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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**OPTIMIZING ARMY SPECIAL FORCES LEADERS IN A  
GLOBAL COUNTER-INSURGENT NETWORK**

by

Joshua H. Walker  
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March 2007

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**OPTIMIZING ARMY SPECIAL FORCES LEADERS IN A GLOBAL COUNTER-  
INSURGENT NETWORK**

Joshua H. Walker  
Major, United States Army  
B.A., Washington State University, 1995

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS**

from the

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## ABSTRACT

Since the watershed events of September 11, 2001, the United States military has been engaged in fighting what has been recognized as a highly organized and networked global insurgency. These global insurgents have sought to take advantage of all the technological advances available in the current information age, combined with the innovative and adaptive advantages of networked organizations.

This study asks two questions: 1.) How can global insurgent networks be countered; and 2.) Where might the most appropriate personnel to man a global U.S. counter-insurgent network be found? This thesis asserts that organizational considerations matter and that for the U.S. military to have the best chance to defeat these global insurgent networks it must further develop small, adaptive human networks of its own. Secondly, the authors will demonstrate that there exists within the Army Special Forces field grade officer population the capability and capacity to man and lead a small, yet globally dispersed counter-insurgent network.

These arguments will be evidenced by an examination of the networked aspects of the global insurgency, hierarchical aspects of the U.S. military and finally the specific manpower data within the Army Special Forces officer population. What is still needed in the evolving global war on terror, and this study hopes to contribute, is a small turn of mind towards applying *networked* counter-terror organizations against a very serious irregular, networked threat. To this end, the authors will propose the establishment of a Special Forces Global Counter-Insurgent Network (SFGCIN).



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We would like to also thank Professor (COL, Ret.) Peter Gustaitis for his invaluable insight into organizational and institutional theories which, combined with his valuable operational experience always kept us honest. He continually caused us to re-think old assumptions and not settle for “good enough.”

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## FOREWORD

There is an old Mongol saying, that “with forty men you can shake the world.” The adage hints at a powerful truth about war: very often, “the few” makes a big difference. In the Mongols’ own experience, their “hordes” were almost always significantly outnumbered in their major battles. Yet they emerged victorious, again and again, carving out the largest empire the world has ever seen.

“The few” have appeared and reappeared many times throughout history, even more dramatically than in the Mongol case. One of the best examples was at Gettysburg, where Joshua Lawrence Chamberlin turned the tide of battle at the critical moment – with just the few hundred fighters of his Maine Regiment attacking and defeating a numerically far superior foe.

But perhaps 1940 was the most auspicious year for “the few” as, even in a very big war, small numbers of fighting men on both sides held the balance between victory and defeat. About a thousand indefatigable RAF pilots were immortalized by Winston Churchill – who first observed this “phenomenon of the few” – for having won the Battle of Britain.

At the same time, about a thousand German U-boat crewmen, in thirty-odd submarines, came perilously close to winning the war outright with their undersea blockade of Britain. On both sides of this, the biggest war in history, the few made a powerful impact.

And two years later, in 1942, just as in the Mongol proverb, not many more than forty American dive bomber pilots – empowered by the preliminary sacrifice of about the same number of torpedo plane pilots – changed the course of the Pacific War at Midway.

It is simply amazing how often, even in the largest-scale wars, small numbers of soldiers, sailors and airmen have wielded huge, world-shaping influence.

And this is still true today. In the war on terror, we have already seen the enemy shaking the world with the power of the few on 9/11. The American response in Afghanistan late in 2001 showed that we understood the value of the few as well, with about 300 Army Special Forces troops toppling the Taliban. Since then, the scale of the terror war has grown, largely due to the American intervention in Iraq.

But now come Majors Walker and Deal, to remind us in their thesis of the enduring (and never more needed) power of the few. They argue quite persuasively that a little more than 200 Army Special Forces majors, representing a “structural surplus of O-4s” – i.e., the number above and beyond the typical number of jobs available for SF majors, - can be repurposed in creative ways to galvanize the effort to build a global counterinsurgent network.

In effect, they are advancing an argument that, once again, “the few” can come to the fore and, in this case, find the way to victory in one of America’s most puzzling, troubling wars.

If there is going to be any way to shorten the “long war,” and to improve our chances of victory, it will likely be found in a skillfully crafted network of “the few.” Like the one they have designed in this study.

May it be so.

John Arquilla  
Monterey, March 2007

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. BACKGROUND

Since the events of September 11, 2001, the United States government has undertaken a fundamental reexamination of the way it protects and defends its citizens against transnational terrorism. This self-examination naturally extends to the Department of Defense (DoD) and consequently engages the special operations forces (SOF) community in debate over long-term strategies for fighting what is now being considered a global insurgency. This debate is healthy, relevant and necessary because of the emergent potential of an irregular threat and the recognition that the U.S. military is not optimized to fight this type of adversary. The National Defense Strategy and Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) clearly identify this problem: “Although U.S. military forces maintain their predominance in traditional warfare, they must also be improved to address the non-traditional, asymmetric challenges of this new century.”<sup>1</sup>

This study asks two questions: 1.) How can global insurgent networks be countered; and 2.) Where might the most appropriate personnel to man a global U.S. counter-insurgent network be found? This thesis asserts that organizational considerations matter and that for the U.S. military to have the best chance to defeat these global insurgent networks it must further develop small, adaptive human networks of its own. Secondly, the authors will demonstrate that there exists within the Army Special Forces field grade officer population the capability and capacity to man and lead a small, yet globally dispersed counter-insurgent network to counter and defeat an irregular, networked adversary.

These arguments will be weighed in an examination of the networked aspects of the global insurgency, the hierarchical aspects of the U.S. military, and finally by analyzing the specific manpower data within the Army Special Forces officer population.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006, 3.

Current operational and administrative constraints, as well as future requirements for this finite population of Army Special Forces officers will also be considered.

One of the recurring themes in this thesis borrows from the work of Drs. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, specifically their idea that “it takes a network to fight a network.” In this view, SOF’s greatest capability exists in what Arquilla and Ronfeldt term a force of “the small and the many.”<sup>2</sup> Such a force stands the best chance of defeating an irregular enemy, fundamentally changing the battlefield from one in which the U.S. military has been asymmetrically disadvantaged, to a symmetrical contest fought with both direct and indirect strategies. Once the battlefield has been leveled, with both actors on equal terms, the natural advantages of the U.S. military in manpower, technology, and resources can potentially lead to a decisive advantage in the ongoing conflict. Until this occurs, traditional U.S. resource advantages will not suffice against an asymmetrically advantaged foe. To this end, the authors conclude by proposing the establishment of a Special Forces Global Counter-Insurgent Network (SFGCIN).

## **B. THESIS OUTLINE**

Before a solution can be proposed, the problem must be identified, framed, and defined. To this end, Chapter II discusses the problem presented by global insurgent adversaries operating within a fourth generation or *netwar* paradigm, which highlight the increasing relevance of networks and social network theory.

Fourth generation warfare (4GW) is described by Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, USMC, in his insightful book, *The Sling and the Stone*. He defines 4GW as an evolved form of insurgency focused not on destroying military targets, but on eroding political will, seeing human and technological networks as the means by which global insurgents seek to achieve their ends.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis of this chapter centers on how a global terrorist insurgency is attempting to counter the inherent advantage of the U.S.

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<sup>2</sup> John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, USMC, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004).

conventional military organization by utilizing what the respected network theorists Steven Metz and Douglas V. Johnson of the Strategic Studies Institute call "strategic asymmetry."<sup>4</sup>

After the problem has been identified, Chapter II will then address the historic and current military predisposition for conventional warfare and the incongruity of this approach when engaged against a globally networked insurgency. This will be accomplished through a brief historical perspective which outlines and shows anecdotally how irregular warfare is not new in the American military experience and how the organizational frame of reference matters.

Chapter III contains the main argument of this thesis and explains the counter to the networked insurgent enemy identified in Chapter II. This chapter recommends an alternate approach by employing Army Special Forces leaders within a small, globally dispersed counter-insurgent network working through, by and with host-nation counterparts for long periods of time. This will allow the necessary trust and influence to develop between foreign populaces and security forces which will lead to *real* knowledge about the hard to reach areas and peoples where insurgents seek refuge. This SF human network will be able to improve upon the capability of most DoD hierarchical organizations currently aligned against this networked threat.

Additionally, this chapter will define the organizational framework of a Special Forces Global Counter-Insurgent Network (SFGCIN) by describing the roles and relationships of the nodes and hubs within this organization. Organizational theories will be presented which will demonstrate the value of relocating select Special Forces field grade officers from the inner hierarchy of organizations and placing them at the periphery or edges of the network, a concept which is promoted by David Alberts and Richard

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<sup>4</sup> Strategic asymmetry is defined as "acting, organizing, and thinking differently than opponents in order to maximize one's own advantages, exploit an opponent's weaknesses, attain the initiative, or gain greater freedom of action...It can have both psychological and physical dimensions." Steven Metz and Douglas V. Johnson II, *Asymmetry and U.S. Military Strategy: Definition, Background, and Strategic Concepts* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2001).

Hayes in their book *Power to the Edge*.<sup>5</sup> This proposal also takes into consideration a model developed by Naval Postgraduate School professors David Tucker, Hy Rothstein, and Anna Simons. Their model highlights the importance of presence, trust, influence, intelligence and security for U.S. personnel operating in the non-western world and will be used to explain the power of the network.<sup>6</sup>

Another important aspect of this network is the belief that it should be operated primarily in *the open*. The information revolution has made it more difficult to keep a secret as well as enabled a rise in the comparative value of information gained from open vice classified sources. A long-term, *unclassified* operation could evolve over time, and then by exception allow for short duration, classified initiatives to be conducted without the risk of maintaining a long-term classified program. This chapter will also identify characteristics which distinguish the proposed network and conclude by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the SFGCIN with current DoD foreign engagement programs.

Chapter IV presents empirical evidence which demonstrates the existence of considerable surplus within the U.S. Army Special Forces field-grade officer personnel population. Because of the unique experience and skill-sets resident within this population, this surplus represents an extremely valuable and limited resource. Therefore, this chapter will discuss how the concepts of allocative and productive efficiency may apply to this dilemma.<sup>7</sup> Robert R. Leonhard, a retired army lieutenant colonel and author of *The Principles of War for the Information Age*, borrows the concepts of allocative and productive efficiency from the study of economics. He uses these concepts to discuss the scarcity of resources and the seemingly infinite demands competing for those resources as an essential dilemma within the military. This chapter

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<sup>5</sup> David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes, *Power to the Edge: Command, Control in the Information Age* (Washington, DC: CCRP Publication Series, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> David Tucker, Hy Rothstein, and Anna Simons, (unpublished research, Defense Analysis Department, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, February 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Robert R. Leonhard, *The Principles of War for the Information Age*, (New York, Ballantine Books, 1998).

provides the empirical data which illustrates how the Special Forces population of field-grade officers has increased over the past several years, as well as projections about how this trend is expected to continue.

It is the authors hope that by the end of this thesis the reader should be, if not convinced, at least appreciative of some simple claims presented in this study. Mainly that a U.S. human network is the most appropriate organizational form to combat the global insurgent networks with which we are at war. Secondly, that there exist roughly twice as many Army Special Forces majors (O-4) as there are traditional Special Forces jobs to employ these men at the height of their operationally productive careers.<sup>8</sup> While it is necessary and healthy for any personnel population to have a small overage, the growing trend of surplus suggests there might be other, more creative ways to employ these special operations leaders. A supporting assertion follows that because of the personnel surplus existing in the Army Special Forces field grade officer population, that they are the most appropriate human resource asset to put to work in the proposed network. This does not mean that all the SF field grade officers working in non-traditional SF positions are not doing valuable work, only that with a 211% overage that those numbers would support putting a small portion of that personnel surplus to work in this proposed human counter-insurgent network, optimizing their unique and critical unconventional warfare and counter-insurgent skill-sets.

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<sup>8</sup> The empirical evidence for this claim will be presented, examined, and explained in detail in chapter IV of this thesis.



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## II. DEFINING THE THREAT – AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The complexity of the future security environment is rooted in global and regional ideological and political struggles. These struggles will challenge traditional US military approaches. Faced with the conventional warfighting capacity of the United States, our adversaries will likely choose to fight using a hybrid of irregular, disruptive, catastrophic and traditional capabilities as a way to achieve their strategic objectives. The strategy of our adversaries will be to subvert, attrite, and exhaust us rather than defeat us militarily. They will seek to undermine and erode the national power, influence, and will of the United States and its strategic partners. Our adversaries will continue to wage IW (Irregular Warfare) against us until we demonstrate the same competency in IW that we demonstrate in conventional warfighting.<sup>9</sup>

### A. OVERVIEW

Historian Walter Laqueur begins *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study* with one of the earliest references to irregular warriors and guerrilla tactics found in recorded history. Set in the fifteenth century B.C., the passage contains an ancient Hittite king's complaint that "the irregulars did not dare to attack me in the daylight and preferred to fall on me by night."<sup>10</sup> This chapter will demonstrate that while guerrilla tactics have remained fundamentally unchanged since classical antiquity, what gives the modern guerrilla (or global insurgent) his disruptive and destructive power is the organizational networked form. To accomplish this, concepts of organization theory will be explained and then applied to what is known about key transnational terrorist groups as well as current U.S. military organizational forms and strategies. Finally the traditional hierarchical organizational structure of the U.S. military will be evidenced as less appropriate in the *long war* because of the inherent inefficiencies with this type of

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<sup>9</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (IW JOC)* (Washington, DC: Version 1.0, January 2007), 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A Historical and Critical Study*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 1.

organization when juxtaposed against a network. This organizational disadvantage poses challenges which hinder many current military efforts in the protracted campaign against terrorist networks.

