IMPLICATIONS FOR US SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES AND THE INTERAGENCY IN PHASE ZERO: CASE STUDIES IN THE PACIFIC THEATER, 2000 TO 2014

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

KYLE M JOHNSTON, MAJOR, US ARMY
B.S., United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, 2005

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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Using a qualitative case study methodology in this thesis, I explore how USSOF and the interagency support chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders in achieving national security objectives. Analysis of national security documents, research literature, and US phase zero counter terrorism campaigns in the Philippines and Indonesia reveals four major themes. First, threat groups exploit instability, and voids in phase zero engagement prevent the United States from understanding that exploitation. Second, authorities can be mutually supportive for the DoS and USSOF, but they can also unintentionally narrow the scope of phase zero operations and create an "authorities trap." Third, the contemporary operating environment is complex, and the US lacks a strategy that synchronizes all the elements of national power to navigate that environment effectively. Finally, understanding the operational environment is paramount for USSOF to effectively execute phase zero operations. These four themes support three recommendations: the legislative foundation of the US national security structure needs to be updated; a national security council level directorate needs to be established to develop and execute phase zero strategy; and Theater Special Operations Commands need to drive national strategy through comprehensive, regional phase zero campaign planning that is integrated at all levels of the GCC and US country team.

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Name of Candidate: Major Kyle M Johnston

Thesis Title: Implications for US Special Operations Forces and the Interagency in Phase Zero: Case Studies in the Pacific Theater, 2000 to 2014

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
DeEtte A. Lombard, M.A., M.S.

_____, Member
Joseph G. Babb, Ph.D.

_____, Member
LTC Steven P. Zynda, M.A.

Accepted this 10th day of June 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

IMPLICATIONS FOR US SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES AND THE INTERAGENCY IN PHASE ZERO: CASE STUDIES IN THE PACIFIC THEATER, 2000 TO 2014, by Major Kyle M Johnston, 100 pages.

Using a qualitative case study methodology in this thesis, I explore how USSOF and the interagency support chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders in achieving national security objectives. Analysis of national security documents, research literature, and US phase zero counter terrorism campaigns in the Philippines and Indonesia reveals four major themes. First, threat groups exploit instability, and voids in phase zero engagement prevent the United States from understanding that exploitation. Second, authorities can be mutually supportive for the DoS and USSOF, but they can also unintentionally narrow the scope of phase zero operations and create an "authorities trap." Third, the contemporary operating environment is complex, and the US lacks a strategy that synchronizes all the elements of national power to navigate that environment effectively. Finally, understanding the operational environment is paramount for USSOF to effectively execute phase zero operations. These four themes support three recommendations: the legislative foundation of the US national security structure needs to be updated; a national security council level directorate needs to be established to develop and execute phase zero strategy; and Theater Special Operations Commands need to drive national strategy through comprehensive, regional phase zero campaign planning that is integrated at all levels of the GCC and US country team.

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ACRONYMS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
AQ	Al Qaeda
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COM	Chief of Mission
CT	Counterterrorism
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IMET	International Military and Education Training
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
JIIM	Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational
LRC	Light Reaction Company
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines
OHD	Operating in the Human Domain
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia
US	United States

USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USG	United States Government
USPACOM	United States Pacific Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSOCPAC	United States Special Operations Command Pacific
UW	Unconventional Warfare
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal—military power, better homeland defenses, law enforcement, intelligence, and vigorous efforts to cut off terrorist financing. The war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise of uncertain duration. America will help nations that need our assistance in combating terror. And America will hold to account nations that are compromised by terror, including those who harbor terrorists—because the allies of terror are the enemies of civilization. The United States and countries cooperating with us must not allow the terrorists to develop new home bases. Together, we will seek to deny them sanctuary at every turn.
>
> — George W Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States*

US Special Operations Forces and the Interagency in Phase Zero

The events of September 11th, 2001 redefined the American paradigm of security—no longer was the threat of American military power enough to deter large scale attacks on the homeland. In the year that followed that historic day, President George W. Bush laid out a vision for ensuring American security that set a precedent for preemptive action unseen in modern foreign policy. The Bush Doctrine, as it became known, was codified in the 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States*. In the introduction, the president stated that "the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world."[1] For the first time in American history, the foundation of securing the

[1] US Executive Office of the President of the United States, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2002).

American people meant projecting power across the globe and creating free-market democracies to prevent attacks on the homeland. As Pulitzer Prize winning author and Yale University professor John Lewis Gaddis reflected on this change: "a nation that began with the belief that it could not be safe as long as pirates, marauders, and the agents of predatory empires remained active along its borders has now taken the position that it cannot be safe as long as terrorists and tyrants remain active anywhere in the world."[2] After September 11, 2001, every tool in the arsenal of American power was dedicated to achieving a democratic, liberal world order.

The military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq that followed are well known to the public at large. Lesser known operations, but foundational to the President's global counterterrorism (CT) and preemption efforts, were those executed by United States Special Operations Forces and their interagency partners outside declared theaters of armed conflict. In places like the Philippines and Indonesia, United States (US) diplomats and military commanders pursued one of the president's top CT priorities to, "strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends."[3] These operations began in the aftermath of 9/11, and endure today as a cornerstone of securing American interests abroad.

The national security strategy of the US has evolved since President Bush left office, but the legacy of the Bush Doctrine permeates the tenants of US Foreign Policy. The US continues to use its power, both hard and soft, to identify and preemptively

[2] John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[3] US Executive Office of the President of the United States, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2002), 5.

interdict threats before a crisis occurs. The balance between diplomacy and force, between carrots and sticks, is what former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Harvard Kennedy School Professor Joseph Nye coined "smart power."[4] This term has come to define the approach to American foreign policy since 9/11, as the US pursues its interests through a blend of coercion, payment, and attraction. President Barack Obama, in the 2015 *National Security Strategy of the United States*, reiterates the projection of smart power to shape environments before conflict occurs: "American diplomacy and leadership, backed by a strong military, remain essential to deterring future acts of inter-state aggression and provocation by reaffirming our security commitments to allies and partners, investing in their capabilities to withstand coercion, imposing costs on those who threaten their neighbors or violate fundamental international norms, and embedding our actions within wider regional strategies."[5] In the US special operations community, the integration of diplomacy and warfighting before the point of crisis is called "phase zero."

Phase zero is any and all activities that happen before the first phases of traditional military operations that serve to shape the environment and prevent or deter future conflicts from emerging or escalating.[6] The term phase zero entered popular lexicon following the publication, "New Thinking at USEUCOM: The Phase Zero

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[4] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 4 (July/August 2009): 160-163.

[5] US Executive Office of the President of the United States. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 10.

[6] Charles Wald, "New Thinking at EUCOM: The Phase Zero Campaign," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (4th Quarter October 2006): 72-73.

Campaign," in the October 2006 edition of *Joint Forces Quarterly* (*JFQ*). In this article, USEUCOM Deputy Commander Charles Wald stated:

> The U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, is fighting a new kind of campaign in the global war on terror. . . . These dangers require new thinking and a new understanding of the differences between theater security cooperation (TSC) and traditional warfighting . . . the command is fighting the war on terror using a new approach, focusing of terrorism's longterm, underlying conditions. This deliberate strategy of engagement is called Phase Zero, but in truth it is much more than just a new phase of systematic campaign planning; it is a new form of campaign in and of itself.[7]

Following the publication of this *JFQ* article, the Special Operations community adopted the term phase zero as a relevant descriptor of regular operations, actions, and activities (OAAs) conducted by US Special Operations Forces (USSOF) during Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) events. These events are bi- and multi-lateral events that progress the objectives laid out in the geographic combatant commanders Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) to enhance partner force capacity and interoperability, shape the operational environment, prevent the escalation of armed conflict, and promote US interests. Successful phase zero operations also serve to develop infrastructure in order to offer a gambit of policy options if armed conflict does erupt and increased military intervention is required.

Phase zero operations, actions, and activities (OAAs) are the primary venue for USSOF to expand its global network and develop the capacity of its partners to counter threats to US interests. USSOF is currently, and will continue to, execute the majority of these phase zero activities in sovereign nations under the auspices of the US ambassador, or chief of mission (COM), and the objectives of his or her diplomatic mission. In this

[7] Wald, "New Thinking," 72.

environment USSOF and the interagency work hand and hand to achieve US national and regional security interests. The integration of USSOF and American diplomats is a new reality in the post 9/11 national security environment.

The nature of executing a blend of diplomacy and special operations outside a declared theater of armed conflict is complex. The contemporary operating environment involves not just transnational terrorist groups like Al Qaeda (AQ), but a dynamic range of actors that challenge existing international norms in pursuit of their own self interests. Established powers like China and Russia are turning more and more to legal, cyber, and political warfare and the use of proxy forces to avoid direct attribution and military confrontation with the US. Meanwhile, non-state actors take advantage of cheap, lethal technologies to empower resistant and insurgent movements, and exploit regions with relative instability. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton observed that for this type of environment, "we need Special Operations Forces who are as comfortable drinking tea with tribal leaders as raiding a terrorist compound. We also need diplomats and development experts who understand modern warfare and are up to the job of being your partners."[8]

The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) describes the complex environment that requires smart power projection as the "gray zone." US Navy Captain Philip Kapusta of USSOCOM Directorate of Strategy, Plans, and Policy writes that the gray zone is: "competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality. They are characterized by

[8] Hillary Clinton, "Remarks at the Special Operations Command Gala Dinner," US Department of State, May 23, 2012, accessed May 4, 2016, http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2012/05/190805.htm.

ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks."[9] For US Special Operations Forces (USSOF), the gray zone is an operational reality. By design, USSOF, "work in hostile, denied, or politically and/or diplomatically sensitive environments."[10] This doctrinal distinction of USSOF as a force designed to work in sensitive environments is important; USSOF is inherently the Department of Defense (DoD) force of choice when operational or strategic effects are required in an environment that falls somewhere between diplomacy, law enforcement, and armed conflict—in the gray zone. In this environment, the US policy makers and executioners face difficult decisions: How do we respond appropriately? What are the right tools to deter or counter non-state and state sponsored naval, ground, air, cyber or terrorist militias? How do we employ these tools without escalating the conflict or delegitimizing our regional partners?

Phase Zero in the Pacific Theater

The Pacific theater is an ideal venue to explore USSOF and interagency phase zero operations. The strategic rebalance to the Pacific theater outlined by the Obama Administration in 2011 highlights the importance of the region and the relevance of the phase zero discussion in the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM).[11] Specifically

[9] Philip Kapusta, USSOCOM White Paper, "The Gray Zone" (MacDill Air Force Base, 2015), 1.

[10] US Department of Defense. Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), ix.

[11] White House, "Resourcing the Rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific Region," April 12, 2013, accessed November 15, 2013, https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/04/12/resourcing-rebalance-toward-asia-pacific-region.

in Southeast Asia and the South China Sea, Chinese aggression is threatening existing international norms and challenging US prominence in the Pacific theater. Islamic extremist groups, pledged to AQ and the Islamic State, maneuver with some freedom in separatist and isolated islands across Southeast Asia. This complex environment, littered with gray zone ambiguities, is an ideal venue to explore the utilization and employment of USSOF as a tool for foreign policy. In this thesis, I will analyze two vignettes in USPACOM to examine how USSOF and the interagency (IA) can improve Chiefs of Mission and Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) foreign assistance efforts.

The first case study will explore the U.S. Military CT and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in the Philippines. This vignette is unique. Unlike the operations with other Southeast Asian nations, a joint task force was established in the Philippines in 2002 as part of Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines (OEF-P). This joint task force demarcated several southern Philippine islands as a combat zone for US troops. The US combat mission in the Philippines focused on advise and assist operations against AQ affiliated terrorist organizations such as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

The second case study will discuss the United States Government (USG) campaign in Indonesia to counter the Islamic extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). JI is an AQ affiliated terrorist organization that came to global prominence after the 2002 Bali night-club bombing that killed over two hundred people. The group also has links to the attack on the *United States Ship (USS) Cole* in 2000, and the attacks in the US on September 11, 2001.

These vignettes are particularly relevant for several reasons. Due to differing operational environments, a stark contrast exists in how the USG executed its CT

missions in the Philippines and Indonesia. This contrast provides an opportunity to juxtapose two campaigns that took place within one GCC. Just as importantly, as these countries addressed their internal terrorism threats, Chinese aggression in the South China Sea threaten interests of both the Philippines and Indonesia. This geopolitical tension adds to the complexities of the gray zone in this region, and creates a unique set of challenges for each (COM) and geographic combatant commander. The nature of these conflicts raises the question of whether or not the structures built by USSOF and the interagency are adequate to respond to gray zone challenges faced by the US and its partners in the region.

These two cases provide a unique lens through which to study how special operations and the interagency support COM and geographic combatant commander objectives for several reasons. First and foremost, both of these campaigns were executed within the borders of, sanctioned by, and conducted by, with, and through the host nation government. Additionally, both of these campaigns were initiated in response to an AQ-linked terrorist threat and embedded in the broader Global War on Terror (GWOT).

Because of the connection with the GWOT, these two campaigns are described as CT campaigns, even though they were executed through foreign assistance programs. In the Philippines, USSOF utilized a broad foreign internal defense (FID) and COIN approach to execute their CT Mission, but it was a CT operation nonetheless. In Indonesia, the Department of State (DoS) utilized multiple funding authorities to build the capacity of the Indonesian Government and the development of their CT capabilities. So the US waged a CT operation in Southeast Asia by building partner capacity in Indonesia and the Philippines through foreign assistance. Both these CT campaigns took

place within a sovereign country, under the invitation of the host nation government, and at the discretion of the US ambassador (USAMB) or COM.

