functioning (conditions, resources). Lastly, determine critical vulnerabilities (CV) by identifying requirements that are deficient or vulnerable to exploitation or attack.<sup>76</sup> Figure 6 shows an example of insurgent strategic, operational, and tactical centers of gravity with their associated critical capabilities, requirements, and vulnerabilities as well as critical nodes identified in the system of systems analysis. Having determined which nodes and vulnerabilities are critical the next step is prioritizing the focus of operations.

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<sup>73</sup> Joe Strange, *Centers of Gravity and Critical Factors Analysis, Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak the Same Language*, Marine War College, 1996, XV.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, IX.

## Critical Factors

**Strategic COG: Ideology**  
**CC:** drives support, recruits  
**CR:** message, means of transmitting  
(Madrass, propoganda),receptive audience  
**CV:** inability to realize/deliver vision, no real  
plan for future except destroy existing govt  
(nihilistic), counter-message, counter-cause  
**Crit nodes:** information: K- ideology,  
M- message, grievance, cause O- legitimacy

**Operational COG: Permissive environment**  
**CC:** safety, support, recruits, resources  
**CR:** complicit or indifferent population  
legalities, protections  
**CV:** temperament / perception populace,  
modified legalities, tribal rifts  
**Crit Nodes:** I- safe havens, Q- governance  
& legal institutions, O- madrassas, schools  
M- uncommitted populace U- clerics,imams

**Tactical COG: Freedom of movement**  
**CC:** ability to recruit, train, resource,  
rehearse, prepare for and conduct ops  
**CR:** safe haven, support structure, resources  
**CV:** linked to anonymity, active support,  
detectability, and protections afforded  
by legal institutions  
**Crit Nodes:** Q- legal institutions, U- clerics  
M- uncommitted populace, I- safe havens

**Figure 6: Critical Factors**

The CARVER target analysis methodology is another means of discerning which nodes or vulnerabilities should be the focus of the targeting effort. Having a multitude of potential targets, CARVER provides a means of determining priorities by analyzing each target according to various criteria. It assesses the criticality, accessibility, recuperability, vulnerability, effect on the populace, and recognizability of the key nodes and vulnerabilities determined by the SoSA and critical factors analysis.<sup>77</sup> CARVER shows which node(s) or vulnerabilities are the most actionable based upon targeting capability and desired effect. In figure 7, the CARVER matrix depicts five critical nodes and vulnerabilities and assigns each a ranking of 1 to 5 according to the target analysis criteria with 1 being the least advantageous and 5 being the most. These are then

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<sup>77</sup> FM 31-20, Doctrine for Special Forces Operations, Headquarters, Department of the Army, April 1990, glossary, 1.

summed and prioritized. Having determined what to target, the next step is designing a campaign that focuses on the desired end state, lays out a plan for achieving effects which lead to that end state, and describes the lines of operation that will accomplish this through synchronized tactical action.

<b><u>CARVER ANALYSIS CRITICAL NODES &amp; VULNERABILITIES (1 to 5)</u></b>				
	<b><u>Ideology</u></b>	<b><u>safe havens</u></b>	<b><u>neutral pop</u></b>	<b><u>Imams,clerics</u></b>
<b>Criticality</b>	5	5	5	5
<b>Accessibility</b>	2	4	4	5
<b>Recuperability</b>	4	4	3	4
<b>Vulnerability</b>	1	4	4	4
<b>Effect on popul</b>	5	4	5	5
<b>Recognizability</b>	2	4	4	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>

**Figure 7: CARVER Analysis**

### End State Analysis

End state analysis defines the problem. It answers the following key questions: what has changed in the current situation that has caused us to act; what should the situation look like when we are done; what effects must we achieve to reach our end state; and, are there differences between what we feel needs to be done vice what higher headquarters wants done? End state analysis is informed by a variety of inputs to include higher headquarter’s guidance and the national strategies. Additionally, end state analysis, like mission analysis in the military decision

making process (MDMP), determines tasks required, resources available, and existing operational parameters (figure 2). A clearly articulated problem statement is essential to starting off on the right azimuth. Otherwise, the planner runs the risk of applying actions and effects to the wrong problem.

## Effects Development

*“The essence of operational art lies in being able to produce the right combination of effects...relative to a center of gravity to neutralize, weaken, or destroy it.”*<sup>78</sup>

The effects-based approach to campaign planning is advantageous because it focuses on achieving campaign objectives through effects and actions oriented on “system behavior rather than discrete task accomplishment” or isolated tactical action.<sup>79</sup> This holds true for OPE campaign planning as well.

COL Mark Rosengard, J3, SOCEUR, advises that DOD’s strategic instruction set for USSOCOM should “assign an effect, not an event or activity” in pursuit of GWOT OPE efforts. Additionally, he stipulates that the desired effect from OPE will likely be find, fix, and finish, but the effect of the finish is not necessarily killing or a kinetic solution. Instead the effect might be changing or shaping the environment.<sup>80</sup> In this case, violence would not be entirely discarded but, instead, would be “complementary rather than controlling.”<sup>81</sup> SOCSOUTH is moving toward effects-based targeting as a mechanism to refine their OPE focus. Their intent is to “influence the target, not just attack the target.”<sup>82</sup> Effects development is an essential part of designing an OPE campaign that takes a comprehensive view of achieving systemic effects. There are a variety of approaches to this methodology.

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<sup>78</sup> Joint Publication 3-0, IV-10.

<sup>79</sup> JWFC Pam 7, 6-8.

<sup>80</sup> COL Mark Rosengard, J3, SOCEUR, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>81</sup> Kaplan, 192.

<sup>82</sup> CW4 Charles Radke, SOCSOUTH Theater Planner, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept

David Galula, who served as a French military officer in counterinsurgency campaigns in Southeast Asia and Algeria, emphasizes the need to find the favorable minority of the population (SA/SU and orientation activities) and organize it (shape, influence, co-opt) to rally the majority of the uncommitted populous against the insurgent minority. He advises, “Every operation, whether in the military field or in the political, social, economic, and psychological fields, must be geared to that end.”<sup>83</sup> Hence, all interagency resources (diplomatic, military, economic, information) must be used to shape or prepare the environment by appealing to and mobilizing the favorable minority. Doing so enables counterinsurgent operations to succeed and develops a non-permissive insurgent environment. Galula points out that engaging the populous, which is the insurgent’s source of strength if not his center of gravity, indirectly targets this elusive adversary. This exposes him since he cannot “freely refuse the fight because [in doing so] he courts defeat.”<sup>84</sup> Reaching out to this favorable minority elicits a response from the otherwise undetectable adversary, making him easier to target due to his resultant exposure. A desired effect may then be that the adversary is forced to expose himself or his activities.

From an effects-based perspective, preparing the environment sets the conditions to identify, develop, and attack enemy operational vulnerabilities. Shimon Naveh, Israeli Defense Force general officer and operational theorist, states that an operational vulnerability “implies the identification of a particular situation, created by the accumulation of certain operational circumstances and inviting the delivery of a strike, which will destroy the defeated system’s ability to perform its original mission.”<sup>85</sup> This situation, created by operational circumstances, is the product of OPE planning and execution that facilitates the exploitation of adversary weaknesses. Naveh observes that, “The anticipation of such an elaborate situation requires a

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<sup>83</sup> David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice*, Fredrick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, 1968, pg 77.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>85</sup> Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence, The Evolution of Operational Theory*, Frank Cass Publishers, Portland, Oregon, 1997, 19.

great deal of creative vision, an efficient military intelligence apparatus, and, above all, the inducement of a specific state of mind or consciousness within the command of the rival system.”<sup>86</sup> From an OPE standpoint this means enhancing SA/SU, anticipating requirements to improve operational responsiveness, and ultimately shaping the environment. This environment may be the friendly or enemy system, the enemy’s mind, or the human terrain within which we operate.

The Army’s Future Force Capstone Concept states that the “American preference to achieve victory through technology overmatch would need to give way to recognition of the primacy of the ‘human dimension’ in irregular warfare.”<sup>87</sup> The primary role of OPE is to “shape the environment and the human terrain” and in doing so “reduce the human commodity as an element of the center of gravity.”<sup>88</sup> Influencing this human commodity, particularly the uncommitted, is critical but can be difficult. For instance, one special operations planner observed that “a politician who supports the GWOT in some parts of [South America] with a heavy Muslim population is committing political suicide.”<sup>89</sup> This can make navigating the human terrain tenuous, but there are still methods to influence both the insurgents and the populace.

One method might be to empower or enable an influential entity within the social network. Target development, in this respect, would be in the form of cultivating a relationship with an entity that exerts a high degree of positive (anti-insurgent) and pervasive influence throughout the target area. For example, imams or clerics of conservative or even fundamentalist mosques who are opposed to terrorism would be valuable allies by virtue of the influence and knowledge they possess with regard to their congregation. They can convince the undecided to

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Greg Grant, *Iraq Reshapes U.S. Army Thinking*, Defense News, 29 Aug 05, <http://ebird.afis.mil.ebfiles/e20050829388583.html>

<sup>88</sup> COL Mark Rosengard, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Radke, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

refrain from terror and also point out those who might be involved in insurgent activities. These influential nodes should be considered high-payoff targets (HPT) and should be identified, developed, and exploited with the same rigor as high-value targets (HVT) are currently prosecuted.

Steven Metz and Raymond Millen from the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College suggest an effects-based, interagency approach to counterinsurgency planning. Their approach seeks to achieve the following effects: delegitimizing, demoralizing, delinking, deresourcing, and fracturing the insurgent organization and infrastructure. Delegitimizing aims at reducing the legitimacy of the insurgent cause in the local and global communities. Demoralizing effects make insurgent livelihood uncomfortable and dangerous. Delinking activities isolate insurgents from their support base. Deresourcing strikes at the insurgents by denying or exhausting resources. Fracturing aims at identifying and exploiting rifts within the insurgent movement or between the insurgents and the populous.<sup>90</sup>

By understanding the dynamics of the insurgent movement it might be possible to play sides against one another. For instance, in Iraq there are two key factions vying for control; transnational insurgents and local militias. Michael Vlahos describes the two competing parties as the “Wilderness Ghazi” and the civil militia and suggests that it might be possible to enable one while reducing the other.<sup>91</sup> Another exploitable issue stems from understanding the link between a Muslim non-state actor’s perceived religious authority in defending Islam and his desire to change his status from “righteous defender to legitimate ruler.”<sup>92</sup> This might also be a point of contention from which to elicit support from people. These potential rifts, both existing

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<sup>90</sup> Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Nov 04, 25-26. The concept of fracturing, delegitimizing, demoralizing, delinking, and deresourcing as effects-based counterinsurgency activities were taken entirely from Metz and Millen from the above cited paper.

<sup>91</sup> Michael Vlahos, *Two Enemies: Non-State Actors and Change in the Muslim World*, Strategic Assessments Office, National Security Analysis Department, The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Jan 05, 4

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 3.



within the centers of gravity described as communities of interest (alliances) and public opinion, can be targeted by influencing the human dimension.<sup>93</sup>

One means of influencing the human terrain is through understanding the dynamics of the society, identifying the power brokers, and adapting the system to modify their behavior. In the Islamic world, clerics are influential political players capable of mobilizing the community, but enjoy a protected status as religious leaders.<sup>94</sup> Changing the legal system to allow the detention of such clerics if they incite violence or are guilty of seditious behavior would be beneficial. “Threat of incarceration creates a hostile environment and prevents these human bridges (recruiters) from freely advertising their connection to jihad and facilitating enrollment of new members.”<sup>95</sup> This is an interagency function that would set the conditions for operational success. Galula observed that “adapting the judicial system to the threat [and] strengthening the bureaucracy...may discourage insurgency attempts...”<sup>96</sup>

It is important to note that in an environment that is inundated with sources of information “perceptions can be shaped but not controlled.”<sup>97</sup> Targeting the will or the mind of the adversary or the populace is an indirect means of achieving desired effects. An effects-based approach should then determine the desired message (effect), the most appropriate medium to send the message (mosque, cleric, community leader, radio), actions that will cause the chosen network to disseminate the message (PSYOPS, IO, HA, tactical action), and an appropriate feedback channel to determine if the message has been received by the intended party and the desired effect achieved.<sup>98</sup> An example could be the distribution of reward posters for information concerning known insurgent identities and activities. This measure not only increases the potential for

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<sup>93</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1976, 596. Clausewitz describes communities of interest (alliances) and public opinion as centers of gravity.

<sup>94</sup> Metz and Millen, 14.

<sup>95</sup> Sageman, 178.

<sup>96</sup> Galula, 67.

<sup>97</sup> Metz and Millen, 14.

<sup>98</sup> Thomas X. Hammes, *Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves Into a Fourth Generation*, Strategic Forum, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, No 214, Jan 05, 5.

pinpointing the insurgent but also dissuades him from operating in an area that has been saturated with posters for fear of being recognized and turned in for reward money. In this case, the posters influence the adversary's mind and affect his behavior as well as increase his potential for exposure, thus shaping and preparing the environment.

Bear in mind that the associated causality between actions, effects, and the desired end state is theoretical, and requires constant feedback and empirical data to substantiate any causal validity. This is accomplished with accurate measures of effectiveness, developed during effects-based assessment planning, which seek to validate both the existence and sensitivity of this linkage.

### Action Development and Resource Matching

Having determined the required effects to achieve the desired end state, the next step is to identify the actions which will achieve the effects and then allocate resources to fulfill the actions. Figure 8 displays a menu of actions, depicted numerically, which correspond to the effect that they support. The granularity and specificity of the actions outlined are dependent upon the level of planning (strategic, operational, tactical, global, regional, country) and specific area of operation. These examples are generic enough to synchronize a global effort yet provide subordinates the flexibility to conduct the actions they deem appropriate. This is also a means of prioritizing efforts, activities, and resources at all levels.

### Logical Lines of Operation

Logical lines of operation are a planning construct used to categorize actions or objectives performed to achieve a desired effect or purpose. The actions in a logical line of operation have a causal relationship with the effect they are designed to achieve whether linear or

non-linear, direct or indirect.<sup>99</sup> An indirect approach may be necessary until the conditions are set to allow direct attacks on an enemy COG if at all possible. This facilitates a “synchronized and integrated combination of operations to weaken adversary centers of gravity indirectly” by exploiting vulnerable weaknesses and requirements.<sup>100</sup> This is akin to the EBO effect-node-action-resource (ENAR) concept used to depict the linkages between the desired effect, the action taken to achieve that effect, the vulnerable node upon which that action will be focused, and the resources allocated to support the action.<sup>101</sup>

Figure 8 depicts an example of possible logical lines of operation for global OPE that produce effects that, in theory, will lead to the end state of a non-permissive environment for terrorism. They are: area orientation activities, target development, preliminary engagement, and shape the environment. The diagram includes lines of operations, nodes and critical vulnerabilities to exploit, objectives and effects, actions and decisive points that will directly and/or indirectly achieve the effects, and the desired end state.

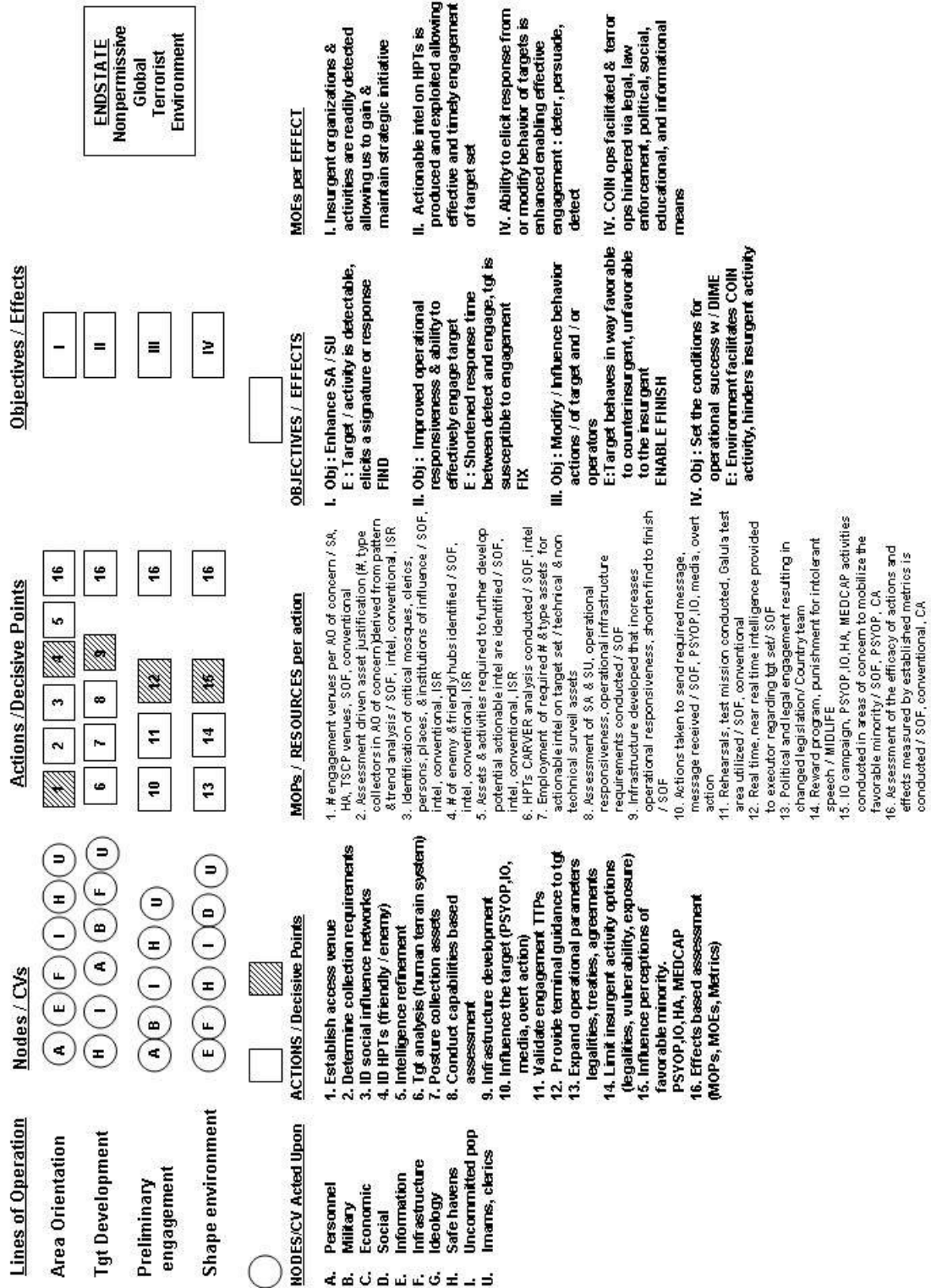
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<sup>99</sup> Jack D. Kem, *Campaign Planning: Tools of the Trade*, Department of Joint and Multinational Operations, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 34-35.

<sup>100</sup> Joint Publication 3-0 RSD, IV-12.

<sup>101</sup> JWFC Doctrine Pam 7, 11.

# Logical Lines of Operation for Global OPE



ENDSTATE  
Nonpermissive  
Global  
Terrorist  
Environment

Figure 8: OPE Logical Lines of Operation Diagram

Resources earmarked to perform the required actions are depicted as well. For the actions and the effects, the accompanying measures of effectiveness (MOE) and measures of performance (MOP) are the metrics by which to gage both the efficacy of the effects in achieving the end state and the correct execution of tasks or actions.<sup>102</sup>

## Decisive Points

JP 5-0 describes a decisive point as “a geographic place, key event, system, or function that, when acted upon, allows a commander a marked advantage over an adversary or contributes materially to creating a desired effect...”<sup>103</sup> They can be an indirect means of attacking enemy centers of gravity. The identification of decisive points during effects-based planning is an effective means of determining which actions and effects will potentially tip the scales in favor of those who conduct them. Identification of this “tipping point” can be difficult, but pays big dividends in that it focuses operational effort and resources toward achieving effects and objectives in the most expeditious manner possible.<sup>104</sup> In figure 8, the anticipated decisive points are depicted among the required actions within each of the logical lines of operation. This represents the notion that, while all of the annotated actions within a line of operation contribute to achieving the desired objective or effect, it is the decisive points or actions that are truly instrumental in accomplishing the goal. Also consider that decisive points may not be readily apparent in the planning stages but may manifest themselves later in execution. For this reason, having an assessment plan that monitors operational effectiveness and is able to identify emerging trends that can be exploited is critical to leveraging decisive points enroute to operational success.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

<sup>103</sup> JP 5-0, IV-15.

<sup>104</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, Back Bay Books, New York, 2002, 9. Malcolm Gladwell describes the tipping point as the point at which changes happen, not gradually, but in one dramatic moment. These are often unforecasted, unintentional, and emergent. He uses the rise and fall of a flu epidemic as an example. Decisive points in a campaign or battle have similar aspects.

