

STATEMENT BY
COLONEL DAVID S. MAXWELL, USA (RET.)
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM
EDMUND A. WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

ON

UNDERSTANDING FUTURE IRREGULAR WARFARE CHALLENGES

MARCH 27, 2012

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before this distinguished panel. The purpose of my testimony is to provide thoughts on three questions.

1. Types of future Irregular Warfare challenges.
2. Strategies best suited to deal with future challenges.
3. Existing examples or models to support those strategies and effectively manage Irregular Warfare challenges.

In my testimony I will seek to answer those questions and focus on three areas that have been the focus of my studies and military experience: Lessons from Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines (OEF-P), the potential for Irregular Warfare following a war or regime collapse in North Korea and recommendations for Special Operations Forces operating in the future irregular environment.

Introduction

As we move toward the close of the eleventh year of the War on Terrorism it is useful to examine the background of the rise of Irregular Warfare and its associated doctrine with the aim of ensuring we preserve the right lessons learned as we try to anticipate the future conflicts with which the U.S. might be faced. However, this will not be an extensive historical review of doctrine or the War on Terrorism but will instead provide a critique of selected areas with the intent to provide some context to the answer the three key questions.

We should recall one historical event that followed the end of the last controversial and difficult conflict that caused major divisions within our Nation and radically altered our military: Vietnam. We came out of the Vietnam experience with the desire not to fight such a war again and in fact within the Army purged much of the doctrine related to Counterinsurgency and Irregular Warfare type activities. The Army in particular embarked on a very successful transformation to an all-volunteer force with the doctrine and weapons systems designed to fight the Nation's existential threat: the Soviet Union on the central plains of Europe. The efficacy of what was known as AirLand Battle and the operational art that was its foundation was proven in Operation Desert Storm.

Yet it is often forgotten that immediately following the defeat of the Iraqi forces and liberation of Kuwait U.S. forces became involved in Operation Provide Comfort in what would perhaps foreshadow two decades of various forms of what can be described as Irregular Warfare though of course that term was not "re-invented" until after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the rise of the Iraqi insurgency. Following Desert Storm the U.S. military was engaged in myriad irregular conflicts from Somalia and Haiti to Bosnia and Kosovo. But even during the first decade after the end of the Cold War it was well known that the types of conflict that were taking place were not really new to the U.S. military and Irregular Warfare and conflict has long been the dominant form that it has faced. In fact, a colleague once remarked that when he first heard that Irregular Warfare was becoming established in doctrine, it reminded him of when Columbus landed in the

New World and the Native Americans were left scratching their heads wondering what was so new about it.

However, with 9-11 and the invasion and occupation of both Afghanistan and Iraq and the rise of the insurgencies, the U.S. military eventually embarked on the development of new doctrine, most all of it tactically- and operationally-focused, for how to conduct counterinsurgency and operate in irregular conflict environments. What then happened is best summed up by the strategist Colin Gray:

“The American defense community is especially prone to capture by the latest catchphrase, the new-sounding spin on an ancient idea which as jargon separates those who are truly expert from the lesser breeds without the jargon.”

This describes what happened in the military very well. In reaction to public criticism that the military was unprepared for what followed after the defeat of the Iraqi military and destruction of its government, the military embarked on a rapid doctrinal development effort that resulted in the famed FM 3-24 as well as new concepts and forces laid out in the 2006 and 2010 Quadrennial Defense Reviews. By 2008 the Secretary of Defense issued an instruction (DODI 3000.07) that brought together Unconventional Warfare, Counterinsurgency, Foreign Internal Defense, Counterterrorism, and Stability Operations under the umbrella of Irregular Warfare.

