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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

EFFECTIVE SOF EMPLOYMENT: MITIGATING CAUSES OF CONFLICT

by

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June 2013

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ABSTRACT

Following two long wars conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan, the American appetite for large-scale and prolonged stability operations may be diminishing. Consequently, employment of United States Special Operations Forces (SOF) may prove an increasingly attractive alternative for the Department of Defense (DOD) in unstable regions because of its unique capability to operate indirectly and with a minimal footprint, particularly in responding to cases of State failure, which is closely tied to outbreaks of conflict between governments and armed insurgents. Hence, the appropriate employment of SOF will be of critical importance to the achievement of U.S.-led efforts' goals-one of which is building partner nation capacity to mitigate causes of conflict or to prevent conflicts from escalating to cause complete state failure.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AP3	Afghan Public Protection Program
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
AOR	Area of Responsibility
BACNA	Colombian Center Narcotics Brigade
C2	Command and Control
CA	Civil Affairs
CAO	Civil Affairs Operations
CAP	Civil Action Program
CATs	Civil Affairs Teams
CDI	Community Defense Initiative
CDRUSFOR-A	Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan
CF	Conventional Forces
CFSOCC-A	Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command –
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIM	Civil Information Management
CJOA	Combined Joint Operations Area
CJSOTF-A	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force - Afghanistan Afghanistan
CMO	Civil Military Operations
CNP	Colombian National Police
COIN	Counter Insurgency
COMISAF	Commander of the International Security Assistance Forces
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
DA	Direct Action
DAT	District Augmentation Team

DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DENTCAP	Dental Civic Action Program
DIME	Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economic
DOD	Department of Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOS	Department of State
ELN	Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional
ENCAP	Engineering Civic Action Program
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaria de Colombia
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FHA	Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
FM	Field Manual
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FOBs	Forward Operating Bases
FSF	Foreign Security Forces
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
GTD	Global Terror Database
GPF	General Purpose Forces
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HN	Host Nation
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program
IGO	Intergovernmental Organizations
IO	Information Operations
IPI	Indigenous Populations and Institutions
IPSP	Internal Peace and Security Plan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
IW	Irregular Warfare
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
JIIM	Joint Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational
JP	Joint Publication

JOA	Joint Operations Area
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines
KLE	Key Leader Engagement
LCE	Liaison Coordination Elements
LDI	Local Defense Initiative
MARSOF	Marine Special Operations Forces
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Program
MEDRETE	Medical Readiness Training Exercise
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
MIST	Military Information Support Teams
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
NA	Nation Assistance
NAS	Narcotics Affairs Section
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental
NPA	New People’s Army
NSPD	National Security Presidential Directive
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines
OPCON	Operational Control
OWS	Operation Willing Spirit
PAT	Provincial Augmentation Team
PNP	Philippine National Police
PRC	Populace and Resources Control
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSE	Psychological Operations Support Elements
RIAB	Radio in a Box
RP	Republic of the Philippines

SIGACTs	Significant Activities
SEAL	Sea, Air, Land
SF	Special Forces
SCA	Support to Civil Administration
SFA	Security Forces Assistance
SFODA	Special Operational Forces Detachment - Alpha
SO	Special Operations
SOCFWD	Special Operations Command Forward
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOJTF-A	Special Operations Joint Task Force - Afghanistan
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SURGRETE	Surgical Readiness Training Exercise
TA	Target Audience
TACON	Tactical Control
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
U.S.	United States
USG	United States Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agricultural
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
VETCAP	Veterinarian Civic Action Program
VSCC	Village Stability Coordination Centers
VSO	Village Stability Operations
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

> The United States is unlikely to repeat another Iraq or Afghanistan—that is, forced regime change followed by nation building under fire—anytime soon. But that does not mean it may not face similar challenges in a variety of locales. Where possible, U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches—primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces—to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention. In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States' allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so than, the fighting the United States does itself.[1]
>
> —Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, January 2009

> Accordingly, U.S. forces will retain and continue to refine the lessons learned, expertise, and specialized capabilities that have been developed over the past ten years of counterinsurgency and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations.[2]
>
> —Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense 2012

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In an era of persistent conflict, with weak and failing states throughout the world, the Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) has become more relevant to the United States' national interests and security. The significance of stabilizing specific failing states for U.S. strategic interests is clear. Failing states may afford terrorist groups sanctuaries, from which they can train and launch attacks. These states may also offer a large pool of potential recruits, because of unemployment, few economic opportunities and political grievances. Moreover, weak states, which possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD), are of even greater threat to the U.S, as WMD can fall into the hands of these terrorist organizations. Somalia, Syria, and Pakistan are examples of countries that demonstrate

[1] Robert Gates, "Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs*, January 2009.

[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense 2012* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), 6.

some of these characteristics. Thus, if left unchecked or unmitigated, failing states may evolve to pose direct and indirect threats to U.S. national interests and security.

Following two long wars conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan, the American appetite for large-scale and prolonged stability operations may be diminishing. Consequently, employment of United States Special Operations Forces (SOF) may prove an increasingly attractive alternative for the Department of Defense (DOD) in unstable regions, because of its unique capability to operate indirectly and with a minimal footprint. Particularly in responding to cases of State failure, which is closely tied to outbreaks of conflict between governments and armed insurgents. Hence, the appropriate employment of SOF will be of critical importance to the achievement of U.S.-led efforts' goals-one of which is building partner nation capacity to mitigate causes of conflict or to prevent conflicts from escalating to cause complete state failure.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify how SOF capabilities can be effectively employed in order to mitigate conflict in failing and weak states. Understanding how to employ SOF for mitigating conflict in failing states can potentially garner numerous benefits for both the U.S. and the assisted country. For instance, the U.S. will be better prepared to assist South Korea's special operations forces to prepare for a possible collapse of the North Korean regime and internal armed conflict that may ensue following the regime collapse. In a similar light, the U.S. will be better prepared to cope with regional crises, such as Mali insurgency.

B. THE PROBLEM (RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS)

1. Research Question

How should SOF be employed in order to stabilize failing states or unstable regions by mitigating conflict?

2. Hypothesis

In order to answer the research question, we hypothesize that the effectiveness of SOF capabilities at reducing conflict in failing states is dependent on three variables:

SOF employment must address immediate causes of conflict; SOF employment must be SOF-centric; and interagency cooperation must be coordinated by SOF.

3. Independent Variables

These three independent variables were developed from personal experience, doctrine, documented historical examples, and academic analysis.

a. SOF Employment Must Address Immediate Causes of Conflict

SOF capabilities, specifically, Civil Affairs (CA), Military Information Support Operations (MISO) and Special Forces (SF), are more effective if they are applied to immediate causes of conflict rather than fundamental causes of conflict. SOF capabilities are better suited to address immediate causes of conflict, as immediate causes are less complex and easier to address than fundamental causes of conflict. Fundamental causes of conflict are deep rooted problems that cannot be influenced effectively by SOF capabilities, but rather require host nation direct engagement. Both causes of conflict will be addressed in further detail in Chapter II.

b. SOF Employment Must be SOF-Centric

We define SOF-centric employment as the employment of U.S. forces in failing states with the aim of maintaining an indirect, host nation led, small footprint, flat organization, with a largely non-kinetic operational focus. SOF-centric employment of U.S. forces will be less invasive, less costly, and more flexible with the main focus towards enabling the host nation populace and host nation government. SOF-centric employment does not only apply to SOF units. General purpose forces may use a SOF-centric approach if they are employed to maintain an indirect, host nation led, small footprint, flat organization, and largely non-kinetic operational focus.

c. Interagency Cooperation Must Be Coordinated by SOF

Often United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and other Department of State (DOS) organizations have the means and resources to provide assistance to host nation institutions when conducting nation building. However, they sometimes lack the access to denied or semi-permissive areas,

and lack the understanding of the operational environment, to include specific culture, values, and political hierarchy. As of late, the U.S. military has acted as the link that connects these organizations to the host nation government. For instance, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) were established to promote regional development at the provincial level in Iraq. The PRT's effort can be characterized as localized economic engagement efforts that contributed to regional stability. However, these provincial developmental projects have often become too big and too slow. As a result, these projects become irrelevant and wasteful by the time they are completed. For example, in 2009, PRT in Iraq purchased $300,000 worth of tractors to benefit local agricultural programs without fully integrating local sheikhs and tribal leaders input. As a result, the tractors were not delivered on time as promised and when they were delivered they caused more problems because it only benefited select few sheikhs and their village.[3]

Alternatively, SOF's organizational structure is better suited for interagency cooperation. By working with interagency organizations SOF elements link a balance between the centralized and local host nation authorities by bolstering traditional governance mechanisms. For example, in Afghanistan, Village Support Coordination Centers (VSCC) integrate interagency involvement into select district and provincial areas, which is facilitated by SOF and directly ties interagency efforts to host nation authority.[4] Additionally, SOF's organizational structure matches the core functions expected of a state which are political, security, social welfare and economic functions and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter II. When combined together, SF, CA, and MISO address these core functions. For instance, SF is focused on enhancing security, through the employment of Foreign Internal Defense (FID). CA is focused on civil assistance to enhance social welfare and economic stability. MISO is focused on influencing the host nation populace to support its own government for political stability. Thus, if interagency cooperation is coordinated by SOF, greater success for stability is likely achieved.

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[3] Blake Stone, "Blind Ambition: Lessons Learned and Not Learned in an Embedded PRT" *PRISM 1*, no. 4 (December 2012): 147–158.

[4] Robert Hulslander, and Jake Spivey, "Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police" *PRISM 3*, no. 3 (June 2012): 125–138.

4. Dependent Variable

To what extent SOF employment was effective at fostering stability in a studied area is the dependent variable in our argument. It is extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness of SOF employment in a given area. However, one of the most effective measures to be used in determining this can be to assess the security function or the change in the level of conflict where SOF capabilities were employed. Therefore, a standard indicator of effectiveness will be measured by violent terrorist acts, or significant activities (SIGACTs) occurring in each region. This approach does not address the other areas of government functions: politics, welfare, and economic. However, these functions are not possible in the absence of security. Therefore, the increase or decrease in number of SIGACTs can function as an indicator for conflict in a given area, and by extension, can determine the overall effectiveness of SOF employment.

C. METHODOLOGY

This thesis begins with identifying fundamental causes and immediate causes of conflict within each case study. Identifying fundamental causes and their effect on stability will allow us to analyze how these fundamental causes impact immediate causes of conflict. In turn, identifying immediate causes of conflict and their effect on stability will help us analyze how immediate causes fuel insurgent movements that destabilize each country or region. Once both fundamental and immediate causes and their impact on stability have been determined, we will examine each hypothesis to determine how effectively SOF capabilities were employed within each case study. It is significant to distinguish the difference between fundamental and immediate causes of conflict. We will argue that SOF is less likely to have an impact on the fundamental causes and is more likely to mitigate immediate causes of conflict. By differentiating the two causes, military planners can then address the causes most relevant to SOF employment. This concept will be addressed in further detail in Chapter II.

We will conduct three case studies where SOF employment has been most extensive, most current, and still ongoing: Philippines, Colombia and Afghanistan. A

couple of caveats should be addressed for data fidelity. For each case study, empirical data specific to SOF employment is limited and can be biased in how the data is interpreted. Also, when empirical data is available, it encompasses the employment of a whole U.S. or Coalition effort. For example, the Global Terror Database has data regarding terrorist activities occurring in Afghanistan, and it does not address specific instances where SOF units were directly involved. As a result, a general statistic could show that violent acts have decreased in a given region, but it does not reflect whether or not it was the result of SOF employment. Therefore, we will focus our study on reports addressing SOF employment, illustrating a change in violent activity for a given area, to demonstrate the difference SOF made in that region. Another difficulty identified is the ability to measure the effectiveness of SOF based on data collected through the employment FID, Civil Military Operations (CMO) and Information Operations (IO), and the results of which were conducted indirectly through host nation forces. Results of operations conducted indirectly through host nation forces can be biased. Where possible, we will collect data where SOF employment did not occur to contrast with areas where SOF was employed.

Each country studied demonstrates whether the employment of SOF did, or did not have, an impact on the level of conflict. The case studies show varying degrees of enduring SOF presence and sustained engagement, reflecting diverse SOF employment in each country. For example, the employment of U.S. forces in the Philippines was largely an exclusive SOF effort. Employment of U.S. forces in Colombia was conducted with a mixture of conventional and SOF units, and in Afghanistan SOF employment initially began with SOF as the primary effort. However, following the introduction of conventional forces into theater, they became the primary effort, and SOF became the supporting effort in Afghanistan. A weakness of these case studies is that there are too many variables to assess to understand the overall impact on the level of conflict. However, by analyzing the number of SIGACTs which occur where SOF have been, and have not been employed, we can determine whether SOF did, or did not, make a difference in the level of conflict in each area studied.

D. RELEVANT LITERATURE

This thesis primarily synthesizes two broad bodies of knowledge. We review the literature on failed states in order to identify both fundamental and immediate causes of conflict for the cases. In addition, we examine key indicators of failing states. Some of the main texts which help to build our basis for research on failing and weak states include: *Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security* by Stewart Patrick and *When States Fail* by Robert Rotberg. From these works, we identify that there are several definitions of weak and failing states. The literature illuminates recurring core functions expected of a state by the people, which similarly appear within each failed state index. They are generally security, rule of law, political freedom, and civil services. However, prevalent failed state indicators are not always consistent among the various studies of failed states, as the focus and purpose of indicators varies from index to index. As a result, within the prevalent literature on failed states, there exists no comprehensive index that we can use to determine the applicability of SOF in weak or failing states. However, Stewart Patrick outlines variables most applicable to our research question. These core functions are Political, Social Welfare, Security, and Economic.[5] Our primary sources for SOF employment are DOD doctrine and case study specific professional journals and articles.

[5] Stewart Patrick, *Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28–30.

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II. METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITIONS

This chapter provides the basic framework that guides the analysis of the thesis. It will discuss the definitions of Special Operations Forces (SOF) and failing state doctrine as it applies to the thesis. The subject of stabilizing failing states has been studied by many scholars. When combined with the employment of SOF in these states, it becomes an even more complex matter. Translating scholarly terminology and applying it to military terminology presents a unique challenge when addressing the employment of SOF elements sent to resolve or mitigate identified causes of conflict.

A. FAILED, WEAK, AND FAILING STATES

As we are concerned about SOF employment in failing states to reduce violence, it is crucial to understand what a failing state is. Numerous definitions for failed and weak states exist. To simplify understanding the difference, we adopt Stewart Patrick's definition for a failing state: "A state that struggles to fulfill the fundamental [basic] security, political, economic, and social functions that have come to be associated with sovereign statehood."[6] Patrick identifies four core functions of a state, which shows a more balanced and transparent index than other indices. We adopt these four core functions, listed in detail below, to assist us in identifying fundamental and immediate causes of conflict. When these core functions are not provided, conflict ensues. Reducing conflict does not undo state failure but can create the conditions in which the host nation can improve its core functions.

- *Political*. The extent to which a state "rules in a legitimate, capable, and responsive manner through accountable, effective, and representative institutions."[7]
- *Security*. The extent to which a state "provides security for its citizens and sovereignty for its territory."[8]

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[6] Stewart Patrick, *Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 30.

[7] Ibid., 28.

[8] Patrick, *Weak Links*, 28.

- *Social Welfare*. The extent to which a government "meets the basic human needs of its citizens." Expected by the people of each region at the institutional level through the establishment of key infrastructure, such as schools and medical facilities and delivery of services such as electricity, water and sanitation. People's expectation on the level of social welfare function the government provide may differ by country and culture. For example, where a water and sanitation system is important to someone from the Philippines, it may not be as important to someone from Afghanistan.[9]
- *Economic*. The extent to which a government "provides citizens with a stable macroeconomic, fiscal, and regulatory environment that is conducive to growth."[10]

B. STATE STABILITY

The core functions listed above directly impact the stability of a state. We define state stability as the ability of a state to carry out these core functions. A failing state does not need to fail at providing all of these functions, because the security function influences other core functions heavily. A state with less security is more prone to failure because of the greater instability that exists with increased violent conflict. However, a high of level of violence does not suggest a state is not successful at providing the security function. For example, one could argue that the level of violence in the United States is relatively high. However, the U.S. is considered to be a relatively stable country. In the same vein, perspectives and tolerance levels of violence may differ, based on culture and country. Thus, by measuring the level of security function and assessing how it impacts the other core functions affecting overall state stability we make a determination of the level of state stability.[11] The greater a state's ability to provide more of the core functions to the population, the greater the state stability. Conversely, a lack of these functions provided by the state demonstrates an occurrence of state instability, which is likely to manifest itself in greater violence.

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[9] World Food Programme, *Philippines: Violent Conflict and Displacement in Central Mindanao, Challenges for Recovery and Development*, (Rome: World Food Programme, 2011), 61.

[10] Patrick, *Weak Links*, 30.

[11] Robert Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 4.

C. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES AND IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

A fundamental cause is the root reason for conflict. An immediate cause has its origin in a fundamental cause, and can be traced back to this fundamental cause. See Figure 1 below. In other words, a fundamental cause is deep rooted, complex and has generational impacts on long-term stability, while immediate causes are relatively new, less complex, and when presented on their own, stem from a fundamental cause. It is very difficult to distinguish fundamental and immediate causes of conflict in general, because each state is unique and has its own history, culture, and societal norms that must be accounted for when identifying each cause. Also, identification of cause of conflict can be subjective according to those in the state as well as outside observers. Therefore, for each case study, we have drawn upon the expertise of authors who have studied each case. Based on relevant literature, we have selected causes of conflict, and have determined fundamental and immediate causes by tracing each cause to its root. If a cause can be traced back to a preceding cause, and if the cause was relatively new and less complex, then we determined this as an immediate cause. If a cause could not be traced back to another cause, and had generational impacts on stability, then we determined this to be a fundamental cause.

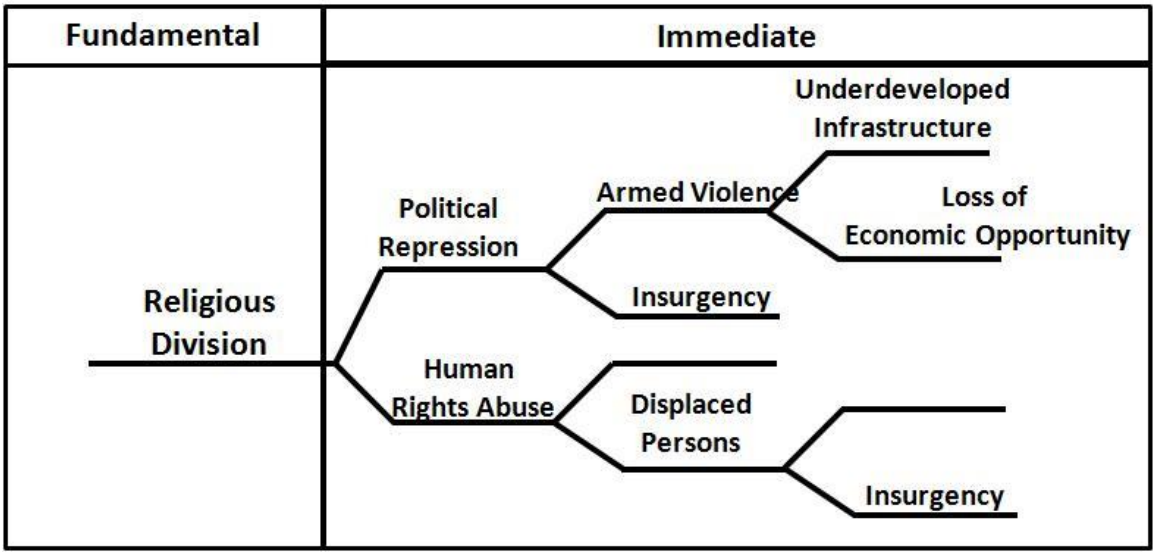

Figure 1. Tracing Immediate Cause and Fundamental Cause of Conflict

D. DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

The development of the three independent variables in our study begin with reviewing relevant literature on intervention and stability operations, current government and academic studies on post conflict operations, and our own experience as SOF officers. The purpose of this section is to give the reader an understanding how we have developed the independent variables and why.

E. THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. SOF Employment Must Address Immediate Causes of Conflict

This variable is predicated upon the assumption that U.S. military capabilities should not and cannot be employed to fix fundamental or structural problems of failing states such as ethnic grievances, resource depletion, and systemic economic and political instability. However, well-coordinated and supported SOF capabilities can be employed as remedy for more immediate causes such as warring factions and weakened governance capacity. Alternatively, SOF capabilities would be ineffective when addressing the fundamental causes, such as resource depletion, rapid macro-economic degradation, and politicized ethnic diversity as such problems are beyond the scope and capacity of SOF.