## Effects-Based Assessment Planning

Conducting an effects-based planning assessment entails developing metrics or measures of effectiveness (MOE) to determine the efficacy of actions in achieving desired effects. It also requires a collection plan that addresses how these MOEs will be observed and interpreted. The Pentagon has alluded to metrics which seek to measure success in locating and reducing safe havens, planning cells, communications networks, and financial assets for select terrorist groups.<sup>105</sup> LTC John Deedrick from SOCPAC commented that “specific MOE’s must be developed [for each theater] and are the most difficult things to define.”<sup>106</sup>

SOCEUR suggests using results, potential, and the enabling environment as metrics.<sup>107</sup> Results would be measured by production or contribution of intelligence reports or products leading to enhanced SA/SU. This would actually be a measure of performance (MOP) of task accomplishment that contributes to attaining effects. Potential would be measured by how well postured USSOCOM is with regard to physical and human assets in achieving SA/SU and improving operational responsiveness. These assets could include ISR platforms for gathering intelligence or perhaps operational infrastructure developed to reduce the time between developing actionable intelligence and acting upon it. Measuring the enabling environment might include an assessment of the political and legal situation in conducting counterinsurgency operations. Expanded legal authorities and political initiatives enacted to empower counterinsurgent forces are an example of measurable improvements in the operating environment.

In conducting effects-based assessment planning it is import to consider that the theory upon which the effect outcomes are based may differ from the reality on the ground. With this in mind, it would be beneficial to designate an initial test area within which to conduct theory

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<sup>105</sup> Linda Robinson, 1.

<sup>106</sup> LTC John Deedrick, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05. The words [in theater] were added by the author.

<sup>107</sup> COL Mark Rosengard, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

testing. This allows the planner to validate the effect-node-action linkages that are the crux of the campaign plan. By testing, for example, the effects of an information operations campaign or a civil affairs project in a particular community, the planner can determine whether the actions produce the desired effects before conducting similar actions elsewhere. Likewise, the planner can note the responses elicited by such action and observe unanticipated 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>- order effects in a selected environment. In this respect, testing requires experimentation aimed at “watching objectively what takes place, being prompt and willing to alter what goes wrong” so that planners might be more adaptive in their approach.<sup>108</sup>

Likewise, learning from this experimentation “implies drawing lessons from the events and spreading the experience among others” which demands that this assessment activity be planned effectively.<sup>109</sup> Using this test area to validate action and effects hypotheses allows the planner to confirm or deny his operational theory and provides a means to accelerate the learning process among counterinsurgents. Using a small or isolated initial test area attempts to mitigate negative repercussions in the event that actions lead to unanticipated detrimental effects. These assessments or experiments must be planned and resourced in advance to take full and timely advantage of the knowledge they provide. In this way, effects-based assessment planning can improve the adaptability and responsiveness of the campaign and the counterinsurgent.

To formulate an effective OPE campaign to achieve desired effects requires a capabilities- based assessment. From this we can identify gaps and address requirements for maintaining SA/SU and improving operational responsiveness.

### Capabilities Based Assessment

A capabilities-based assessment sets the stage for determining operational shortfalls and requirements necessary for achieving desired effects. A critical component for achieving this is

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<sup>108</sup> Galula, 104-105. The concept of theory testing in an initial test area is depicted by Galula.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

access to the area of concern. This access should be based upon and tailored to the capability the planner intends to establish. Two essential considerations are situational awareness and understanding (SA/SU) and operational responsiveness.

Threat-based information and intelligence drive and focus assessment activities by marshalling and employing collection assets in an effort to refine the intelligence picture in an area of concern. Upon refining the intelligence picture and SA/SU, the next step is to improve operational responsiveness through target and infrastructure development with an eye toward enhancing the menu of operational responses. These responses (effects) may not be kinetic. In a counterinsurgency situation they will primarily be informing, influencing, or shaping the target or environment. This assessment determines the capabilities required to enhance SA/SU and operational responsiveness in the context of time, space, and means and ultimately answers where, with what, and how quickly a capability must be administered. Having assessed, answered, and catered for these needs you have effectively prepared the environment and set the conditions to achieve required effects.<sup>110</sup> An effective OPE campaign will be aimed at achieving exactly that; a thorough assessment of existing and required capabilities and a plan to address those requirements in order to produce the desired operational end state.

## Synchronization and Plan Refinement

Synchronization and plan refinement entails developing a synchronization matrix, wargaming, and the production of an effects tasking order (ETO). The ETO is similar to an operations order (OPORD) or fragmentary order (FRAGO) in that it directs subordinate elements to conduct current and future operations by providing them the information they need to conduct effects-based operations. This information typically includes the commander's and higher headquarter's guidance and intent, the priority effects list (PEL), synchronization matrix, and the

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<sup>110</sup> David B. Plumer, COL, USA (retired), USSOCOM J3XPR, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05. COL Plumer outlined the capabilities-based assessment framework as a method for preparing the environment.



effects-based assessment plan.<sup>111</sup> The priority effects lists is a method of allocating finite resources in accordance with the prioritized effects that the commander wants to achieve. For OPE this might mean initially giving resource priority to one of the lines of operation. For instance, area orientation activities could be the priority throughout the globe in an initial phase. Having achieved this globally, the campaign now transitions to target development with the preponderance of assets allocated to this line of operation. Next, having identified and developed targets, assets turn toward preliminary engagement.

Another method of effects prioritization might be allocating resources for all lines of operation to a particular region. Actions and resources are driven by EBO and effectively synchronized striving to complement, not replicate, existing capability in theater. This ensures the commander's intent is resourced properly and also avoids needless redundant activity. In either case, the PEL is an effects-based method of prioritizing activities and assets in pursuit accomplishing the commander's objectives.

USSOCOM has begun to operationalize OPE as a method for setting conditions to fight and win the GWOT. The suggested effects-based campaign planning construct offers a methodology to assist USSOCOM in synchronizing its OPE efforts globally by providing subordinate elements a flexible overarching framework which nests their efforts, horizontally and vertically. This synergizes the collective effects of global operations and facilitates prioritization of effort and resources.

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<sup>111</sup> The Effects-Based Operations Process, Concept of Operations, Version 0.6, Joint Forces Command, Joint Experimentation Directorate, EBO Prototyping Team, 15 Oct 04, 95.

## CHAPTER 4

The National Defense Strategy states that “the United States cannot influence that which it cannot reach,” thus substantiating the need for strategic access to key regions of the globe.<sup>112</sup> Likewise the National Military Strategy acknowledges that posture and presence developed in anticipation of future threats enhances our ability to fight the GWOT.<sup>113</sup> This “global defense in depth” requires improved intelligence collection capability, enhanced visibility of critical areas, and “multiple types of rapid intercept capability”.<sup>114</sup>

Venues for access to areas of concern through engagement with global and regional partners are critical to providing the situational awareness and operational responsiveness we need to prepare the environment in anticipation of and in response to insurgent activity. We need “better methods for early warning of insurgency, preventative actions, and the creation of early-stage support packages” to respond to insurgency in the pre-crisis stage which would require an investment of resources upfront but would be well worth the cost.<sup>115</sup> This being the case, why do we not engage those who can provide us access to key areas of interest?

The National Military Strategy states that security cooperation builds trust, confidence, and important relationships between the United States and its multinational partners. This engagement “enhances important intelligence and communications linkages and facilitates rapid crisis response” providing a benefit that far outweighs the costs.<sup>116</sup> However, political considerations often trump the practical necessity for engagement and access. As an example, the Lehey Amendment has precluded SOCPAC from effectively engaging Indonesia, the most

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<sup>112</sup> National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, 6.

