



**STRATEGY  
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**COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE JOINT  
COMMISSION OBSERVER PROGRAM  
U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES IN BOSNIA**

**BY**

**COLONEL CHARLES T. CLEVELAND**  
United States Army

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Command and Control of the Joint Commission Observer Program  
U.S. Army Special Forces in Bosnia**

by

**COLONEL CHARLES T. CLEVELAND**  
Department of the Army

**COLONEL James F. Powers**  
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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## ABSTRACT

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In December 1996 U.S. Army Special Forces relieved the volunteers from the British Army in the Joint Commission Observer (JCO) mission in Bosnia. The JCO program provides the SFOR Commander with a means to gain access to local, regional and even national level leaders of the warring factions and other influential actors. Initiated during the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) period, these military observers gave the Commander a flexible force that could act as informal emissaries or call in air strikes.

For U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) the JCO mission was a doctrinally new role. Their success in Bosnia was later affirmed by their subsequent deployment to Kosovo. The development of a JCO planning methodology was key to their success. Developed over the course of five battalion rotations, this JCO planning methodology had as its cornerstone a process that translated the CINCs operational requirements into mission guidance to the SFJCO teams.

The SF experience in Bosnia also identified weaknesses in the current training regimen for Special Forces battalion commanders and staffs. SF groups and battalions should conduct Unconventional Warfare (UW) exercises periodically to ensure operations and planning procedures required in protracted special operations campaigns are improved.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I arrived in Sarajevo on 8 December 1995 as the team leader of the ADVON for the U.S. contingent to the Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF). As the CJSOTF Operations Center Director I became familiar with the British Joint Commission Observer mission. Returning to Bosnia in October 1996, I served as the Deputy Commander of the CJSOTF to assist in its transition from British to U.S. command and lead-nation. At that time I led the planning effort to replace the British JCO teams with U.S. Army Special Forces detachments. Lastly, I returned as the Battalion Commander of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group responsible for all JCO missions from December 1997 to April 1998. It was during this deployment, that the JCO methodology discussed here was finalized. This novel approach to long term operations systemically linked the Stabilization Force Commander's (COMSFOR) strategic endstate and operational requirements with JCO operations throughout Bosnia.

The process, though, was evolutionary and preceding SF battalion rotations contributed significantly to understanding how U.S. Army Special Forces should conduct JCO operations. Of particular note were the efforts of COL Tom Rendall and his battalion staff on the rotation following ours. His understanding of the complexity of the Bosnian operational environment and the role the U.S. Army's unconventional warfare experts should play better was unparalleled. He and I discussed the situation in Bosnia many times and for his insight I am grateful. During his rotation the U.S. Special Forces mission was successfully transitioned to a Multinational JCO program in October 1998. Also noteworthy for laying the ground work were COL Pete Gustaitis, COL Mike Dietrick, and COL Roy Hawkin, commanders of highly successful SF battalion rotations to Bosnia during the IFOR and the early SFOR days.

Lastly, the successful development of the JCO program would not have been possible without the support and vision of the 10<sup>th</sup> Group Commanders for whom I worked. MG Geoffrey Lambert recognized the contributions U.S. Special Forces could make as JCOs when he commanded the 10<sup>th</sup> Group and then made it a reality during his tenure as Commander, Special Operations Command (Europe). In the face of pressure to end the mission with the pull out of the U.K. volunteers, he succeeded in convincing the SFOR leadership to not only accept the American replacements but to keep them under the operational control of the CJSOTF. BG Les Fuller later forced a standardized approach to this new mission that allowed the succession of battalion rotations to continue improving the tactics, techniques and procedures the teams and their headquarters elements would follow.



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## **COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THE JOINT COMMISSION OBSERVER PROGRAM: U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES IN BOSNIA**

As the U.S. Army grapples with its relevance in the wake of Task Force Hawk and as the U.S. Joint Forces Command seeks to refine the concept of Rapid Decisive Operations, military leaders must not forget that there will be many operations that cannot be resolved in either a rapid or decisive manner. Nearly all military operations since Vietnam have required some form of sustained combat operations. Panama, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and most recently Kosovo, have had U.S. soldiers playing a key role in achieving the desired strategic endstate for periods ranging from months to years. In each of these operations U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) have played key roles in providing the JTF Commander ground truth, especially in the uncertain and high risk immediate post-conflict phase. In spite of the high probability that U.S. forces will continue to be called upon to perform such long term missions, relatively little training is devoted to conducting such operations. This critique can also be leveled at the SF community, where the focus on major theater war missions of special reconnaissance and direct action leaves staffs and commanders relatively untrained for sustained special operations.

The purpose of this paper is to outline how U.S. Army SF battalions in Bosnia devised a method of exercising command and control of the Joint Commission Observer (JCO) mission and to suggest that a more formal doctrinal review of this process and ultimately formal staff training on the conduct of sustained special operations are required. The methodology discussed is an amalgam of intelligence, Civil Affairs and SF techniques that these battalion headquarters developed while deployed to suit the reality of the operational environment. The doctrinal approach to SF targetting did not exist in Bosnia. SF Commanders were left with "operationalizing" either COMSFOR or Multinational Division Commander's intent and devising ways of facilitating the achievement of his strategic endstate. While not exactly the same as the techniques used after Just Cause in Panama or in Haiti, discussions with SF veterans of those operations reveal there are many similarities. The procedures outlined in this paper were used in Bosnia and represent an attempt to capture in doctrinal terms the process of connecting the JTF Commander's operational requirements and strategic endstate with actions at the SF team level.

The JCO mission gave the Implementation Force (later Stabilization Force) Commander a unique means to communicate with key community leaders and gather valuable information. By December 1997 twelve SF teams located in key towns were tasked to meet with prominent

citizens in their areas on a routine basis with the purpose of developing an acquaintance, hearing local complaints, or passing instructions. To best understand the mission and the JCO targeting methodology, it is necessary to have some familiarity with the predecessors to the U.S. JCO mission and how U.S. Army SF came to be tasked with this role. The battalion's JCO methodology can then be outlined to show how the supported commander's strategic endstate, operational direction, concerns, and guidance are developed into a plan for attaining the needed influence with key personalities in a given area. Included is a discussion of measures of effectiveness for the JCO program that are used to keep the program focused and relevant. The paper concludes with a recommendation that SF battalion and group staffs conduct periodic unconventional warfare exercises to teach staffs how to conduct sustained, long term command and control of such complex special operations.

## **PEACEKEEPING IN BOSNIA – A REVIEW OF THE SPECIAL FORCES MISSION**

### **THE U.S. ARMY AND THE IFOR AND SFOR MISSION**

When the U.S. Army crossed the Sava River into Bosnia-Herzegovina in December 1995, it began the most complex peacekeeping operation (PKO) in its history. The Dayton Peace Accords brought the three warring factions to an uneasy, ambiguous, brokered peace.<sup>1</sup> Underpinning the agreement was to be a large and lethal U.S. