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JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE

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Networked Special Operations: Addressing Transnational Threats, Homeland Defense,
and Breached Seams in the Western Hemisphere

By

Alex Castro

Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

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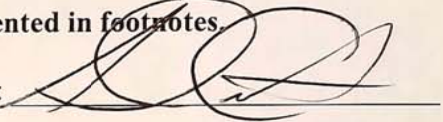
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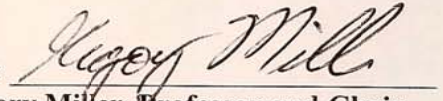
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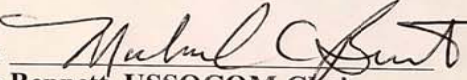
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Abstract

This thesis revolves around a central question: *Can United States Special Operations Command act as the conduit to network special operations in support of strategies specific to transnational organized crime (TOC) and homeland defense (HD)?*

An examination of the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS), the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG), and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), uncovers some distinctive goals and requirements linked to national security on U.S. frontiers. The organizations discussed within this document have missions and goals that each pursue, though that is not the focus of this thesis. What *is* at issue lies in the parallel and myopic lines of effort that each organization follows despite shared national-level directives. The U.S. national defense and homeland security industrial complex are in need of a serious forced evolution that mimics the threat posed by transnational and transregional threats which do not adhere to geographic borders nor are they subject to the posse comitatus bifurcation inherent to military and law enforcement collaboration. Through all of these examples, little ‘strategy’ is provided that adequately links ends-ways-means to a comprehensive scheme to either counter-TOC or HD. This thesis contends USSOCOM should be the clearing house and stand as a foundational organization for a true global approach to global threats. By using the TSOCs in a “supported command” roll then USSOCOM, through direct coordination with the GCC’s, could utilize the resident network already in place.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis revolves around a central question: *Can United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) act as the conduit to network special operations in support of Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) strategies specific to transnational organized crime (TOC) and homeland defense (HD)?* An examination of the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS), the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG), and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), uncovers some distinctive goals and requirements linked to national security on U.S. frontiers. A largely unprotected border with Mexico, transnational safe havens in both the USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM areas of responsibility (AOR), and vast oceanic transportation lanes leading to U.S. soil require deliberate strategies. Despite shared ambitions of protecting national interests near the homeland and in the Western Hemisphere, there is no single unified organization that links each of the independent GCCs, Departments, and/or agencies in the attainment of intersecting national security objectives. However, USSOCOM is a common enabler in each of the independent GCCs and is charged with defending the homeland and executing counter-transnational organized crime (CTOC) missions, which puts it in the position of being able to coordinate common mission sets and tasks based on its currently networked relationships.

This division of duties and responsibilities is necessary for distinct GCC-specific programming actions, organizational development, training, and equipment accessions. The organizations discussed within this document have missions and goals that each pursue, though that is not the focus of this thesis. What *is* at issue lies in the parallel and seemingly myopically focused lines of effort that each organization follows in the attainment of shared national-level directives. These cylinders of excellence create

outstanding internal results whereas interaction and mutually dependent success seems to occur more via personal relationships and happenstance, vice a codified or doctrinal convergence of efforts.

To use a football analogy, defensive units are comprised of various individual positions. Linebackers, safeties, defensive linemen, corners, etc. Each player excels at his position, trains to very specific guidelines based on his unique skill sets, and uses mentors that give the player the best guidance in becoming the best position player. Yet to win, each must not only acknowledge the other positions, but they must be networked to create a whole-team approach to the game. This is accomplished through a shared set of plays, designed schemes, and more importantly through a singular defensive coordinator who is charged with the overall accomplishment of defending the end-zone. So who is the defensive coordinator that can see the transnational threats and provide for a holistic homeland defense? This thesis proposes that USSOCOM has the ability and authority to serve in this capacity.

The next four chapters provide a detailed discussion of the challenges, authorities, and opportunities through which USSOCOM can synchronize the GCCs in addressing TOC and HD related issues. First, chapter-2 provides the primary analysis of the national strategic directives, Department of Defense guidance, and GCC unclassified strategies. The 2015 NSS, the 2012 DSG, and the 2014 QDR provide the high level demands directed at both the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), specific to the protection of U.S. national interests in the Western Hemisphere. Along with a review of the guidance, is an explanation of the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and the resulting seams created by the distinctive geographic boundaries for each

GCC. The chapter also incorporates the larger part of ‘seam-analysis’ that highlights the existence of gaps that negatively affect the attainment of directives placed forth by the NSS, DSG, and QDR.

Chapter-3 addresses the need for a codified level of command and control (C2) relationships, organizational charts, and bureaucratic scheme that surround each of the GCCs, Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs), and DHS. This deliberate step provides for a shared, networked approach that sufficiently surrounds transnational organized crime, counter-drug, and counter-terrorism activities. The intent is not to show that fusion alone can solve the national interest issues that USSOCOM supports, but to indicate areas where national security could benefit if a singular, enabling organization supplements and binds regionally focused Geographic Combatant Command Strategies into a cohesive national defense model where a symbiotic relationship is a precursor to success.

Chapter-4 summarizes current USSOCOM efforts and other potential solutions that help answer: *Can USSOCOM act as the conduit to network special operations in support of GCC strategies specific to transnational organized crime (TOC) and homeland defense (HD)?* Admiral William McRaven, previous Commander of USSOCOM, developed a vision for the future: “A globally networked force of SOF, interagency, allies, and partners able to rapidly and persistently address regional contingencies and threats to stability.”¹ His guidance descends from an understanding that effective networks are best created before a crisis but networks require relationships built over time, and this time must be driven by an organization that not only retains the

¹ Admiral William H. McRaven, USSOCOM 2020 – Forging the Tip of the Spear (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM Public Affairs, 2014), 12.

skill sets, but the experience to harness such a network.² USSOCOM possesses an exclusive ability to maneuver globally, directly employ, and control combat forces independent of restrictive geographic lines or Unified Command Plan (UCP) barriers. Similarly, the threats of today, and of the future, do not observe artificial separations created through Combatant Command (CCMD) area of responsibility demarcations. Most transregional threats do not adhere to geographic or regional boundaries, which prevents any single CCMD from unilaterally addressing the threat(s) to National Security. This thesis presents a need for a cross-organizational enabler, seen in Admiral McRaven's vision for the future.

Finally, chapter-5 summarizes the various thoughts and examples provided in this thesis. The culmination is a networked approach that imbues a singular CCMD with the ability to provide a networked approach to transregional threats.

² Admiral William H. McRaven, USSOCOM 2020 – Forging the Tip of the Spear (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM Public Affairs, 2014), 1.

Chapter 2: Grand Strategic Directives, the Unified Command Plan, and Seams

Planners at the operational/tactical level are mostly guided by higher National or Department level strategic guidance as frameworks that help link means and ways to national security ends. Without guidance, personalities or individual preferences tend to take over. Doctrine gives way to word-of-mouth, guidance gives way to techniques, and long term strategic efforts are hampered by individual turn-over and personalities. For example, during contingency operations, planners and staff begin course of action (COA) development that provides potential options to the mission at hand. However, the lack of unity between other instruments of national power is clearly seen at this critical first operational level step to addressing a problem. (See *Figure-1*)

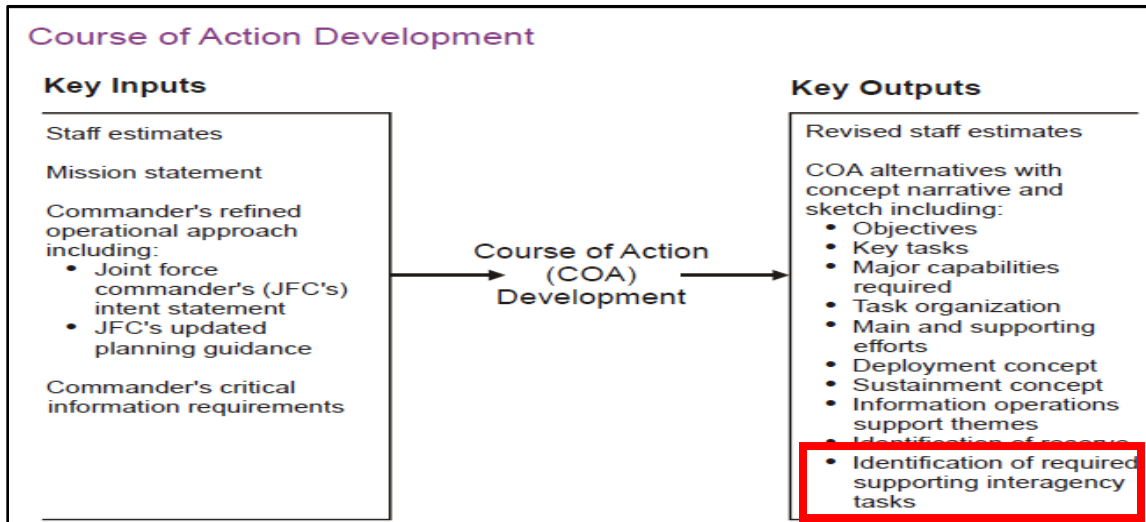


Figure 1 Joint Staff-Planning Course of Action (COA) Development Key Inputs and Outputs¹

Under 'Key Inputs', not a single reference or deliberate directive drives planners to consider the actions of other agencies, departments, or existing operations that may or

¹ Admiral Micheal Mullen, *JP 5-0 Joint Operational Planning*, (Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 11 August 2011), III-14. In the source document, this is used as Figure III-7.

may not overlap the perceived new problem. It is not until a planner looks to the ‘Key Outputs’ that any mention of identifying an external agency’s tasks comes into play. In other words, to follow the guide places interagency or cross-organizational coordination as an afterthought. *Figure-1* above, if used as a model to explain how national strategic and military guidance flows, illustrates the late-to-need inclusion of joint/interagency considerations into any viable course of action, thus instead of integrated it may end up simply additive or at best parallel. An examination of higher strategic guidance follows to understand where this division of effectiveness occurs.