<sup>113</sup> National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 10.

<sup>114</sup> Antulio J. Echevarria, Bert B. Tussing, *From Defending Forward to ‘Global Defense in Depth’: Globalization and Homeland Security*, Strategic Studies monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Oct 03, ix.

<sup>115</sup> Metz and Millen, 22.

<sup>116</sup> National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 10-11.

populous Muslim country in the world, because of human rights issues.<sup>117</sup> Congress has refused to resume the training of Indonesian officers despite the fact that U.S. officials have acknowledged the importance of Indonesian assistance in the War on Terror.<sup>118</sup>

Understandably, Indonesian human rights violations and policy must be addressed, but denying SOCPAC the opportunity to conduct military-to-military joint combined exercise training (JCET) is imprudent. It prevents the United States from both assisting the Indonesians in addressing the GWOT and influencing them with respect to human rights. This “all or nothing” foreign diplomacy must give way to a more pragmatic approach that weighs the security consequences of disengagement and reconsiders other means, punitive or otherwise, of achieving conformity with regard to human rights and other contentious issues. This example illustrates how legislative considerations severely hinder OPE efforts in the more important regions by restricting access to these areas and limiting the opportunity to shape the environment, particularly the human dimension.

This lack of pragmatism often prevents the United States from exploiting opportunities to enhance its posture to fight the GWOT. In another instance, political and legal concerns in Mauritania precluded SOCEUR from leveraging a potentially more effective and amenable regime that came to power as result of a coup.<sup>119</sup> It is understandable that the United States does not want to legitimize the practice of toppling a government via a military coup in lieu of a peaceful democratic transfer of power, but unless we are willing to unseat the new regime it would be beneficial to deal with them in order to improve our global security posture. In another, similar circumstance, the Uzbekistan Senate demanded the withdrawal of American troops after the United States criticized their heavy-handed crackdown on unarmed demonstrators in the city

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<sup>117</sup> Office of Antiterrorism Assistance, 10 Feb 04, <http://diplomaticsecurity.org/director1.htm>

<sup>118</sup> Simon Montlake, *Indonesia, US Ties Strained By Past*, Christian Science Monitor, 29 Aug 05, <http://ebird.afis.mil.ebfiles/e20050829388362.html>

<sup>119</sup> COL Mark Rosengard, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

of Andijan in May of 2005.<sup>120</sup> By ostracizing a country or party whose behavior we do not condone we lose access to a potential key area and the opportunity to gain SA/SU and shape that region. Even worse, we may push country into the camp of an adversary.

## **USSOCOM OPE Posture Shortfalls**

A variety of significant issues adversely impacts USSOCOM's ability to posture forces and assets to fully leverage OPE as an intelligence and operational enabler. As previously mentioned, unless USSOCOM is afforded engagement access venues to areas of concern it cannot effectively work through, by, and with host nation entities to improve intelligence and operational capability. These opportunities must be provided through a globally synchronized Theater Security Cooperation Program that is formulated with an eye toward strengthening our security posture.

Currently, special operations force (SOF) deployments are not planned or prioritized around specific OPE objectives. They are driven by the TSCP which is influenced by the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC) and prescribed by both the Chief of Mission (COM) for a particular country as well as the host nation.<sup>121</sup> This means that USSOCOM's opportunities for engagement are not crafted specifically to improve situational awareness or operational responsiveness, but instead to fulfill the requirements of the COCOM, the country team, and the country of interest.

OPE objectives that are being fulfilled are often incidental. To rectify this situation requires global synchronization and collaboration between USSOCOM, the TSOC's, the GCC's, Department of State, and the appropriate embassies with the understanding that the criteria for committing SOF will be to fulfill OPE objectives. Ideally, this can be done while still meeting COCOM engagement objectives and supporting the Mission Performance Plans of the American

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<sup>120</sup> Aziz Noritov, *Uzbekistan Senate: U.S. Must Leave*, Philadelphia Enquirer, 27 Apr 05, <http://ebird.afis.mil.ebfiles/20050827387873.html>

<sup>121</sup> A USSOCOM operations officer, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

ambassador. However, facilitating OPE objectives should be the priority task of SOF in country as directed by the pertinent TSOC.

Another critical issue regarding the posture of SOF forces is that they are not currently focused or prioritized globally within the context of a clear GWOT end state.<sup>122</sup> Between 70-80% of SOF are currently focused in Iraq and Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, these two areas of operation are the main effort, however, the nation is assuming risk elsewhere. The former commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, LTG Philip Kensinger, commented that “If you don’t take a holistic approach to this...you press on one area, and you get a bulge someplace else.”<sup>123</sup> Committing the preponderance of SOF to one region risks being blindsided and unprepared in other areas. If we do not consider future operations by covering down on these shifting “bulges” USSOCOM will never gain or maintain the strategic initiative with an effective OPE program. The difficulty lies in the prioritization of finite assets.

The prioritization of finite resources in support of OPE is often problematic. The predictive nature of OPE, which seeks to anticipate future intelligence and operational needs in the pre-crisis stage, makes justification of resource allocation difficult at best. A USSOCOM spokesman highlighted the difficulty of measuring the potential of a probable support area as justification for the allocation of resources against that area.<sup>124</sup> Planners need to articulate the need to commit resources to what Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld calls the “unknown unknowns.” Although OPE utilizes a capabilities-based assessment, it is difficult to establish or even focus a capability without orienting on a specific target.<sup>125</sup> Likewise, threat seems to drive justification for finite resources. This is the paradox of capabilities-based versus threat-based planning. The quandary USSOCOM faces is that to detect the target indicators that would be the requisite for commitment of assets requires resource allocation upfront. The answer might be

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Linda Robinson, 3.

<sup>124</sup> MSG Ron Taylor, CSO-J3X NCOIC, OPE Conference, 12-15 Sep 05.

<sup>125</sup> CW4 Radke, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sep 05.

maintaining a small signature in a variety of potential hotspots and incrementally echeloning more capability as the situation requires. The initial disposition of forces would be the result of predictive analysis and intelligence garnered through existing global capability.

In an era of techno-centric solutions, the current global conflict has illuminated the primacy of the human dimension. Ultimately, the United States must strengthen its ability to leverage its human assets in order to monitor and influence global affairs. Establishing the presence of U.S. forces abroad must have a well-planned purpose. This presence must be at vital locations, conducting critical activities, with the most influential entities possible in order to maximize utility.

However, in some instances the sheer presence of American soldiers and personnel serves a purpose in and of itself.<sup>126</sup> The political and psychological effects of American presence in an area can both dissuade potential adversaries and elicit responses that make them easier to target. Technology does not obviate the need for highly trained personnel that collect and analyze intelligence, conduct diplomacy, and promote military security cooperation. We have diminished our human intelligence (HUMINT) capability and marginalized the Foreign Area Officer program. This is exacerbated by a lack of engagement venues in critical areas of concern as a result of idealistic foreign policy. Ambassador Marshall F. McCallie remarks that, “There is no substitute for...professional personnel at diplomatic missions and listening posts throughout the world.”<sup>127</sup> Pragmatic foreign diplomacy and a globally synchronized OPE-driven TSCP will establish the venues that fulfill this requirement by allowing USSOCOM forces to be postured appropriately.