Research Question

The primary research question in this study is: How does USSOF and the interagency work to achieve national security objectives at the country team level in phase zero? What are the costs and benefits of a USSOF-led Counterterrorism Campaign versus a DoS-led Counterterrorism Campaign? Where are the tensions in executing phase zero operations and where can USSOF and the interagency better complement each other to advance the geographic combatant commander and COM objectives in the Pacific theater? This study attempts to answer these questions and contribute to the existing literature on phase zero and the utilization of USSOF in the spectrum of gray zone environments.

Assumptions

The major assumption accepted to pursue this research is that a qualitative case study methodology, based in part on literature written by participants of the events described, can provide an objective reflection of tensions and effectiveness in executing phase zero operations. With the Philippines case study in particular, most of the literature reviewed was published by former commanders of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, or historians and researchers contracted by the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). Although a variety of assessments are provided throughout the literature, personal bias cannot be eliminated from those authors who write about their past experiences.

Limitations and Delimitations

The methodology used in this thesis delimits the analysis to a description of two case studies in order to provide a broad understanding of the environment and provide common themes useful to phase zero planners. The use of only two case studies without quantitative metrics, however, prevents any broad conclusions on causality or correlation between specific actions of the US and the effects on the environment. The examination of the case studies is also not inclusive of all foreign assistance the US provided to the countries examined. Although the many different types of foreign assistance are identified in the literature, only the foreign assistance programs tied directly to the CT campaigns in Indonesia and the Philippines are discussed. Additionally, the case studies examine two lead agencies and two specific CT campaigns within the sovereignty of the respective countries. This thesis does not examine some of the regional cooperation and CT efforts developed in Southeast Asia, or the lead efforts of other USG agencies like the Central Intelligence Agency or the Drug Enforcement Agency.[12]

It is also important to acknowledge that all conflicts are dynamic, and conflict environments are in states of constant change. The grievances, motivations, and ideologies that may drive a group to violence change over time. Their allegiances, partnerships, and priorities also change over time. This fluidity creates difficulty for any

[12] For example, the Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN) reaffirmed a regional commitment to counterterrorism at a 2007 "ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism," that stated, "This Convention shall provide for the framework for regional cooperation to counter, prevent and suppress terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to deepen cooperation among law enforcement agencies and relevant authorities of the Parties in countering terrorism." Association of South East Asian States (ASEAN), "ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism," January 13, 2007, accessed March 15, 2016, https://www.unodc.org/tldb/pdf/ASEAN%20Convention%20on%20Counter%20Terrorism.doc.

researcher to categorize and aggregate groups in order to describe the environment and identify patterns. This challenge of fluidity in the environment is present in this study.

Groups like Abu Sayyaf and JI are not monolithic. During the timeframe of this study, significant infighting within these groups created factions and splinter cells. The allegiances of these groups are influenced by the success and notoriety of other groups like AQ and Daesh. More importantly for this study, their objectives and regional alliances changed as the political and military environment changed. As the Philippine Government negotiated with the Islamic separatist group the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the MILF cut ties with ASG. As a result, the ASG lost active sanctuary in the critical southern islands of Mindanao. In Indonesia, as the CT police forces effectively decapitated the JI leadership in the mid-2000s, the group shifted their terror attacks from western targets to primarily police forces. Additionally, JI and ASG actively worked together during the timeframe of this study, had dozens of local and regional threat group associations, and continually redefined these relationships.

To account for this dynamic environment, this thesis will focus only on the CT efforts against JI in Indonesia and ASG in the Philippines between 2000 and 2014. This study will not attempt to dissect the local dynamics of war or evaluate the root causes of instability in the Philippines or Indonesia. Instead, this study will focus on the declared threat by the US and host nation governments, and the effects of the campaign to thwart those threats. The timeframe reflects the initial intervention of USSOF into the Philippines following the kidnapping of US citizens in 2000. This study ends in 2014, due primarily to the limited amount of data available after that time.

A major limitation to this study is classification. Phase zero operations, while not inherently classified, are codified by geographic combatant commanders in their Theater Campaign Plans (TCPs). These TCPs, and the corollary documents provided by the Theater Special Operations Command to support the TCP are classified. Without the ability to dissect the details of these planning documents, assessing the effectiveness of a specific USPACOM line of effort in Southeast Asia is both naïve and ineffective. Instead, analysis of openly cited events and operations will assess first, US policy, and then the challenges in executing that policy in terms of building the global SOF network. In this regard, the scope of this paper is limited to the unclassified level of discussion.

These limitations and delimitations require that I do not attempt to describe the effectiveness of the USPACOM TCP or United States Special Operations Command Pacific's (USSOCPAC's) execution of phase zero operations within that TCP. Instead, I will provide a short discussion of how USSOF and the interagency work to achieve national security objectives in phase zero. Through the discussion of two vignettes, I hope to elucidate current challenges and identify potential solutions to improve the effectiveness of USSOF and interagency phase zero operations in the gray zone.

Key Definitions

Country Team: "The country team is the heart of Embassy operational decision making, in virtually all posts overseas, including consulates outside the capital." It includes the heads of all Embassy sections and the heads of each USG agency at post.[13]

[13] US Department of State, "RS401, Introduction to Department of State Agency Culture," accessed May 4, 2016, http://www.state.gov/courses/rs401/page_25.htm.

Foreign Assistance: When describing the whole-of-government approach in Indonesia and the Philippines, this paper will use the term "foreign assistance." This is not a doctrinal military term defined by a joint publication, but does have legal precedent as defined by the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act. This act went into law, "To promote the foreign policy, security, and general welfare of the United States by assisting people of the world in their efforts toward economic development and internal and external security, and for other purposes."[14] Throughout this paper, the term foreign assistance will reflect the concepts of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, and include all tools used by the USG to improve a partner nation's capacity. The broad nature of this definition includes all the military and non-military initiatives that are authorized by law to develop a foreign power's capacity for security.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID): Joint Publication 3-22 defines foreign internal defense as "the US activities that support an host nation's (HN) internal defense and development strategy designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security, consistent with US national security objectives and policies."[15]

Global SOF Network: This paper will refer often to the term global SOF network. This network, as described above is, "A globally networked force of SOF, interagency, allies, and partners able to rapidly respond and persistently address regional

[14] US House of Representatives, Public Law 87-194, September 1, 1961, accessed March 26, 2016, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-75/pdf/STATUTE-75-Pg424-2.pdf.

[15] US Department of Defense. Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), II-1.

contingencies and threats to stability."[16] This network has physical and geographical elements, but it is built upon relationships. The global SOF network must be empowered, nurtured, and maintained through persistent engagement by regionally aligned SOF who understand local cultures, values, and languages.

Integrated Country Strategy: The Integrated Country Strategy (ICS), as defined by the DoS, "is a multi-year plan that articulates the U.S. priorities in a given country. The ICS sets Mission Goals and Mission Objectives through a coordinated and collaborative planning effort among Department of State (State), USAID, and other U.S. Government (USG) agencies operating overseas under Chief of Mission authority. The primary audiences for the ICS are the Country Team, Bureaus, State resource and policy analysts, and senior leadership in the USG."[17]

Internal Defense and Development (IDAD): Internal Defense and Development is a host nation's program that "focuses on building viable political, economic, military, and social institutions that respond to the needs of the HN's society."[18]

Phase Zero: The definition described earlier in this chapter by General Wald will be used throughout this thesis. Of note, the use of the term phase zero used by Special Operations is not synonymous with the phase 0 in the conventional six phases of military

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[16] United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, 2014), 6.

[17] US Agency for International Development, "Integrated Country Strategy: Guidance and Instructions," accessed March 25, 2016, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAA879.pdf.

[18] US Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), II-1.

operations (Shape, Deter, Seize the Initiative, Dominate, Stability, Transition, Shape).[19] The phase 0 in the phases of traditional military operations applies to shaping the environment specifically for deterrence, or facilitating the escalation of conventional forces within the context of a larger concept of operations plan (CONPLAN). Special Operations phase zero operations, on the other hand, build host nation capacity, achieve effects across the diplomatic and military spectrum, prevent the escalation of conflicts, and set conditions favorable to U.S. interests within the context of a Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) or Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) outlined by the Geographic Combatant Commander.

Security Force Assistance: According to Joint Publication 3-05 Special Operations, "USG security sector reform (SSR) focuses on the way a HN provides safety, security, and justice with civilian government oversight. The DoD's primary role in security sector reform is to support the reform, restructure, or reestablishment of the HN armed forces and the defense aspect of the security sector, which is accomplished through security force assistance."[20]

Special Operations: This thesis will use the doctrinal term for special operations as defined in Joint Publication 3-05 and Joint Publication 1-02: "Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with

[19] US Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011).

[20] US Department of Defense, JP 3-05, xi.

and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk."[21]

[21] US Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Dictionary of Terms* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), 221.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> We simply cannot surge trust at the time of crisis.
> — General Joseph Votel, Commander, USSOCOM

The literature used in this study is generally categorized as official U.S. policy and strategy, or academic literature and open source media. The official documents include national security documents that are published as policy and strategy like the National Security Strategy, Defense Strategic Guidance, and publications from the USSOCOM. These documents define and describe the contemporary operating environment and the relevance for special operations to execute activities that fall outside the current war-peace continuum. The academic literature, on the other hand, will help analyze and interpret these official documents, and provide insight into the execution of foreign assistance in the countries addressed in this study.

Official Documents

The execution of US Foreign Policy and military action abroad is codified in law under the Code of Laws of the United States of America (U.S.C). Two of these titles, Title 10 and Title 22, are the primary titles relevant to this study and are briefly outlined below. U.S.C. Title 10 describes the role, functions, and authorities of the Armed Forces of the United States. Two sections within Title 10 mandate the legal requirement for USSOCOM to develop and execute a Special Operations strategy globally. The first one, which is specific to USSOCOM is Section 167: Unified combatant command for special operations forces. This section establishes USSOCOM as a functional combatant

command for special operations and gives additional responsibility to USSOCOM that includes: developing strategy, doctrine, and tactics; preparing and submitting budget proposals; program recommendations; and training assigned forces.[22] Section 164: Commanders of combatant commands: assignment; powers and duties outlines all the combatant commander's responsibilities: "responsible to the President of the United States and Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) for missions assigned; gives direction to subordinate commands; prescribes the chain of command to commands and forces; organizes the commands and forces; employs forces within that command; and assigns command functions, and approves internal organization."[23]

The U.S.C Title 22: Foreign relations and intercourse, describes the responsibilities and authorities for conducting foreign relations. Chapter 32: Foreign Assistance, Subchapter II: Military assistance and sales (subsections 2301-2349bb-6) of Title 22, provides the legal authority for the DoS to fund a variety of foreign programs in support of US interests. These programs include Military Assistance, Foreign Military Sales, Economic Support Fund, International Military and Education Training (IMET), and Anti-terrorism Assistance.[24] Although the DoS is the designated lead agency for

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[22] U.S.C., Title 10, *Armed Forces*, accessed March 26, 2016, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title10/pdf/USCODE-2011-title10-subtitleA-partI-chap6-sec167.pdf; United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020, The Global SOF Network* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, 2014), 3.

[23] United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020: The Global SOF Network*, 3; U.S.C., Title 10, *Armed Forces*.

[24] U.S.C. Title 22, Chapter 32, Subchapter II, *Military Assistance and Sales*, accessed March 26, 2016, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/chapter-32/subchapter-II.

these administering these programs, the DoD, and subsequently USSOF, is often the lead agency in executing any foreign assistance funded activity related to defense or security.

It is important to note that although these authorities are distinct, they are also complementary in nature. Outside a declared theater of war, and in order to counter gray zone threats, chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders have to rely on a myriad of mutually supporting authorities. The case studies that follow in chapters 3 and 4 illuminate the interaction of these authorities at the country team and GCC level.

While U.S.C outlines the legislative and funding authorities for national security and foreign assistance, it is the National Security Strategy (NSS) that outlines the President's objectives for national security. This document provides the strategic guidance for all agencies involved in the national security of the United States.[25] The National Security Act of 1947 established the current national security framework and required the publication of the NSS, and with the exception of the notable amendments in the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, remains relatively unchanged. In support of the NSS, the DoD publishes three strategic documents that translate the policy objectives outlined by the NSS into strategic defense goals and missions.

The *Quadrennial Defense Review* (*QDR*), the *National Defense Strategy* (*NDS*), and the *National Military Strategy* (*NMS*) are published on a rotational, but complementary cycle.[26] The Commander, USSOCOM, currently builds his strategic

[25] Daniel A. Gilewitch, "The Theater Campaign Plan: Translating Strategy to Engagement" (C204B Course, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2015), 3.

[26] Ibid.

guidance on two additional documents published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff titled *Mission Command* (April, 2012), and the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* (September, 2012).[27] The details of each of these documents is not essential for the content of this thesis, but understanding their relation to the strategy of USSOCOM is important. The Commander, USSOCOM writes his vision and strategy to directly complement the strategic guidance issued by the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The current vision and strategy of USSOCOM is outlined in two documents: *SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear*; *Operating in the Human Domain*; and the *2015 USSOCOM Posture Statement to Congress*. This strategy starts with the vision for the future of special operations laid out by Admiral William McRaven, the former commander of USSOCOM, in *SOCOM 2020*. This document "provides strategic direction for SOF to prepare, posture, and operate in dynamic and diverse environments, often under ambiguous circumstances."[28] Within his strategic vision, McRaven identified four initiatives for USSOCOM: win the current fight; expand the global SOF network; preserve the force and families; and provide responsive resourcing to meet dynamic future challenges.[29] These four initiatives are integrated into a vision that balances the need to counter immediate threats to the nation while preparing the USSOF community to thrive in the complex operating environments of the future.