National Security Strategy, Defense Strategic Guidance, and the Quadrennial Defense Review

President Obama’s 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) outlined four enduring national interests, two of which are specifically relevant to this thesis. The first applicable enduring national interest is “the security of the U.S., its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners”, and the second is “a rule-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet *global challenges*.”² Along with these national interests, President Obama provided a prioritized list of eight strategic risks. These strategic risks include a request to pursue a “comprehensive national security agenda” that also involves “policy tradeoffs and hard choices” regarding the allocation of finite resources.³ The President’s first priority was

² President Barack Obama, National Security Strategy (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, February 2015), 2; emphasis added to highlight the transregional/national nature of the threat(s)

³ President Obama, National Security Strategy, 2. Note: This guidance remains as the current NSS until replaced by President Trump. However, the four enduring national interests still remain as the underpinnings in defining the pursuit of national interests while President Trump is very much a proponent of homeland defense/security given his campaign and current strategic messaging.

homeland defense against catastrophic attacks on U.S. soil or vital infrastructure, and finalized his list emphasizing the risk of “regional spillover” of transnational organized crime given the dangers of weak and/or failing states.⁴ Ultimately, he explains that “fulfilling our responsibilities depends on a strong defense and secure homeland [and] it also requires a global security posture in which our unique capabilities are employed within diverse international coalitions and in support of local partners.”⁵

Within the 2015 NSS are broad goals and intent that speak largely to the United States’ role as a global leader and partner to the international community. The intent of America’s integration into the larger world construct projects the United States as a singular sentient being vice a conglomerate of independent actors operating within the national governmental system of departments, agencies, and bureaus. This assumption of a fully networked system stands as the foundation for attaining the goals set forth as part of national security. But the NSS contains nothing that actually directs full cooperative integration. Grand strategy should be broad enough to guide the general direction of the nation but include guidance that holds each organization accountable to a shared goal of national security and not encourage independent ventures towards the same finish line.

The overall grand strategic goal of national defense relies heavily on the military as “the bedrock of [U.S.] national security” which will “remain ready to deter and defeat threats to the homeland, including against missile, cyber, and terrorist attacks.”⁶ United States military forces, according to the NSS, will be used to not only deter but to defeat and deny aggression by threats of a transnational nature or others that threaten homeland security. Yet

⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

⁶ *Ibid*, 7.

the NSS characterizes the use of military forces in a way that leans more towards action abroad and projects a presumptive tone of addressing these threats away from the homeland. In the sections specifically termed “Reinforce Homeland Security” and “Combat the Persistent Threat of Terrorism”, most of the guidance and strategic direction continues to focus on overseas threats and partnerships with other nations, states, and governments while the term “whole of community approach” is a phenomenal maxim that captures the true landscape of players available to combat transnational threats.⁷ The NSS seemingly ignores the potential threat by transnational organizations able to commit or inspire terrorist attacks in the continental United States, and appears to limit the larger threat to the Middle East and African areas of operation. The NSS does mention homegrown violent extremism, but only in a singular line, and does not acknowledge the potential for significant Western Hemisphere threats. The NSS uses the words ‘joint’ and ‘interagency’ only once each throughout the entire document. The very top level guidance is missing even the clearest directive intent that subsequent strategy developers can use as leverage to bind organizations into a communal model of performance.

The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) directs “the Joint Force [to] recalibrate its capabilities and make selective additional investments” to support ten major mission areas and be prepared to support four subset missions.⁸ The mission areas relevant to this thesis are: *counter terrorism/irregular warfare, defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities, provide a stabilizing presence, conduct humanitarian/counterinsurgency operations, and humanitarian disaster relief operations.*

⁷ President Barack Obama, National Security Strategy (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, February 2015), 8-9.

⁸ President Barack Obama, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense Strategy* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, January 2012), 4.

Like the more recent NSS, President Obama directed “a renewed emphasis on the need for a *globally networked approach* to deterrence and warfare” and also highlights a need to “examine the mix of Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) elements best suited to the strategy.”⁹

The 2012 DSG also designates U.S. forces to continue to defend U.S. territory from direct attack by state and non-state actors, come to the assistance of domestic civil authorities in the event such defense fails, and provide homeland defense and support to civil authorities which require strong, steady-state force readiness as threats to the homeland may be highest when U.S. forces are engaged in conflict abroad.¹⁰ This direction to the Department of Defense takes a much more prescriptive style by clearly articulating the need for a community approach to problem sets. However the mission areas mentioned earlier, namely *counter-terrorism (CT)/irregular warfare (IW)* and *defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities*, only briefly mention integration with other instruments of national power (assumed to mean a vague reference to interagency cooperation).

For *CT/IW*, the DSG focuses on al-Qaeda as the major threat that U.S. military forces will combat. This myopic focus on a singular target group encouraged DOD strategists, ISR experts, and intelligence analysts to comfortably reside in the ‘Afghanistan-model’ while other problems brewed.¹¹ The seemingly overnight success of groups like ISIS, the larger ISIL movement, the Muslim Brotherhood events in Egypt,

⁹ *Ibid*, 7; author added emphasis on “globally networked approach” given an underlying theme in this thesis directly relates to bringing various individual parts together to gain a better sum of all parts.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

¹¹ This is a direct conclusion drawn from 12 years of the author’s experience leading an ISR squadron in both OEF, OIF, Inherent Resolve, New Dawn, and ISR campaign planning for both Iraq and Afghanistan. The main problem with simply characterizing all issues as either related to or detracting from al-Qaeda meant that other networks were able to grow under the U.S. radar.

and the devolution of Libya are all recent examples of events that transpired directly in front of U.S. experts, despite the strong presence in the Middle East, which failed to produce any large scale organizational reorganization or consolidation. The paucity of coordination meant that despite a preponderance of military forces being allocated to U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), terrorism and unrest remain growth industries. Evidence of the growing influence of ISIS and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's 2012 expansion into Syria were efforts that both the Department of State and the Defense Intelligence Agency understood, but was not part of the DOD's strategic focus area.¹² This seam between the major communities of Departments that are part of the United States' arsenal of power, is clearly visible within the primary document meant to be the national defense strategy, otherwise known as the 2012 DSG.

For the DSG guidance regarding *defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities*, there is a slightly better acknowledgement of the ties to civil authorities, but only after the preventive measures from direct attack fail. This approach, etched with deterrence-focused characteristics, only ties DOD assets to civil connections in a post-event environment. The President states, within the DSG, that "threats to the homeland may be highest when U.S. forces are engaged in conflict with an adversary abroad."¹³ This statement negates the constant threat of lone-wolf style events, a repetition of 9/11, and the desire of active terrorist networks to conduct or motivate attacks on U.S. soil. A separation occurs where the DOD, focused externally, fails to acknowledge a need for a

¹² Graeme Baker, *ISIL: Rising Power in Iraq and Syria - The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has outgrown even al-Qaeda as it seeks to establish a new caliphate*. Available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/06/isil-eminant-threat-iraq-syria-20146101543970327.html> (accessed 22 December 2016)

¹³ President Barack Obama, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense Strategy* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, January 2012), 5.

coherent team effort in combating threats to homeland defense. One seam appears when the DOD approaches threats overseas and fails to use the U.S. as a potential source zone for national defense issues. This assumption then leverages law enforcement mechanisms without the benefit of using capabilities available overseas to be employed against domestic targets. Threats to the nation do not adhere to geographic borders nor do they neatly subscribe to the posse comitatus bifurcation inherent to military and law enforcement collaboration.

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) summarizes the threats to the Western Hemisphere as security challenges derived from state-on-state conflict, paramilitary activity, and insurgencies. “Today’s threats stem from the spread of narcotics and other forms of TOC, the effects of which can be exacerbated by natural disasters...These challenges are shared and do not respect sovereign boundaries. It is in the mutual interest of all the nations in the Western Hemisphere to unanimously develop regional capacity to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat these threats from non-state actors.”¹⁴ The 2014 QDR invokes seeking a diverse methodology to protecting the homeland. Former Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel posited that defeating attacks in the United States from increasingly networked threats comes from a strategy that includes an equally diverse and networked counter effort, and that collaboration with both interagency and international partners is essential.¹⁵ He underwrites the need for a networked approach to defending against transnational threats by stating “the homeland is no longer a sanctuary

¹⁴ Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel, *2014 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, March 2014), 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 15-16.

for U.S. forces, and we must anticipate the increased likelihood of an attack on U.S. soil.”¹⁶

The 2014 QDR is by far the clearest in delivering a narrative of cooperation and integration of departments, agencies, and capabilities.