## **B. IDENTIFYING THE THREAT**

### **1. *The Old – Guerrilla Tactics***

With so much written about a *new* form of warfare in the post-9/11 era, it is important to distinguish exactly what is new and what is not.<sup>11</sup> Guerrilla warfare tactics have been relatively unchanged since the Hittite king was ambushed over three thousand years ago. Guerrilla tactics have always involved a struggle of the weak against the strong, the irregular against regular martial forces. This fundamental relationship is one of asymmetry.<sup>12</sup>

Colonel C.E. Callwell described guerrilla tactics in his treatise, *Small Wars* as “shirk[ing] engagements in the open. Organization they had little or none... [and they] gave the regular troops much trouble.”<sup>13</sup> The British Special Operations Executive veteran, James Eliot Cross, highlighted clandestine sabotage and subversion as key tactics of guerrilla warfare. He stated that, “[t]he military weakness of guerrillas and rebels. . . forces them to avoid battle with official forces except through ambushes, assassinations, and hit and run raiding. . . .”<sup>14</sup> This speaks to the asymmetric aspects which have always epitomized guerrilla tactics. While the guerrilla tactics of ambush, sabotage and subversion, kidnapping, assassination, and terrorism have most often been a part of guerrilla warfare, it was the thoughts of Mao Zedong on the political implication

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<sup>11</sup> For example: Irregular Warfare as articulated in the *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept* (IW JOC).

<sup>12</sup> Metz and Johnson further describe asymmetry as “the methodology of the weak against the strong. It is the use of disparity between contending parties to gain advantage.”, 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 31.

<sup>14</sup> James Eliot Cross, *Conflict in the Shadows: The Nature and Politics of Guerrilla War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), 58.

of guerrilla warfare in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which gave revolutionary and guerrilla warfare a new focus and audience. Mao's famous statement that "politics is war without bloodshed; war is politics with bloodshed"<sup>15</sup> can be easily understood as a paraphrase of Clausewitz's famous adage that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means."<sup>16</sup> Mao and Clausewitz both recognized the infrangible bond between policy and war, yet it was Mao who took the idea on the centrality of a political undertaking, "[t]he problem of political mobilization of the army and the people is indeed of the utmost importance. . . political mobilization is the most fundamental condition for winning the war."<sup>17</sup> This is where a truly new aspect of guerrilla warfare began to emerge. While the tactics of the guerrilla remained constant, a new understanding of the primacy of *political will* in an insurgency was born and developed by Mao's "Peoples War". Colonel Thomas X. Hammes in his insightful book, *The Sling and the Stone*, credits Mao's "Peoples War" with the birth of a new generation of warfare, a Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW).<sup>18</sup> A point of departure for the next section will concentrate on this new generation of war and what is central to understanding and defeating a protagonist operating in 4GW – the *network*.

## 2. *The New – The Irregular Networked Threat*

Most often in the field of counter-terrorism the term *terror network* is discussed as if its mere label as a network conveys a level of understanding unique to a terrorist organization. The problem arises in the obvious variety and complexity of the multitude of terrorist organizations with which the U.S. is concerned. The broadness of the term describes nothing more than a basic concept of an inter-connected organization. Much

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<sup>15</sup> Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Baltimore, Md: Nautical & Aviation Pub. Co. of America, 1992), 55.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, Michael Eliot Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>17</sup> Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: on War in the 21st Century*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Hammes further explains 4GW as utilizing "all available networks – political, economic, social, and military – to convince the enemy's political decision makers that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly for the perceived benefit." *The Sling and the Stone: on War in the 21st Century*, 2.

more is needed to understand the complexity of a network if the counter-terrorism community is to grasp this important aspect of modern terrorist organizations. To better know the enemy, this section will utilize an organizational frame of reference to analyze the networked organizational form and its inherent potential within an era of 4GW.

**a. *Inside the Network***

The forensic psychiatrist and former U.S. Foreign Service officer, Marc Sageman conducted primary source research during his time in Islamabad while working with Afghanistan's mujahedin. Sageman applied social network analysis to study empirical data gathered on global Salafi jihadis'<sup>19</sup> relationships and ties to others in their networks. This work led to new insights and understanding of the motivations and ways individuals joined the global Salafi jihad. The most valuable aspect of Sageman's book, *Understanding Terror Networks*, for the purposes of this thesis, falls within his analysis and explanation of networks.

Sageman states that "[a] group of people can be viewed as a network, a collection of nodes connected through links. Some nodes are more popular and are attached to more links, connecting them to other more isolated nodes. These more connected nodes, called hubs, are important components of a terrorist network"<sup>20</sup> To visualize this concept, Figure 1 depicts Drs. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldts' three basic networked forms: the chain or line network, the hub, star, or wheel network, and the all-channel or full-matrix network.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Marc Sageman defines global Salafi jihad as "an Islamic revivalist social movement. It consists of people and organizations in various degrees of formalization who share the same ideology and mission." Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>21</sup> John Arquilla, and David F. Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: the Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001), 7-8.

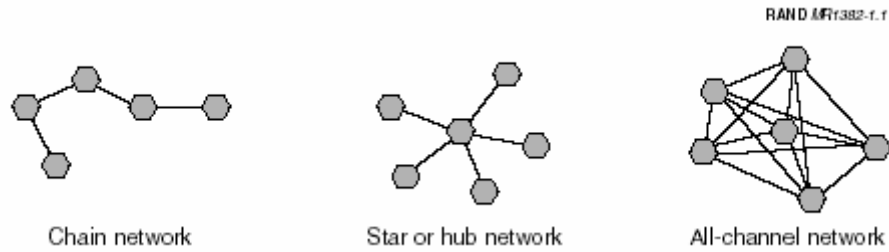


Figure 1. Three Basic Types of Networks

The chain or line network is characterized by end-to-end movement of people, goods or information along a line through intermediate nodes. The hub, star, or wheel network is much like a franchise in which actors are connected by a central node and “must go through that node to communicate and coordinate with each other.”<sup>22</sup> Finally, the all-channel or full matrix network, topographically, is a system in which everyone is connected to everyone else with the authority to move information or goods in any direction.<sup>23</sup>

To further our understanding of networks, Sageman informs us that within the varied population of organized terrorist groups, there exist many different types of networks. Some are dominated by a few tightly connected hubs (hierarchical) while other cores or hubs are connected to their field lieutenants by weak links (decentralized).<sup>24</sup> Sageman also intones that networks are not static, but evolving, and that how they grow over time informs their potential.<sup>25</sup>

Sageman provides the example of how the “growth of [a] network [is] not a random process but one of preferential attachment, meaning that [how] a new node will connect to any given node is proportional to the number of its existing links” or a “small world” network.<sup>26</sup> He provides the example of internet traffic on CNN, Google, or

<sup>22</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Sageman, 137 – 138.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

Yahoo websites – these “giant hubs . . . receive far more ‘hits’ than most other web sites. This approximates the structures of the two Arab clusters of the global Salafi Jihad.”<sup>27</sup> So naturally, the more well-known the hub, the more likely it will be to attract new nodes. The intent of this section is not to get into specific analysis of the various terrorist “clusters” which comprise the global Salafi jihad, but to provide an organizational frame of reference to analyze enemy networks.

Besides the idea of “small world” networks, Sageman also introduces the idea of “geographical distribution” which suggests that rather than a top-down building plan; small world networks are capable of “spontaneous self-organization. . . [by] self-recruits, establishing clusters of mujahedin who built upon preexisting linkages to the jihad.”<sup>28</sup> This suggests that another powerful aspect of these networks is the lack of a need for an organized recruit infrastructure because of a “like-minded” community which seeks out linkages to the network from the bottom up.

Sageman also adds the concept of “embeddedness,” which refers to “the rich nexus of social and economic linkages between members of an organization and its environment.”<sup>29</sup> This is an important aspect of social network theory because it explains the relationship between a network and society, shared collective behavior, and the concern of individuals to either maintain or sever these social bonds. The repercussions either work to keep a member in a small world network or if these links are severed (lack of *embeddedness*), frees the individual to establish weak links to new networks.<sup>30</sup>

#### ***b. The Old Guerrilla in the Information Age***

The impact of the current information revolution with which transnational terror organizations now operate is critical to understanding terror networks’ potential to bridge old divides with new technology. Within the information age, Sageman continues

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<sup>27</sup> Sageman, 140.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

to highlight the necessity of close, intense and intimate relationships required for religious terror movements to have trust and commitment from each member. In the past, because of the traditional time and distance it took to meet and communicate, it was not as easy for these isolated insurgents to maintain current, frequent, and detailed correspondence. Sageman points out that:

the more isolated the fanatic, the more likely it was that his fanaticism would fade. Enthusiasm for one's task is difficult to preserve in a vacuum. The revolution in communication technology in the 1990s has dramatically changed this situation.<sup>31</sup>

This new communication technology has been a boon for the many disparate and formerly isolated terror organizations, with the “impact on network topology”<sup>32</sup> for these groups not yet fully realized. One aspect of the information age is the impact of satellite phone communication and internet connectivity which have made it easier to communicate directives, propaganda and *ideas* than at any previous time in history – the links of a global network that move with the press of a button. This has resulted in the creation of a virtual community where disparate individuals (nodes) can be exposed to ideas and build basic connections (links) to others, through cyberspace, slowly building a network from the bottom up and with very little chance of exposure. Thus the extremely difficult task of building a clandestine insurgent network has been made much more feasible with the advantages available in the information age.

These are some of the key aspects which empower a new generation of guerrillas operating in fourth generational warfare. The power of a networked form operating in the information age has best been articulated by what Drs. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt refer to as *netwar*. Arquilla and Ronfeldt define netwar as:

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<sup>31</sup> Sageman, 158.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 164.



. . . an emerging mode of conflict at societal levels, involving measures short of war, in which the protagonists use – indeed, depend on using – *network forms* of organization [emphasis added], doctrine, strategy, and communication. These protagonists generally consist of dispersed, often small groups who agree to communicate, coordinate, and act in an internetted manner, often without precise central leadership or headquarters. Decision-making may be deliberately decentralized and dispersed.<sup>33</sup>

The essential point is the *potential* of these irregular networked threats. According to Arquilla and Ronfeldt, the power of actors to operate in autonomous networks, harnessing information at high speeds in a globalized and connected world, will result in a new form of global terror organization able to adapt and evolve faster than its opposition—the U.S. military’s hierarchical counter-terror organizations.<sup>34</sup> The old, familiar guerrilla now acts outside of a traditional nation-state framework and with the advantages of a networked organization on a global scale. To succeed against a networked terror organization, Arquilla and Ronfeldt argue, requires “effective interagency approaches, which by their nature involve networked structures.”<sup>35</sup>

Networked terrorists are determined and unified in their goals of “overthrowing the existing world structure, destroying the United States and instituting in its place al-Qaeda’s version of the next Islamic caliphate.”<sup>36</sup> The advantages of the networked form, operating within the information age, have provided al-Qaeda and their affiliates a much greater chance of fulfilling their dire goal.

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<sup>33</sup> John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt, *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1997), 277. For more on netwar, see John Arquilla and David F. Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>35</sup> Arquilla, and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 78.

<sup>36</sup> Kimbra L. Fishell, “Challenging the Hegemon: Al Qaeda’s Elevation of Asymmetric Insurgent Warfare onto the Global Arena.” In *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, ed. Robert J. Bunker, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 117.

The historians and theorists, Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett reach many fascinating conclusions at the end of their study of military innovation in the interwar period between the first and second world wars. One important finding regarding innovation was that “[i]nnovation in tactics and *operational concepts* [emphasis added] can prove as important on the battlefield as changes in equipment.”<sup>37</sup> Murray and Millett further find that most innovation is evolutionary (bottom-up) vice revolutionary (top-down) and that “evolutionary innovation depends on organizational focus over a sustained period of time.”<sup>38</sup>

The good news is that innovation has and is occurring since the events of September 11, 2001. Even more promising is the fact that the U.S. military and especially the special operations community possess the appropriate human capital, material and technological resources to counter this determined adversary. What is still needed and this study hopes to contribute - is a small turn of mind towards applying *networked* counter-insurgent organizations against a very serious irregular, networked threat.

## **C. THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAME OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Historical Background**

Irregular actors practicing guerrilla warfare have been part of the U.S. military experience even before colonial times. America’s experiences in asymmetric warfare began as early as the French and Indian Wars, where small, irregular bands of raiders fought limited skirmishes in the service of either French or British interests for control of the continent. The American tradition of irregular warfare continued with the American Revolution, when the Continental Army harassed its better-armed and better-trained opponents with guerrilla-style tactics. Arquilla notes that,

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<sup>37</sup> Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 306.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 306, 309.