2. SOF Employment Must Be SOF-Centric

This thesis defines characteristics of SOF-centric employment to be an indirect approach, host nation led, flat organization, small footprint, and generally non-kinetic operations. This variable was developed based on the idea of minimalist stabilization, which promotes the concept that military intervention should be indirect, un-intrusive, and have greater host nation involvement (both civic and military).[12] Also, we adopt the flat organization model of Mintzberg as part of our SOF-centric approach. Mintzberg states a flat, or "horizontal" organization has the following characteristics: flexible with more autonomy, less bureaucratic, which encourages out of box solutions for problems, and has a less formal communication structure, with more frequent face-to-face

[12] Stephen Watts, Caroline Baxter, Molly Dunigan, and Christopher Rizzi, *The Uses and Limits of Small-Scale Military Interventions* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), 8.

interaction.[13] Although, SOF organizations are military organizations which are hierarchical organizations in nature, in their execution, they often assume a flatter organizational structure, giving greater flexibility to respond to highly complex and unstable environments, such as in failing states. Also, this variable captures the concept that a failing state has a better chance of long-term stability with less direct involvement by an external entity, as opposed to external support with short-term stability through direct intervention. Additionally, conventional force-centric operations tend to be invasive as they require a large support footprint in order to sustain their operations. They require a greater number of service members serving in the General Purpose Forces (GPF) who often lack the maturity and knowledge to engage the local population. Another characteristic of the SOF-centric approach is that when SOF is employed, it should be small enough to allow for greater flexibility and not to be misinterpreted as an occupying force. SOF capabilities must be employed in an indirect manner, by, with and through, the host nation forces. The host nation forces must lead operations in order to give the partner government a great degree of perceived political leadership and legitimacy. SOF capabilities must be focused more on non-kinetic operations, versus kinetic operations conducted by both host nation and U.S. in order to minimize unnecessary damage to the population. Last, unilateral operations should be avoided by U.S. forces when possible in order to minimize targeted insurgent or terrorist information operations campaigns against the U.S.

3. Interagency Cooperation Must Be Coordinated by SOF

This variable is mainly informed by our own experiences as SOF operators that SOF units are most effective when operating in a joint capacity with other governmental agencies. Also, SOF's unique organization, capabilities, and regional expertise create the most suitable environment for interagency cooperation. GPF battalions and brigades have nation building capabilities similar to SOF's. However, these capabilities are not organic to the conventional unit. At the operational and tactical unit level, GPF capabilities lack the specialized training, experience and existing interoperability

[13] Henry Mintzberg. "Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?" *Harvard Business Review 59*, no. 1 (1981): 8.

structure with the interagency when incorporating interagency resources into theater. Alternatively, Civil Affairs (CA), Military Information Support Operations (MISO), and Special Forces (SF) which are organic to SOF, and respectively correspond to political, security, social welfare, and economic aspect of nation building. Regional and cultural proficiency and expertise due to persistent engagement with host nation enable SOF capabilities to be more effective in identifying immediate causes of conflict and organizing solutions to address causes of conflict. This enables higher rate of return on resources spent and minimizes inefficient use of resources. Thus, SOF can be the center of an interagency effort that directs and coordinates stability operations efforts from the tactical to strategic levels.

F. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) DOCTRINE AND DEFINITIONS

Military doctrine is a guide which standardizes operations under a common frame of reference across the military. We provide core SF, CA, and MISO doctrine here in order to provide the common frame of reference in which SOF operate under in order to reduce violence and level of conflict in failing states.

1. Defining SOF Core Operations

Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-05 (ADRP 3-05) for Special Operations defines SOF Core Operations as, "military missions for which SOF have unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment, and training to orchestrate effects, often in concert with conventional forces."[14] See Figure 2. We selected core operations which only pertain to assisting a host nation in reducing levels of conflict, through which that host nation can then address the core functions expected of a state. These SOF core operations are Foreign Internal Defense, Counterinsurgency and Stability Operations and they are defined below.

[14] U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publications 3-05 (ADRP 3-05): Special Operations* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 2-1.

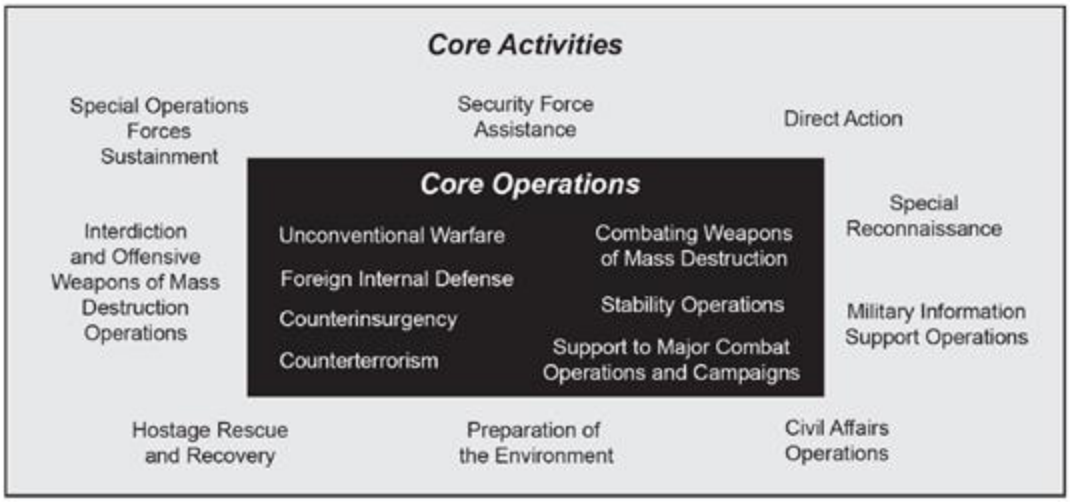

Figure 2. Special Operations Core Operations and Activities[15]

Stability operations encompass various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power. The five primary stability tasks are establish civil security, establish civil control, restore essential services, support to governance, and support to economic and infrastructure development. Stability operations are aimed at reducing threats from state fragility and instability. Long-term stability operations—consisting of low-profile SOF engagement conducted in concert with U.S., interagency, international, and HN partners—can mitigate the risk of lengthy post-conflict interventions.[16]

Foreign Internal Defense is participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security (JP 3–22, Foreign Internal Defense). FID is an activity of IW and involves a comprehensive approach. The comprehensive approach includes all instruments of national power—diplomatic, information, military, and economic. FID is executed through unified action involving the synchronization, coordination, and integration of activities from governmental and nongovernmental entities within the operation to achieve unity of effort.[17]

[15] U.S. Department of the Army, *ADRP 3–05: Special Operations*, 2-1.

[16] Ibid., 2-4.

[17] Ibid., 2-2.

> ***Counterinsurgency*** is defined as comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances (JP 3–24, Counterinsurgency Operations). Successful COIN operations are population-focused because of the importance of building support for the government and its programs. Likewise, the population is a center of gravity for an insurgency and is targeted as part of an integrated COIN effort.[18]

When assisting a host nation in reducing conflict, understanding above SOF core operations is crucial. Stability Operations, FID, and COIN emphasize civilian and military cooperation and comprehensive approach which include all the instruments of national power: Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic. Also, ADRP 3-05 stresses the importance of interagency cooperation with SOF to assist a host nation in focusing its efforts towards the population, making the people of that country the center of gravity. Moreover, similar to our four core functions expected of a state, Joint Publication 3-07 (JP3-07) Stability Operations identifies human security, economic and infrastructure development, and governance and rule of law as elements of stable state. JP 3-07 states that the stability of a state depends on how well these elements are performed.[19] See Figure 3. There are many conditions and factors that are needed to be considered in order to bring stability to a state. Also, besides the above mentioned factors, other important factors are the forces who plan and execute these operations. According to JP 3-07, SOF's unique capabilities make them the force of choice when it comes to conducting stability operations.[20] These unique capabilities inherent to SOF are listed in further detail in the next section.

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[18] U.S. Department of the Army, *ADRP 3–05: Special Operations*, 2-3.

[19] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-07 (JP 3-07): Stability Operations* (Washington DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), I-2.

[20] Ibid., I-15.

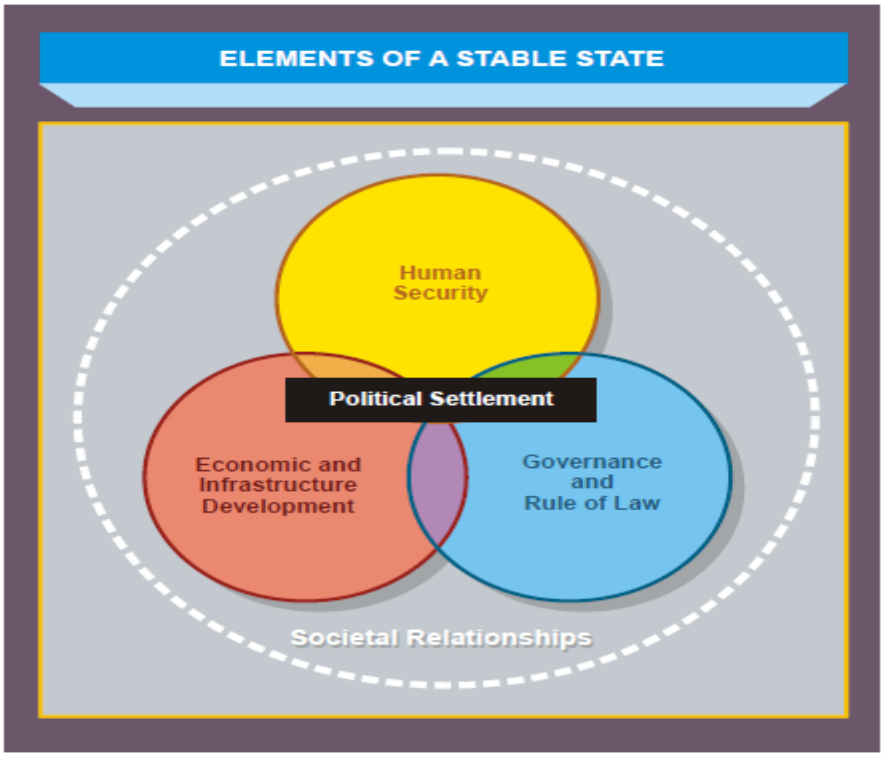

Figure 3. Elements of a Stable State[21]

2. Understanding Special Operation Forces and their missions

To better understand how SOF capabilities can be employed to reduce violence and level of conflict in failing states, SOF capabilities, must be defined.

a. Civil Affairs (CA)

Field Manual 3-57 (FM 3-57) Civil Affairs Operations defines CA as, "designated Active and Reserve Components forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs operations and to support civil-military operations."[22] Civil Affairs Teams (CATs) are typically comprised of a team chief, team sergeant, medic and engineer. CATs primary function is to engage the civil component at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. They integrate military forces with civil authorities, including intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental

[21] U.S. Department of Defense, *JP 3-07: Stability Operations*, I-3.

[22] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-57 (FM 3-57): Civil Affairs Operations* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 2011), 1-1.

Organizations (NGOs) and the Indigenous Populations and Institutions (IPI) to modify behaviors, to mitigate or defeat threats to civil society, and to assist in establishing the capacity for deterring or defeating future civil threats to U.S. objectives.[23] See Figure 4.

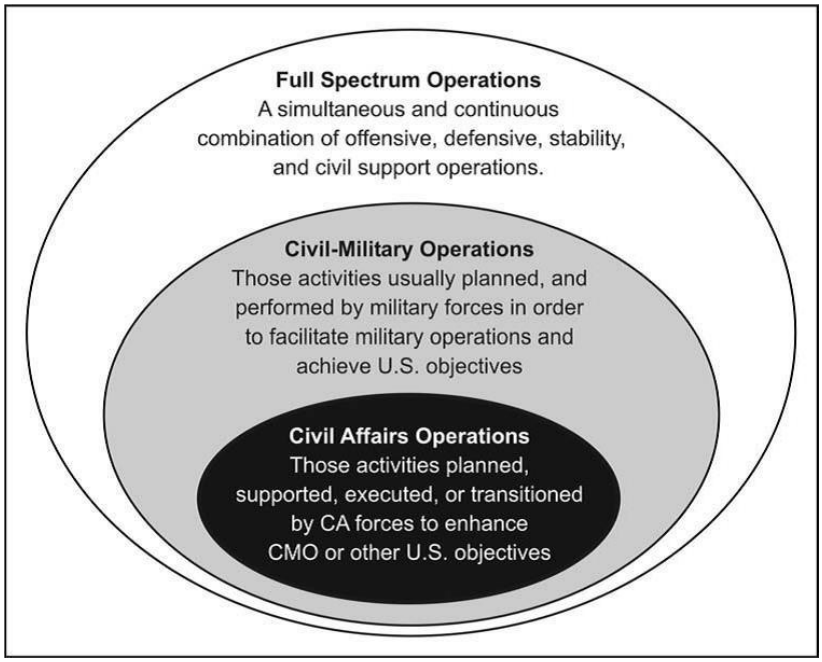

Figure 4. Interrelationship of CAO, CMO and Full Spectrum Operations[24]

CA has five Core Tasks, which are: populace and resources control, foreign humanitarian assistance, civil information management, nation assistance, and support to civil administration, and are listed in further detail below.[25]

> ***Populace and resources control* (PRC)**. Populace control provides security for the populace, mobilizes human resources, denies enemy access to the population, and detects and reduces the effectiveness of enemy agents.[26]
>
> ***Foreign humanitarian assistance* (FHA)**. FHA are programs conducted to relieve or reduce the results of natural or man-made disasters or other

[23] U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-57: Civil Affairs Operations*, 1-1.

[24] Ibid., 1-3.

[25] Ibid., 1-3.

[26] Ibid., 3-2.

endemic conditions, such as human pain, disease, hunger, or need that might present a serious threat to life or that can result in great damage to or loss of property. Normally, FHA includes humanitarian services and transportation; the provision of food, clothing, medicine, beds and bedding; temporary shelter and housing; the furnishing of medical materiel and medical and technical personnel; and making repairs to essential services.[27]

Civil information management **(CIM)**. CIM is the process whereby civil information is collected, entered into a central database, and internally fused with the supported element, higher HQ, and other USG and DOD agencies, IGOs, and NGOs. This process ensures the timely availability of information for analysis and the widest possible dissemination of the raw and analyzed civil information to military and nonmilitary partners throughout the AO.[28]

Nation assistance **(NA)**. NA is civil or military assistance (other than FHA) rendered to a nation by U.S. forces within that nation's territory during peacetime, crises or emergencies, or war based on agreements mutually concluded between the United States and that nation. NA operations support a HN by promoting sustainable development and growth of responsive institutions. The goal is to promote long-term regional stability."[29]

Support to civil administration **(SCA)**. SCA are military operations that help to stabilize or to continue the operations of the governing body or civil structure of a foreign country, whether by assisting an established government or by establishing military authority over an occupied population.[30]

A key point to understanding CA core tasks is that CA plays a critical role in stability operations. Although its functions do not directly address the political and security functions related to a failing state, their non-kinetic operations are a powerful tool that addresses the social welfare and economic functions expected of a state. CA conducts these core tasks through Civil Military Activities (CMA) or Civil Military Operations (CMO) and Civic Action Programs (CAP). They are defined below.

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[27] U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-57: Civil Affairs Operations*, 3–6.

[28] Ibid., 3-10.

[29] Ibid., 2-13.

[30] Ibid., 3-17.

DENTCAP. Dental Civic Action Program; program aimed at providing dental treatment to a local populace of a foreign nation through the employment of dentists and dental technicians.

ENCAP. Engineering Civic Action Program; program aimed at providing civil engineering projects in a foreign nation to improve infrastructure, such as clinics, and schools.

MEDCAP. Medical Civic Action Program; program aimed at providing medical treatment to a local populace of a foreign nation through the employment of doctors and medics.

MEDRETE. Medical Readiness Training Exercise

VETCAP. Veterinarian Civic Action Program; program aimed at providing medical treatment to the animals belonging to a local populace of a foreign nation through the employment of veterinarians and technicians.

SURGRETE. Surgical Readiness Training Exercise

A review of CA's activities, operations, and capabilities illustrates the vast range of problems it is expected to mitigate and demonstrates the importance of its existence. CA's role is crucial as it applies to the successful employment of SOF, because it enhances relationship between the population and the military.

b. Military Information Support Operations (MISO)

Military Information Support Operations (MISO) units, formerly known as PSYOP, are specially trained, equipped and organized to provide specialized support to commanders. These operations are conducted across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, and are also used as part of interagency activities to achieve U.S. national objectives.[31] In respect to Special Operations, MISO is integral when employing SOF in areas experiencing conflict. It supports various missions under Irregular

[31] U.S. Department of the Army, *ADRP 3-05: Special Operations*, 2-6–2-7.

Warfare;[32] however, for this thesis we will define MISO which pertains to FID, Stability Operations and COIN.

> ***FID.*** Psychological Operations (PSYOP) are used to promote the ability of the HN to defend itself against internal and external insurgencies and terrorism by fostering reliable military forces and encouraging empathy between HN armed forces and the civilian populace. PSYOP also may be used to modify the behavior of selected target audiences toward U.S. and multinational capabilities. The main objectives of PSYOP during FID are to build and maintain support for the host government while decreasing support for insurgents.
>
> ***Stability Operations.*** Successful execution of stability operations tasks depends on informing the local populace and influencing attitudes to secure the trust and confidence of the population. PSYOP exerts significant influence on foreign target audiences (TA).
>
> ***COIN Operations.*** PSYOP can influence foreign populations through information to influence attitudes and behavior and to obtain compliance or noninterference with friendly joint operations. PSYOP can provide public information to support humanitarian activities, ease suffering, and restore or maintain civil order. PSYOP can serve as the supported commander's voice to foreign populations by conveying the Joint Force Commander's intent.
>
> ***Civil Affairs Operations (CAO).*** CAO are military operations conducted by civil affairs forces that enhance relationships between military forces and civil authorities through the application of functional specialty skills that normally are the responsibility of civil government. PSYOP can be integrated with CAO activities to increase support for the HN government and reduce support to destabilizing forces. PSYOP can publicize the existence and successes of CAO to enhance the positive perception of U.S. and HN actions in the AOR and trans-regionally. PSYOP inform and direct civilians concerning safety and welfare to reduce civilian casualties, suffering, and interference with military operations.

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[32] Irregular warfare (IW) is defined as "a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will." (JP 3-13.2) Under IW, MISO conducts the following activities: "insurgency; counterinsurgency (COIN); unconventional warfare (UW); terrorism; CT; FID; stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations; PSYOP; CMO; intelligence and counterintelligence activities; transnational criminal activities, including drug trafficking, illicit arms dealing, and illegal financial transactions, that support or sustain IW; and law enforcement activities focused on countering irregular adversaries." (JP 3-13.2)

Most important aspect MISO is that it amplifies host nation government and military actions and successes in order to build local populace confidence in their government. Thus, reducing support for insurgent forces.

c. Special Forces (SF)

> Special Forces is characterized as a highly adaptive, culturally experienced and a versatile organization, allowing it to conduct operations that have operational and strategic implications. Special Forces Soldiers plan and conduct special operations (SO) across the full range of military operations from unilateral direct action (DA) to joint interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) interaction…[33]

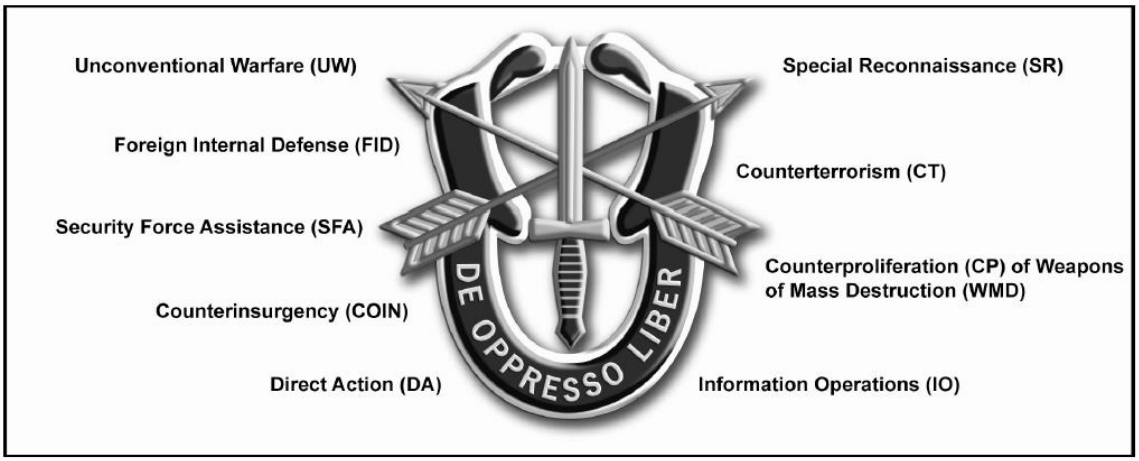

Figure 5. Special Forces Principal Tasks[34]

As defined above, SF is a unique organization operating at all levels of war. This thesis will highlight specific SF principle tasks that are more closely associated with stability operations. These tasks include COIN, FID, and Security Force Assistance (SFA).