The American people expect the Department of Defense to assist civil authorities in saving and sustaining lives after natural and man-made disasters, including extreme weather events, pandemics, and industrial accidents. The surest way to stop potential attacks is to prevent threats from developing. Defeating terrorist attacks in the United States from the highly diversified and increasingly networked terrorist threat requires an equally diverse and networked counter effort. The Department of Defense’s activities to protect the homeland do not stop at our nation’s borders. We will collaborate with interagency and international partners to tackle root drivers of conflict, including building capacity with allied and partner militaries, and to sustain a global effort to detect, disrupt, and defeat terrorist plots.¹⁷

This excerpt is clear on the expectations of the American people, the need for an equally and exhaustive networked counter-threat system, and the admission that U.S. borders are not meant to limit combined efforts.

Regarding Special Operations Forces (SOF), the 2014 QDR predicts continued high demand for forces that are specially trained in counter-terrorist threats around the globe as well as emerging transnational threats. This demand may exceed USSOCOM’s organic ability to grow SOF personnel and will then depend on either partner nations, other agencies, or additional contributors of trained personnel that can address TOC and HD issues. As such, the “United States will continue to advise, train, and equip partner forces to perform essential tasks against terrorist networks, complementing U.S. activities

¹⁶ Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel, *2014 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, March 2014), 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 15-16.

in the field.”¹⁸ This option allows for additional stability in the Western Hemisphere while providing supplementary capacity aimed at homeland defense and taking into account the transnational characteristics of the various threats. Unfortunately, for the DOD, the primary method that allocates tasks and responsibilities is currently limited to the separation of CCMDs as outlined in the Unified Command Plan.

UCP (USNORTHCOM/USSOUTHCOM) and DHS Security

A baseline understanding of the UCP, the rules that govern each GCC, and the complex interaction of separate laws and documents provides some insight into the causes of seams and interpretive development of strategy for each of the organizations involved.

The National Security Act of 1947 and Title 10 of the United States Code (USC) provide the basis for establishment of combatant commands. The Unified Command Plan (UCP) establishes the missions, responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility (AORs) for commanders of combatant commands ("Combatant Commanders"). A "geographic Combatant Commander" is a commander of a combatant command that includes a geographic AOR. A "functional Combatant Commander" is a commander of a combatant command with transregional responsibilities. Command of combatant commands will be exercised as provided for herein and as otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense (the "Secretary").¹⁹

The terms Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) and Functional Combatant Commander (FCC) are critical to proposed ideas and solutions set forth in this thesis. Namely the transregional directive indicated towards the FCCs.

¹⁸ Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel, *2014 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, March 2014), 37.

¹⁹ Barack Obama, Unified Command Plan (with Change-1 dated 12 September 2011), The White House, Washington, DC, 2011), 1.

For the DOD, UCP boundaries are the fundamental zones where seams collide.

Figure-2 below illustrates the area of responsibility (AOR) assigned via the Unified Command Plan (UCP) relative to USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM. This naturally creates barriers between commanders, headquarters, and staff functions, again due to the UCP requirements for delineation, but nonetheless has limitations in answering a threat network that does not adhere to borders. This seam exists between all of the typical GCCs as each commander is only responsible for his or her immediate AOR and resident threats. USSOCOM, via the TSOCs described later, is different.

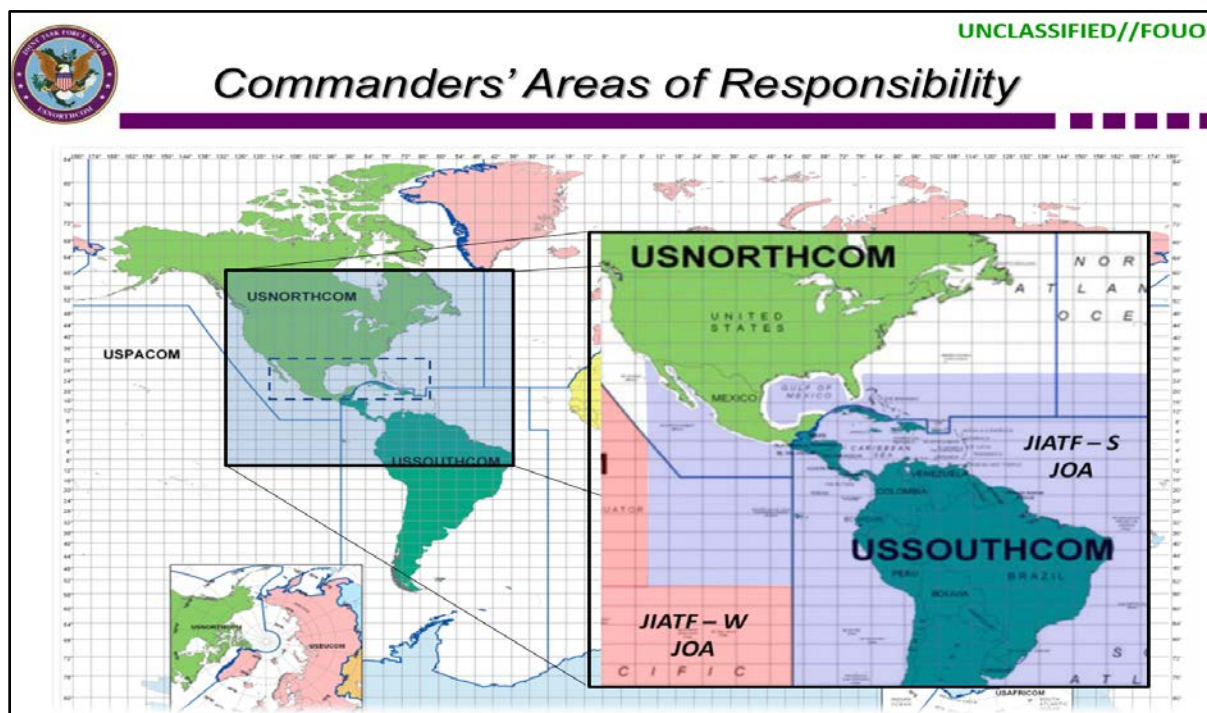


Figure 2 Unified Command Plan Graphic ²⁰

The DOD Reorganization Act of 1958 updated the *Combatant Commanders* charged with full operational control of forces within their organization. The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 further deconstructed areas into geographically

²⁰ Department of Defense, "Commanders' Area of Responsibility", Unified Command Plan (current as of 2016), <http://www.defense.gov/Military-Services/Unified-Combatant-Commands> (date accessed 10 Oct 2016).

aligned CCMDs.²¹ However, the creation of these CCMDs occurred in a time of static threats and known blocks of competition (like the former Soviet Union), where regionally focused strategies fail. Given the transregional capabilities of today's threats, the CCMDs must evolve towards a change in addressing an antiquated model of AORs.

A secondary example of the complexity and segregation of a united solution to global problems is seen in the comparison of how the DOD AORs and U.S. Department of State align. *Figure-3* compares how the Departments differ in their unique approaches to theater issues. The main area relevant to this thesis is the distinct lines DOD draws between USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM, whereas the State Department places both North and South America under a single Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. This obviously ties events that occur in Brazil, Ecuador, or Canada, as actions that effect the same area as the continental United States (CONUS).

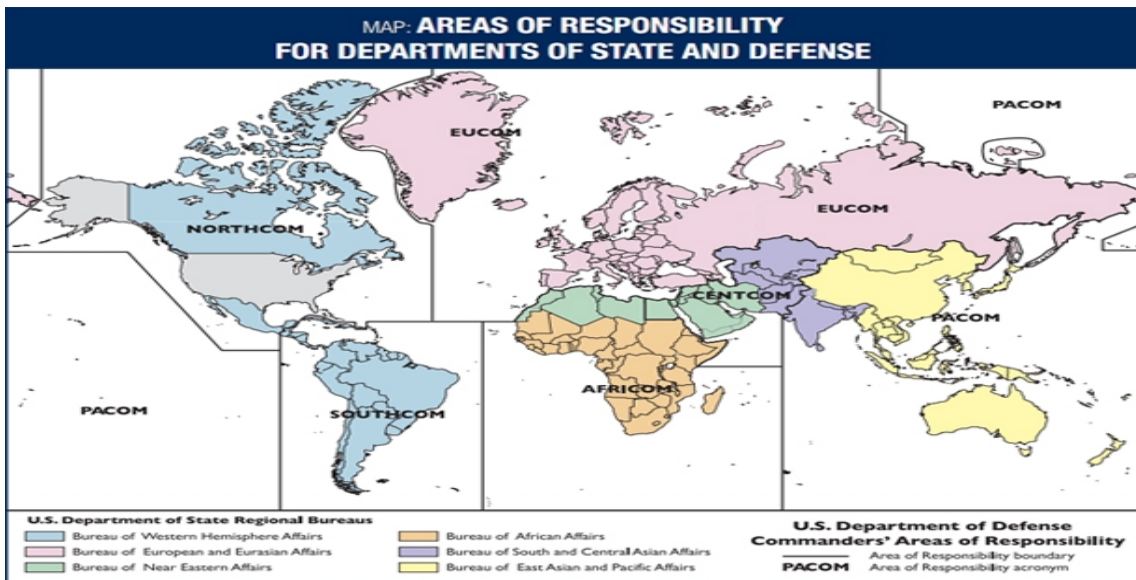


Figure 3 Area of Responsibility Comparison: Department of State (DOS) and Department of Defense (DOD)²²

²¹ Andrew Feickert. "What Are the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and Combatant Commands (COCOMs)?" *Congressional Research Service: Report 1-5. International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, EBSCOhost* <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=283fa1a6-7fb6-4e79-9c89-180bf5bbcd9%40sessionmgr4009&hid=4102> (accessed October 17, 2016).