. . . during the Revolution, American forces demonstrated a penchant for protracted guerrilla warfare in the remarkable campaign in the South, which was won, and won freedom for the colonies, despite the absence of victory in open battle against the British.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the American ability to fight unconventional, *less than total war* campaigns and win, General Washington felt that to be taken seriously as a world power, the Continental Army needed to evolve into a *conventional* fighting force. Thomas Adams notes that “when George Washington took command of the fledgling Continental Army, he made it his first order of business to create an army that could fight in the properly accepted ‘European’ manner of its British opponents.”<sup>40</sup> This attached the United States to a conventional model despite its obvious unsuitability in various campaigns, including the frontier wars in the late nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup>

Having long idealized the European tradition of the set-piece battle, the U.S. emerged as the preeminent practitioner of what historian Edward Luttwak calls attritional warfare.<sup>42</sup> The perceived supremacy of conventional, attritional warfare has led to the idea that this is the “American” way of war. Despite American involvement in many small wars, U.S. doctrine continued to neglect unconventional warfare until well into the

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<sup>39</sup> John Arquilla, ed. *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times* (New York: University Press of America, 1996), 55.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998), 27.

<sup>41</sup> Adams notes that “Though frequently criticized, the [frontier army's] standard offensive methods were never changed. Heavy columns...locked to slow moving supply trains, continued to crawl about the vast western distances in search of an enemy who could scatter and vanish almost instantly.” Adams, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Luttwak proposes a spectrum ranging from attritional to relational-maneuver warfare. He equates attritional warfare with an army focused more on its own internal administration and operation and less on the external environment. “By contrast, the closer they are to the relational-maneuver end of the spectrum, the more armed forces will tend to be outer-regarding.” For further insight into attritional and relational-maneuver warfare see Edward N. Luttwak, “Notes on Low-Intensity Warfare,” *Parameters*, December 1983.

twentieth century. According to Adams, “Every experience outside the conventional model...was treated as an aberration.”<sup>43</sup>

Today, a daunting challenge for the U.S. military is to look back and reflect on its storied and successful history of irregular or unconventional warfare. In the information age, irregular actors’ potential to disrupt and destroy is magnified by their mastery of networked organizations and the acephelous nature of the network. For the U.S. military to succeed against these modern, irregular enemies, it must relearn how to fight and win small wars. One way to accomplish this goal would be to affect a simple shift in organizational and human resource perspective which could have a significant impact in a long, protracted struggle. In the next section, the organizational frame of reference will illustrate the inherent disadvantages of a large, hierarchical institution trying to keep pace with the innovation and adaptability of a networked terror organization.

## **2. Hierarchy versus the Network**

### ***a. The Hierarchy***

The military, like most government agencies, is what Professor Henry Mintzberg, renowned author and organizational theorist, refers to as a machine bureaucracy. A machine bureaucracy consists of a large hierarchy which is characterized by its rigid departmentalization, standardization, and centralization.<sup>44</sup> This type of structure is most effective in a simple and stable environment. While the authors understand the inherent complexity and variance present in war, this argument is being considered within an organizational, not operational perspective. For example, during the Cold War, the former Soviet Union posed the single greatest threat to the security of the United States. From an organizational standpoint, the Soviet military posed a symmetrical threat to the U.S. military in that they were both large, modern conventional

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<sup>43</sup> Adams, 28.

<sup>44</sup> For a more thorough explanation of organizational characteristics and configurations see Henry Mintzberg, “Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?” *Harvard Business Review*, (Jan-Feb 1981): 7.

force structures. The U.S. weapon systems and set-piece battle strategies shared very similar constructs. This created a relatively simple and stable environment which lasted for over four decades, an environment for which a machine bureaucracy was well suited.

One of the primary problems associated with a large, machine bureaucracy is its inadaptability. This inability to adapt is what makes machine bureaucracies less flexible than properly networked organizations. According to Bunker,

This allows for adaptive behavior to take place during operational situations. When this is combined with the greater information processing speed of the network structure, it helps to explain why they can easily outdistance hierarchical structures and get inside their [decision cycles].<sup>45</sup>

Bunker cites Al-Qaeda as an example of a network that has been able to adapt as a result of its “losing and learning doctrine” and “goal oriented and not rule oriented” protocols. The first protocol is based on the premise that unsuccessful operations are not necessarily failures as long as the organization learns and does not repeat the same mistakes. The latter focuses the organization on the end-state and not the means. “If one form of attack or technique fails then others will be tried. These protocols have allowed Al-Qaeda to become a network that learns.”<sup>46</sup>

***b. The Network***

A network, on the other hand is most closely aligned with what Mintzberg refers to as an *adhocracy*. An adhocracy is a complex, non-standardized organization which is tremendously fluid in structure and relies on mutual adjustment for coordination among its components. This type of organization is well suited to a complex and dynamic environment. Unlike a hierarchical organization where power is concentrated at

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<sup>45</sup> Matt Begert, “Operational Combat Analysis of the Al Qaeda Network,” in *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, ed. Robert J. Bunker, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 165.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

the top, power within an adhocracy is distributed throughout the structure and is based on expertise rather than authority.<sup>47</sup> Mintzberg states:

In a project structure, strategy is not formulated from above and then implemented lower down; rather, it evolves by virtue of the multitude of decisions made for the projects themselves. In other words, the adhocracy is continually developing its strategy as it accepts and works out new projects, the creative results of which can never be predicted. And so everyone who gets involved in the project work – and in the adhocracy that can mean virtually everyone – becomes a strategy maker.<sup>48</sup>

While these characteristics provide an adhocracy with many advantages in the constantly evolving insurgent threat environment, like any organizational structure, an adhocracy also has its disadvantages. The primary limitation of this type of organization is its inefficiency. “Adhocracy can do no ordinary thing well. But it is extraordinary at innovation.”<sup>49</sup> So while adhocracies might not be best suited to perform repetitive, administrative organizational tasks, they are very well suited to innovate and adapt, keeping pace with nimble terrorist networks.

As previously mentioned, a machine bureaucracy is most efficient when operating in a simple and stable environment. Unfortunately, the environment in which the U.S. military must operate today is much more uncertain. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the dawning of the information age, and the emergence of many new challenges posed by a networked adversary, the U.S. military must now operate within an increasingly complex and unstable environment for which a network or adhocracy is much better suited. This concept is already recognized in the National Military Strategy:

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<sup>47</sup> Mintzberg, 10-12.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 12.

“It is imperative that the Armed Forces retain the ability to contend with the principal characteristic of the security environment – uncertainty.”<sup>50</sup>

The authors believe that it is possible for a nimble, networked organization to operate within a large military hierarchy – specifically to counter an irregular networked threat in an uncertain environment.

*c. Challenges to Hierarchy from the Network*

Arquilla and Ronfeldt suggest that hierarchies face three organizational challenges in confronting networks. These challenges must be confronted in order to develop new and better methods against terror networks. The first challenge is that “hierarchies have a difficult time fighting networks.” The second is that “it takes networks to fight networks.” Finally, Arquilla and Ronfeldt posit that “whoever masters the network form first and best will gain major advantages.”<sup>51</sup>

The first point is supported by Marc Sageman’s empirical research which led him to state that: “flexibility and local initiative of small-world networks and cliques contrast with the rigidity of hierarchies, which do not adapt well to ambiguity but are excellent at exerting control.”<sup>52</sup> The rigidity of organizational hierarchies, institutionalized standard operating procedures, and entrenched action approval mechanisms at the operator, managerial, and executive level – all contribute to organizations that function well in performing familiar, repetitive tasks. However, such organizations are not very good at dealing with new tasks.<sup>53</sup> This inadaptability makes it difficult for large hierarchical organizations to implement institutional changes. Arquilla and Ronfeldt cite examples of the difficulties hierarchies encounter when fighting

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<sup>50</sup> United States Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2004), 7.

<sup>51</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> Sageman, 165.

<sup>53</sup> Mintzberg, 7-8.

networks, such as the “failings of many governments to defeat transnational criminal cartels engaged in drug smuggling.”<sup>54</sup>

The second point, that *it takes networks to fight networks*, is supported by Robert J. Bunker and Matt Begert’s findings in their essay *Operational Combat Analysis of the Al Qaeda Network*. Bunker and Begert assert that the web-like structure between various cells and nodes creates much greater connectivity resulting in a flatter and more efficient organization. “Because the majority (if not all) of the cells and nodes can link to each other directly, middle layers are done away with, resulting in flat information integration.”<sup>55</sup> Bunker and Begert also point out the advantages of networks over hierarchies when it comes to information flow, which they attribute to an *information multiplier* effect. They predict that,

. . . over time, the ‘information multiplier’ will grow even more pronounced over that of hierarchies with the advent of broadband communications that will provide a greater initial baseline of information being sent into an organization. Networks, unlike hierarchies, will be better suited to handle these increased information flows. Real-time information being received by those who can immediately capitalize upon it also takes place as organization structure allows processing speeds to increase.<sup>56</sup>

This information advantage will only become more pronounced as the amount and complexity of relevant data in the contemporary operating environment continues to grow.

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<sup>54</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Bunker and Begert, 147.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.



Another considerable advantage of a network over a hierarchy is explained by Bunker and Begert's belief that the network, unlike a hierarchy, will acquire "increasing returns as [it] expands."<sup>57</sup> They posit that,

As they grow, network structures operate in a manner contrary to hierarchical structures. Whereas hierarchies see diminishing returns as they grow too large, networks see increasing returns and value. The best example of increasing returns can be seen with a computer connected to the Internet. One or two computers linked online have basically no value but millions of computers are a different story.<sup>58</sup>

This concept of a vast network, comprised of many small nodes is exactly inline with the power of a network of *the small and the many* proposed in this thesis and stands the best chance of countering the advantage of our networked, insurgent adversaries.

Finally, the advantage of mastering network forms *first* suggests that al-Qaeda has a head start in this area. However, the lessons learned in the opening rounds of this new era of warfare might be improved upon by an informational and organizationally flexible Special Forces organization.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

While guerrilla tactics have remained fundamentally unchanged since antiquity, characterized by what James Elliot Cross referred to as, "[the] military weakness of guerrillas and rebels which forces them to avoid battle with official forces except through ambushes, assassinations, and hit and run raiding. . . ."<sup>59</sup> What is differentiated in the modern era for guerrillas or insurgents is the enhanced disruptive and destructive power enabled by the organizationally networked form. The difficulty of a hierarchical organization to adapt to complex and varied tasks demonstrates the inherent inadequacies

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<sup>57</sup> Bunker and Begert, 162.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Cross, 58.

of this type of organization when operating in the ambiguous and uncertain environment of counter-insurgency. The potential of the information age empowers an innovative and adaptive insurgent network which demands an innovative and adaptive network to defeat it. The next step in the ongoing global war on terror will require that Special Operations leaders continue to embrace the challenges and opportunities of the information age and attempt *old and new* solutions which challenge organizational conventional wisdom.

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### **III. A NEW STRATEGY IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THE LONG WAR: SPECIAL FORCES HUMAN NETWORKS**

Today, those who want to defend against netwar will, increasingly, have to adopt weapons, strategies, and organizational designs like those of their adversaries. This does not mean mirroring the adversary, but rather learning to draw on the same design principles that he has already learned about the rise of network forms in the information age. It should not be necessary, or desirable, to replace all hierarchies with networks. Rather the challenge will be to blend these two forms skillfully, while retaining enough central authority to encourage and enforce adherence to truly networked processes.<sup>60</sup>

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL FORCES GLOBAL COUNTER-INSURGENT NETWORK (SFGCIN)**

The Special Forces Global Counter-Insurgent Network (SFGCIN) proposed in this chapter resolves two dilemmas. The first is the need for a small, but widely distributed human network to counter the global insurgent network. The second is the need to maximize the human resource pool surplus of SF field-grade officers not employed to maximum effect. Although mid-level and senior SF officers currently fill hundreds of staff positions throughout the Army, these staff positions are far removed from the insurgent threat environment. The authors believe that some members of this human resource pool would be better employed within an appropriately-structured network operating within and against the insurgent threat environment.

Special Forces officers are assessed, selected, trained, educated, and experienced in unconventional warfare and counter-insurgency principles, which gives them skills and attributes different from other Army officer populations. One can imagine an empowered network for the next phase of the Global War on Terror where nearly every developing country deemed at risk of becoming a safe haven for the global insurgents, is assigned a team(s) led by experienced SF officers, each with well over ten years of experience, who

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<sup>60</sup> Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar*, 82.

can speak the native language, understand the complex and nuanced aspects of UW and counter-insurgency as well as strategic, operational, and tactical imperatives.

The tradition of sending uniquely qualified individuals into foreign lands with ambiguous guidance is exemplified by Milton E. Miles and his World War II “Yangtze Raiders” in China as well as the famous exploits of T. E. Lawrence, who was sent into the desert in 1916 by Britain to report on Arab nationalist movements.<sup>61</sup> Although this patient, ambiguous and long-term approach does not fit neatly into today’s more effects-based, attritional military strategies, much of unconventional warfare and counter-insurgency lies outside more conventional military frames of reference.

The longevity and constancy required of the personnel manning the network for, at a minimum of two to three years is crucial. Serving for several years as advisors to a host nation’s field command, authorized to live with and share the risks of their host-nation counterparts, in the most relevant counter-insurgent military units, would give SF unconventional warfare experts time to build trust and relationships with key military and government decision makers.

Risk-to-gain analysis for different countries would be required for operations, but a network-based approach could be applied across the entire spectrum of conflict, from peacetime engagement through uncertain or hostile environments. Currently many U.S. military-to-military engagement programs are short-term in duration, or longer-term but lack the networked topography to take advantage of the relationships and information gleaned from more sustained missions.