COIN – defined previously

FID – defined previously

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[33] U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-18 (FM 3-18): Special Forces Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 1-1.

[34] Ibid., 2-4.

> Security Force Assistance (SFA) — The Department of Defense's contribution to a unified action effort to support and augment the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces (FSF) and their supporting institutions to facilitate the achievement of specific objectives shared by the U.S. Government.[35] SFA and FID overlap without being subsets of each other[36]

SF teams are the unit of choice when conducting low intensity operations; especially when carrying out the three principle tasks listed above. SF generally has advanced training in variety of target languages, as well as an enhanced understanding for cultural awareness and regional expertise that conventional units often lack. At the tactical level of operations, SF is organized typically as a 12 man team, and is designated a Special Forces Operational Detachment–Alpha, or SFODA. Each SFODA is organized with SF Soldiers who are specially trained in planning, intelligence operations, weapons, engineering and demolition, advanced medical skills, radio, electronic, and telecommunications. These groups of man are highly adaptable and can operate in austere condition. Also, they can work in smaller groups, typically two to three man teams, to cater to specific mission requirements. When compared to conventional forces, SFs ability to work closely with host nation security forces is crucial to stability operations that occur in highly complex and unstable environments, such as failing states.

In summary, this chapter provided an overview of definitions, doctrine and tasks performed by SOF to give the reader a better understanding of SOF capabilities, and how they can be employed to mitigate conflict. The full spectrum of SOF operations was not discussed because this thesis is focused on the employment of SOF to assist host nations with a stabilization effort. When combining the complexity involved in stabilizing failing states with the employment of SOF, this chapter reviewed some of the essential information for the reader to understand when translating military terminology and applying it to scholarly terminology applied by academics.

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[35] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-22 (JP 3-22): Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), I-16.

[36] U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 3-18: Special Forces Operations*, 2-9.

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III. PHILIPPINES CASE STUDY

A. INTRODUCTION

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines (RP) have a relatively long relationship dating back to the 1890s when the U.S. formally colonized the Philippines (1902-1946) in the wake of the war with Spain in 1898.[37] Since then, the Philippines has been vital to U.S. national interests and security in Southeast Asia. In the first half of the 20th century the Philippines emerged as central to America's wider geopolitical and commercial push into Asia, despite the looming confrontation with an expansionist Imperial Japan's ambition to dominate Asia. Since World War II, the Philippines has served as a strategic base of operations for the U.S. military. Today, the Philippines is even more vital to U.S. national interests and security as it serves as a recruitment base and training ground for al-Qaeda linked terrorist groups, such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). Also, as China's ambition and influence grows within Asia, the Philippines will play an even greater role in U.S. national interests and security.[38] Therefore, the stability of the Philippines is a significant concern for the U.S., as the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) struggles with various insurgent groups that threaten the country's stability and security through violent armed conflict. These insurgents groups are the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) / New People's Army (NPA), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), ASG and the JI.[39] In an effort to combat the threat of terrorism and armed conflict by ASG and JI, the GRP requested U.S. assistance. Consequently, the U.S. employed SOF in the Southern Philippines. This case study is focused on the employment of SOF in the Philippines under Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P), in order to determine whether SOF capabilities have been effectively employed and whether SOF capabilities can mitigate causes of

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[37]Thomas Lum., *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*, CRS Report RL33233 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, January 3, 2011).

38 We are primarily dealing with low-intensity conflict, not great power politics.

39 Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests.*

conflict which threaten Philippine stability. We will briefly introduce the history of the Philippines in the 20th century. Next, we will identify the fundamental and immediate causes of conflict. Subsequently, the case study turns to a discussion of SOF employment in the Philippines and examines three variables to study how effectively SOF capabilities are used to mitigate the causes of conflict in the country. The overall argument within this case study is that JSOTF-P has been employing SOF capabilities effectively to mitigate immediate causes of conflict through a SOF-centric methodology and effective interagency cooperation which is coordinated by JSOTF-P.

B. BACKGROUND

The complexity of the root causes of conflict in the Philippines can be illuminated by close examination of its modern history. By examining the rise of two insurgent groups, the MNLF and CPP/NPA, the root causes of the conflict become more evident. With the introduction of Islam and Catholicism in the 16th century, the people living on the islands that became the Philippines were divided into two religious groups, the Muslim Filipinos and the Christian Filipinos. By the late1960s, the differences between these two groups had transformed into a full-fledged political and socio-economic repression of the Muslim minority. The MNLF was created by the dissatisfied and marginalized Muslim Filipinos to seek an independent Muslim state separate from the RP.[40] Since then, Philippine stability has suffered through persistent armed conflict and violence between the GRP and MNLF, and other secessionist groups such as the MILF and ASG. Similarly, the CPP/NPA was created because of the differences that existed between the rich and the poor. Increasing socio-economic inequality and oppression of the poor by the political elites and the rich led to the Huk insurgency in 1947. The Huk Insurgency was quickly quelled by the GRP. However, over the years, poor governance and rampant corruption have exacerbated the socio-economic inequality issue. During the Marcos regime, the CPP/NPA established itself and gained strength on the issue of

[40] Larry Niksch, *Abu Sayyaf: Target of Philippines-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation*, CRS Report RL31265 (Washington DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, January 24, 2007).

socio-economic inequality. Consequently, violent armed conflict ensued between the CPP/NPA and the GRP, which further increased conflict level in the Philippines.[41]

C. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT

From the history of the Philippine insurgencies, this case study has determined that three broad fundamental causes of conflict have afflicted the Philippines: the religious divide between the Christian Filipinos and the Muslim Filipinos, socio-economic inequality, and the culture of corruption. These causes of conflict are deep rooted and have manifested themselves as many different immediate causes of conflict. First, the religious division, which separates the Christian and the Muslim Filipinos into two polities, mainly affects the issue of political and security functions. For example, political repression and discrimination of the Muslims intensified when the newly established GRP encouraged Christian Filipinos to migrate to the Muslim Southern Philippines. This migration diluted the Muslim population and reduced them to a minority.[42] With the migration, also came the Public Lands Act which encroached on the Muslim right of ancestral lands in Mindanao, further antagonizing the Muslims.[43] This religious division has created deep hatred and distrust between the Christians and the Muslims, which has fueled the rise of Islamic secessionist movements led by the MNLF, MILF, and ASG. Violent armed conflict between the Muslim insurgents and the GRP continues today.[44]

Second, socio-economic inequality is another fundamental cause of conflict. According to the Gini coefficient,[45] RP is ranked in the top 36 out of 136 countries in the world for its income inequality.[46] (#1 represents the highest income inequality) This

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[41] Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*.

[42] Daniel Joseph Ringuet, "The Continuation of Civil Unrest and Poverty in Mindanao," Contemporary *Southeast Asia 24*, no. 1 (April 2002): 38.

[43] Syed Serajul Islam, "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines," *Asian Survey 38*, no. 5 (May 1998): 445.

[44] Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*.

[45] Gini Coefficient is an internationally accepted measure of inequality of income. It measures the degree of inequality in the distribution of family income in a country.

[46] "The World Factbook: The Philippines," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed March 17, 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html.

fundamental cause is a combination of income inequality and social injustice. The CPP/NPA cites this fundamental cause as the source of its existence.[47] More importantly, socio-economic inequality renders large segments of the population susceptible to terrorist and insurgent narratives.[48] For instance, during the Marcos regime, the CPP/NPA successfully exploited socio-inequality issue to radicalize people by offering social justice through land-reform and protection to the poor.[49] As the influence of the CPP/NPA grew, the Marcos regime indiscriminately and brutally repressed the CPP/NPA under martial law.[50] Armed violence between the CPP/NPA and the GRP intensified, further increasing level of conflict in the Philippines.[51] Despite GRP efforts to defeat the insurgency, by 1981, it was reported that the CPP/NPA fighters had reached 10,000 strong and the CPP/NPA acted as an unofficial government in many areas of the Philippines.[52] Presently, though the GRP has done much to alleviate poverty and close the socio-economic inequality gap, its efforts have been hampered by persistent armed conflict between insurgent groups and the GRP. GRP's inability to provide adequate security in rural areas, due to insurgent activities, has made poverty alleviation very difficult.

Government corruption, the third fundamental cause of conflict, gives little chance for the poor to be heard. The ignored, marginalized, and poverty stricken Filipinos became the target of exploitation and recruitment by the CPP/NPA, as well as other insurgent groups, such as ASG and JI. Whether it is the use of public office for self-serving opportunities, or bribing a public official for illegitimate gains, the culture of corruption is rampant at all levels of the Philippine society. The culture of corruption is

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[47] Ricardo C. Morales, "Perpetual Wars: The Philippines Insurgencies" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 34, http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA420548.

[48] Rommel C. Banlaoi, *Philippine Security in the Age of Terror: National, Regional, and Global Challenges in the Post-9/11 World,* (Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 18.

[49] Martin Wright, "Before People Power: the Philippines from 1500 to 1986," in *Revolution in the Philippines?: A Keesing's Special Report,* ed. Martin Wright (Chicago, IL: St. James Press, 1988), 9.

[50] Mark R. Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 72.

[51] Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*.

[52] Wright, *Revolution in the Philippines?*, 15.

considered to be the number one concern of Filipinos, regardless of religious or class affiliations.[53] Corruption diverts public resources from development of basic services and the economy. Also, it erodes confidence and trust in government.[54] Former president Marcos used state funds to reward his cronies and political allies during his rule.[55] Also, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) were used as tools of repression against opposition groups rather than a tool of justice.[56] The assassination of Benigno Aquino, Marcos's staunch opponent, stunted investment flow and brought investment confidence to a record low.[57] More recently, former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was arrested for the misuse of state lottery funds that were intended for development.[58] Today, although the image of the AFP and the PNP has improved, some still view them as tools of repression and symbols of government corruption, which is detrimental to the GRP's legitimacy, marginalizing its efforts to deal with terrorism and insurgent groups.[59]

D. IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

There are numerous immediate causes of conflict which stem from the fundamental causes of conflict discussed above. These immediate causes are categorized below based on four core functions expected of a state. These immediate causes of conflict were more prevalent during the Marcos regime. However, these immediate causes still exist today despite concerted GRP efforts.

- Political: political repression, extrajudicial killing, political assassination

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[53] "The Global Coalition Against Corruption," Transparency International, accessed February 10, 2013, http://www.transparency.org/country#PHL_PublicOpinion.

[54] "Challenges to Philippine Culture of Corruption: Causes, Consequences and Change," Estifania Edna Co, accessed January 7, 2013, http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/events/conferences/documents/Redesigning%20The%20State%20Papers/Co.pdf , 7–9.

[55] Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle,* 140.

[56] Banlaoi, *Philippine Security in the Age of Terror,* 102.

[57] Judith Bell, "The Economic Context," in *Revolution in the Philippines?: A Keesing's Special Report,* ed. Martin Wright (Chicago, IL: St. James Press, 1988), 70.

[58] Floyd Whaley, "Philippines Ex-President is Arrested in Hospital on New Charges," *New York Times,* October 4, 2012.

[59] Banlaoi, *Philippine Security in the Age of Terror,* 129.

- Security: armed violence, weak rule of law, human rights violation
- Social Welfare: lack of social services (such as medical services, potable water, and sanitation; underdevelopment of infrastructure, such as roads and schools)
- Economic: lack of economic opportunities

The immediate causes of conflict exacerbate the existing fundamental causes and insurgent activities. Political repression, extrajudicial killing, political assassination, and human rights violations by the GRP fuel insurgent movements. For instance, the extrajudicial killing of Muslim AFP recruits by the AFP, known as the Jabidah Massacre, was the underlying cause which sparked the Muslim insurgency.[60] Similarly, political repression and heavy handed response by the Marcos regime to rising communist movements further radicalized the CPP/NPA in the early 1970's. Also, 40 years of failed counterinsurgency operations against multiple insurgencies, which have included human rights violations by the AFP, have eroded government legitimacy and undermined confidence in GRP's ability to provide protection.[61] Unprosecuted human rights violations committed by the AFP continue today[62] and promote perceptions of corruption and failure in government and the rule of law.[63] Along the same line, persistent armed violence and weak rule of law contribute to creating a cycle of conflict. Due to heavy armed violence throughout the Philippines, the PNP's primary function—to deal with internal security problems—was given to the AFP.[64] Thus, the primacy of police and civilian rule was weakened due to prolonged and politicized military involvement in internal security problems.[65] As a result, the GRP suffered over ten military coups

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[60] Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle*, 41.

[61] Geoffrey Lambert, Larry Lewis, and Sarah Sewall, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines: Civilian Harm and the Indirect Approach," *PRISM 3*, no. 4 (September 2012), 127.

[62] "World Report 2013: Events of 2012," Human Rights Watch, accessed February 15, 2013, 356, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/philippines?page=1.

[63] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines," 132.

[64] Armed Forces of the Philippines, *Internal Peace and Security Plan – Bayanihan*, (Philippines: Department of National Defense, 2010), 15.

[65] Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle*, 163.

d'états from 1986 to 2006, which directly challenged civilian rule and the rule of law.[66] Armed violence in conflict affected areas disrupts the development of social welfare and economic functions. For instance, in 2008, heavy fighting between the MILF and AFP over Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD), resulted in 610,000 internally displaced persons.[67] The armed violence such as above has been ongoing for over 40 years, destroying livelihood of Filipinos, further instigating social inequality gaps, and religious division.[68] Needless to say, due to armed violence, social welfare infrastructure, such as roads, schools, medical facilities and potable water, and economic infrastructure, such as small market in rural areas and job opportunities, are underdeveloped in the conflict affected areas, compared to non-conflict affected area. In turn, lack of economic and adequate social welfare functions encourage conflict as the local populace sees deterioration of these functions as "willful government neglect" based on religious discrimination, enhancing insurgent narrative.[69]

In summary, these immediate causes have cascading impacts on the stability of the Philippines, as these causes continue to exacerbate the fundamental causes of conflict. The GRP, understanding the consequences of these immediate causes, has begun, in recent years, addressing them with the help of the U.S., and especially SOF.

E. SOF CAPABILITIES EMPLOYED: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION

In 2002, with the growing level of conflict in the Southern Philippines due to violent extremist groups such as ASG and JI, the GRP requested U.S. assistance in combating terrorism. In response to this request, the U.S. chose SOF to assist the GRP. JSOTF-P, under Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (OEF-P), deployed to lead

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[66] "1986–1990 Philippine coup attempts," Wikipedia, accessed May 8, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1986%E2%80%931990_Philippine_coup_attempts#Notes.

[67] "Shattered Peace in Mindanao: The Human Cost of Conflict in the Philippines," Amnesty International, last modified October 29, 2008, 2, http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA35/008/2008/en.

[68] Leslie Dwyer and Rufa Cagoco-Guiam, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao," (Philippines: The Asia Foundation, 2012), 13.

[69] Dwyer and Cagoco-Guiam, "Gender and Conflict in Mindanao," 7.

combat advise and assist operations in the Southern Philippines.[70] Initially, its primary focus was on improving security functions of the AFP in the Southern Philippines. However, today, JSOTF-P's capability is focused on all four core functions expected of a government. This section will briefly describe the JSOTF-P mission, its organization and the capabilities of JSOTF-P employed.

JSOTF-P Mission Statement:

> The Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines mission is to support the comprehensive approach of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their fight against terrorism and lawless elements in the southern Philippines and prevent terrorists from establishing safe havens. At the request of the Philippine government, JSOTF-P works alongside the AFP in a strictly non-combat role to defeat terrorists, eliminate safe havens and create the conditions necessary for peace, stability and prosperity in the Southern Philippines.[71]

The above mission statement is the blue print for JSOTF-P's employment of its SOF capabilities. Its focus is on indirect, host nation led, and comprehensive approaches to peace, stability and prosperity.

Since its initial deployment, JSOTF-P has been comprised of about 600 personnel on any given day, for over ten years.[72] It is organized into three regionally focused task forces which provide command and control to SOF units operating in the Southern Philippines. These three task forces are Task Force Sulu (Sulu Archipelago), Task Force Archipelago (Basilan Island and Tawi Tawi Island) and Task Force Mindanao (Eastern Mindanao).[73] Each task force is composed of Special Forces (SF) / Navy SEAL teams, Military Information Support Teams (MIST), Civil Affairs Teams (CAT), who are known as the Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE), alongside other vital enablers. These

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[70] Fran Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole of Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," *Special Warfare 25*, no. 3 (July–September 2012): 9.

[71] Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Fact Sheet," *JSOTF-P (blog)*, July 1, 2011, http://jsotf-p.blogspot.com/search?updated-min=2011-01-01T00:00:00%2B08:00&updated-max=2012-01-01T00:00:00%2B08:00&max-results=35.

[72] Max Boot and Richard Bennet, "Treading softly in the Philippines: Why a Low Intensity Counterinsurgency strategy seems to be working there," *The Weekly Standard 14*, no. 16, (January 2009).

[73] Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Fact Sheet," *JSOTF-P (blog)*.

SOF units are partnered with AFP units in their respective areas of operation, and are directly integrated with AFP partners in order to enhance AFP capabilities.[74]

The SF teams' main focus is to increase capacity of the AFP and police partners to combat terrorism. These SF teams train and advise their partners from basic infantry skills to combined application of combat powers, to include non-kinetic capabilities. Together with these skills, the SF teams demonstrate the importance of human rights and rule of law during training and mission planning, emphasizing the legitimacy of the GRP and the supremacy of the rule of law.

CAT mainly offers non-kinetic capabilities. However, its capabilities are perhaps the most valuable assets that improve the social welfare and economic function in the conflict affected areas of the Southern Philippines. CAT, SF teams and partnered AFP units conduct Civil Military Operations (CMO). CMOs build small but vital infrastructure such as roads, schools, water wells, medical centers, and piers. In addition, CMOs provide medical care to impoverished regions torn by poverty and armed violence, providing basic social services in areas where local government cannot. These CMOs establish and reinforce the GRP and the local government's legitimacy as these operations are carefully designed, planned and executed by the AFP with the help of SOF, specifically targeting terrorist safe havens.[75] Improved road networks increase the accessibility of government forces in denied areas. Also, education centers, wells, and medical centers become the hub for information flow where the GRP is able to promote government legitimacy and collect information on terrorist and lawless elements.[76] To further bring relief to the immediate causes of conflict, CAT liaise and coordinate closely with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the targeted and effective utilization of international resources at a provincial and district level, which is a long term solution to the causes of conflict.

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[74] Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole of Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," 10.

[75] Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests.*

[76] Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Fact Sheet," *JSOTF-P (blog).*

MISO teams also offer non-kinetic capabilities that are directly informed by strategic objectives and offer comprehensive plans to address the psychological and political aspect of conflict. MISO teams train and advise the AFP Psychological Operations units and conduct information operations through mass media such as public radio. Often MISO teams organize community relations activities as CA and SF teams conduct CMOs. MISO also produces pamphlets and comic books with anti-terrorist themes in order to dissuade the youth from developing an interest in joining terrorist organizations.[77] Overall, MISO capability has an amplifying effect on CA and SF teams' mission. Through public broadcasts via radio, television, newspapers, and pamphlets, GRP's efforts to provide and improve the four core functions for the livelihood of ordinary Filipinos are amplified in the Southern Philippines. Thus, the legitimacy of the GRP and the local government is strengthened.

F. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. SOF Employment Must Address Immediate Causes of Conflict

- Political: political repression, extrajudicial killing, political assassination
- Security: armed violence, weak rule of law, human rights violation
- Social Welfare: lack of social services (such as medical services, potable water, and sanitation; underdevelopment of infrastructure, such as roads and schools)
- Economic: lack of economic opportunities

An examination of JSOTF-P's employment of its SOF capabilities shows that the SOF capabilities employed do address most of the immediate causes of conflict in the Philippines. Over the last ten years, JSOTF-P lines of operations have been Capacity Building, Targeted CMO, Information Gathering and Sharing and Information Operations.[78] While JSOTF-P does not identify fundamental causes and immediate causes of conflict of the Philippines, these lines of operations, especially Targeted CMO and Capacity Building, have addressed immediate causes of conflict rather than fundamental causes of conflict. For instance, it is reported that 80% of JSOTF-P efforts

[77] Boot and Bennet, "Treading softly in the Philippines."