²² Unknown Author, Map available at <http://www.usglc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/map1.jpg> (accessed 30 December 2016)

This incongruent approach means that no singular strategy at the operational level is likely to succeed in isolation given the chances of diverse priorities or efforts based on the commanders in each CCMD and the various offices within the DOS bureaus. Where is the defensive coordinator that can assist in providing the networked approach to threats in the Western Hemisphere? Although a review of DOS strategy is not part of this thesis, *Figure-3* above illustrates that the problems faced by U.S. Departments are not viewed through the same lenses, nor do they share the same frameworks. The UCP designates two primary CCMDs, and one functional combatant command for defending, deriving strategy, and protection of the areas located within the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has an entirely separate organizational line with overlapping mission interests. These major organizations are the primary players designated to combat transnational threats, and provide for homeland defense.

USNORTHCOM Focus Area

The Department of Defense (DOD) AOR description for USNORTHCOM is that it:

[o]perates in the area of responsibility encompassing the continental United States, Alaska, Mexico, Canada, portions of the Caribbean and surrounding waters. NORTHCOM is primarily responsible for civil support and homeland security and also oversees the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). It has few permanent forces and is instead assigned forces by the Secretary of Defense or the President whenever required for the execution of its missions.²³

²³ Department of Defense, "Commanders' Area of Responsibility", *Unified Command Plan* (current as of 2016), <http://www.defense.gov/Military-Services/Unified-Combatant-Commands> (date accessed 10 Oct 2016).

This mission statement is regionally focused, for understandable reasons, however the absence of any guidance to work through boundaries or with partnering GCCs is noteworthy.

The USNORTHCOM Mission is: “to conduct Homeland Defense and Civil Support operations within the assigned area of responsibility to defend, protect, and secure the United States and its interests.”²⁴ Additionally, U.S. Special Operations Command-North’s (SOCNORTH) area of focus:

[m]irrors that of USNORTHCOM and includes air, land, and sea approaches and encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles. It also includes the Gulf of Mexico, the Straits of Florida, and portions of the Caribbean region to include The Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. CDRSOCNORTH is responsible for maintaining existing relationships with regional SOF organizations in Canada, Mexico, and The Bahamas and facilitates their contributions to the cooperative defense of North America.²⁵

In terms of countering transnational organized crime, USNORTHCOM focuses on Mexico as the primary pathway which transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) use to traffic drugs, weapons, money, and people. General Charles H. Jacoby, former Commander USNORTHCOM/NORAD, testified to the House Armed Services Committee in March 2012 that his organization would work with and through U.S. law enforcement agencies to combat the threats posed by Mexican TCOs.²⁶ However, this

²⁴ U.S. Northern Command, “USNORTHCOM VISION”, <http://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/563996/usnorthcom-vision/> (accessed 10 Oct 2016).

²⁵ U.S. Northern Command, “U.S. Special Operations, North”, <http://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/621830/us-special-operations-command-north/> (accessed 10 Oct 2016).

²⁶ Andrew Feickert, “The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress,” Report R42077 (CRS, Washington, D.C., 3 January 2013), 46. Available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42077.pdf> (Accessed 21 December 2016)

looks at Mexico as a singular source zone for TCOs and does not allow for a connection to possible illicit origination based in USSOUTHCOM, or other CCMDs for that matter.

In the analysis of the GCCs, CCMDs, and FCCs, there are existing organizations that are ideal examples of baseline constructs for a fully networked Western Hemisphere defense/security strategy. Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR) is a land-based organization that pools the Joint Force and NORAD capabilities together for the defense of the Nation's Capital. The intent is a focused methodology towards a no-fail mission of protecting the critical infrastructure within the NCR. This JFHQ is also charged with defense support to civil authorities (DSCA), which is a clear duty that infuses not only a Joint service system, but a mandate to be an interagency partner.²⁷ The second existing example is Joint Task Force North (JTF-North) which "is the DOD organization tasked to support our nation's federal law enforcement agencies in the interdiction of suspected transnational threats within and along the approaches to the continental United States."²⁸ The JTF-North construct and JFHQ-NCR, are valuable examples of networked methodologies to the threats posed to homeland defense and by transnational threats, but are not organizationally able to take on a larger role based on their current size and charter. Additionally, the mission of JTF-North runs headlong into a directive set forth by the very same UCP which obligates USSOCOM as "the lead [CCMD] for synchronizing DOD planning against terrorists and their networks on a

²⁷ *Ibid*, 44.

²⁸ Andrew Feickert, "The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress," Report R42077 (CRS, Washington, D.C., 3 January 2013), 45. Available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42077.pdf> (Accessed 21 December 2016)

global basis.”²⁹ This aspect is further developed later in the ‘Seam Analysis’ section of this thesis.

An additional component of USNORTHCOM is the relatively new Special Operations Command North (SOCNORTH) which is a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) that is operationally controlled (OPCON) to USNORTHCOM but remains functionally tied to USSOCOM. SOCNORTH’s mission statement is:

“SOCNORTH, in partnership with the interagency and regional SOF, synchronizes operations against terrorist networks and their acquisition or use of weapons of mass destruction, and when directed, employs fully capable SOF to defend the homeland in depth and respond to crisis.”³⁰ This component of USSOCOM, functionally embedded with USNORTHCOM serves as the resident SOF tie that provides USSOCOM with a direct method to both influence and support a networked approach to threats in the Western Hemisphere.

USSOUTHCOM Focus Area

The UCP AOR description for USSOUTHCOM is that it:

[o]versees an area of responsibility encompassing 31 nations in Latin America south of Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean Sea. USSOUTHCOM works to increase the security of the United States by engaging its partners to enhance the peacekeeping abilities of the region, to promote human rights, to deter illegal activities associated with illicit trafficking and to conduct multinational military exercises designed to strengthen partnerships while developing collective capabilities.³¹

²⁹ *Ibid*, 16.

³⁰ U.S. Northern Command, “U.S. Special Operations Command, North”, <http://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/621830/us-special-operations-command-north/> (accessed 14 Dec 2016).

³¹ Department of Defense, “Commanders’ Area of Responsibility”, *Unified Command Plan* (current as of 2016), <http://www.defense.gov/Military-Services/Unified-Combatant-Commands> (date accessed 10 Oct 2016).

This mission statement, like that of USNORTHCOM's, remains regionally focused and does not contain guidance to work through boundaries or with partnering GCCs.

According to USSOUTHCOM's publications and website, its mission is: "to conduct joint and combined full-spectrum military operations within the Area of Responsibility, in order to support U.S. national security objectives and interagency efforts that promote regional security cooperation."³² USSOUTHCOM does acknowledge the existence of transregional threats such as terrorist organizations and various recognized crime/narco organizations, and addresses these issues through a singular organization designed to integrate law enforce, military, and joint activities in a focused counter-drug operation.

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-South) "is an interagency task force that integrates and synchronizes U.S. counterdrug operations and is responsible for the detection and monitoring of suspect air and maritime drug activity in the region [and] works in coordination with USNORTHCOM's JTF North on a variety of counterdrug and counter trafficking operations."³³ The shortfall is in the tasking given to JIATF-South. The Commander USSOUTHCOM testified in March 2012 that the "illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people and their associated TCOs constitute the primary threat to regional security" and placed a premium on pushing efforts to involve regional partners and various U.S. interagency offices.³⁴ Yet JIATF-South, the one organization that resides within USSOUTHCOM that is both manned/organized as joint and interagency,

³² U.S. Southern Command "Our Mission", *Missions Main* (current as of 2016) <http://www.southcom.mil/ourmissions/Pages/Our-Missions.aspx> (date accessed 12 Oct 2016).

³³ Andrew Feickert, "The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress," Report R42077 (CRS, Washington, D.C., 3 January 2013), 55. Available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42077.pdf> (Accessed 21 December 2016)

³⁴ *Ibid*, 56.

has a mission that is confined to counterdrug operations and detection and monitoring of potential drug activity in the region. It falls short of addressing the larger source zone issue that is responsible for placing drugs in the field of play.

USSOUTHCOM also contains a USSOCOM organization as part of the Geographic Command structure. U.S. Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH): “plans, directs and executes special operations missions throughout Central America, South America and the Caribbean to achieve operational and strategic objects in support of the Commander, USSOUTHCOM. As directed, SOCSOUTH responds to crisis in the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility to protect U.S. vital interests and to fight and win our nation's wars.”³⁵ Like SOCNORTH, SOCSOUTH creates the formal tie to a CCMD which allows USSOCOM inputs, ties, and the organizational construct which can serve as basis for a globally networked CCMD ready to address transregional issues.

Department of Homeland Security Focus Area

The DHS mission set includes “prevention of terrorism and enhancing security”, “securing and managing [U.S.] borders”, and “mature and strengthen the homeland security enterprise.”³⁶ This multifaceted task requires DHS to embody a network-like mentality given the distinct aspects of an extensive requirement for border security, and serves as a solid baseline for multi-service/interagency cooperation. However, the DHS

³⁵U.S. Southern Command “Mission Statement”, *Special Operations Command South* (current as of 2016) <http://www.socso.southcom.mil/sites/socsouth/SitePages/Home.aspx> (accessed 12 Oct 2016).

³⁶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Mission”, Homeland Security (current as of 2016). <https://www.dhs.gov/mission> (date accessed 12 Oct 2016).

approach to TCOs varies from the DOD mindset where practices and guidance may not easily translate to joint military capability or lexicon.