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[27] United States Special Operations Command, SOCOM 2020, *The Global SOF Network*, 4.

[28] United States Special Operations Command, SOCOM 2020, *Forging the Tip of the Spear*, 2.

[29] Ibid., 1.

The first initiative, win the current fight, establishes USSOCOM's commitment to the enduring international efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and its mandated mission to CT worldwide. As conventional forces withdraw from Afghanistan, SOF is inheriting a larger burden of the task to achieve national objectives in that region, while continuing to execute special operations activities against the Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and North Africa. Furthermore, USSOCOM retains a legal mandate to execute CT operations globally as a functional combatant command.[30]

The second initiative in the *SOCOM 2020 Strategy* is to "expand the global SOF network." USSOCOM describes the complexities of the threats and operational environment faced by SOF in the future, and acknowledges that these challenges are further compounded by the reality of a strained fiscal environment. In light of constrained resources, *SOCOM 2020* articulates the importance of shaping the environment and deterring conflicts from escalating. To do this, USSOCOM will emphasize the development of strategic relationships and partnerships to enable the operations, actions, and activities to shape the environment through the global SOF network. *SOCOM 2020* goes on to state that, "In support of Ambassadors and GCCs, aligned with our interagency partners, SOF will provide small unit, forward-based persistent presence closely integrated with our partners to protect our interests and provide rapid response. We simply cannot surge trust at the time of crisis."[31] This initiative directly supports the strategic guidance to expand joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multilateral

[30] United States Special Operations Command, SOCOM 2020, *Forging the Tip of the Spear*, 4-5.

[31] Ibid., 5.

cooperation, and build regionally postured, globally networked force that is flexible and scalable as directed by the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[32]

The global SOF network is tangible in its brick and mortar locations, but its foundation is built upon strategic relationships across the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environment. McRaven envisions, "A globally networked force of SOF, interagency, allies, and partners able to rapidly respond and persistently address regional contingencies and threats to stability."[33] In the simplest terms, USSOCOM wants to empower its friends and allies to prevent, deter, and then resolve their problems. When the US' friends and allies cannot resolve their own problems, USSOCOM wants to have the network in place to help facilitate unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral actions to respond and ameliorate those problems, anywhere on the globe.

General Joseph Votel, United States Army, the former USSOCOM Commander, reiterated McRaven's vision in his 2015 *Posture Statement* to Congress. In this testimony, Votel described the challenges in the global security environment, and stated that, "our success in this environment will be determined by our ability to adequately navigate conflicts that fall outside of the traditional peace-or-war construct."[34] Both McRaven and Votel expressed that existing security structures provide challenges to

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 6.

[34] General Joseph J. Votel, *Posture Statement of USSCOM to House Armed Services Committee*, March 18, 2015, accessed May 14, 2016, http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Votel_03-26-15.pdf, 7.

achieving national security objectives. USSOCOM exists to execute special operations in high-risk, politically sensitive environments that require an increasing level of interagency coordination, yet the legal framework defined by U.S.C. creates institutional barriers to that desired endstate. Both *SOCOM 2020* and the 2015 *Posture Statement* allude to a disconnect between the desired ends outlined in the national security strategy, and the ways and means that exist to achieve those ends.

The third and fourth initiatives in *SOCOM 2020*, preserve the force and family, and provide responsible resourcing, address the foundation of the Special Operations community, its people, and the doctrine, organizations, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities requirements to sustain the first two initiatives. These four initiatives ultimately support McRaven's vision for SOF to focus its efforts on indirect approaches that are not defined by unilateral, direct action raids. *SOCOM 2020* emphasizes the importance of the global USSOF network, and that, "USSOCOM must not only continue to pursue terrorists wherever we may find them, we must rebalance the force and tenaciously embrace indirect operations in the 'Human Domain.'"[35] To further address the importance of the "Human Domain," USSOCOM published a white paper in August, 2015 titled, *Operating in the Human Domain*.

Operating in the Human Domain "describes the mindset and approaches that are necessary to achieve strategic ends and create enduring effects in the current and future environment."[36] Similar to *SOCOM 2020*, *Operating in the Human Domain* frames its

[35] United States Special Operations Command, SOCOM 2020, *Forging the Tip of the Spear*, 1.

[36] United State Special Operations Command, *Operating in the Human Domain Concept* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, 2015), 3.

operating concept in the context of the challenging operating environment faced by SOF in the future. The interaction of non-state actors with increased capabilities, the diffusion of cheap, lethal weapons, the hyper-connectivity of regional and global population bases, and the rise of modern nation-states challenging the established international order presents USSOF with a host of asymmetric and irregular threats that require continuous adaptation.[37] The growing complexities of these environments suggest that understanding the nuances of the local and regional populations is essential for USSOF to achieve its strategic objectives.

Based on this view of the contemporary operating environment, "the central idea of the OHD [Operating in the Human Domain] Concept is that SOF need to develop and implement a comprehensive Human Domain discipline to identify, understand, and influence—through words, deeds, and images—relevant individuals, groups, and populations."[38] Critical to this concept is the premise of trust. The Operating in the Human Domain concept is based upon USSOF building trust at the personal and organizational level across the JIIM structure to shape the environment in support of US interests.

The strategies outlined by SOCOM will increasingly occur in an environment that span diplomacy, rule of law, and conflict known as the gray zone. In his 2015 testimony before the Housed Armed Services Committee, General Votel introduced the idea of the gray zone by describing the actions of belligerents in this environment: "Actors taking a 'gray zone' approach seek to secure their objectives while minimizing the scope and

[37] Ibid., 7-8.

[38] Ibid., 11.

scale of actual fighting. In this 'gray zone,' we are confronted with ambiguity on the nature of the conflict, the parties involved, and the validity of the legal and political claims at stake."[39] As discussed in chapter 1, the USSOCOM Director of Strategy, Plans, and Policy (J51), US Navy Captain Philip Kapusta elaborated on Votel's discussion in the white paper "The Gray Zone." Kapusta argues that the US needs new strategies focused on attacking the root problems of conflicts, and deterring gray zone aggression through counter-force, countervailing, and counter-value targeting.[40] He claims that US policy-makers too often views conflict as a military problem, and focus their efforts on attacking the conflict instead of addressing the underlying symptoms of those conflicts.

"The Gray Zone" goes on to describe some of the major implications for operating in this type of environment. It states:

> Our responses to gray zone challenges display several clear deficiencies. As separate U.S. government agencies strive to achieve their individual organizational goals, they seldom act in integrated ways to support wider government objectives. The National Security Act of 1947 served us well, but in an era far removed from the Cold War, the United States needs a new construct for the 21st century.[41]

"The Gray Zone" emphasizes the need for a whole-of-government approach that applies an unprecedented level of interagency cooperation and a complete overhaul to the national security apparatus.[42]

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[39] Votel, 7.

[40] Kapusta, 7.

[41] Ibid., 6.

[42] Ibid., 6-7.

The vision and strategy laid out by USSOCOM are nested within joint publications that outline the core capabilities and missions of Special Operations. JP 3-05 *Special Operations* is the overarching document that describes the conduct of special operations within the context of the joint force. It describes the makeup and organizational command structure of USSOCOM, which includes USASOC, Naval Special Warfare Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Marine Special Operations Command, and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).[43] JP 3-05 also defines the core activities of special operations as direct action, special reconnaissance, countering weapons of mass destruction, CT, unconventional warfare (UW), FID, security force assistance, hostage rescue and recovery, COIN, foreign humanitarian assistance, military information support operations, and civil affairs operations.[44] All of these core activities are executed in the phase zero environment, and are tools for chiefs of mission and combatant commanders to counter gray zone threats.

Most importantly for this thesis, JP 3-05 clearly articulates the role of USSOF in the interagency environment and while conducting foreign assistance. It states that, "Special operations provide joint force commanders (JFCs) and chiefs of mission with discrete, precise, and scalable options that can be synchronized with activities of other interagency partners to achieve United States Government (USG) objectives."[45] Special operations are instrumental in supporting the interagency and joint force in achieving US objectives abroad.

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[43] US Department of Defense, JP 3-05, ix-x.

[44] Ibid., x.

[45] Ibid., ix.

Similar to the DoD's *Quadrennial Defense Review* (*QDR*), the DoS publishes a *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* (*QDDR*). The *QDDR* is a joint DoS and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) publication that "provides a blueprint for advancing America's interests in global security, inclusive economic growth, climate change, accountable governance and freedom for all."[46] The 2015 *QDDR*, signed by Secretary John Kerry, focuses on four areas, four global priorities, and a number of internal initiatives for the DoS and USAID.[47] Two of the priorities identified by Secretary Kerry in the 2015 *QDDR* correlate directly to the analysis and conclusions presented in the final two chapters of this thesis.

The first of these relevant *QDDR* priorities is "Preventing and Mitigating Conflict and Violent Extremism." Under the Secretary of State's guidance, the DoS and USAID will build their capacity to focus on the prevention of conflict and violent extremism. The *QDDR* identifies two lines of effort within this priority: "expand prevention efforts to counter violent extremism;" and "strengthen our ability to prevent and respond to internal conflict, atrocities, and fragility."[48] Under Secretary Kerry's direction, regional bureaus and chiefs of mission will prioritize security objectives complementary to the DoD's phase zero operations.

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[46] US Department of State, *The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review*, 2015, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.state.gov/s/dmr/qddr/.

[47] US Department of State. *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review Executive Summary*, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241430.pdf, 10.

[48] Ibid.

The second *QDDR* priority pertinent to this literature review is titled, "Promoting Open, Resilient, and Democratic Societies."[49] This priority has four supporting efforts: "bolster support for democracy, human rights and governance;" "expand anti-corruption initiatives;" "strengthen support of civil society and protect an open internet;" and "deepen partnerships and defend human rights."[50] These two priorities and their supporting efforts, as described in the *QDDR*, express the need for mutually supporting efforts by the DoS, USAID, and the DoD at the country team level. As part of an overarching diplomacy, development, and defense (also known as 3D) plan, a COM must effectively leverage the funding, authorities, and capabilities of the interagency community.

To support the *QDDR*, the DoS and USAID also publish a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). This document is "is a blueprint for investing in America's future and achieving the goals that the President laid out in his National Security Strategy and those in the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review."[51] In the Joint Strategic Plan, the Secretary of State and Director of USAID outline their strategic goals and objectives that will help achieve the policy objectives laid out by the President of the United States. The shared DoS and USAID mission is to "shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world, and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 11.

[51] US Department of State, *Joint Strategic Plan 2014-17*, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/223997.pdf, 2.

American people and people everywhere."[52] The Indonesia and Philippines case studies provide an examination of how chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders implemented the priorities laid out by the *QDR* and *QDDR* to achieve national security objectives.

Across the globe, each US country team develops an Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) to advance the vision of the COM within that country and support the host nation's internal defense and development planning. As discussed in chapter 1, the ICS is classified as Sensitive But Unclassified and will not be discussed in detail. Generically speaking, the ICS lays out the COM's priorities, goals, and objectives for the US mission in the country. The ICS articulates how the US Country Team will synchronize all the elements of national power available to achieve US objectives.

Academic Literature

Collectively, the documents discussed above provide the legislative, executive, and strategic context for the execution of foreign assistance by the DoD and DoS abroad. The following academic literature review provides some context for these official documents, and offers different analysis as to how the US approaches foreign assistance in line with U.S.C and strategic guidance. A recurring theme throughout the reviewed literature is a gap between the execution of special operations policy and an overarching strategy to employ special operations in phase zero. This is reflected by a number of active duty and retired special operations officers, academics, and think tank research reports.

[52] Ibid., 1.

Colonel Brian Petit, the former Commander of 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group while deployed in the Philippines, and former chief of the Special Operations Forces Leader Development and Education Department at the Combined Arms Center in the Training and Doctrine Command of the US Army, links strategy to operations in his book, *Getting Big by Going Small:The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero.* Petit starts with the research question, "What are the special operations elements of operational art in Phase Zero?" and then examines the development of operational art and design for special operations during phase zero.[53] Petit goes on to link policy, strategy, and diplomacy efforts to support his argument for improving operational art in special operations.

Petit then argues that phase zero operations need a design methodology different from those used during other major military operations. His analysis examines the operational design process, and the associated tensions with that process, by using two vignettes and one case study. He describes these tensions in terms of policy, programs, and posture, and uses his vignettes and case study as a vehicle to illuminate existing challenges to the implementation of his operational art concept. Most importantly for this thesis, Petit explores the tensions inherent in this complex process to execute foreign assistance. He explains that, "competing agendas, entities, and agencies, both US and foreign, pursue their interests. Within this pursuit exists the persistent tension of

[53] Brian S. Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (Denver, CO: Outskirts Press, 2013), e-book location 215 of 3744.

calculation, posturing, and seemingly small actions with oversized effects."[54] Petit elaborates with a short vignette on Indonesia.

In his Indonesia vignette, Petit describes how congressional legislation can represent a policy dilemma for special operations in phase zero. Specifically, he discusses the effects of the 1997 change to the Foreign Assistance Act, known as the Leahy Amendment, on phase zero operations in Indonesia. The Leahy Amendment barred US foreign assistance to any unit of a nation's security forces if there was any evidence that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. According to Petit, in the early 2000s, Indonesia showed progress in security sector reform including human rights, and representative government. Additionally, the US GWOT sought out increased access and visibility of Southeast Asian terror networks transiting between Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The Leahy Amendment, however, prohibited the growth of bilateral military engagement with the Indonesian Armed Forces and hurt perceptions of the US among Indonesians. This lack of access and popular support of the Indonesian public limited understanding and intelligence gathering for the US in Southeast Asia.[55]

The Leahy Amendment created a policy dilemma for special operations phase zero in Indonesia. Withholding foreign assistance in an attempt to force better behavior limited the ability of USSOCPAC to effectively train a counter terrorist force in Indonesia and wage a synchronized GWOT campaign in Southeast Asia.[56] Transnational terrorist groups such as ASG and JI maneuvered effectively and took sanctuary in "The

[54] Petit, e-book location 1491 of 3744.