[78] Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*.

have been CMOs which reduce insurgent safe haven through creating a better environment for the populace and livelihood for former militants, thus improving the social welfare and economic functions.[79]

From 2007 to 2011, JSOTF-P and the AFP conducted 500 joint CMOs to include Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP), Dental Civic Action Program (DENTCAP), Engineer Civic Action Program (ENCAP), and Veterinary Civic Action Program (VETCAP) to improve the social welfare and economic functions in the conflict affected area. These CMOs have resulted in medical and dental care to over 100,000 patients. Also, over 140 infrastructure projects were completed and developed to include, schools, roads, medical centers, water wells, and piers.[80] Where social welfare and economic development is stagnant and non-existent, the AFP, partnered and enabled by JSOTF-P, provided social services and energized economic development in the conflict affected area. Also, CMOs have had impact on other immediate causes of conflict. First, the image of the AFP was improved as a competent national security force that provides security rather than acting as a tool of repression.[81] As AFP units coordinated and set the security conditions for numerous CMOs, in the eyes of the local populace, these CMOs proved that the AFP was capable and even more powerful than insurgents, and was committed to improving their livelihood.[82] As the security function improved, doctors, teachers, government organizations and non-government organizations were allowed to return and further improved the social welfare and economic functions in the conflict affected area.[83] Second, the legitimacy of the GRP was bolstered and the insurgent narrative was delegitimized in the eyes of population who were susceptible to insurgent narrative. Thus, the population rejected the insurgent narrative. AFP Psychological Operations teams advised and assisted by MIST, disseminated results of CMOs through

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79 Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*.

80 Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Fact Sheet," *JSOTF-P (blog)*.

81 William Eckert, "Defeating the idea: Unconventional Warfare in southern Philippines" *Special Warfare 19*, no. 6 (November–December 2006): 20.

82 David P. Fridovich and Fred T. Krawchuk, "Winning in the Pacific: The Special Operations Forces Indirect Approach," *JFQ Forum*, no. 44 (1st Quarter 2007): 24–27.

83 Ibid.

mass media platforms, such as newspaper, posters, leaflets, radio and television, countering insurgent narratives.[84] Third, through the interaction with the local populace during these CMOs, better intelligence was gathered, which helped the AFP to separate the insurgents from the populace, mitigating any chance of human rights abuse and collateral damages.[85] While conducting CMOs, AFP units and SF teams often interviewed and engaged the local populace to assess atmospherics and to gather intelligence on insurgent activities. Lastly, civil military cooperation with local authorities, such as police and local government officials, promoted the primacy of the rule of law and interaction between military and civilian organizations. More recently, this increased interaction and cooperation resulted in Joint Task Force Zamboanga-Basilan, a civil-military fusion center.[86] This organization places the PNP at the front in order to strengthen the rule of law and civilian primacy.

While CMOs mainly improved the social welfare and economic functions, Capacity Building improved the political and security functions, specifically addressing extrajudicial killing, human rights violations and armed violence. Through persistent and habitual engagement with tactical units to higher headquarters, JSOTF-P assisted the AFP to be more proficient and professionalized.[87] This effort has helped the AFP to consider the population as the center of gravity.[88] This change in perspective resulted in a decrease in human rights violations and extrajudicial killings by the AFP.[89] Also, armed violence decreased as the AFP focused on separating the insurgents from the populace through CMOs and intelligence driven operations.[90]

Interestingly, how and why JSOTF-P addresses immediate causes of conflict seems to be due to restrictions imposed by bilateral agreements drawn between the U.S.

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84 Stuart L. Farris, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines" (monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009), 38.

85 Boot and Bennet, "Treading softly in the Philippines."

86 Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole of Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," 12.

87 Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 125.

88 Boot and Bennet, "Treading softly in the Philippines."

89 Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 128.

90 Boot and Bennet, "Treading softly in the Philippines."

and the GRP. This agreement, known as Visiting Force Agreement, restricts JSOTF-P from conducting direct combat operations.[91] Ironically, this restriction is an enabler and force multiplier as JSOTF-P is forced to allocate scarce resources to non-kinetic and non-combat related operations, such as CMOs and Philippine Security Forces (PSF) capacity building, for providing a secure environment for the populace in the conflict affected area. For over 40 years, the AFP was focused on direct combat operations aimed at insurgent groups. However, these efforts only offered a short term fix, and addressed a small portion of the immediate causes for conflict. Direct combat operations often produced civilian casualties and collateral damage, which bred grievances and exacerbated insurgencies.[92]

In recent years, the AFP published the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) – Bayanihan, which outlines a Whole of Nation Approach and People Centered Security / Human Security Approach to Philippines internal security problem caused by conflict. Its strategy is to pursue peace and security through empowering other government agencies and providing protection, respect for human rights, good governance, social welfare and economic opportunities, aimed at improving the four core functions expected of a state.[93] This recent strategic change in the GRP's approach to conflict is a result JSOTF-P's persistent engagement with its AFP partners.[94]

A recent 2011 Congressional Research report stated that ASG strength and leadership has greatly diminished in the Southern Philippines since the Philippines and U.S. began joint military operations.[95] This is an indicator that SOF employment which addresses the immediate causes of conflict is working. Conversely, it can be argued that the reduction in ASG strength in the Southern Philippines is a direct result of increased capacity and capability of the PSF, enabled by JSOTF-P, to conduct surgical kinetic operations aimed at the ASG leadership rather than addressing immediate causes of

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[91] Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole of Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," 9–12.

[92] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 131.

93 Armed Forces of the Philippines, *Internal Peace and Security Plan – Bayanihan*, 25.

[94] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 125.

95 Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests*.

conflict. These kinetic operations, which only address armed violence, have been quite successful. It is reported that by 2010 only a half of a dozen out of 24 original ASG leaders remain at large.[96] However, these kinetic operations are only a small part of a larger PSF effort in addressing causes of conflict.[97] Without addressing the social welfare, political and economic functions, the PSF could not have been able to garner population support and critical intelligence to specifically target ASG leadership among the local populace. For example, in 2007, a local on Jolo, impressed by AFP CMOs, which showed that the PSF was committed to improving the livelihood of the population, provided a valuable intelligence which led to the capture of an ASG leader Abu Solaiman, a high value individual.[98] Thus, increased kinetic capability cannot be argued as the only reason for reduction of ASG strength in the Southern Philippines.

2. SOF Employment Must Be SOF-Centric

The employment of SOF capabilities by JSOTF-P fits the characteristic of SOF-centric employment. Its approach is indirect, non-kinetic, host nation led, flat organizational structure and small footprint. As mentioned previously, JSOTF-P is restricted from conducting direct combat operations which forces JSOTF-P to be indirect in its approach. Also, the importance of sustaining GRP and U.S. legitimacy has forced JSOTF-P to provide and employ more non-kinetic support to the AFP. Since the beginning of OEF-P, JSOTF-P has consistently ensured that the AFP was upfront in every operation, and JSOTF-P acts in a supporting role.[99] For instance, numerous CMOs such as MEDCAP, VETCAP, ENCAP, and DENTCAP are coordinated through the AFP and conducted with the AFP. Also, JSOTF-P has instituted a "Rewards for Justice" program that offers bounties for wanted terrorists as means of indirect and non-kinetic approach to targeting terrorists in support of the AFP operations.[100]

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[96] Hrvoje Hranjski, "Filipino Militant's Killing Cripples Abu Sayyaf," *The Guardian*, February 22, 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/8956648.

[97] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines," 124.

[98] Ibid.

99 Fridovich and Krawchuk, "Winning in the Pacific," 24–27.

100 Boot and Bennet, "Treading Softly in the Philippines."

At strategic and operational level, JSOTF-P is a flatter organization with small footprint compared to conventional army headquarters. Also, its three Task Forces are organized in flatter organizational structure to give SOF teams more flexibility and authority to make quick decisions and bottom-up planning, which is vital to a SOF-centric approach. At the tactical level, SOF teams, who are trained regional experts, can manage and operate on their own, with little guidance and supervision. This means teams can assume a flatter organizational structure. These SOF teams known as LCEs, ranging from two to ten personnel are dispersed and embedded with partnered AFP units. Also, due to their dispersion throughout Joint Operations Area (JOA), these LCEs are given flexible authority to conduct FID and assistance operations within the JSOTF-P's mission, lines of operations and guidelines. See Figure 6. Moreover, a force cap of approximately 600 personnel on JSOTF-P constrains its foot print in the Philippines. Its composition and the wide disposition of its forces throughout the Philippines within the AFP bases ensure that JSOTF-P forces are protected.[101]

[101] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 128.

Figure 6. JSOTF-P Joint Operations Area[102]

3. Interagency Cooperation Must Be Coordinated by SOF

As the only U.S. military entity in the Southern Philippines, JSOTF-P is at the center of interagency cooperation as JSOTF-P, through its partnered AFP units and local government officials, has access to semi-permissive and restricted areas of the conflict affected areas in the Southern Philippines. JSOTF-P and the U.S. Embassy Country Team have a strong relationship and meet on a weekly basis to integrate and synchronize their efforts and plans.[103] JSOTF-P maintains liaison with multiple interagency

[102] Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Fact Sheet," *JSOTF-P (blog).*

103 Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole of Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," 12.

organizations, such as USAID, Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Treasury, Department of State (DOS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Working closely with these organizations, JSOTF-P is able to leverage greater resources in mitigating immediate causes of conflict. As a result of this cooperation, JSOTF-P coordinated with USDA agricultural seminars in Sulu and Mindanao, conflict affected areas. These seminars are designed to give practical advice on farming and veterinary techniques. The seminars also brought provincial and national assets to the local government to increase greater participation and sponsorship in the conflict-affected areas.[104] Through coordination with the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Navy, JSOTF-P coordinated regular visits of the U.S. Navy hospital ship Mercy, which has provided medical care to tens of thousands of Filipinos.[105] Cooperative effort of JSOTF-P and DOJ's International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) has resulted in training of over 1600 local police officers in the conflict affect area of Sulu Island by ICITAP.[106] These efforts strengthens rule of law, limits extrajudicial killing, and human rights violations by the AFP and the police, which directly deals with the immediate causes of conflict.[107] USAID, coordinating with JSOTF-P, has brought millions of dollars worth of projects to conflict-affected areas.[108] JSOTF-P has been taking a lead role on the ground in interagency cooperation in the conflict affected area because of its freedom of movement in this semi-permissive environment and access to these areas. Also, due to its habitual relationship with local PSF and humanitarian capabilities, such as disaster response, JSOTF-P is at the center of gravity to foster most efficient and effect interagency cooperation.[109] However, it seemed that JSOTF-P's ability to coordinate interagency cooperation is limited to tactical and operational level success within its JOA as its

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104 Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines, "Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Fact Sheet," *JSOTF-P (blog).*

105 Boot and Bennet, "Treading softly in the Philippines."

106 Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole of Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," 11.

107 Boot and Bennet, "Treading Softly in the Philippines."

108 Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 130.

109 "USAID/Philippines Role in Civil-Military Cooperation," United States Agency for International Development, accessed March 12, 2013, http://philippines.usaid.gov/about/military_coord.

footprint is limited to the JOA. Also, U.S. Embassy Country Team has been the lead in the overall interagency cooperation in the Philippines beyond the scope and range of JSOTF-P's capabilities.[110] Consequently, it is clear that JSOTF-P is not the lead in interagency cooperation but a support. However, interagency cooperation in the Philippines is effective as JSOTF-P's on the ground experience and the capabilities of its assets are well coordinated with the Country Teams through weekly coordination and full time liaison in the Embassy.[111]

G. SUMMARY

Although the Philippines is not a rapidly failing state, it has experienced a great deal of instability in recent years. In addition, its instability has direct implications on the U.S. strategic interests in the region. This case study identified three fundamental causes of conflict which are religious division, socio-economic inequality and the culture of corruption. This case study also identified immediate causes of conflict categorized by four core functions expected of a state. Both fundamental and immediate causes of conflict leave the populace susceptible to an insurgent narrative, thus perpetuating the cycle of conflict. However, assuming that the fundamental causes of conflict cannot be effectively addressed by SOF capabilities, this case study examined how SOF capabilities were employed to address the immediate causes of conflict. The examination has shown that by design and conscious effort by JSOTF-P, JSOTF-P has employed SOF capabilities which are focused on CMOs to address the immediate causes of conflict. Also, JSOTF-P's application of SOF capabilities is SOF-centric in that SOF capabilities are employed indirectly, by, with and through the PSF, with the PSF in the lead. The JSOTF-P organizational structure resembles a flat organization despite its military organizational structure in that its small SOF teams are empowered and guided through distinct JSOTF-P's lines of operations and its mission statement. JSOTF-P's small footprint, through embedding and effective partnership, has lowered visibility of U.S. military presence to a minimum in the highly politically sensitivity environment and

[110] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 127.

[111] Ibid.

neutralized the perception of occupying forces. As the only U.S. military organization in the Philippines, JSOTF-P has been at the center of gravity for interagency cooperation, especially in the conflict affect area due to its access and close partnership with host nation forces. Although, JSOTF-P is supporting the overall U.S. Embassy Country Team's initiative in the Southern Philippines,[112] JSOTF-P greatly leveraged resources and applied interagency cooperation as a force multiplier to its SOF capabilities. JSOTF-P, having close ties with PSF units, is the choice partnership by Non-Government Organizations and Other Government Agencies for the proper selection and distribution of aid within the conflict affected areas. Overall, SOF employment in the Philippines has been effective. This conclusion is supported by further analysis of significant activities (SIGACTs), which is comprised of insurgent attacks to include armed clash, shooting, bombing, abduction, ambush, and raid, in Basilan and Sulu from 2001 – 2008. Figure 7 shows a decrease in SIGACTs from 2001-2006, when SOF were employed in Basilan, and an increase in SIGACTs from 2006-2008, when they had been redeployed from Basilan to Sulu. Likewise, Figure 8 shows an increase in SIGACTs from 2002-2005 in Sulu, before SOF were deployed there, and a decrease in SIGACTs from 2006-2008 when SOF were deployed in Sulu. Moreover, though JSOTF-P relocated its forces from Basilan to Sulu, the AFP and PNP continued their presence in Basilan. Thus, reduction of level of conflict can be attributed to SOF employment in Basilan.

[112] Lambert, "Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines," 127.

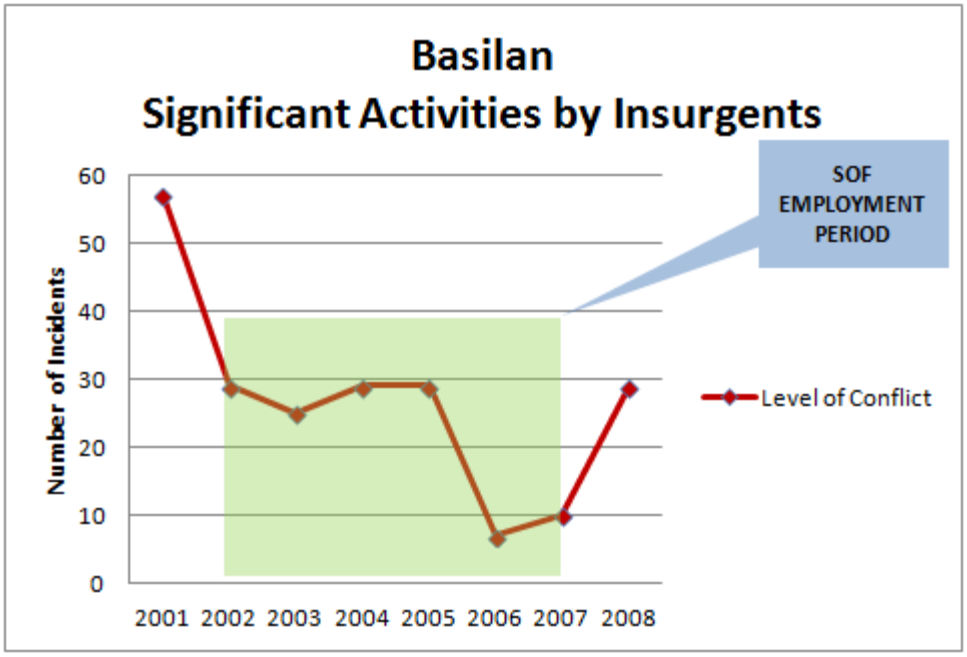

Figure 7. Basilan Significant Activities by Insurgents[113]

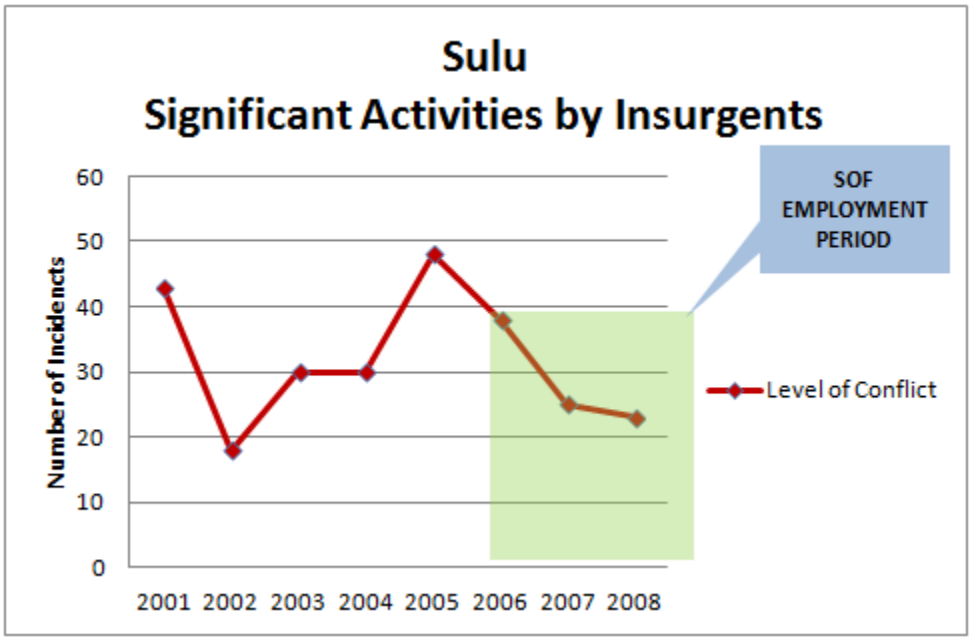

Figure 8. Basilan Significant Activities by Insurgents[114]

[113] Joseph Felter, "Bringing Guns to a Knife Fight: A Case for Empirical Study of Counterinsurgency" (Ph. D. thesis, Stanford University, 2005).

[114] Ibid.

IV. COLOMBIA CASE STUDY

A. INTRODUCTION

Colombia has been marred by two persistent security threats: the cultivation, processing, and global distribution of cocaine, and the long-standing existence of at least two significant guerrilla movements within its borders. The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN) were designated as terrorist organizations by the U.S. in 1997.[115] For over 50 years, the presence of terrorist organizations and the cocaine trade not only contributed to the conflict in Colombia, but have been a cause of concern for the United States for two reasons. First, the United States and Europe account for 80% of global cocaine consumption originating from Colombia.[116] According to the U.S. Department of Justice, "the illicit drug trafficking and abuse of drugs present a challenging dynamic threat to the United States."[117] Second, the cause of Colombia's conflict associated with terrorist organizations spills over to the neighboring countries, which can threaten regional stability. The porous borders between Colombia and its neighbors facilitate movement, safe haven, and criminal activities for terrorist groups.[118] Hence, Colombia's internal conflict and its influence on neighboring countries add to the cause of concern for the United States. Since 2000, Colombia has received nearly $7 billion in U.S. aid, which is the largest amount received amongst any other countries in the Americas.[119] Military assistance, consisting of training and equipment, contributed the most towards

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[115] "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 2, 2013, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm.

[116] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Globalization of Crime: Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment," (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, 2010), 82, http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2010_low_res.pdf.

[117] U.S. Department of Justice, "National Drug Threat Assessment 2011," (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, 2011), 1, http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs44/44849/44849p.pdf.

[118] Nina M. Serafino, *Colombia: Current Issues and Historical Background* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003).