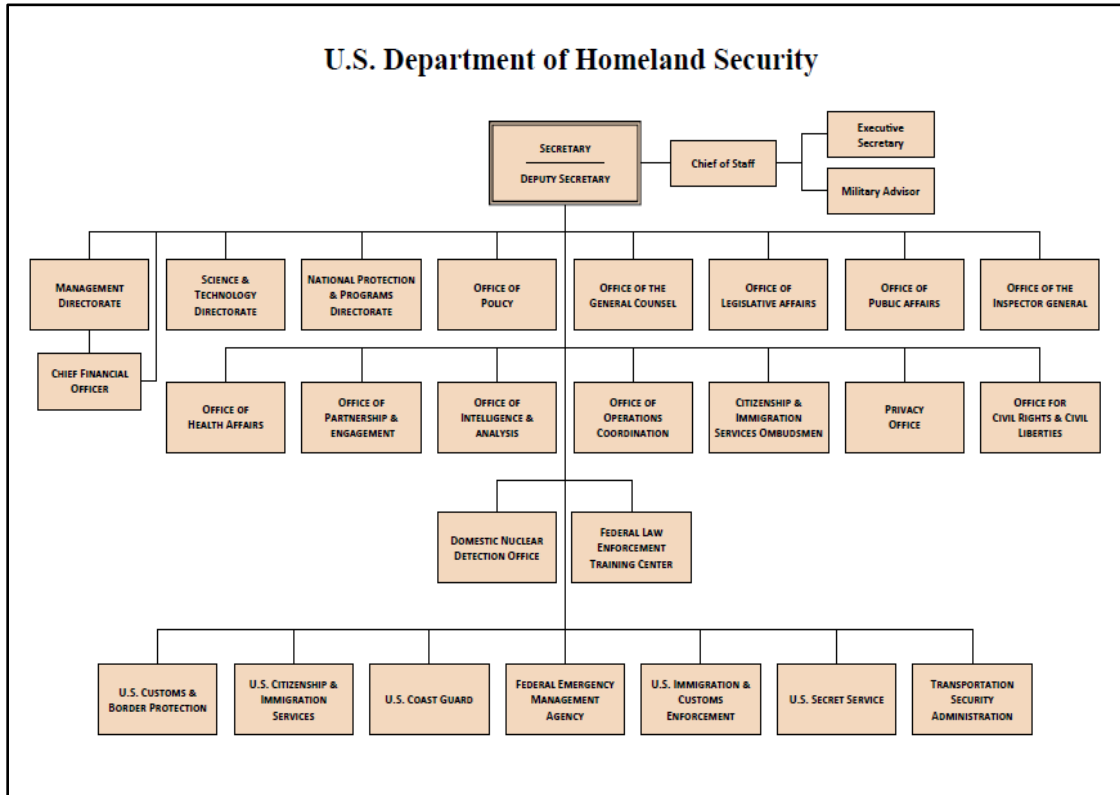
The Department of Homeland Security categorizes the activities of TCOs as market driven, flexible, and responsive to pressure felt by law enforcement efforts. “Transnational criminal organizations remain the primary adversary in market-driven flows of people and goods, and maximizing profit continues to be their major incentive. Although directly targeting the illegal movement of people and goods has resulted in reductions to specific flows, TOCs are highly dynamic and will often respond to pressure on one illicit flow by shifting to another product or route.”³⁷ This drive for profit means TCOs will continue to look for either market growth or potential new sources of income. The networks currently in use by these TCOs can also be used as security breaches that will be exploited by threats to both homeland defense and internal security. These are “illicit pathways through which people and illegal goods—narcotics, funds, counterfeits, and weaponry—can cross the border. Primarily driven by criminal profits, these flows of people and goods are persistent and enduring. The risk from these activities is difficult to mitigate, especially given the limited role of homeland security activity in addressing the root causes of supply and demand.”³⁸

This ‘limited role of homeland security’ and the ability of DHS organizations to attack and stop the source zone actors is a seam which resides between the DHS as a law enforcement agent and the DOD military responsibilities. But, like USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM, there are organizations within DHS that fill DOD-like roles with

³⁷ Secretary Jeh C. Johnson, “The 2015 Quadrennial Defense Review”, Department of Homeland Security (Washington, D.C.: 18 June 2014), 57.

³⁸ Secretary Johnson, “The 2015 Quadrennial Defense Review”, Department of Homeland Security, 54.

missions and task similar to that of sub-commands within the CCMD. *Figure-4* provides for a comparison of organizational structure and levels between DHS and DOD entities.



*Figure 4 Department of Homeland Security Organizational Structure*³⁹

Figure-4 contains two organizations applicable to this thesis. First is U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) charged with keeping terrorists and their weapons out of the U.S. while facilitating lawful international trade, securing the borders, serve as the premier law enforcement agency enhancing the Nation's prosperity and security through collaboration and integration.⁴⁰ For clarity within this thesis, CBP and later the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) should be thought of as comparable to both USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM in terms of organizational stature within the larger DOD and DHS

³⁹ Department of Homeland Security, "DHS Organizational Chart", <https://www.cbp.gov/document/publications/cbp-organization-chart> (accessed 10 Dec 2016).

⁴⁰ Department of Homeland Security, "U.S. Customs and Border Protection-About CBP", <https://www.cbp.gov/about> (accessed 10 Dec 2016).

system. Under CBP is the U.S. Border Patrol whose mission “is preventing terrorists and terrorist’s weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from entering the United States”, “preventing the illegal trafficking of people and contraband”, and using air and land assets to secure the U.S. borders and ports of entry.⁴¹ The U.S. Border Patrol, for this thesis, is comparable to SOCNORTH and SOCSOUTH in terms of organizational stature within the DOD and DHS system. Additionally, the Border Patrol does have a resident Special Operations Group (SOG) that utilizes many of the same training methods held by USSOCOM.

The second relevant sub-organization under DHS is the USCG, a hybrid organization that holds the status of a military service while also authorized to carry out law enforcement activities in accordance with Section 89 of Title 14 U.S. Code.⁴² The USCG operates to “prevent and respond to terrorist acts [which] may include anti-smuggling, migrant interdiction, counter-piracy, rule-of-law, counter-proliferation, and port security” which echoes the same tasks as those held by the TSOCs and Border Patrol. The ability to operate with both a law enforcement authorization and the distinction of military service, makes the USCG a unique example of an internally networked capability. This ability to work both law enforcement and DOD-like missions, is a critical attribute. This gives the USCG the authority find, fix, and finish targets without the need for additional approvals. However, each of these organizations under DHS, regardless of their overlapping tasks and missions, still reside outside the DOD and

⁴¹ Department of Homeland Security, “Border Patrol Overview”, <https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/along-us-borders/overview> (accessed 10 Dec 2016).

⁴² Admiral R.J. Papp, *Coast Guard Publication-1: Doctrine for the U.S. Coast Guard*, (Washington, D.C., Headquarters United States Coast Guard, February 2014), 59.

with no formal singular clearinghouse for strategy or operations that addresses the shared transnational threats.

Seam Analysis and Synthesis

The analysis of the GCCs, DSG, UCP, and various organizations within the CCMDs and DHS suggests that there are a few baseline networked organizations (JIATF-S, JTF-North, and USCG) do exist; they simply work towards independent goals despite shared threats. There is no shortage of overlap or shared problem sets; the issues reside with vague and broad guidance to each Department, no current movement towards a shared organizational structure, and CCMD mission statements that fail to articulate the proximity of another CCMD. The nature of the transnational/regional organizations is such that they will not adhere to borders or UCP lines as demarcations or simple deterrents to business. These criminal organizations will simply expand, mutate, and evolve at a rate that outpaces the ability for any one of the CCMDs to address without some organization acting to link operations and strategy across UCP or administrative borders. Additionally, the traditional threats resident within the Western Hemisphere are not the only customers interested in challenging U.S. homeland defense and security.

In his March 2012 posture statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), former Commander USNORTHCOM General Douglas Fraser noted that the threat to the U.S. could not simply address countries resident within the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

[T]here are economic benefits for countries in this AOR in establishing or renewing relationships with extra-regional actors such as China, Russia, and Iran, it also presents a number of challenges. Currently, 18 countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean receive military training

from China, and in 2011 Venezuela became the largest importer of Russian arms in the world. In addition to extra-regional state actors, violent extremist organizations from the Middle East are active in Latin America and the Caribbean and are involved in fund-raising activities to finance worldwide activities.⁴³

Thus, the threat to the U.S. is not just a matter of addressing transnational organized crime in Mexico, Bogota, or other countries in the Western Hemisphere but *is* a matter of creating a networked organization able to address the problem set with an equally expansive strategy.