The sustained presence of U.S. forces in strategic locations as a result of training and engagement venues provides a multitude of advantages. First, ongoing engagement provides a

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<sup>126</sup> COL Mark Rosengard, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sep 05.

<sup>127</sup> COL John R. Martin, *Defeating Terrorism: Strategic Issues Analysis*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Jan 02, 51.

springboard from which to rapidly prosecute operations in the event that a time-sensitive target set emerges. It provides a rapid response to time-sensitive actionable intelligence because of its forward posture. Second, it enhances operational reach by establishing an infrastructure that provides men, equipment, and access to the region. Third, it provides continuous surveillance of the area of operation through presence and activities orchestrated through, by, and with the host nation. The result is continuity of SA/SU. This is a means of increasing both situational understanding and operational reach.

Humanitarian assistance (HA) venues are another way of shaping both the environment and perceptions. U.S. relief efforts in Indonesia after the tsunami in 2005 resulted in a pro-U.S. sentiment throughout the country and the Southeast Asian region. The same was true in Pakistan after America provided earthquake disaster relief. A career Pakistani diplomat admitted that political relations between the United States and Pakistan have been good but, “public opinion until now has been a very different matter.”<sup>128</sup> Not only do such activities shape perceptions, but they also provide opportunities to engage with host nation military and the population in general. Additionally, they pave the way for future engagement opportunities as we have begun to see in Indonesia.

Admiral William J. Fallon, USPACOM Commander, has been lobbying DOS, DOD, and Congress to develop a new policy to take advantage of this opportunity for military-to-military interaction and cooperation.<sup>129</sup> These humanitarian assistance operations as well as small-scale civic assistance activities should be used to pave the way for the U.S. military to work through, by, and with host nation sponsors to address the conditions that allow insurgent activity to take root. HA activities are well received, provide access to critical places and people (local

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<sup>128</sup> David R. Sands, *Aid Likely To Improve U.S. Image*, Washington Times, 11 Oct 05, 18. <http://ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20051010395934.html>.

<sup>129</sup> Richard Halloran, *U.S. Restoring Security Ties With Indonesia*, Honolulu Advertiser, 4 Dec 05, 1, <http://ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20051205405431.html>

government, military, police, business), and address the underlying causes of potential insurgent support and activity.

## **Interagency Interoperability and Integration**

While engagement venues set the stage for military-to-military training that encourages and enables foreign partners in fighting insurgencies, the War on Terror cannot be fought exclusively by military means. Operational preparation of the environment must seek to leverage all elements of national power in order to shape the environment. As Pentagon Under Secretary for Policy, Douglas Feith states, “It is not a military project alone.”<sup>130</sup> The National Security Strategy stipulates that we will disrupt and destroy terrorist networks by “direct and continuous action using all the elements of national and international power.”<sup>131</sup> The National Defense Strategy calls for an increase in horizontal integration that seeks to improve interoperability and reduce parochialism. The strategy aims to “fuse operations and intelligence and break down the institutional, technological, and cultural barriers that separate them.”<sup>132</sup> Intelligence and operations fusion is just one facet of this much needed interagency cooperation. Counterinsurgency strategy that seeks to undercut the insurgent cause may involve the activities of multiple agencies, each with its own institutional equities.<sup>133</sup> Although progress has been made, it is these conflicting equities, as well as institutional differences, that preclude the interagency from achieving operational synergy to the fullest extent possible.

It makes sense that the National Security Council (NSC) would be the proponent for interagency cooperation with regard to national security and the GWOT. Unfortunately, the NSC has remained somewhat silent on this issue and has given very little guidance. Despite a desire

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<sup>130</sup> Linda Robinson, 2.

<sup>131</sup> National Security Strategy, 6.

<sup>132</sup> National Defense Strategy, 12.

<sup>133</sup> Rod Paschall, *LIC 2010, Special Operations and Unconventional Warfare in the Next Century*, Brassey’s (US), Inc, New York, 1990, 121.



for unity of effort, there is no unity of command.<sup>134</sup> At each echelon there is an organization or element designed to facilitate coordination and synchronization of all elements of national power. The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) is the global strategic integrator. Various Joint Interagency Coordinating Groups (JIACG) reside at each of the Combatant Commands to provide interface with Department of State, Department of Justice, and the Central Intelligence Agency. Military Liaison Elements (MLE) are integrated with various U.S. Embassy country teams to provide a means of coordinating and integrating military operations so that they complement diplomatic, economic, and information activities in the different countries. Although a variety of organizations have been established as conduits for interagency coordination, a multitude of impediments still exist that prevent true synergy and unity of effort.

Terrorists think globally, organize regionally, and act locally, while operating throughout the spectrum of hard power (bombings, killings) and soft power (media, information).<sup>135</sup> The transnational nature of the GWOT necessitates a global full-spectrum approach on the part of the U.S. government. Terrorists know no boundaries. Unless we can operate in a similar fashion we will not gain the strategic and operational initiative. For this reason, horizontal integration between U.S. government agencies throughout the globe is imperative. Unfortunately, a degree of friction has prevented this from happening. Lateral crosstalk between some military liaisons in various countries of interest has been inhibited in some instances due to personality conflicts within the embassies.<sup>136</sup> Within the Department of Defense, USSOCOM has encountered resistance from the various regional commands that are uncomfortable with USSOCOM forces operating autonomously within their area of operation.<sup>137</sup> These organizations must subordinate their parochialism to the greater need for integration and synchronization. The USSOCOM J3X

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<sup>134</sup> COL Mathew Bogdanos, in an interview at the conclusion of his lecture to the School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Ft. Leavenworth, KS in Oct 05.

<sup>135</sup> Ambassador Hank Crumpton, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>136</sup> CW4 Radke, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sep 05.

<sup>137</sup> Rowan Scarborough, *Special Operations Forces Eye Terrorists, Command Draws Up War Plans*, Washington Times, 12 Aug 05, pg 1, <http://ebird.afis.mil/ebfiles/e20050812384965.html>.

emphasizes that the relationship is not “us” (DOD) and “them” (interagency); we are all part of the interagency.<sup>138</sup>

Within the interagency arena there is a growing rift between the Pentagon, Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency regarding USSOCOM’s empowerment in synchronizing the GWOT. This friction stems from controversial initiatives to grant USSOCOM the authority to conduct operations in sovereign foreign countries without the consent of the residing U.S. ambassador.<sup>139</sup> Likewise, the CIA feels that USSOCOM intelligence activities may not only encroach on their territory but, more importantly, may interfere with their existing activities.

Authorization for the conduct of military activities within a foreign country is a contentious issue. The U.S. ambassador as the Chief of Mission has authority over all U.S. government personnel and activities in-country. As the president’s diplomatic representative it is incumbent upon the ambassador to safeguard American regional interests and leverage all elements of national power, including the military. USSOCOM is pushing for authorities that would allow the conduct of military operations in a target country without the explicit consent of the ambassador. This is an effort to expedite the targeting process by circumventing the “often time-consuming interagency debate.”<sup>140</sup>

While this arrangement might be advantageous to DOD, it can be very problematic for overseas emissaries. Military operations that are planned and orchestrated in a vacuum without the consultation of the appropriate members of the U.S. embassy country team may well have various unforeseen collateral effects. The political environment in Pakistan is such an example. Aggressive, overt U.S. military operations in Pakistan in pursuit of al Qaeda would have caused

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<sup>138</sup> COL Kent Bolster USSOCOM J3X, UW, USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sep 05.