[119] Peter DeShazo, Johanna Mendelson Forman, and Phillip McLean, "Countering Threats to Security and Stability in a Failing State: Lessons from Colombia," Center for Strategic & International Studies, (Washington DC: CSIS, 2013), v, http://csis.org/files/publication/090930_DeShazo_CounteringThreats_Web.pdf.

the overall amount of this aid, which has been persistent. This case study will focus on the last two decades of military assistance to Colombia, specifically SOF employment, to determine its effectiveness by examining the following: fundamental and immediate causes of conflict, SOF employment, and three variables pertaining to our hypothesis.

B. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT

This case study focuses on Colombia's three prevalent fundamental causes of conflict. These fundamental causes are weak governance, social inequality, and the industrial level of coca cultivation.[120] These root causes are so deeply intertwined that they form arguably a wicked problem.[121] Colombia's weak governance not only creates a permissive environment for terrorism, but it creates a vacuum of authority which these terrorists fill with their own authority.[122] The social inequality between the "haves" and "have-nots" not only exists in terms of wealth distribution, but also in terms of political representation. As a result, political power and representation is consolidated within the elites, which further segregates the populace, and creates opportunity for alternative political representation through terrorist organizations. The coca cultivation in Colombia has long been a part of its history, but became a more prevalent issue as a cause of conflict as the global demands increased, and it became an illicit parallel economic structure. Consequently, the terrorist and paramilitary organizations took advantage of this attractive source of income to maintain a consistent flow of resources to bolster their respective organizations. Furthermore, this lucrative parallel economic structure has not contributed to national GDP, but rather promoted illicit agricultural alternatives to peasant farmers.

Historically, the government ceded control over many of the rural areas that the terrorist organizations currently control, and the culture of violence dates back to the

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[120] Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and Its Implications for Regional Stability*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2001), 2.

[121] Nancy Roberts, "Wicked Problems and Network Approaches to Resolution," *International Public Management Review 1,* no. 1 (February 2013), 1.

[122] William O'Neill, "Responding to Terrorism: What Role for the United Nations," *International Peace Academy Conference Report*," (New York, NY: International Peace Institute, 2013), 9, http://www.ipacademy.org/media/pdf/publications/conference_report_terr.pdf.

initial ideological split between Colombia's two dominant political parties.[123] The Conservatives favored an authoritarian and centralized government, while the Liberals advocated a decentralized and federalist government. However, the majority of the actual violence occurred amongst peasants in the rural areas serving as proxies for the political parties. What began as a difference in ideas, quickly led to a state of undeclared civil war and was considered one of the most violent eras of Colombian history, which is known as *La Violencia* and claimed over 300,000 lives from 1946 to 1958.[124] Eventually, the two parties agreed to alternate the presidency every four years so that each party had equal opportunity for political representation, and thus ending this period of violence. This pacification, known as The National Front, brought unity among the political parties; but the government continued to neglect the rural areas. As a result, armed conflict and violence persisted among the various groups of people in the rural areas, and government legitimacy continued to deteriorate as rule of law was established and enforced locally by terrorists in the absence of government authority. The absence of government authority in the rural areas creates power vacuums where the terrorists and paramilitary organizations establish their own governing authorities.[125] For instance, Colombia's terrorist and paramilitary organizations reached 622 out of 1050 municipalities (townships) in the mid-1990s.[126] Additionally, the FARC and ELN controlled approximately 30–35 percent of the national territory of Colombia between 1999 and 2008.[127]

Colombia's weak governance in the rural areas continued to segregate the population which increased social inequality. Following the National Front, the interest of workers and peasants continued to be neglected resulting in sharp decline of living conditions.[128] Colombia's current Gini coefficient of 58.5 ranks in the bottom 10 in

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[123] Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Colombia," (Washington DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, February, 2007), 2–3, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Colombia.pdf.

[124] Ibid.

[125] DeShazo, Forman, and McLean, "Countering Threats," 6.

[126] Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth*, 46.

[127] "FARC," Terrorist Groups, accessed April 14, 2013, http://terroristgroups.org/farc/.

[128] Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

terms of its income inequality, and Colombia has maintained this consistently low ranking over the past two decades.[129] According to a statement made by the head of UN's Economic Commission for Latin American and Caribbean office in Bogota, the depth of social inequality will induce people to resort to non-institutional means of collective action such as violence.[130]

Colombia's social inequality was most prevalent in the rural areas. It is in these same areas where Manuel Marulanda Vélez organized the FARC. With the limitation of political power and representation imposed by the government, Marulanda Vélez, who was a former peasant, aligned with the Liberal Party during *La Violencia*. He adopted communism, and united with other like-minded individuals. The government attempted to eradicate this group, rather than find ways to resolve the social gap. This eradication effort resulted in the dispersion of these individuals rather than their eradication. The fighters eventually united under the leadership of Marulanda Vélez and created the FARC. Similarly, ELN's roots can be traced back to the disparity in social classes around the same time period. The government's initial attempt to neutralize these guerillas led to the training of civilians by the military and police, which became the basis of the initial paramilitary organizations. The creation of these terrorist organizations, as a result of social inequality, has incited more violence, persistent armed conflict, and human rights violations.

Colombia's coca cultivation was initially small scale and part of common peasant farming, which began in an ideal climate and geography of the Andean Regions. However, it became a fundamental cause of conflict with the introduction of chemical processing, resulting in the industrialization of a highly addictive narcotic commonly referred to as cocaine. This fundamental cause was further exacerbated by the decline in coffee prices and increasing global demands which allowed this lucrative economic opportunity to transform into an illegitimate economic structure. The majority of the

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[129] "The World Factbook: GINI Index," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed May 5, 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2172rank.html.

[130] "Can Colombia's New President Close the Inequality Gap," Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, accessed March 15, 2013, http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/10000women/article.cfm?articleid=6211.

areas where most of the coca cultivation is transformed into illegal narcotics are under the control of various terrorist and criminal organizations.[131] Some of the immediate causes of conflict stemming from this fundamental cause are persistent violence as well as human rights violations. For instance, drug traffickers exploit children by using them as distributors to target schools in order to expand the internal drug market in Colombia.[132] This form of child labor leads to recruitment of other children as drug users and traffickers. Ultimately, this illicit economic structure only benefits the terrorist, and does not contribute to the overall economy of Colombia.

C. IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

The immediate causes of Colombia's conflict stem from the fundamental causes and are categorized below, based on the four core functions expected of a state:

- Political: armed political oppositions (FARC, ELN, paramilitary)
- Security: armed violence, kidnappings, human rights violations
- Social Welfare: lack of social services
- Economic: narcotics (illicit economic structure)

The armed political oppositions to the existing government are responsible for the immediate causes of conflict consisting of armed violence, human rights violations, and kidnappings. These immediate causes threaten the livelihood of the populace and consistently threaten Colombia's security function. Colombian government's inability to effectively address these immediate causes of conflict within its sovereign territories creates a security vacuum. This security vacuum provides freedom of movement and activities to terrorists which allows for the continuation of armed violence, crime, and illicit activities. According to Rand, "the response of governments in Bogotá to the state's weakness has been to conciliate, negotiate with, or, if possible, ignore challengers, rather than to try to impose its authority."[133] The persistent violence, as a result of the

[131] Economist, "A survey of Colombia: Drugs, War and Democracy," accessed February 13, 2013, http://www.economist.com/node/576197.

[132] "Colombia: Show of strength to eradicate child labour," Education International, accessed April 10, 2013, http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2172.

[133] Rabasa and Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth*, 2.

Colombian government's inability to provide security to all of its citizens, has become part of everyday life, and has a direct impact on the life expectancy of the populace.[134] The importance of security has been recognized even by the government, and it prompted former Colombian President Uribe to implement Democratic Security Policy, "to regain control of the country by increasing the numbers and capacity of troops and police units and by deploying them across the country to challenge the guerrillas."[135]

D. SOF CAPABILITIES EMPLOYED: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION

This case study focuses on SOF engagements in Colombia over the last two decades and analyzes it into two parts: Pre 9/11 and post 9/11. In the 1990s, the SOF footprint was relatively large, and the mission was limited to counter-narcotic efforts. At the time, the majority of SOF in Colombia consisted of 7th Special Forces Group personnel.[136] The 7th Special Forces Group's efforts provided training and assistance to the newly established Colombian Counter Narcotics Brigade (BACNA) from the late 1990s into the early 2000s.[137] During this period, augmented SF companies rotated out every 90 days to train different battalions. MISTs maintained a similar presence as the SF teams, but were smaller in their overall number of personnel. The MISTs, also known as Psychological Operations Support Elements (PSE), initially began with three operators in 1990. Their initial mission was to support the United States Embassy in Bogota and the Plan Colombia, and was limited to counter narcotics efforts.[138] Civil Affairs have also maintained consistency of its missions throughout the years since the 1990s, supporting U.S. and Colombian national objectives.

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[134] Economist, "A survey of Colombia."

[135] "Colombia: President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy," International Crisis Group, accessed March 20, 2013, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/006-president-uribes-democratic-security-policy.aspx.

[136] Andrew Feickert, *U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia*, CRS Report RL32758 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, January 20, 2006).

[137] Colonel Jeffery D. Waddell, "United States Army Special Forces Support to Plan Colombia," (strategy research project, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 14.

[138] Robert Jones Jr., "ARSOF in Colombia," *Veritas 2*, no. 4 (2006): 95.

The post 9/11 era for SOF in Colombia is characterized largely by change in authority and strategy. The signing of National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 18 by President George W. Bush, allowed more flexibility to train Colombian military for the purpose of targeting terrorist groups. Prior to the signing of NSPD 18, Special Forces soldiers were limited to assisting Colombia for the purposes of counter narcotics. In 2002, the role of SOF expanded to countering terrorism and insurgencies in addition to its initial role of counter narcotics. To support this expanded authority, the number of MIST personnel grew to 12 in order to support both the old counter narcotic mission as well as assist in the new mission of targeting terrorists for the Colombian military. An example of executing this expanded authority is demonstrated through MIST supported and Colombian government led campaigns against high-value targets such as former FARC leader Alfonso Cano. MIST assisted in developing products such as the leaflet in Figure 9 to encourage the populace to report any information related to the location of this high-value target. As a result, information derived from the citizens helped locate Cano and eventually this high value individual was killed in 2011.[139] The expanded authority granted after 9/11 allowed MISTs to be more flexible with regards to their ability to focus efforts on terrorists, which allowed them to provide more active support to the Colombian military under the authority of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

[139] Jones Jr., ”ARSOF in Colombia,” 95.

Figure 9. Leaflet Used in the Campaign to Locate Alfonso Cano[140]

Civil Affairs operations in Colombia continued to support the Foreign Internal Defense and Counterinsurgency missions, and further legitimized Colombian institutions to gain and maintain a positive opinion of the target population. An example of CA effort in support of the Colombian institutions is the Surgical Civic Action Program (SURGCAP) which took place in a small remote town of *La Macarena* in April 2012. The Colombian military put together this event to bring attention to remote residents who lacked medical service, and with the help from U.S. CA Soldiers as well as the Bogota based NGO medical organization, *Patrulla Aerea Civil Colombiana (PAC),* this event resulted in more than 1000 Colombian citizens receiving free medical care and general surgery services.[141] With the authority and money to assist the host nation to target terrorist groups, elements of 7th Special Forces continued their efforts to train, advise, and assist the Colombian military and police. In 2006, for example, elements of 7th Special Forces worked with Colombian SOF consisting of *Battallon Comando* (BACOA) and the *Agrupacion Lanceros* (Lanceros) as well as Colombian National Police's (CNP) *Carabinerors* and *Junglas* as part of their mission to train, advise, and assist.[142]

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[140] Janice Burton, "ARSOF in Colombia: 50 years of persistent engagement," *Special Warfare 25*, no. 4 (2012): 30.

[141] Sergeant First Class Alex Licea, "Colombian Military, U.S. Army Civil Affairs help Colombian residents along remote countryside," Tip of the Spear, (June 2012): 10–11.

[142] Jones Jr., "ARSOF in Colombia," 69-72.

E. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. SOF Employment Must Address Immediate Causes of Conflict

- Political: armed political oppositions (FARC, ELN, paramilitary)
- Security: armed violence, human rights violations, persistent violence
- Social Welfare: lack of social services
- Economic: narcotics (illicit economic structure)

SOF employment in Colombia has been persistent over the past two decades, and to some degree it addressed all immediate causes of conflict that are identified in this case study. In fact, based on limited data on SOF employment in Colombia over the last two decades, SOF has focused on the eradication and interdiction of narcotics, terrorists, and the provision of social welfare. Narcotics as an illicit source of revenue provide resources to the terrorists and continue the armed political opposition and violence. Therefore, addressing narcotics can reduce the source of terrorist revenue and indirectly impact their operations by disrupting the source of the resource. For example, the U.S. trained BACNA formed the first of Colombia's joint forces with other Colombian units as part of large-scale aerial eradication in the Putumayo and Caqueta departments.[143] These efforts resulted in decline of total coca cultivation from 169,800 hectares in 2001 to 144,450 in 2002 according to U.S. government figures.[144]

Terrorists are primarily responsible for the armed conflict, human rights violations, and persistent violence. Mitigating terrorists directly impacts security by reducing armed conflict, human rights violations, and persistent violence. Prior to 9/11, SOF efforts were limited to counter-narcotics until the strategy expanded to address security issues in 2002 with the signing of NSPD 18 by President George W. Bush. For example, the SF support to increase security along the Arauca Oil Pipeline occurred immediately after NSPD 18 was approved. Figure 10 reflects decrease in terrorist attacks on Colombian infrastructure, to include oil pipelines, as a result of increase in security efforts since 2002. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, SF

[143] DeShazo, Forman, and McLean, "Countering Threats," 6.

[144] Ibid., 17.

provided training and equipment for about 1,600 Colombian Army soldiers to improve their ability to act quickly in minimizing terrorist attacks along the Cano Limon pipeline.[145] As a result, attacks decreased in Arauca, but more attacks occurred in the neighboring Department of Norte de Santander where the Colombian Army brigade has not received U.S. security training.[146] In 2006, the Colombian led Humanitarian Demobilization program, supported by U.S. Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS), resulted in an average of one guerrilla turning himself in every three hours from summer to the end of year to the local police or army, of which 56 percent came from the FARC.[147] The leaflets produced by MIST in support of the Humanitarian Demobilization program contributed to at least 290 FARC members demobilizing.[148]

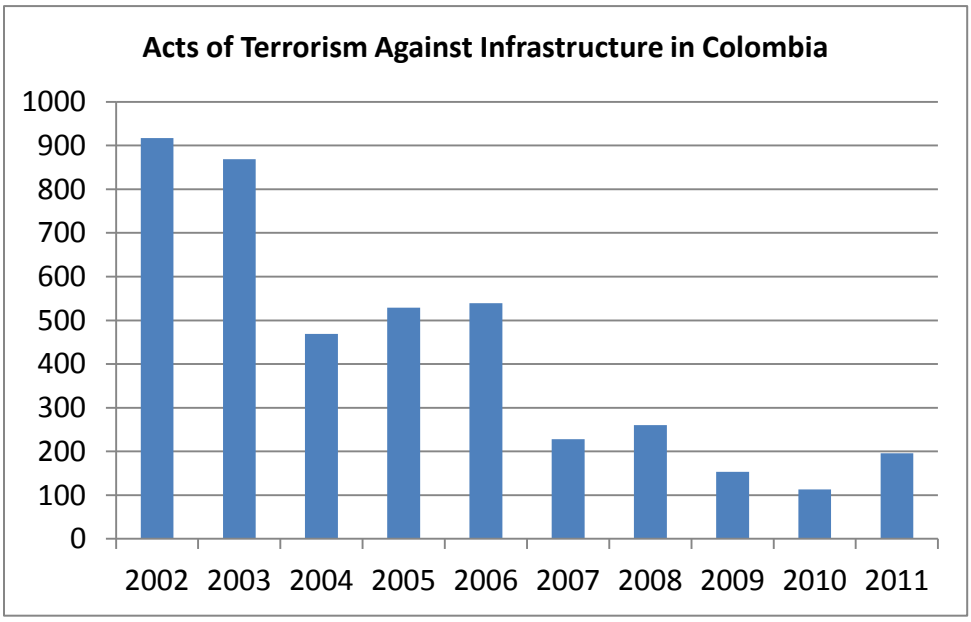

Figure 10. Acts of Terrorism in Colombia (Infrastructure)[149]

[145] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Security Assistance: Efforts to Secure Colombia's Cano Limon-Covenas Oil Pipeline Have Reduced Attacks, but Challenges Remain*, GAO-05-971, (Washington DC: GAO, 2005), 3.

[146] Ibid., 4.

[147] Jones Jr., "ARSOF in Colombia,", 97.

[148] Burton, "ARSOF in Colombia," 30.

[149] Ministerio de Defensa Nacionál, *Logros de la Politica Integral*, (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian Ministry of National Defense, 2012), 37.

The lack of social services may not seem as important as other immediate causes of conflict, but nonetheless it still contributes. The social services are based on needs of the populace and if terrorists provide these needs as opposed to the government, it increases their legitimacy which can impact their recruiting and support base from the population. With the help of CA teams, more host nation led efforts are being made to address lack of social services in the periphery. CA provides much needed supplies and expertise to the existing Colombian government apparatuses, and the rest of the efforts are executed by, with, or through the host nation. The CA efforts are transparent "through the integration of Colombian forces, police, civilian government agencies, NGOs, doctors, and engineers, to plan, coordinate and execute operations facilitated by the civil affairs team."[150] For example, the transparent CA efforts led by Colombia have occurred in the following areas, which had previously lacked a government presence: San Jose del Guaviare, Solano, and Fusagasuga. In Guaviare, the capital of Guaviare department, which borders the former demilitarized zone for the FARC, medical readiness training exercise (MEDRETE) was conducted, and as a result, more than 800 consultations were provided to the populace covering general medical, optometry, orthopedics, audiology, vaccinations, general dentistry and orthodontics.[151] In Solano, both MEDRETE and surgical readiness training exercise (SURGRETE) were conducted to over 826 patients.[152] As a result, 826 minor surgeries along with 560 optometric evaluations and 6670 other specialty consults were performed.[153] In Fusagasuga, MEDRETE provided healthcare to over 1030 patients with medicines and eyeglasses.[154] These Colombian-led CA efforts are significant because it impacted the populace in regions not previously affected by the Colombian government.

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[150] Jones Jr., "ARSOF in Colombia," 99.

[151] Jones Jr., "ARSOF in Colombia," 100.

[152] Ibid., 101.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid., 102.

2. SOF Employment Must Be SOF-Centric

Due to limitation on the number of U.S. military personnel authorized in Colombia, as well as the capabilities that Colombia already possesses, SOF-centric operations fit ideally to support Colombia, and therefore SOF employment has been SOF-centric. As stated in Chapter II, SOF-centric is defined by the following characteristics: indirect, host nation led, flat organization, small footprint, and generally non-kinetic operations. Colombia serves as an example of success through an indirect approach to assist the host nation. The initial efforts of SOF in the 1960s can be summed up by the following statement from the Strategic Studies Institute in 2002,

> Also notable is that U.S. policymakers resisted the temptation to "Americanize" Colombia's conflict through the introduction of Special Forces combat teams directly onto the battlefield. Unlike Vietnam, decision makers pursued an indirect policy that played to America's strengths: economic and military aid, training of security forces, technical assistance, and logistical and intelligence support. Not only did this policy prove judicious from a domestic political standpoint, it ensured Colombian solutions to Colombian problems…[155]

This statement emphasizes the importance of working by, with, and through the host nation to ensure that host nation takes ownership of the problems, as well as the solutions. This indirect approach allows the host nation to receive necessary assistance to lead all efforts and reinforce the idea of host nation led solutions to resolve host nation problems. Thus, every effort of SOF in Colombia is host nation led. For example, the efforts of the C2 element, Special Operations Command Forward (SOCFWD), served a critical role in providing on-site coordination to the host nation government and military under Operation Willing Spirit (OWS) which resulted in a successful hostage rescue in 2008.[156] SOCFWD was a small element which provided indirect support through the host nation and its role was indirect in nature which allowed the host nation to execute the actual hostage rescue. The Washington Post reported in 2008, "Colombia's military yesterday rescued the most prominent of several hundred hostages…a group of 15 that

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[155] Dennis M. Rempe, "The Past as Prologue? A History of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in Colombia: 1958–66," (monograph, U.S. Army War College, 2002), 15.