But with this came the proliferation of new terms and concepts that were (and remain) redundant and of little additional value. Examples of such terms include Security Force Assistance (SFA), Building Partner Capacity (BPC), Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA),

Organize, Train, Equip, Rebuild/build and Advise (OTERA), Stability Security, Transition, Reconstruction Operations (SSTRO), Provincial (originally provisional) Reconstruction Teams (PRT), and Military Transition Teams (MiTT), again, just to name a few. In addition, re-establishing Irregular Warfare as one end of the spectrum of conflict has also led to the rise of new terms to describe conflicts other than state on state high intensity maneuver warfare. Although a number of these terms were being put forth prior to 9-11 examples of the names for war and conflict included not only Insurgency but also Asymmetric Warfare, 4th Generation Warfare (and 5th as well), Hybrid Warfare, Network Centric Warfare, and a host of other rather esoteric terms such as “post-heroic warfare,” “matrix warfare,” and “holistic warfare.” And we should not forget the Chinese “Unrestricted Warfare.”

If Clausewitz were alive today he would repeat what he wrote in the 19th Century:

“Again, unfortunately, we are dealing with jargon, which, as usual bears little resemblance to well defined, specific concepts.”

But Clausewitz also wisely remarked that before you embark on war you have to determine the type of war to be fought. Unfortunately this wise counsel has been focused on **naming** rather than **understanding** the war. The U.S. military has expended a lot time and intellectual capital trying to come up not only with new names of war but also new names of old concepts. I am often reminded of the scene in “Apocalypse Now” in which Captain Willard (Martin Sheen) is sitting in his quarters and says words to the effect, “(Expletive). Still in Saigon. Every day I am here I grow weaker and every day Charlie is in the bush growing stronger.” I would turn this to say, “(Expletive). Another new

doctrinal term. Every day we make up new terms and grow weaker, while AQ is in the mountains growing stronger.”

Despite this seemingly negative critique, all the services have done a lot of important work despite the focus on naming conventions. This work must be preserved and used rather than purged as it was following Vietnam. This is important especially as the opponents of Counterinsurgency want to sound the same call as was heard in 1975: “Never Again.”

To sum up, the military has to get its doctrinal house in order, protect the intellectual strides that have been made, cease the proliferation of new terms and concepts and instead focus on streamlining doctrine to make it efficient and effective, and most important, so that it provides the military with the foundation for education and training in order for it to be able to practice sound operational art and assist in the development and implementation of strategy in support of U.S. National Security policy.

Types of Future Irregular Warfare Challenges

Predicting the future is always a losing proposition because it is filled with uncertainty. However, while we cannot know what will happen, it is likely that the future will include many elements from history, though perhaps in new creative combinations not totally new or surprising to students of military or world history. We should be reminded of the adage “Train for Certainty and Educate for Uncertainty.” It is uncertain what will

emerge from the spectrum of conflict. However, as war remains “an act of force to compel an enemy to do our will” we know that we have to train our military for the full spectrum of conflict using the right capabilities of the joint force to achieve our objectives. This should not be interpreted as an attempt to categorize Irregular Warfare as the “graduate level of war” (a description sometime attributed to Counterinsurgency). The ability to be effective in any form of conflict requires a trained ***and*** well-educated force because it is *war itself* that is the graduate level of war. In an uncertain future and, especially, in times of fiscal constraint that our military will experience for the next decade, the most important thing for our military is to educate the force and continue the high level of training for which it has been revered and renowned.

As the focus of this paper is on Irregular Warfare, it is important to define and describe it.

The current Joint Chiefs of Staff definition is the start point:

Irregular warfare. A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. Irregular warfare 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. Also called IW. (JP 1-02)

The first sentence is the essence of IW while the second is an apparent attempt to define how it is fought and countered. However, this is hardly adequate and often finds analysts and planners trying to fit the conflicts they are observing into that definition. Furthermore, as we know, this definition was adopted despite not having the “buy-in” or support from other government agencies, namely the Department of State. A lot of effort went into the “debate” to get this definition approved.

Having wrestled with this problem for many years prior to 9-11, another way to describe the future operational environment and the contrast between conventional conflict or war and what might be described as non-conventional war or conflict. In a monograph I wrote in 1995 regarding SOF support to Peace Operations, I wrote the following:

What is clear is that the military is now involved in not only the prevention and resolution of conventional conflicts, but also in *non-conventional* conflicts (a non-doctrinal term). This is the milieu in which the military increasingly operates and which makes peace operations so difficult, yet it is this very environment in which US SOF have traditionally worked. This environment needs to be explored and thoroughly understood in order to deduce solutions to complex problems. To explain this “new” environment, the common definition of conflict will be examined and compared to its non-conventional counterpart. Conflict is defined as *“an armed struggle or clash between organized political parties within a nation or between nations in order to achieve limited political or military objectives.”* This definition, though somewhat more ambiguous than war, is still rather straightforward and simple to understand. However, non-conventional conflict is something even more ambiguous and difficult to understand. It extends the continuum of conflict. Conflict in the conventional sense begins when the armed struggle begins; however, non-conventional conflict encompasses the types of conflict listed above, starting with the threat or possibility of conflict and extending past conflict termination, because the conditions that gave rise to hostilities in the first place may still remain, though not visible or easily recognized. It also includes armed clashes by unorganized groups that are not seeking to achieve any traditional political or military objectives. Non-conventional conflict encompasses the lawlessness of a society in which the governmental system has collapsed, but no organized group has risen to take its place. Violence and terrorist-like activity can occur out of frustration with no identifiable purpose. This type of conflict is non-conventional, because it is difficult to determine the objectives and methods of the actors, perhaps difficult to even determine the actors, and thus it is difficult to apply conventional elements of national power. This is the sensitive and complex environment in which peace operations may increasingly take place. Although the situation may not be a traditional insurgency, there will likely be many of its characteristics present. In these types of non-conventional environments it is the issue of *perceived*

legitimacy by the people and the political powers involved that places new stresses on military forces whose legitimacy is no longer a matter of fact. This is perhaps the most significant change for military forces given the evolution of the character of *conflict* (while as Clausewitz teaches us the nature remains constant).¹

To expand the understanding of non-conventional conflict it is useful to turn to (*now deceased*) Sam Sarkesian, a professor of political science at Loyola University, who sets forth *in 1993* a set of characteristics that summarize the variety of future non-conventional conflicts in which the US might become involved. He believes that it is in this environment that US SOF will be called upon to operate.

- Asymmetrical Conflicts. For the US these conflicts are limited and not considered a threat to its survival or a matter of vital national interests; however, for the indigenous adversaries they are a matter of survival.
- Protracted Conflicts. Require a long term commitment by the US, thus testing the national will, political resolve, and staying power of the US.
- Ambiguous and Ambivalent Conflicts. Difficult to identify the adversary, or assess the progress of the conflict; i.e., it is rarely obvious who is winning and losing.
- Conflicts with Political-Social Milieu Center of Gravity. The center of gravity will not be the armed forces of the adversaries as Clausewitz would argue, but more in the political and social realms as Sun Tzu espouses.²

The above would describe some, if not all, of the conflicts in which US military forces have been involved since the end of the Cold War. In this light it seems that the military faces situations driven by the changed environment in which peace operations must be conducted. The evolution of conflict in the post-Cold War era now presents military forces not only with highly complex

¹ David S. Maxwell, "Support to United Nations Operations: Is There a Role For United States Special Operations Forces?" School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1995.

² Sam C. Sarkesian, Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 15.

operating environments (witness Bosnia), but also with the challenge to continually justify military presence in the eyes of a diverse and potentially antagonistic cast of players. This sensitive environment confounds conventional logic, defies traditional solutions, and has driven the military to a paradigm shift.³

Again, the above was written in 1995 but I think it describes today's situation as well. In my opinion, in the future we are going to see conflict from across the spectrum both traditional conventional and non-conventional, sometime separately, sometimes simultaneously, and sometimes sequentially; but of course the scale and scope is unknown and uncertain. Therefore we must educate our force for this uncertainty.

Something that is also rarely discussed is whether the U.S. faces existential threats. Clearly the most existential threat is one that will be waged among nuclear powers who have both the weapons and the delivery capability to inflict devastating society changing effects on the U.S. However, there are few countries with these capabilities and fortunately deterrence theory seems to continue to function effectively among the major nuclear powers (though perhaps not as well among the lesser nuclear powers). As the U.S. looks at conflicts around the world, a question that should always be asked is whether there is an existential threat to the U.S. or its treaty allies. If there is not an existential threat then this should drive the strategy in a way that is decidedly different than the commitment of forces for an existential threat. Or to put it another way, given the level of commitment of the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan, did we really have

³ Maxwell.

sufficient capability to deal with existential threats either to the U.S. or our allies? I think an objective answer might be no.

But for the future, I think we can put the nature of the threats we will face into three categories. First will be those existential threats to the U.S. or allies that will be characterized by state on state military conflict, conquest of territory and the potential for large scale death and destruction among the participants – military and civilian.

The second type of conflict will be those that threaten the status quo and regional stability of friends, partners, and allies and will require not the commitment of large-scale regular U.S. military forces, but a select and tailored force to be able to assist as appropriate in support of U.S. interests. The U.S. should consider carefully first whether to contribute any military capabilities at all and if so then in such a way as to ensure that such contribution does not become the focal point or cause of an escalation of conflict. We have seen these types of conflict in Colombia, the Philippines, the Trans Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Yemen as examples. We are likely to see these again in the future and, after determining if assisting such friends, partners, or allies is in the U.S. national interest, then we must be prepared to commit the right forces with the right resources and authorities to achieve U.S. objectives through and with the host nation.

However, the third category of threat is one that combines the potential for high-end conventional conflict that can only be conducted among states along with the non-conventional conflict to include the potential for insurgency and terrorism as well as

humanitarian crises. There is currently at least one threat to a U.S. ally that meets this description and that is North Korea.

Despite its failed economy and the extreme suffering of its population, North Korea still has formidable conventional and non-conventional capabilities. While the outcome of an attack by the north is not in doubt because surely the alliance possesses sufficient combat power to defeat the North Korean military and destroy the Kim Family Regime it is what comes next that will truly challenge the alliance. Due to the nature of 60+ year regime, there is the potential for an insurgency that will make Iraq and Afghanistan pale in comparison, particularly given the “guerilla mindset” of the population and the presence of weapons of mass destruction. Possible scenarios as well as recommendations are spelled out in the attached paper “Irregular Warfare on the Korean Peninsula”. This paper outlines five major strategic assumptions, one imperative, and 5 key preparatory tasks summarized below:

Assumptions:

1. The threats within North Korea following war or regime collapse will be irregular, dangerous and complex.
2. The Republic of Korea and its allies will not be welcomed with open arms by everyone in North Korea; by some, perhaps by many, but not by all and therein lies the threat.
3. The U.S. military doctrinal focus on IW has not taken into account the North Korean threat.
4. China will intervene to protect its interests.

Imperative: The ROK must lead unification efforts; military and civilian – as this is critical for long term legitimacy.

Key Preparatory Tasks:

1. Clear and definitive Alliance end state for the Peninsula must be established.
2. A comprehensive influence campaign must be initiated focused on the second tier leadership and the population.
3. Establish a policy and plans for North Korea security forces during post-conflict/collapse.
4. Establish a North Korean “Hands” program (South Korean and U.S.)
5. International Coordination of plans must be conducted – to include China.⁴

Frank Hoffman has described this type of potential conflict as Hybrid because it combines the high-end state war fighting capabilities with the irregular. Should the above assumptions prove true then the ROK-U.S. alliance will face one of the most difficult and complex security challenges in the modern era and certainly since World War II and the Korean War. This conflict requires more than planning. It requires preparation. Please see the attached paper for a more detailed discussion.