<sup>139</sup> Ann Scott Tyson and Dana Priest, *Pentagon Seeking Leeway Overseas, Operations Could Bypass Envoys*, Washington Post, 24 Feb 05, A01.

<sup>140</sup> Ann Scott Tyson and Dana Priest, *Pentagon Seeking Leeway Overseas, Operations Could Bypass Envoys*, Washington Post, 24 Feb 05, A01.

social and political unrest, thus endangering the pro-U.S. Musharraf government and adversely impacting American interests in the region.<sup>141</sup> A holistic understanding of the operational environment, as well as the impact of military operations, are the realm of the ambassador. As the only entity in-country that truly leverages all elements of national power, the Chief of Mission needs to have oversight of all activities that may affect the area within his purview. The Chief of Mission will understand the ramifications of activities within the country and evaluate cost versus benefit. However, the ambassador must have an understanding of the applications of national power, to include military, in achieving his diplomatic objectives.

This application of diplomatic, information, military, and economic power is an art in itself. It should be crafted and formulated in a manner similar to that of operational art or a campaign plan in which the military element would be a logical line of operation. This could be taught at the National Defense University to all members of the diplomatic corps, particularly incoming ambassadors. USSOCOM's OPE campaign plan would nest within the ambassador's "operationalized" mission performance plan. This is one method to ensure true synchronization of all elements of national power and the OPE effort within each target country.

Training and procedures are another issue. The feeling among many Agency personnel is that DOD personnel do not have the required skills to properly perform certain intelligence related functions since they were not trained at Langley. They feel that various sensitive intelligence operations are best left to the CIA.<sup>142</sup> This must be rectified. Both DOD and CIA must have a common curriculum and compatible reporting procedures to ensure interoperability. Liaisons within each organization and student exchanges at the schoolhouses can ensure compatibility of standard operating procedures and establish a familiarity within the communities. This would assist DOD in understanding Agency procedures and equities. Likewise, the Agency would better understand DOD capabilities and limitations. By understanding the strengths and

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> A senior agency officer at the USSOCOM OPE Conference who wished to remain anonymous.

limitations of each organization, both can better synchronize their efforts and leverage each other's activities.

Conflicting organizational cultures, modes, and authorities are another point of friction. This is painfully evident in the realm of information sharing. Since there are a variety of agencies that grant security clearances, there is an inherent incompatibility between organizations with regard to authorization for information sharing. No single entity adjudicates which clearances are compatible and which are not. It is up to the individual organization to decide whether personnel from another organization have the appropriate clearances to share intelligence.

There are a multitude of examples which underscore the operational implications of impediments to information sharing. In one instance, the FBI precluded the DEA from getting an interrogation briefing for just that reason, despite working on a related case.<sup>143</sup> In another example, a member of the "Able Danger" intelligence team, which used data mining to identify some of the 9/11 terrorists, said that military lawyers forced the team to cancel three scheduled meetings with the FBI thus preventing them from passing crucial intelligence.<sup>144</sup> Critical information such as this was dispersed throughout the intelligence community but, because of security prohibitions, could not be collated in a timely manner. It "was not even available to analysts and policymakers ...who could begin to 'connect the dots'".<sup>145</sup> Thus, critical information, the identity of some of the would-be 9/11 hijackers, remained unexploited.

Different organizational cultures also cause problems. Unlike DOD, the various interagency coordinators, such as JIACG, do not have tasking authority. They lead through persuasion and consensus which confounds their military counterparts. Thus, essential non-military personnel, capabilities, or activities cannot be guaranteed in support of various

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<sup>143</sup> COL Mathew Bogdanos, in an interview at the conclusion of his lecture to the School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Ft. Leavenworth, KS in Oct 05.

<sup>144</sup> Philip Shenon, *Officer Says Military Blocked Sharing of Terrorist Files*, NY Times, 17 Aug 05, <http://ebird.afis.mil.ebfiles/20050817385873.html>

<sup>145</sup> Stephen J. Blank, *Rethinking Asymmetric Threats*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Sept 2003, 24.

counterinsurgency initiatives. This is also due to a paucity of resources. DOS, CIA, and DOJ do not have the manpower and equipment that DOD has at its disposal. Likewise, military personnel go wherever, whenever, to do whatever they are told. This is not the case with their interagency counterparts.

The multilayered hierarchical military chain of command is, at times, far less responsive than that of the Department of State. DOS, on the contrary, has very few layers between the operational level (ambassador), the Secretary of State, and the President. This results in varying rates of information dissemination, both up and down the chain of command, meaning that different headquarters acquire crucial information at different times. This also translates into differences in responsiveness with regard to authorizations. Some organizations may be granted approval for action almost immediately, while others must wade through various echelons before given permission to execute. The Secretary of Defense has sought to rectify this with enhanced operational capability and the implementation of the time-sensitive planning process (TSP) which expedites approval for certain operations. “[Rumsfeld’s] aim is to give SOCOM the means to locate terrorists and dispatch its commandos quickly to capture or kill them within hours rather than days.”<sup>146</sup> Unfortunately, not every target warrants SECDEF level attention. Some operations, although important, will not get the requisite approvals in time to exploit fleeting windows of opportunity. As a result, various targets will escape despite DOD’s capability to capture or kill them.

The difference in organizational lexicons within the various agencies, as insignificant as it may sound, often causes staffing problems that impede certain initiatives. As an example, disagreement on the meaning of the words covert and clandestine or partner nation versus host

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<sup>146</sup> Glenn W. Goodman Jr., *Expanded Role For Elite Commandos*, *Armed Forces Journal*, Feb 2003, 34-38.

nation have held up approvals in Washington for weeks if not months.<sup>147</sup> Speaking a different organizational language often prevents effective communication. The ambiguity of terms, definitions, and concepts inhibits clarity in articulating intent and operational concepts. As a result, synchronization and unity of effort are diminished.

Another friction point within the interagency community is the issue of primacy. Within DOD, USSOCOM has been tasked to synchronize efforts in support of the War on Terror. Within the interagency arena the arrangement is far more nebulous and will continue to be so until a new presidential directive is issued that deconflicts prior policies which gave the lead to different agencies. For instance, Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 39, enacted in 1995 under President Clinton, gave Department of State the lead responsibility for counterterrorism overseas. After 9/11 President Bush put the CIA in charge of disrupting terror networks abroad, but later tasked the Pentagon with eliminating terrorist sanctuaries under National Security Presidential Directive 9.<sup>148</sup> Unity of effort is difficult to achieve without unity of policy. Until this is resolved cooperation will be sporadic and personality dependent.