This chapter contains the main argument of the thesis, which is that a nimble network of Special Forces field grade officers is the best tool to counter a determined, networked terrorist enemy. These factors lead to trust and eventually allow the network to exert influence on host-nation partners. In addition, the proposed network would be

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<sup>61</sup> Vice Admiral Milton E. Miles recounts Admiral King’s guidance launching him on his World War II mission in 1941. “You are to go to China and set up some bases as soon as you can. The main idea is to prepare the China coast in any way you can for U.S. Navy landings in *three or four years* [emphasis added]. In the meantime, do whatever you can to help the Navy and heckle the Japanese.” Milton E. Miles and Hawthorne Daniel, *A Different Kind of War*, 1st ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, 1967), 18.

established and operate primarily in the unclassified arena. The difficulty of maintaining a classified initiative for a long period is discussed later in the chapter.

## **B. THE NETWORK**

### **1. Explaining the Special Forces Global Counter-Insurgent Network**

#### *a. The Nodes*

Chapter II discussed the type of networked insurgent enemy which currently challenges the U.S. military and the need to counter that very real threat with a better network of our own. This section focuses on the characteristics and roles of the nodes for the proposed network.

David Alberts and Richard Hayes have studied and written on the concept of network centric warfare (NCW) in their book, *Power to the Edge*. They stress, among other things, the important role experience and seniority play depending on their location within a network. They specifically examine the effects of moving senior personnel from the inner hierarchy of organizations to the periphery or the edges of a network.<sup>62</sup> Alberts and Hayes state that

*Power to the edge* involves the empowerment of individuals at the edge of an organization (where the organization interacts with its operating environment. . .) Edge organizations move senior personnel into roles that place them at the edge. They often reduce the need for middle managers whose role is to manage constraints and control measures.<sup>63</sup>

The movement of field-grade officers causes more latitude to be entrusted to an edge organization. Thus “expanding access to information and the elimination of

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<sup>62</sup> Network Centric Warfare “describes how information coupled with changes in C2 (command and control) can transform military organization.” Alberts and Hayes, xix.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 5.

unnecessary constraints” results in a more responsive and efficient organization.<sup>64</sup> This idea of moving more senior operators closer to *the edge* of a network is shared in the authors’ concept of field-grade officers manning the nodes of the proposed network. This is where the network interacts with the threat environment, filtering and understanding foreign cultural and human terrains, often where frustration arises for many U.S. military and intelligence organizations.

It is at the edge of the SFGCIN where the nodes would be located as small teams. At this stage of concept development it is not important to determine the exact configuration of these teams, as that should depend on the unique cultural, environmental and operational aspects of each country or region of employment. What is most important is that these teams are led by a Special Forces field-grade officer with experience and aptitude for unconventional warfare and counter-insurgency and that the nodes live and operate for the majority of their time in the hinterlands and un-governed regions of each respective country.<sup>65</sup> A starting point would have each team comprised of four to five men with the obvious specialties of: intelligence analysis, advanced special operations qualifications and other, more sensitive skill-sets. Their job would be to build relationships (links) with their host nation counterparts, learning their operating environment from their native counter-part’s perspective and acting as sensors and collectors (nodes) in the network. These nodes will naturally be connected into hubs, most likely located within the country team for each foreign country which will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

There are many challenges to the sort of network proposed here, especially when considering the need to operate in non-western environments. Many similar SOF programs have been struggling with these challenges for several years. One model which demonstrates the potential of SF nodes to overcome some of these challenges is found in

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<sup>64</sup> Alberts and Hayes, 5.

<sup>65</sup> The authors suspect that there will be a significant increase in the population of Special Forces senior warrant officers (CW3 and CW4) in the future as well, yet this study lacks the empirical evidence to further argue this claim at this time. This SF demographic would also be an excellent human resource pool with which to build the proposed network.

Drs. Tucker, Rothstein and Simons' unpublished research at the Naval Postgraduate School.<sup>66</sup> In their section on operations in the non-western world they address how a “force [like a SFGCIN] would complement the efforts of other in-country U.S. assets.”<sup>67</sup> One of their suggestions illuminates a significant advantage of employing the type of organization proposed here. They posit that this type of network would assist “FAOs (Foreign Area Officers), attaches, and other personnel – by working in areas where such personnel typically cannot spend sufficient time: in border areas, shantytowns, – in those places in society where trouble often brews.”<sup>68</sup> Tucker's, *et al.*, model will be illustrated and explained in greater detail in a later section.

Global insurgents recruit, seek refuge and operate in such environments, where few U.S. organizations are equipped or tasked to uncover and develop these critical areas. In these environments the nodes of the network, positioned alongside their host nation counterparts, would be able to acquire knowledge which might lead to the eventual infiltration and exploitation of insurgent safe havens. Even beyond havens, this approach would help uncover insurgents everywhere they operate or try to infiltrate. The next section will explain how the nodes of the network will interact with the command and control or synchronizing hubs of the network.

***b. The Hubs in the Network***

The nodes play the role of sensors. They can only have value if there is a clearing house or center to move, filter and share the information and knowledge they obtain from their operating environment. The hubs of the network will perform the critical role of prioritizing, synchronizing, and processing the wide variety of information and knowledge from the nodes. For the hubs to serve their role within the network, they should ideally be manned from the pool of SF field-grade officers who have served for several years as a node team leader. The idea of having more senior personnel serve at

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<sup>66</sup> Tucker, Rothstein and Simons.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 34.



the periphery of a network borrows again from Alberts and Hayes Edge Organizations.<sup>69</sup> Manning the hubs and even the nodes of a network with field grade officers should help convince the higher, hierarchical military organizations, which will ultimately oversee this network, to trust the abilities and judgment of the network. This would give them greater authority and autonomy to steer a counter-insurgent network within the challenging and amorphous insurgent warfare environment.

As General John Abizaid, Commanding General of U.S. Central Command points out, “[the insurgency] is getting more organized, and it is learning. It is adapting, it is adapting to our tactics, techniques and procedures, and we’ve to adapt to their tactics, techniques and procedures.”<sup>70</sup> A peer-to-peer relationship between nodes and hubs, sharing information and intelligence through websites and other means would reduce many of the traditional hierarchical encumbrances which put many U.S. military organizations at a comparative disadvantage to their networked enemy.

To keep the network from evolving over time into a more hierarchical (and thus less nimble and adaptable organization) the hubs will need to assess which nodes are more efficient and productive; they should have the authority to shift or reallocate human, technological, and material assets among the nodes and between the nodes and the hubs. In their essay, “Multilateral Counter-Insurgency Networks”, John Sullivan and Robert Bunker point to the importance of redundancy and the ability to pick and choose the best hub or node to accomplish particular tasks. They write,

While individual hubs are important, and hubs with high capacity are critical, the workload must be distributed across the network to optimize resilience. Multiple hubs, reinforced by clusters of nodes with distributed capabilities, can absorb both random failure and intentional attack.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Alberts and Hayes.

<sup>70</sup> Bruce Hoffman, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq,” (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, June 2004): 6, quoted in Brian Knowlton, “Top U.S. General in Iraq Sees ‘Classical Guerrilla-Type’ War,” *International Herald Tribune*, 16 July 2003.

<sup>71</sup> John P. Sullivan, “Multilateral Counter-Insurgency Networks,” in *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency*, ed. Robert J. Bunker, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 195.

Although this is a tall order for the early stages of a field network with limited manpower and resources, it is an appropriate goal for a maturing network. The composition and density of the network nodes would naturally need to allow for near constant adjustment based on the ever changing threat environment. A flat network with mid to senior-level operators at the nodes and hubs of the network would outpace the innovation and adaptation of more traditional hierarchical organizations.

At first, the most logical type of configuration for the proposed counter-insurgent network would be Arquilla and Ronfeldts' star or hub (Refer to Figure 1) "where a set of actors must go through that hub to communicate and coordinate with each other."<sup>72</sup> This is because of the natural chain of authority known and understood within all military organizations. As network theory and the potential of more radical organizational forms becomes more widespread and accepted within the military and SOF, the logical evolution would be towards an all-channel network, a "collaborative network of . . . groups where everybody is connected to everybody else."<sup>73</sup> The difference between the role of the hub in a Star or Wheel network and the role of the hub in an all-channel network is the hub's irrelevance in the latter. The nodes' ability to interact with any other node or hub in the network and the knowledge of where they are makes a central hub less necessary for coordination.

In the near term, a central hub for the proposed SFGCIN network would serve as a traditional military command and control hub, responsible for connecting the network nodes to each other and for coordinating with the hub's peer and higher agencies. These hubs would most likely be located within respective Country Teams, liaising with the agencies resident in every U.S. embassy, including the defense attaché, the military advisory group, intelligence agencies, and other organizations as appropriate.

One significant difficulty will be determining command and control relationships. The network hubs should be directly connected to the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), through their respective Theater Special

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<sup>72</sup> John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar*, 7-8.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Operations Command (TSOC) with coordinating authorities from the Geographical Combatant Commands (GCC). The details of these command authorities are beyond the scope of this thesis, yet they must be determined with the approval of respective Chiefs of Mission, as many of these very issues have been hindering similar SOF initiatives for many years now. These challenges also involve inter-agency friction as were foreseen and addressed in many national and military strategy documents, specifically the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Report which states:

Increasing unity of effort to achieve the nation's security policy priorities across the agencies of the Federal Government is essential. Only with coherent, leveraged U.S. Government action can the nation achieve true unity of effort with international partners. To address more effectively many security challenges, the Department is continuing to shift its emphasis from Department-centric approaches toward interagency solutions. Cooperation across the Federal Government begins *in the field* [emphasis added] with the development of shared perspectives and a better understanding of each agency's role, missions and capabilities.<sup>74</sup>

Another significant challenge involves the operational realities of gaining specific host-nation (HN) country approvals for this network to operate. Equally as important is ensuring that the host-nation units selected are the relevant organizations regarding trans-national or local insurgent actors. This means considering not just national counter-terror units, but border and coastal patrol forces as well. While many of the early bi-lateral agreements might be extremely restrictive in nature, the long-term personal relationships engendered in the proposed network would be tasked to slowly, patiently overcome many of the administrative and operational limiting factors. This already goes on everyday in other valuable SOF programs. A foreign country's national and military leadership would have to be convinced that their interests would be served by allowing varying numbers of these small SF teams (nodes) to be embedded with their

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<sup>74</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006), 84-85.

units *in the field*. Not so much with the potential for U.S. combat operations, but with the potential to improve HN units' and commands' operational abilities - as well as the *real* U.S. knowledge developed on the insurgent environment in the little-known, yet critical regions of the globe.

The physical location and the length of time served by the personnel manning the network hub is crucial because of the social bonds formed with the permanently assigned personnel in an embassy, which is basically a *de facto* family. This structure would give SOCOM a truly global, persistent presence at the personal and local level in the most critical regions of the world, but to be a success, the same factors of presence, trust, and influence must be achieved within the community of each U.S. embassy.

## **2. Operating the Network in a Non-Western Environment**

As stated earlier in this chapter, Drs. David Tucker, Hy Rothstein and Anna Simons developed a model which presents five considerations for U.S. personnel operating in the non-western world. Their model highlights the importance of presence, trust and influence, which lead to intelligence and security.<sup>75</sup> In this section, the five categories of presence, trust, influence, intelligence and security are applied to the proposed SFGCIN network.<sup>76</sup>

### ***a. The Power of Presence***

A global counterinsurgent strategy needs a vehicle to establish small, long-term human networks. The size and attitude of this presence is of paramount importance. The nodes in the proposed SFGCIN network would operate quietly as small teams, *in the open* - establishing a steady-state, low-signature presence in a country. In the initial phase, as the SF team establishes their presence, they would conceivably

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<sup>75</sup> Tucker, Rothstein and Simons.

<sup>76</sup> These considerations apply to the nodes of the proposed network as it is likely that the network will be most appropriate in the non-western world.

receive attention from the local populace, media, and even insurgent networks operating nearby. Over time, once the small, seemingly benign nodes of the network have been in place for several months and eventually years, they would blend in with the day-to-day environment and become much less noticeable. A small team with their host nation counterparts could then move about within a country without raising suspicion because of their persistent presence. Thus a small, sustained presence of culturally attuned special operators would not intimidate or threaten their host-nation counter-parts or be nearly as noticeable within the local environment. Having a real, global persistent presence in the most remote, yet critical regions of the world answers many of the United States' national strategy documents findings and is the first step to building the trust and relationships necessary for an effective counter-insurgent network.<sup>77</sup>

***b. Building Trust***

As small SF nodes move throughout the host nation, they will learn the lay of the land and develop relationships with key leaders, sharing their daily risks and privations. Such shared experiences are the foundation of any good network, which is trust. Once foreign military leaders and organizations learn that these men are committed to a long-term endeavor, they will eventually let down their guard and begin to share information. The proposed SFGCIN would build bonds at the lowest levels within the field commands which have the most interaction with or near transnational insurgent areas of interest. This might mean that to be of the most value, network nodes would be “married up” with units patrolling national borders, near refugee camps where global insurgents recruit, or in the slums and ungoverned regions of a country. Tucker *et al.*, explain the benefits of developing trust through long-term relationships:

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<sup>77</sup> The concept of a sustained presence nearest to the global insurgent environment is very closely aligned with several of the options put forth in the recently authorized *QDR Execution Roadmap for Irregular Warfare*. Specifically, the requirements to: “(U) Increase DoD capability and capacity to conduct counter-network operations and (U) Establishing long-term non-intelligence military and civilian assignments in countries and regions of strategic importance to DoD.” United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Execution Roadmap for Irregular Warfare*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, April 26, 2006).