[156] "Operation Willing Spirit," Special Operations Command South, accessed April 14, 2013, http://www.socso.southcom.mil/history.aspx.

included the French-Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt and three American Defense Department contractors who had been imprisoned in remote jungle camps since 2003."[157]

The U.S. SOF in Colombia work directly with the host nation government and military at both the tactical and operational level, and SOF's organizational structure and characteristics allow this type of flexibility as oppose to a non SOF element. The lateral authority and flexibility to work with the host nation military, police, and U.S. embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section implies that more responsibility and flexibility is given to each individual and/or units at the lowest level because of unique inherent capabilities of SOF. One of the inherent capabilities of SOF is to operate in small numbers. The initial support to Plan Colombia in 2000 saw a force cap (ceilings), which limited the number of U.S. military and civilian contract personnel. The nature of SOF task organization is small compared to the conventional unit equivalent, and this limitation, as well as the added limitation of downsizing the existing SOF footprint to support GWOT efforts in the Middle East, further prevented SOF from establishing a relatively large footprint. In the case of Colombia, the small SOF footprint, paired with increases in host nation military footprint, contributed in maintaining host nation led efforts. Although the small footprint may have its limitations, it is less intrusive and forces the host nation to build up its capabilities. The reduced SOF footprint maximized its effectiveness through training the trainer within the Colombian military and police to build host nation capabilities. The effectiveness of the host nation capabilities in improving security is reflected in Figures 11 and 12. In addition to working in small numbers, MISO and CA efforts are purely non-kinetic in nature since many of their efforts are centered on the host nation populace. In Colombia this holds true since MISO focuses on disseminating information and messages to the populace through available mediums while CA assists host nation apparatuses with supplies and expertise to improve social welfare amongst the populace.

[157] Juan Forero, "15 Hostages Rescued in Colombia," *Washington Post*, July 3, 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/02/AR2008070202502.html.

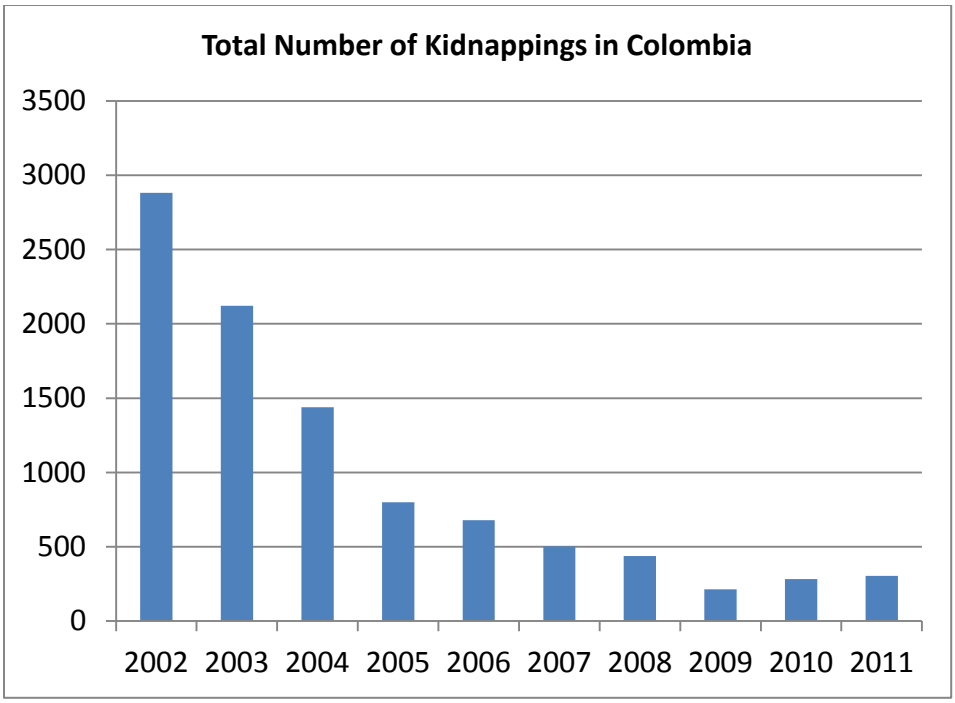

Figure 11. Total Number of Kidnappings in Colombia[158]

[158] Ministerio de Defensa Nacionál, *Logros de la Politica Integral*, 14.

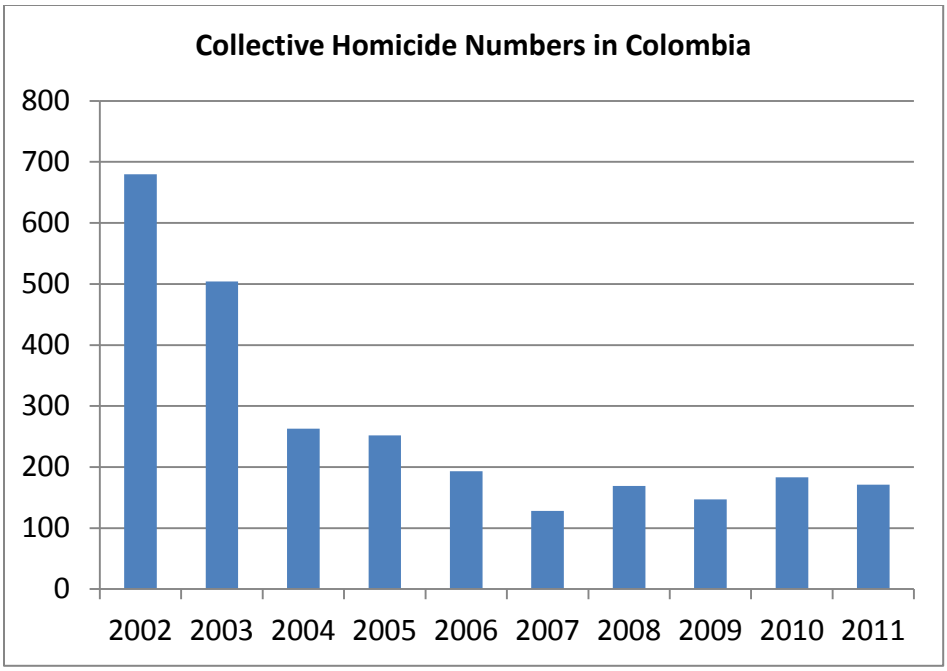

Figure 12. Collective Homicide Numbers in Colombia[159]

3. Interagency Cooperation Must Be Coordinated by SOF

Although there are traces of interagency cooperation in Colombia, it has not been coordinated by SOF. There are habitual working relationships between SOF and interagency within the U.S. embassy, but there are also differing focus of efforts between the military and other non-military agencies which makes it difficult for any coordination. In the past the military's primary focus was the FARC, and agencies like the NAS within the U.S. embassy focused solely on the drug related problems, whereas United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was concentrating on development.[160] However, even though SOF has not coordinated interagency cooperation, all agencies have adopted a whole of government approach where differing views come together to produce a concerted effort. The U.S. government agencies in Colombia hold synchronization meetings to ensure that all efforts are transparent to one another and allow synchronization of efforts, which continues through today.[161]

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[159] Ministerio de Defensa Nacionál, *Logros de la Politica Integral*, 11.

[160] Burton, "ARSOF in Colombia," 27.

[161] Ibid.

F. SUMMARY

Modern day Colombia is not a failing state, but has seen a great deal of instability from deriving from persistent conflicts. In addition, its strategic importance as a key US partner and ally in South America makes the stability of Colombia a priority for the United States. This case study identified three fundamental causes of conflict which are weak governance, social inequality, and culture of coca cultivation. This case study also identified immediate causes of conflict which are armed political oppositions, armed violence, kidnappings, human rights violations, lack of social services, income inequality, and narco-trafficking. Independently, these immediate causes of conflict may not threaten the stability of Colombia, but the aggregate effect of these immediate causes leaves the populace susceptible to terrorists and paramilitary influence and vulnerable to violence. Much of the credit should be given to the Colombian government for identifying the causes of conflict and applying the proper strategy to mitigate them. However, SOF has played a vital role in assisting Colombia to mitigate the immediate causes of conflict and allowing the host nation government to lead and build on successes to progress forward in improving its overall security, especially in the periphery. Any SOF presence visible to the locals is temporary and always in the presence of host nation representatives. The unique environment of Colombia where U.S. military efforts are limited to providing equipment, training, advising, and assisting naturally favors the less intrusive SOF-centric approach regardless of whether the unit is SOF or conventional. The conventional forces assigned to U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) also provide assistance to Colombia in a similar manner as SOF due to the restrictions placed on all U.S. military assistance. As seen in this case study, an effective way to empower the host nation government apparatus is through partnerships and providing the necessary assistance, but ultimately putting the face of the host nation on every effort.

In the 1990s, the strategy revolved around counter-narcotics for the Colombian and U.S. governments, which impacted SOF employment and utilization. However, the shift in strategy after 9/11, addressed improving the security through targeting terrorists as an organization as well as individuals in addition to the original counter-narcotics missions. Additionally, Colombia implemented the Democratic Security and Defense

Policy under President Uribe where the Colombian government also shifted its strategy to address security issues while counter-narcotic missions remained ongoing. These strategy shifts have resulted in improvement in overall security over the last decade and continues to maintain its effectiveness. Although much of the credit should be given to Colombia for implementing effective measures to improve security, SOF employment, as well as other non SOF employments under USSOUTHCOM, played a key role in providing training and equipment to Colombian armed forces which increased the effectiveness of the supported units and its associated operations in eradicating the sources which produce the immediate causes of conflict which threaten Colombia's security.

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V. AFGHANISTAN CASE STUDY

A. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Afghanistan has been consistently ranked among the top 10 failed states by a number of failed state indexes.[162] Afghanistan is challenged with addressing threats jeopardizing its overall stability. The U.S. and Coalition forces presently assisting Afghanistan have been addressing many of the fundamental issues threatening Afghanistan's stability since the signing of its Constitution in 2004. This case study is focused on the employment of SOF in Afghanistan and examines the hypotheses to determine whether or not SOF capabilities have been effectively employed to mitigate causes of conflict. The first section will provide a brief overview of Afghan history, as well as review the specific definitions and principles that outline the scope of the case study. The second section will review both fundamental and immediate causes of conflict in Afghanistan. This section will also provide a brief overview of SOF and conventional force employment in Afghanistan from 2001 to present. The third section will examine the hypotheses of the thesis against actual examples of SOF employment in Afghanistan. Overall, the argument of this case study is that SOF units eventually figured out how to mitigate immediate causes of conflict through the application of a SOF-centric methodology and effective interagency cooperation.

B. BACKGROUND

The U.S. and Afghanistan's political relationship began in the 1930s after the former recognized Afghanistan's independence from Great Britain, which had treated the Emirate of Afghanistan as a tributary polity rather than a formal colony since the 1890s or so.[163] Following World War II, Afghanistan vied for support from both the U.S. and

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[162] Several reputable indexes are published which measure and rank nation-state failure, weakness, and fragility; all of which rank Afghanistan within the top ten. Examples of such are the Fund for Peace Failed State Index, Brookings Index of State Weakness in the Developing World, and The World Bank Fragile States/Territories.

[163] "A Guide To The United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, And Consular Relations, By Country, Since 1776: Afghanistan," U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, accessed January 15, 2013, http//history.state.gov/countries/Afghanistan.

the Soviet Union. It regularly accepted foreign assistance and the establishment of many basic services and infrastructure, such as roads and schools. In the 1950s, U.S. agricultural experts went to Afghanistan to develop its agronomic potential. Currently, agriculture is eighty percent of Afghanistan's economic income. However, most farms produce anything beyond the subsistence level.

During the years of Soviet occupation in the 1980s, the U.S. assisted anti-Soviet Afghan fighters through covert operations and other methods.[164] Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the collapse of the Afghan Interim Government in 1992, a civil war ensued. In 1993, Pakistani military dictator Zia ul-Haq worked with Arabs, Pakistani, and Afghans to galvanize a violent movement that led to the formation of the Taliban, which later concurred most of Afghanistan until late 2001.[165] Following the Al Qaeda terrorist attacks in 2001, U.S. forces returned to Afghanistan to topple the Taliban, which was providing asylum for the terrorist and Al Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden.

In the beginning, the mission in Afghanistan was straightforward: overthrow the Taliban regime and capture or kill Osama Bin Laden. It quickly grew more complex after U.S. leaders established a policy of nation building.[166] There were several courses of action to consider when determining the factors that should be addressed to stabilize the country. The variables the Department of Defense considered when planning a campaign coincided with doctrinal components often used by military planners, yet destabilizing factors found in Afghanistan were not clearly identified. A culture of corruption, economic turmoil, and influence from warlords merely touched the surface regarding some causes of conflict in Afghanistan. Clearly, there existed fundamental reasons for conflict that an intervening organization would be challenged with reconciling if Afghanistan were to successfully progress as a functioning nation-state.

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[164] "A Guide To The United States' History Of Recognition, Diplomatic, And Consular Relations, By Country, Since 1776: Afghanistan."

[165] Zalmay Kahlilzad, *Prospects for the Afghan Interim Government*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991); "Taliban," Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed January 17, 2013, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2325?_hi=34&_pos=4.

[166] Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers*, (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2011), 630.

C. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Numerous fundamental causes of conflict exist in Afghanistan. This case study has identified three recurring causes, which are consistently addressed in literature regarding Afghanistan. They are corruption enabled by poor governance, poverty and economic underdevelopment, and foreign intervention. The first fundamental cause for conflict in Afghanistan is corruption enabled by poor governance. "Corruption is widely understood to be the improper use of a public or official position for private gain."[167] "Bad governance is associated with corruption, distortion of government budgets, inequitable growth, social exclusion, and lack of trust in authorities."[168] Of course, corruption is only one form of government failure, but because of the severity of corruption in Afghanistan, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) has created an inherent divide between the government and the population. As a result, a general lack of confidence in the Afghan government exists, which perpetuates a belief that all those in the government's employ are corrupt and not trustworthy. Sentiments such as these degrade the GIRoA in its ability to demonstrate legitimacy, which is important to U.S. national strategy and interest. An example of such a circumstance is discussed in an article appearing in the January 2013 Afghanistan Review. It suggests Afghan government officials are defrauding society by living exorbitant life styles and are lining their own pockets with other people's money.[169] Instances such as these create vacuums of power, which produce wide divisions between social classes, and further delegitimize the GIRoA. According to Transparency International, Afghanistan is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world,

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[167] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Corruption in Afghanistan: Recent patterns and trends—Findings," (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, December 2010), 3. http://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/Corruption_in_Afghanistan_FINAL.pdf.

[168] "Corruption and Governance," The World Bank Group, accessed March 10, 2013, http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/1f3aa35cab9dea4f85256a77004e4ef4/e9ac26bae82d37d685256a940073f4e9?.

[169] Eray Basar, "Governance and Rule of Law," *Civil Military Fusion Center – Afghanistan Review*, https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/afg/Documents/Afghanistan_Review/CFC_Afghanistan-Review-15Jan13_final.pdf, "According to the lawmaker Shukria Barekzai, the rents of the two deputies for their homes and guest houses are approximately USD 12,000 a month. Moreover, they are also billing their office, security and guest house expenses to the government, totaling up to USD one million annually. Barekzai also said that high level officials are building their residences by using the state budget despite that the presidential office allocated adequate money for such construction," (January, 15 2013).

along with North Korea and Somalia.[170] The culture of corruption in Afghanistan has had profound impacts on the poor, hindering the country's economic growth; which reflects poorly on government leadership, and encourages support for the insurgency.

Corruption in Afghanistan impacts many levels of government and society, from the street cop extorting passers-by at a traffic check point, to senior leadership positions held in the Ministry of the Interior.[171] According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), "Corruption is principally a failure of governance."[172] The political environment has not experienced relative long term low levels of conflict since the 40 year reign of its last democratic Monarch, Zahir Shah, which ended in 1973.[173] Since then, Afghanistan has seen a high turnover rate in its political leadership, each of which held varying strategies for Afghan governance.

The second fundamental cause for conflict is poverty and economic underdevelopment. Several contributing variables perpetuate poverty as well: abuse of power and armed conflict are simply two of them.[174] The CIA ranks unemployment in Afghanistan at 183 out of 201 countries. According to The World Bank, Afghanistan is rated 160 out of 183 countries in its ability to facilitate business. It is also ranked 183 for its ability to protect investments.[175] This suggests that attracting foreign and internal investment remains a challenging issue for Afghanistan. In combination with an extremely high illiteracy rate, inadequate land ownership and dependence on livestock,

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[170] "Corruption Perceptions Index 2012," Transparency International, accessed April 15, 2013, http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012 Afghanistan is ranked the lowest, along with N. Korea and Somalia.

[171] Ernest Leonardo and Lawrence Robertson, *Assessment of Corruption in Afghanistan*, United States Agency for International Development-Afghanistan, (Washington DC: USAID, January 15 – March 1, 2009) 4, 8.

[172] United Nations Development Programme, Primer on Corruption And Development, *Corruption and Development: Anti-Corruption Interventions for Poverty Reduction, Realization of the MDGs and Promoting Sustainable Development*, Democratic Governance Group, (New York, NY: December 2008), 9.

[173] Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan,"* 103–105.

[174] Anthony Cordesman and Adam Mausner, "Agriculture, Food, and Poverty in Afghanistan," Center For Strategic & International Studies, (Washington DC: CSIS, 2013), http://csis.org/publication/agriculture-food-and-poverty-afghanistan.

[175] The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, "Doing Business," (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2012), 6.

much of Afghanistan remains unemployed, living in poverty, relying primarily on subsistence farming for survival.[176] Attempting to overcome this challenge however, Afghanistan has consistently depended on foreign assistance in order to contribute to its annual GDP. "The country is highly aid dependent with foreign aid disbursements of 47 percent of GDP in 2008/09."[177] Presently, the U.S. and Coalition forces are assisting with the enhancement of security in Afghanistan, which is conducive for foreign and internal investment. However, balancing security and commerce can be a double edged sword because many of the security measures that have been established, such as check points, building barriers, and conducting raids often hinder commerce and potentially damage the economy.[178]

A third contributor to a fundamental cause for conflict is foreign intervention. While Afghanistan's economy has long relied on external support in order to provide for its people, as exemplified in the establishment of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, which appropriated funds and military assistance advisory groups, foreign occupation has sparked intense resistance movements[179] In turn, these resistance movements often become armed militant groups after foreign occupying forces are driven out. These remnants of armed resistance persistently threaten political and social stability in Afghanistan. This case study defines foreign intervention as actions of one or more states, which alter the internal affairs of another state, against the will of the affected state.[180] Since the 1950s, Afghanistan has seen a relatively high turnover in its governmental institutions, which were largely supported by either Russia or the United

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[176] Library of Congress, "Country Profile: Afghanistan," (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, August, 2008), 9, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Afghanistan.pdf.

[177] "Growth in Afghanistan," The World Bank, accessed March 15, 2013, http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/EXTSARREGTOPMACECOGRO/0,,contentMDK:20592478~menuPK:579404~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:579398,00.html

[178] Berman et al., "Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 4, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, August 2011), 519.

[179] U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, *Legislation on Foreign Relations Through 2002* I-A, (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003), 29, http://transition.usaid.gov/policy/ads/faa.pdf.

[180] Ashok Swain, and Amer, Ramses, "The Democratization Project: Opportunities and Challenges" (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 47.

States. In the rural areas outside governmental influence, warlords controlled large spans of territory, which created power vacuums and took political sway from governed areas.[181] Following King Mohammed Zahir Shah's rule from 1933 to 1973, Afghanistan has seen numerous instances of foreign intervention.[182] As a result, the people of Afghanistan have suffered oppressive hardships at the hands of foreign occupiers. In contemporary Afghanistan, this case study argues that foreign intervention has delegitimized the GIRoA because the current administration can potentially be seen as a dependent state, having a puppet government, which provides incentive for government opposition groups.

D. IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF CONFLICT

This case study identified four immediate causes of conflict, which stem from the fundamental causes, and are listed below.

- Political: Delegitimization of the Government, and Political Assassinations
- Security: Warlordism, Collateral Damage, and Weak Rule of Law
- Social Welfare: Poor social services (Health and Education)
- Economic: Weak economic infrastructure

As in many weak and failing states, a weak political system and lack of security are two of the largest factors contributing to conflict. Afghanistan is no different. Since 2002, efforts have been made to shape, clear, hold and build development to improve Afghanistan's social welfare. However, the Afghan government repeatedly contends with challenges against its authority. For example, insurgent forces delegitimize the GIRoA by exploiting religious, social, political and tribal ties through the use of propaganda and select acts of violence.[183] Afghan President Hamid Karzai vehemently

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[181] Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan*, 347.

[182] For a clearly articulated, well written and in-depth history of Afghanistan, read "Peter Tomsen, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts, and the Failures of Great Powers*, (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2011).