[55] Petit, 91-93.

[56] Ibid., 96-97.

sea and island border region between east Malaysia, the southern Philippines and northern Indonesia."[57] The inability of USSOF to effectively develop the Indonesian armed forces hindered multilateral special operations efforts to limit the freedom of maneuver for these terrorist groups.

Although Petit describes the natural tensions in synchronizing different cultures and priorities in the phase zero environment, he identifies the biggest hindrance to effective execution of phase zero as a lack of a national grand strategy.[58] Petit argues that, "Grand strategy is the singular, defining idea that orients a nation's power and influence abroad," and that "twenty years after the Cold War, the United States (US) lacks a grand strategy."[59] In the absence of a grand strategy, the US has employed a means of engagement, which Petit believes in a poor substitute, and inhibits the synchronization of US agencies in Phase Zero Campaign planning.

In a 2007 article from the peer-reviewed academic journal *Third Word Quarterly*, Naval Post Graduate School instructor Hy S. Rothstein argues that the "US success against irregular threats is inversely related to the priority senior officials (civilian and military) attach to the effort."[60] Through examination of three case studies based on operations in El Salvador, the Philippines, and Afghanistan, Rothstein makes the case that the American way of war characterized by massive economic and military resources

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[57] Petit, 96.

[58] Ibid., 1-3.

[59] Ibid., 1.

[60] Hy S. Rothstein, "Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare in an Era of Collapsing States," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 275.

is counterproductive in irregular struggles that rely on a nuanced understanding of populations and cultures. As a result, irregular campaigns that are constrained through neglect, diplomatic tension, or resources, require indirect approaches that focus more on building the long-term capacity of the host nation than on achieving short-term tactical results.[61]

Rothstein's second conclusion is that a bottom-up, indirect approach of developing partner force capacity and legitimacy is a more effective approach to achieving policy objectives.[62] Rothstein argues that critical to achieving success is engaging before the problem reaches a critical mass, and concludes by articulating the importance of relationships. He states that, "the special relationships among cadre members should be based on trust. This is key because the dynamic of the small group must be such that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."[63] Rothstein's analysis is that success is defined by small USSOF teams acting in a cadre role that build special, intimate relationships with their partnered force over time. Rothstein's assessment is not new, as the importance of trust is articulated in both the *SOCOM 2020* document series and the Operating in the Human Domain concept.

In a 2014 RAND study funded by and prepared for the USASOC titled, "Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War," the authors attempt to consolidate the lessons learned from 13 years of war and place them in the context of the future operating environment. They argue that the, "policy process is not optimized to

[61] Ibid., 282-287.

[62] Ibid., 293.

[63] Ibid.

produce clear ends, efficacious ways, or adequate means and is inhibited by inadequate civil military interaction at the levels of policy, strategy, and implementation."[64] In order to account for the ineffective and inefficient policy process that links ends, ways, and means, the RAND study authors suggest that the US needs a theory for success. This theory needs to "fully account for the changed character of warfare; reaffirm the ultimate political objectives of war; and articulate what their achievement might look like."[65] The conclusions set forth in this RAND study suggest that in order to meet the threats of the future, a new strategy is needed to employ USSOF in the gray zone.

Author, journalist, and national security contributor Linda Robinson articulates that due to the changing operational environment and the nature of constrained resources, the future of special operations must increasingly rely on an indirect approach to counter threats. Although precision strikes and direct action raids are highly glamorized in the press and in Hollywood, Robinson states that there are less noticed, and very successful special operations occurring outside of Iraq and Afghanistan:

> Two of the most successful recent U.S. special operations partnerships took place in Colombia and the Philippines. In both cases, over the course of a decade, and with relatively modest investments, a few hundred U.S. special operators were able to strengthen those countries' security forces and dramatically reduce threats from insurgents, terrorists, criminals, and armed separatists.[66]

The case studies that follow will elaborate on one of the examples cited by Robinson, and provide insight into the application of USSOF in the future.

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[64] Linda Robinson et al., *Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2014), 86-87.

[65] Ibid., 91-97.

[66] Linda Robinson, "The Future of Special Operations: Beyond Kill and Capture," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 6 (November/December 2012): 114-115.

The official publication of USSOCOM, *Special Warfare Magazine*, provided an extensive amount of historical data on the SOF activities in the Philippines. In this magazine, many officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers from the Special Operations community provide first hand accounts of their experiences in the Philippines. This publication dedicates several entire issues to Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, and many of these were used for data of the Philippine case study in chapter 4 that follows.

In this literature review, I briefly summarized the key literature to develop the strategic and regional context of this study. Also provided is the framework to study how USSOF and the interagency seek to achieve objectives laid out by the National Security Strategy (NSS). What the current literature does not extensively address is a qualitative comparison of foreign assistance campaigns led by USSOF and the DoS. How does USSOF and the interagency work to achieve national security objectives at the country team level in phase zero? What are the costs and benefits of a USSOF-led Counterterrorism Campaign versus DoS-led Counterterrorism Campaign? Where are the tensions in executing phase zero operations and where can USSOF and the interagency better complement each other to advance the geographic combatant commander and COM objectives in the Pacific theater? This study attempts to answer these questions and contribute to the existing literature on phase zero and the utilization of USSOF in the spectrum of gray zone environments.

Methodology

The methodology used in this study is qualitative, using two different case studies to compare different foreign assistance campaigns within the Pacific Theater. This type

of methodology, according to Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and author of multiple books on research methodology, John C. Creswell, is "an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem."[67] Creswell states that through the qualitative approach, "the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting."[68] This methodology is appropriate for this study, because the nature of the research question asks how different agencies within the USG execute foreign assistance campaigns. Creswell argues that when a researcher attempts to understand "how" or "what" happened in a particular situation, qualitative research is the most effective as it helps the researcher understand an environment with many variables and then present a detailed view of the topic.[69]

Within the qualitative traditions of inquiry, this thesis will use the case study methodology. The case study "is an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context."[70] With this process, the researcher identifies his or her case (or cases), determines how many cases to study, develops a rationale for why to study those cases, determines the depth of each study, and then determines the

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[67] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 15.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 17.

[70] Ibid., 61.

boundaries of each of those studies.[71] This methodology allows the researcher to describe the environment, determine themes based on the in-depth understanding and description of that environment, and then make assertions based on the themes developed in the analysis.

In order to understand how USSOF and the interagency support GCC and COM foreign assistance campaigns, two case studies in the Pacific theater are explored. The first discusses the campaign in the Philippines to thwart the ASG and associated terror networks. The second case study explores the campaign in Indonesia to counter JI. These two case studies are used because they describe two distinct foreign assistance campaigns in the Global War on Terror, led by two different US agencies, both within the same theater of operations. The first, in the Philippines, was led by USSOF and the Special Operations Command Pacific. The second, in Indonesia, was led by the DoS and the US Embassy in Indonesia.

Each case study is organized in four sections. The first section outlines the history of US relations with the host nation country and describes the context of that relationship in the strategic environment. The case study then describes the terrorism threats that emerged in each country leading up to and immediately following September 11, 2001. The third section describes the US response to that threat, and then each case study concludes with a description of the effects and outcomes of the US response. Chapter 5 will identify four themes revealed from analysis of the literature and the case studies. The final chapter in this thesis will readdress the research and analysis in context of the

[71] Ibid., 63-64.

original research question, identify unexpected conclusions and their relationships with the current field of study, and recommend further avenues of research.

This methodology is more descriptive of the environment than explanatory in its nature. The existing literature does not provide ample correlative or causal evidence to relate specific US led operations, actions, activities (OAA) and their effects on the targeted threat groups. Although a quantitative analysis to measure the effectiveness of each campaign could provide additional insight into this research, it was not realistic without access to data outside the scope of this MMAS.

CHAPTER 3

COUNTERTERRORISM IN THE PHILIPPINES, 2000 TO 2014

The History of US-Philippine Relations and the Strategic Environment

To understand the operating environment of US forces in the Philippines, it is essential to understand the historical landscape of the 118 year US-Filipino relationship. Following the US declaration of war with Spain in 1898, the US Military sailed into Manila Bay, and with support of a local anti-Spanish insurgent force led by Philippine national Emilio Aguinaldo, ousted the Spanish occupation force. As the Spanish surrendered and sailed out of Manila, US Forces occupied and refused to hand the city over to Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo perceived this action as a betrayal of his agreement with the US, and ignited an intense three-year conflict that reverted to a COIN fight between the US and Aguinaldo's forces. This conflict became known as the Philippine-American War, and marked the beginning of a long tenuous relationship between the US and the Philippines.[72]

Although the Philippine-American War would officially end in 1902, small insurgencies would continue for more than a decade. The most notable of these insurgencies was the Muslim Moros in the Sulu Archipelago, who fought to preserve "their traditional practices of slavery, tribal warfare, and Islam."[73] Although pacified in

[72] Cherilyn A. Walley, "A Century of Turmoil: America's Relationship with the Philippines," *Special Warfare Magazine* 17, no. 1 (September 2004): 4-11.

[73] Ibid., 6.

1915 when Moroland came under complete US rule, the grievances and motivations of these southern Islamic separatist groups would endure throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The three decades following the 1915 pacification in the Southern Philippines included some form of US colonial rule during a slow transition to Philippine Independence. This transition was interrupted by the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Philippines, and the subsequent re-conquest of the islands at the end World War II. Following the war, the US granted the Philippines independence with the 1946 Treaty of Manila, which established the Philippine Republic. Shortly thereafter, the US responded to a growing threat of communist insurgency in the Philippines with the Philippines Military Assistance Act, authorizing US forces to train, man, and equip Philippine Armed Forces. Among other things, this act ultimately led to the establishment of a Joint US Military Advisory Group in the Philippines, a position that endures today in the capital of Manila.[74] In 1952, the US and the Philippines signed a mutual defense treaty, and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) approved the lease of major airbases and naval stations on the main island of Luzon for US forces throughout the Cold War.

The US maintained these strategic platforms until 1992 when the USG and GRP failed to renegotiate the lease of the two major air and naval bases, Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station. The withdrawal of permanent US basing, in 1992, significantly curtailed military-to-military training, exchange opportunities, and security assistance

[74] Walley. 8.

programs for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).[75] According to the former command historian for the USASOC, Dr. C. H. Briscoe, the withdrawal of US military forces had implications beyond the loss of a key strategic platform in the Asia-Pacific:

> In the ensuing decade, without U.S. support and the benefits of a U.S.-Philippines professional military relationship, the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, declined rapidly. That military erosion allowed latent insurgencies, some of which had ties to international terrorism, to flare to the point that they posed a threat to the viability of the Philippine Government.[76]

During the 1990s, the threat of these budding insurgencies in the southern Philippines rose concurrently with the growing reach of other global Islamic terror networks such as AQ.

The Threat in the Philippines

The threat groups in the Philippines are diverse in both demographic composition and agenda. In addition to multiple Islamic separatist and terrorist groups, the Philippines is home to a persistent communist insurgency, the New People's Army that strikes out violently against the GRP and undermines the rule of law.[77] The primary focus of the GRP CT efforts over the past several decades, however, was focused on Islamic separatist groups in the southern islands of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. These islands are home to what the Spanish called the "Moros," Muslim ethnicities that maintain long-standing grievances based in political exclusion, a lack of economic

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[75] Ibid., 10.

[76] C. H. Briscoe, "Why the Philippines?: ARSOF's Expanded Mission in the War On Terror," *Special Warfare Magazine* 17, no. 1 (September 2004): 2.

[77] Chalk et al., *The Evolving Terrorist Threat in Southeast Asia: A Net Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 33.

development, and relative geographic isolation. The historic colonial presence in the Philippines, and continued US support to the Christian-dominated GRP exacerbates perceived disenfranchisement of the Muslim population.

These symptoms manifested in armed conflict in the 1970s with the establishment of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), whose stated goals were self-determination for the establishment of a future Bangsamoro Republic. For over two decades the MNLF engaged in a protracted insurgency against the GRP until a 1996 agreement allowed the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Under this agreement, the GRP established a special government council to oversee infrastructure development in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, and the MNLF assumed governing control of the region.[78]

In 1984, another Islamic separatist group, the MILF, emerged in the southern Philippines after a rift with the MNLF. The MILF rejected the idea of autonomy after the 1996 accord, seeking the creation of an independent, theocratic Islamic state governed by *sharia* law.[79] Ultimately, "The underlying difference between the MNLF and MILF thus originally lay in ideology: Whereas the former was geared toward largely nationalist goals, the latter championed aspirations of a far more religious nature."[80] Strategically, however, the MILF downplayed ideology over time, and negotiated with the GRP for

[78] Chalk et. al., 34. The term Bangsamoro refers to the Bangsamoro people of the Southern Philippines who represent a variety Muslim ethnic groups.

[79] Ibid., 37.

[80] Ibid.

secession and increased autonomy for the southern provinces.[81] Since the late 1990s, the GRP and MILF have signed various ceasefires to further Bangsamoro autonomy and address MILF relationships with other terrorist groups like JI and ASG.[82]

Another extremist group in the southern Philippines with links to the MNLF and MILF is the ASG. In 1991, Abdurajak Janjalani, a Philippine Muslim who fought in the international Islamist brigade in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation, established ASG on Basilan Island.[83] ASG, or "father of the sword," sought the creation of an Islamic State in the Southern Philippines, and received funding from AQ throughout the 1990s.[84] Although they vacillated between ideological zealous terrorist group and criminal organization, the increased brutality of ASG in the 1990s elevated the group's stature in the region. Across the southern islands of Mindanao and Basilan, the group conducted ambushes, kidnappings, bombings, and executions that included dramatic beheadings.[85]

This insurgent activity in the southern Philippines began to gain attention in USPACOM headquarters in the late 1990s. By early 2000, ASG began kidnapping

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[81] Ibid., 38.