Strategies best suited to deal with future challenges

The key to future challenges for the United States lies in the ability to develop strategies that have balance and coherency among ends, ways, and means. Nearly every shortcoming we have experienced in the past decade of war can be attributed either to a

⁴ David S. Maxwell, “Irregular Warfare on the Korean Peninsula Thoughts on Irregular Threats from North Korea - Post-Conflict and Post-Collapse: *Understanding Them to Counter Them*,” www.smallwarsjournal.com November 2010. Also published as Chapter Six in Confronting Security Challenges on the Korean Peninsula, Dr. Bruce Bechtol, editor, Marine Corps University Press, Quantico, VA, 2011.

lack of effective strategy or a lack of coherency and/or imbalance among ends, ways, and means.

The problem is best illustrated by the long running debate among those who advocate a counterinsurgency or nation building “strategy” versus those who advocate a counter-terrorism “strategy.” We should really give some critical thought as to whether COIN and CT are strategies at all. But the establishment of the two camps has been extremely counter-productive because each camp has advocated the efficacy of the ways they trumpet as strategy when real strategy should focus on using the right ways and means in the right combinations to achieve the desired ends that support national policy and interests. Although it should be obvious, employment of COIN techniques and CT capabilities are not mutually exclusive but we have allowed the divisive debate in both political and military circles to hinder our ability to develop effective strategy to support national policy.

If the future holds three likely categories of threats, then what are the capabilities the U.S. needs for each? For the first, existential threats against the U.S. and its allies, the U.S. require what it has always required: a military educated, trained and ready to fight and win the nations wars. The dominant military capability lies in both the Nation’s Regular and Strategic Forces.

The difficulty is balancing the size of this force with the capability to fight and win the nation’s wars and provide the capability to deal with the second category that threatens

the status quo and regional stability of our friends, partners, and allies. The U.S. needs a strategy to be able to identify threats and vulnerabilities and if assessed as appropriate, apply the right instruments of U.S. national power in the correct combination to be able to help friends, partners, or allies counter those threats. In the past, the forces that have had the capability to contribute in this area most effectively have been Special Operations Forces (SOF). It will most likely be the force with the necessary capabilities to deal with the second category in the future as well.

For the Hybrid threat posed by, for example, North Korea, it requires the combined capabilities required for the first two categories: Regular, Strategic and Special Operations Forces. While the military can and should develop traditional Operations Plans to deal with the first and third category and train and maintain readiness to execute those plans, it is the second category that requires consideration of a different and non-traditional strategy and capabilities.

The first requirement is the necessity for a functional national security process to orchestrate the instruments of national power to be able to deal with threats to friends, partners, and allies. History is replete with examples of both effective and ineffective application of the instruments of national power. An inherent weakness in the U.S. national security system is the turnover of national security personnel and the lack of defined and common processes and procedures for formulating plans and then orchestrating the execution of the plans to include receiving assessments and then adapting plans as conditions on the ground evolve. In May 1997 President Clinton

signed Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 “The Management of Complex Contingency Operations.” The PDD provided an interagency process to assess and plan for complex operations. Coincidentally, after the PDD was signed interagency training was conducted to test the processes and one of the original complex scenarios used was the collapse of the regime in North Korea. This took place at the same time CONPLAN 5029 –“North Korean Instability and Collapse” was being developed and the U.S. Commander in Korea, General John Tilelli, asked Secretary of Defense Cohen to use the Korean scenario both for training and as a way to bring the interagency into the planning that was being conducted in Korea.

A PDD 56-like process can have application across the spectrum of conflict of course, but is especially applicable to the second category, threats to the status quo and regional stability. It can be an effective tool to both develop strategy to support national policy and supervise and resource execution. However, what is also required are the capabilities and forces and an organization to be able to both provide the assessments to anticipate potential future conflict as well as have the small footprint capability to provide the advice necessary to assist friends, partners and allies. U.S. SOF can be a key capability in this regard. To understand how SOF can play a role it is necessary to look at the two over arching special operations capabilities: Surgical Strike and Special Warfare.