[183] Stephen Carter and Kate Clark, *No Shortcut to Stability: Justice, Politics and Insurgency in Afghanistan*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, (London: Chatham House, December 2010), 1.

stressed a need to uphold safety for the Afghan people.[184] His argument stemmed from U.S., International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) combat operations, which sometimes had inflicted collateral damage onto innocent civilians when targeting insurgents. Political assassinations by the Taliban destabilized the Afghan government, as was demonstrated when recent political leaders were killed, to include the mayor of Kandahar, Ghulam Haidar Hameedi; a northern police commander, Gen. Daud; and President Karzai's half-brother, Ahmad Wali Karzai, a key southern powerbroker.[185] Incidents such as these further fueled insurgency propaganda and expanded the division between the people and the state. The GIRoA recognized this failure in state building, and in an attempt to improve the increasing levels of conflict through increased security, it drastically increased its military and police forces throughout Afghanistan. ANSF numbers grew from an originally planned 70,000 to its current strength of 352,000.[186] GIRoA officials plan to eventually downsize to 228,500, and by mid-2013 ANSF forces are expected to secure all of Afghanistan, as ISAF draws down to prepare for withdrawal.[187]

Security is the most significant variable influencing the levels of conflict, as it is intertwined with all the other variables affecting conflict. Because of a lack of security, political representation is undermined in many areas of Afghanistan by warlords who control areas that ANSF and ISAF forces cannot yet hold or influence. Anemic rule of law threatens the levels of conflict because of the shortage of effective security. "Afghanistan's justice system remains weak and compromised, and a large proportion of the population relies instead on traditional justice mechanisms, and sometimes Taliban

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184 "Karzai protests civilian deaths," *New York Times*, January 25, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/25/world/asia/25iht-25karzai.19659063.html?_r=0.

185 "Afghanistan: Country Summary," Human Rights Watch, last modified January 2012, 3, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/afghanistan_2012.pdf.pdf.

186 "Summary of Afghan National Army (ANA)," The Naval Postgraduate School Program for Culture and Conflict Studies, accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.nps.edu/programs/ccs/Docs/Pubs/ANA_Summary_Web.pdf; CJ Radin, "US begins downsizing the Afghan National Security Forces," *Threat Matrix (blog)*, January 2, 2013, http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2013/01/us_begins_downsizing_the_afgha.php.

187 "Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed April 15, 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87595.htm.

courts, for dispute resolution."[188] Alternatively, occurring in most of the Afghan rural areas, are informal justice systems, structured to be more restorative than retributive; which are aimed at promoting communal harmony, rather than prosecuting violators of perceived laws.[189] Human rights abuses are endemic within this traditional justice system, where children are sometimes bartered to other families to satisfy conflict resolution, despite this practice being outlawed.[190]

Last, a lack of basic services, such as access to schools, health clinics, and roads to promote economic trade and growth also exacerbate Afghan political, security, and economic stability. Even though, since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, social welfare in Afghanistan has improved and the number of basic services provided to Afghan people has increased, the GIRoA continues to struggle with establishing enough institutions to account for the vast numbers of people not living near urban areas, or major cities.[191]

In summary, as in many failing states, political legitimacy and effective security are the major factors effecting levels of conflict, which directly influence other variables, such as economic stability and social welfare. The GIRoA has experienced a steep learning curve since its establishment in 2004, and has struggled with being able to cope with numerous factors affecting levels of conflict, such as intervening governments, insurgency, and corruption.[192] The U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense play an integral role with assisting the GIRoA and each has worked tirelessly at reducing conflict. However, as the withdrawal of U.S. and Coalition forces draws closer, understanding how to address immediate causes of conflict is essential because, quite

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188 "World Report 2012: Afghanistan," Human Rights Watch, accessed May 19, 2013, http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-afghanistan.

189 Noah Coburn and John Dempsey, *Informal Dispute Resolution in Afghanistan*, United States Institute of Peace Special Report, (Washington DC: USIP, August 2010), 3, http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/gpo19340/sr247_0.pdf.

190 "World Report 2012: Afghanistan."

191, Emergency & Development Infrastructure Department, *Annex 1: Brochure*, International Organization For Migration, (Geneva: IOM, March 2012), 2, http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/countries/docs/afghanistan/IOM-Afghanistan-EDID-Brochure-March-2012.pdf.

192 "The World Factbook: Afghanistan," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed February 20, 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html; Barnett Rubin, "Crafting a Constitution for Afghanistan," *Journal of Democracy 15*, no. 3, (July 2004): 5-19.

simply, the GIRoA will be expected to function essentially independent of U.S., ISAF, or NATO by 2025.[193] Until then however, expectations of SOF in Afghanistan have increased, and the employment of SOF has become an increasingly popular alternative for U.S. military and political decision makers.

E. SOF CAPABILITIES EMPLOYED: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan was to eliminate any existing threat to United States or U.S. national security interests.[194] Shortly following Bush's address to Congress, Paul Wolfowitz recommended the employment of SOF in Afghanistan to the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. In addition to attacking targets associated with Al Qaida and Taliban, SOF was to be used to set the conditions necessary for the establishment of a new Afghan Government under Operation Enduring Freedom.[195] U.S. conventional forces entered theater in 2002 and the U.S. and Coalition footprint quickly grew throughout Afghanistan. SOF and other interagency organizations which initially conducted operations freely throughout Afghanistan, soon found themselves competing with other U.S. and Coalition militaries.[196] U.S. troop strength peaked to 100,000 in 2011, following President Obama's surge request, creating a substantially larger U.S. and Coalition footprint than

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[193] Hamid Karzai, "Remarks by President Obama and President Karzai of Afghanistan After Bilateral Meeting," (Chicago, Illinois: May 20, 2012), http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/20/remarks-president-obama-and-president-karzai-afghanistan-after-bilateral; Stephen Flanagan, "NATO: The Chicago Summit and U.S. Policy," Center for Strategic & International Studies, (Washington DC: CSIS, April 26, 2012), 2, http://csis.org/files/ts120426_Flanagan.pdf.

[194] George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, United States Capitol, Washington, DC, 20 September 2001, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html.

[195] Paul Wolfowitz, "Using Special Forces on "Our Side" of the Line," Secret Memorandum declassified January 11, 2010, http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/267/2001-09-23%20from%20Wolfowitz%20re%20Using%20Special%20Forces%20on%20Our%20Side%20of%20the%20Line.pdf, 23 September 2001.

[196] Office of Public Affairs, "International Contributions to the War Against Terrorism," *Fact Sheet* Department of Defense, (Washington DC: May 22, 2002), http://www.defense.gov/news/May2002/d20020523cu.pdf.

had previously been witnessed.[197] From 2001 to the present, the role of SOF in Afghanistan changed as U.S. national interests shifted to reinforce its international strategic goals.

During the early phases of the campaign, SOF and Conventional Forces often had different goals and focus, which sometimes created problems between commands.[198] Recognizing this dilemma, General Stanley McChrystal was appointed the Commander of ISAF (COMISAF) for Afghanistan in 2009. He changed the focus for SOF operations to be more supportive in nature to conventional forces operating in Afghanistan. He reduced SOF kinetic operations, and maximized the reduction of collateral damage being afflicted onto the Afghan people by issuing a COMISAF Directive in July 2009.[199] Building the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) became a main focus. Theater Rules of Engagement (ROE) were changed as well, restricting the use of precision guided munitions in an effort to reduce collateral damage. Conflicting strategies between conventional forces and SOF units were reduced through the standing up of the Combined Forces Special Operations Command-Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A), where its command relationship with the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan (CDRUSFOR-A) changed from Tactical Control (TACON) to Operational Control (OPCON). In July 2012, the CFSOCC-A restructured its organization to constitute the Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (SOJTF-A).[200] It is comprised of all the U.S. military branches, as well as 23 other countries, and is focused on improving coordination between the U.S. and Afghan government for an enduring and continued U.S. presence following 2014.[201]

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[197] Amy Bingham, "Afghanistan War by the Numbers: Lives Lost, Billions Spent," *ABC News*, May 1, 2012, http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/billions-dollars-thousands-lives-lost-afghanistan-war/story?id=16256292.

[198] Andrew Feickert, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report RS21048 (Washington DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, July 16, 2010), 10.

[199] Brady Clark, personal observation, July 1, 2009, GEN McChrystal's COMISAF Directive was classified as SECRET, and is thereby unavailable for reference in this case study. However, it can be stated that measures were established in the Directive to reduce Afghan collateral damage.

[200] Carmen Gentile, "U.S. Afghan elite forces merge," *USA Today*, August 19, 2012, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/afghanistan/story/2012-08-19/afghanistan-joint-command/57147250/1.

[201] Lisa Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP: Comparing Past and Current Challenges to Afghan Local Defense," National Defense Research Institute (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, December 2012), 7.

The organizational restructuring of the CFSOCC-A into the SOJTF-A, enabled remotely operating SOF units, who were working with local area governance, to synchronize all missions with that of the CDRUSFOR-A, and the ability to problem solve increased, at all levels, more effectively. This flatter organizational structure improved information flow as it reduced the degrees of separation between the district, provincial, and capital level leadership, and tied the districts to the central government.[202] The SOJTF-A streamlined the approval process for mission planning by decentralizing approval authorities to the battalion level and below, which allowed units to operate more effectively in support of the conventional force units who have operational control authority for varying areas of responsibility.[203] Communications between all units were simplified, and planners at all levels were able to coordinate more efficiently with units operating in remote areas of Afghanistan.

Tactically operating SOF units, training and living with ANSF, continued to deal with challenges, such as leadership deficits, insider attacks, and limited planning capabilities, like logistics.[204] Despite these challenges, village level security forces grew in 2012 to 88,464 personnel. "Areas of the country influenced by the insurgents and the ability of the insurgency to attack the population have been significantly diminished."[205] Illustrated in Figure 13 below, SIGACTs increased one percent in 2012 for the same corresponding month recorded in 2011. However, since 2010 overall enemy activity has declined. ANSF units continue to struggle with challenges associated with fluctuating enemy initiated attacks, often attributed to varying annual weather and the harvesting of poppy.

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[202] Donald Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan," *Special Warfare* 24, no. 4 (October–December 2011), 24–25.

[203] Ibid.

[204] U.S. Department of Defense, "Report on Progress Towards Security and Stability in Afghanistan," (Washington DC: Department of Defense, April 27, 2012), 5, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Report_Final_SecDef_04_27_12.pdf.

[205] U.S. Department of Defense, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan" (Washington DC: Department of Defense, December 12, 2012), 61, http://www.defense.gov/news/1230_Report_final.pdf.

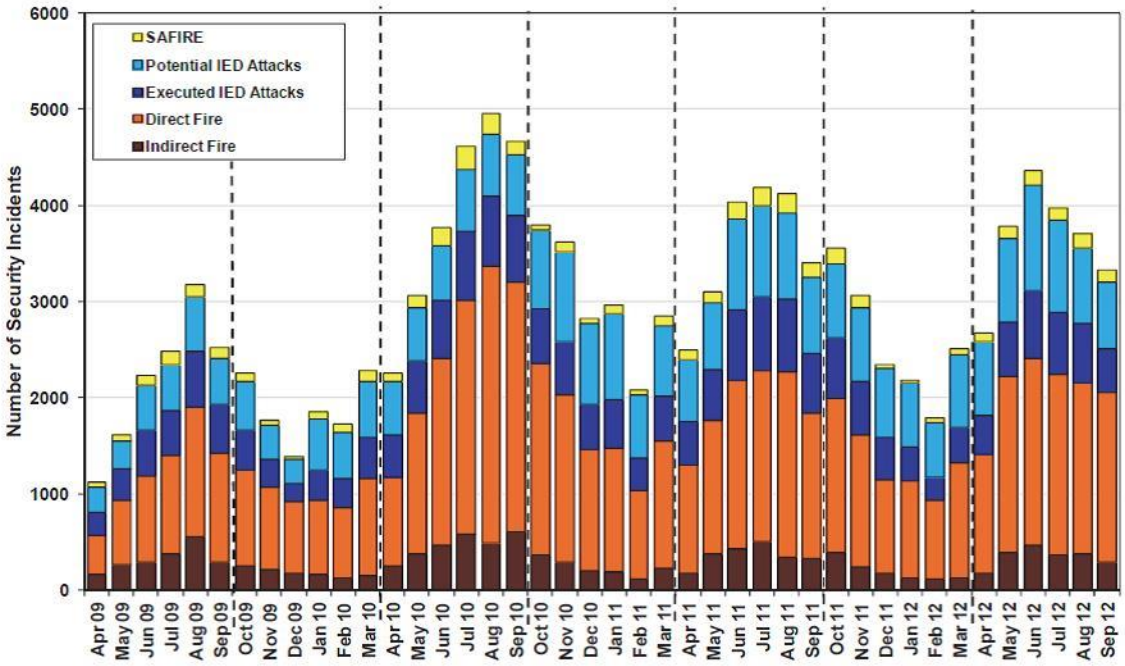

Figure 13. Monthly Nationwide SIGACTs (April 2009 – September 2012) [206]

In 2011, SOF units saw increased joint service participation with the integration of U.S. Navy SEAL teams and Marine Special Operation Forces (MARSOF), which began working for the regionally aligned SOTFs. Almost all were employed to conduct population-centric operations in Afghanistan, with goals to neutralize insurgency, support development, and improve governance through the establishment of a secure environment.[207] However, it remains to be seen whether or not these units were successfully employed. This case study will now examine three variables to determine whether or not SOF capabilities have been effectively employed to mitigate causes of conflict that threaten Afghanistan stability.

[206] Brad Fultz, "The Legitimacy Matrix—A Qualitative Tool for Afghanistan," *Small Wars Journal*, (Bethesda, MD: Small Wars Foundation, February 2, 2012), 151.

[207] International Security Assistance Force Joint Command, Mission Statement, May 9, 2012, http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/isaf-joint-command/index.php.

F. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

1. SOF Employment Must Address Immediate Causes of Conflict

As discussed previously, this case study identified immediate causes of conflict for Afghanistan, which SOF can potentially influence. Listed below, these immediate causes stem from fundamental causes, and are important to address when assisting the Afghan government with stability.

- Political: Delegitimization of the Government, and Political Assassinations
- Security: Warlordism, Collateral Damage, and Weak Rule of Law
- Social Welfare: Poor social services (Health and Education)
- Economic: Weak economic infrastructure

Employment of SOF capabilities to match the immediate causes of conflict in Afghanistan came about after eight years of kinetic operations primarily focused on high value targets, which often included former Afghan warlords.[208] While the SOJTF-A did not specifically identify the aforementioned fundamental and immediate causes of conflict, through command directives that issued guidance on the reduction of collateral damage, and restructuring of command relationships, SOF transformed its employment to better match immediate causes of conflict.

Two major lines of operation resulted from SOFs attempt to address immediate causes of conflict. They were the establishment of Village Stability Operations (VSO) and bolstering of Foreign Internal Defense (FID) to train Afghan Local Police (ALP) and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). VSO is a grass-roots strategy where CA, MISO, SF, SEALs, MARSOF, and sometimes Conventional Army security teams collectively enter a village, at the villagers' behest, and establish programs that enhance village security and social welfare. The ultimate goal of the program is to turn the responsibility of security in each of the villages back over to Afghan control.[209] The teams further develop political relationships of the district and provincial leaders through

[208] Brady Clark, first-hand knowledge. Examples of warlords targeted by SOF in 2007—2008 are Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Mawlawi Jalaluddin Haqqani. They are, respectively, leaders of the HIG and the Haqqani networks.

[209] Hulslander and Spivey, "Village Stability Operations," 135.

coordination meetings held in the form of Shuras (town meetings) designed to bring together the villagers and local area governance. The teams also increase and improve local area security by training the local ALP, which are typically manned at 30 per village, and are not authorized to grow larger in number than mandated allocation determined by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior (MoI). District governance is further legitimized as insurgent forces are repelled by the village police forces who participate in the stability programs. Figure 14 below reflects all SIGACTs occurring in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011, and it encompasses all U.S. and ISAF efforts to reduce conflict. It does not address an exclusive SOF endeavor. However, studies have shown that enemy attacks, or significant activities (SIGACTs) occurring near the vicinity of VSO sites have significantly reduced.[210] By tracing the pace of SIGACTs, the employment of VSO, and the building up of FID, it can be argued that the ANSF, SOJTF-A, and conventional force efforts have relatively reduced the levels of conflict in Afghanistan since 2009.[211] Alternatively, it has been argued that severely harsh winters are likely responsible for the marked decrease in SIGACTs occurring over the last number of years.[212]

[210] Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP," 15.

[211] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), (2012), Global Terrorism Database [Data file]. Retrieved from http:// www.start.umd.edu/gtd.

[212] Nathan Ronaldson, "Quarterly Data Report Q.1, 2012," *Afghanistan NGO Safety Office: Analysis & Advice for Humanitarians* (Kabul, Afghanistan: ANSO, January 1 – 31 March 2012), http://www.ngosafety.org/store/files/ANSO%20Q1%202012.pdf.

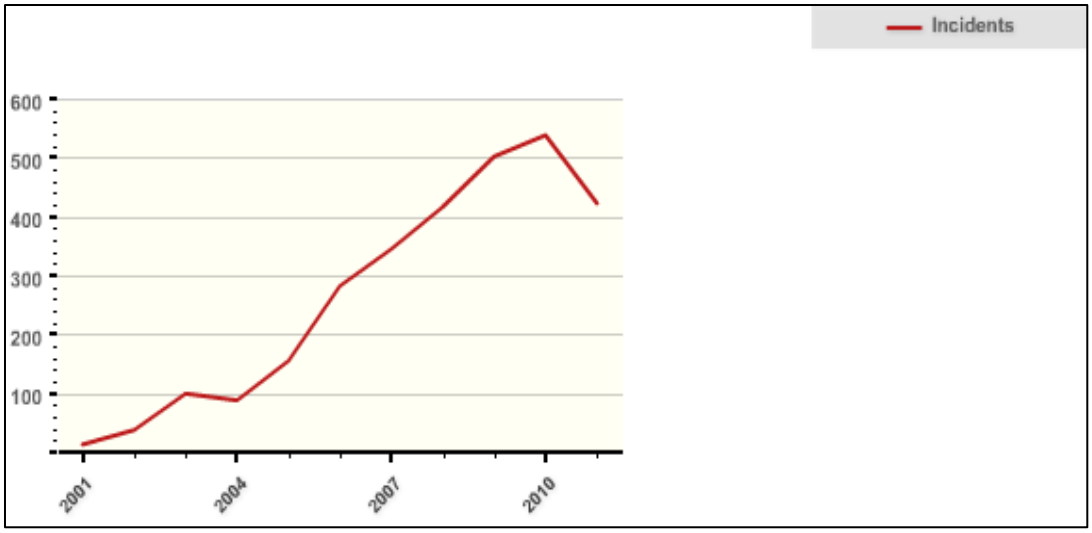

Figure 14. SIGACTs in Afghanistan Over Time (From Global Terror Database)

Following the establishment of the Village Stability Coordination Centers (VSCC), the communication mechanism changed so that it was less hierarchical in its organization, which provided better situational awareness at all levels of command, and linked host nation district leaders to provincial leadership through regularly occurring Key Leader Engagements (KLEs) and Shuras.[213] The meetings would bring together tribal elders, district and provincial leaders to discuss pressing matters of concern, and illuminated issues that were not known to senior leadership, which often led to development projects in areas needing improved social welfare. Linking the Afghan government to development promoted a positive effect on the quality of life for the local population, improved infrastructure, and legitimized public opinion between local and national levels of government.[214] An example of this was seen in Arghandab Province. Following the District Governor's approval and working with local village leadership, SOF elements instituted cash-for-work and crops for work projects, which empowered

[213] Generally speaking, a Shura is when a group of leaders, whether tribal or religious, meet to discuss issues that require a decision.

[214] Ty Connett and Bob Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations: More than Village Defense," *Special Warfare 24*,no. 3, (July–September 2011).

the community and enabled it to promote a more stable environment conducive to improving the social welfare and economic core functions.[215]

VSO and FID are primarily conducted by SOF units, and each address several immediate causes of conflict previously outlined. The results of such efforts have enabled local area government officials to get back into the district centers and begin working to reestablish necessary infrastructure, such as clinics and schools. As a result, the legitimacy of the GIRoA has been bolstered in remote areas such as Marjeh and Sarkani, which hadn't seen lawful governance since the Soviet occupation.[216] Rule of law also improved in these areas.[217] SOF addressed the security function most effectively by assisting the ANSF units to build their capacity and improve their overall capability.