[82] Vaughn et al., *Terrorism in Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 18.

[83] Vaughn, et al., 49; Council on Foreign Relations, "Abu Sayyaf Group (Philippines, Islamist Separatists), updated May 27, 2009, accessed February 15, 2016, http://www.cfr.org/philippines/abu-sayyaf-group-philippines-islamist-separatists/p9235, 1-2.

[84] Larry Niksch, *Abu Sayyaf: Target of US-Philippine Anti-Terror Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 2002), 4.

[85] Ibid.

westerners for ransom, and USPACOM leaders and staffs began developing strategies for helping the GRP with internal instability.[86] In August 2000, ASG kidnapped 30 hostages including American Joseph Schilling, sparking an urgent request for USSOCPAC to deploy an advisory group to train and assist AFP CT efforts.[87] By March 2001, a company of US Army Special Forces from 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) began training the first AFP Light Reaction Company (LRC).[88] Soldiers assessed and selected out of the ranks of the Philippine Special Forces and scout ranger organizations comprised the initial LRC, and were trained as a national CT force. While US Special Forces trained the LRC from September 2000 through April 2001, ASG militants kidnapped three more Americans, and in response the LRC deployed to Basilan Island to free the hostages.[89] The first employment of the LRC did not end well. The force was deployed as a conventional, not a national CT force, and lacked effective coordination, command, and control at the operational level. This failure spurred enhanced USSOCPAC efforts to increase operational training resources to the AFP.[90] As

[86] Briscoe, 16.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Briscoe, 17; David Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Philippines: What Would Sun Tzu Say?" *Military Review* (May-June 2004): 20. A note of Special Forces Groups: There are five active duty Special Forces Groups that are aligned with each of the five Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) and Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC). 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) is aligned with US Pacific Command (USPACOM) and US Special Operations Command Pacific (USSOCPAC).

[89] David Johnston, "U.S. Indicts 5 Filipino Men in Kidnapping of Americans," *The New York Times*, July 24, 2002, accessed February 3, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2002/07/24/international/asia/24INDI.html; Maxwell, 20.

[90] Briscoe, "Balikatan," 17.

a result, key leaders from across Special Operations Command Pacific and 1st SFG (A) scheduled a meeting to incorporate increased CT training into an upcoming joint exercise named Balikatan 02-1. This meeting was scheduled for September 11, 2001.[91]

The Counterterrorism Campaign in the Philippines

September 11, 2001 dramatically changed the legal authorities and resources available for Special Operations Command Pacific operations in the Philippines. The US Congress authorized the deployment of forces to assist the Philippine Government to counter AQ linked terrorist groups under an Authorization for the Use of Military Force. Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo offered unequivocal support to the US, and immediately allowed military overflight rights and use of Philippine air and naval bases to support operations in Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terror.[92] She defined the GRP's alliance with the US as in the Philippine national interest, aligning the GRP fight against domestic terrorism with the GWOT.[93] In November 2001, after President Arroyo's visit to Washington, DC, Arroyo and President George W Bush affirmed their intent to cooperate closely in strengthening the AFP CT capabilities.[94] In the shadow of the operations beginning in Afghanistan, the USPACOM commander approved plans to increase training to the LRC and other AFP units to thwart the terrorist threat in the southern Philippines. By February, 2002, hundreds of USSOF and support

[91] Ibid.

[92] Niksch.

[93] Ibid., 1.

[94] Briscoe, 17.

personnel were deployed under Special Operations Command Pacific's deployable headquarters, Task Force 510 (TF510), to train, advise, and assist the AFP under the auspices of bilateral training exercise known as Balikatan 02-1. This task force became known as Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P).[95]

The JSOTF-P grew to nearly 1,300 personnel by early 2002. Its mission was to conduct UW operations by, with, and through the AFP to isolate and destroy terrorist organizations as part of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines.[96] According to Colonel (retired) David Maxwell, the Commander of the JSOTF-P from 2006 to 2007, the endstate of this operation was, "for the AFP to gain sufficient capability to locate and destroy the ASG to recover hostages and to enhance the legitimacy of the Philippine government."[97] JSOTF-P would achieve this endstate by achieving six key tasks:

> denying the ASG sanctuary;
> surveilling, controlling, and denying ASG routes;
> surveilling supporting villages and key personnel;
> conducting local training to overcome AFP weaknesses and sustain AFP strengths;
> supporting operations by the AFP "strike force" (LRC) in the area of responsibility (AOR); and
> conducting and supporting civil affairs operations in the AOR.[98]

In the summer of 2002, the AFP deployed to rescue the US hostages kidnapped the previous year. Although one hostage was killed, the overall operation was considered a

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[95] Maxwell, 20.

[96] Maxwell, 20; Vaughn et al., 19.

[97] Maxwell, 21.

[98] Ibid., 20-21.

success by military leaders: the ASG was driven from Basilan and the GRP gained legitimacy through the effective employment of the AFP in a contested area.[99]

From 2002 on, an average of five to six hundred USSOF worked by, with, and through conventional and special operations Philippine military and police forces in close synchronization with the US country team's defense, development, and diplomacy approach. Key to this campaign was embedding small liaison control elements into various AFP and Philippine National Police-Special Action Force units across the battlespace. These liaison control elements were comprised primarily of Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas, or partial contingents of Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas, and developed intimate relationships with their Filipino counterparts. Throughout OEF-P, these liaison control elements trained, advised, assisted, and coordinated US support to the AFP CT activities across the southern Philippines.[100]

In addition to building the capacity of the AFP to directly engage insurgent and terrorist fighters, the USSOF campaign focused on isolating threat groups from the population with widespread humanitarian and economic development projects. These efforts were augmented by a several hundred man engineering task force dedicated to infrastructure development on the island of Basilan, a known safe-haven for ASG and other separatist militant groups.[101] Extensive Civil Affairs operations were bolstered by

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[99] Ibid., 21.

[100] Richard Oakley, "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines: FID Success and the Way Forward," *Special Warfare Magazine* (January-March 2014): 48.

[101] Richard Swain, "Case Study: Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines," Booze Allen Hamilton and the US Army Counterinsurgency Center, October, 2010, accessed January 20, 2016, www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ada532988, 2-3.

targeted Military Information Support Operations to influence the local populace and legitimize the GRP.

Most importantly, USSOF in the Philippines were effectively integrated into the country team and focused on FID to support the AFP capacity to execute COIN and CT operations. According to a former JSOTF-P Commander:

> A corollary of JSOTF-P's mission is their support role as a component of the ambassador's "America-in-3D" initiative focusing on diplomacy, development and defense. The JSOTF-P deputy commander and J9 work in the U.S. Embassy in Manila, maintaining effective relationships with all critical components of the U.S. country team. Similarly, the JSOTF-P leadership meets weekly with the ambassador, deputy chief of mission and senior embassy officials. Further, JSOTF-P personnel of all ranks meet on a weekly basis with representatives from the Departments of State, Justice and Treasury, and are co-located at their headquarters with FBI and Department of Justice representatives. At three locations in the southern Philippines, JSOTF-P forces are collocated with members of the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program who train local law-enforcement officials.[102]

This whole–of-government approach by USSOF in the Philippines ensured the synchronization of US efforts across the country.

Conclusion

By most discernible measures, the campaign in the Philippines between 2000 and 2014 was successful. In an extensive study published by RAND in 2016, Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines succeeded in reducing transnational terrorist threats and conditions, increasing the capabilities of the Philippine security forces, and enhancing US-Philippine relations. These conclusions are supported by a mixed methodology analysis that reflected a decrease in enemy attacks, membership and support for ASG,

[102] Fran Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole-of-Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," *Special Warfare Magazine* 25, no. 3 (July-September 2012): 11.

increased satisfaction with the Philippine security forces, and improved AFP capabilities at the tactical, operational, and institutional levels.[103]

The mission in the Philippines is also recognized internally by the US Army as a model construct for planning and executing FID, and is outlined in the Army Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense publication Army Techniques Publication 3-05.2.[104] This publication claims that:

> Operation ENDURING FREEDOM–Philippines was successful because it maintained a small SOF U.S. Military footprint in a politically sensitive environment to be in agreement with the HN constitution. This operation applied interagency concepts because the operation was completely synchronized between the JSOTF-P Headquarters, U.S. country team, TSOC, and GCC. In addition, the JSOTF-P staff operated in close coordination with the military assistance advisory group to interact with Philippine national-level headquarters to facilitate nation assistance. This mutual effort enabled the JSOTF-P to assist our partner nation along four lines of operations that were balanced and executed simultaneously.[105]

Some of the key lessons learned from the Philippines model include emphasizing the host nation's sovereignty, integrating USSOF personnel at all levels of command across the JIIM hierarchy, and developing an extensive understanding of the operational environment through personal relationships and an enduring presence in the region. The limited budget and "light footprint" of US Military personnel in country, arguably acted as a forcing mechanism to encourage the focus on Philippine-led initiatives and interagency cooperation. Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines cost only fifty-two

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[103] Linda Robinson, Patrick Johnston, and Gillian S Oak, *U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines, 2001-2014* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2016), 112-124.

[104] US Department of the Army, ATP 3-05.2, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2015), 2-19.

[105] Ibid.

million dollars annually, and on average only 500 to 600 US Military personnel were deployed as part of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines.[106]

The efforts of JSOTF-P assisted the AFP attrit ASG's capabilities to conduct effective terrorist attacks and build the legitimacy of the government in the southern Philippines. In 2014, the MILF cut ties with the ASG and subsequently signed a cease fire with the GRP. The FID and UW characteristics of the Philippines campaign lend credence to the use of USSOF in phase zero operations before widespread conflict erupts. In the findings of one RAND study, "The intervention benefited from its proactive nature: The US did not wait until the Philippine Government was near collapse or ASG on the brink of overrunning the government. Because the situation was not dire, it was also relatively less costly to deal with."[107] In 2014, the combat mission in the Philippines officially ended when USSOCPAC dissolved JSOTF-P. However, the foreign assistance, Phase Zero Campaign endures today as part of the COM's country strategy through multiple SOF operations, actions, and activities that occur annually in the Philippines. This includes the bilateral exercise Balikatan, which marks its 15th consecutive year in 2016.

[106] Robinson, Johnston, and Oak, 112.

[107] Robinson et al., 74-75.

CHAPTER 4

COUNTERTERRORISM IN INDONESIA, 2004 TO 2014

The History of US-Indonesia Relations and the Strategic Environment

The modern US-Indonesian relationship was formally born in the aftermath of World War II. In 1799, the Dutch colonized what is modern day Indonesia as part of the Dutch East Indies. Until Japanese forces invaded and occupied Indonesia during World War II, the Dutch successfully maintained their colonial rule by repressing and isolating nationalist or anti-colonial movements across the various Indonesian islands. Following the Japanese surrender in 1945, Indonesian nationalism took root under the absence of Dutch forces and independence was declared by Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno.[108] The Dutch refused to relinquish their colonial possessions, however, and a four-year anti-colonial insurrection ensued. In 1949, Indonesia successfully gained independence from the Netherlands, and established a parliamentary democracy under Sukarno. The US became one of the first nations to recognize Indonesian independence, and established diplomatic relations with Indonesia in 1949.[109]

Sukarno's Government evolved over a 16-year period until a perceived crisis of communist insurgency set the conditions for the military, under command of General Suharto, to undermine Sukarno and take control of the government. After Suharto

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[108] Bruce Vaughn, *Indonesia: Domestic Politics, Strategic Dynamics, and U.S. Interests Congressional Research Service* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 2011), 6-7.

[109] Ibid.

assumed the presidency in 1965, a brutal wave of violence swept the country resulting in an estimated five hundred thousand deaths, many characterized by the government as "anti-communist" purges.[110] Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the US maintained a strong relationship with the Indonesian Government. Although not officially aligned with the US, Indonesian President Suharto was a strong supporter of US anti-communist efforts in Asia. As a result, the US aggressively supported the dictator from the beginning of his tenure in the late sixties until his resignation in 1998.[111]

Suharto ruled with an authoritarian hand, supported by his National Armed Forces, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI). The TNI ran their own governments at the local and national level, and deeply controlled all aspects of social and political life.[112] Suharto and his generals brutally repressed dissent across the diverse archipelago in an attempt to maintain control over an expansive territory spanning over seventeen thousand islands.[113] The most infamous of the regime's authoritarian repression took place in East Timor, where some human rights groups estimate the TNI killed more than 200,000 people over a 25 year period.[114]

Despite the brutality of the Suharto regime, the USG funded a generous IMET program with the TNI and funded a foreign assistance program totaling nearly $35 billion

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[110] Vaugh, *Indonesia: Domestic Politics*, 7.

[111] Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2003), 216.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., 216-217.

[114] Ibid., 217.

between 1965 and 1991.[115] When the TNI massacred nearly three hundred civilians in the East Timor capital of Dili in 1991, however, the US Congress banned the US Military from training Indonesian forces under the IMET program. US commanders in the Pacific theater challenged Congress on this ban, believing that this limitation greatly inhibited their access to Indonesian military leaders and ability to respond to a crisis. These leaders in USPACOM and Special Operations Command Pacific believed that access, "was more important than making a point about human rights. Sanctions would do little more than antagonize the Indonesian military and leave the United States with no contacts in a critical Pacific theater country."[116] As a result, commanders in USPACOM searched for ways around the legislative barrier to continue training the TNI.