What we have in mind by trust is not some generalized feeling of goodwill toward the United States or its personnel but personal relationships of mutual confidence built through sustained face-to-face contact. Once we have established that trust we will find it easier to gather the intelligence we need to fight terrorism because we will have entered the human world where the terrorists live and operate. As we build trust, we will also build influence. As we build our influence and increase our intelligence, these efforts will begin to reinforce one another.<sup>78</sup>

As the network nodes develop their relationships, social and cultural barriers will be lowered, allowing everyday conversations and relationships to turn towards problems shared by U.S. personnel and their host nation counterparts. When other countries believe that their interests are valued and supported by the U.S., the most important characteristic of human networks will develop - influence.

*c. The Payoff – Influence*

Once a node element establishes a small, non-threatening presence and develops personal relationships based on trust and shared interests, the network will begin to produce results disproportionate to its size. Before a SF field-grade officer deploys to a country or region, he should be given the national strategic goals for his area of operations and entrusted with the latitude to accomplish them. The SF human network will be of greatest value in this phase. The collecting and influencing nodes will be able to subtly exert personal influence, encouraging foreign military or governmental leaders to take action in America's favor. A small team may gain the trust of a senior national or military leader and influence him to take a desired action in a specific scenario. As acknowledged counterinsurgency expert, Australian Army Lieutenant Colonel David Kilcullen points out, "[t]raditional diplomacy, with its emphasis on treaties and geopolitical debates, is less relevant than the ability to understand and influence foreign

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<sup>78</sup> Tucker, Rothstein and Simons, 32.

populations – not in the councils of state but in their villages and slums.”<sup>79</sup> Shared relationships and knowledge will be the sinew of this network, and each host-nation partner would always understand that their U.S. counter-part had the authority to either encourage or discourage greater U.S. intervention.

*d. Gleaning Information and Intelligence*

When positive presence, trust, and influence are being cultivated by nodes operating within the host nation’s borders, information and intelligence will be natural byproducts. One of the most difficult tasks for westerners in foreign, non-western countries is learning to discern the cultural and human terrain specific to a country or region. Non-western global insurgents count on this inability of traditional western military and intelligence forces to decipher foreign threat environments and “hide in the open.” The average military personnel operating in a foreign country might walk by an active insurgent headquarters in a slum or remote tribal enclave and be none the wiser. By comparison, the nodes of the proposed SF network would work in the field for many years with local counter-parts. Over time these personal, bi-lateral relationships will cause the U.S. SF node personnel to develop a more “native perspective”, thus becoming better able to decipher the local terrain and indicators. Special Forces networks, sending data and information along with experienced, on-the-ground analysis back to higher headquarters, would provide a formidable weapon against America's asymmetrical, networked adversaries and help shrink the areas where terrorists can “hide in the open.”

*e. Considering Security*

The proposed SF network would have the potential to operate throughout the spectrum of conflict. Higher intensity conflicts simply require increased risk mitigation factors shared with the host nation military counterparts. While it may seem callous, the heightened risk to well-trained special operators would be worth the gain of a responsive and influential strategic human network. An important function of this

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<sup>79</sup> George Packer, "Knowing the Enemy," *The New Yorker*, December 18, 2006, 63.

proposed network is to foresee and understand situations better before they escalate into crisis. If the U.S. must contend with a crisis, there would be a trusted network in place to assist with forces arriving from outside a country, with the potential to influence the outcome without resorting to the use of force. The fundamental truth is that the environment where the global insurgency operates is of higher risk. In order for a counter-insurgent network to learn, counter and eventually defeat the threat network, it must operate in close proximity to the threat network. The maturity and skill-sets of the personnel being considered to lead this counter-insurgent network provide them with the most appropriate qualifications to operate and thrive in this complex and demanding environment.

## **C. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE SFGCIN**

### **1. Personnel Considerations**

The qualities and traits of the personnel selected for the proposed counter-insurgent network are at least as important as the network itself. While the phrase “right man for the job” is often used in regard to selection for critical jobs and billets, more often than not, it is personnel availability and timing which ultimately determine the outcome. The U.S. Army Special Forces majors population, at the time of this writing, is 211 percent over strength. Army Special Forces must continue to be exacting about which personnel are selected for each assignment and even more so for a network such as the one proposed here to succeed. A significant level of specificity is required to select the “right man for the job.”<sup>80</sup>

Counter-insurgency and unconventional warfare are highly specific and difficult specialties involving problems unlike those faced in traditional kinetic warfare. No other

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<sup>80</sup> The evidence which demonstrates the current percentage of overstrength SF field grade officers was gleaned from SF Human Resource Command, interviews with SF Proponency personnel and is explained in detail in the following chapter. All evidence indicates that considering only the SF major’s personnel population, the current 211% overstrength data is not only accurate, but predicted to actually increase over the next five to seven years. This also takes into account the BAND I, II, and III changes currently being developed and enacted within the Army Special Forces branch.



officers or non-commissioned officers in the Army are selected, trained and educated specifically for their ability to perform these ambiguous and challenging forms of warfare. The Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 (DA PAM 600-3), *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* highlights the many unique characteristics and attributes resident in SF and its officers. Some of the most appropriate to this network are taken from the DA PAM 600-3:

They [SF] provide military capabilities not available elsewhere in the armed forces.

SF operations are frequently conducted through, with, or by indigenous forces. . . . They interact closely and live under the same conditions as the indigenous people.

Special Forces officers must: Be mentally flexible and willing to experiment and innovate in a decentralized and unstructured environment. Have the ability to solve complex political-military problems and develop and employ conventional or unconventional solutions. Develop and employ non-doctrinal methods and techniques when applicable. Be capable of decisive action for missions in which no current doctrine exists. . . . Be subject matter experts and [a] recognized authority in unconventional warfare, Joint and interagency operations, planning, operations, and intelligence as well as technical and tactical skills.<sup>81</sup>

These characteristics should serve as a starting point and demonstrate anecdotally, the niche of Army SF in UW and COIN and its unique ability to succeed within the proposed network.

Colonel Hammes discusses some of the specific opportunities and challenges of building just this sort of node and hub network. In discussing networks, Hammes explains the difficulty in getting the right man for the job as well as the bigger organizational issues inherent in sharing information and knowledge across agencies:

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<sup>81</sup> United States Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, (Washington, DC: HQDA, 28 December, 2005), 133-134.

Fortunately, the U.S. government has such experts. Unfortunately, we have no coherent organization to find and deploy them. Even if we can push our bureaucracy to find and deploy the right people, they still work in their individual departmental stovepipes. Beyond getting the people to the field, we have to develop genuine networks to tie various agencies together in the field and in Washington.<sup>82</sup>

These are just some of the challenges to finding the right personnel for the proposed network. Yet this brief discussion should lend support to the belief that to defeat a global insurgent network will demand that the U.S. military put their most appropriate personnel towards this problem. While all U.S. SOF personnel perform their divergent roles admirably, none are more suited to operate in a global counter-insurgent network than the men in Army Special Forces.

## **2. Duration of Duty Assignment**

Another necessary characteristic of the proposed network involves the duration of time served by personnel inside the network. The United States' highest national policy and strategy documents acknowledge the changing nature and challenges of the emergent trans-national global insurgent adversary, yet many military and SOF foreign engagement programs (discussed in more detail below) are virtually unchanged since before September 11, 2001. While these programs accomplish their intended missions, they are either short-term in duration or, if longer-term, serve a purely training or advisory role not linked operationally to a SOF headquarters engaged in the day-to-day counter-insurgent fight. These programs include the Joint Combined Exchange Training program (JCET), Personnel Exchange Program (PEP), and Security Assistance Training Management Organization's (SATMO) initiatives.

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<sup>82</sup> Hammes, 226.

In 2005, Lieutenant Colonel Kilcullen “redefined the war on terror as a ‘global counter-insurgency’” in an article in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*.<sup>83</sup> With the emerging characterization of the global war on terror as a global counter-insurgency, it seems appropriate that the networked approaches the U.S. military considers to counter insurgent networks be designed with the appropriate long-term perspective required for this kind of conflict.

For the network nodes to have a presence in the field long enough to develop trust and influence, the one to six month duration of many SOF foreign engagement programs is inadequate. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review states that, “[l]onger duration operations will emphasize building personal relationships with foreign military and security forces and other indigenous assets to achieve common objectives.”<sup>84</sup> Such “longer duration” programs are neither specified nor described. A SF counter-insurgent network could be developed, stationing the best personnel in the most appropriate region and countries, but *without* a long-term commitment from the people comprising the network. The end result would mean never reaching the network’s true potential.<sup>85</sup>

### **3. Factors of Proximity to the Threat Environment**

Lieutenant Colonel Kilcullen, State Department Counterterrorism coordinator Henry Crumpton, and anthropologist Montgomery McFate point out that if “the battlefield in the global counter-insurgency is intimately local, then the American government needs . . . a “granular” knowledge of the social terrains on which it is

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<sup>83</sup> Packer, 63.

<sup>84</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2006), 44.

<sup>85</sup> Another aspect of this network which would directly answer some of the options put forth in the recently authorized *QDR Execution Roadmap for Irregular Warfare* are: “(U) Establishing a Foreign Area “Year Gap” Program to send non-FAO “command track” officers on long-term immersion tours in foreign countries of strategic interest in the Long War.” As well as “(U) Establishing a program for detailing DoD military and civilian personnel to serve in foreign armed forces and governments of strategic importance to defeating terrorist extremism in the Long War.” These IW Roadmap options share many of the same characteristics with the proposed SFGCIN in this thesis. United States Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Execution Roadmap for Irregular Warfare*, (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, April 26, 2006).

competing.”<sup>86</sup> This seems intuitive in a war fought by non-state actors who operate and seek refuge in remote and ungoverned regions of the world. The National Military Strategy recognizes the importance of “countering threats close to their source,” adding that “[f]orces operating in key regions are essential to the defense of the United States and to the protection of allies and US interests.”<sup>87</sup>

The necessity of “countering threats close to their source” is acknowledged, but many U.S. military and SOF initiatives, outside declared combat zones, have changed little since the Cold War. If a strategic military leader were to take a snapshot of ongoing SOF programs and initiatives outside declared combat zones, he might be convinced that there is real global coverage appropriate to the perceived threats. Simply put, there are enough unit or mission icons on the map to support this impression. But a snapshot fails to capture the full story. Often foreign nations are considered “covered” in the traditional military equation, if they have a Joint Combined Exchange Program that interacts with one of their military units once or twice a year. Other foreign engagement programs show on the map as long-term coverage, even if the personnel manning the program are tied only to a training command with no way to leverage the personal relationships and networks they develop in performing their mission. For the U.S. military to compete and eventually get ahead of the global insurgents decision-cycle we must ensure our missions and programs which profess a “global persistent presence” are more than icons on a map, but qualified personnel on the ground, in or near the threat, operating an adaptive and learning human network with enough consistency and longevity to be an asset. The U.S. military cannot afford to take a TDY (temporary duty) approach to a *long war* problem.

#### **D. THE ADVANTAGES OF OPERATING A NETWORK IN THE OPEN**

The final key to this proposed counterinsurgent network would be the benefits of operating primarily in the unclassified arena. In the contemporary operating environment

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<sup>86</sup> Packer, 65.

<sup>87</sup> United States Department of Defense, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2004), 10.

(COE), anyone with a cell phone camera can transmit a photo of U.S. commandos around the world on an internet blog or the mainstream media. The advent of information age technology has greatly increased the difficulty of maintaining a secret U.S. military presence in a foreign country for a long-term initiative.

Gregory F. Treverton, an expert on covert action, special activities, and paramilitary operations, analyzes U.S. post-World War II covert and clandestine operations, including the 1953 return of the Shah to Iran, the 1954 overthrow of Guzman in Guatemala, the Iran Contra affair and the Bay of Pigs invasion.<sup>88</sup> While these are large-scale events, Treverton draws conclusions applicable to smaller-scale secret operations as well.<sup>89</sup>

The first is that “[c]overt interventions, by definition initiated in secret, nonetheless eventually become public, usually sooner rather than later. . . secret decisions produce public results.”<sup>90</sup> Treverton notes that decision makers often assumed that the hand of the U.S. government could be hidden from public view.<sup>91</sup> While this might remain true for short duration operations, the ability for a single actor to communicate globally in the information age makes it increasingly difficult to keep covert actions from public view. This is especially true when the target has an incentive to uncover and broadcast classified U.S. action to the broadest possible audience.

Treverton also concludes that “[o]nce begun, even if small, [classified actions] still create commitments for the United States.”<sup>92</sup> The benefit of the proposed network operating in the open is that there is no need for “shallow cover” or “plausible

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<sup>88</sup> Gregory F. Treverton, *Covert Action: The Limits of Intervention in the Postwar World* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 44. Treverton served on the Church Committee, which investigated the intelligence abuses in the aftermath of Watergate.

<sup>89</sup> One note, the authors acknowledge Treverton’s study is mainly focused on covert operations, which have different authoritative and legislative parameters than the simply “classified” considerations of this proposed network. The authors believe that many of the overall lessons from Treverton’s study of covert operations can be reasonably applied to lesser “classified” initiatives discussed in theory here.