The examples placed forward, through a review of the strategic guidance (NSS, DSG, QDR, and UCP), the various mission sets and tasks attached to the CCMDs, U.S. CBP and USCG, and the many sub-commands and organizations, illustrate the complex system of agencies that all claim a share in the CTOC and/or HD mission. Through all of these examples, little ‘strategy’ is provided that adequately links ends-ways-means to a comprehensive scheme to either CTOC or HD. Dr. Peter McCabe notes that an electronic search for U.S. strategic guidance yields a list of 125 strategic level documents covering topics such as borders and immigration, national security, terrorism, illicit pathways, and law enforcement.⁴⁴ Another cylinder of excellence example is a DEA lead division (*Figure-5*) specifically fashioned for CTOC. Bureaucratic expansion, coupled with both NSS and a National CTOC Strategy that is ‘everything to everyone’, allows for ‘organization creation’ to become a growth industry without any one entity tasked with the oversight or coordination of efforts. This in itself could be an area for further research

⁴³ Andrew Feickert, “The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress,” Report R42077 (CRS, Washington, D.C., 3 January 2013), 57. Available at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42077.pdf> (Accessed 21 December 2016)

⁴⁴ Dr. Peter McCabe, “Chapter 6. Counter Transnational Organized Crime Strategic Guidance,” in *SOF Role in Combating Transnational Organized Crime*, ed. William Mendel and Dr. Peter McCabe (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: JSOU, 2016), 70.

but is beyond the scope of this thesis. Readers familiar with the CTOC mission set can easily draw from *Figure-5* and see overlaps with organizations such as JTF-Bravo, JIATF-South, or even the USCG. In other words, there is not a limit nor a complete index of all the agencies or organizations that may have overlapping tasks and responsibilities.

INFORMATION SHARING TO COMBAT TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

The Special Operations Division

Established in 1994, the Special Operations Division (SOD) is a DEA-led multi-agency operations coordination center with participation from Federal law enforcement agencies, the Department of Defense, the Intelligence Community, and international law enforcement partners. SOD's mission is to establish strategies and operations to dismantle national and international trafficking organizations by attacking their command and control communications. Special emphasis is placed on those major drug trafficking and narco-terrorism organizations that operate across jurisdictional boundaries on a regional, national, and international level. SOD provides foreign- and domestic-based law enforcement agents with timely investigative information that enables them to fully exploit Federal law enforcement's investigative authority under Title III of the U.S. Code. SOD coordinates overlapping investigations, ensuring that tactical and operational intelligence is shared among law enforcement agencies.

Figure 5 Additional Bureaucracy in the CTOC Campaign (DEA-led)⁴⁵

Furthermore, the “Department of Justice (DOJ) has the lead to work law enforcement with foreign partners, DOD, using SOF, assists with building partner capacity (BPC). The shortfall in these efforts resides in the fact that no real operational entity exists to prioritize and synchronize U.S. CTOC efforts.”⁴⁶ This simultaneously opens the door to a larger influx of potential Special Interest Aliens (SIAs), TOC maintained illicit pathways, and oversight of activities occurring at the seams of all these organizations that in turn negatively affects homeland defense. The next chapters propose potential solutions using

⁴⁵ President Barack Obama, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security*, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, July 2011), 16.

⁴⁶ Dr. Peter McCabe, “Chapter 6. Counter Transnational Organized Crime Strategic Guidance,” in *SOF Role in Combating Transnational Organized Crime*, ed. William Mendel and Dr. Peter McCabe (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: JSOU, 2016), 72.

USSOCOM as the global integrator and potential 'defensive coordinator' for CTOC which creates a networked approach to homeland defense.

Chapter 3: Forming a Network

“We live in a world in which the threats have become increasingly networked and pose complex and dynamic risks to U.S. interests around the world. These networks are diversifying their activities, resulting in the convergence of threats that were once linear. In today’s environment, this convergence can have explosive and destabilizing effects—there is no such thing as a local problem.”¹ - Admiral William McRaven

The ability to synchronize efforts, tie goals and objectives, and coordinate across fences will rely heavily on the ability of the GCCs, TSOCs, and DHS to properly command and control assets over and through geographic lines. Transnational entities are simply too amorphous and require an organization or methodology that is equally flexible yet cohesive. In Chapter-2, various examples of segregated, yet effective, organizational efforts illustrated the complex bureaucracy working towards the CTOC and HD mission sets. These various organizations have independent missions, tasks, measure of performance, and command and control (C2) lines that rarely intersect. The Posse Comitatus Act creates instant seams between prosecuting targets from a military perspective or through law enforcement mechanisms. The following ideas pull from the various organizations discussed in Chapter-2 and lead to a proposed network format to address TOC and HD issues.

Forming the Network

In 2009, Brigadier General Jeff Buchanan-USA, Captain Maxie Davis-USN, and Colonel Lee Wight-USAF looked to create an interagency organization that was fully networked across capabilities, authorities (law enforcement (LE) and military), and fully capable of addressing the unity of command and effort within an AOR. They proposed

¹ Admiral William McRaven, as quoted by Paul R. Kan, "Forces of Habit: Global SOF's Role in Countering Illicit Drug Trafficking." *Journal of Strategic Security* Vol 7, No. 2 (Summer 2014): 21-28. <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol7/iss2/4/> (accessed 27 December 2016), 22.

creating a “standing, civilian-led interagency organization [that] would include representatives from all major Federal agencies, including DOD, dissolving the GCCs”, by creating a Joint Interagency Command (JIACOM) infused with interagency directive and military command authority.² These JIACOMs would create a higher level of regional awareness across the various Departments and instruments of power normally separated by self-interested areas (DOS, DOD, DHS, etc.), increase knowledge endurance by allowing civilians to maintain their positions for longer terms and provide consistency beyond the military PCS cycle, and NGOs and DOD-avoiding entities may view civilian leadership as less threatening. This idea is rather aggressive, but the nature and complexity of the threats warrants a major shift in the status-quo.

Chapter-2 included a brief explanation of the roles and missions carried out via JIATF-South. This Joint and Interagency Task Force contains the military range of capabilities in the various domains (Air Force, Navy, and Army personnel) as well as the law enforcement (LE) aspect with their integration of CBP and USCG assets. This means that as an integrated task force, the commander has within his or her authority the ability to both find and prosecute targets or threats. The bureaucratic quagmire is minimized and the reaction time to the dynamic nature of evolving threats remains largely based on the capacity and capabilities apportioned to JIATF-South. Additionally, the seams created between Departments (DOD vs DHS) and internal organizations (JTF-North vs SOCNORTH vs USCG) means that by networking the individuals together, shared success equals mutual support to national security. This model also allows for JIATF

² Jeffrey Buchanan and Maxie Y. Davis and Lee T. Wight, “Death of the Combatant Command? Toward a Joint Interagency Approach,” Joint Forces Quarterly Issue 52-1st Quarter 2009 under “Focus on Land Warfare,” <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-52.pdf> (accessed 23 December 2016). 95.

operators to address Special Interest Aliens (SIA) who will use TOC controlled illicit pathways into the CONUS. As a reference, SIA are “persons seeking entry into the United States who originates from specially designated countries that have shown a tendency to promote, produce, or protect terrorist organizations or their members”³ The following case study of OPERATION CITADEL (OP CITADEL), shows the potential benefits of a networked approach to TOC and HD when a singular organization integrates the various players into a well-coordinated defensive scheme.

Case Study - OPERATION CITADEL

SIAs are one present and growing threat where TOCs and HD collide. For years, TOCs created illicit pathways through U.S. borders that allows for drugs and material to be smuggled in illegally. The ‘cargo’ can and has changed. Foreign interests who continue to probe and exploit gaps and seams in coverage are able to navigate through the organizational cylinders in the attainment of their goals. An example of an interagency and Joint Force approach to the TOC and HD problem set is the deliberate enactment of OPERATION CITADEL by DHS’s- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Team.

The 2011 Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime is a concentrated attempt at guiding various U.S. agencies together towards a shared plan to combat the trafficking of persons, detection and monitoring of illicit pathways, and is a practical step towards a networked approach to homeland defense.

³ Department of Homeland Security as quoted by Adam E. MacAllister, Dan Spengler, Kyle Larish, and Nam-young Kim, “Special Interest Aliens: Achieving an Integrated Approach,” *Small Wars Journal* (12 December 2016). http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrn/art/special-interest-aliens-achieving-an-integrated-approach#_edn1 (accessed 18 December 2016)

In June 2013, HSI initiated the inaugural multi-agency concerted action via OPERATION CITADEL (OP CITADEL); A surge initiative under the auspices of the Illicit Pathways Attack Strategy (IPAS) that also integrated HSI's "Biometric Identification Transnational Migration Alert Program (BITMAP) initiative that fills biometric databases with data collected from special interest aliens, violent criminals, fugitives and confirmed or suspected terrorists encountered within illicit pathways. This data helps HSI form strategic pictures of the trends, networks and individuals connected with these pathways.⁴

This effort targeted both the conventional and nonconventional pathways exploited by TCOs, and terrorist support networks to smuggle narcotics, people, weapons, and contraband through the Central American corridor and across U.S. borders.⁵

OP CITADEL networked the capabilities and resources of HSI, CBP, USCG, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and agents from the Department of Defense, Justice, and State into a single organization. OP CITADEL-2013 targeted a small section of Central America with a focus on domestic criminal incidents, checkpoints, judicial wires, and some port operations. OP CITADEL-2014 grew to include collaboration with JIATF-South's Counter Threat Finance Team and USSOCOM's global network of regional partner-driven intelligence group centered on persons of interest within the Western Hemisphere. OP CITADEL-2015 continued to develop by forward deploying agents to Colombia, Panama, Honduras, and El Salvador which further expanded the U.S. defense network into the realm of the counter-CTOC network intelligence mapping and characterization. OP CITADEL-2016 pressed the same proactive measure, added ties towards USSOUTHCOM's disruption and dismantlement campaign, and expand the forensic analysis to include limited ties to Africa and the Middle East. This effort moved beyond the purely Western Hemisphere

⁴ Definition available at <https://www.ice.gov/international-operations> (accessed 3 January 2017)

⁵ Acting Associate Deputy Assistant Director Alexis Torres, "Homeland Security Investigations Illicit Pathways Attack Strategy: CITADEL 15 REPORT- FY 2015 Assessment", U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (21 December 2015), 2-3.

mentality and pushes, rather than waits for, preemptive intelligence on foreign fighter travel and other public sector security concerns.⁶

This case study illustrates a positive improvement towards an ideal approach to the TOC and HD issues, especially when viewed through the danger of allowing seams to present opportunities for business development in terms of SIA movement through illicit pathways. OP CITADEL is a great first step of a proof of concept in action. The limitations are simply tied to the resources HSI holds and its AOR viewpoint. HSI's approach focuses on Central America and not the whole of the Western Hemisphere. Frail countries such as Venezuela, Chinese expansion in to Brazil, and various other source zones that could bed inbound foreign fighters requires that a larger net be cast that fully encompasses the USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM AORs. This involves an organization that not only has the capacity and capability to integrate a larger global view of threats, but also contains the resident infrastructure that ties into the larger CCMDs charged via the UCP for defense of the United States. The largest threat, inherent in the SIA problem set, is the influx of inspired individuals motivated by global influences. These same individuals then serve as an ideally prepositioned militant pool of manpower near U.S. borders to launch attacks or create security issues.