There are some causes of conflict where SOF has not been able to mitigate as effectively. These causes primarily center on political assassinations, and increasing weak economic infrastructure.[218] However, through influencing the mitigation of other immediate causes, principally security, SOF has demonstrated increasing significance to reducing conflict in Afghanistan.

Several examples exist where social welfare has improved through the employment of CA teams by establishing essential infrastructure, such as schools, clinics, and roadways.[219] MIST teams broadcasted important radio messages, using tactical radio

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[215] Joe Quinn, Mario Fumerton, "Counterinsurgency from Below: The Afghan Local Police in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective," discussion paper, November 2010, 19, https://ronna-afghan.harmonieweb.org/CAAT/Shared%20Documents/Counterinsurgency%20From%20Below.pdf.

[216] Brad Fultz, "The Legitimacy Matrix."; The authors incorporated Fultz's Legitimacy Matrix used in 2009 with their own experiences in Afghanistan in 2010. Fultz's assessment of Legitimacy of Marjeh in January 2009 greatly differed from the author's assessment in 2010, suggesting that overall legitimacy improved over the course of time, as a result of improvements contributed through SOF units in the area of operations.

[217] Michael Phillips, "U.S. Sees Shift for Afghan Special Ops," *The Wallstreet Journal*, October 19, 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443684104578066833738443070.html.

[218] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), (2012). Global Terrorism Database [Data file], http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd, March 10, 2013; UNODC, *World Drug Report 2012* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.XI.1), 21, http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/WDR2012/WDR_2012_web_small.pdf.

[219] Rory Hanlin, "One Team?s [sic] Approach to Village Stability Operations", *Small Wars Journal*, (Bethesda, MD: September 4, 2011, updated: 12, 2011).

broadcasting systems to reinforce traditional Afghan and Islamic values and also to counter insurgent propaganda.[220] When combined, SOF in Afghanistan has shown a marked reduction in the number of SIGACTs and improved rural area stability, which previously functioned as sanctuaries for insurgent commanders who planned and prepared attacks against the GIRoA and inflict violence upon the people of Afghanistan.[221]

2. SOF Employment Must Be SOF-Centric

With the introduction of conventional forces in 2002, and examples that the Taliban were transitioning to an insurgency, experts have argued that the focus of SOF should have shifted from stabilization and rebuilding operations to a counterinsurgency strategy.[222] Opinions for which phase of the operation the U.S. and NATO were in differed greatly, which created overlapping efforts, and non-mutually supporting agendas between the multiple organizations operating within Afghanistan.[223] As a result, violence and conflict grew from 2002 to 2009 as U.S. and Coalition forces contended with an increasing number of SIGACTs occurring throughout the country.[224]

Drawing from lessons learned in Vietnam, and responding to the need for a different strategy that was previously heavily reliant on SOF kinetic operations, beginning in 2009, Civil Affairs Teams (CAT), Military Information Support Teams (MIST), and Special Forces (SF) teams moved out of the city-like Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and into rural area villages to stabilize the countryside, one village at a

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[220] Donald Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future," 27.

[221] Brian Petit, "The Fight for the Village: Southern Afghanistan, 2010," *Military Review*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: May-June 2001), 30; Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP," 15.

[222] Hy Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 97.

[223] Ibid.

[224] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), (2012). Global Terrorism Database [Data file], http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd, March 10, 2013.

time.[225] The name of this SOF-centric program changed as it evolved and adapted to fluid problem sets. Beginning as the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) in 2009, the program later changed to the Community Defense Initiative (CDI), which again changed to the Local Defense Initiative (LDI). In August 2010, Afghan President Hamid Karzai made a presidential decree under the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, which created the current VSO program.[226] The most significant difference between VSO and the previous programs is that VSO sought village buy-in before deployment of SOF units into the rural areas.[227] Communities and village officials worked indirectly with SOF units. Each had mutual goals aimed at stabilizing these areas through improved security, which was to be established by the ALP. The CA, MISO, and SF teams maintained a much smaller footprint in these villages when compared to the forces occupying the larger-manned FOBs. These SOF units enabled community leaders to govern their own areas of influence by indirectly improving security and building the capacity of the ALP. When these SOF-centric characteristics are combined, local area development is further promoted and governance is bolstered through the improvement of security.[228] In March 2012, 56 VSO sites were established throughout Afghanistan and were comprised of almost 13,000 personnel.[229] By September 2012, 73 districts included approximately 16,400 ALP security forces distributed throughout Afghanistan.[230] Figure 15 below, illustrates the number of VSO sites that operated amongst 136 authorized districts by September 2012. Over half of the authorized districts were validated by SOF operating in the various regions located throughout Afghanistan. The figure also accounts for

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[225] Jim Gant, "A Strategy for Success in Afghanistan: One Tribe at a Time," (Los Angeles, CA: Nine Sisters Imports, 2009), it is important to note that Gant's operational experiences were not conducted under the auspice of a formalized stabilization program. However, it is the author's opinion that Gant and his team contributed to the inception of the programs that followed Gant's experiences in 2009 and the publication of the cited paper.

[226] Brady Clark, Personal observation. Clark was a Special Forces Operational Detachment Commander in Afghanistan several times, with his most recent deployment spanning from January to August 2010.

[227] Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP," 12.

[228] Donald Rector, "Afghan Local Police: An Afghan Solution to an Afghan Problem," *Small Wars Journal*, (Bethesda, MD: Small Wars Foundation, January 10, 2012).

[229] Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP," 6.

[230] Ibid., 9.

conventional units, as indicated by BSO, or Battle Space Owner who operate in a SOF-Centric manner, and have also stood up ALP forces. "The decentralized and distributed command and control created challenges with logistical sustainment, but because of the expeditionary nature of SOF logistical units, the additional force structure and small footprint was both operationally and logistically supported by the CJSOTF-A [now the SOJTF]."[231] According to a December 2012 RAND paper, enemy SIGACTs occurring near the VSPs were statistically significantly reduced, which likely resulted from ongoing SOF operations in the rural areas.[232]

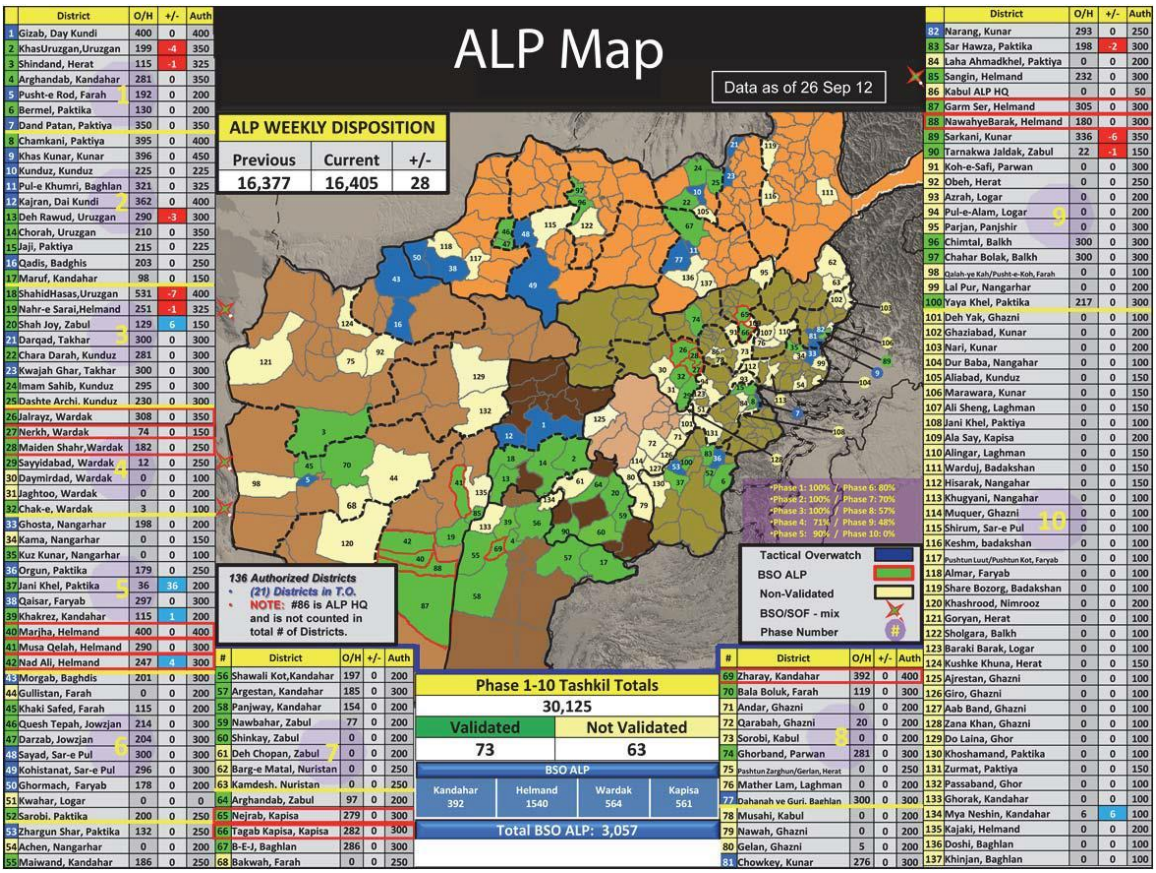

Figure 15. VSO/ALP Sites by District (March 2012)[233]

[231] Donald Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future, 27.

[232] Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP," 15.

[233] U.S. Department of Defense, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," 2, 81.

The reduction in SIGACTs suggests the VSO/ALP program has demonstrated the ability to be a successful program by using this SOF-centric approach. FID training conducted to build the capacity and capability of the ALP has reduced conflict and improved the overall local area security in greater than 70 areas across Afghanistan. By improving local area security, host nation governing bodies were further legitimized, and were better able to influence the other core functions expected of a state. The relative lightly manned SOF units conducting VSO, through generally non-kinetic means, indirectly improved security by assisting the ALP; who in turn take the lead in security for their villages.

3. Interagency Cooperation Must Be Coordinated by SOF

Although a good relationship exists between the SOJTF-A and the multiple interagency organizations, this case study could not find instances where the efforts of interagency were coordinated solely by SOF. Despite the significant increase in the number of U.S. civilian personnel flowing into Afghanistan since 2009, there is no formal coordination between these organizations and SOF. However, as the drawdown of U.S. forces from Afghanistan continues, the likelihood of SOF-Interagency interaction and coordination may increase because of decreased accessibility to rural areas that may result from a reduced U.S. presence.

G. SUMMARY

Transitioning Afghanistan from one of the most failed states in the world to a more stabilized one will be a long road for both the Afghan people and foreign supporters. Ultimately, we argue fundamental causes of conflict will require an Afghan solution. Reduction in corruption will likely take generations, but better governance is dependent on the eradication of corruption sooner than later. As long as the economy suffers from a lack of opportunity, the leadership of Afghanistan will continue to struggle in garnering support for foreign aid. It is arguable that U.S. and ISAF forces operating in Afghanistan are conducting some form of foreign intervention, which resulted in the growing insurgency. However, with the introduction of SOF into rural areas of Afghanistan, conflict levels occurring near these locations have significantly reduced,

which suggests the governing institutions in these areas favor U.S. and ISAF involvement.[234] Through a reduction in conflict and improved stability since 2009, the governing institutions in these areas are further legitimized as a result.

It is not likely the SOJTF-A will be able to mitigate the fundamental causes of conflict, as they are deeply engrained in the Afghan society. However, other organizations exist which strive to strengthen governments, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Alternatively, SOF can influence and mitigate some of the immediate causes of conflict, most specifically security. As the U.S. begins its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the SOJTF-A will continue to employ USSOF throughout the country. Because of SOFs relative low cost, small foot-print, capability to mitigate immediate causes of conflict, and its ability to synergize organizational efforts aimed at addressing complex issues, the significance for SOF employment in Afghanistan will likely be a persistent endeavor made for many years to come.

[234] Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP," 15.

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VI. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will compare and contrast all case studies in order to analyze the overall effectiveness of SOF employment in the Philippines, Colombia, and Afghanistan.

A. ANALYSIS—COMPARING SOF EMPLOYMENT BY CASE STUDY

Table 1 is a graphic representation of our evaluation and analysis for SOF employment in each case study.[235]

Case Study	SOF Address Immediate Causes	SOF-Centric Employment	SOF Coordinates Interagency Cooperation	Effectiveness of SOF Employment
Philippines	Good	Good	Poor	Effective
Colombia	Good	Good	Poor	Effective
Afghanistan	Fair	Fair	Poor	Partially Effective

Table 1. Comparison of Effectiveness of SOF Employment by Case Study

1. SOF Employment Must Address Immediate Causes of Conflict

All three case studies have shown that SOF employment addressed most of the immediate causes of conflict. However, it did not address some immediate causes of conflict, such as political assassination and political repression in the Philippines and Afghanistan. Political assassination and political repression are serious problems which inhibit the political freedom and create an unstable political environment. However, these immediate causes of conflict are politically driven acts that are difficult to properly address through a military to military engagement only. Thus, SOF employment did not address these particular immediate causes of conflict because SOF predominately operates at the operational and tactical level, while having strategic implications.

[235] The Table lists the countries studied in the first column, and the independent variables are listed in the headers of the following columns. The last column lists the results found for each case study. The scale rates effectiveness using poor, fair, and good as descriptors, and levels of effectiveness for SOF employment.

SOF employment did address, however, the issue of professionalizing militaries to be more legitimate and supportive of their civilian governments by providing an environment in which civilian political primacy and rule of law are respected. As a result, extrajudicial killings and human rights violations committed by host nation militaries and security forces were reduced during the timeframe SOF was employed, which was especially exemplified in the Philippines. We also determined that SOF employment did not specifically address the economic function expected of a state in all three case studies. Thus, SOF had limited impact on economic conditions in conflict affected areas. However, where the economic function improved, it was demonstrated that SOF employment reduced armed violence and improved the security and social welfare functions. Therefore it is arguable that the improved economic function was a byproduct of the improved security and social welfare functions. SOF employment is by nature focused on improving the security function of a state. However, without improving the other functions of a state, such as the political, social welfare and economic functions, the improved security function is not sustainable. Thus, SOF employment must employ multiple instruments of national power to address as many immediate causes of conflict as permitted by operational environment and SOF's abilities.

2. SOF Employment Must be SOF-Centric

All three case studies have shown that SOF employment was relatively SOF-centric. In the Philippines, due to limitations imposed by bi-lateral agreement between the RP and U.S., SOF employment was entirely SOF centric. In Colombia, the congressional limitation imposed by the U.S. promoted SOF-centric approach to all military assistance. In Afghanistan, SOF employment was partially SOF-centric during the beginning phases of the operation. However, with the introduction of conventional forces in 2004, SOF employment shifted to primarily kinetic and FID operations. In 2009, the strategic focus changed, and then SOF employment became once again SOF-centric, which continues through today. The latest change in SOF employment to be more SOF-centric resulted from lessons learned in SOF history that demonstrated reduction in the levels of conflict through successful SOF employment.

Conducting operations indirectly, through host nation forces, with non-kinetic focus, while maintaining a small footprint and flat organizational structure in a non-permissive environment, presents unique challenges for SOF. Non-permissive environments are typically more dangerous operating environments. Therefore a SOF-centric approach may be more difficult to implement in higher intensity conflict areas, such as Afghanistan, due force protection and logistic support issues. Employment of SOF must be a deliberate decision made by policy and strategic planners, while keeping these challenges in mind.

3. Interagency Cooperation Must Be Coordinated by SOF

All three case studies demonstrated some levels of interagency cooperation. However, SOF was not the lead in interagency coordination in any case study. Such coordination must occur through the U.S. Embassy. Due to SOF's disposition, dispersion and unique capabilities, such as language skills, habitual relationships with host nation security forces, and cultural awareness and respect garnered over time, in the three countries studied, interagency organizations were able to gain better access to areas otherwise inaccessible to most conventional and regular interagency channels. A viable and cooperative relationship existed between SOF and interagency, but SOF was not the sole proponent for coordinating interagency efforts. We also did not find that SOF had any significant influence at regulating interagency operations. However, this does not mean SOF is not good at coordinating interagency operations, rather it highlights the importance of SOF as a critical link between interagency strategic objectives and operational and tactical needs to improve the core functions expected of a state. In short, where U.S. government agencies are the distributor of nation building resources, SOF can be an effective tool utilized to disseminate resources in these conflict affected areas.

4. Overall Effectiveness of SOF Employment

All three case studies demonstrated SOF employment as having varying degrees of effectiveness. In the Philippines, SOF employment was effective. In Colombia SOF employment was also effective. However, SOF employment was partially effective in Afghanistan. This partial effectiveness in Afghanistan can be attributed to the change in

strategic focus over time. We recognize the SIGACT data used in this thesis is limited in geographic and temporal scope, which postulates an imperfect metric when measuring the overall stability in each country studied. Furthermore, the number of SIGACTs changed over time for each of the case studies. In the Philippines, the number of SIGACTs declined where SOF units were employed. In Colombia, the number of SIGACTs declined nationally with the shift in strategy by both the U.S. and Colombia to target terrorists in order to improve security. The efforts of the host nation military and police forces outweighed all other efforts, but it can be argued that the effort of SOF in building host nation capabilities and targeting terrorists to address security issues contributed in some part to the overall decline in SIGACTs. In Afghanistan, the number of SIGACTs relatively steadily increased until VSO and FID began addressing the immediate causes of conflict, and SOF began operating in a more SOF-centric nature. Therefore, it is arguable that using SIGACT data as a metric to measure the effectiveness of SOF employment in each case study is viable.

B. CONCLUSION

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review states the following regarding the use of smaller U.S. forces and host nation leadership:

> Efforts that use smaller numbers of U.S. forces and emphasize host nation leadership are generally preferable to large-scale counterinsurgency campaigns. By emphasizing host-nation leadership and employing modest numbers of U.S. forces, the United States can sometimes obviate the need for larger-scale counterinsurgency campaigns.[236]

The purpose of this thesis is to identify how SOF capabilities can be effectively employed in order to mitigate conflict in failing and weak states. Our hypothesis was that the effectiveness of SOF employment is dependent on three variables: SOF employment must address immediate causes of conflict; SOF employment must be SOF-centric; and SOF-led interagency cooperation must be coordinated by SOF. Before examining these variables, each case study identified fundamental and immediate causes of conflict. By

[236] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington DC: Department of Defense, February 2010).

identifying fundamental and immediate causes of conflict, we were able to examine whether SOF employment addressed immediate causes of conflict rather than fundamental causes of conflict, which are deep rooted and complex problems that need to be addressed by the host nation government. The case studies then examined the two remaining variables to determine whether or not SOF employment was SOF-centric and if interagency cooperation was coordinated by SOF. Examination of each variable in each case study, allowed us to determine the overall effectiveness of SOF employment within each country. Based on the evidence of the case studies, we have determined the following conclusions:

SOF did not specifically identify fundamental and immediate causes of conflict in each case study. However, SOF employment focused on mitigating the immediate causes of conflict. Thus, the overall effectiveness of SOF employment was successful. More importantly, SOF recognized that a symbiotic relationship exists between the security and social welfare functions, and therefore also focused on improving the two functions simultaneously through host nation security forces capacity building and CMOs focused on indigenous populace. The political and economic functions were strengthened, as a byproduct of the improved security and social welfare functions.

The employment of SOF was most effective when its employment was SOF-centric. This variable had the most impact on the overall effectiveness of SOF capabilities because the characteristics of a SOF-centric approach highlight the best practices outlined in the joint publications regarding COIN, FID, SFA, and stability operations. A SOF-centric approach is built upon the mutual respect of political sensitivities between the host nation and U.S. governments, while maintaining the obligation to protect the population and sustain popular support, to include the need for organizational flexibility for operating in highly complex and unstable low intensity conflict environments.

SOF did not coordinate interagency cooperation in any of the three case studies. Therefore, this variable had no impact on the overall effectiveness of SOF employment. This is because inherently interagency operations are the responsibility of the Department

of State. However, where interagency resources were available, SOF and other agencies worked together to reduce immediate causes of conflict in unstable areas.

Reducing conflict through SOF employment is complex. The ideas that we have presented in this thesis can be applied to SOF employment in FID, SFA, COIN, and stability operations. As discussed in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, there is a growing demand for smaller numbers of U.S. forces that emphasize host nation-led efforts and indirect U.S. participation. This approach should be viewed and considered for implementation at the strategic level, with specific objectives established before SOF employment. Also, this concept can be applied in assisting foreign militaries, like the South Korean military in developing a plan to counter potential insurgency presented by the possible collapse of the North Korean regime. Similarly, this concept can be applied to assisting the government of Mali as it addresses problematic insurgency issues.

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