<sup>90</sup> Treverton, 4-5.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

deniability.” In an information age replete with data mining, shallow cover is all too easily exposed. If all long-term actions of the network are not secret, the U.S. government would not become committed to strategies which might go against its stated foreign policy goals. If circumstances developed that made a short-duration classified operation necessary, the network, which has been in place for years and allayed suspicions of clandestine activity, would be the perfect platform to provide infrastructure support for a classified mission. Writing in 1987, Treverton articulates a key generational shift from the early post-World War II era to today when he states,

In the United States, after Vietnam, Watergate, and the Iran-Contra affair, neither the Congress, nor the media, nor the public is as prepared as in the 1950s to accord presidents easy resort to covert action. When reports of covert action play back to the United States from abroad, or surface in Washington, those reports are less likely to be dismissed. When they are denied, the denials are less likely to be believed.<sup>93</sup>

What was true in the 1980s is even truer today. The growing likelihood and greater criticism of an exposed classified action puts even more emphasis on decisions to conduct long-term, classified operations. This seems to suggest that while the challenges to the secrecy of large and long-term classified operations increase, the option of smaller-scale and shorter-duration classified operations remains a reasonable option. A long-term information network functioning in the open, yet manned by operators with the skills to conduct short-term classified missions appears most appropriate for the contemporary operating environment.

Treverton’s evidence for the trend in classified actions is mostly anecdotal in nature. Yet his book covers nearly thirty years of U.S. covert action throughout the world, highlighting early successes and later failures. Three important points can be taken from what was true in 1987 when Treverton published his research. First, classified U.S. commitments usually lead to widening involvement so as not to jeopardize

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<sup>93</sup> Treverton, 9.

the initial classified actions. Second, the public is more skeptical and less trusting of government justifications for classified action. Finally, in comparison to the 1950s through 1980s, access to information and its means of dissemination has increased dramatically, further increasing the chances that a single actor might expose a secret action and rapidly find conduits to broadcast that information to a global audience.<sup>94</sup>

All of this supports the idea that for Special Forces to man and operate a long-term counter-insurgent network. The task of gathering relevant and valuable *open source* information quietly, while “hiding in the open” would be more likely to succeed if there was no “secret network” to expose.

## **E. CURRENT DOD FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS**

### **1. Security Assistance Training Management Organization (SATMO)**

The DoD has several programs which share many of the characteristics of the SF human network proposed in this thesis. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command sponsors the Security Assistance Training Management Organization (SATMO), which:

. . . plans, forms, prepares, deploys, sustains and redeploys CONUS-based Security Assistance Teams (SATs) to execute OCONUS Security Assistance missions in support of US National Security and National Military Objectives, Regional Unified Commands' Theater Security Cooperation Strategies and US foreign policy.<sup>95</sup>

SATMO is comprised of highly trained soldiers and teams training and advising foreign militaries across the globe. Many of its personnel have Army Special Forces or other SOF backgrounds. Personnel operating within this mission often form small teams to live and train with important host nation military units for long periods of time,

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<sup>94</sup> Treverton.

<sup>95</sup> United States Training and Doctrine Command, Security Assistance Training Management Organization (SATMO); available from <http://www.bragg.army.mil/satmo/msnstmt.html>; Internet; accessed 13 December 2006.

consistent with the requirements for an effective network. So while the SATMO program shares some of the same attributes of the SFGCIN, it is not tied into an operational SOF command tasked with fighting the global insurgency or organized along network lines. Additionally, Title 22 of U.S. Code prohibits this type of program from serving in a combat or combat advisory role, which logically limits this organizations role in an active counter-insurgent network. The SATMO program does hold much potential to compliment the operations of a SF counter-insurgent network, specifically sharing the social bonds and links developed in U.S. to host-nation SATMO liaisons with the nodes of the proposed network.

## **2. Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Program**

Another valuable DoD program is the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) program managed by SOCOM. The program has many characteristics necessary for a successful network. It is manned by Special Forces soldiers, targeted at relevant host nation military units, and helps build multilateral military relationships between the U.S and its allies. One of the critical short-comings of the JCET program is its short-duration. A JCET is typically only three to four weeks in duration; it fails to have the longevity suggested by the authors which is required for U.S. personnel to build the necessary social bonds with their host nation counter-parts, allowing them to truly know and understand the threat environment. Also, most JCETs are not planned in “high threat” areas of foreign countries. So whatever information is learned about a foreign area where a JCET is operating is usually of limited operational value for the GWOT. This combined with the narrow mission scope and legislative restrictions prevent JCETs from being applied beyond their intended theater security cooperation and engagement goals.

## **3. Defense Attaché and Foreign Area Officer Programs**

The Foreign Area Officer (FAO) and Defense Attaché (DAT) programs have historically proven very effective. The DAT serves as the Secretary of Defense’s representative and is often the senior military advisor to the Ambassador on the



embassy's country team.<sup>96</sup> However the role and scope of a DAT is not conducive to leading a counter-insurgent network for many obvious reasons. The majority of a FAO or DAT's time is spent juggling myriad security assistance programs, military travel coordination, attending host nation military events and social engagements, mostly within the embassy or diplomatic enclave. Their visits outside a capital are seldom of any long duration because of the real and pressing responsibilities in the capital, and are always of high concern and visibility to the host nation's senior defense ministry officials. The situation for SF elements in the proposed network would be vastly different from the environment of FAOs and DATs. The nodes and hubs of the SF network would be primarily concerned with the areas away from the capital and diplomatic enclave, instead spending most of their time in the field, learning the hinterlands and remote tribal regions where terrorist insurgents seek refuge. What the SF network learns could be shared with the DAT and FAO personnel in each country, allowing various DoD programs and initiatives to be better focused within each respective country.

## **F. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Since the events of September 11, 2001, many military options and strategies have been vigorously analyzed and considered, resulting in improvements in our nation's counter-terror capabilities. Yet more can be done. To confront diffuse, networked insurgent organizations, the U.S. must adapt its more hierarchical organizations and empower small, local, and sustained networks of our own. Small teams acting as the

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<sup>96</sup> An example duty description of a defense attaché is found on the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany's webpage which describes the DAT as: "the primary military advisor to the Ambassador and Country Team on military issues and developments within Germany. Additionally he represents the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and greater Department of Defense (DoD) elements; plans and coordinates U.S. military activities with the German Armed Forces throughout Germany (including coordination with DoD, Joint Staff, and USEUCOM); observes and reports on German military developments; oversees U.S. military training programs (including Foreign Area Officer in-country training and the Personnel Exchange Programs); and supports DoD and other VIP visits." U.S. Department of State, "The Defense Attachés' Office (DAO)," *United States Diplomatic Mission to Germany*; available from <http://berlin.usembassy.gov/germany/dao/index.html>; Internet; accessed 15 February, 2007.

nodes of an active hub or all-channel network would have the greatest access to the “ground truth” because of their proximity to the problem and the lens provided by their host nation counterparts.

This subtle, less intrusive and indirect concept also has the potential to dramatically alter the way U.S. power is portrayed abroad, thus improving how America is perceived by allies and adversaries. One way to achieve this metamorphosis, while simultaneously increasing American influence, is to empower a global SF human network embedded at the local level in or near the insurgent environment. A small investment of human capital could fundamentally change how U.S. “presence” is defined and viewed. This would simultaneously help with the greatest problem faced by our western military institutions – how to decipher the cultural and human terrain of remote foreign countries and thus narrow the dark spaces which provide safe harbor for America’s insurgent enemies. At the same time, such a network would help change how U.S. power is exercised and perceived overseas, thus improving many of the bi-lateral counter-insurgent partnerships which are critical to understanding, exploiting and then defeating the global insurgent network.

The next chapter will demonstrate where the most appropriate personnel can be found to build a Special Forces Global Counter-Insurgent Network, (SFGCIN) which has the potential to address these modern challenges.

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## **IV. THE HUMAN RESOURCE DILEMMA – PRIORITIZING LIMITED HUMAN CAPITAL**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

The empirical data evidenced in this chapter will illustrate that there is a significant surplus of SF majors per year group (YG) as well as an increase in the time these officers will spend at this grade. These two factors taken together should allow some portion of this surplus to support a global counter-insurgent network. The relevancy of this argument within the context of limited human resource assets in the current Global War on Terror (GWOT) will be strengthened through the utilization of the economic principles of *allocative* and *productive* efficiency.

This chapter briefly outlines the historical background regarding SF officer personnel issues of the recent past. It considers the impact of the programmed growth within Army SF Groups and presents the most current predictions for future trends in the Army SF field-grade officer population.

### **B. BACKGROUND**

#### **1. Surplus in the System**

The Army Special Forces branch is over-strength across all of its field-grade officer populations. Within Special Forces, majors are currently 211% over-strength, lieutenant colonels are currently 158% over-strength, and colonels are currently 220% over-strength.<sup>97</sup> These trends are expected not only to continue but to steadily increase over the course of the next decade.

Human Resources Command (HRC) has an ideal *pyramid* which depicts the number of officers at each rank within the Department of the Army. This *personnel pyramid* has served as a base model used historically to judge the health and constancy of various year-group officer populations over time. Each branch within the Army also has

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<sup>97</sup> *Special Forces Branch Brief* (Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Command, December 2006), 7.

its own distinct pyramid based on the fact that there are a different number of jobs at each rank in any given branch. The dashed line in Figure 1 depicts the ideal Special Forces pyramid based on ratios determined by HRC. The inner-most line depicts the number of current authorizations according to the Personnel Management Authorization Document (PMAD).<sup>98</sup> The outer-most line depicts the actual inventory of officers on hand. The disparity between the inner-most line depicting the authorizations and the outer-most line depicting the actual inventory graphically displays the surplus of field grade officers within the Special Forces branch, particularly at the rank of major. In this study, the authors suggest that the actual pyramid may be considered ideal if these officers are put to best use.

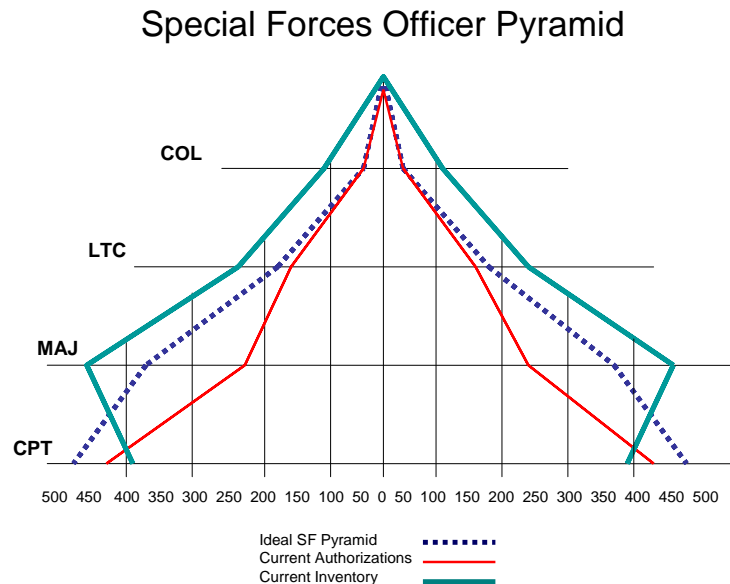


Figure 2. Special Forces Officer Pyramid<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> The PMAD is a document that identifies force structure authorizations at the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) and grade level. It is produced semiannually. For more information, see: “How The Army Runs (HTAR),” 25<sup>th</sup> ed. Chapter 15, 15-10, a, 2005-2006, available from <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/dclm/linkedtextchapters.htm>; Internet; accessed on 19 December 2006, 341.

<sup>99</sup> Figure 2 was created by the authors from data presented by LTC Chris Karsner, CG, *USASOC Briefing on Recommended Changes to 18A Force Structure*, (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006).

Despite the surplus of certain populations of officers within Special Forces, the branch remains overall under-strength in enlisted personnel. In order to address these manning shortfalls and improve the capacity of Special Forces, United States Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) recently adopted a transformation initiative known as the Enhanced Special Forces Group (ESFG). This will increase the overall size of the Special Forces groups over the next few years. The ESFG states that its purpose is to “provide additional planners, trainers, coordinators, and sustainers to enable the Active Component (AC) Special Forces Groups to conduct sustained UW operations in multiple locations without augmentation or contractors.”<sup>100</sup> This transformation will take place in three incremental bands. ESFG Band I will add 97 positions per group, Band II will add 156 positions per group, and Band III will add 457 positions per group.<sup>101</sup> Band I and II will increase the battle staff and support capability of each group, which will logically increase the availability of SF qualified personnel for employment.<sup>102</sup> Band III will provide the most significant element of this transformation through the addition of one SF battalion per group.<sup>103</sup> The ESFG is a valuable and necessary initiative based upon the greater demand for Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the ongoing GWOT. Although this initiative will create a greater requirement for SF officers by increasing the number of operational billets associated with the new SF units, this chapter will demonstrate that the trend of SF field-grade officers remaining over-strength will continue to increase.

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<sup>100</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness ODUSD(PI)(RQ), *Defense Manpower Requirements Report: Fiscal Year 2006*, July 2005; available from [http://www.dod.gov/prhome/docs/DMRR\\_FY06.pdf](http://www.dod.gov/prhome/docs/DMRR_FY06.pdf); Internet; accessed on 8 December 2006, 67-68.

<sup>101</sup> LTC Jeffrey L. Kent, “SF Command Addresses Joint-Fires Shortfalls at the SF Group, Battalion Levels,” *Special Warfare*, Vol. 18, No. 1, July 2005, 24-27.