The USPACOM found their route around the IMET ban with the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Program. The JCET was a vehicle to train USSOF overseas on their core competencies including UW and FID. Part of that training for USSOF required the training of a host nation or indigenous force. In the case of Indonesia this meant the ability for USSOF to train the TNI outside the scope of the IMET program, and "between 1991 and 1998, U.S. Special Operations Forces conducted forty-one training exercises with Indonesian troops, at least twenty-six of which were with the Kopassus."[117] The Kopassus were the TNI special operations forces primarily indicated in the widespread human rights abuses in East Timor. USPACOM continued the JCET Program until instability within the Suharto regime led to reliable reports linking the

[115] Ibid., 216.

[116] Ibid., 218.

[117] Ibid., 222.

Kopassus to political kidnappings in February, 1998. Under mounting pressure from human rights groups and with the newly passed Leahy Amendment, the Pentagon shut down the JCET Program in May, 1998.

Meanwhile, economic crisis in the late 1990s enflamed growing social and political tensions across Indonesia. The corruption and brutality of Suharto's regime was tolerated for decades by most Indonesians in part due to the strong growth of the Indonesian economy throughout his rule. As the economy stagnated, however, the corruption and authoritarianism became seen more and more as the source of the country's problems. As living conditions worsened for wide swaths of the population, anti-Suharto demonstrations grew across the country and after 30 years in power, Suharto resigned on May 21st, 1998.[118]

Geo-strategically, Indonesia is a critical US ally in the Pacific theater. It has a population of two hundred and forty million, making it the largest country in Southeast Asia and is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world.[119] Indonesia also sits at the crossroads of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, linking energy and commercial trade routes between the Middle East and Africa to East Asia and the Americas. According to a Congressional Research Service Report, "the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok straits are some of the world's most important strategic sea lanes."[120] Nearly half of all the world's ocean trade travels through the straits that border Indonesia, and the US has significant

[118] Priest, 224-225.

[119] Vaugh, *Indonesia: Domestic Politics*, summary.

[120] Ibid., 33.

economic and military interests in maintaining freedom of navigation in these strategic sea lanes of communication.[121]

This geography and demography also add a layer of complexity to the security environment in Indonesia. Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, scattered across the equator and sharing maritime borders with the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Timor, Palau, and Australia. Securing this diverse and expansive terrain is only one of many challenges facing Indonesia. Due to its vast Muslim population and many isolated regions, Indonesia is a potential recruiting ground for a variety of Islamic extremist groups. In recent years, many Indonesian fighters have traveled to conflict zones in the Middle East and South Asia, and foreign fighter flow is a security concern of local, national, and regional governments across Southeast Asia.[122]

The Threat in Indonesia

The collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998 created a relative vacuum of governance that allowed many formerly restricted Islamic extremist groups to openly recruit, train, and expand their operational capacity. Sectarian violence and major Christian-Muslim clashes erupted in several islands of Indonesia that fell outside the immediate control of the central government. By the early 2000s, the two major islands

[121] Ibid., 33-34.

[122] Sarah Khederian, "Indonesia's Returning Foreign Fighter Threat," Georgetown Security Studies Review, November 14, 2014, accessed January 22, 2016, http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2014/11/14/indonesias-returning-foreign-fighter-threat/.

of Maluku and Sulawesi were immersed in full scale sectarian civil wars, and the Islamic extremist group JI came to prominence as a regional terrorist group.[123]

Jemaah Islamiyah is a militant Islamist group that grew out of cultural and religious opposition to foreign imperialism and secular Indonesian governments in the mid-twentieth century. In the 1940s, a group of Muslim militants organized a group named Darul Islam to propagate the establishment of an Indonesian Islamic state under sharia law. Following World War II and the four-year Indonesian National Revolution, the Indonesian Government implemented democratic changes and aggressive military operations to thwart the expansion of the group. By the 1960s, the Indonesian Government effectively dismantled Darul Islam as a coherent organization. Veterans of the group, however, splintered into factions and continued to spread their extremist ideology underground. [124]

Following the government repression of insurgents and separatists in the 1960s under Suharto, two radical clerics, Abu Bakar Baasyir and Abdullah Sungkar, took up the torch of Darul Islam and reignited the call for sharia law in Indonesia. In the following decades, these clerics preached a fiery brand of Wahhabi extremism, prostylizing, and recruiting across Southeast Asia. The invasion of Russian Forces into Afghanistan offered Baasyir and Sungkar the opportunity to build their organization, gain tactical experience, and network with the global jihadi network. They sent fighters to Afghanistan in support of the mujahedeen, many of whom would later train in AQ camps. In the early 1990s, Baaysir and Sungkar formally established JI at Camp Saddah, Afghanistan, a

[123] Ibid., 89.

[124] Vaughn, 5.

training camp set up by a close confidant of Usama bin Laden.[125] Following the collapse of the Suharto Regime, JI gained regional prominence as a notable militant Islamic group in Southeast Asia.[126] At its height, JI was described as AQ's operational wing in Southeast Asia and reportedly counted total membership around two thousand with another five thousand passive sympathizers.[127]

Jemaah Islamiyah garnered the attention of the intelligence and military communities after its members reportedly met with AQ operatives in Malaysia to discuss the 2000 *USS Cole* and September 11, 2001 attacks against the US.[128] Their international notoriety came, however, on October 12th, 2002, when a massive car bomb exploded near a popular nightclub in Bali, Indonesia killing 202 people and injuring more than 300 others. Less than one year later, on August 5th, 2003, a suicide bomber detonated a car bomb outside the JW Marriott in Bali killing 12 and injuring another 150. In 2004, a suicide car bomb detonated outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta killing three and wounding more than 100. On October 1st, 2005, another string of terrorist bombings across Bali killed 20 and injured over 100. Dozens of terrorist attacks in Indonesia claimed more than 600 killed and wounded in four consecutive years. Every one of these attacks was linked to the terrorist group JI.[129] On October 23rd, 2002, the US officially

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[125] Chalk et al., 87.

[126] Vaughn, 5; Chalk et al., 89.

[127] Ibid., 92-93.

[128] Vaughn, 6.

[129] Iis Gindarsah, "Indonesia's Struggle Against Terrorism," Council of Councils, Council on Foreign Relations, April 11, 2014, accessed October 8, 2015, http://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global_memos/p32772, 3-4.

declared JI a terrorist organization, and included Indonesia as another front for the Global War on Terror.[130]

The Counterterrorism Campaign in Indonesia

Although the US-led GWOT generated significant regional and international pressure on the Indonesian Government to address domestic terrorism, it was not until the 2002 Bali attacks that the Indonesian Government took deliberate actions to address the threat.[131] In 2003, the Indonesian Government passed significant antiterrorism regulations and legislation that provided law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges proactive authority to thwart domestic terrorist threats. The new CT laws, "empowered the police to detain terrorism suspects for up to six months before indictment and gave prosecutors and judges the authority to block bank accounts belonging to individuals or organizations believed to be funding militant activities."[132] Additionally, the new legislation included the creation of several national level CT departments, and an overhaul of the domestic intelligence services.

In early 2003, the Indonesian Government did not have the institutional capacity or necessary capabilities to effectively wage a CT Campaign against JI. Yet, popular sentiment in Indonesia would not support a large US Military presence like that in the Philippines. As a predominately Muslim country, many Indonesians felt that the GWOT

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[130] US Department of State website, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm.

[131] Chalk et al., 153.

[132] Ibid.

was a pretense for the US to wage war on Islam.[133] Additionally, the Indonesian CT force at the time, the Indonesian Special Forces, the Komando Pasukan Khusu or Kopassus, retained a mandated national CT role.[134] The USG, however, could not develop the capabilities of the Kopassus due to the enduring legislative ban dating back to 1991 and 1998 human rights abuses. In light of these allegations, the DoD and DoS were prevented from providing support to the Kopassus until 2010, when the Obama Administration lifted the ban.[135] Due to these constraints, USSOF played a minimal role in the training of the Kopassus in the campaign against JI, and the foreign assistance mission in Indonesia remained a DoS led operation.

While the Bush Administration and leaders in USSOCPAC attempted to find creative ways of vetting and developing the Kopassus to take a role in the GWOT, the US country team in Indonesia pursued the development of new capabilities to thwart the threat of JI and other Islamic terrorist groups. Specifically, the US DoS developed the Indonesian police CT and rule of law capabilities through a variety of Title 22 funding mechanisms. The largest portion of US funding to Indonesia came in the form of Economic Support Funds, part of which were spent bolstering the country's police and security forces. These funds amounted to nearly $80M between 2003 and 2007.[136] For funding directly towards Indonesian security forces, the majority of assistance came

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[133] Priest.

[134] Chalk et al., 153.

[135] Elizabeth Bumiller and Norimitsu Onishi, "U.S. Lifts Ban on Indonesian Special Forces Unit," *International New York Times*, July 22, 2010, accessed January 6, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/23/world/asia/23military.html?_r=0.

[136] Chalk et al., 173.

through the Department of State Anti-terrorism Assistance program. The Anti-terrorism Assistance provided forty million dollars to support Indonesian CT efforts between 2003 and 2007.[137]

In 2003, the DoS designated an initial eight million dollars of supplemental funding under the auspices of the Anti-terrorism Assistance to develop a national CT police force, known as Densus 88 (also know as DET 88). DET 88 consisted of three police divisions focused on investigations, intelligence logistical support, and hostage rescue and raids.[138] The Indonesian Government complemented DET 88 and expanded its CT capabilities with a national bomb task force. [139] While developing the DET 88 capabilities, the US country team, specifically the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Legal Attache, worked with the Indonesian attorney general to develop the legal infrastructure to aggressively pursue terrorist suspects. The FBI and government of Indonesia built upon domestic legislative changes to establish a Terrorism and Transnational Crime Task Force in 2006. This task force included specially trained terrorism prosecutors who could effectively address the growing number of domestic terrorism related trials. [140] In conjunction with the establishment of DET 88, the Terrorism and Transnational Crime Task Force was one of several initiatives developed

[137] Chalk et al., 173.

[138] US Department of State, *Anti Terrorism Assistance 2003: Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2003* (Washington, DC: Department of State, February 2004), 4.

[139] Chalk et al., 153-154.

[140] Ibid.

by the Indonesian country team to enhance the capabilities of Indonesian security forces and address domestic terrorism.

In conjunction with the aggressive CT activities of DET 88 and the Terrorism and Transnational Crime Task Force, Indonesia developed de-radicalization and counter-radicalization programs to build popular resilience against Islamic extremism.[141] These efforts included, "prison reform, rehabilitation programs and counterpropaganda. The purpose of these measures [was] to disengage terrorist convicts from future activities and prevent or disrupt the radicalization process of Indonesian society."[142] The prison reforms undertaken by the Indonesian Government were an important acknowledgement that poor living conditions and inhumane treatment by Indonesian officials created an environment conducive to radicalization and increased danger of terrorist recidivism.[143]

In conjunction with these CT efforts, the Indonesian Government instituted significant democratic reforms after the election of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in 2004. These changes influenced the political, economic, and social dynamics in Indonesia and complemented the widespread CT and de-radicalization efforts in the country. Since the end of the Suharto Regime, democratic transparency and the development of a free and open media expanded civil society. Indonesian leaders removed the governing powers of military leaders, and separated the roles of the armed forces and the domestic police forces.[144]

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[141] Gindarsah.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 3.

[144] Vaugh, 8.

As a result of these reforms in civil society, significant US policies changed towards Indonesian security cooperation and foreign assistance after 2005. Specifically, these policies addressed the ban on military support to the TNI, resurrecting the IMET, restarting non-lethal Foreign Military Sales, and waiving Foreign Military Financing restrictions.[145] These policy changes built upon the momentum the DoS-led foreign assistance mission and created opportunities for USSOF to engage and develop CT capabilities of the Indonesian Military.

Conclusion

Similar to the campaign in the Philippines, the campaign to counter terrorists in Indonesia between 2003 and 2014 is considered a success by contemporary analysts and policymakers. The investment by the US and the development of Indonesia's CT capabilities had measurable impact, and many recognize that it has paid considerable dividends in the Southeast Asia CT fight.[146] This case study is a great example of US support to a host nation led, whole-of-government approach to an internal security problem with regional and global implications.

Indonesia's success is measured in part by the approximately three hundred JI militants that were killed or captured between 2003 and 2014, including key organizational leaders.[147] According to The Jamestown Foundation, a global analysis and research foundation, Densus 88 has crippled JI:

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[145] Chalk et al., 16.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid., 93-94.

> In November 2005, Densus 88 turned the tide in Indonesia's war against JI. A Densus 88 sniper shot Dr. Azahari Husin, the JI mastermind behind the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings and the JW Marriot and Australian Embassy bombings, during a raid on Husin's hideout in Batu, East Java. An accomplice set off a suicide explosive killing himself and a third man who had joined Husin in engaging the counterterrorism force in an intense gun battle. After Husin, Densus 88 eliminated JI's other top operatives in near succession.[148]

This analysis is supported by a number of US agencies and independent think tanks. The Congressional Research Service, for example, stated that, "Since the Bali bombing in 2002, crackdowns by various governments in the region—encouraged and in some cases supported by the US government and military—are believed to have weakened JI to such an extent that it essentially is no longer a regional organization, but rather is one confined to Indonesia, with some individuals still operating in the southern Philippines."[149] This case study represents an effective DoS-led foreign assistance mission that enabled a whole-of-government approach to address both immediate threats and the root causes of terrorism.

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[148] Jacob Zenn, "Indonesia's 'Ghost Birds' Tackle Islamist Terrorists: A Profile of Densus 88," *Terrorism Monitor* 9, no. 32 (August 2011), accessed February 6, 2016, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38312&no_cache=1#.VrZz5ZMrKT8.