Case Study - Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs)

Transnational organized crime resides in a nebulous and frameless domain of shifting profit driven markets, growth potential, and external influences that may or may not originate within a given AOR. Local drug lords who possess the means to influence

⁶ Alexis Torres, "Homeland Security Investigations Illicit Pathways Attack Strategy: CITADEL 15 REPORT- FY 2015 Assessment" (21 December 2015), 13.

political leaders, radicalized sects that look to expand both a physical and virtual caliphate, and the growth of cyber oriented threats means an organization cannot simply work within an easily definable space. In 2013, the Secretary of Defense transferred combatant command (COCOM) of the TSOCs to USSOCOM from the GCCs. This correctly aligned USSOCOMs mandate to organize, train, and equip the TSOCs as well as the resident SOF personnel assigned to USSOCOM globally. Operational control (OPCON) remained with the GCCs. This network-in-being means that the TSOCs, functionally vested into the GCC's AOR, also create a global hive of capability (see *Figure- 6 Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs)*). The network foundation for combating a global threat is resident within the TSOC-USSOCOM distribution.



Figure 6 Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs)⁷

TSOCs are functional sub-unified commands that are fully capable of enacting Command and Control (C2) over SOF entities within the respective AOR, as well as rapidly integrating SOF actions with other TSOCs or USSOCOM as a global integration

⁷ Note: No Author given. Image available at http://images.slideplayer.com/28/9402754/slides/slide_11.jpg (accessed 2 January 2017).

hub. “They often have presence throughout the AOR, have well-established relationships with the [GCCs], US military and interagency mission partners, and the various regional military forces in the AOR.”⁸ Like JIATF-South, TSOCs are inherently joint and consist of capabilities from each of the services. However, their components are much larger and contain not only the assets but the organizational backbone required to maintain local network integrity. SOCSOUTH, as an example of an existing TSOC, contains all the requisite forces to find, fix, target, and disable many threats across the range of military operations and in the various domains.



Figure 7 TSOC Example - SOCSOUTH (USSOUTH) and Assigned Units⁹

Figure-7 above illustrates the impressive capabilities available to SOCSOUTH and with each component, the unique training each special operations unit receives as part of its individual charter and related domain. Airpower, seapower, landpower, and a combined arms 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment provides SOCSOUTH the forces needed in the three traditional domains. Other assets that reside in the Cyber and Space domains are part of separate organizations.

⁸ Brigadier General Stephen M. Neary, “Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) Command and Control Organizational Options,” (Deployable Training Division JS/J7: Suffolk, VA. August 2016), 8.

⁹ Note: Image provided by Mr. Michael Bennett, JFSC Chair for Special Operations via email 3 Jan 2017.

Chapter Review

There is no shortage of organizations that create demonstrable effects within their respective lanes of distinction. HSI's efforts via OPERATION CITADEL and JIATF-South's ability to integrate assigned joint/interagency partners/other federal agencies are good localized attempts to address a problem set that is not a regionally contained national threat. The issue is global. Many veterans of the early OIF and OEF campaigns understand the various iterations of strategies, narratives such as 'Hearts and Minds', and tactics developed to combat the Taliban and various terrorist networks. It took years to refine the approach away from individual units working individual assignments for individual measures of performance. It took a necessary change to JP 3-24, Counterinsurgency and JP 3-26, Counterterrorism to then move towards a holistic approach to the problems within Iraq and Afghanistan. Readers familiar with General (ret) Stanley McChrystal's book Team of Teams understand that he took the antiquated lines of TACON and OPCON reaching to several different 'commanders' and forced each unit to work within a shared model towards combined goals. This problem set is no different, just much larger with a proximity to U.S. soil that demands major changes to the standard way of doing business.

Chapter 4: Integrating Special Operations Entities into Service and GCC Strategic Development

The U.S. national defense and homeland security industrial complex are in need of a serious *forced* evolution that meets the boundless threat posed by transnational and transregional threats. The geographic separation offered to the nation by the great oceans and the tyranny of distance are not enough to guard against individuals or groups who are profit driven, willing to sacrifice others for their cause, or make their living with and through the misery of those around them. The ‘War on Drugs’, countless intercepts by U.S. counter-drug agents, and an immigration problem that was a centerpiece in the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign, are all signs that despite possessing advanced capabilities, and highly trained organizations, evil will take advantage of any perceived seam. The parochial approach to the Vietnam War by the various services and political strategists, and the late-to-need strategy for operations in Syria and Iraq are constant reminders that strategy and doctrine must improve.

General Joseph Votel, 10th (former) Commander USSOCOM, delivered his second posture statement to the HASC subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, at which he stated:

[USSOCOM] must help our nation win in today’s challenges and contribute to keeping the nation safe. Our most important effort under this priority has been to organize our processes for dealing with transregional threats; those challenges that are dispersed not only across the borders of nation-states, but also across our GCC boundaries. As a headquarters with global responsibilities, USSOCOM is well-positioned to help the GCCs prioritize and synchronize SOF operations to maximize our effectiveness. This trans-regional approach also allows us to better inform DOD decision-making processes on force management.¹

¹ General Joseph L. Votel, “Statement of General Joseph L. Votel, U.S. Army Commander United States Special Operations Command,” Special Operations Forces In An Evolving Threat Environment: A Review

General Votel continued to refine his thoughts by explaining:

Despite this complex security environment, USSOCOM is well-postured to support the GCCs in countering these trans-regional challenges by virtue of its global perspective. Our responsibility to synchronize planning against Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) will help the GCCs identify opportunities to influence dynamics in one region by applying pressure in another... The range of challenges we deal with in this environment, and the span of their reach, prevent a one-dimensional approach from achieving our desired ends. Partners, both international and domestic, are critical to providing us with the range of capabilities, resources, and access we require. USSOCOM's extensive investment in building a global network of partners has proven indispensable in developing comprehensive approaches against these threats. Although we work with a large network of partners, USSOCOM can also provide the capability to act discreetly [and] while the challenges we face will not be solved by military capabilities alone, there are simply cases in which force will be our only recourse. For these situations, USSOCOM has invested a great deal of effort in ensuring we are fully integrated with the Services.²

This viewpoint, especially taking into consideration the 'global perspective', illustrates how USSOCOM is currently organized and integrated (through the TSOCs) to act as an ideal singular coordination clearinghouse for CTOC and related HD tasks.

USSOCOM: Experienced and Networked Agent for Global Threats

General Votel's thoughts parallel the integrated nature of the TSOCs with USNORTHCOM and USSOUTHCOM and the other GCCs and serves as a solid foundational tie for USSOCOM to be a global integrator for global campaign-like development addressing CTOC and HD. Not only because of the advocacy resident

Of The Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request For U.S. Special Operations Command (1 March 2016), under "Witness: General Joseph L. Votel" <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS26/20160301/104552/HHRG-114-AS26-Wstate-VotelJ-20160301.pdf> (accessed 23 Dec 2016). 3-4.

² General Joseph L. Votel, "Statement of General Joseph L. Votel, U.S. Army Commander United States Special Operations Command," Special Operations Forces In An Evolving Threat Environment: A Review Of The Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request For U.S. Special Operations Command (1 March 2016), under "Witness: General Joseph L. Votel" <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS26/20160301/104552/HHRG-114-AS26-Wstate-VotelJ-20160301.pdf> (accessed 23 Dec 2016). 8.

within the command, but because of the infrastructure currently in place. In other words, making full use of available capacity and capability. Michael Kraft and Edward Marks offer:

United States Special Operations Command is a global military synchronizer for the war on terror and is responsible for synchronizing or coordinating planning and, as directed, executing operations against terrorist networks on a global basis in coordination with other CCMDs, the services and, as directed, appropriate U.S. government agencies. The USSOCOM Center for Special Operations (CSO) is the fusion point for DOD synchronization efforts, combining operations, intelligence, and long-range planning and strategy.³

The challenge of undertaking enemy networks that do not adhere to preordained rules or doctrine present an ever shifting target. Developing strategy, incorporating various sources of intelligence, and maintaining clear command and control, are all lines of effort which require a capable organization. The creation of a well written ‘mission statement’ or ‘vision’ simply is not enough to undertake the role required of a global epicenter for countering TOC or the HD/security threats.