<sup>102</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness ODUSD(PI)(RQ), *Defense Manpower Requirements Report: Fiscal Year 2006*, July 2005; available from [http://www.dod.gov/prhome/docs/DMRR\\_FY06.pdf](http://www.dod.gov/prhome/docs/DMRR_FY06.pdf); Internet; accessed on 8 December 2006.

<sup>103</sup> BG John F. Mulholland Jr., “Unconventional Warrior: Interview with Brigadier General John F. Mulholland Jr.,” *Special Operations Technology: Online Edition*; available from <http://www.special-operations-technology.com/article.cfm?DocID=1387>; Internet; accessed on 8 December 2006.

## 2. Utilizing Special Forces Personnel - Allocative and Productive Efficiency

Robert R. Leonhard, a retired army Lieutenant Colonel and author of *The Principles of War for the Information Age*, borrows the concepts of allocative and productive efficiency from the study of economics. Leonhard uses these principles to discuss the scarcity of resources and the seemingly infinite demands competing for those resources as an essential problem within the military. He describes allocative efficiency as the military art which “dictates that we must properly allocate our combat power to the most important demands and leave other goals unresourced, or at least under-resourced.”<sup>104</sup> He defines productive efficiency as “combining available resources in such a way as to get the maximum output from consumed resources.”<sup>105</sup> In line with the classic principle of economy of force, these two concepts epitomize the parameters which must be considered when employing an extremely valuable and limited resource.

In a memorandum for the Commander of the Army Human Resource Command dated 8 September 2005, General Bryan D. Brown, Commanding General of United States Special Operations Command, outlined the personnel fill priority for Army Special Operations officers.<sup>106</sup> Logically, Special Forces Groups are at the top of this list. After the obvious requirements to man Army SOF commands and Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs), the remaining priorities are listed in order of declining relevance to the GWOT. This directive is extremely useful as it allowed the Human Resource Command to fill billets for Special Forces officers in-line with the commander’s priorities.

To add value to these priorities and decisions, Leonhard’s arguments for *allocative* and *productive* efficiency are particularly useful. To maximize the impact of this small pool of seasoned UW and counter-insurgent (COIN) experts, the tenets of

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<sup>104</sup> Leonhard, 130-131.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>106</sup> General Bryan D. Brown, Memorandum for Commander, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, “Personnel Fill Priority for Army Special Operations Officers, FY2006-2007,” (MacDill AFB, FL: United States Special Operations Command, 8 September 2005).

productive efficiency must be acknowledged; assigning (as Leonhard previously asserted) “available resources in such a way as to get the maximum output from consumed resources.”<sup>107</sup> To realize the potential of allocating this finite personnel resource and its unique characteristics within a global SF counter-insurgent network more closely aligns the principles of allocative and productive efficiency, utilizing the best tool (human resource) against a global insurgency (demand), even at the expense of other lesser demands.

### **C. A GROWING TREND**

From fiscal year 1996 to 2002, the accession goal of Special Forces officers was 100 captains per fiscal year. Between fiscal year 2002 through 2005, the accession goal of Special Forces officers increased to 105 captains per fiscal year. This seemingly small increase was directed by Major General Geoffrey C. Lambert, USASFC Commanding General during that time, based upon the fact that there were 270 Key Developmental (KD) positions for captains. Serving as a Special Forces Operational Detachment - Alpha (SFOD-A)<sup>108</sup> commander for two years divided the 210 SFOD-A positions into a requirement of 105 captains per year. The remaining sixty positions were considered specialty commands, intended to be filled by senior captains after their first two years as a SFOD-A commander.<sup>109</sup>

In order to meet the requirements of the ESFG initiative, the accession goal of Special Forces officers has increased to 155 captains per year beginning in fiscal year 2006. The additional battalion per group will increase the amount of SFOD-A commander positions from the current number of 270 to approximately 360 once the ESFG initiative is complete. Although the ESFG will create new positions, projections displayed later in this chapter will demonstrate that the increase in the number of officers

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<sup>107</sup> Leonhard, 134.

<sup>108</sup> The SFOD-A is the basic, tactical unit for Army Special Forces, comprised of twelve men with specific operational specialties.

<sup>109</sup> LTC Chris Karsner, *SF Officer YG Production and Projection Models* (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006), 2.



selected and trained through the Special Forces pipeline will more than make up for this difference, and that the surplus of senior officers will continue to increase.<sup>110</sup>

Several factors have contributed to a recent increase in the SF field-grade officer population: higher accession rates, fewer Career Field Designation Board (CFD) removals, and most significantly, higher promotion rates. In the past, SF basic year groups (YG) consisted of approximately 90 officers at initial accession. Separations as a captain reduced this number to approximately 80 officers. Promotion rates to major were approximately 85%, reducing this number to approximately 70 officers. Finally, the Career Field Designation Board removed about 15-20 SF majors from the operational career field both voluntarily and involuntarily. This resulted in a historical YG size of 50-55 officers for SF majors,<sup>111</sup> a trend which can still be seen today in YG 91 through 93 officers as demonstrated in Figure 3 below.

## **SF MAJOR INVENTORY**

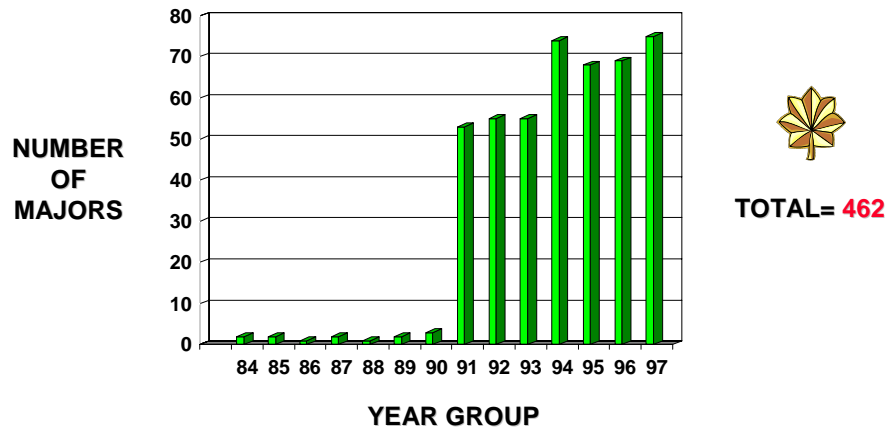


Figure 3. Special Forces Major Inventory<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> LTC Chris Karsner, *SF Officer YG Production and Projection Models* (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006), 14.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>112</sup> *Special Forces Branch Brief* (Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Command, December 2006), 13.

Recently, these figures have changed significantly. YG 94 officers originally had 100 captains assessed, 9 separated as captains, the promotion rate to major was 100%, there were no involuntary CFDs and only 12 voluntary CFDs, resulting in a population of approximately 79 majors. YG 95 officers originally had 94 captains assessed, 11 separated as captains, the promotion rate to major was 100%, there were no involuntary CFDs and only 13 voluntary CFDs, resulting in a population of approximately 70 majors. This change has resulted in the addition of approximately 20 officers per YG, a spike which is clearly demonstrated in Figure 3 above, beginning with YG 94. This increasing trend will continue to expand the surplus of SF majors. The sharp increase in the number of majors depicted in Figure 3 between YGs 1990 and 1991 is the result of the preponderance of all year groups prior to 1990 being promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

This dilemma of an increasing SF major population was compounded in fiscal year 2006, when the Army conducted two promotion boards for the rank of major. Starting with YG 96 officers, this reduced the pin-on time for promotion to major, a change which has essentially decreased the amount of time that officers will serve as a captain and increased the time that they will serve as a major by about one year.

What this evidence suggests is that there will now be an additional year within a SF Major's time in grade. An SF Major now has the potential to attend the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC) or Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) and then serve within the USSOCOM prioritized Key and Developmental (KD) billets in SF or SOF units (two years). The authors believe that the additional year inside a Major's time in grade will enable him to be allocated to serving within the authors' proposed network in accordance with the core priorities for SF officers' assignments as articulated by USSOCOM and HRC. In personnel terminology, this would be referred to as a "post-KD" job or one after an officer has met his institutional requirements for that grade.

In order to partially address the over-abundance of field grade officers, the Directorate of Special Operations Proponency is recommending several re-grades<sup>113</sup> and re-codes<sup>114</sup> to the Modification Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE), the document which prescribes the number of assigned personnel and equipment within Special Forces groups. These recommended changes will essentially create more major positions and fewer captain positions within Special Forces. Current proposals recommend the re-grade of the Group S3 from a major to a lieutenant colonel position and the following positions from captain to major: Group Assistant S3, Group HHC Commander, and Battalion HSC Commanders. Special Forces Proponency is also recommending that the USASOC HHC Commander and Group Support Battalion Executive Officer positions re-code to SF major positions.<sup>115</sup> Although these adjustments will help to slightly rebalance the ideal SF pyramid displayed earlier in Figure 2, future projections demonstrate how the inventory of majors will still continue to exceed authorizations.

#### **D. PROJECTED TRENDS**

The empirical evidence within this section has been gleaned from the experts within the Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, who believe that this growth trend will continue for the foreseeable future.<sup>116</sup> It is important to acknowledge that the statistics presented in this section of the thesis are *projections*. While it is impossible to foresee exactly what will happen in the future, it is possible to make fairly accurate predictions based on previous and current information. Although the ESFG initiative will

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<sup>113</sup> The term “re-grade” means a change in the rank or grade of the individual who fills a particular duty position. For example, the Group S3 (Operations Officer) position is being recommended to change from an O-4 (Major) to an O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel) position.

<sup>114</sup> The term “re-code” means a change in the required functional area of the individual who fills a particular duty position. For example, the GSB XO position, currently held by a 90A or multifunctional logistician, is being recommended to change to an 18A or Special Forces position.

<sup>115</sup> LTC Chris Karsner, *CG, USASOC Briefing on Recommended Changes to 18A Force Structure*, (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006).

<sup>116</sup> LTC Chris Karsner (Directorate of Special Operations Proponency), in discussion with the authors, 16 November 2006.

increase the size of SF units and the recommended re-codes and re-grades will slightly rebalance the current SF pyramid, the Directorate of Special Operations Proponency anticipates that the excess of field-grade officers will continue to grow throughout the SF branch.

Table 1 also displays the increasing SF captain projections that are expected to result from the Band III growth that is currently under way. It depicts the projected inventory of captains, the projected authorizations according to the Personnel Management Authorization Document (PMAD), and the projected authorizations with the recommended re-grades and re-codes previously mentioned. This table also demonstrates the extensive time which is invested to train every captain in order to properly prepare him for the unique Special Forces missions; each year group of officers accessed will not report to a SF Group until two to three years after his initial selection and training begins. This training, which is expanded upon by the officer's operational experience, is what makes Army SF officers such a valuable asset within DoD and highly qualified candidates for the authors' proposed counter-insurgent network. Assuming that SF continues to meet its new accession goal of 155 captains per year, as evidenced by the "Gains to Force" in Table 1, the SF branch can be expected to reach 100% strength in captains within the next four to five years.

## SF CPT Projections

BAND III in FY08 and regrade of selected 18A positions  
from O3 to O4

FY	YG Accessed	SF Board File Quota	SF Board Selects	Gains to Force	Reporting FY to SFG(A)		Projected 18A CPT Average Inventory	Projected 18A CPT 0609 PMAD Auths			Projected 18A CPT Auths w/ regrade	
					~50%	~50%						
FY06	YG03	350	320	155	2008	2009	378	443	85%	443	85%	
FY07	YG04	400	320	155	2009	2010	367	443	83%	443	83%	
FY08	YG05	400	320	155	2010	2011	377	465	81%	439	86%	
FY09	YG06	400	320	155	2011	2012	427	487	88%	460	93%	
FY10	YG07	400	320	155	2012	2013	477	509	94%	481	99%	
FY11	YG08	400	320	155	2013	2014	527	531	99%	502	105%	
FY12	YG09	400	320	155	2014	2015	547	553	99%	523	105%	
FY13	YG10	400	320	155	2015	2016	548	553	99%	523	105%	

Table 1. Special Forces Captain Projections<sup>117</sup>

This increase in captains strength, coupled with the 100% promotion rates and fewer CFDs among the last three year groups to be promoted to major, will continue to increase the surplus within the SF major population, as demonstrated in Table 2. Table 2 displays the SF major projections for the next twelve years. Like Table 1, it depicts the projected inventory of majors, the projected authorizations according to the PMAD, and the projected authorizations with the recommended re-grades and re-codes. The “YGs in MAJs Inventory” column lists all of the year groups that compose the inventory of majors each fiscal year. At the time these projections were made in November 2006, SF Majors were 194% over-strength.<sup>118</sup> By FY 2018, it is projected that SF majors will be 246% over-strength, assuming that the re-codes and re-grades are approved. If the recommended re-codes and re-grades are not approved, this surplus will be even greater. These projections make it evident that this personnel excess will continue and thus provide ample opportunity to employ this population within new and relevant initiatives.

<sup>117</sup> LTC Chris Karsner, *SF Officer YG Production and Projection Models* (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006), 12.

<sup>118</sup> The most recent SF Branch Brief lists majors as 211% over-strength. *Special Forces Branch Brief* (Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Command, December 2006), 7.