Additionally, DOS officers receive little to no training in COIN or CT related activities. There is no course of instruction to educate diplomats in leveraging the elements of national power in pursuit of counterinsurgency or counterterrorist actions. What is needed is CT oriented education for DOS and interagency personnel. This should lead to the incorporation of CT planning elements in both the Regional Action Plans and Mission Performance Plans of ambassadors and their country teams in theater. The National Defense University (NDU) has not been effectively utilized to train foreign service officers in this arena. Recently, the CJCS tasked the NDU to develop an operational-level interagency curriculum. In February 2005 it sponsored a four day course on the Joint Interagency Coordinating Group (JIACG) open to all members of

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<sup>147</sup> MAJ Dave Bolduc, Deputy Director Special Operations, J3, Joint Staff, USSOCOM OPE conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

<sup>148</sup> Linda Robinson, 4.

the executive branch.<sup>149</sup> This is a step in the right direction with regard to enhancing interagency interoperability. The next crucial step would be educating the diplomatic decision-makers in matters concerning CT and, specifically, OPE activities centered on global COIN. Doing so sets the conditions for implementing a more comprehensive OPE program that integrates all facets of national power.

Regardless of how CT focused the ambassador might be, to be truly effective the Chief of Mission needs the resources to execute his plan. The Department of State doesn't provide the ambassador with funding specifically intended for CT/COIN oriented activities. There is no money earmarked for COIN/CT initiatives or activities given to DOS or ambassadors. There is no delineation of GWOT economic development money to leverage against safe havens.<sup>150</sup> Planning for the integration of the DIME in pursuit of the GWOT is critical but ineffective without adequate funding and resources. From an OPE planning perspective this means that the onus is on the military to set the conditions and shape the environment. The diplomatic, economic, and informational aspects of national power will be of little assistance to the military planner until they are resourced properly.

To better facilitate interagency cooperation, the United States will need to enact legislation that mandates coordination between the various interagency members. Cooperation between DOS, CIA, DOD, and DOJ has greatly improved since 9/11, but is not at the level it needs to be. The varied successes and failures are often personality driven. A potential remedy to this situation would be implementing legislation similar to the Goldwater-Nichols Act which was passed in 1986 and forced the Armed Services to become joint. Goldwater-Nichols type legislation could mandate interagency cooperation, establish guidelines for determining who has primacy in certain activities, and outline the level of participation required by each member of the interagency for a particular operation or liaison activity. Likewise, it could call for the

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<sup>149</sup> Bogdanos, 14-18

<sup>150</sup> A senior U.S. Counterterrorism Official at the USSOCOM OPE Conference, 12-15 Sept 05.

development of a standard interagency planning process that better integrates all elements of the DIME. This would be the interagency equivalent of the Joint Operations Planning and Execution System (JOPES) which is the standard planning process adopted by the joint community in an effort to enhance interoperability. The EBO methodology is aptly suited for just such an interagency planning process.

Ultimately, the conditions have not been set for USSOCOM to fully leverage and exploit OPE in the GWOT. First, foreign diplomacy must pave the way for engagement with countries in areas of concern in order to afford USSOCOM the opportunity to shape the environment. Precluding such engagement denies venues for access and only degrades our global SA/SU and, consequently, our security posture. Secondly, while the interagency community has made great strides in enhancing cooperation and interoperability, significant improvement is required. Incongruities between security clearances, organizational cultures, and operational methodologies inhibit truly effective integration and impede the synergistic application of all elements of national power. In short, lack of engagement venues makes effective OPE difficult, while lack of interagency interoperability makes preparing the environment problematic and less than optimal.



## CONCLUSION

USSOCOM is adequately leveraging OPE as an operational enabler as it continues to improve its capability to globally synchronize efforts in support of the GWOT. However, USSOCOM and the rest of the interagency community must take various measures in order to maximize the effectiveness of operational preparation of the environment by setting the strategic conditions for operational success in the long-term.

First, OPE does fulfill key requirements outlined in the various national strategies to include disrupting and destroying terrorist organizations of global reach, denying safe haven, sustaining our intelligence advantage, and posturing for strategic uncertainty. It is an excellent method of achieving situational awareness and understanding, extending operational reach and responsiveness, and ultimately shorting the time between find to finish. Most importantly, preparing the environment allows USSOCOM to gain and maintain the strategic initiative as a result of its anticipatory nature and application in the pre-crisis phase of operations.

Second, although USSOCOM has in fact developed a comprehensive unconventional warfare campaign plan for the GWOT, it would benefit from having an OPE specific campaign plan that operationalizes OPE in an effort to both guide its conduct and synchronize its effects. Currently, USSOCOM has developed, for the TSOCS, a basic framework for the development of OPE plans. This is an excellent start and provides a template that is flexible enough to allow for regional specific needs yet provides a degree of commonality between programs. However, a comprehensive OPE campaign plan would synchronize preparation activities while subsuming these regional specific OPE programs into one unified global effort thus ensuring that preparation activities are more than just isolated tactical actions.

Using the suggested effects-based campaign planning framework within the context of operational design has several advantages. It focuses on effects leading to the desired end state. These effects may be kinetic (capture or kill) or non-kinetic (shaping or influencing). This non-

kinetic aspect is a critical portion of operational preparation of the environment. Also, the system-of-systems analysis is an excellent methodology for understanding and exploiting insurgent networks and their inherent weaknesses. Lastly, the EBO framework might be more easily understood and better received within the interagency arena. The facets of operational art and design may be foreign concepts to non-DOD planners, but the logic of integrating effects to achieve an end state should be simpler to convey and orchestrate within the diverse interagency community.

Lastly, until USSOCOM conducts *strategic preparation of the environment*, thus setting conditions for operational preparation of the environment, OPE cannot be fully exploited. This strategic preparation is in two areas: regional engagement, and interagency interoperability / integration.

We cannot influence a region without access to key areas of interest through engagement or other venues. Unless we are willing to engage various vital partner nations, despite political sensitivities, we lose the ability to affect change. Hence, limiting influencing and shaping opportunities with countries like Indonesia, because of human rights violations, not only degrades the nation's security posture but also precludes the United States from exerting influence through training and interaction. In the long run this interaction will have a more positive impact on human rights conduct than disengagement will.

Interagency integration and interoperability needs improvement in order to fully leverage all elements of national power. Coordination between DOD, CIA, and DOS is inhibited because of security clearance issues, differing organizational cultures, authorities, and the matter of primacy. Potential solutions could include enacting a Goldwater-Nichols type of legislation that mandates, by law, a requirement and standard of integration for the interagency community. A potential solution for problems relating to disparate organizational cultures and primacy issues would be to develop an interagency schoolhouse with a curriculum that educates all members on the roles, capabilities, and limitations of their counterparts. Likewise, education on campaign

planning, as it applies to the application of the elements of national power, would also be beneficial and provide all participants with a common operational framework.

Preparing and shaping the environment is, from a temporal standpoint, the deep fight. This must be planned, orchestrated, and synchronized by USSOCOM and should integrate all elements of national power to shape the environment to find, fix, and finish terrorist networks. Creating a non-permissive environment for terrorists by preempting or mitigating conditions that foster and enable insurgent activity is the ultimate goal. Robert Kaplan aptly observes, “Success require[s] long-term continuous presence on the ground in scores of countries- quiet and unobtrusive- with operations harmonized through a central strategy, but decentralized execution...”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Kaplan, 192.

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