As has been demonstrated since 9-11, the U.S. possesses a surgical strike capability that has performed remarkably well in critical areas around the world. This capability is defined in the draft Army Doctrinal Publication 3-05 Special Operations, as follows:

Surgical strike is the execution of activities in a precise manner that employ special operations in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover or damage designated targets, or influence adversaries and threats. Executed unilaterally or collaboratively, surgical strike extends operational reach and influence by engaging global targets discriminately and precisely. Surgical strike is not always intended to be an isolated activity; it is executed to shape the environment or influence a threat in support of larger strategic interests. Although the actual strike is short in duration, the process of planning frequently requires interagency and host nation partnerships to develop the target and facilitate post-operation activities.

Surgical strike activities include actions against critical operational or strategic targets; *counterproliferation* actions to prevent the threat and/or use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our forces, allies, and partners; *counterterrorism* actions taken directly and indirectly against terrorist networks to influence and render global and regional environments inhospitable to terrorist networks; and *hostage rescue and recovery* operations, which are sensitive crisis response missions that include offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorist threats and incidents, including recapture of U.S. facilities, installations, and sensitive material.

This capability resides permanently in a national mission force which is resourced at a very high level. Again, from Saddam to Zarqawi, to hostages on the ground and off the coast in Somalia, other high value targets in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and finally Bin Laden himself, this standing joint special operations force has returned on the nation's investment through this surgical strike capability far beyond the imaginations of the original leaders who founded these organizations and the visionary political leaders who supported them.

The other overarching special operations capability is Special Warfare. Again from the draft ADP 3-05 it is defined as:

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

Unconventional warfare is defined as activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area (JP 3-05). Unconventional warfare operations are politically sensitive activities that involve a high degree of military risk. These operations require distinct authorities and precise planning, and are often characterized by innovative design. Army special operations forces activities are used to shape the indigenous population to support the resistance movement or insurgency.

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 activities provide a capability that is oriented on proactive security **cooperation. Foreign internal defense activities shape the environment and prevent or** deter conflict through sustained engagement with host nations, regional partners, and indigenous populations and their institutions.

Foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare may be considered conceptual opposites; however, the training and education provided to Army special operations forces to work with indigenous forces in the conduct of unconventional warfare is equally applicable in foreign internal defense. In both capabilities, Army special operations forces focus on interacting with and empowering indigenous powers to act. The ability for Army special operations forces to build insurgent capabilities during unconventional warfare is the exact skill set used by Army special operations forces when working with or through indigenous forces and host nation institutions to defeat an insurgent threat.

This describes the traditional SOF capabilities and the two key missions for the future which are best suited for dealing with the second category of threats. However, there is one key difference between the Nation's surgical strike and special warfare capabilities: The surgical strike capability has a standing joint special operations force that is maintained the highest state of readiness and has the ability to operate globally to support U.S. national security objectives. The special warfare capability has no counterpart organization. Although United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is a "hybrid" combatant command – with service-like resource responsibilities and authorities and the capability to operationally employ forces – it has not been able to effectively execute operations in comparison to the effectiveness of the standing joint special operations force responsible for surgical strike. The special warfare capabilities remain disparate, assigned to different organizations deploying and working for the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) and U.S. Country Teams. Strong consideration should be given to establishing a standing special warfare joint force that would have global responsibilities to be able to provide long duration and sustained support to U.S. Country Teams and Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC). An investment in a force that is resourced at a high level to provide a global foreign internal defense and as required, unconventional warfare capability with an integrated network from the continental U.S. through the TSOCs and GCCs to specific host nation on the model of the surgical strike standing joint special operations force would pay similar dividends over time and ensure that the hard won Irregular Warfare capabilities would be sustained over time.