## SF MAJ Projections

BAND III in FY08 and regrade of selected 18A positions from O3 to O4

<b>FY</b>	<b>YGs in MAJs Inventory</b>	<b>Projected 18A MAJ Average Inventory</b>	<b>Projected 18A MAJ 0609 PMAD Auths</b>		<b>Projected 18A MAJ Auths w/ recode</b>	
<b>FY07</b>	<b>YG91/ YG92/ YG93/ YG94/ YG95/ YG96/ YG97/ YG98</b>	473	243	194%	243	194%
<b>FY08</b>	<b>YG92/ YG93/ YG94/ YG95/ YG96/ YG97/ YG98/ YG99</b>	486	248	196%	248	196%
<b>FY09</b>	<b>YG93/ YG94/ YG95/ YG96/ YG97/ YG98/ YG99/ YG00</b>	504	253	199%	280	180%
<b>FY10</b>	<b>YG94/ YG95/ YG96/ YG97/ YG98/ YG99/ YG00/ YG01</b>	512	258	198%	286	179%
<b>FY11</b>	<b>YG95/ YG96/ YG97/ YG98/ YG99/ YG00/ YG01/ YG02</b>	513	263	195%	292	175%
<b>FY12</b>	<b>YG96/ YG97/ YG98/ YG99/ YG00/ YG01/ YG02/ YG03</b>	534	268	199%	298	179%
<b>FY13</b>	<b>YG97/ YG98/ YG99/ YG00/ YG01/ YG02/ YG03/ YG04</b>	573	268	214%	298	192%
<b>FY14</b>	<b>YG98/ YG99/ YG00/ YG01/ YG02/ YG03/ YG04/ YG05</b>	609	268	227%	298	204%
<b>FY15</b>	<b>YG99/ YG00/ YG01/ YG02/ YG03/ YG04/ YG05/ YG06</b>	634	268	236%	298	213%
<b>FY16</b>	<b>YG00/ YG01/ YG02/ YG03/ YG04/ YG05/ YG06/ YG07</b>	668	268	249%	298	224%
<b>FY17</b>	<b>YG01/ YG02/ YG03/ YG04/ YG05/ YG06/ YG07/ YG08</b>	700	268	261%	298	235%
<b>FY18</b>	<b>YG02/ YG03/ YG04/ YG05/ YG06/ YG07/ YG08/ YG09</b>	734	268	274%	298	246%

Table 2. Special Forces Major Projections.<sup>119</sup>

Special Forces Proponency acknowledges this problem and the impact it will have within the SF field-grade officer population:

Without significant force structure growth and the resultant increase in command or operational positions, those SF Majors afforded the opportunity to serve in an SF Operational or Training Group will be limited to roughly three-fourths of the YG population. However, other SF Major positions have been identified as key developmental which provide the equivalent necessary professional experience and development opportunities for future leadership responsibilities and successful service at higher levels within the force.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>119</sup> LTC Chris Karsner, *SF Officer YG Production and Projection Models* (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006), 13.

<sup>120</sup> LTC Chris Karsner, *SF Major Key Developmental Positions Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: Directorate of Special Operations Proponency, 16 November 2006), 12.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has focused on the empirical data gleaned from research at the U.S. Army Special Forces Human Resource Command, the Army Special Forces Proponency Division and other relevant agencies: specifically addressing how to man the proposed network. The evidence supports a claim of this thesis: mainly that a portion of U.S. Army SF personnel, particularly the “Major” population, is not being utilized efficiently. A more imaginative and aggressive approach regarding the special operations contributions to the war on terror is warranted.

Many of the statistics cited in this chapter represent a snapshot in time; these numbers are constantly changing. As a result, the actual numbers from the projections cited in this chapter can be expected to vary; however, the evidence clearly supports the fact that the excess of SF field-grade officers is a trend which will not only continue but can be expected to increase over the next decade.

Although there is clearly a surplus of field grade officers within Special Forces, this unique group of counter-insurgent and unconventional warfare experts remains a finite asset within the Army. It is crucial as the Army engages a determined global insurgency that those field grade officers not serving in an operational or KD position should be utilized in jobs that will take maximum advantage of their requisite expertise and thus leverage their productive efficiency in the most advantageous regards to the Army and the global war on terror.

The importance of finding less intrusive, more protracted ways to influence the *Long War* warrants the consideration of this type of networked, “small investment to large gain” initiative. The current solution to manning other programs which are similar to the one recommended here can mainly be described as short-term and temporary in their manning concepts. Many of these programs take the few officers who are assigned to operational SF Groups or Theater Special Operation Commands and pull them from their critical MTOE billet for short-term Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments in order to fill a deployed operational requirement. Since there is not a current body or eligible pool of selected, qualified, and experienced SF officers set aside within the branch to conduct these assignments, this solution results in the worst-case scenario. By taking a SF Major

from an operational, KD billet during his tenure to serve in a TDY capacity, SOF commands are deprived of a critical commander or staff officer for an extended period of time.

This temporary approach ultimately hinders the outcome of *both* requirements. Because the losing unit cannot afford to give up its SF field-grade officer permanently, the mission taking this officer away from his actual KD position unavoidably takes a short-term approach to a problem, which demands a long-term commitment of effort. Rotating people through short, six-month deployments can never develop the trust and influence necessary to build a productive human network. Once a new officer has served for several months in a liaison role with his host-nation counterpart, his TDY assignment is complete. Then a new SF field-grade officer arrives to start over again, and the cycle continues, never realizing the potential that a long-term commitment would facilitate.

Finally, the argument is not that the Army needs to radically change their current SF field-grade officer prioritization, simply apply some reasonable percentage of the excess strength present in the current and future force structure. Another way exists to utilize this important human asset, which naturally complements the principles of allocative and productive efficiency demanded of a scarce human resource. This would allow Special Forces to fill a critical niche in the global effort against a determined, networked adversary. This will provide USSOCOM and the Geographical Combatant Commands with a *real* global persistent presence, able to provide valuable information from remote and austere locations in countries of interest which no other agency or personnel are as qualified to obtain.



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## V. CONCLUSION

Earlier in this thesis, the authors analyzed the U.S. military's fight against an irregular, networked terror adversary who seeks to asymmetrically attack traditional U.S. military strengths. He does this through networked organizational forms, exploiting the power of social bonds as the sinew of these innovative organizations to exploit the inherent weaknesses of more hierarchical western military organizations. It is important to note that the enemy knows and understands what western military thinkers have been writing and talking about since the 1990s: mainly an emergent form of warfare previously identified as 4GW or netwar. The enemy understands that "4GW is the only kind of war America has ever lost, and done so three times: in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Somalia."<sup>121</sup> Al Qaeda and its affiliates have not been idle with this knowledge. In February of 2002 the online magazine *Al-Ansar*, a purported official al Qaeda website, published an article by Ubeid Al-Qurashi, a close aide to Osama bin Laden:<sup>122</sup>

In 1989, some American military experts predicted a fundamental change in the future form of warfare. . . . They predicted that the wars of the 21st century would be dominated by a kind of warfare they called "the fourth generation of wars." Others called it asymmetric warfare. . . .

This new type of war presents significant difficulties for the Western war machine and it can be expected that [Western] armies will change fundamentally. This forecast did not arise in a vacuum – if only the cowards [among the Muslim clerics] knew that fourth-generation wars have already occurred and that the superiority of the theoretically weaker party has already proven: in many instances, nation-states have been defeated by stateless nations. . . .

In Afghanistan, the Mujahideen triumphed over the world's second most qualitative power at the time . . . . Similarly, a single Somali tribe humiliated America and compelled it to remove its forces from Somalia.

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<sup>121</sup> Thomas X. Hammes, "Rethinking the Principles of War: The Future of Warfare," in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Anthony McIvor (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 270.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

A short time later, the Chechen Mujahideen humiliated and defeated the Russian bear. After that, the Lebanese resistance [Hezbollah] expelled the Zionists army from southern Lebanon. . . .

Technology did not help these great armies, even though [this technology] is sufficient to destroy the planet hundreds of times over. . . . The Mujahideen proved their superiority in fourth-generation warfare using only light weaponry. They are part of the people and hide among the multitudes. . . .

Thus it appears that there are precedents for world powers and large countries being defeated by [small] units of Mujahideen over the past two decades, despite the great differences between the two sides. . . <sup>123</sup>

This is only one of myriad anecdotal examples available that demonstrate the nuanced understanding our enemy already has of the challenges and opportunities available in future conflict. Some governmental and military departments have made progress since September 11, 2001, but have we done enough? Much of our military industrial complex, weapons and systems procurement emphasis, and even personnel management philosophies remain fundamentally unchanged since the end of the Cold War. If the enemy already has a good idea of our own western theories of future war, it becomes even more imperative that the U.S. military move to improve its ability to fight and win in an era of netwar.

In his exceptional book on counter-insurgency, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, Colonel John Nagl explains just how difficult the task of changing from a traditional military mindset to one necessary to defeating an insurgency can be:

Counter-revolutionary forces must also fight with ideas . . . Creating a political-military-economic strategy to defeat an insurgency is every bit as revolutionary as planning to overthrow a government, and a great deal more difficult. . . Gerald Templar created a revolution of his own in

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<sup>123</sup> Ubeid Al-Qurashi, "Bin Laden Lieutenant Admits to September 11 and Explains Al-Qa'ida's Combat Doctrine," *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, Special Dispatch – Jihad and Terrorism Studies, no. 344 (February 10, 2000); available from <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP34402>; Internet; accessed on 17 February, 2007.

Malaya. He encouraged innovation from below and demanded a new approach to solving problems of Malayan society. He not only refused to focus exclusively on the insurgency as a military problem, but did not even see it primarily as such – and he insisted that all of his subordinates share that worldview.<sup>124</sup>

This point is critical for the U.S. military and the future role of Army Special Forces in particular. Few will argue that the American military is the preeminent armed force in the world, whether measured by budget, technology or training, yet this advantage in military resources is less and less the valued currency in 4GW. That is because the traditional, nearly timeless military calculus of men and material which has been considered from Alexander, Hannibal, through Napoleon and today, no longer proves true in the current epoch of fourth generation warfare. In an asymmetrical war, it does not matter that the U.S. owns most of the military resource advantages – al Qaeda and its affiliates are not fighting us along those same lines of operation. In this war of asymmetry, the U.S. military must follow Gerald Templar's example and create a revolution in military mindsets in the long war.

This will mean encouraging, gleaning, and then implementing innovation from below – from the sergeants and captains and warrant officers with the experience of three and four tours of duty fighting terrorist networks in multiple theaters. To cause this change in military mindset to occur, senior leaders must change, and communicate this change to every level of the military. The fact that counterinsurgency is a difficult task to quantify means that the current measures of effectiveness, such as the numbers of targets killed or captured are not reliable measures of success. The networked terrorist organizations arrayed against the U.S. are acephalous in nature, thus killing individual leaders is of limited value.

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<sup>124</sup> John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons From Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 196.

This does not mean that every organization must be realigned along network-centric principles, to the contrary. Higher, administrative commands performing regimented and recurring tasks are perfectly suited to maintain their hierarchical nature.

Yet, for the organizations placed in the lead in the war against global insurgency it will be paramount to adapt and change those elements or nodes closest to the networked threat in order to become more aligned along small, dispersed network forms. Once this has been accomplished, the networked insurgent adversary will lose much of its asymmetric advantage.

This is good news, as again Hammes points out, “[t]he inherent conflicts in such networked insurgencies [will] offer opportunities that can be exploited, but only by people with deep and current cultural and political understanding of the specific insurgencies.”<sup>125</sup> The group of men most prepared to meet these important criteria is the currently under-utilized pool of Army Special Forces field-grade officers. The fact that the Army Special Forces is currently more than 200% overstrength in field-grade officers suggests that a portion of these men could be more optimally employed in the global counter-insurgent network proposed in this thesis.

By assigning the most qualified personnel within the most relevant organizational form, tied into a responsive operational command tasked with leading the global war on terror -- would allow the proposed SFGCIN to change the operational metric. The nodes of the SFGCIN could apply the advantages of a U.S. SOF network, building strong social bonds of their own with indigenous peoples and militaries and begin to turn the tide from reactive to proactive measures, exploiting terror networks. This is a powerful point and would mean a real, not simply rhetorical paradigm shift necessary to defeat a determined insurgency. We must develop a network which would provide the knowledge of the cultural and human terrain, depriving the enemy network of its inherent advantage, thus allowing our networks to proactively exploit their exposed weaknesses.

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<sup>125</sup> McIvor and Hammes, 275.

There is still much to be done to build the proposed Special Forces Global Counter Insurgent Network, but there has certainly never been a more opportune time to apply the principles of allocative and productive efficiency with respect to the unique and valuable human resource resident in the Army Special Forces field-grade officer corps. This role could fill a unique and critical link in the broader, global war against terror networks for the foreseeable future. This change cannot be realized by any amount of technological or resource advancement. Instead it is a human resource and organizational turn of mind that is required. Hammes reminds us that,

Western forces have tried to substitute technology for human connections. This is a fundamental difference [with our enemy] that must be recognized in the West. Once recognized, it should result in major efforts to build similar human networks among allies and neutrals when we are fighting a networked insurgent.<sup>126</sup>

The United States Army has the most appropriate personnel in its Special Forces to build a powerful human network capable of challenging the global insurgent network. Our enemy is unequivocal in their focus and determination to bring every tool to bear against the United States to achieve their ends. For the U.S. to prevail in this global conflict we must be equally determined to evolve and adapt our response to the greatest struggle of our time.

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<sup>126</sup> McIvor and Hammes, 276.

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