

Special Warfare

October - December 2012 | Volume 25 | Issue 4



**ARSOFF'S PERSISTENT PRESENCE
IN SOCSOUTH**



Cover Story

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**ARSOF in Colombia:
50 years of persistent
engagement**

Cover and Left: U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers train Colombian National Police Jungla Instructors in close-quarters combat.

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**U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY
SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL**

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Special Warfare welcomes submissions of scholarly, independent research from members of the armed forces, security policy-makers and -shapers, defense analysts, academic specialists and civilians from the United States and abroad.

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Submit graphics, tables and charts with source references in separate files from the manuscript (no embedded graphics). *Special Warfare* may accept high-resolution (300 dpi or greater) digital photos; be sure to include a caption and photographer's credit. Prints and 35 mm transparencies are also acceptable. Photos will be returned, if possible.

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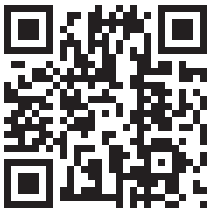
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FROM THE COMMANDANT



The United States Army Special Operations Forces have a unique and successful 50-year partnership with the forces of Colombia. That partnership is rooted here at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, whose former commander, Maj. Gen. William P. Yarborough, was key in developing early relationships between the militaries of the two countries.

Earlier this year, the *Special Warfare* team headed down to Colombia in support of our Special Operations Command-South edition. While there, the team spent time with key leaders in the U.S. Military Group, Colombia; members of the Advanced Operations Base; military trainers; other government agencies; and, Colombian military leaders.

What we found is that the partnership started more than 50 years ago is still strong. U.S. forces are working closely with the Colombian forces advising them in their ongoing fight against the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* and transnational criminal organizations that use the FARC as a means of running narcotics and weapons. Today, U.S. SOF is an integral part of the U.S. country team in Bogota, Colombia. SOF is fully integrated in all U.S. activities within the country from working with conventional forces to working with interagency partners like the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

It is the unique ability of SOF to work with our partner-nation forces and the interagency that has made it so successful in Colombia. What we have learned in our more than 50 years of partnership with the Colombians is that relationships matter. One of the greatest skills we teach our young officers and noncommissioned officers is how to build relationships with their partnered force. Those relationships are nurtured and strengthened through ongoing episodic training. The bonds are further strengthened as Soldiers who have formed friendships use social media to stay in contact and to strengthen their friendships with their partnered force.

Today, Colombian forces are leading the fight, with our Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Special Forces Soldiers standing alongside them. This long-term, persistent presence has brought a stabilizing presence to Colombia, which continues to spread in the U.S. Special Operations Command-South area of responsibility.

While in-country, our team also had the opportunity to watch the annual Forces Commando Competition, which brings the top special-operations teams from throughout the western hemisphere together for a grueling test to determine the best of the best. Additionally, this event builds camaraderie and esprit de corps between the competitors. It is this brotherhood that has been, and will continue to be, fostered and developed by U.S. Army SOF as they work through and with our partner nations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Reeder".

Major General Edward M. Reeder Jr.



Green Berets Awarded Distinguished Service Cross for Valor

Two Green Berets from 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in a ceremony held at the John F. Kennedy Auditorium June 12.

CWO Jason W. Myers and Staff Sgt. Corey M. Calkins received the U.S. Army's second highest award for valor for two separate missions in Afghanistan in 2010. The Distinguished Service Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor.

"I am extremely honored and humbled to receive this award," said Calkins, a senior weapons sergeant and native of Midland, Mich. "I was just the one called on that day but I know any other guy on my team would have done the same thing."

Calkins distinguished himself on Feb. 18, 2010 as part of a dismounted patrol consisting of U.S. Army, Marines and Afghan National Army soldiers. During this patrol, Calkins faced a formidable enemy force in fortified positions. Facing this threat, he assaulted his way through the area successfully suppressing the enemy force allowing the safe evacuation of three injured Marines.

"Corey Calkins constantly exposed himself to effective rocket-propelled grenades, machine gun fire and mortar fire as he almost single-handedly routed the entrenched Taliban to regain vital terrain and to save the lives of his fellow Americans and Afghan partners," said Adm. William H. McRaven, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

During the ceremony, vignettes were presented describing the actions of Myers and Calkins. McRaven referenced the vignette when describing Calkins' ability to rally troops to action.

"The ANA, spurred on by Calkins' undaunted drive toward the enemy, hurled themselves against the enemy in an apparent effort to match their mentor's bravery and aggression," said McRaven. "Undaunted drive...that says it all."

Only two months after Calkins' valorous actions Myers distinguished himself along a single-lane road in the mountains of Afghanistan on March 27, when his patrol was ambushed by an enemy force of approximately 75 to 100 insurgents. During this ambush, Myers took command of the situation by directing movement, returning fire and providing medical aid all while exposing himself to enemy machine guns and RPGs.

"There are so many heroes on my team and I am just so honored to be here," said Myers. "I just did what needed to be done and I know that anyone else would have done the same."

"Chief Myers did what no normal man would do," said McRaven. "Chief Myers did what only a very small percentage of soldiers in the history of the U.S. Army have done — he fought his way out of a deadly ambush by constantly exposing himself to RPG and PKM fire and rallying his force, saving the lives of his Afghan and American partners and then taking the fight to the enemy until victory was assured."

McRaven put into perspective the actions of both Myers and Calkins and what it means to be a Green Beret.

"The Green Beret isn't just a piece of headgear; it is a symbol of all that is good and right about America. It represents the finest Soldiers ever to take the battlefield. Jason Myers and Corey Calkins represent all that is good about the men who wear the green beret," said McRaven. — *by Staff Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASFC (A) Public Affairs Office.*

Correction In the July-September 2012 issue of *Special Warfare*, we incorrectly listed the unit of Cpt. Joseph W. Schultz on our memorial page. Cpt. Schultz served in 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne).

USASOC Welcomes New Senior Enlisted Soldier

The United States Army Special Operations Command welcomed a new senior-enlisted Soldier during a change of responsibility ceremony at Meadows Field on June 14.

Command Sgt. Maj. George A. Bequer assumed responsibility of USASOC from Command Sgt. Maj. Parry L. Baer. Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland Jr., presided over the ceremony.

"It has been my privilege to not only serve in the United States Army for the past 35 years, but also in the ranks serving next to what I consider are the true heroes of this force and this nation," Baer said. "(Command Sgt. Maj. Bequer) you are the right person to come in and follow behind me and continue to lead the enlisted force into the future."

Bequer comes to USASOC after serving as the command sergeant major of Special Operations Command Central since 2009.

He has served in Special Forces for the last 28 years, the majority of which was with the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C. Bequer also served as the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan command sergeant major.

"A man will make three choices in his life: who he marries, if he will have children and what calling he will pick," Bequer said. "If you've decided to be a Soldier in the United States Army and wear a beret, if you've decided to be a Soldier in the United States Army and serve in the USASOC family, then you have made a phenomenal choice. I am honored to have been selected as the new sergeant major, and I am honored to be allowed to serve you as new command sergeant major."

Baer, the USASOC command sergeant major since December 2007, is retiring after more than 34 years of military service. — *by Staff Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASFC (A) Public Affairs Office.*



TOP DOG Command Sgt. Maj. George Bequer assumes responsibility of U.S. Army Special Operations Command. USASOC Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Noggie

New Commander Takes Control of the SOAC

The U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command held its first change-of-command ceremony June 13 when Maj. Gen. Kevin W. Mangum relinquished command to Col. Clayton M. Hutmacher.

Mangum was the first commanding general of the SOAC, which was provisionally activated in March 2011.

"This has been a great adventure starting a command and establishing a headquarters from scratch," said Mangum. "We have labored to build the right form and function, the correct organization and process, to build the U.S. Army Special Operations Command aviation enterprise and orchestrate all things aviation for the command."

Lt. Gen. John Mulholland Jr., the USASOC commanding general at the time, presided over the ceremony on Meadows Field at the USASOC headquarters.

In a separate ceremony prior to the change of command, Mangum was presented the Gold Order of St. Michael, which recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to the promotion of Army aviation. Out of more than 8,000 recipients of the Order of St. Michael, Mangum is only the 110th to receive the Gold Award. Retired Lt. Gen. Daniel Petrosky, Army Aviation Association of America president, presented the award.

Hutmacher assumes command following an assignment as assistant commanding general for Special Operations Forces Mobility, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission, Afghanistan. Hutmacher returns to Army Special Operations Aviation after spending three previous tours with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne).

His last assignment was as the 160th SOAR (A) regimental commander, where four years ago he was also passed the guidon by outgoing regimental commander Mangum.

"Amy and I are following a splendid command team following the Mangums, and I will continue the exceptional work of Maj. Gen. Mangum in ensuring the long-term health and relevance of the ARSOA enterprise," remarked Hutmacher. "The establishment of the USA-SOAC is a significant milestone and we are excited and humbled to have the opportunity to serve with ARSOA Soldiers, civilians and family members again." — *USASOC News Service.*

USASOC welcomes new Commanding General

Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland, Jr. relinquished command of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command to Lt. Gen. Charles T. Cleveland during a change of command ceremony on Fort Bragg's Meadows Field on July 24.

Gen. Raymond Odierno, the 38th U.S. Army Chief of Staff, officiated the ceremony and passed the unit colors from Mulholland to Cleveland symbolizing the transfer of authority.

"Shakespeare himself would have found it hard to describe and articulate how great it is to be around these men and women every day. They are our nation's greatest treasure...who seek nothing more than the opportunity to do it again," said Mulholland speaking to hundreds of families, friends, and distinguished guests including North Carolina Gov. Beverly Perdue.

Mulholland continued by thanking the Soldiers in formation for a job well done and reiterating that no leader is successful on his own; it is because of the people with whom they work.

"Here is the simple truth, I have had the incredible honor and privilege to command the world's finest special-operations force," he said.

Adm. William H. McRaven, commanding general of the U.S. Special Operations Command had words of motivation and admiration for both Mulholland and Cleveland.

"It is my honor to be here today to watch the passing of the colors from one great special-operations officer to another," said McRaven. "The Soldiers who are standing in the formation today

represent the very best of what John Mulholland and USASOC have given our nation."

"They are Soldiers of legend — the Green Berets, the Rangers, the Night Stalkers, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations — all volunteers, many three times over," he said. "The Soldiers before me are as brave as they are effective. Albert Einstein once said the world is a dangerous place to live. Not because of the people who are evil but because of the people who would do nothing about it. I can guarantee you that there are not spectators, no on-lookers within these formations. They are doing something about the evil in this world."

Following his tenure at USASOC, Mulholland will take the position of deputy commanding general of USSOCOM at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.

Cleveland also assured Mulholland and everyone in attendance that he is up for the challenge and would do his very best to continue on the legacy of the command.

"I commit myself and the command ensuring that we continue the progress of the past decade of making the application of Army special operations and our conventional forces seamless," said Cleveland. "USASOC will do its part to finish the fight, support the special-operation forces operational commands and commit to preserving the warfighting strength of this magnificent force."

"Soldiers and civilians of USASOC, be proud of who you are, what you do and who you do it with. You are without equal," he said.



IN COMMAND Gen. Raymond Odierno, the 38th U.S. Army Chief of Staff, passes the unit colors to Lt. Gen. Charles T. Cleveland during the USASOC Change of Command Ceremony. Photo by Staff Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASFC(A), Public Affairs.

"Special-operations forces have never been better and their role never more central to the success of our ongoing campaigns in Afghanistan and around the globe," said Cleveland. "I am honored to be here and I am sure glad to get started." — by Staff Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASFC(A) Public Affairs.

USASFC receives new Commanding General

Brig. Gen. Christopher K. Haas assumed command of the U.S. Special Forces Command on Aug. 15 during a change of command ceremony on Fort Bragg's Meadows Field. Haas is replacing Maj. Gen. Edward M. Reeder, Jr.

Lt. Gen. Charles T. Cleveland, commanding general of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, was the officiating officer for the ceremony and passed the unit colors from Reeder to Haas symbolizing the transfer of authority.

"The Soldiers before you represent a unique capability in America's arsenal and hold a special place in her defense. No other force has the unconventional-warfare mission. No other force has the agility and expertise to operate on a global scale with teams spread literally around the world," said Cleveland speaking to hundreds of families, friends, and distinguished guests among whom were Afghan dignitaries, the Honorable Qayum Karzi, elder brother to the president of Afghanistan, Senator Ehsan Bayat, member of the Meshrano Jirga, the upper house of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, Mr. Amin Ramin, managing director of

Afghan Wireless Communications and Director Edward J. McCallum, director of the Counter Terrorism Technical Support Office.

"It is truly amazing what they do," said Cleveland. "Maj. Gen. Ed Reeder has commanded this magnificent formation with distinction. He was hard, fair and fiercely loyal to his regiment. For all that, I think what stands out about Ed's command tour was the care and support he gave to the families of our fallen and wounded. His sincerity, compassion and dedication to their welfare are exemplary and inspired us all."

Reeder thanked the men of the regiment for their service and for the opportunity to be their commander.

"I take this moment to honor you, the troops of this great regiment; those who represent a name, a persona and a reputation that is feared by America's foes and adored, respected and welcomed by her allies. The U.S. Army Special Forces Green Berets continue to represent a symbol of excellence, a badge of courage and a mark of distinction in the fight for freedom," he said. "I can't even begin to tell you how much of an honor it was to command and

serve this great regiment. It was an honor to command the world's premier unconventional-warfare fighting force that prides themselves on their abilities to fight and win in the most complex and demanding environments," said Reeder.

Cleveland also had words of motivation and admiration for Haas as he takes on the challenges of his new command position.

"The colors were passed to another great Special Forces commander. Brig. Gen. Chris Haas has successfully completed a year in command of Afghanistan's Combined Forces Special Operations Command," he said. "No officer is better prepared to take the reins from Reeder than Haas. He is a warrior, leader and a man of courage and conviction."

Haas thanked Cleveland for the opportunity and reiterated how proud he was to be the commander of the regiment.

"It is an honor once again to serve in your ranks," said Haas.

Reeder assumed command of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. — by Staff Sgt. Marcus Butler, USASFC(A) Public Affairs.

Reeder assumes command of the Special Warfare Center and School

One day after relinquishing command of the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne), Maj. Gen. Edward M. Reeder, Jr. assumed command of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in an outdoor ceremony Aug. 16 on Fort Bragg, N.C.

Reeder has led U.S. Army special-operations Soldiers as commander of USASFC(A) at Fort Bragg and the Combined Forces Special Operations Command in Afghanistan. In those assignments, he said he couldn't have been more satisfied with the quality of the Soldiers selected, trained and educated by SWCS for his operational units.

With SWCS now under his leadership, that quality will not be compromised, Reeder pledged to the Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Military Information Support Operations commanders attending the ceremony.

"Army special-operations forces are asked to work deep in enemy territories, in small numbers, without overwhelming firepower, under the most difficult of conditions," Reeder said. "The weapons they use are their imaginations, guts and extensive experience."

"That education starts right here at the U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence," Reeder said, referencing a recent designation granted to SWCS by the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter Chiarelli.

SWCS, the arm of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command responsible for qualification, language and advanced training courses as well as special-operations doctrine and management, maintains its headquarters and many classroom courses at Fort Bragg, with field training units at Camp Mackall in Hoffman, N.C., and various advanced-skill courses across the country, such as combat-diver training in Key West, Fla., and military free-fall training in Yuma, Ariz.

The command's outgoing leader, Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick, introduced Reeder as a brother, a mentor and the finest officer he'd ever known. Sacolick, who spent two years commanding SWCS and served as its deputy commanding general before that, will report to the U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Fla., to serve as its director of force management and development.

"We're a great country because we're a smart country," Sacolick said during the ceremony. "We have, indisputably, the finest universities on our planet because our country places great value in our collective intellects. Why should our military be any different?"

"For our force to succeed, we must produce special operators who are highly trained in warrior skills, but more importantly properly educated," Sacolick said. Under his command, SWCS officially established the Special Warfare Education Group (Airborne) to emphasize education as a foundation to special-operations Soldiers' career-long development.

"We educate our special operators to work with indigenous people in a culturally attuned manner that allows us to bridge language barriers, open lines of communication and connect with key political and military leaders in a way that is both immediate and lasting," Sacolick said. "When we invest in the minds of our Soldiers, we're rewarded with an ever-increasing return. Our mission at [SWCS] is to build a well-educated, character-based special operator."

Lt. Gen. Charles T. Cleveland, commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, handed the SWCS colors from Sacolick to Reeder during the ceremony. In his official remarks, Cleveland said Reeder and his wife, Adrian, were the perfect command team to pick up at SWCS where the Sacolicks left off.



TAKING REIGN Maj. Gen. Edward M. Reeder, Jr. assumes command of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

"[Reeder's] currency in combat as well as his experience in special-warfare campaigning, the blending of [military information-support operations] and Civil Affairs capabilities, building surrogate operations, intelligence activities, will be especially helpful in his work to create the special-warfare operator of tomorrow," Cleveland said.

Cleveland also noted that he, Reeder and Sacolick shared a common background.

"I know of no other SWCS or USASFC(A) change of command where all three officers served together as captains in the same battalion at the same time," Cleveland said. "Third Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in the mid-1980s appears to have been a good place to grow up." — *by Dave Chace, SWCS Public Affairs Office.*

Brown Takes Command of 95th Civil Affairs Brigade

Col. James J. Wolff relinquished control of the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) to Col. James F. Brown on June 22 on Meadows Field, Fort Bragg, N.C.

The brigade welcomes back Brown, who served as the brigade's deputy commanding officer from May 2009 to June 2010. Brown most recently served as commander of the Civil Affairs advisory and assistance team to Gen. John R. Allen, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Wolff's new assignment will take him to Afghanistan to fill a key CA billet.

Wolff led the brigade as it added a fifth battalion last October, while also increasing the brigade's strength by another five companies, spread across its four other battalions. Wolff also supported the establishment of second active duty CA brigade at Fort

Hood, Texas, and improved the recruiting and training of Civil Affairs Soldiers and officers at Fort Bragg.

Under Wolff's direction, the brigade also improved its financial- and personnel-management systems and safety program, resulting in major Army and U.S. Army Special Operations Command awards.

Ceremony host Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland Jr., then-USASOC commanding general, praised Wolff's leadership of the brigade for the past two years.

"You cannot go anywhere in the world that is important to the United States of America and not find an Army special-operations Soldier," Mulholland said. "In many cases, it's going to be a Civil Affairs Soldier or a CA team."

"Our CA teams operate in complex, dangerous and ambiguous environments. I'm amazed on a daily

basis by their ability to plan and conduct operations that assist U.S. ambassadors in achieving our nation's foreign policy objectives while supporting the TSOC [Theater Special Operations Command] commander's intermediate military objectives," Wolff noted in his final remarks to the troops. "The accolades from ambassadors and supported commanders are now routine. And the recognition from partner-nation militaries continues to grow."

"This day is not about me. As Jay stated, it's about the accomplishments of the Soldiers who stand before you and those who have gone before them," Brown said. "I look forward to working closely and enabling these commanders to continue this tradition of excellence in support of USASOC and our nation's priorities." — *USASOC News Service.*



Security, Defense and Policy Course Offers SOF Warriors Unique Opportunity

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 MARK ROLAND

Special-operations forces are geographically oriented; language-qualified and possess deep cultural understanding. This capability to communicate effectively, understand cultural nuances and form lasting relationships is what enables us to accomplish our mission. The goal of every special-operations soldier is to understand and be understood in the language of our strategic partners, in situations from simple conversations to complex joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational interactions. Conversing with, and listening to the perspectives of our neighboring nations, provides valuable understanding that cannot be gained elsewhere.

The opportunity to listen and learn from the civilian and military leaders of our regional partners before we are working together operationally is rare. To do so in their native language — Spanish — is even more valuable. In May, I was afforded the opportunity to attend an event that provided world-class education in defense and security strategy, language immersion and interaction with military and civilian leadership from more than 26 countries in Central and South America.

This gathering was not held in a faraway place like Colombia or Chile, but rather at the National Defense University's Center of Hemispheric Defense Studies. The Security, Defense and Policy course is conducted in Washington, D.C.

The CHDS is part of a Department of Defense initiative to assist nations with the development of more effective leadership and to strengthen relationships between senior civilian leadership and senior defense and military leaders. As a benefit of the spread of democracy, many nations have civilian leaders exercising constitutional authority over defense activities. These civilians often have limited understanding of military activities. Likewise, there are military professionals who have spent a lifetime understanding their services, but who have not had the opportunity to appreciate the challenges of forming defense policy. CHDS provides a venue to spread multinational defense ideas between these civilian and military leaders.

The CHDS is part of several other courses, all conducted by NDU that help bridge the gap between civilian and military leadership in the major geographic regions of the world. The courses are aligned with their respective geographic areas, and include many classes and seminars that relate to civilian and defense leadership challenges. Military attendance is funded and scheduled through the U.S. Special Operations Command J7-9. The academically

stringent courses all build from a baseline of the Security, Defense and Policy course.

Course attendees must speak Spanish at a master's level. If an attendee is not a native speaker, he is vetted telephonically before acceptance. The course requires attendees to be master's-level educated or the professional equivalent within their field, as all work will be evaluated within the NDU's strict standards of performance. The participation is limited to 25 percent military and police involvement, to allow civilian leaders to understand policy challenges and effects and to let military and police leaders learn about the many challenges policy makers face.

Special-operations forces understand that tactical decisions can have strategic implications. Our operators are selected, trained and prepared to interact with our partner-nation forces in a culturally attuned manner. The CHDS course offers a unique learning environment where a tactical-level operator can directly interface with the civilian executive leadership and senior defense officials who will make the decision to invite Army special operations forces to assist in their nation's security and defense efforts.

Language is a fundamental aspect of the ARSOF warrior's intrinsic skills. Being able to speak in a foreign language is not the end state, it is the bridge to being able to understand others and build relationships. The CHDS courses enable ARSOF Soldiers to develop lifelong professional relationships. To secure that bond, NDU supports a dedicated alumni association, publishes a newsletter and hosts an online forum for communication.

While ARSOF Soldiers benefit from this program, the leaders who have oversight and decision authority to invite or expand ARSOF missions in their country also have the rare opportunity to speak with an ARSOF operator, learn what ARSOF can and cannot do for their country and see for themselves the quality interactions that can come from ARSOF assistance with their security and defense issues. Simple conversations, which result in understanding, can alleviate many misconceptions. CHDS provides a venue to spread multinational defense ideas between these civilian and military leaders.

Understanding others, how they see the world and learning the challenges they face from their point of view is the cultural understanding aspect of the ARSOF line of work. It is critical to not only understand problems from the United States perspective, but from the regional perspective of the partner nation. This is often hard to ascertain, as individuals are hesitant to voice their concerns publicly among multina-

tional company. The course design provides the optimal environment for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

The course is conducted with several key lectures by well-respected and experienced professors, many of whom who have held key positions of leadership like minister of defense or heads of military service. These lectures, and the associated assigned reading, are the topics of the day and bring home the main point. Following the lectures, students break into small-group sessions for discussions. This is where true communication and understanding begins.

The class of approximately 65 attendees is broken up into four small groups. These small groups are facilitated by a professor and allow very detailed discussion of the main topics of the day to be conducted. Each day as the group shares its perspective and opinions, the understanding of these issues is expanded.

To encourage open interaction, the course is conducted as a non-attributable learning environment. It is understood by all that they are not making policy statements or entering into agreements for their respective entities or countries. Any statement made or opinion expressed is considered the speakers own, and not to be charged to their position, entity or country. This is an opportunity that has never been afforded to many of the high-level attendees present. With a group of educated, concerned leaders frankly discussing the issues they face, many walls can be broken down in a very short time. Sitting and listening to the perspectives of the senior leadership from countries such as Venezuela, Paraguay, or Mexico was an opportunity to understand their perspective, and their issues, which would never be possible without the personal interaction of the small group environment.

The Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies Course offers the ARSOF community an unparalleled opportunity to conduct language-immersion training, profoundly advanced cultural and regional understanding and provides a professional defense-policy education all in one setting. It is an extremely challenging and rewarding experience that enables special-operations Soldiers to put into action and enhance the skills that make us uniquely capable to achieve the nation's strategic special-warfare objectives. **For more information on the course, visit the website at www.ndu.edu/chds.**

CWO2 Roland is a native of State College, Pennsylvania. He has worked in the 7th SFG(A), where he conducted numerous missions to South America in support of Counter Narco Terrorism missions and ongoing security assistance operations to nations throughout the region. Mr. Roland graduated from the Security and Defense Policy course from the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies in March of 2012. He is currently assigned to the USAJFKSWCS, CDID, SF Directorate, where he works as a doctrine developer/writer on projects such as FM 3-18 (SF Operations) and the Detachment Mission Planning Guide.



SOF Logisticians: Bridging The Gap

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3
ALEX M. OCASIO

Today's Department of Defense operations are more structured as joint operations than ever before. This structure is most evident in the U.S. Special Operations Command, which relies on the joint services to maximize the DoD special-operations capability. Therefore, systematic gaps exist between service-specific systems. One example can be found in Afghanistan where special-operations forces operate predominately in an Army-ground environment, yet are represented by Army, Navy and Marine organizations. This situation requires Marine and Navy logistics personnel to interface with standard Army Logistics Information Systems, which unfortunately results in a training gap at the tactical level.

In an Army-centric logistics environment, joint-force logisticians are facing the challenge of bridging the gap of service-specific logistics systems. More importantly, without Army-specific logistics-support personnel, our sister services may not be as effective as they could be in accomplishing mission requirements. In response, the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) recently developed a new training program for Marine and Navy personnel to help better integrate their logistics organizations into the Army-based logistics environment in Afghanistan.

Our joint services play a significant role in, and are key components in, current operations in the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan. While operating as a part of the CJSOTF-A in a special-operations task force capacity, the joint services are responsible for supporting the war efforts in their commands' area of responsibility. The commands are not only responsible for the tactical efforts, but are also responsible and challenged to provide the logistics support for assigned forces. Understanding that the Marine and Navy logistics support systems are completely different from that of the Army's has been a challenge for them.

In an effort to bridge this gap, the need for both a pre-deployment training program and in-theater assistance program has been identified and developed. These training programs provide our joint-forces opportunity, experience, insight and assistance required to understand the Army LIS, as well as supply functions, policies and procedures.

In the vastness of the logistics arena, the commanders intend to narrow the focus of training to those areas which provide the most value to mission support. The focus is also in areas that generate the largest margin of failures due to the lack of training for personnel. The intent of the training will address the issue of personnel not possessing a general technical knowledge of the necessary systems required for interacting with the supported supply support activity. These critical LISs are the primary means of re-supplying forces and ensuring that the forces' equipment remains in an operationally ready status at all times. These LISs functional areas include the Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced and the Standard Army Maintenance Systems Enhanced. The PBUSE and SAMS-E functional areas are the most necessary systems for our joint-forces to achieve the highest level of technical proficiency, maintain a fully mission capable equipment status and sustain their forces in Afghanistan.

With this in mind, the 528th SB commander, Col. Thomas Rogers, and Naval Special Warfare 4 commander, Cmdr. Job Price worked together to

Sister Services seeking pre-deployment Logistics Information Systems Support Training should contact the following:

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develop the best way-ahead to prepare the NSW 4 personnel for their upcoming deployment. As a result of this collaboration, a two-phased pre-deployment training program and in-theater assistance support program was developed. The pre-deployment phase consists of three segments, which include a LIS-training course, a logistics-support workshop and practical training with logistics personnel.

The first of the three segments for Phase I is a 40-hour LIS-training course supported by the United States Army Special Operations Command G4, Sustainment Automation Support Management Office. The LIS training course provides training on SAMS-E, and on all levels of PBUSE. These systems are the primary means to create, submit and track requisitions in support of organizational supply and equipment requirements, manage their maintenance programs and manage accountability requirements of the organization's property.

Segment II is a half-day workshop supported by senior logisticians from the 528th SB. The workshop includes logistic training on some research enablers including the Logistics Information Warehouse, Army Integrated Logistics Analysis Program and the Radio Frequency In-Transit Visibility Portal. Also covered are Department of the Army forms, Department of the Army publications, interactions with the SSA and SSA/unit reconciliation processes and procedures. The workshop culminates in an open-forum discussion on Army logistics systems, procedures and functions.

Culminating Phase I is the practical-training segment. Based on the type of LIS training and functional area the trainees received during segment one, the attendees are either aligned with the motor-pool, supply room or PBO. If the trainee received SAMS-E training, he is aligned with maintenance personnel, if he received PBUSE supply-room-level he is aligned with supply-room personnel, and if he received PBUSE PBO-level he is aligned with PBO personnel. The intent of the two-day practical training event is to familiarize trainees on the daily operational requirements of the systems. This training provides those hands-on experiences with LIS and the focused functional area. Phase II is the in-theater support program. Phase II was conceptualized to assist, integrate and complete the pre-deployment training program to ensure support personnel able to start the deployment with the proper data and settings.

The in-theater support will bring the pre-deployment training phase full circle by providing an initial theater entry support team, which will integrate the joint forces at the beginning of their deployment on Army logistics systems, processes and procedures. This in-theater support team is comprised of 528th SB (SO) (A) personnel specializing on the three LIS and functional areas the joint forces personnel trained on during the pre-deployment phase. The projected duration for Phase II is two weeks; one week prior to and one week after the command's transfer of authority takes place. However, based on scheduling the first iteration of Phase II is not projected to take place until later this year. Several sections have completed Phase I of this plan with positive and successful results. The joint forces are very receptive and are looking forward to the additional support from the 528th SB while deployed.

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CIVIL AFFAIRS

Civil Affairs (USAR) Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

A/3/1st SWTG(A) piloted new teaching styles in its recent Civil Affairs Advanced Individual Training course in accordance with the U.S. Army 2015 teaching philosophy and 2020 CA strategy. Course instructors collaborated with the CA training developers and revised the course schedule to include more cadre-to-student mentorship and guidance. This resulted in increased missions during field training and the introduction of additional practical exercises during the academic portion of the course to enhance critical thinking and adaptability. Future revisions of the course will include 20 additional warrior tasks added to the Warrior Task and Battle Drill week, additional land navigation training exercises, more in-depth drivers training, and introduction of world religions to the course. The cadre is developing more challenging training reflecting the 2020 CA strategy, which focuses on training students to be better diplomats in the joint environment. Developing concepts include more physically demanding events (ruck marches and obstacle course), supplementary area-study development, reading and writing assignments on current operations and an overall increase in interactive teaching styles during the academic portion of the course.

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Psychological Operations Qualification Course

This past quarter, 5th BN, 1st SWTG(A) conducted its second Interagency Planning Exercise in Hoffman, N.C., to train Military Information Support Teams in support of foreign internal defense and public diplomacy. The IAPX began by conducting mission analysis utilizing information from mission strategic plans, non-governmental organization open-source analysis and through interaction with multiple State Department officers. The exercise continued with briefings with a U.S. Ambassador's office involved in the plan as the students began to develop the mission concept brief. The IAPX concluded with a MICON brief to the ambassador's office, after incorporating advice from State Department officers involved. The course cadre has worked to build a lasting relationship between the United States Army Psychological Operations Qualification Course and the FSI community, to secure diverse interagency personnel and instructors for the U.S. PSYOP Officer Qualification Course. This week-long exercise trains students to accomplish their individual critical tasks and operate as a member of a team while conducting select collective tasks with the culmination piece being a briefing of their mission-support program as a coordinated and synched effort in line with the country team goals and ground combatant commanders/theater special-operations command objectives given to a U.S. Ambassador.

5th Battalion cadre attended the Verbal Defense and Influence course in London, Ohio, to prepare for this iteration of the POQC. The training is designed to teach PSYOP Soldiers to conduct essential human interaction effectively and safely. Students will be required to demonstrate their ability to master interpersonal skills, display self-confidence in dealing with others, effectively respond using communication skills and maintain mental and emotional safety — all while simultaneously de-escalating combative or hostile environments and deciding what follow on actions to take.

SOF Logisticians *continued from page 09*

This grass-roots initiative to educate the force is producing results. Since the inception of the program in December 2011, the 528th SB has sponsored five iterations of pre-deployment training with a combined total of 30 trainees from Marine Special Operation Command 82-2 and NSW 4. By providing better trained logisticians who are able to transition with less difficulty to an Army-based logistics structure, this effort is bridging the gap for our joint services projected to support the CJSOTF-A mission.

CW 3 Alex M. Ocasio is a supply systems technician (920B), currently serving as the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) S4. Previously, he served with the Group Support Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), 782nd Brigade Support Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division and the 61st Maintenance Company, 498th Corps Support Battalion. CW3 Ocasio has four deployments, one to Jordan and three to Afghanistan.

SPECIAL FORCES

18A Course Language Integration

The 18A Course recently expanded the Cultural Adaptive Response Training field-training exercise to include three new scenarios featuring language-capable role players for French, Russian and Spanish, in addition to the previous Arabic-speaking scenarios. Later in the course during the Unconventional Warfare Pilot Team FTX, students meet resistance elements from the diverse ethnic populations of Pineland with language interaction in Arabic, Chinese, Pashtu and Spanish. Practical exercises augmented with language are still focused on the primary outcomes of the respective modules. Students with the target language will exhaust their language capability before transitioning to English to meet the primary training objectives.

ARSOF

Detachment Leader's Course (DLC)

We continue to expand the scope of participation in the ARSOF Detachment Leader's Course as 25 Warrant Officer Tactical and Technical Course graduates participated in the May course. The next iteration of the ARSOF Detachment Leader's Course took 27 students to the interagency education week in the National Capitol Region. The DLC is working hard with its interagency partners to secure additional facilities and briefing opportunities to ensure all students receive the maximum possible benefit from this experience.

Survival Resistance Evasion and Escape (SERE)

The SERE course has undergone a significant change recently with the implementation of a new scenario which is separate from the "Pineland" scenario that serves as the framework for the rest of the SF Qualification Course. This allows for a more understandable situation and chain of events by which the students conduct the exercise. It also allows the non-SFQC students attending SERE, who are not familiar with the Pineland scenario not to be at a disadvantage to the SFQC students.

In addition, SERE continues to provide training opportunities to other organizations. The SERE committee routinely supports both 18A and Robin Sage, conducting a captivity exercise in those courses. SERE also provided survival training to 40 members of the SWCS Support Battalion. Similar support to other units, including in the operational force, is scheduled for the weeks ahead, and will also occur, as schedules permit, for other requesting committees within training group.



JOINT EFFORT Partner-nation special-operations forces and a National Police K-9 team conduct vehicle-interdiction training in Honduras. *U.S. Army photo*

OEF-CCA: IRREGULAR APPLICATIONS FOR USSOF EFFORTS

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHAWN SATTERFIELD

Operation Enduring Freedom-Caribbean, Central America is a U.S. regional military operation initiated in 2008, under the operational control of Special Operations Command-South. SOCSOUTH is the theater special-operations command for U.S. Southern Command. While OEF-CCA has a focus on counterterrorism, it also supports US-SOUTHCOM's military objectives and is a regional part of the larger fight against terrorism.

Special Forces operational detachment-alfas, Naval Special Warfare task elements, Navy special-boat teams, civil-military support elements, military-information support teams as well as U.S. Army general-purpose forces Civil Affairs teams and U.S. Navy's maritime CA teams are assigned as persistent tactical units in support of OEF-CCA. Additionally, elements from U.S. Air Force's 6th Special Operations Squadron and the U.S. Army's 3rd Battalion 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment conduct episodic deployments in support of OEF-CCA. While deployed into the area of operations, these units are under the tactical command and control of a Special Forces operational detachment-bravo, which is deployed to Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, as an advanced operational base. The AOB is responsible to the commander, SOCSOUTH for all assigned U.S. special-operations forces and supporting general-purpose forces in the Central American countries of Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

After a decade of asymmetrical conflict, SOF are well poised to implement creative solutions to affect the geographic combatant commander's military objectives and to support the U.S. country teams. OEF-CCA provides a SOF construct to highlight examples of creative solutions in today's contemporary operating environment.

Unique distributed command and control, utilizing ways within a partner-nation's means to achieve realistic ends, breaking training-engagement paradigms and utilizing reachback support were among the tools AOB 2230 (C Company, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne)) leveraged to achieve success during a recent OEF-CCA deployment.

SOCSOUTH exercises control of deployed SOF through a unique DC2. In CENTAM, an SFODB is deployed as an AOB, referred to as AOB CENTAM, headquartered at SCAB. SCAB is a Honduran-owned air base that hosts SOUTHCOM's Joint Task Force-Bravo. While the AOB deploys with its organic complement of personnel and equipment, it is unique in several aspects: all SOF and GPF operational control to SOCSOUTH is under tactical control of AOB CENTAM while deployed into the AOR. On occasion, the deployed SOF or GPF element commanders were at the rank of O5, but were under the C2 of the AOB commander, an O4. Additionally, while there is no doctrine for a joint AOB, AOB 2230 exercised command and control of not only U.S. Army elements but also sister-service elements with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy. Up to 15 subordinate elements were attached to AOB 2230 during its simultaneous deployment in up to five countries. In essence, AOB 2230 became a miniature joint special-operations task force and needed to understand joint culture and language and how to plan for employment of CATs, MISTs NSWTEs for campaigning in CENTAM, while exercising effective command and control.

Additionally, AOB 2230 was assigned an enhanced enabler with two more planned enablers for future AOBs to better facilitate its ability to perform at the operational level. A civil-military operations planner was assigned to the AOB and was integrated into the staff. The assignment of a CMO planner, who was a GPF O5, to the AOB was a new initiative which occurred during AOB 2230's deployment. The CMO planner focused at the operational level and was responsible for developing a regional CMO plan, nesting the regional AOB CMO plan within the U.S. country teams, SOUTHCOM component commands and JTF-B. Additionally, the CMO planner assisted the subordinate CAT commanders implementing measures of performance and measures of effects, again synchronizing these effects with a regional approach throughout CENTAM. The CMO planner ties the operational level into the strategic level, working with the SOCSOUTH J37 as well as advising the AOB commander on all CMO aspects. SOCSOUTH in-

tends to ask for an information operations planner to be incorporated into future AOB staff, in order to create more capable DC2 nodes. Lastly 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) agreed to provide a strategic debriefer who will be assigned to the AOB during the next rotation. This asset will be able to conduct debriefings of subordinate elements upon their return from activities in key areas of interest. This will better answer the AOB's priority intelligence requirement and assist with future decision points regarding area of interest adjustments and force protection. SOCSOUTH is also considering requesting a NSW planner to be assigned to the AOB, which will allow improved synchronization of land and maritime regional planning.

One of the challenges AOB 2230 faced was synchronizing lines of operations with the individual U.S. country teams. Each CENTAM country and U.S. country team faces unique challenges. AOB 2230 also realized that often members of a country team did not fully understand the capabilities that the AOB brought to the table. In order to better support the country team, the AOB assigned liaisons to the country teams in those countries that had a persistent SOF presence.

The commander of SOCSOUTH provided guidance to more utilize the 'ops-intel' capabilities of Special Forces intelligence sergeants more commonly known as 18Fs. As a result, 18Fs and SF operations officers,

“After a decade of asymmetrical conflict, SOF are well poised to implement creative solutions to affect the geographic combatant commander’s military objectives and to support the U.S. country teams.”

known as 180As, from the SFODAs were assigned the additional duty as U.S. country team LNOs with instructions to integrate with the tactical analysis team, sourced by Joint Inter-Agency Task Force- South. This relationship grew throughout the deployment and provided a significant return on SOF investment in the AOR. In order to facilitate integration between the 18Fs, 180As and the country team, the AOB and SFODAs needed to build rapport, trust and confidence with the country team. As an Army National Guard unit, AOB 2230 was well suited for this task. AOB 2230 and its SFODAs leveraged its organic member's civilian occupations to build this rapport. Many members' civilian occupations are with U.S. government agencies and state and local law enforcement. This background helped the team members build almost instant rapport with many members of the country teams. In many instances, the AOB/ SFODA LNO's civilian agency was the same agency assigned to the country team. This resulted in the AOB/ SFODA LNO being welcomed and in some cases offered a seat at the regular country team meetings with the U.S. ambassador. Ultimately, the 18Fs were used to assist with intelligence analysis and were the conduit for reachback support to the AOB and SOCSOUTH while the 180As kept the country team advised of all AOB activity. The LNOs had the freedom of maneuver to meet with the country team and spend time with the SFODAs at the training-engagement locations. This allowed the LNOs the ability to provide the country team ground truth and atmospheric throughout the particular country. The end result was a fluid nesting of the AOBs lines of operations with the country team's goals fully utilizing the 18Fs' capabilities.

One of the benefits after a decade of experience in conflict with an asymmetric enemy is the ability of tactical SOF leaders to apply critical thinking to solve complex problems. The AOB provided guidance to the subordinate elements to develop ways, within the partner-nation's existing means; to achieve both the U.S. government's and partner-nation's ends. The subordinate units were challenged to develop bottom up solutions without additional investment of U.S. assets or expenditures. This approach of achieving ends, which are self sustaining by the partner nation, supported the goal of working ourselves out of a job. Some of these ways are highlighted in the following examples.

One of the SFODAs, on a persistent training mission, recognized their partner-nation SOF counterparts were only utilized occasionally on high-value target operations. The target deck for HVT operations was limited and this unit only conducted these operations a handful of times throughout the year. Through their LNO to the country team, the SFODA identified a national police unit that was actioning interdiction and medium-level targets on a weekly basis. This police unit stood to benefit from training with its own military SOF — the partner unit of the SFODA. The SOF partner unit had previously not utilized its instructor abilities outside of the unit. The SFODA, with the country team, encouraged and facilitated the

partnered SOF unit to provide tactical instruction to the police unit. The SFODA assisted its partner unit in developing a program of instruction and mentored the instructors. This greatly enhanced the PN SOF unit's instructor capability, while enhancing the police unit's tactical capacity. The result was quality tactical courses of instruction conducted by the PN SOF unit for the police unit on a recurring basis. The additional benefit was integration and close-working relationship engendered between the police and military units, which was previously lacking in SOF connecting of dots.

In another case, an SFODA recognized its host-nation's statutory authorities allowed its maritime partnered SOF unit to conduct illicit-trafficking interdiction operations without police, since they had inherent arrest authority. However, much of the intelligence necessary for such law-enforcement operations, as well as the technical expertise required to obtain criminal convictions of illicit trafficking suspects resides with the national police. The SFODA began developing a POI, which included interoperability training with a counternarcotics national-police unit. At the onset of this training, the maritime partner SOF unit successfully conducted two significant illicit-trafficking interdictions. This led the SFODA, again through their LNO with the country team, to develop an interagency task-force concept for consideration by the PN and U.S. country team, comprised of a SOF national-police element and a military air-support wing. This concept was further developed with the US country team, with the SFODA remaining in the background when they formally presented it to the partner-nation ministers of defense and public security. The country

team took ownership of the concept and the SFODA moved into an advisory role. This concept was subsequently adopted by the partner nation, and at the time of this writing, was in an initial implementation phase. This concept is now being briefed to other country teams as a model to consider. What the SFODA conceived at the tactical level produced an operational, even strategic effect.

One of the MIST elements assigned to AOB CENTAM developed products for an airborne leaflet drop to support a land-domain partner-nation SOF unit. This particular SOF unit did not have organic assigned fixed-wing aircraft, however a sister maritime unit did. The land domain unit and maritime unit had not previously collaborated, although they shared geographic areas of responsibility.

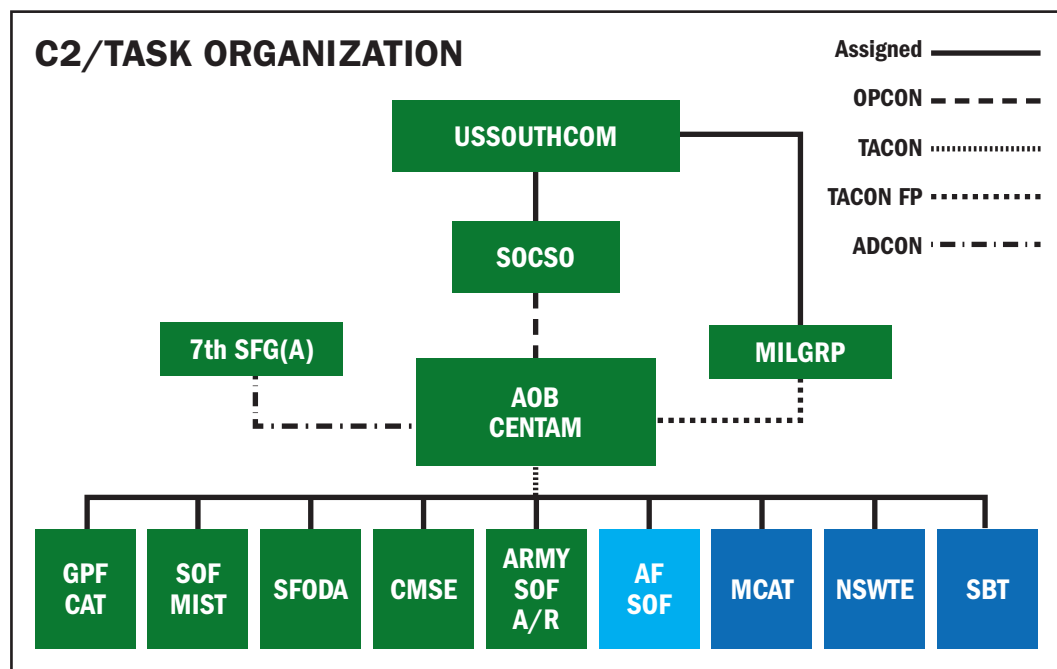
The MIST commander facilitated meetings between the two units resulting not only in utilization of the fixed-wing aircraft to support the leaflet drop. The meeting also had the effect of initiating enduring collaboration between the two units. By using creative thinking, SOF often influences positive cultural change to break longstanding institutionalized biases against cooperation by simply creating pathways for improvement.

Another MIST element decided to break from the normal process and develop partner-nation IO capability as it conducted product development. Previously, an information product was developed by the MIST, who would then seek country-team and partner-nation approval prior to release. This particular MIST elected rather to facilitate the partner-nation development of products by conducting a subject-matter expert exchange with the partner-nation public affairs sections. During this exchange, the MIST presented its methodology and then mentored the partner-nation in drafting of its own IO products. Not only was the partner nation, who has the best perspective given it's their country, lead in product development, but also in developing a structure and process for use in the future without the assistance of a MIST. Ultimately this was a significant step in the U.S. military again, working itself out of a job.

In another country, a CAT multiplied the effect of its efforts by integrating non-governmental organizations with its partner-nation's CA program. The CAT was limited in the amount of area it could geographically affect, but by enlisting non-governmental organizations to collaborate with the partner nation, a much larger area was positively affected by CMOs.

During the course of AOB 2230's rotation, it strove to increase the efficiency of its capacity building and direct support (IO, CMO, etc.) by focusing on effects. This moved away from old, simple, comfortable paradigms through several methods, some of which are closely linked to developing 'ways' within the partner nation's 'means' to accomplish 'ends'.

The AOB received guidance from SOCSOUTH regarding the establishment of a reconnaissance capacity in one of the CENTAM



AOB CENTAM While deployed into the area of operations, units are under the tactical command and control of a Special Forces operational detachment-bravo.

SOF units. This guidance was based on dialogue with the country team and the fact this particular country was the leading recipient of illicit air-trafficking. The intent was to establish a national level RECCE capability to directly support law-enforcement efforts. While there was some initial RECCE capability with this SOF unit, it was in need of improvement and the task organization of the unit did not allow for a dedicated RECCE capability. The SFODA was tasked to build this capability within the current SOF unit's capacity. Previous SFODA's training engagements with this partnered unit revolved around assisting them conduct a commando course, which was conducted by the unit for all military services. The SFODA convinced the unit's leadership of the utility of a dedicated RECCE detachment, and concentrated its training on this detachment in lieu of assisting with the conduct of commando courses for their GPFs. The SFODA was successful in influencing the unit's leadership and was allowed to build a specific task organization and training POI for a national-level RECCE. The SFODA concentrated the majority of its deployment time on this effort.

Upon completion of the RECCE POI, and one day prior to the RECCE detachment's graduation, the partner-nation unit conducted an HVT operation. Despite being awake for the previous 48 hours on the course's final field-training exercise, the RECCE students conducted infiltration to hide sites and established eyes on target, to provide current information on the target. The unit actioned the target as the RECCE transitioned into a blocking force and detained numerous squirts. This operation was one of the most successful operations to date for this unit, and the leadership directly attributed its success to the RECCE detachment. Currently this RECCE detachment is being utilized on a regular basis.

SFODAs and NSWTEs that were conducting training engagements at the same time, in the same country, partnered to conduct culmination exercises between navy and army elements. Previously, SFODAs and NSWTEs had not conducted partner-nation joint-training



BUSTED Partner Nation SOF, National Police and DEA Advisors conduct training in vehicle, board, search and seizure. DoD photo

exercises together. These CULEXs served to develop joint planning, at the operational level. Thorough after-action reviews of these CULEXs have led to partner nations addressing communication and planning shortfalls and increased partner-nation joint-operating capability.

Prior to conducting a series of FTXs, one SFODA coordinated with the country team to determine best locations to conduct the FTX. The intent was to determine where the presence of the partner-nation's forces would have operational-shaping effects or result in disruption of illicit trafficking. The series of FTXs were conducted in general areas known as illicit-trafficking movement corridors. The presence of the partner-nation's forces in itself was a disrupting effect. This shaping-effect FTX is being evaluated as a model in the AOR.

A final paradigm shift the AOB recommended to SOCSOUTH was to conduct training engagements in conjunction with the GPF, by front loading episodic USSOF training engagements with mobile training teams from U.S. Army South or U.S. Marine Forces South. Often an SFODA or NSWTE will arrive to conduct training with a host-nation SOF unit, only to find their weapons in a state of disrepair and the soldiers lacking in basic marksmanship skills. By synchronizing GPF- and SOF-training engagements they become mutually supporting of SOUTCHOMs military objectives. Both USARSO and MARFORSOUTH have the capability to conduct armorer course MTTs can repair many small-arms shortcomings as well as small-unit tactics MTTs. If these MTTs are conducted immediately preceding the arrival of SOF, trainers can bring the partner-nation SOF to a higher level than would otherwise be possible. Instead of focusing the first few weeks on weapons repair and zeroing weapons, SOF can develop higher-level skill sets while increasing the overall efficiency of the training engagement. Currently the SOCSOUTH staff is working with USARSO and MARFORSOUTH to schedule such MTTs conducted by GPFs in conjunction with USSOF follow-on training.

Another challenge AOB 2230 faced was a lack of depth to adequately provide C2, plan regionally and synchronize subordinate elements across seven countries. While expected to perform as a miniature JSOTE, the AOB needed to increase the depth of its 18-person staff, in order to work at the operational level. To fill staff-

ing gaps, AOB 2230 utilized reach-back support from CONUS units, SOCSOUTH J2, force-provider S2s, and other government organizations to assist in intelligence and analytical support.

When partner-nation SOF elements conducted sensitive-site exploitation, they may share, as authorized, information with their partnered SOF units, who in turn pass the raw information to the AOB S2 section. The AOB would forward such information to the SOCSOUTH Joint Intelligence Support Element to analyze and process for sharing with other agencies. The AOB/SFODA LNOs to the country team would also receive this intelligence and provide products directly to country teams. An additional service AOB 2230 utilized

was with the 98th Civil Affairs Battalion cultural analysis database. This, combined with support through SOCSOUTH from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, provided a human terrain, social/ cultural analysis for AOIs. This process was initiated by AOB 2230 and at the time of this writing is still in development. The intent is to have an analytical product to assist CMO and MISO in focusing and planning at the micro-node level in their AOIs. As previously mentioned, AOB 2230 also requested a strategic debriefer to assist with managing information obtained from personnel as they returned from civil reconnaissance and medical civic-action missions. 7th SFG(A) agreed to provide a strategic debriefer, who is scheduled to deploy with AOB 2230's replacement AOB. These initiatives, in concert with SOCSOUTH staff efforts, will better focus the AOB's CMO and MISO efforts.

While there is no defining tactical level playbook or doctrine for AOB CENTAM, USSOF tactical elements are well poised, trained and experienced to implement creative solutions to affect the GCC's military objectives and to support the country teams. The level of training and experience, after a decade of conflict with an asymmetrical enemy in the Global War on Terrorism, has led to an unprecedented level of SOF capability and performance. By arming these units with a clear understanding of the commander's intent and granting them the latitude and freedom of maneuver to innovate, they will continue to achieve unparalleled success in today's contemporary operating environment. **SW**



comment here

Lt. Col. Shawn Satterfield served on an ODA for 12 years in 12th, 10th and 20th SFGs. His ODA command time includes JCETS in SOUTHCOM, support for Operation Joint Guardian, and OEF-A. Satterfield's staff time includes the Andean Ridge Regional Engagement branch chief and J33 for SOCSOUTH. Satterfield has deployed as an AOB commander in support of OEF-A and OEF-CCA. Lt. Col. Satterfield's civilian occupation is a Missouri State Trooper where he is an assistant director of the criminal division.



AHEAD OF THE GUNS

SOF IN CENTRAL AMERICA

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT M. KIRILA

“This nation expects to have forces that can respond to the sound of guns with speed and skill and discipline whenever and wherever they are needed. This nation also expects to have forces who can operate with knowledge and wisdom well ahead of the guns in order to prevent violence from erupting.”

— Admiral Eric T. Olson

Introduction

Fifty-two days after returning from Afghanistan, the men of Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) deployed to the Central American region of the U.S. Southern Command. What they quickly realized was that the perspectives and methods of fighting a network and influence-oriented enemy in combat had significant parallels to the permissive, non-combat conditions found in Central America.

Central America exists as the land bridge between North and South America. It consists of 9 to 10 countries depending on where one draws regional lines. All of these countries share a common language, a 500 to 600 year common history, and *mas o menos* (more or less) a common culture. Politically, however, the previous 100 years shaped them in different ways. In that time, the United States has been the greatest political, economic and military influence in the region, creating a population that vacillates between attraction and aversion. Today, the region is generally pro-American and the environment is best characterized as permissive for U.S. interests and citizens.

That is not to say that threats to the U.S. national and regional interests do not exist. In fact, a clear and present danger does exist in our own hemisphere.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate how a single Special Forces advanced operations base changed a paradigm of simultaneous but tactically and perhaps even operationally uncoordinated U.S. government activities in Central America to a coordinated and wittingly networked and multinational campaign that aligned joint, interagency and combined forces from every country in Central America. The joint force has the ability to respond to the ever-increasing influence of transnational criminal organizations, the new specter of radical Is-

lamic growth in the western hemisphere and the emergent humanitarian crises, which are analogical outgrowths of corrupt or inept governments and their disenfranchised people. Advanced Operations Base Caribbean and Central America acted as the strategic bridge in Central America by being the omnipresent knowledge broker who had access and credibility with decision makers in every U.S. Embassy, the U.S. Special Operations Command and host-nation senior military and/or public officials.

Setting

While the focus and might of the United States military remains on the Middle Eastern conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and elsewhere, a small contingent of special-operations forces have been quietly involved in assisting and developing greater security much closer to home.

The Monroe Doctrine. Nearly 200 years ago, President James Monroe declared a policy whereby the United States would look upon interference in the Western hemisphere as acts of aggression requiring the U.S. to intervene. At the time, this policy though somewhat unenforceable, was largely greeted with positive response in the region.

As recently as 60 years ago, President John F. Kennedy reiterated the efficacy and relevancy of the Monroe Doctrine at an Aug. 29, 1962 news conference:

“The Monroe Doctrine means what it has meant since President Monroe and John Quincy Adams enunciated it, and that is that we would oppose a foreign power extending its power to the Western Hemisphere, and that is why we oppose what is happening in Cuba today. That is why we have cut off our trade. That is why we worked in other ways to isolate the communist menace in Cuba. That is why we will continue to give a good deal of our effort and attention to it.”



MULTINATIONAL BOOM Panama City is the capital and largest city in Panama and is an important hub for international banking and commerce. In recent years Panama's economy has experienced an economic boom giving it the fastest growing economy in Central America. *Wiki Creative Commons photo*

Threat

Despite an alarming lack of media coverage, the gravity of the security situation in Mexico and its regional neighbors is significant. In each of the past two years, there have been more violent deaths and more weapons recovered in Mexico than any other place on earth. The rise of TCOs and their resultant impact upon the governments throughout Central America and South America have created another threat to stability in the region.

The principal and most urgent threat to the United States is the drug trade and its generation of a 1,000 mile area of an unstable population on the southern border of the United States. Drug trafficking, once dominated by Colombian cartels, is now dominated by Mexican criminal organizations like Los Zetas and the Sinaloa and Gulf cartels. In fact, the Mexican cartels have expanded the business model to become the major players in cocaine trafficking worldwide, with operations in Europe, Africa and Asia. This expansion has generated massive amounts of profit and firmly establishes these cartels as illicit multinational corporations that are run by intelligent and ruthless chief executives. These super-empowered non-state actors compete and collaborate globally.

Cocaine and other major narcotics are moved from South American regions through Central America and the Caribbean and onward to the United States and Europe. Mexican cartels have taken advantage of the high state of corruption or low level of competency that exists in many of the local, regional and sometimes national-level governments throughout Central America.

In El Salvador and Honduras, murder rates are amongst the highest in the world. Transparency International, a nongovernmental organization and sponsor of a global-corruption index, evaluates the level of corruption in Honduras and Nicaragua in the bottom third of the global population alongside such notables as Pakistan, the Philippines and Uganda. Guatemala might be worse than them all. Correspondent to this low rule-of-law indicator, the Latin American gangs that originated in El Salvador are on the rise again. This time; however, the gangs have gone international and extend from Canada into Colombia. It is a logical construct that these gangs will establish ties or amalgamate their activities into the more organized and resourced drug-trafficking organizations operating in legal and pseudo-legal status in every nation in Central America.

The Growing Multinationalism in Central America

Globalism has affected the nations of Central America in many ways but perhaps the most significant is the growing multinationalism.

Twenty years ago the populations in most of the Central American countries were static and composed primarily of people of the same historical lineage and presence in the country.

Today there are large and growing populations of Chinese, Lebanese and Indian people living in every nation in Central America. Categorically, each of these demographics represents a significantly different culture, linguistic route and world view. Chinese and Lebanese banks can be seen in every major city and mosques have achieved even greater penetration reaching out into the countryside. There are now stores and service providers who speak no Spanish and cater only to the parochial interest of their national clientele. Competition and dischord amongst these new groups and historically resident groups has lead to widespread frustration and distrust.

Illicit activities historically germinate and flourish in the environmental conditions found throughout Central America. Organizations like Hezbollah and Los Zetas all enjoy overlapping constituencies in places like Panama, Belize, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Guatemala. Although not yet explicitly witnessed it is that significant concern that this competition remains steady and evolves and by extension provides opportunities for nontraditional actors like al-Qaeda and its affiliates access to elicit transportation and financial infrastructure established by drug-trafficking organizations.

The observed nexus between demographically diverse populations, drug-trafficking organizations, low rule-of-law and the physical and financial infrastructure they establish and the violent-extremist organizations strategic aims in the region present a clear and present danger to the sovereign government's regional stability and national security of the United States.

It is in this geo-political situation that the U.S. military and interagency partners find themselves. This article presents examples of how U.S. joint SOF under the command and control of Advanced Operating Base Caribbean and Central America in coordination with agency partners, are effectively achieving U.S. national-security objectives.

Task Organization

The theater special-operations command for U.S. Southern Command is SOCSOUTH, which is responsible for planning and executing mission command for Operation Enduring Freedom-Caribbean/Central America. AOB-CENTAM is located in Soto Cano, Honduras, a base Special Forces have been operating out of for the past 30 years. Today, AOB-CENTAM operates alongside Joint Task Force Bravo and commands and controls SOF in nearly every country in Central America, from Guatemala to Panama.

AOB-CENTAM has evolved over the years into a joint special-operations organization consisting of Special Forces operational detachments, military information support teams, a civil-military support element, Air Force Special Operations Intra-Theater Airlift, 160th Special Operations Aviation, Navy special-warfare elements including a SEAL platoon, special boat teams, Naval small craft instruction and technical training elements and Air Force Special Operations Squadron Elements. All of the elements are deliberately assigned to locations throughout Central America in support of the theater-engagement strategy of the commander, United States Southern Command. AOB-CENTAM maintains coordination authority with seven country teams, JTF-Bravo, Joint Interagency Task Force South, the 407th Military Intelligence Battalion

OEFC-CCA is accurately described as joint, in that USSOF military elements and other government entities participate. It can also be characterized as interagency as a result of the involvement of the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Agency for International Development and SOUTHCOM Military Groups in planning, coordinating, and/or executing. Finally host-nation diplomatic, military and other agencies all directly or indirectly participate. This plan, set into action by multiple agencies constitutes the interweaving of a series of long-term activities and operations that clearly exceed the objectives of individual engagements or even annual plans. AOB-CENTAM accomplishes this interweaving of agendas and objectives by personally meeting with, coordinating, synchronizing and demonstrating the achievements of the disparate objectives to local, national and regional policy makers.

Building Capability and Capacity

The commander's stated objective of building capability in Central America is broadly defined as developing partner-nation units capable of independent, combined or multinational-networked operations. Building capabilities and capacity with and through PN forces is the logical and positive outcome of USSOF foreign-internal defense

“A military campaign is a term applied to a large-scale, long-duration, significant military-strategy plan incorporating a series of interrelated military operations or battles forming a distinct part of a larger conflict often called a war.”

and various other U.S. governmental agencies that support U.S. objectives. In some of the U.S. Embassies, a special-operations liaison package is embedded to provide information and synchronize the diverse efforts.

Regardless of organization, all of the elements manifest the underlying philosophy that at its heart reflects the long historical record of Special Forces in Central America. Through and with ... is the simple, but elegant, statement that frames every mission in CCA.

Mission

AOB-CENTAM commands and controls and synchronizes USSOF in Central America alongside partner-nation military and paramilitary forces to disrupt terrorist activities thereby protecting the southern border of the United States from penetration. The OEFC-CCA strategy emphasizes a combined counterterrorist training approach whose purpose is to build capabilities amongst our PN forces. The key to success for our forces is tied to how effectively we are able to work through and with the host-nation security forces of the region. The lines of operation for all of the elements under the mission command of AOB-CENTAM are: build capability and capacity, build influence and counter transnational threats.

While it may be doctrinally incorrect to describe AOB-CENTAM's efforts in Central America as campaigning, a review of the characteristics of campaign development yields a slightly different conclusion.

A military campaign is a term applied to a large-scale, long-duration, significant military-strategy plan incorporating a series of interrelated military operations or battles forming a distinct part of a larger conflict often called a war.

activities. FID is one of seven ARSOF core tasks and involves training, equipping, advising and assisting. The unique skills organic to SOF elements described contribute to the development of PN capabilities with a long-term objective of a PN capability to conduct unilateral operations against threats to national or regional security.

FID in Central America is funded using either joint-exchange for training or counternarcotics mission authorities as directed by the commander, SOUTHCOM. The two missions are similar in the sense that the U.S. Special Operations Command deploys in support of the theater-security cooperation plan to train with PN forces. However, JCETs and CNTs differ in operational authority. JCET authorities only sanction USSOF to train with PN forces to enhance USSOF capabilities. CNT authorities provide the deploying USSOF element the ability to train, advise and assist PN forces on tactical threats affecting the region or country's internal security. The strategic implications of the advise and assist role requires USSOF to fully understand the theater, regional and country-team strategies in order to ensure that its advisory role remains operationally focused within the boundaries defined by the geographic combatant commander's engagement plan.

The current operational deployments vary dependent upon the PN capability, the country-team capacity and regional needs and priorities. Most CNT operations in CENTAM are deployed as a persistent presence, or every day of the year. SOF are usually able to aid the country teams by identifying PN shortfalls in domains such as operations, logistics, communications and leadership. The country teams in turn use Foreign Military Funding and other resources to assist in the provision of material solutions to PN operational short-

comings. Because so many of the Central American governments cannot compete financially with the local or regional illicit narcotraf-fickers, foreign aid or assistance subsidizes their efforts.

The priority for building capability also results in episodic engagements or short-term operational deployments. Building a specific capability to counter a clearly defined or emerging threat becomes the operational focus of these missions. The deploying elements conclude these deployments by assessing the capability of the unit they are training with because the AOB has a responsibility for notifying the SOCSOUTH commander when persistent or episodic engagements have culminated. Team, detachment and AOB assessments are now based on the operational capability of the unit in contrast to the assessment of the comprehension and ability to employ the training or capability received. This is a critical difference and requires constant reinforcement by the AOB commander.

Finally the AOB commander is responsible for making recommendations on future force employment and PN force identification to reach long-term regional security objectives. Special operators as a result of their living and working relationships with the PN forces are perfectly situated to identify individuals and units for future USSOF partnerships. The very same operators are also responsible for objectively analyzing and assessing unit operational parameters and collaborating with the PN special operations leadership to develop a long-term focused capability plan. Sometimes this process, or lack thereof, is indicative of a unit unable or unwilling to commit to the achievement of those objectives deemed critical to the SOCSOUTH strategy.

“ARSOF, by design, can be a strategic-bridging force where our people instinctively and creatively look to build relationships and connect capabilities across domains and paradigms.” — Lt. Gen. John Mulholland

Building Influence

The multinational nature of the most significant regional threat in Central America defines the focus of AOB-CENTAM. Synchronizing USSOF with other U.S. governmental agencies becomes a central mission for the AOB commander and his staff. The Department of Defense’s role is to build the capability of PN forces to detect, deter and disrupt the illicit networks in breadth and depth along the Pan American Land Bridge. The capability building effort is not specifically restricted to PN military. In many countries, USSOF trains anti-drug units, police and other internal security forces.

The build-influence line of operations is comprised of three categories: Educate and actively liaise with all elements of the U.S. country teams, find commonality of security objectives and positively influence key leaders and policy makers in the region. The method for achieving these objectives require aggressive and persistent information sharing.

Educate and Actively Liaise. One of the first activities the AOB conducted was a regional tour in which key leaders and subordinate bureaucrats in U.S. embassies and PN senior military leaders were provided a joint SOF capabilities briefing. These briefings served the dual purpose of educating those who could influence USSOF operations but also demonstrated a desire by the PN military to collaborate and share information. These face-to-face-meetings demonstrated the competencies of USSOF and enabled them to seize the initiative in building influence in the various departments and echelons of bureaucracy within every embassy and PN defense organization. In two instances, AOB liaison elements in embassies were established to maintain the connective tissue so important to information sharing and collaboration. This was not universally required because many of the U.S. Embassies in

Central America have former special operators serving as civilians and foreign area officers within the country team. The underlying message in all of our efforts in CENTAM was efficiencies gained by a synchronized pursuit of our national objectives.

Finding Commonality. Critical to finding commonality with key leaders was the demonstration of our understanding of their objectives and concerns, whether diplomatic, economic, defense or informational. AOB-CENTAM leadership specifically planned during pre-mission training activities to influence senior leaders by studying and internalizing such policy guidelines as exist within the National Defense Strategy, the Global Force Management Plan, the Southern Command and SOCSOUTH strategy the individual ambassador’s mission strategic resource plan and the respective military group commander’s long-range objectives. The effort, though exhaustive, proved to be invaluable time and time again as our AOB commander or his representative was able to interrelate with senior U.S. and PN officials due to his understanding of their stated objectives.

Demonstrating Value. Another fundamental objective of building influence is to demonstrate value. ARSOF must be capable of providing ground combatant commanders, ambassadors and PN senior civilian and military leadership with a full range of options otherwise unavailable that will assist in achieving the desired effects across geographic expanses, political affiliations or fiscal constraints. AOB-CENTAM demonstrates value to the U.S. Government and PN senior leadership alike by developing the legitimacy of the units with which it is associated. This is a significant undertaking where corruption and low rule-of-law apply so broadly. USSOF deliver legitimacy by developing competency and subsequent credibility of PN security forces in the eyes of the local and national population.

The integration of CMSE, MIST and public affairs teams whose message is synchronized with U.S. and PN themes is another effective method to demonstrate value and positively influence decision makers. Collaborative planning ensured USSOF operations paralleled the country team’s internal information operations and mutually enhanced already established themes and trans-regional messages. SOF enablers focused on enhancing the image of the PN through institutional building projects, PN-run community medical programs and published articles highlighting the PN’s recent operational accomplishments.

Counter Transnational Threats

One of the principles of National Defense Strategy over the past 11 years has been countering transnational threats. USSOF contribute and assist in this pursuit by advising and assisting PN forces in the disruption and deterrence of special-interest aliens and or drug-trafficking organizations by providing accurate, timely and insightful reporting to SOCSOUTH, JIATF-South and the Military Groups. As knowledge brokers, USSOF can collaborate with other intelligence disciplines in the development of assessments and forecasts as well as passively collect information as it pertains to the daily activities and people with whom they interact. As advisers, USSOF bring new technical skills and experiences gained from operating against networked combatants in places like Afghanistan.

Deterrence, or the threat of punishment to an individual or organization, is pursued in two main categories. Direct deterrence involves the direct physical and legal presence at the local, regional and international levels. In many of the countries of Central America, this deterrence is supported mainly through the legal and paramilitary arms of government. AOB-CENTAM had little direct involvement in

this avenue. Indirectly, however, AOB-CENTAM contributed to the professionalism of the federal security forces throughout the region on a persistent basis. The limiting factor in this effort is the inability of many of these countries' small security forces to absorb long-term training opportunities.

Disruption, or the interruption of illicit transportation infrastructure, is pursued by two general categories. USSOF contribute to the local and regional disruption of SIAs largely through their persistent engagement with all of the counter-drug agencies and national military organizations responsible for interdicting illicit actors and organizations.

Concurrent to SOF operations the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard and PN naval assets are interdicting the flow of SIA trafficking. JIATF-South plays a key role in providing information and intelligence in order to optimize geographically and logistically constrained resources.

Astride the land bridge, the DEA in coordination and conjunction with PN counter-drug, counter-terrorist or police forces are interdicting land-based routes that support and SIA trafficking. JTF-Bravo contributes with its aerial capabilities, transporting PN forces and provides direct-mission support.

Persistent engagement and coordination with JIATF-South has resulted in operational intelligence that the AOB became proficient in developing in a coordinated manner, weaving authorities and PN capabilities together to achieve results not previously possible. Physically being on the ground in every country in the region and sharing "eyes and ears" atmospherics with all of the key military and civilian leaders garners credibility and influence with SOUTHCOM, SOCSOUTH and the ambassadors. The military groups are another important part of the AOB regional-engagement plan. Typically commanded by O6-level officers, these organizations work for the ambassador and represent SOUTHCOM interests. Repetitive and close interpersonal coordination by the AOB commander with the military group commanders enabled USSOF to more effectively achieve SOCSOUTH regional objectives and connect the individual country's action plan and mission-strategic resource plan with regional-security objectives.

This influence is notable because AOB CENTAM has very little actual authority to make all these actions and activities occur. Instead, previous performance, initiative and creative problem solving by AOB and SFODA leadership led to occupation of a leadership role that was dependent upon its ability to coordinate multiple agendas, requirements and personalities. Whether acting as an adviser to the commander of JTF-Bravo, educating and training U.S. Embassy staffs in every country, helping the JIATF staff tighten their operational understanding of the international trade dynamics or hosting Congressional delegations and highlighting the capabilities and shortcomings



SYNCHRONIZED EFFORT An operations officer with Special Operations Command-South, briefs military officials from nine countries at the start of a joint exercise. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea

of the existing partner-nation governments and their correspondent security forces, the AOB commander and his small staff wielded significant influence in the region.

Summary & Conclusion

The Special Forces AOB, as a mission-command element, is the decisive element of special operations in Central America. As the commander of SOF operations, he has become the nexus of the informal connective tissue that links U.S. national and regional objectives with PN goals and military and paramilitary capabilities. As a knowledge broker, he provides senior military and political leadership with the ground truth few others can provide. This is especially true in contingency operations where his forces are agile and purposefully built organizations that can act more quickly than any other U.S. government element in the region. This is exactly the function that Lt. Gen. John F. Mulholland referred to in his "ARSOF 2018" article as the strategic bridge that connects simultaneous, but disparate efforts, across multiple domains and disciplines. As has been demonstrated countless times in successive decades, a small group of intelligent and creative Special Forces officers and noncommissioned officers developed and executed a multinational plan that far exceeded the size and scope of their limited task organization and operational authorities. They did this the old-fashioned Special Forces way, by building credibility through demonstration of value, via perseverance, rapport building, information sharing and persistent presence on the ground advising and assisting. **SW**

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21 COUNTRIES



CHILE



BRAZIL



2012 FUERZAS COMANDO

One hundred and sixty-eight of the best soldiers in the western hemisphere gathered in Colombia in May to compete in *Fuerzas Comando 2012*.

The soldiers, representing 21 countries, competed for the title of the best of the best among the special-operations and counter-terrorist forces in the region. The competition, which spanned the course of two weeks, and included a physical-fitness event, rifle and pistol qualifications, distance and FBI "T" shoot, sniper stalk, road march, critical tasks, snaps and movers, a field shoot, obstacle course, combined assault, aquatic event, stress tests

and night shoots. There was also a multinational airborne operation on the last day.

"The focus of these competitions is to test the abilities of special forces soldiers. The participants will be tested on things like marksmanship and physical fitness, which are an important part of the training for any special forces soldier," said Colombian Lt. Col. Juan Carlos Vargas Carvajal, operations officer for the Colombian Joint Special Forces Command and officer-in-charge of the *Fuerzas Comando 2012* events.

"After eight days of competition, the participants are physically exhausted," said Maj. Juan Carlos Blanco of the Colombian

Army. "This event really puts to the test the competitors' physical and mental condition."

For Colombian Defense Minister Jaun Carlos Pinzon, whose country not only hosted but also won the competition, it was about so much more.

"I would like to dedicate these games to all who have fallen while conducting their duties," said Pinzon, while addressing the competitors. "We wish them peace in their tombs."

The games were conducted at Fort Tolima, Colombia, the home of the Colombian Special Forces Commandos.

"It's truly exciting to be here in the field of green Tolima, which represents the

URUGUAY



CANADA



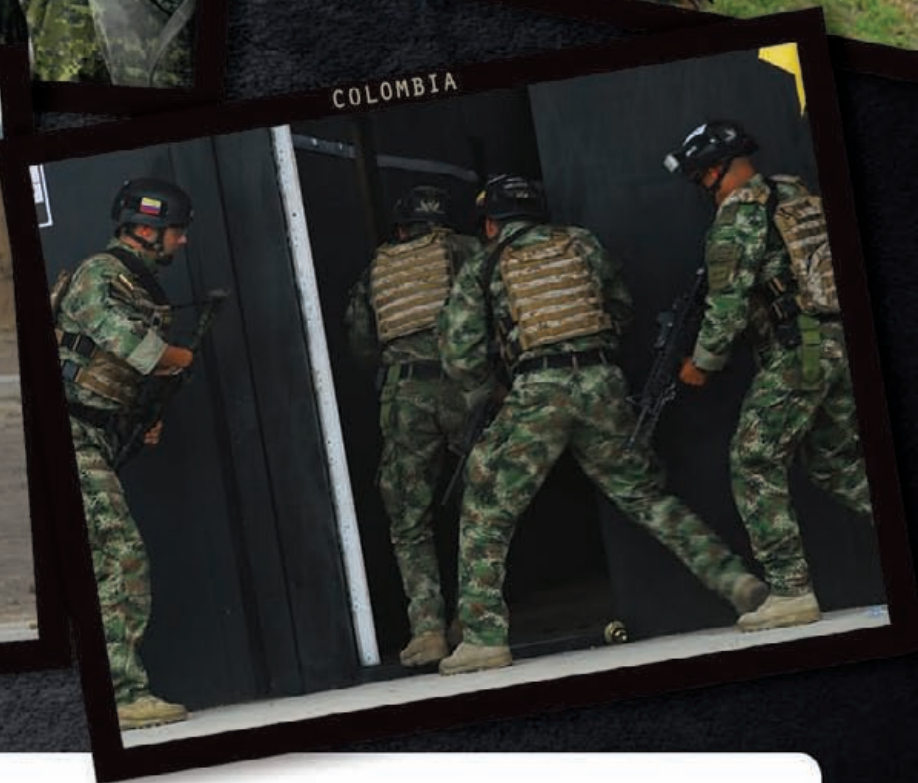
EL SALVADOR



HONDURAS



COLOMBIA



sacred temple of education. It is here the best have been trained," said Pinzon. "These games foster the warrior spirit, build on the relationships that have already been established, as well as giving us a chance to work with and learn from each other."

He added that it was significant that the elite units competing represent some "of the most prepared, capable forces in all the countries," noting that the games are one way that relationships are built among the forces.

"Regional/multinational partnerships are formed from mutual trust and the level of comradeship between these partners and

with those who make an effort to sacrifice for their country," continued Pinzon. "Above the spirit of the competition, more important than the spirit of competition, is that many of our countries are facing threats from criminals who do not know borders. States have borders, criminals don't. So it is necessary to work as a team, to form a brotherhood, a comradeship between the men and women who protect citizens from these criminals. We have to know each other so that we can operate as an integrated force."

The defense minister added that it was because of relationships like those built

through interaction in events like the *Fuerzas Comando*, that his country has moved forward.

"Our Army is an ambassador of our country to the world," he said. "They train our friends and they give their blood and their lives in support of our country. We have made progress in Colombia. We can talk about a future of honor. We can imagine our country when peace arrives because of what happens here." **SW** *comment here*



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PANAMA



PERU



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



GUATEMALA



UNITED STATES



ECUADOR

JAMAICA



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



GUYANA



MEXICO



BAHAMAS



BELIZE



COSTA RICA



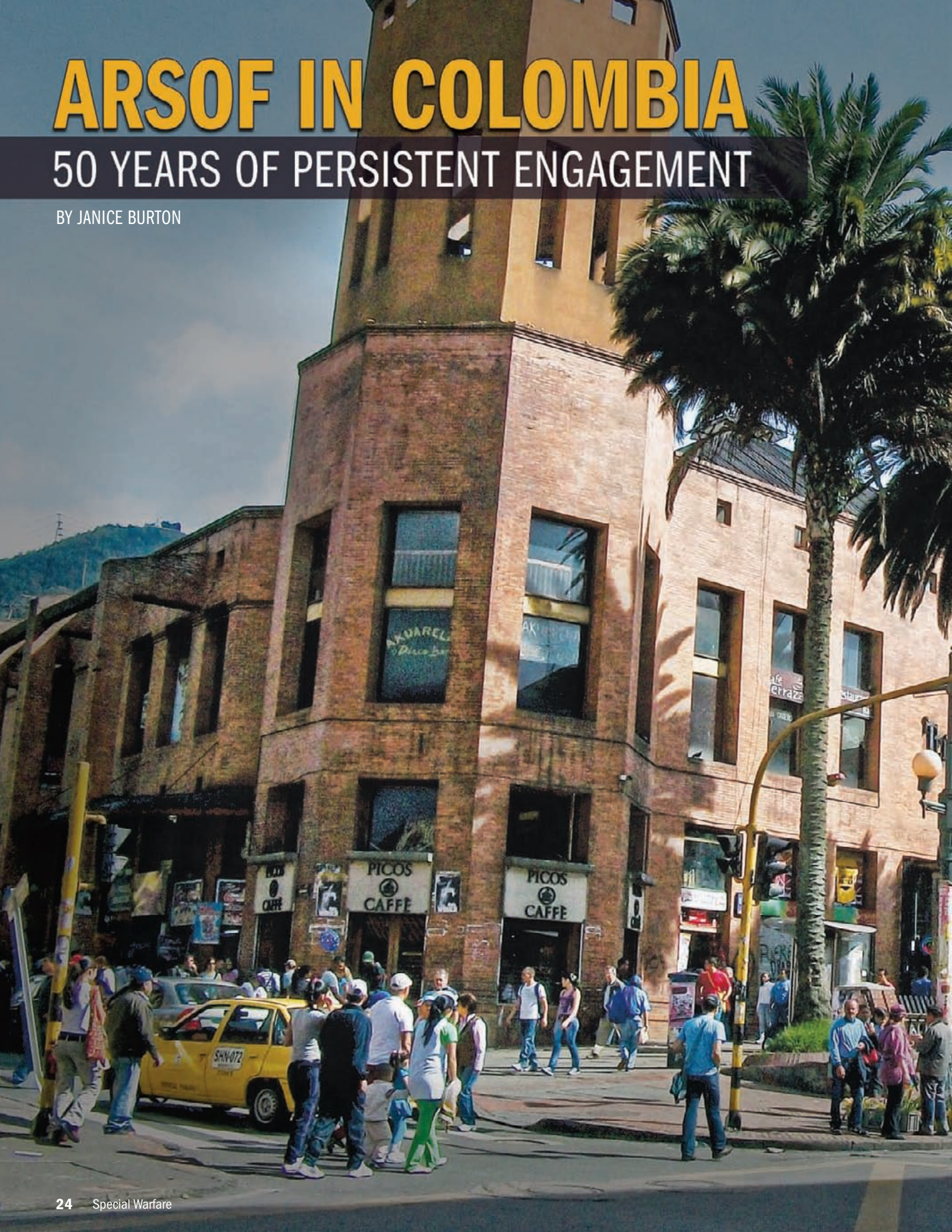
PARAGUAY



ARSOF IN COLOMBIA

50 YEARS OF PERSISTENT ENGAGEMENT

BY JANICE BURTON





Colombia is a country of contrast. You have only to make the drive from the bustling center of commerce that is Bogota to Tolamaida to realize you aren't in Kansas anymore. Walking the streets of the Zona Rosa in downtown Bogota, there are tangible signs of a newfound security among the populace. Diners crowd outdoor patios. High-end shops do a brisk business. But evidence of the country's problems is found on every corner, as members of the Colombian security forces stand guard, weapons at the ready.

This is the reality of Colombia. Security is in the eye of the beholder. But considering that as late as 2000, many considered the country a failed state; violence in the form of bombings and kidnappings by insurgent groups like the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) and from paramilitary groups associated with the drug cartels was a way of life. In 1999, non-government agencies operating in Colombia reported that the country had the fourth-largest population of internally displaced persons in the world.¹ The ongoing struggle between government troops, insurgents and paramilitary groups associated with drug trade forced as many as 300,000 people, mostly women and children, from their homes.²

It was into that environment that the U.S. started pumping large sums of money into Colombia under the Clinton Administration through Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia, approved in Washington, D.C., and put forward by the Government of Colombia under then President Pastrana, was touted as an “integrated strategy to meet the most pressing challenges confronting the county.”³ Where the plan failed is that it focused solely on combating the narcotics industry as a means of reviving the faltering Colombian economy and bringing security. It ignored entirely the insurgency that had plagued the country for most of the past century.

In support of Plan Colombia, the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton pledged more than \$1.6 billion in aid aimed at fighting the illicit drug trade, increasing the rule of law, protecting human rights, expanding economic development and instituting judicial reform. There were five central components to Plan Colombia:

- Improving governing capacity and respect for human rights.
- Expansion of counternarcotics operations into Southern Colombia, which was the stronghold of the cartels.
- Alternative economic development, which provided economic alternatives to small farmers to turn them away from the production of coca and opium.
- Increased interdiction in Colombia and the region.
- Assistance for the Colombian National Police to continue efforts at eradication.⁴

The plan also called for Colombia to seek a peace agreement with its insurgent groups, but did not allocate any funding to help the Colombian security forces counter the insurgency should negotiations fail.

Plan Colombia, as it was initially implemented, also failed to address the lack of security and the lack of widespread government presence meeting the needs of the populace.

While the overarching end state desired by Plan Colombia was not recognized, it was an impetus for change, particularly in the Colombian military. With increased funding and access to U.S. advisers, the leadership of the Colombian armed forces recognized the lack of a strategic focus in combatting the nation’s internal enemies and instituted a reform process that “affected everything from recruiting, to military schooling, to assignment policies, to structure, to operational art. The result was a reclaiming of a strategic initiative.”⁵

In May 2002, President Alvaro Uribe Velez was elected by a popular mandate. Uribe recognized that change in Colombia could not happen without a constant state presence in the lives of the Colombian people. To that end, Uribe changed the focus of Plan Colombia, turning from the Washington-driven program to a plan derived in Colombia, by Colombians for Colombians. The new plan, the Democratic Security and Defense Policy, which was officially released in 2003 and is still the driving force behind today’s Colombian security policy, focused on security as the key to improving the lives of the people of Colombia.

The new policy followed a simple line of thinking:

- The lack of security was at the root of Colombia’s problems.
- The void in security was a result by a lack of state presence in large portions of the country.
- The state needed to step into the void.⁶

The new policy recognized that the illicit drug trade and its associated violence were not the only threats to the security of the nation. It put a new emphasis on countering the insurgency and the violence in the form of kidnappings and homicides that it engendered. The key points of the new policy were stated clearly: “Security is not regarded primarily as the security of the citizens without assistance of the state. Rather, it is the protection of the citizen and democracy by the state with the solidarity and cooperation of the whole of society.”⁷

In order to provide that kind of far-reaching security, the administration had to bring security to the hinterlands and did so by implementing a consolidation plan, which brought a state presence to those ungoverned areas of the country. Ten years later, the consolidation of Colombia is still ongoing. It is a tenuous process where losses and gains are marked by inches rather than miles, but that was recognized early on when the plan was introduced. Announcing its strategic approach to providing security to the country, the plan outlined three key strategies:

- A gradual restoration of state presence, authority and institutions in strategically important areas.
- An enduring presence by the armed forces, the *solado campesino* (local forces) and National Police Carabineros will be maintained to provide for the security of the populace
- The reestablishment of the normal operations of a justice system, local governance, broadening of state services and sustainable development.⁸

Key to the success of the Consolidation Plan was the ability of the Colombian Armed Forces and National Police to successfully execute a successful counterinsurgency plan against the insurgent groups, the paramilitary units and those involved in the illicit drug trade. The leadership within the Colombian military had been refining exactly this kind of plan in the years prior to Uribe’s election. Throughout his two terms in office, the military flourished and became the face of the state throughout most of the Colombia, enjoying a high approval rate from the average Colombian citizen. The plan had some immediate and tangible results. According to official government statistical information from August 2004, in two years, homicides, kidnappings and terrorist attacks in Colombia decreased by as much as 50 percent — the lowest levels in almost 20 years. In 2003, there were 7,000 fewer homicides than in 2002 — a decrease of 27 percent. By April 2004, the government had established a permanent police or military presence in every Colombian municipality for the first time in decades.

The Uribe administration had a mandate from the people to pursue a war against those who were disrupting the nation’s security. That was shown in Uribe’s second election, which required a change to the country’s constitution. During Uribe’s administration the military made great strides in establishing security in the outlying areas of the country. Uribe’s successor, President Juan Santos capitalized on the strength of the military to provide security, while changing the focus of the government.

Since taking office in late 2010, Santos has focused more on social and economic reforms than the provision of security, relying on the gains made by the security forces in the preceding eight years to keep the fragile peace. Reducing poverty is high on his agenda, and restoration of land to those forcibly displaced by

armed groups has become his signature issue.

To that end, members of the Colombian Armed Forces and National Police are continuing to pursue the Consolidation Plan (Sword of Honor) aided by their U.S. advisers, while U.S. government agencies and other nongovernmental agencies seek to bring humanitarian assistance and economic development into the contested areas. Each of the players in the consolidation plan has a unique role and mission from development efforts of the U.S. Agency for International Development, to the eradication mission of the Department of State's Narcotic Affairs Section to the training/advising mission of the U.S. military.



DISPLACED A stark contrast to the bustling city, many rural villages of Colombia are plagued with poverty, homelessness (primarily of women and children) and a lack of security. The Consolidation Plan brings security forces to these areas so that agencies can enter to provide aid and investment in the area. *UN photo*

Interagency

For many working in the interagency, progress in Colombia has been very visible. What is most apparent is that there is now a political will to make changes in the country that did not exist 15 years. Over the past decade, the government, which at one point was considered fairly corrupt and was believed by many to be under the control of the cartels has changed dramatically. Those who have served long-term in the country with various government agencies have witnessed the changes first hand.

The biggest changes have been over the last 10 years, and have been accomplished by the administrations of Uribe and Santos. According to an employee with one of the NGOs, the Uribe and the Santos administrations' desire to create security and economic development within the country proved that the political will is greater now than at any other time.

He noted that without the political will, many government agencies would not be working in Colombia and would not have formed partnership with their host-nation counterparts, whom he gives credit for many of the changes in the country. Colombia has been a work in progress, with the U.S. pouring large sums of money into the country. But he stressed that the job was not complete, noting that with the draw down of the U.S. budget, it is important that those who make decisions concerning funding understand that America's work in Colombia is not done yet.

Colombians are taking the lead in many efforts, but they are not at the point of sustaining the efforts without continued U.S. support, including consolidation efforts; a counterinsurgency strategy that focuses its efforts on geographic space. There are 51 municipalities — about 11 percent of Colombia's land mass — in contention, and it is in this area that the war will be won. That is where the majority of U.S. effort should be synchronized and placed.

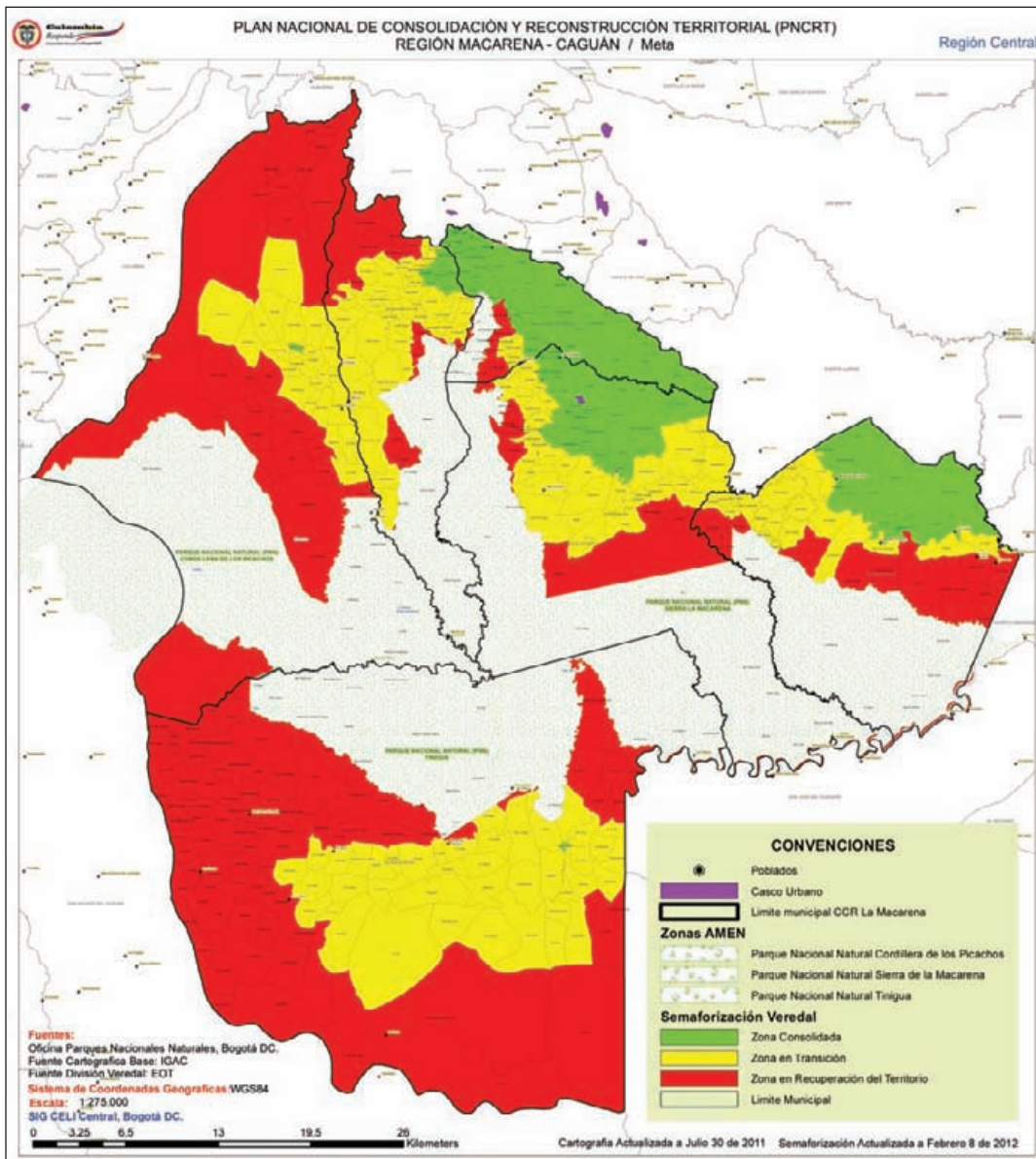
In the past U.S. agencies looked at Colombia's problems through very different viewpoints, with the military focusing on the FARC; while other government agencies, like NAS, looked at the problems created by the drug cartels; and other agencies like USAID worked in development. That has changed over the past years as all American governmental entities have made a concerted effort to pursue a different path, adopting a whole-of-government approach.

To that end, all U.S. government agencies working in Colombia hold a weekly synchronization meeting every Tuesday morning. The meeting has a twofold purpose: the first is transparency and, more importantly, it gives each entity the ability to receive feedback and align its efforts with those being undertaken by other agencies. The geographic focus of the consolidation plan makes it much easier to pinpoint and synchronize all U.S. efforts.

While agencies like USAID have not always had a comfortable relationship with the military that is not the case in Colombia. The integration of the military into the everyday social scheme of the country with an expanded presence has made association with military activities meaningful.

The non-military personnel working in Colombia recognize that people respond to the military presence often begging for them not to leave. The Colombian Armed Forces are the de facto face of the state in some places.

The military presence allows government agencies and non-governmental organizations to go into formerly contested areas. Under the consolidation plan, the districts are marked as red, green or yellow. The red districts are in active combat and no development projects occur. When they tip into the yellow phase, development can begin to occur and USAID can begin investing in the district.



PLAN NACIONAL DE CONSOLIDACIÓN Under the consolidation plan districts are marked as red, green or yellow. The red districts are in active combat and no development projects occur. When they tip into the yellow phase, development can begin to occur. *USAID graphic*

It is not wise for agencies to invest a lot of time and money into areas where the FARC still has control. If an agency puts a teacher in a school located in a district that is red or builds a clinic, the FARC will take credit for the improvements, which is counterproductive to the mission.

When a district tips to yellow, various U.S. government agencies teamed with members of the Colombian Regional Consolidation Management Teams go into the area and conduct a needs analysis. They evaluate the needs and respond quickly to the most pressing. By addressing the needs of the populace, the people come to recognize that the state is a better long-term partner for them than the insurgents.

The Regional Consolidation Teams, like the provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan, have a variety of coordinators, who meet with members of the community, hear their concerns

and determine the greatest needs. They then petition the government to meet those needs in that area.

Analysis and the evaluations are very difficult in terms of getting funding and in terms of security. A district that is yellow is still straddling the fence. It could swing back to red. To win the support of the people all of these encounters are Colombian led. The staff at the support center is Colombian, which helps get buy-in from the local populace and get government support to meet the needs in these areas. While U.S. agencies may help at the outset, Colombians have stepped up to manage the system, allowing U.S. personnel to take a step back.

It is important to note that providing a whole-of-government approach to the problems in Colombia is a very deliberate process. It requires patience. No plan is perfect.

NAS

The Narcotics Affairs Section within the embassy has been a crucial partner for U.S. special-operations forces. While in the past, success for the section has been weighed by the number of coca fields eradicated and farmers who

turn from production, the agency is taking a different approach.

A major investment has been in creating a top-notch training center for the Colombian National Police, who are central in the fight against illicit trafficking and narcoterrorism. The center, which is located on what used to be a ranch in Espinal, has received much of its funding from the International Narcotics Bureau of the State Department.

The Colombia Bureau is the largest foreign-assistance program in operation. It is, in fact, the largest narcotics operation in the world, and is funded by the U.S. Congress. Its role is moving from law enforcement to assistance, rule of law and institution building. That doesn't mean that the bureau doesn't focus on interdiction and eradication, rather it focuses on ensuring that Colombian security forces have the capacity to deal with those issues.



FORTIFIED *Left:* The headquarters building on the campus of the Colombian National Police training center in Espinal. The training center, funded largely by NAS, provides top-notch facilities and equipment for training police. *U.S. Army photo; Right:* Colombian rural police were often in contested areas long-term without dedicated police stations. Projects to build fortified police stations give them permanent presence and protection against attack. *Courtesy photo*



All of the activities of the bureau are synchronized with the U.S. Military Group, Colombia. Members of the NAS staff are frequently partnered with U.S. special-operations forces. They work closely with members of the civil-military support element and military-information support teams to deal with environmental issues associated with aerial eradication. Civil Affairs teams hold medical civic-action programs in villages where eradication is or will occur. The CA teams ensure that the local populace suffers no ill effects from the eradication, while the MIST educates them on the herbicides that are used in the eradication.

Their strongest alliance with ARSOF is with the advisers and trainers from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne). Over the past year, NAS, in concert with 7th SFG(A) has contributed to the development of the Rural Policing program by planning and overseeing a historic joint training between the Colombian National Police's Carabineros and the Colombian Special Forces Commandos. In Colombia, the police element must go on missions with the commandos because they have arrest power for both the insurgents and the drug traffickers.

The training was not without its difficulties. The Colombian National Police refused to allow the training to occur at their state-of-the-art training center. Instead, SF trainers, accompanied by trainers from the center had to create mobile training teams to go out and do the training in the field.

This training was significant in that the Soldiers of the 7th SF Group acting as trainers served as a bridge between the two groups, who actually don't get along.

The training was also significant because it also signaled an increase in fortified police stations in the contested areas. The Rural Police often stay in the contested areas for long periods of times without dedicated police stations. The goal is to build fortified police stations in the areas, which create a permanent presence in the area. The stations frequently come under attack, so NAS is also funding projects to fortify the stations.

The Base Security Program was initially initiated by two retired U.S. Special Forces Soldiers, and has been ongoing for four or five years.

The bases from which the Junglas were operating frequently came under fire. Many of the houses the force was stationed in had no real protection, even though they were providing key support in the consolidation zones. The program is designed to put up walls and towers to offer fortifications for the force.

A recent attack on one of the fortified facilities by the FARC only resulted in slight shrapnel damage after two hours of active combat. Prior to the fortification program, the facility and the force stationed there would have been wiped out.

It is a priority to ensure that the Colombian forces who are operating in the contested consolidation zones have a survivable position in which to live and operate. By providing a safe haven, the bunker mentality can be eliminated and the security forces can begin to go out and work in the community. It's Community Policing 101.

As the bases are fortified, the insurgents change their tactics. In recent months, mortar attacks on the stations have become popular. Initially the fire on the stations was indiscriminate, but over time, the insurgents have honed their ability to fire on the stations and now do so on a regular basis with a great deal of success. Improving the stations to the point that these attacks do minimum damage is complicated.

The fortification program is not without challenges. Depending on who owns the property, permission has to be gained from the landlord to build these fortified stations and create stand-off areas, which is often limited by other landlords. Additionally, water purification centers are being placed in all of the stations in order to provide potable water. A number of officers have died from waterborne illnesses. The systems are big enough to provide water for the local community, as well. This helps build rapport within the community, who in turn shares information about the FARC.

Getting the populace to recognize the government as their hope versus the FARC or drug traffickers takes work. Key to that are programs conducted by the CMSE and the MIST, both of which are nascent in the Colombian military.

U.S. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers are working closely with their counterparts to develop the capacity of their partnered force for the conduct of independent operations. In initial operations, the U.S. CA teams took the lead hosting a medical civic-action program, with their partnered force supporting the activity. Today, the Colombian forces conduct the MEDCAPs on their own, the U.S. forces supporting them.

By working closely with the U.S. elements, the Colombians can get to a point where they can address the needs of their people and opens doors U.S. forces and agencies couldn't get into on their own.

MIST

The same is happening with the MIST.

Captain Maurice Valentine has been working closely with the developing Colombian PSYOP force for more than a year. The team he has on the ground has been there eight months.

"Everything we do is in support of the Colombian National Plan for Consolidation and is aimed at security, support to the populace and providing a state presence," he said. "For us, security is more of a support effort, working with the Colombian National Police and Armed Forces."

U.S. MISO teams working in Colombia have a very straight forward plan and align their missions with the objectives of Special Operations Command-Southern Command. They have two intermediate objectives, the first of which is to counter transnational organized crime and the second is maintaining positive U.S. military influence of the developing Colombian forces. They do the latter by building the capacity within the forces to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, deterring and disrupting violent extremist organizations and defeating attacks by those organizations.

Recently another key task was added to the team's focus — assisting with the demobilization effort by encouraging members of the VEOs to disassociate themselves from their organizations.

"We are doing everything from messaging with printed products to radio broadcasts," explained Valentine, who noted the Colombian security forces have developed the ability to conduct influence messaging.

"We support them when they have problems."



HIGH VALUE TARGET A leaflet used in the campaign to locate the FARC's leader, Alfonso Cano. Information related to Cano's whereabouts was derived from citizens who were influenced by the campaign to report. *Courtesy graphic*

The demobilization program has been successful over the past few years. More than 8,000,000 leaflets have gone out over the last years, which have had a direct impact on the problem. According to Valentine at least 290 demobs from the FARC have been a direct result of the campaign. The campaign's focus is based on what the individual is missing by his association with the FARC or the drug traffickers. It encourages participants to come home and be a part of their family.

The MIST also works closely with the Government of Colombia in countering recruitment of young children by the FARC.

"This is a very tough task. We have worked closely with Colombian forces to determine who the FARC is targeting, what makes them effective and the demographic they are after," explained Valentine.

They have found that the FARC is currently targeting two groups for recruitment — children ages 6-11 and 12-18. To defeat these recruitment efforts, the MIST, working with the Colombian PSYOP, U.S. MILGRP Information Operation and CMSE is becoming a presence in the areas where the FARC recruits. They go in to these areas using any messaging mediums available to get the message to the at-risk children.

A successful campaign that the MIST supports is the MILGRP Information Operations' "YO SOY" or "I am" campaign which focuses on the hopes and dreams of the families in the community. The campaign addresses the fact that the children are more than a tool of the FARC and puts an emphasis on family. The "YO SOY" program strengthens the whole-of-government approach through regional meetings and engages regional civilian, military officials as well as national-level agencies including the office of the vice-president and president. Also of importance are campaigns against high-value individuals. These campaigns have also proven fairly successful, with the killing of the FARC's leader Alfonso Cano in November 2011. Valentine said that information related to Cano's location was derived from citizens who were influenced by the campaign to report.



AIRBORNE U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers and their Colombian counterparts practice drills prior to a joint airborne operation at the Tolemaida Military Base in Melgar. *US Army photo*

The Way Ahead

Lt. Col. Will Griego, the U.S. Special Operations Command liaison to the Colombian Joint Special Operations Command and by default the ad hoc SOF USMLGRP mission chief, like many senior SOF officers who served in the 7th SFG(A), has a lot of history on which to base his view of Colombia.

Griego's first deployment to Colombia was in 1994 and he has been in and out of the country since that time. That has been the case with a number of SOF officers and NCOs during the U.S. Army's 50 plus years in Colombia.

"Historically, the U.S. SOF presence in Colombia began in 1959," explained Griego. "A special team conducted a survey of the country at the request of the Colombian president who was looking for a way to defeat some of the splinter groups in the country. On Feb. 2, 1962, Maj. Gen. William Yarborough (then the commander of the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center) came to Colombia to conduct a pre-deployment site survey. Part of that trip was to discuss how the U.S. could help the Colombians defeat emerging threats following the violence of the 1940s and 1950s, which was known as La Violencia."

In the '60s, the U.S. SOF presence in Colombia consisted of military trainers, information ops and Civil Affairs.

"If you are looking at what we are doing today, it's not the first time," he said. "When the U.S. focus turned to Vietnam, we lost a lot of the groundwork we had laid in Colombia. The same thing happened following 9/11."

Griego noted that in 1998, Colombia was on the verge of being considered a failed state.

"Colombia's resurgence from the brink of becoming a failed narco-state in the late '90s to the second strongest economy in South America is due in no small part to a rich history of USSOF efforts in Colombia," said Griego. "These efforts demonstrate the huge returns on investment that come from an enduring USSOF-embedded partnership, and serve as a model that should be studied and replicated in other parts of the world."

"This is a case study in how you can turn around a country in less than 10 years when you have the military and political will converging," said Griego, pointing to the transformation of the Colombian military in the late '90s and the influx of U.S. dollars in early 2000.

Up until 9/11, no Plan Colombia-funds allocated by the U.S. government could be used directly to fight the FARC and other emerging threats; money could only be used to counter the growth of illicit narcotics. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, President George W. Bush signed the National Security Presidential Security Presidential Directive 18 that allowed the money to be used to target the insurgent group, which was being funded through narcotic activities.

Griego recalls that in the early '90s, the Colombian military was ill-prepared to deal with its adversaries.

"When I got here the conscripts of soldiers were patrolling in the same shoes they got when they joined. Very few had weapons. They patrolled with sticks or knives," he said. "Today,



HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT A U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier trains Colombian National Police Junglas in marksmanship instruction at the Colombian National Police Training Center in Epinal. *US Army photo*

you will see the conscripts are well equipped — although their equipment is very different from our SOF forces — everyone has a standard issue. I jokingly tell the Colombian soldiers there are no poor soldiers when they have two cell phones and throw away the leftover rice. That is definitely a sign that the hard days are long gone. The Colombian Army is definitely one of the better equipped and trained forces in region, and it definitely has the most experience.”

What is lacking is sustainment, which will ensure that both the Colombian Military and, as importantly, the Colombian National Police have the training they need to secure the peace.

“Colombia has one of the most militarized police forces in the world and the military is doing a lot of policing,” said Griego. “Look at the number of police in Colombia — the ratio of police to citizen is like 50 to 1 — so there is definitely a shortage of law enforcement.”

“Soldiers run into problems in remote areas because in some instances, they are the only government presence. If a couple is having a fight, the lady can go to the soldier but he has never been trained on settling domestic disputes. He is in a very difficult position. If he does nothing, the government is neglecting its role. And if what he does is not done in accordance with the law, than the soldier can be charged.”

Griego said that is why the rural police are having such a positive impact in the country. “There are just not enough of them. Historically, in certain areas although the police presence hasn’t

been very significant because they have always been outgunned and outmanned. We have made a significant impact there through our training.”

The hands-on training for both the Colombian military and the national police falls to the Soldiers of the 7th SFG(A). In a recent deployment, that task fell to the men of ODA 7313, who trained the Junglas and the Carabaneros at the Colombian National Police Training Center in Espinal. The team also served as the trainers in the NAS-sponsored joint training between the police and the military.

The ODA has found the Colombian forces to be very focused and very committed to the mission. Capt. Matthew Wood, the team leader, noted that his men were able to share experiences and knowledge from their deployments to Afghanistan with the Colombian forces that then took that information and looked at the ways they were fighting.

The team looked at the strengths and the weaknesses of the forces and zeroed in on some key areas of training including assault planning, after-action reviews, rehearsals, mission training and training in core fundamentals.

“These guys are very motivated and can do anything with almost nothing,” said Wood. “But they are lacking in some core training, on which we were able to focus.”

There is also a lack of a professional NCO corps. According to Wood, the majority of the soldiers are specialist who are more than

capable of following direction, but lack the NCO leadership. “We are really encouraging them to use their NCOs more,” said Wood.

Griego added that Colombia has a rank called professional soldier. These men will never be sergeants or leaders. In his words, they “check the block and move on.”

Part of the problem is the lack of established training cycles.

“These guys are always deployed, so it makes it difficult to establish that professional force,” said Griego.

Wood and his men found this to be true when they worked on basics like marksmanship. “In years past when there was a

“He said, “The hardest thing I have to do is to win a war that people think is already won.”

Noting the reduction in FARC numbers and the increase in security, people feel that they can move freely. “This has given them a false perception that the FARC was defeated, but that isn’t the case,” said Griego.

The end game can only be the defeat of the FARC rather through attrition or negotiation. “Again, the minister of defense uses a soccer analogy when talking about the end state. He explains that if we score two goals in the first 75 minutes, and we drop our guard

“There are only three possible outcomes: the government via military and other agencies defeats the FARC; the FARC reaches its strategic goal of taking power or it’s a tie ... There is only one option, the defeat of the FARC.”

continuous U.S. presence, this probably wasn’t a problem,” said Wood. “But over the past 11 years, with our focus on Afghanistan, the force was lucky to get a team for three months at a time, and then not see anyone again for a year. We hope that we can put the emphasis here again.”

They also hope that through ongoing instruction they can create a corps of Colombian trainers who can ensure that the core skills stay fresh within the force. “There is a much greater need for training than what 10 guys can do,” said Wood.

“The SF cadre we have is great, but it’s very small compared to the size of the Colombian force, which is around 240, 000,” said Griego. “Even at that, no one is offering more direct support to the Colombian effort than are the Soldiers of the 7th SF Group.”

Griego sees U.S. SOF’s way ahead in Colombia in the near future as a time of refocusing.

“In the ’90s we had a large footprint here with at least one or two battalions on the ground,” he said. “With the shift in focus to Afghanistan and Iraq, we did, somewhat drop our guard, leaving only one or two operational detachments in Colombia. At that time, 7th Group was the premier foreign-internal defense group in the world. We never had to use interpreters. We were very tuned into the culture. Now we are lucky to have one or two proficient or native speakers on the teams. We are again righting the ship, in the sense that we are providing the right assistance.”

He sees the role of Special Forces as expanding in support of building the capacity of the Colombian military to defeat the FARC, with the CMSE and MIST continuing to work the non-lethal missions of trying to separate the FARC from the population. Of utmost importance is ensuring the nesting of all SOF operations in support of the country team.

As Colombian forces gain momentum and news coming out of the country reflects a more positive picture, it becomes harder for people to understand the U.S. presence in the country.

“The Colombian minister of defense said it best,” said Griego.

in the last 15 minutes and the opponent scores, the momentum changes and they could tie the game. In the Government of Colombia’s eyes, a tie is a loss. There are only three possible outcomes: the government via military and other agencies defeats the FARC; the FARC reaches strategic goal of taking power; or it’s a tie.

“It’s very clear that the FARC will never win. If it becomes a tie, victory by default goes to the FARC. There is only one option, which is to defeat the FARC,” continued Griego. “In order for them to do that, we have to continue to help them reach that next level through persistent engagement, sharing of tactics, techniques and procedures. The Colombian forces can now conduct unilateral operations against the FARC because of the training we have provided them. We are completely embedded in mission training, battle tracking, assisting and advising and providing the right weapons. Now we have to work on sustainment.” **SW**

Janice Burton is the editor of Special Warfare. [comment here](#)

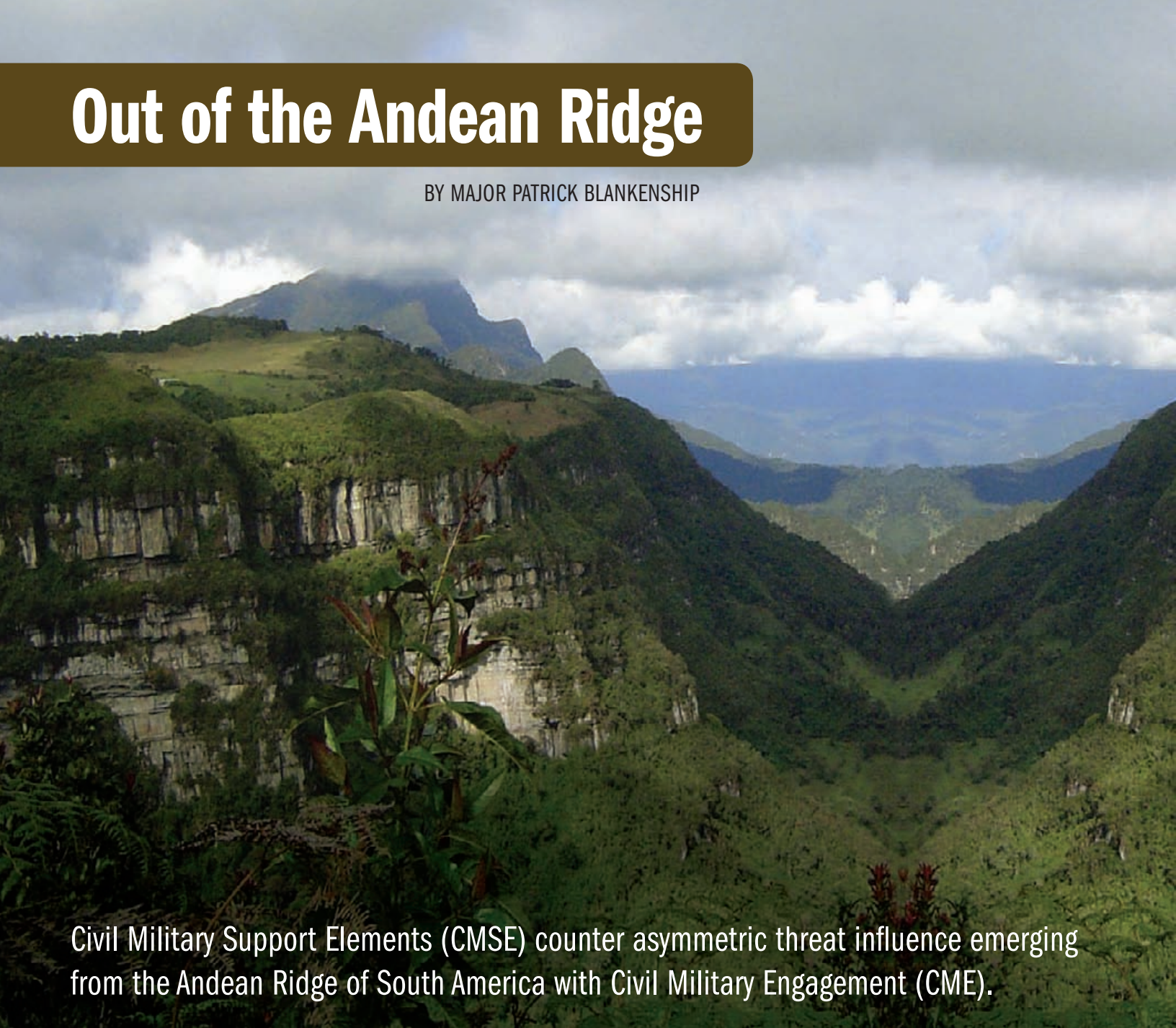


Notes

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Out of the Andean Ridge

BY MAJOR PATRICK BLANKENSHIP



Civil Military Support Elements (CMSE) counter asymmetric threat influence emerging from the Andean Ridge of South America with Civil Military Engagement (CME).

To produce effects in support of U.S. national-security interests through the conduct of civil-military engagement¹ a U.S. Special Operations Command program of record, Civil Affairs professionals must first understand the intricacies of threat systems that CMSEs are designed to counter, and describe how those systems leverage the human dimension of the operations environment to achieve their threat end states. This article illustrates how CMSEs contribute to the disruption of threat influence in Latin America through the conduct of CME.

The Civil Affairs Framework for Engagement (CAFÉ):² Operational Design for CME

CMSEs contribute to the disruption of threat systems by analyzing the inputs that threat systems require to survive and how threat systems exploit civil vulnerabilities of people in specific geographic areas, to gain a competitive advantage over the state. Using the deliverables of an asset/gap-based system analysis, CMSEs design a series of actions (to be conducted persistently over a period of time) in a specific micro-node to first counter and then ultimately disrupt threat influence. The CMSE plan of actions over time in the micro-node are synchronized with other SOF elements under the command and

control of the theater special-operations command, coordinated with the Civil Affairs command responsible for the joint-operations area and executed in collaboration with the embassy and the partner-nation government.

The headwaters of a threat stream

To begin an analysis of the threat system in Latin America, it is useful to follow the flow of drugs and money, a critical input for the threat system, back to their points of origin.

The Andean Ridge of South America, comprised of the countries of Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, is the largest cocaine-producing region of the world and a critical source of revenue



for both profit-motivated transnational organized crime and ideologically inspired violent-extremist organizations. According to the UN World Drug Report of 2010 an estimated 480 metric tons of cocaine from the Andean Ridge was sold on world markets generating \$88 billion in illicit revenues for threat systems.³

Cocaine

The primary source of funding, the lifeblood for TOC in the western hemisphere, is a product of rural agriculture and the coca bush. The coca bush is a small, hearty plant, native to the Andes, that grows best on moist slopes between the elevations of 4,500-6,000 feet. Coca leaves from the

bush are picked by rural farmers three to four times a year making it a reliable crop and subsequently a reliable source of income. The harvested leaves from the coca bush are then processed into coca paste, and then into cocaine, utilizing low-tech procedures and instructions openly available on the Internet.⁴

The finished product, kilogram blocks of cocaine, are then moved forward as efficiently as possible toward the world consumer markets of greatest demand. North America, led by the United States, is the largest buyer of cocaine with more than 6.2 million users consuming 40 percent of the world cocaine supply annually. The money generated through the trafficking of cocaine into North America is estimated to total \$38 billion in revenue for TOC.

Lucrative business

The most basic and fundamental way TOC, and specifically the illicit trafficking system affects the human dimension of the operations environment is through the generation of employment. The jobs created as part of the production and illicit trafficking of cocaine are many and require a robust personnel structure to support a black-market economy of scale. In many Latin American countries, where the formal economy cannot support the demand for income-producing jobs to meet the basic needs of families and to thwart a persistent cycle of poverty, many people are lured into the illicit economy to survive. The jobs created for the production of cocaine include rural farmers who plant and harvest coca leaves as well as semi-skilled laborers who refine coca leaves into coca paste and then into cocaine in jungle laboratories. Business is also generated through the import and transport of precursor chemicals coming from large suppliers like China.

CMSEs analyze the exploited civil vulnerabilities of the people who form the worker base of TOC in key micro-nodes and conduct CA activities in those same areas to disrupt threat influence. These activities are designed to serve as a complement to other long term, large-investment development activities undertaken by the PN government or development organizations such as U.S. Agency for International Development.

Transportation

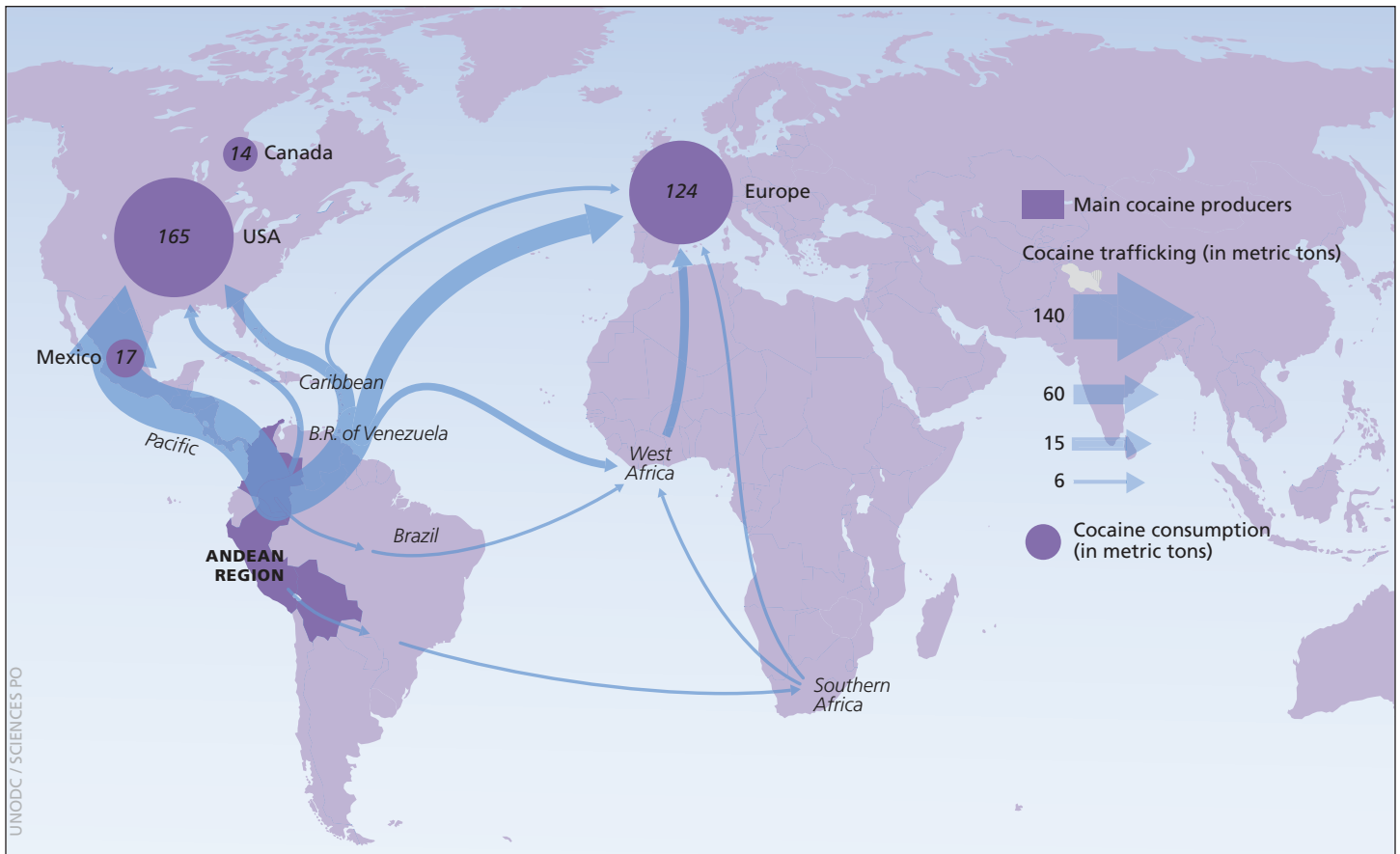
One of the more robust parts of the illicit trafficking system is the transportation network that moves product through a series of nodes utilizing the transportation modes of land, sea and air. Modal transportation techniques vary depending on the node and the line of communication linking node to node. Modal transportation techniques can be as low tech as a teenage boy with a school backpack and a cell phone carrying a couple kilos of cocaine along mountain paths from one village to the next or as high tech as million dollar fast boats, submarines and airplanes equipped with the latest GPS and communications technology moving 500 or more kilos at a time from country to country.

Civil Affairs professionals prove value added to the SOF community through the management and analysis of civil information available in the Civil Affairs Operating System. Covering everything from key leaders to landing strips, leveraging information contained in a historical database of civil information provides useful information about how the threat system will likely try to move illicit goods through an area and who they will likely try to leverage to accomplish it.

Security

The private security network needed to safeguard the functions of an illicit trafficking system is significant and employs a substantial number of personnel. Security personnel range from the simple and low tech, such as the unarmed teenager standing on the street corner with a cell phone acting as a look out, to the more sophisticated and influential. A mid-level TOC leader, armed with large amounts of money and specific guidance to pay off key government leaders, security-force officials and community group leaders in critical nodes constitutes a formidable opponent to the rule-of-law by the state. Corruption is most often the term used to describe the effects of this extremely successful, and difficult to counter, TOC strategy. Perhaps the most visible and dangerous aspect of TOC security is the ability to arm, operate and sustain private security forces to protect the illicit trafficking networks, attack rival networks, government forces and private citizens as necessary.

CMSEs interact with PN security forces, service providers and relevant populations to weave together networks of purpose to detect and resist non-state forces. These social networks link the government to the people and raise the level of participation or collective action of all involved. Close relationships between PN security providers and the populace generally increase the exchange of information on threat activity, and therefore the effectiveness of the PN security forces.



IN DEMAND Main global cocaine flows for 2008, from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2010. UNODC graphic

Filling the sovereignty gap

Given the size and scope of TOC, with revenues from cocaine alone that exceed the gross domestic product of the five northernmost countries in Central America combined, many governments in Latin America simply do not have the capacity to confront the threat and provide adequate security in all of their territory, to all of their citizens, all of the time. Similarly, a gap in the provision of, or access to basic services, such as water, sanitation, hygiene, food, clothing, shelter/land, healthcare and education to all citizens, in all areas of the country, all of the time, creates opportunities for TOC or VEOs to exploit the civil vulnerabilities of people in micro-nodes that are deemed critical to the threat system. In micro-nodes known to be under the threat-system control, non-state/counter-state actors have leveraged gaps in state capacity to become the primary service providers and supplanted the functions of governance with the local population. Lack of capacity in the legal economy to provide employment and income for the sustainment of basic family needs, as the result of

slow or stagnant economic development, provides a perfect opportunity for TOC and/or VEO to rival the ability of states to adequately govern their territories.

CMSEs, after conducting an analysis of assets available and gaps in the provision of security and services, weave together a series of actions over time in micro-nodes to have a disruptive effect on threat activity. In the most vulnerable of areas, where the provision of basic medical services is not met by the state, the medical civic-action project is a proven catalyst for a whole-of-government application by the PN. The idea behind the MEDCAP is not only to facilitate the PN government to provide badly needed medical care to vulnerable populations in under-governed areas, but moreover, to reintroduce the relationship of governance between the people and their government in a non-threatening, more informal environment. The resultant change in attitudes by the people toward their government after the MEDCAP is a prerequisite for building collective action and resistance to threat influence.

An emerging threat

The multi-billion dollar cocaine-financed threat stream in Latin America has facilitated a hybrid threat to stability and development in the Western Hemisphere. TOC and VEOs depend upon illicit trafficking revenues and the exploitation of civil vulnerabilities for their survival. Some experts have attempted to define this nexus of threat activity as criminal insurgency, while others prefer the term narcoterrorism. Regardless of the name, the complexity, diversity and adaptability of this threat system has eluded the narrow categories used to define it, being neither purely VEO nor exclusively TOC. Organizations, like the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia in Colombia and Sendero Luminoso in Peru, have formed relationships of convenience with TOC and diversified to combine their ideologically motivated insurgencies with the sustaining revenues made available from illicit trafficking.

The population-centric approaches used by CMSEs to disrupt both TOC and VEO have more similarities than differences as both threat groups depend on the exploitation of civil vulnerabilities to achieve their

end states. The use of CMSEs as part of an integrated SOF application to disrupt threat influence is essential to achieve sustainable effects over time.

In these areas throughout Latin America, deemed critical to the threat system, CMSEs from the 98th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) counter threat influence and control of populations through the conduct of civil-military engagement, a subset of CAO in support of the CMO Plan for Special Operations Command South.

The Colombian example

In the case of Colombia, the two major threats to stability for the state are the FARC (a 50 year-old insurgent movement classified as a VEP) and BACRIM (various transnational organized criminal organizations). Beginning with the Uribe administration in 2002, the Colombian government began to make serious progress against attacking and dismantling the FARC, progress that was fundamental to the continued success of the

that without an integrated, indirect and population-centric approach, any direct-action gains against FARC leadership will be unsustainable and the sovereignty gap will remain a vulnerability for the state.

The initial analysis of a FARC strategic shift was proposed during the Monterey (Naval Post Graduate School-hosted) FARC Systems Analysis Conference in August 2011. During the conference, a hasty center-of-gravity analysis was conducted on the current state of the FARC. For the purposes of application of CME as a tool to counter threat influence, we will look at the critical vulnerabilities of the FARC system inputs.

Threat Centers of Gravity

Conducting a simplified analysis of three COGs provides insights into how basic threat systems function and survive and also provides opportunities to target system vulnerabilities using the available SOF tools.

The COG of Land. This COG consists of those critical land nodes and lines of com-

ing for CA professionals and reveals what the FARC is doing to control and recruit vulnerable populations. The FARC needs to control vulnerable populations in areas that are important to it for its survival as a system. Many of these populations also serve as critical nodes and/or junctures of FARC lines of communication. One of the critical inputs of the FARC's personnel system is the need to recruit youth, ideally between the ages of 8-15-years-old. The recruitment of youth depends on a base of support that replenishes the FARC personnel system. One of the tools that the FARC utilizes for recruiting is FARC public companies. These are organized plain-clothe militias that facilitate and conduct civic outreach to targeted populations, provide salaries for recruited youth and other services such as health and education to their families.

FARC militias, very much like their counterparts in Sendero Luminoso, have primary responsibilities to influence, control and recruit people in areas that are deemed

“The multi-billion dollar cocaine-financed threat stream in Latin America has facilitated a hybrid threat to stability and development in the western hemisphere.”

Santos administration beginning in 2010. As a result of the success of the Colombian government attacking and dismantling FARC leadership, the FARC has shifted strategy and downgraded their operations from positional warfare to guerrilla warfare and a larger reliance on plain-clothes militias to control and recruit vulnerable populations. Colombian military leaders have stated as recently as January 2012, that they are seeing a shift in the ideologically motivated FARC toward the profit-oriented BACRIM, or in the words of the Colombian military leadership during the *Comite de Revision Estrategica y Innovacion*, the FARC is becoming less FARC and more “FARC-RIM.”

Since 2007, CMSEs have played a vital role working with the Colombian military to build capacity to conduct CMO. In 2012 after years of direct-action success, these efforts intensified with the Colombian Ministry of Defense initiating a two-year plan to substantially build its own CA forces in an effort to consolidate gains against the FARC. The Colombian government believes

communication that connect and reveal that the FARC needs to either control or maintain open access for the present and future survival of their system. PN security forces trained by U.S. Special Forces have capabilities to attack and seize terrain nodes and control lines of communication to target the enemy system.

The COG Money. This includes all the financial needs of the threat system and these inputs come from a variety of sources, which include kidnapping, extortion, illegal mining and drug trafficking. Interagency partners with the capability to conduct investigations and build cases for criminal prosecution play a large role with PN security forces in tracking and attacking the Money COG. The U.S. Treasury also plays a role here leveraging Kingpin authorities to seize property and cash associated with drug traffickers and to use such cash to offer rewards for captured TOC leadership.

The COG of People. This includes all of the threat system needs for personnel. This is where the threat analysis gets interest-

critical to the operations of the FARC as a system. SL, which is now divided into two main factions in Peru, has mastered the art of recruiting youth into its ranks by providing education and opportunities for children at very young ages, ideally between 6-8-years-old 5.

SL, an organization with roots in Marxist/Leninist ideology reached its height and also met its downfall in 1992 with the capture of their leftist intellectual leader, Abimael Guzman in Lima, Peru.

Since that time, the remnant of Sendero Luminoso has reevaluated its strategy, learned from its organizational mistakes of concentrating too much power into one leader and changed tactics away from terrorist-like attacks against civilians and non-uniformed government workers. Today, its strategy is to target only uniformed government personnel. The strategic change in tactics to protect civilians and those government officials who are rendering aid has provided a boost in support by the population for the new SL.



GOING DOWN A fully-operational submarine built for the primary purpose of transporting multi-ton quantities of cocaine located near a tributary close to the Ecuador/Colombia border that was seized by the Ecuador Anti-Narcotics Police Forces and Ecuador Military authorities with the assistance of the DEA. DEA photo

Using ideology to recruit and civic outreach to provide education and health services to sustain support in certain population nodes, SL has publicly touted its successes and shows clearly how these base activities support its tactical capability to attack government forces at will. According to the Peruvian government, an estimated 300 SL fighters control portions of the Valles de los Rios Apurimac y Ene and the Upper Huallaga Valley. To maintain its personnel strength, SL aggressively recruits from local communities leveraging a strong ideological narrative mixed with actions of civic outreach that address education and health vulnerabilities of indigenous people in nodes deemed critical to the threat system. In the VRAE, an SL leader known as Comrade Jose has stated that SL works hand-in-hand with drug traffickers, but also states that he does not consider that the farmers who cultivate the coca are acting illegally. By redefining the role of the farmers, the people who work in the micro labs to refine the coca leaf into cocaine and the transporters who carry the cocaine out of the VRAE as “workers” instead of “narcotraffickers” the SL is embracing the Marxist/Leninist ideological underpinning, which is shared by other like-minded insurgents, such as the Paraguayan People’s Army. Comrade Joe states that the relationship of SL to the narco-traffickers is characterized by providing protection for transportation, which Jose calls an “Impuesto de Guerra,” or war tax. The relationship of VEOs working collaboratively as part of a wider TOC system appears to be the trend in the case of both the FARC and SL and can be expected to evolve along similar lines in other locations, with other groups such as the EPP in Paraguay. Exploitation of civil vulnerabilities gives threat groups an advantage in areas where the state influence and control is the weakest. In these areas, CMSEs working in conjunction with PN security and service providers to provide specialized capabilities to counter threat influence through the conduct of CA activities, which are conducted over time to produce measurable effects.

Conclusion

CMSEs counter asymmetric threat influence emerging from the Andean Ridge of South America with CME. Assisting PN security and service providers to confront hybrid threats to security through population-centric approaches is where CMSE conducting CME forms part of the whole-of-SOF application. **SW**



comment here

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LESSONS LEARNED AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF PLAN COLOMBIA AND COCA PRODUCTION

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW L. CRABB, USMC

Illegal drug production is a difficult problem that fuels lawlessness and insurgency across the world. Many places in the world (including the U.S.) suffer from illicit crop production. For many experts, though, Colombia provides the best example of a country with long-standing illicit drug production and long-term programs in place to eliminate drug production activity. The U.S. government has invested heavily in Colombia to defeat drug production, trafficking and the illegally armed groups that support and benefit from the activity.

While every operational environment is unique, the findings on illicit crop production in Colombia can be extrapolated to identify some general trends and causes of drug production incentives across the world — from Afghanistan to Mexico. Understanding these general motivations and incentives can help operational commanders make wise decisions concerning how to deal with illicit crops, drug production and the peasant-farmers who grow them.

The chain of illegal drug production starts with those who grow the illicit crops; in Colombia's case that is the campesinos, or peasants.

The Peasants

Throughout the 1980s – 2000s, the Colombian peasants were a key component in successful industrial-level cocaine production in Colombia. Cocaine is a highly profitable and lucrative business — but it is dependent on a large pool of manpower to grow, gather and refine the coca leaves into cocaine. The coca bush is, in many ways, an ideal crop for the trade in illegal narcotics. The *agronomics* of coca make it a hard crop to compete with, proven by years of unsuccessful crop substitution efforts.¹

The coca plant is a hardy and highly adaptive species. It is normally found in the Andean highlands, but grows quite well in a variety of climatic and soil conditions; it can be grown effectively on hillsides, underneath forest canopies and in sandy soils. This makes coca a crop that is ideal for subsistence farmers — the peasants — whose land is of poor quality. Additionally, drug traffickers often arrange to pick up the coca leaves (or refined coca products)



CASH CROP Top, A Colombian coca plant reaches a height of 7-10 feet and can be grown in a variety of climate and soil conditions. Bottom, The coca plant has small flowers that mature into red berries but it's the leaf that contains the alkaloid chemical compounds known as cocaine. UN photos

at their source, alleviating the need for farmers to take a perishable foodstuff over precipitous terrain to market.²

Growing coca is also much more profitable compared to a normal crop. Field hands harvesting coca can expect to make more than double what they would in harvesting licit crops. A farmer growing coca could expect to make 10-20 times (conservative estimate) per hectare than what he would with other crops. A coca crop can be grown and harvested two or more times per year.³ This means that, unlike a licit crop such as sugarcane, coca's multiple harvests can provide year-round, full-time employment.⁴

Additionally, coca production provides a substantial number of jobs.⁵ In 1981, it was estimated that in Colombia alone, coca production provided more than 500,000 jobs. This includes land owners/farmers, field hands, pisadores (leaf stompers), refiners, transporters, security and administrative services (lawyers, accountants). Indirect "employees" could also be said to include the politicians, military officers and policemen who drug traffickers bribe; the licit businesses drug traffickers invest in and use to launder money.

Assessing "Plan Colombia"

In 2000-2002 timeframe (just before Colombian President Alvaro Uribe was inaugurated), cultivation of coca reached its peak of approximately 163,000 hectares.⁶ Murders, kidnappings and terrorist attacks were at an all-time or near all-time high. More pertinent to the peasant, 131 small municipality mayors exercised power away from their districts. Because violence and insurgency had driven away the government, democracy and the protections of the state did not exist for the average Colombian peasant.⁷

President Uribe inherited and then aggressively expanded, Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia was a multi-year campaign that attempted to leverage all the assets of the Colombian and U.S. governments to eliminate illegally armed groups (guerrilla insurgents and the paramilitaries), drug production and trafficking. It actively focused on the peasantry and the coca it grew; the Colombian government assessed those results in its annual Coca Surveys.

In the 2003 report, the government assessed each department and its production of coca relative to the geography, agronomics and economic conditions of the peasantry. It identified that the production of coca was directly congruent with the level of poverty of the peasantry in the department in question.⁸ In areas where



SURVEY SAYS In 2003 the Colombian government's annual coca survey identified the Southeastern Departments of Caqueta, Putamaya, Meta, Guaviare and Vaupes as the primary producers of coca.

poverty was low, the survey noted a low-level of illicit crop production, with crops like coffee being grown instead.

Additionally, as in most agriculture, the physical characteristics of a given province dictated whether a harvest of coca could be grown at all. The coca shrub grew best on slight hillsides where the soil was well drained. Coca also relied on being produced in remote areas along drug-trafficking routes. All these characteristics

allowed the Colombian government to focus its efforts on the poorest and most remote departments where the physical features promoted the cultivation of coca. This made the Southeast of Colombia the most suitable agronomically and geo-politically. Satellite

and aerial imagery confirmed the southeastern departments of Caqueta, Putamaya, Meta, Guaviare and Vaupes as the primary producers of coca.

The Colombian government's 2003 Coca Survey found that the level of coca production made a significant decline from Plan Colombia's start in 2001 — an overall decline of 38 percent.⁹ Most of the fall was attributed to an aggressive aerial-spraying campaign in Caqueta and

Putamaya. Manual eradication and forest-management programs accounted for a much smaller proportion of eradication.¹⁰ The spraying program was (and remains today) extremely controversial. Many peasant advocates and non-governmental organizations maintain that the aerial spraying has caused health and environmental problems.¹¹ The U.S. and the Colombian government counter that they have sponsored numerous studies that show no long-term adverse impacts. Non-governmental organizations representing the peasants' interests also accuse the aerial spraying of being too indeterminate, damaging licit subsistence and market crops.

Although not mentioned in the 2003 report, the decline in coca production could also be linked to the rising level of violence.¹² As the Colombian government went into previously uncontested areas and attempted to reestablish local government and military/police



TAKING ACTION Alternative-crop programs give farmers who formerly grew coca other options. *Left:* A project encouraging the establishment of fish ponds. *Right:* A technician from the UN Drug Control Programme gives advice on coffee cultivation to farmers. *UN Photos*

presence, the violent confrontation between the Colombian government and the illegally armed groups was reflected in the level of murders, kidnappings and terrorist incidents — all of which spiked in 2002. As the violence rose, the swirl of chaos surrounding the peasants was reflected in the rise of internally displaced persons. New internally displaced person numbers within Colombia went from 317,000 in 2000, to 363,000 in 2001 and peaked with 420,000 in 2002.

Encouraged by the fall in coca production, though, Plan Colombia continued in spite of these other negative trends. As the decade progressed, more positives began to catch up to the reduction of illicit crop production, reestablishment of government presence and the lessening violence. The 2004 U.S. Agency for International Development report touted that Plan Colombia had established 33 justice houses, infrastructure projects were completed in eight different departments and anti-corruption units were established in 19 different government organizations with 75 civilian oversight commissions.

The same report showed that in 2003 internally displaced persons fell from the previous years' high to 215,000 personnel. Unemployment also fell precipitously, adding to the licit economy's ability to support peasants forced out of coca production.

By 2007, positive trends continued in the areas of violence reduction and establishment of the rule of law.¹³ The 2009 Coca Survey also had much good news on the status of the Colombian peasant and rural Southeastern Colombia. While coca production had actually started to increase in 2005/2006 (attributed to funding decreases in the alternative crop programs), by 2009 the production of coca had flattened out to approximately the levels of 2003 (lowest recorded levels).

Yet, in spite of the sustained high-level of effort, significant amounts of coca continued to be produced.

The 2009 Coca Survey went to extraordinary lengths to identify the reasons behind this disturbing fact. It conducted thorough statistical sampling (if flawed because of the security challenges in combat-zone poll taking) to paint a picture regarding the economic motivations of the peasant.

First, the 2009 Coca Survey noted the lower-level of coca production and the fact that manual eradication had now begun to be a significant means of coca eradication. Manual eradication provided a significant source of non-narcotic jobs to the peasantry.

More significantly, the survey went to great lengths to assess the coca peasant and his crop production methods. The survey showed that progressively over the years, as a general trend, the coca field size had shrunk and dispersed as a means to avoid aerial detection and eradication.¹⁴ The survey also explored the vast array of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides peasants utilized to promote and protect their illicit crops. The survey also found that 61 percent of the farmers decided to refine the coca leaves into either the coca paste or further refine it into the cocaine base utilizing "kitchens" on their own land. The reason: refinement (as opposed to simply selling the unprocessed leaves) was exponentially more profitable for the small farmer.

The survey showed that while profitability was a significant factor in deciding whether to grow coca, farmers were also affected by the easy accessibility of coca products to follow-on markets; the fact that buyers would pick-up and transport the product; the fact the farmer had better information on coca pricing compared to licit crops. In short, the survey indicated a coca-farming community that was savvy and educated in how to produce and package their crops to maximize profit.¹⁵ This logic is borne out in first-hand surveys of the peasantry as well.¹⁶

Conclusion

While serving as a staff officer in Afghanistan and as a brigade adviser in Colombia, I saw how illicit crop production and its role in funding lawlessness and insurgency was a challenging and frustrating problem for tactical-level commanders. Recent after-action reports indicate this remains the case in Afghanistan. Plan Colombia and its results can provide a wealth of insights and lessons learned for combat leaders.

What lessons can we learn from Plan Colombia to combat drug production?

- **Provide assistance to the peasant-farmer.** Good governance programs such as agricultural advice/assistance, establishing agricultural cooperatives and alternative crop production lead to lower drug production. Leaders can facilitate the Government of Islamic

“Plan Colombia and its results can provide a wealth of insights and lessons learned for combat leaders.”

Republic of Afghanistan and the U.S. interagency (such USAID) to establish these programs in their AO.

- **Improve transportation infrastructure.** Being able to reliably get their product to market improves the chances of farmers growing licit crops. U.S. and GIRoA assistance in building and accessing roads and / or facilitating transportation can help incentivize farmers away from illicit crops.

- **Focus on specific areas.** Just as Colombia concentrated efforts (based on the agronomics and geo-politics) in the Southeastern portion of the country, in Afghanistan provincial-level commanders can analyze and focus on specific areas of their AO for countering illicit crops.

- **Improve government presence and good governance.** Increased and effective government presence (such as schools, the judiciary and police forces) leads to lower drug production. This has been

and needs to be a continuous effort on the part of the US and GIRoA.

- **Kinetic Operations are important, but non-lethal operations are at least equally important.** Targeting and lethally interdicting the criminal/insurgent leadership and infrastructure is important, as is establishing a security presence. Peasant-farmers grow crops, however, because of market advantages. Most farmers, though, know the harmful effects of their crops. Commanders should leverage information operations to actively sway and influence farmers to stop growing their destructive produce.

In the case of Colombia, the best news is that—through a comprehensive counter-narcotics strategy—the Colombian Government has disrupted many illegally armed groups and re-established itself and the rule of law in many previously

contested areas. Once it accomplished this first, very difficult step, it quickly filled the vacuum by establishing good governance and assisting farmers in those areas to wean them away from illicit crop production. If that can be done in places such as Afghanistan, US forces and the GIRoA will have an opportunity to defeat the political and criminal insurgencies that plague their areas of responsibility. **SW**

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THE COLOMBIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNITS

BY JANICE BURTON

U.S. forces serving in Colombia work directly with the Colombian Ministry of National Defense, which is the executive-level ministry of the Government of Colombia. The Ministry of Defense has oversight of the National Army, National Armada and Air Force and the National Police. Since 1991, the Ministry of Defense has been headed by a civilian defense minister. Just as in the United States, the commander-in-chief of the Colombian Armed Forces is, by law, the president. The Minister of Defense has significant authority in the day-to-day administrative and operational control of the force.

As is the case in many countries, Colombia continues to require compulsory military service. At 18, every non-student male must present himself for military service for one to two years (normally 24 months). However, it is possible to avoid service by paying a fee, and those with high-school diplomas are exempt from combat. After completing active service, conscripts become part of the reserve. There is not a well-developed noncommissioned officer corps. In an effort to shore up the Colombian military, U.S. advisers are pushing their Colombian counterparts to work to strengthen the NCO Corps as the backbone of the force.

From 1999-2001, the U.S. government approved a \$1.3 billion aid package under the auspices of Plan Colombia, most of which was earmarked for military hardware and antidrug efforts. In the ensuing years, U.S. aid has continued with Congress approving funds to strengthen the armed forces, which included the establishment of a new commando battalion. U.S. military aid to Colombia is primarily devoted to training units of the Special Forces and Rapid Deployment Force and the special-operations units of the Colombian National Police. In the 2013 U.S. budget, approximately \$260 million is earmarked as aid to Colombia, with \$18.6 million of that going to fund Colombian forces training soldiers and police from other countries in the region.

U.S. Army special-operations forces work directly with their counterparts in the National Army, more specifically the Brigada de Fuerzas Especiales (Special Forces Brigade) and the National Police.

The Brigada de Fuerzas Especiales is comprised of four battalions whose soldiers are highly trained in both airborne and counterinsurgency operations, with a primary focus of eliminating the threat of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia and criminal activity associated with illicit drug trade. The brigade was created through resolution 011 of 1970. The Special Forces Brigade, with a motto of Faith in the Cause, is a strategic element that provides the necessary skills for the conduct of unconventional military operations inside enemy territory and occupied territory. The brigade is made up of battalions that are temporarily attached to any given Colombian army battalion or brigade, with national jurisdiction.

The Policia Nacional de Colombia also are recipients of funding and training from the United States. On the operational side,



SPECIAL OPS A Jungla with the Policia Nacional de Colombia. U.S. Army photo

U.S. Special Forces Soldiers work closely with the Junglas and the Carabineros. Started in 1989 by the British SAS, the Air-mobile Interdiction (Jungla) Program has more than 600 specially selected Colombian police who operate in three operational companies: Santa Marta, Facatativa and Tulua. Additionally, the Junglas have one reconnaissance section, which is headquartered in Bogota and a training company. The Junglas receive training in small-arms use, drug-lab destruction, night operations, small-unit tactics, sniping, long-range reconnaissance and patrol, demolitions and medicine. Their training is conducted by Colombian instructors with the aid of U.S. Army Special Forces, CIA, DEA and other U.S. government agencies.

The Carabineros are comprised of 33 groups that are separated in mobile squadrons. Each squadron is comprised of 150 men. The Carabineros are charged with providing security in the hinterlands of Colombia. With the consolidation of Colombia, the government has embarked upon a policy of territorial consolidation through the establishment of a normal justice system, strengthening of local democracy and by meeting the most urgent needs of the population. Key to meeting those goals is providing security in contested areas. The Carabineros are the field-police force that is working to provide rural policing in the ungoverned areas.

Earlier this year, a joint effort by the Narcotics Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Bogota and the 7th Special Forces Group brought the Colombian Special Forces and the National Police together for a rural police training class. It was the first class of its kind, as the two agencies do not train together on a routine basis. The military and the police were able to see the benefit of working together on missions, and plans are underway to expand the rural police-training program in the coming year. **SW**

Janice Burton is the editor of Special Warfare.

Second-quarter FY13 Boards

DATE	BOARD
8 JAN	Reserve Component Lieutenant Colonel Promotion
14 JAN	Active Component Nominative Command Sergeant Major
23 JAN	Reserve Component Colonel Promotion
4 FEB	Army Reserve AGR Sergeant First Class
4 FEB	Active Component Sergeant First Class
20 FEB	Active Lieutenant Colonel Promotion
11 MAR	Reserve Component Major Promotion

Prior Service Accessions

The Prior Service Accession program provides a unique opportunity for former Special Forces-qualified personnel to rejoin the regiment. This program is open to CMF 18-qualified noncommissioned officers who previously served in the active or Army National Guard components and desire to return to active Special Forces service.

This program is open to all Special Forces-qualified Soldiers who want to return to active duty and serve in the regiment. National Guard Soldiers are required to obtain a conditional release from the National Guard Bureau prior to applying for active service. As the CMF 18 proponent, the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School adheres to specific procedures in order to screen, process, approve and assign prior-service volunteers back into the Special Forces Regiment. The policies and procedures are in coordination and concurrence with Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, United States Army Human Resources Command and United States Army Recruiting Command.

All Special Forces-qualified enlisted Soldiers, not currently serving on active duty in Special Forces, must follow this process for screening, assessment and revalidation prior to acceptance into active service. This includes prior service, those serving in the National Guard and SF-qualified personnel on active duty, who are not serving in CMF 18 positions. Volunteers are accessed onto active duty under a conditional contract under USAREC. Conditions of their contract specify that, upon successful completion of an assessment and review board the Soldiers will then serve on active duty in CMF 18. Soldiers who do not meet assessment prerequisites or board criteria are reclassified to another MOS as directed by AHRC IAW needs of the Army and may reapply after a period of 12 months. Assessment of the Soldier's military records to include performance evaluations, academic evaluations and administrative actions are conducted by the Commander, USAJFKSWCS and culminates with the PSA board chaired by the CSM, USAJFKSWCS. Upon completion of all re-validation requirements applicants must appear at the board for final assessment and determination. PSAs accepted are then assigned within the regiment based on the Soldiers MOS, language, skills, experience along with current enlisted-strength inventory and operational readiness. Exceptions to this policy and assignments are at the discretion of the USAJFKSWCS and USASFC CSMS. The Special Forces Proponency Office CMF 18 SGM is designated as executive agent for the PSA process prior to board appearance. Since fiscal year 2008 to 2012, a total of 61 enlisted PSAs have been evaluated and boarded with 57 PSAs accepted and assigned within CMF 18 with four PSAs reclassified for duty outside ARSOF. The experience and skills these applicants possess will continue to enhance our enlisted strengths, maturity and advanced capabilities. SF Proponent will continue to focus on improving the PSA program and increasing the enlisted strengths within all active duty groups.

Skill Identifier and Personnel Development Skill Identifier

The Classification and Structure Branch of the Department of the Army G1 has approved the establishment of Skill Identifier K9, Special Operations Support, to identify officers in any area of concentration completing an assignment with a special-operations unit. To be awarded the SI, the officer must have successfully completed 12 months in an active-duty capacity with a special-operations forces designated unit. Army Reserve or National Guard officers must meet the same qualifications as active-component officers; however, they must have a cumulative 24 months of assignments in a SOF designated unit. The approval and removal authority for awarding or withdrawing the SI is the first Army special-operations forces qualified O5/LTC commander in the chain of command. Officers who have previously served in a SOF unit and meet the above qualifications must contact the United States Army Special Operations Command, DCS G1, ATTN: AOPE-MPD, 2929 Desert Storm Dr, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-9110 for award of the SI. The SI K9 is open to any AOC authorized in a SOF unit with the exception of AOC 18A, AOC 37A or AOC 38A. The effective date for SI K9 is Oct. 1, 2012.

The Classification and Structure Branch of the DA G1 has approved the establishment of a Personnel Development Skill Identifier D5R, Regional Support Element, to identify officers, warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers who have successfully completed the Advanced Training and Language Course conducted under the auspices of the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne). The PDSI D5R is open to any officer AOC 18A, warrant officer MOS 180A, and enlisted MOS 18B, 18C, 18D, 18E, 18F and 18Z.

Human Resources Command

Over the last several months, there were several personnel changes at Human Resources Command affecting Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs. Col. Donald Wolfe stepped down as the SF Branch chief and took over as the Maneuver, Fires and Effects Division director; the first SF officer to ever hold this position. Lt. Col. Dennis Heaney is on-board as his replacement as the SF Branch Chief. CW4 Lee Bedore replaced CW4 Terry Baltimore as the SF Warrant Officer Assignments officer. Lt. Col. Alex Simmons is the first PSYOP branch chief. Lt. Col. Tony Thacker is now the CA branch chief. Previously, CA and PSYOP were combined under one branch; the separation reflects the maturity of the two newest branches in the Army.

BAREFOOT RUNNING FOR INJURY PREVENTION: PROCEED WITH CAUTION!

BY JIM FERNANDES, PT, DPT, ATC, CSCS



Recently there has been a trend among runners to wear shoes with less support to avoid injury. The belief is that thousands of years ago humans did not run in cushioned shoes and that we began to run with more of a heel-strike pattern as a result of the extra support. Studies show that with a cushioned/supportive shoe, a runner tends to strike the ground with his heel producing more impact force through the legs, suggestive of higher risk for injury. This excessive force is reduced when striking with the midfoot or forefoot as would typically occur with barefoot running. It is important to note; however, that no studies show that a forefoot/midfoot-strike pattern will lead to fewer injuries.

With the advent of minimalist footwear — shoes that mimic running barefoot but provide a barrier to rough surfaces, glass or rocks, more and more people are adopting this style of running. Although a change in foot-strike pattern may help someone who is having pain with running, a thorough exam should be performed by a medical provider to determine the true cause of the pain. If barefoot running is something you are interested in, here are some common questions and recommendations that may assist you in your decision.

How do I get started?

Slow, Slow, Slow! Progression to minimal running should take six months to a year to avoid injury. This is the number one mistake people make when switching to minimal footwear. If appropriate, it is ideal to supplement use of a minimal shoe into your current running program. For example, do an easy warm up of 5-10 minutes wearing your minimal shoes and then finish your run wearing your regular shoes. Progress time in your minimal shoes no more than 10 percent over the course of each week. In fact, it may be beneficial to walk around in your minimal shoes daily for several weeks prior to even beginning running in them. This will minimize muscle soreness as you adapt.

What can I expect as I start?

Muscle soreness, particularly in the calf/Achilles. Since you no longer have support from a shoe, the muscles of the foot have to work harder to stabilize your body. Additionally, changing the way in which you run will demand more from these muscles; . This is synonymous to how you feel after completing a good workout for the first time after a long break from exercise. It is important not to progress your time/distance in the minimalist shoes until this soreness subsides. Ensure you properly foam roll and stretch your calves after you run to ease this soreness and decrease your chances of an injury.

What are some trouble signs?

Pain lasting longer than three days should be evaluated by a medical provider. It is not uncommon for someone to develop stress fractures in the foot, particularly the top and outsides, so you will want to follow up on pain in these regions if it does not improve with rest. If you have a sensory problem in your feet due to an old injury or neurological deficit, you should not run barefoot or in minimal shoes. Use caution adopting this style of running if you have gained more than 15 pounds in the past 12 months.

What surfaces should I run on?

Typically a firm/flat surface such as a track is the most ideal place to start running. Running on uneven surface or too soft of a surface changes the way you run in addition to requiring a higher amount of ankle stability/strength. Running in minimal shoes or barefoot is significantly more demanding on the muscles of the lower leg without the demand of an uneven surface adding to it.

Bottom line, if you're thinking of giving minimalist running a try, progress slowly and be attentive to your body's response. If you are looking to change your running style in an effort to resolve pain, first consult with your medical provider. **SW**



Jim Fernandes, PT, DPT, ACT, CSCS is a physical therapist for the THOR3 Program at the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School.

REVOLUTION 2.0

Revolution 2.0 is Wael Ghonim's account of his experiences during the Arab Spring Revolution in January 2011. If you are an unconventional warfighter, you should know Ghonim's name because he almost single-handedly orchestrated an unconventional-warfare campaign using the Internet as a mobilizing force. His book is a four-phase blueprint of how he set about changing not only his native Egypt by overthrowing the government of an unwanted dictator, but inspired a transnational Arab youth movement to challenge their dictatorial leaders. The following is a summarized outline of how Ghonim organized his campaign (injected with my perspective as a Psychological Operations officer).

Phase one: Convince people to join his Facebook page and become members - not an insignificant behavior considering the risk of being discovered by the Egyptian Secret Police and being incarcerated, interrogated, tortured or even killed for openly opposing the ruling party. Ghonim was able to first gain this seemingly minor milestone by tugging at Egyptians' heartstrings. He adopted the persona of an upper middle-class; educated professional who had been beaten to a gruesome death by the secret police for protesting against the ruling party. Ghonim began to post Facebook messages as though they were coming from the martyr had he still been alive. This particular martyr story stood out to Ghonim from the dozens of other secret police victims because he was nearly identical to the victim in social class, age and political stance. It finally occurred to him that the level of the regime's brutality and corruption could destroy any Egyptian's life. And in fact, after decades, it had already destroyed the will of an entire generation of Egyptians to speak out against the regime.

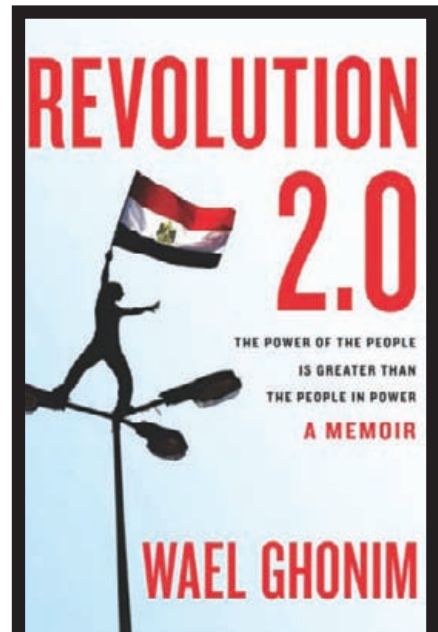
Phase two: Convince these members to take their activism a step further and "like" his Facebook page and actually post comments. Each phase required an individual to assume a higher degree of risk, yet became acceptable because the

individual had graduated from the previous lower-level risk and was ready to accept a moderate increase in risk.

Phase three: Participate in online campaigns and even contribute content (poetry, graphic design for logos and other promotional material, videos, photos, composing and recording songs of the revolution) capitalizing on the talents of the Facebook page members themselves. This not only attracted more members by visually, aurally and emotionally arousing those still stuck in phase two, but solidified the positions of those who actually contributed content and psychologically positioned themselves to commit to phase four.

Phase four: Mobilize, take action. Until this phase, individuals have accepted the position and the arguments of the campaign and have participated willingly in every way possible short of actually showing their face in public in solidarity with the movement. The increase of risk assumed by the individual is greater in the transition between phase three and phase four than in any other phase transition. Yet, it is made possible because the individual has participated relatively anonymously to this point, building passion for the cause. The transition between phase three and phase four took the longest amount of time. It became inevitable when Ghonim linked the date of the planned protest in Tahrir Square to the annual date to honor the police in Egypt after learning of the successes of a similar social media-enabled revolution in Tunisia. Not only did the protesters rally against the injustices of the Secret Police, they also honored the service of those police officers who served honorably by resisting the regime's intimidation practice contributing to the legitimacy of the protesters' cause.

How does this apply to SOF? Ghonim brilliantly describes how the Egyptian movement manifested. It did not happen accidentally. It was created and there was a formula to how it succeeded. We can learn how an unwanted government is



DETAILS

By Wael Ghonim

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Reviewed by:

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overthrown in the modern, digital age. Social media as a mobilizing force was not unique to Egypt. Ghonim was convinced by the online-activism-turned-actual-activism successes in Tunisia. It was the Tunisian successes that sparked the idea to replicate a similar mobilization model in Egypt. And in turn, sparked similar efforts across the Arab world to mobilize citizens and challenge governments. The conditions in both Egypt and Tunisia were ripe for change. All the elements for success existed: public disgust for the ruling class (segmented population), a general disregard of Internet activism by the regime (a weakened government), a nationwide demographic of young people able to communicate with each other instantly (favorable terrain; i.e. dominance of the Internet) and an example of the success achieved by others outside of Egypt. What was miss-



COLOMBIA: A CASE STUDY FOR SOF AS THE 7TH WARFIGHTING FUNCTION

BY JANICE BURTON

The first time Army special-operations forces stepped foot in the jungles of Colombia was in 1959. In 1962, the Colombian government asked Maj. Gen. William Yarborough, then-commander of the Special Warfare Center, to come and do an appraisal of their armed forces.

For more than 50 years, U.S. special-operations forces, primarily U.S. Special Forces, have been in and out of Colombia. Today, operating under the auspices of the U.S. Military Group, Colombia, SOF are central to all actions undertaken by the United States to support the government of Colombia. But they aren't alone.

If you were to catalog all of the U.S. resources operating in Colombia, you would find a host of agencies with three letter names (some four), as well as a contingent of the conventional force. But what you won't find is any operation ongoing where SOF aren't involved in some capacity.

Why?

It may be because SOF have a historic presence in the country. In Colombia, the term persistent presence has real meaning. Senior U.S. military officials who are leading the mission in Colombia today have many deployments to the country under their belts. They were there as young captains and majors. They served on the teams training the Colombian forces. They moved through the same jungles, were bitten by same mosquitoes and mourned the same losses as their counterparts who happen to be in power in Colombia today.

U.S. SOF have built habitual relationships with the members of the Colombian army and national police. SOF are known by the soldiers serving on the frontlines of the fight, not only for their expertise, but also for their loyalty to their partners. It is to SOF that the conventional forces and the interagency turn for a holistic view of Colombia.

Unlike operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, where operational necessity drives battlefield synchronization and integration, operations in Colombia are planned specifically with the idea of synchronization at the forefront. It's driven not only from

the conventional force, but also from the interagency. Everyone understands the unique skills and capabilities they each bring to the table, and in particular the unique skills of SOF.

Col. Michael Brown, commander, U.S. Military Group, Colombia, is charged with synchronizing the U.S. military efforts in Colombia. He sees his role as that of a ringmaster in a multi-ring circus. What Brown does well is ensure that the military isn't acting alone and that its efforts, and particular those of SOF, are synchronized throughout the conventional force and the interagency.

"SOF brings unique capabilities that cannot be replicated by any other Department of Defense organization," said Brown. "SOF becomes more important as it is synchronized with other activities."

And that's really the drive behind creating a 7th Warfighting Function. The creation of the 7th WFF, is really a reorganization of lethal and nonlethal activities, which will "institutionalize the capabilities and skills necessary to work with host nations, regional partners and indigenous populations ... The addition of a new functional cell that governs and synchronizes conventional and special operations forces' capabilities to assess, shape deter and influence foreign security environments will draw SOF and CF operational frameworks closer and thus provide a means to integrate their capabilities."¹

This is being done in Colombia, as interagency coordination is done on a daily basis between the conventional force, SOF, the interagency and the host nation.

Brown may state the case for integration best.

"I always say that you should never have a moment when you realize you are the only organization doing something. If you find yourself out there alone, something has gone very wrong." **SW**

Janice Burton is the editor of Special Warfare.

Notes

1. "Special Operations/Conventional Force Interdependence: A Critical Role in Prevent, Shape, Win," *Army*, p. 39-42, June 2012.

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ing in Egypt until Jan 2011 was a vision of what success looked like and an agent with the technical and marketing savvy to leverage the connecting mechanism of social media, in other words: leadership.

I couldn't help but to draw many comparisons between Ghonim's experience and Orson Welles' classic 1984. Both involve a ruling class that controls

thought through the suppression of opposing political ideas. Both involve an individual recognizing the situation and supporting a revolution to overthrow the government. Both involve a protagonist who is captured by the regime security element and incarcerated, interrogated, secluded from the outside world while guards attempt to coerce the individual

into adopting the cause of the regime. Fortunately for Ghonim, his story turned out better than Winston Smith's.

This book is a fascinating read and sheds light on many nuances of Egyptian and Middle Eastern culture while giving an insider's look at the psyche of an Arab population primed to overthrow a government. **SW**

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