An adjusted model of the current global SOF network is the solution this thesis proposes as a potential development to hemming the seams between the various independent organizations currently undertaking the CTOC role and/or providing for an approach to homeland defense or security. Proposing USSOCOM and the TSOC network as a solution should not be taken to mean ‘apply Special Forces personnel to more targets’; that is merely a treatment to a small part of the larger issue. What *is* required are the skill sets in ground level relationship building, proficiency in building partnership

³ Michael Kraft and Edward Marks. *U.S. Government Counterterrorism: A Guide To Who Does What*, (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2012). 185. (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost, <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzQxMTk2MV9fQU41?sid=690ed733-bfc3-432c-a6d1-c43f9fde99eb@sessionmgr4009&vid=4&format=EB&rid=1> (accessed 12 December 2016)

capacity capable of providing locally generated internal security, and the inherently multi-service/multi-agency infrastructure resident within USSOCOM. This effort is not meant to detract effects from any single GCC, but to combine and reorganize the capacity into a singular hive-like organization that networks through the frontiers of the UCP and Department level egocentrism.

Within the existing construct of TSOCs reside strong networks tied to their primary area of operations, but beholden to a mandated OPCON relationship to the parent GCC. For example, SOCSOUTH as a sub-unified command within SOUTHCOM, must focus on the Southern Hemisphere on a day-to-day basis. But their SOF expertise and daily capacity to live within the region's operational environment provides a method to identify threats posed by potential transregional terrorist networks that operate beyond a TSOCs UCP-established limits. This is true for the remaining TSOCs on a global scale. However, they are limited in holistically addressing the global nature of other transregional activities based on the current OPCON structure, UCP driven theater campaign plans attached to the parent GCCs, and the law enforcement aspect of dealing with criminal threats that reside outside of the typical 'military-only' authorities. Each CCMD's goal is the achievement of its AOR-specific theater campaign plan, and protecting the national security/defense issues which are regionally aligned.

USSOCOM's TSOCs, if imbued with hybrid legal authorities to engage civilian based criminal networks, as they do with military based target sets, then the United States would possess a global capability to address transregional threats. This change, similar to the authorities inherent within JIATF-South and the U.S. Coast Guard, will allow the TSOCs a greater freedom of movement within the global field of play. Additionally, the current construct of USSOCOM as the parent command able to extract multiple GCC-

level inputs, would then have the ability to create a true global campaign plan as the supported organization for both dealing with multi-regional terrorist networks and the intersection of criminal pathways that bridge UCP boundaries. This major shift may change the relationships of the TSOCs from sub-unified command to something of a hybrid JIATF-like organization or ‘supported command’ solely for the specific task of countering transregional, multi-domain, multi-functional threats. The ability for the GCCs to leverage the success of the networked TSOCs would still support the GCC’s theater campaign strategy/plans, but would require a modification to the UCP and/or Title-10 authorities required to adequately direct joint and interagency strategy and operations. If the goal truly is national security and a successful global ability to address transregional threats, then ‘who owns the team’ should not matter.



Figure 8 *USSOCOM Interagency Partnerships in National Capital Region*⁴

⁴ Michael Bennett, “United States Special Operations Command”, Powerpoint Brief given with permission *USSOCOM Chair-JFSC* (January 7, 2017).

This new JIATF-like transition will build on the vision set forth by General Votel, address President Obama’s 2015 global security concerns, and organizationally meet the 2012 DSG’s guidance for recalibration. *Figures 8, 9, and 10* depict the construct as it stands today which illustrates the resident network infrastructure which could accept new global authorities. Figure 8 above is the network resident within the National Capital Region (NCR). Various agencies, departments, and organizations charged with both counter-terrorist and counter-organized crime are easily visible. The limitation is simply; who is in charge?



Figure 9 USSOCOM's Global Network of Partners (Military, International, Interagency, and Industry)⁵

Figure-9 above is a global look at the vast relationships USSOCOM has with various nations, states, militaries, and industry. This *figure* is a relationship unique in the

⁵ Michael Bennett, “United States Special Operations Command”, Powerpoint Brief given with permission. *USSOCOM Chair-JFSC* (January 7, 2017).

military CCMD structure which only USSOCOM has, given the UCP delineations of region-specific responsibilities attached to the other CCMDs.



Figure 10 International Special Operation Partnerships⁶

Figure-10 above further shows the tightly integrated associations USSOCOM owns with and through various partner nations across the global theater. This network is not only global, but include a bilateral approach of embedded liaisons between each member. Operation Citadel, discussed in Chapter-3 (pages 32-34), shows the benefit of taking various independent organizations and placing them into a matrixed solution for addressing a cross-functional threat. The same could be true for addressing global transnational organizations by adding new authorities to USSOCOM, and changing the relationships of the TSOCs to JIATF-like organizations operating within a CCMD's AOR, but organized to support true global campaign objectives. The global

⁶ Michael Bennett, "United States Special Operations Command", Powerpoint Brief given with permission. *USSOCOM Chair-JFSC* (January 7, 2017).

synchronization means that a USSOCOM would expand to address the transregional networks by empowering its own network with new authorities that add the ability to act in both law enforcement and military lanes like the U.S Coast Guard, HSI, and the JIATF-South models.

Chapter Review

Businesses in the public sector compete to attain or maintain their sales or profit by constantly evaluating their customer base, and the competitors in the same market. Failure to change, regardless of a strong held believe in self-interested ideals, places more ‘chance’ into a successful business strategy and assumes customers or competitors will also maintain the status quo and avoid seeking a competitive advantage against an aging business model. Homeland defense is a no fail mission and cannot allow unnecessary chance to be introduced into the equation. The infrastructure, codified by current doctrine, and tested by employment in the various counterterrorism campaigns, suggests that USSOCOM has the ability to integrate capabilities and planning across the joint and interagency spectrum. However, grand strategic direction must evolve to both account for the abundance of bureaucracy and intentionally direct Departments to consolidate efforts into a more streamlined team.

Using the business example, CEOs and Boards are held accountable for comparing costs, overhead, and the profit margins available to stock holders. There is an expectation that effectiveness is not enough, but a maximization of resources. The DOD does not view effectiveness with an eye for either efficiency or return on investment. If there is a perceived deficiency in a required area, then the first response is normally the

creation of an organization without looking for a solution that is already in action. The overlap of missions is simply accepted.

The CCMDs and the fight for national security will benefit from a more centralized view of creating and enacting strategic guidance, almost a bottom up approach. The operational level and tactical operators understand the field and form relationships with the various other agencies that will receive guidance from the higher levels. Yet this guidance, which undoubtedly is created by smaller sections within the larger staff functions, may not completely address the true issues faced by the boots on the ground. In the author's experience, many of the guidelines and directives written by the strategy division of 12th AF originated between 3-5 people at most, then were sent out for minimal level coordination, and then were signed by the Commander as 'strategic guidance'. The responsibility to encompass all of the true issues fell to the personnel assigned, and heavily leveraged upon personal experiences and staff prowess, vice a mechanism to incorporate the various tiers of the staff and tactical units.

Chapter 5: Summary

“Across the three pillars of the defense strategy, the Department is committed to finding creative, effective, and efficient ways to achieve our goals and in making hard strategic choices. Innovation – within our own Department and in our interagency and international partnerships – is a central line of effort. Infusing a culture of innovation and adaptability that yields tangible results into an organization as large as the Department of Defense is by necessity a long-term, incremental undertaking. We will actively seek innovative approaches to how we fight, how we posture our force, and how we leverage our asymmetric strengths and technological advantages. Innovation is paramount given the increasingly complex warfighting environment we expect to encounter.”⁷

- 2014 QDR

USSOCOM can provide a broader view of multiple challenges to national interests based on its adaptable organization and organic capability to provide a range of military assistance to the target areas. USSOCOM’s commitment as a transregional bridge between the GCC’s and National Strategy development, given its adaptable organization, could provide the much needed enterprise solution between regionally specific threats and artificially restrictive Unified Command Plan language. If it is assumed that resources, at best, will remain the same then adaptable solutions must be pursued to combat enemies and threats that enjoy freedom of regional maneuver.

USSOCOM, as an adaptable and globally networked enabler and employer of national power, can utilize its inherent multi-region, multi-specialty organizational structure to help bridge divides in supporting the National Security Strategy. This thesis examines USSOCOM’s ability to integrate its resident networked capacity, command and control evolution, and deliberate special operations integration into geographic combatant command strategies specific to transnational criminal organizations, and homeland defense.

⁷ Secretary of Defense Charles Hagel, *2014 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, March 2014), 22.

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) focused on rebalancing, but lacks clear joint/inter-agency architecture to ensure CCMD capacity or Special Operations Forces are able to support the national security threats operating across borders and affecting the Western Hemisphere. However, there are examples of foundational options (such as the examples from HSI, JIATF-South, and the TSOs) which if modified at the strategic level, could become the much needed total force integrator for strategy development and force employment towards transnational organized crime as well as provide a proactive layer of homeland defense. These trans-national challenges to national security require an adaptable organization properly configured to network multi-agency, multi-service, and multi-domain actions.

The physical game of homeland defense and the security of American people is a contact sport, individuals are lost and damage does occur. However, there is no need to 'hope for the best', it takes a leadership mindset change that divorces organizational parochialism away from geographic-centric plans and harness a current network-in-being with the ability to plan against threats to U.S. national interests. The very nature of the special operators that comprise the various agencies makes it extremely difficult to depart from making 'your team' the best it can be. However, a simple change in perspective can mean the difference between successes for the whole or selfish wins.

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