[149] Vaughn, 2.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

> Success in the future demands unprecedented levels of trust, confidence, and understanding conditions that can't be surged.
>
> — United States Special Operations Command, *SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear*

Review of the pertinent literature and the US phase zero CT campaigns in the Philippines and Indonesia revealed four major themes. First, threat groups exploit instability, and voids in phase zero engagement prevent the US from understanding that exploitation. Second, authorities can be mutually supportive for the DoS and USSOF, but they can also unintentionally narrow the scope of phase zero operations and create an "authorities trap." Third, the contemporary operating environment is complex and the US lacks a strategy that synchronizes all the elements of national power to navigate that environment effectively. Finally, understanding the operational environment is paramount for USSOF to effectively execute their phase zero tasks.

Before discussing these four themes in further depth, an important discovery should be discussed—phase zero is not a USSOF-specific activity, and USSOF is not required for phase zero in every environment. Phase zero must be conducted as a whole-of-government campaign, with USSOF utilized as one tool among many in that campaign. Some environments, like the environment characterized by popular anti-American sentiment in Indonesia during the first several years of the Global War on Terrorism—are not conducive for USSOF to shape the environment. Therefore, the definition of phase zero used throughout this thesis should be amended to include all the

elements of national power at the disposal of the geographic combatant commander and COM.

Theme #1: Threat Groups Exploit Instability, and Voids in Phase Zero Engagement Prevent the US from Understanding that Exploitation

For any casual student of history, foreign policy, or sociology, the first part of this statement may sound not only like a shallow observation of the obvious but a law of human nature and a fundamental rule of how societies interact. A nuanced reflection of this idea, however, is important in the context of how the US secures its interests abroad. Based on the two case studies explored, this exploitation appears to have greater effects when the US is not actively involved in a holistic Phase Zero Campaign in those regions.

In the context of US foreign assistance abroad, understanding the nature of this exploitation is paramount. When national interests are at stake the USG has a plethora of established capabilities and authorities to pursue those interests. This is reflected by the multiple sources of foreign assistance programs under U.S.C Title 22 and 10, among others, utilized to support the Philippines and Indonesia in their efforts to develop CT capabilities. These programs, however, were reactionary, employed coherently to target established terrorist threats only after the attacks on September 11th, 2001. The US employed its capabilities aggressively in the USPACOM Theater only after a third party exploited relative instability in the region.

In the case of the Philippines, the rise in Islamic extremism correlated with the withdrawal of large scale US Military presence in the country after 1992. In Indonesia, Islamic extremism rose during the collapse of the Suharto regime and the prohibition of US foreign assistance after the passing of the Leahy Amendment in 1997. While these

events do not have a cause and effect relationship, the lack of US Military presence did have tertiary effects: the geographic combatant commanders and chiefs of mission did not fully understand the magnitude or the nature of the Islamic extremist threat growing in Southeast Asia. It took the kidnapping of US citizens in the Philippines, and then the tragedy of September 11th, to focus phase zero activities in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Kidnappings, terrorism, and violence, however, were only a symptom of wider sources of instability like economic insecurity and relative depravation felt by alienated populations. In this environment, JI and Abu Sayaf Group built their international terrorist networks and developed tactical and operational capacity. The planners of the *USS Cole* attack met with JI leaders in Malaysia, and the 9/11 mastermind, Khalid Sheik Mohammad developed his plan to use commercial airlines as weapons in the Philippines.[150] These threat groups exploited relative instability in the region prior to 9/11, and a void of a coherent US Phase Zero Campaign prevented the US from understanding the extent of that exploitation.

This first theme about exploitation and engagement provides a premise for the next three themes involving authorities, complexity and strategy, and trust. These three themes are all predicated on understanding the environment and effectively addressing the root problems that threaten US interests abroad. This first theme does not portend that phase zero operations can mitigate every threat to the US. Instead, this theme reflects the complexity of the environment and that a lack of phase zero engagement inhibits phase

[150] 9/11 Commission, *9/11 Commission Report*, accessed April 17, 2016, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/sept11/911Report.pdf, 73.

zero planners from the following: avoiding an authorities trap that limits planners view of the problem to the tools they have at their disposal; providing strategic assessment of the operational environment and effectively shaping regional or national strategy; and building the global SOF network and requisite understanding of the operational environment to tackle local, nuanced problems.

Theme #2: Authorities can Support Interagency Cooperation, but they can also Bias Phase Zero Planners with the "Authorities Trap"

Special Operations Command Pacific initially deployed to the Philippines for a very specific purpose: to train, advise, and assist the AFP to counter terrorist groups and free kidnapped US citizens. After September 11, 2001, this task evolved to advising and assisting the GRP to destroy the terrorist networks linked to AQ like the ASG. This mission was authorized by the US Congress and President as part of the Global War on Terrorism, and ultimately achieved its desired endstate. These authorities, however, coupled with a decade long void in phase zero engagement, fostered an environment for the chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commander to focus the majority of their foreign assistance efforts on CT in the southern Philippines. USSOF commanders effectively executed that mission by integrating their commands across the JIIM structure, and developing effective relationships and communications structures at the tactical, operational, and national level. Due to their effectiveness and resource capacity, JSOTF-P naturally became the main effort for the development of capabilities for the AFP under the country team's IDAD program. USSOF effectively utilized their Title 10 authorities in the OEF-P campaign. In a complimentary nature, the DoS utilized existing

Title 22 authorities to support the JSOTF-P as the main effort for foreign assistance in the Philippines.

Developing AFP capabilities to CT in the southern Philippines, however, did not translate to a whole-of-government approach to build enduring security and stability. One problem lay in that fact that the Islamic extremist groups targeted in OEF-P represented only one part of the multi-faceted security threats and sources of instability faced by the GRP. Because GWOT authorities existed, both the geographic combatant commanders and chiefs of mission narrowed the focus of their foreign assistance, or Phase Zero Campaign, on Islamic extremism. This is an authorities trap for phase zero planners—both USSOF and DoS phase zero planners. While the GWOT was arguably the most pressing national security concern to the US, the inherent value of a Phase Zero Campaign is that it provides access for US policy makers to understand and shape the environment. When a CT Campaign becomes a replacement for an overarching Phase Zero Campaign, as it did in the Philippines, other strategic threats can be overlooked. In the case of the Philippines, for example, political violence, communist insurgency, transnational criminal organizations and rising aggression by China collectively posed a much greater threat to Philippine security than Islamic extremism did.

During the timeframe of this study, political violence was rampant in the Philippines, and it continues today as a significant threat to the stability of the GRP. During election cycles, violent attacks and assassinations of political leaders, their supporters, and their family members spike dramatically. Leading up to the 2009 presidential elections in the Philippines, 57 politicians, journalists, and political

supporters were murdered.[151] In April 2013, attackers ambushed a town mayor after a campaign rally, killing 10 including the mayor and his 15 year old daughter.[152] Six months later, more than 20 people were killed and 27 injured in political violence leading up to national elections, half of which were incumbent politicians running for re-election.[153] In the fall of 2015, at least two mayors seeking a 2016 reelection were murdered.[154]

Much of this violence is linked to the communist insurgency in the Philippines led by the New People's Army, the militant wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The New People's Army, a Maoist-based revolutionary movement, has waged the world's longest communist insurgency and is considered by the AFP as the greatest threat to the country's stability.[155] According to the Global Terrorism Index Report in 2014:

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[151] The Guardian, "Philippines Charges 189 with Election Massacre of 57 People," March 25, 2010, accessed February 27, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/25/philippines-election-massacre-ampatuan-mangudadatu; BBC News, "Philippines Political Violence Leaves 21 Dead," November 23, 2009, accessed February 27, 2016, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8373770.stm.

[152] The Guardian, "Philippines Gunmen kill 10 in Political Violence," April 26, 2013, accessed February 27, 2016, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/26/philippines-gunmen-kill-10.

[153] ABC, "Philippines Pre-Election Violence Kills at least 20," October 28, 2013, accessed February 27, 2016, http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-28/at-least-20-dead-in-the-philippines-pre-election-violence/5051070.

[154] Akbayan, "Philippines: Alarming Incidents of Political Violence Related to 2016 Polls," October 20, 2015, accessed February 27, 2016, https://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2015/10/20/18779074.php.

[155] Austin Wright and Jeremy Herb, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and Talks," *International Crisis Group, Asia Report*, no. 202 (February 2011), accessed, April 15, 2016, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/202%20The%20Communist%20Insurgency%20in%20the%20Philippines%20Tactics%20and%20Talks.pdf.

> The largest individual group [for terrorist attacks] was the New People's Army, a communist organisation, which claimed responsibility for 30 per cent of deaths in 2013. . . . In total, 103 people were killed by assassinations in 2013 which is more than five times higher than 2012. The use of these tactics and targets demonstrates that many of the terrorist groups in the Philippines are seeking to directly change the political system. Around 34 per cent of deaths from terrorist attacks were targeting the government, with business leaders, private citizens and police representing between ten and seventeen per cent of deaths.[156]

Despite the threat posed by the New People's Army and its designation as a terrorist organization by the US, the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force for the Philippines limited JSOTF-P to targeting AQ linked terrorist organizations. As such, the US foreign assistance mission from 2000 to 2014 did not address a terrorist organization credited with nearly one third of the terrorist attacks in the Philippines.

In addition to the political violence and insurgency outside the scope of Islamic extremism, transnational criminal organizations severely undermine Philippine internal security and US interests in Southeast Asia. Human trafficking for prostitution and child labor is wide spread in the Philippines and undermines the rule of law and the formal economy. The criminal networks that operate these human trafficking networks facilitate other criminal activity that allows the movement of illicit material in and out of the country. These internal security threats all exist in the shadow of China's maritime activities in the South China Sea that threaten Philippine sovereignty and economic income from commercial fishing. Due to the nature of USSOF's CT mission in the Philippines from 2000 to 2014, however, these dynamic threats were not inherently part of JSOTF-Ps efforts to develop the capacity of the AFP.

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[156] Austin Wright and Jeremy Herb, "Global Terrorism Index Report: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism," Institute for Economics and Peace, accessed April 15, 2016, http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf.

The mission of JSOTF-P from 2002 to 2014 justifiably focused on the threat of Islamic extremism. The CT nature of the authorization for OEF-P, however, facilitated an environment for the chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders to focus on countering Islamic terrorism, and not necessarily addressing the widespread symptoms of instability in the Philippines that fostered the rise of Islamic extremism in the first place. The former was a CT Campaign, the latter would have been a Phase Zero Campaign: this is the authorities trap.

The observation of the authorities trap is not a criticism of the holistic COIN and CT Campaign waged by JSOTF-P from 2002 to 2014. JSOTF-P's activities during OEF-P are considered a great interagency success in countering the Islamic extremist threat in the southern Philippines. JSOTF-P effectively integrated intelligence activities, civil-military operations, humanitarian assistance, and military information support activities with effective military training, advising, and assisting to build the local infrastructure, win the support of the population, isolate the insurgency, and target bad actors. In the context of complex and bureaucratic JIIM relationships, these achievements cannot be overstated. The observation of the authorities trap simply states that when sent on a mission to CT with specific Title 10 CT authorities, that is what USSOF will do. Additionally, the amount of resources tied to Title 10 authorities may hinder the overarching US mission from a whole-of-government Phase Zero Campaign that seeks to understand the root causes of instability and shape that environment accordingly. The lesson learned is that specific USSOF missions should not replace an overarching Phase Zero Campaign, and a CT Campaign like OEF-P should be one line of effort in a broad, whole-of-government approach to shaping the environment.

The authorities trap is simply an acknowledgement of potential bias in planning for phase zero. The role of USSOF is to provide chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders options. In order to do that effectively, SOF planners must understand potential biases that may inhibit objective recommendations for the allocation of limited resources. Understanding this bias is also reflected in the third theme identified throughout the research, which involves the complexity of the environment and the need for a strategy to navigate that complexity effectively. Without a coherent strategy for the conduct of phase zero or the implementation of USSOF activities, planners will continue to fall victim to simply executing the mission they are authorized to do, instead of providing the COM and geographic combatant commander with the best options for long-term, phase zero shaping operations that leverage all the instruments of national power.

Theme #3: The Contemporary Operating Environment is Complex and the US lacks an Integrative Strategy to Effectively Navigate that Environment

Most of the literature reviewed in this thesis reflects a belief that the international security environment is increasing in complexity. National security experts, academics, and military professionals define these challenges with a range of descriptors such as asymmetric, irregular, hybrid, unconventional, or gray. Adjectives aside, the common theme is that the complexity of the environment requires a flexible strategy that can address the spectrum of conflicts between war and peace. Contemporary authors are exploring what this strategy may look like, but there is no established consensus on what an asymmetric, irregular, hybrid, unconventional, or gray zone strategy looks like.

As discussed in chapter 2, Colonel Petit argues that the US has replaced strategy with engagement. Accepting that premise has some significant implications for Phase

Zero Campaign planning. Engagement in the phase zero environment is specifically susceptible to the authorities trap bias, as phase zero engagements for USSOF are typically carried out as part of a JCET Program. The exercises are authorized as a means for USSOF to train on their core capabilities. Although that authorization includes training partner forces for FID and UW, the geographic combatant commanders and chiefs of mission must understand that JCET engagements do not take the place of a Phase Zero Campaign. JCETs and other bi- or multi-lateral training exercises are only one tool, and as Petit states they should be "tied to and in support of the overall strategy of the combatant commander and US country team."[157] All the elements of national power must be synchronized in a coherent strategy and campaign, using engagement tools like JCETs as a way to execute that strategy.