However, as many military planners will note, special operations may not possess the capacity for the potential level of effort required depending on evolving threat environments. As has been proven in Iraq and Afghanistan, Regular and Special Operations Forces must be interoperable and capable of mutual support and integration. To be able to have an integrated Regular and Special Operations capability consideration should be given to establishing a “hybrid corps” headquarters that would consist of Regular Forces and Special Operations Forces with special warfare capabilities. This would be a permanent corps headquarters that would focus on the foreign internal defense missions requiring capabilities beyond the organic ones in the standing special warfare joint special operations force. It can both provide forces as well as command and control for larger operations.

This hybrid corps would have global responsibilities. It would be able to provide advisors when there is a delta in SOF capabilities. The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School could re-establish the Vietnam era Military Assistance and Training Advisory (MATA) Course to train Regular Force advisors and be the repository to maintain this skill set for the Army.

These are examples of future capabilities and possible organizations that could support a U.S. national security strategy. However, the key to the future remains understanding the character and nature of conflict, anticipating challenges, and then developing an effective strategy that brings balance and coherency among ends, ways, and means. However, there is no “silver bullet” or “holy grail” of strategy. Future strategies will require

balance and adjustment based on changes in the security situation. There is no single strategic model than can apply to the future such as NSC-68 and Containment.

Existing examples or models to support those strategies and effectively

While there is no single model that can work in all situations, there are numerous examples of effective operations that have been or are currently being conducted around the world. A look at Colombia, the Horn of Africa, and the Philippines will show as many differences as there are similarities. However, there are some key points that do help to explain why these operations seem to be functioning as effectively as they are. One of the common areas is that they are practicing good special warfare skills and in particular the foreign internal defense mission where they are operating in an advisory and assistance role providing training and support to help the host nation's internal defense and development programs in order to defend against lawlessness, subversion, insurgency, and terrorism. However, I will use the Philippines to illustrate some of the operational concepts that can support a global strategy for the second category of threats.

A more detailed description of how the Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (OEF-P) evolved can be found in the attached paper: “Foreign Internal Defense: An Indirect Approach to Counter-Insurgency/Counter Terrorism, Lessons from Operation Enduring Freedom- Philippines for dealing with Non-Existential Threats to the United States” which was presented at a conference on *Irregular Warfare Challenges and Opportunities*

of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and sponsored by the Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office on December 6, 2011.

The first point to keep in mind is that the title of the paper states that it is an indirect approach to both COIN and CT. From the initial assessment it was understood that the mission had to provide advice and assistance to our Philippine allies on both COIN and CT. A second point is that the U.S. military was not conducting COIN and CT but was advising and assisting the Armed Forces of the Philippines on their conduct of COIN and CT. This cannot be overlooked and leads to a statement that should be considered, namely that the United States military should not be conducting COIN because rarely if ever is the insurgency directed at the U.S. except under perhaps one condition. That condition would be if the U.S. is or appears to be an occupying power. One type of insurgency is by definition focused on ridding a land of an occupying power. If the U.S. is acting like an occupying power and feels the need to conduct U.S. led COIN operations then it is likely *a* major, if not *the*, cause of an insurgency. A problem that most U.S. forces have is that they are so focused on mission accomplishment they often lack the patience to let the host nation operate in accordance with its own capabilities as well as customs and traditions. Which brings the next key lesson.

OEF-P began with a detailed and thorough assessment of the situation from the national strategic to the tactical level done in partnership with Philippine counterparts. This resulted not only in understanding the character of the conflict in the Southern Philippines but understanding the Philippine strengths and weakness and customs and

traditions as well. This was also possible because of decades of engagement between U.S. SOF and the Philippine military. It also allowed for the development of a campaign plan that was jointly developed and approved and reinforced the U.S.-Philippine relationship that the Filipinos were in charge on the ground and the American forces were not.

While U.S. SOF provided training, advice and assistance they did not try to create a military in the U.S. image. It was tailored advice based on understanding the Philippine military as well as culture. Again, this reinforced that the U.S. was not in charge of operations. Although the American forces deliberately did not try to create the military in the U.S. image they did integrate some high tech capabilities into Philippine operations, particularly intelligence capabilities.