If no strategy exists to marry engagements with the right partner at the right place at the right time in pursuit of regional or strategic objectives, those engagements are not part of a Phase Zero Campaign; they are simply training exercises that offer USSOF teams some exposure to the local environment. It is important for USSOF planners to clearly articulate this to geographic combatant commanders and chiefs of mission. For example, a COM may use a USSOF team as an effective diplomatic tool to conduct bi-lateral training with one of the host nation's elite forces. This can demonstrate the COM's commitment to the development of the host nation's military capability, and articulate the nature of the US's relationship with that country. If the COM's primary security issue in that country is CT, however, and USSOF is conducting bi-lateral training with a military force that does not have domestic CT authorities in that country, that diplomatic tool is

[157] Petit, 173.

being utilized improperly. The same is true if USSOF is training a domestic CT Unit in a nation where the US's primary security concern is maritime aggression from a state actor like China. Yet, this misapplication of USSOF is probably transparent to the COM, as he or she met their diplomatic goal to demonstrate a US commitment to enhance the host nation's security capacity. Therefore, a coherent strategy must exist to outline the strategic objectives for phase zero planners and synchronize the efforts of the US across the interagency.

According to military theorist and academic James D. Kiras of the United States Air Force's School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, strategy is "the bridge between policy and available means, including the use of military force."[158] In order for the US to realize a strategy, it must have all the elements of national power working in concert towards a unified goal. When executive national security objectives are in conflict with legislation, as in the Indonesia case study, the COM and geographic combatant commanders cannot develop a comprehensive operational approach that is synchronized across the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multi-national environment to meet strategic objectives.

The lack of a strategy prohibits USSOF and interagency planners from effectively linking national objectives to the ends, ways, and means of tactical missions during phase zero. Petit's commentary on the challenges to operational design in phase zero reflect the nature of this disconnect. Both case studies explored reflect these tensions, as does the Global War on Terrorism in the Pacific theater as a whole from 2001 to 2014. There was

[158] James Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy from World War I to the War on Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2006), 62.

no regional, whole-of-government strategy to combat terrorism across Southeast Asia. USSOCPAC executed a campaign in the Philippines, and the Indonesian country team executed a campaign in Indonesia. The intersection of governed spaces, however, is the environment most highly exploited by those threat groups phase zero campaigns intend to target.

In the case of Southeast Asia, the lack of a coherent national or regional strategy prevented the development of an effective campaign to address the border areas in the Celebes and Sulu seas. A 2007 *Asia Times* article succinctly summed up the threat from the maritime space between the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia:

> Decades of poor governance, economic and political marginalization, lack of state capacity, and separatist conflict have turned this area into an "ungoverned space" and hence a haven for transnational criminals, including terrorists. Addressing transnational threats in this area not only requires greater security cooperation among the three countries, but also increased assistance from external powers who have much to offer in terms of capacity building.[159]

Country level campaigns to CT are not sufficient to addressing transnational terrorist and criminal organizations that exploit the seams and gaps between countries. A national and regional strategy is required to holistically approach these issues and synchronize the elements of US national power with the interests of regional partners.

Theme #4: Understanding the Operational Environment is Paramount in the Development of Effective Phase Zero Operations

The landscape in Southeast Asia is reflective of a larger struggle for identity in a globalizing world. What renowned author, teacher, and foreign policy expert Samuel

[159] Ian Storey, "Triborder Sea' is SE Asian Danger Zone;" *Asia Times*, October 18, 2007, accessed April 21, 2016, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/IJ18Ae01.html.

Huntington described decades ago as the "Clash of Civilizations" is personified in places like Indonesia and the Philippines where traditionalist seek to preserve a way of life in an environment that is rapidly changing.[160] This "clash" is just one of the complexities of the environment that phase zero planners must understand when developing campaigns to achieve US interests.

On the small island of Bali, Indonesia, for example, westerners flock to the beaches for the exotic nightlife and world-class surfing. International companies develop the pristine landscape to cater to these tourists and to capitalize on the western desire for luxury goods and first-class accommodations. This development is in sharp contrast to the rich cultural and religious landscape. Bali is home to over eighty percent of ethnic Balinese who practice a form of Hinduism that is shaped by the history of the native tribes, Buddhism, and centuries of traders and merchants traveling across the Indian Ocean. Time barely touches many of the small villages in the central jungles of the island, unmolested by travelers and development; owned by historic temples and irreverent, lounging monkeys. The past, the present, the primitive, and the developed first world co-exist in an island barely 2,200 square miles small. The result is an environment that Islamic extremists target as a reprehensible representation of the West perverting a traditional society.

The description of this environment is important because USSOF identifies the first of its 12 "SOF Imperatives" as "understand the operational environment."[161] This

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[160] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011).

[161] United States Special Operations Command, "SOF Imperatives," accessed April 21, 2016, http://www.soc.mil/USASOCHQ/SOFImperatives.html.

means that, to be effective, USSOF and diplomats must understand the nuances of the local culture, politics, and geography, and the geopolitical implications of armed US Military Personnel in a foreign country. This is an incredibly high expectation, and requires time in the region developing relationships and trust with host nation partners. In the Philippines case study, this trust was built upon small teams and liaison at all levels of the host nation's military and the US country team. The enduring, day to day presence facilitated the development of personal, not just organizational, relationships. In the Indonesia case study, understanding the local perceptions and popular sentiment against US Military presence prompted a non-military approach to what appeared to a military security problem.

According to USSOCOM, "Special operations are 'special' because their success depends on long-term relationships with indigenous forces and populations and knowledge of the cultural, societal, economic, and political environments in which they occur. . . . The greater the environmental knowledge and extent of relationships, the more likely the outcome will be successful. This, more than any other single factor, defines the nature of special operations."[162] This articulation of special operations could be expanded to include all the JIIM actors who are essential to the development and execution of phase zero operations. Relationships matter, and the executors of phase zero campaigns must be provided the time and flexibility to develop a nuanced, personal understanding of the operational environment.

[162] United States Special Operations Command, Publication 1, *Doctrine for Special Operations* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, 2011).

Conclusion

Phase zero is a whole-of-government approach that seeks to synchronize the shaping of the environment and preventing, deterring, and preparing for conflict. The two case studies examined identify tensions in applying interagency authorities and capabilities in a coherent, national and regional phase zero strategy. Those tensions beg the question of whether or not the current structures and organizations to execute foreign assistance and phase zero operations are conducive to addressing the complexities of the threats in the current operating environment.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Political warfare is the logical application of Clausewitz's doctrine in time of peace. In broadest definition, political warfare is the employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives.
>
> — George Kennan, "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum," February 1948

Conclusions

In undertaking this research, I sought to understand how USSOF and the interagency achieve national security objectives during phase zero operations. To scope the research into a manageable body of work, I narrowed my discussion to a review of how national security strategy is formed and authorized at the national level, and then executed by chiefs of mission and geographic combatant commanders. The analysis in chapter 5 revealed four themes about a complex operational environment, adaptive threat groups, a lack of phase zero strategy, and challenges with the interagency structures and authorities.

Many of the authors reviewed in this thesis built their studies on a premise that the current operating environment is something new, foreign, and increasing in complexity. This claim fails to account for a basic characteristic of warfare that has endured throughout history—war is a complex human endeavor stressed by fog and friction. Contemporary authors are, in a sense, substituting the benefit of hindsight with simplicity. Modern US history is teeming with examples of military and diplomatic leaders describing the environment they face as more complex and more irregular than ever before. President John F. Kennedy, in his 1962 speech to the graduating class of

West Point, articulated challenges in national security that are as relevant today as they were 54 years ago:

> This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin--war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat; by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him. It is a form of warfare uniquely adapted to what has been strangely called 'wars of liberation,' to undermine the efforts of new and poor countries to maintain the freedom that they have finally achieved. It preys on economic unrest and ethnic conflicts. It requires in those situations where we must counter it, and these are the kinds of challenges that will be before us in the next decade if freedom is to be saved, a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.[163]

The introduction of new technologies in warfare and diplomacy always challenges existing tactics, strategies, and internal processes. The technologies emerging in the information age are no different, and just as industrial revolution and nuclear age required changes in US strategy and tactics, technology today requires the US to adapt. This is important for US policy-makers to embrace. Viewing the environment as increasingly complex externalizes the challenges to US national security. Believing that conflict naturally and continuously evolves, on the other hand, mandates perpetual review and adaptation of internal processes, strategies, and tactics. The former allows complacency, the later demands action and change.

The current national security structure is built upon the 1947 National Security Act and must evolve. The first prominent change to this document occurred in 1986, with the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, after crisis drove policy-makers to react to the reality that contemporary warfare required an integrated

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[163] John F. Kennedy, "Remarks at West Point to the Graduating Class of the U.S. Military Academy," June 6, 1962, accessed May 7, 2016, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8695.

joint force. In the past 30 years, globalization and the information age has fundamentally altered how individuals and societies interact, yet the US national security architecture has changed little since the reforms in 1986.

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter is proposing to update some provisions of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act through what he calls the "Force of the Future" initiative. Among other things, his initiative seeks to reform the human resourcing and acquisition processes, and clarify some of the roles and functions of senior DoD officials. The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator John McCain, has also mentioned recently that the US Congress is working on a legislative update to Goldwater-Nichols.[164] The extent of these recommended changes are yet to be published, but this is an acknowledgement by the senior leaders in both the executive and legislative bodies that the current national security construct is outdated. The question remains how flexible will the "Force of the Future" be to react to the sort of gray zone challenges described in this thesis.

The acknowledgement of antiquated legislative structures is an implicit acknowledgement that the national security apparatus lacks an effective agency to coordinate, synchronize, and execute effective phase zero strategy. Nearly 70 years ago, the father of the US containment strategy during the Cold War, George Kennan, described the execution of US policy in this environment as political warfare. He said, "Political warfare is the logical application of Clausewitz's doctrine in time of peace. In broadest definition, political warfare is the employment of all the means at a nation's

[164] Austin Wright and Jeremy Herb, "Military Reform Effort Claims Latest Casualty," *Politico*, April 18, 2016, accessed April 21, 2016, http://www.politico.com/story/2016/04/defense-pentagon-brad-carson-222064.

command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives."[165] A range of descriptors has emerged in the post-9/11 operating environment, but Kennan's political warfare definition from 1948 most accurately depicts the challenges the US faces by unconventional, irregular, asymmetric, and gray zone threats.

In the execution of phase zero and political warfare, the geographic combatant commander and COM must employ all the elements of national power at his or her disposal, including USSOF, to achieve national objectives. In adversarial states, this should include influencing, coercing, deterring, and resisting state aggression in conjunction with unconventional, hybrid, irregular, and asymmetric means. In friendly and allied states, this means supporting the existing regime with foreign assistance and FID. These efforts, however, must be synchronized across the JIIM environment and regionally focused by a national level agency.

The US needs a National Security Council level headquarters to develop strategy, synchronize the interagency, and execute political warfare in phase zero. In a 2016 *Joint Forces Quarterly* article, four senior ranking officers in the special operations community—including the former commanders of both USSOCOM and USASOC—make this very argument. They claim that,

> President Eisenhower once considered appointing a National Security Council (NSC)-level 'director of unconventional or non-military warfare,' with responsibilities including such areas as 'economic warfare, psychological warfare, political warfare, and foreign information.' In other words, he saw the need for an NSC-level director of political warfare, someone to quarterback the habitually interagency effort. This need still exists to achieve unity of effort across all aspects of national power (diplomatic, information, military, and economic)

[165] George Kennan, "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum," Department of State, May 4, 1948, accessed March, 3, 2016, http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114320.

> across the continuum of international competition. As Max Boot has observed, political warfare has become a lost art which no department or agency of the U.S. Government views as a core mission.[166]

The creation of such an organization would require significant political will. In the absence of a national directorate to develop and execute political and UW, however, the theater special operations commands should strive to shape national policy by developing focused regional phase zero campaigns. Communicating and integrating seamlessly with the country teams and GCCs is essential in this endeavor. Widespread use of liaison, decentralized interagency commands, and enduring presence by regional experts should be the standard, not an exception to the rule. Short, rotational training engagements cannot be misconstrued as a replacement for strategy, and the Theater Special Operations Commands must effectively communicate their capabilities and regional security concerns across the interagency.

Currently, there is an academic discussion within the US Special Operations community as to how to define, describe, and operate in the environment outside of declared, armed conflict. Several white papers from USSOCOM and USASOC concisely describe these challenges and potential responses. These include the gray zone, "SOF Support to Political Warfare," and "Unconventional Warfare," to name a few. The public policy research organization RAND has also published extensively on these topics. With this thesis, I hope to contribute to that discussion, and suggest that USSOF be widely used in the phase zero environment across the spectrum of gray zone threats. As the nature of conflict between and among states evolves, the role of US Special Operations

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[166] Joseph L. Votel et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 80 (1st Quarter 2016): 108.

Forces must evolve as well, and geographic combatant commanders and chiefs of mission must view USSOF as a dynamic tool that can operate across the spectrum of conflict between and among states.

Recommendations for Further Study

The interactions between USSOF and the interagency during phase zero warrant further exploration. This study analyzed relationships only in the Pacific theater, and primarily between the DoS and USSOF. Expanding this research to include several other case studies or vignettes from a variety of GCCs could provide further insight as to how USSOF and the interagency interact at the country team and GCC level. This should include examination of other USG agencies like the Central Intelligence Agency and Drug Enforcement Agency, and interagency or multinational organizations that address regional transnational crime, drugs, and terrorism. Additionally, identifying quantitative measures to support the qualitative analysis in this thesis might provide more correlative support to the effectiveness of different phase zero approaches. Additional research into this topic may provide insight into the fog and frictions that hinder the achievement of national security objectives during phase zero, and may also illuminate innovative solutions to alleviating the tensions across the JIIM environment.

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