The Joint Special Operations Task Force –Philippines (JSOTF-P) had a unique mission statement that provides an overview of the entire mission and the foundation for operations.

*JSOTF-P, **in coordination with the US Country Team**, builds capacity and strengthens the Republic of the Philippines security forces to defeat selected terrorist organizations in order to protect RP and US citizens and interest from terrorist attack **while preserving RP sovereignty**.⁵*

There are three points to make about this mission statement. First, it uses plain language and no jargon or doctrinal terms. It should be understood by military and non-military alike. The second point is that the mission statement recognizes that JSOTF-P must be

⁵ Credit for this mission statement belongs to then-LTC Bill Medina who was a planner in the SOCPAC J5 in 2006 and later Chief of Staff, JSOTF-P, 2007.

integrated with the Country Team. There are tremendously effective relationships with USAID, the Pol-Mil section of the embassy, the military attaches, the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group, the legal attaché and the intelligence organizations. These relationships ensure integration and synchronization of activities and ensure that JSOTF-P supports the Ambassador's Mission Strategic Plan. Finally the last part emphasizes the critical importance of national sovereignty. Rarely does a mission statement contain such a statement and while the concept of preserving host nation sovereignty is understood to be important, having it explicitly stated in the mission statement reinforces that to every member of the organization.

Finally, JSOTF-P integrates and effectively employs not only joint special operations forces from all four services but also numerous regular forces as well from maintenance and logistics units, ground security forces, intelligence analysts and intercept capabilities, engineers, and medical personnel.

These are just a few of the lessons from OEF-P that will have future application; however, it should not be considered a model. Each security situation is unique and requires thorough assessment in order to craft the appropriate campaign plan to support the national strategy.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to look at the future of Irregular Warfare. The key to the future is having a force trained for certainty and educated for uncertainty. The three potential categories of threats should shape the force as well as the strategy. A new SOF, as well as a hybrid Corps, construct should be considered for dealing with the second category of threats to provide assistance to friends, partners, and allies when the status quo or regional stability is threatened.

An overlooked irregular threat is North Korea. It has the potential to be an extremely dangerous and complex threat and this requires that the ROK-U.S. alliance prepare for the threat now.

Finally there are many lessons to be learned from ongoing operations that will have application to the future operating environment. While this paper looked at U.S. operations in the Philippines there are many to learn from U.S. operations in Colombia, the Trans-Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The uncertain future demands an agile force that can fight and win the nation's wars and yet operate in other environments that may not require a large footprint and massive combat power. Finally, successful support to U.S. national security objectives in the future will be characterized by efficient and effective joint military and interagency operations executing strategy with balance and coherency among ends, ways, and means.

Enclosures:

“Foreign Internal Defense: An Indirect Approach to Counter-Insurgency/Counter Terrorism, Lessons from Operation Enduring Freedom- Philippines for dealing with Non-Existential Threats to the United States”

“Irregular Warfare on the Korean Peninsula Thoughts on Irregular Threats from North Korea - Post-Conflict and Post-Collapse: *Understanding Them to Counter Them*”

David S. Maxwell is the Associate Director of the Center for Security Studies and the Security Studies Program in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He is a 30 year veteran of the US Army recently retiring as a Special Forces Colonel with his final assignment serving on the military faculty teaching national security strategy at the National War College. He spent the majority of his military service overseas with nearly 25 years in Asia, primarily in Korea, Japan, and the Philippines leading organizations from the A-Team to the Joint Special Operations Task Force level. He has Masters of Military Arts and Science degrees from the US Army Command and General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies and a Master of Science degree in National Security Studies from the National War College of the National Defense University. He is the author of numerous works on Korea, Special Operations, Foreign Internal Defense, Unconventional Warfare and National Security Strategy. He is also pursuing a Doctorate of Liberal Studies degree at Georgetown. He and his family reside in Northern Virginia.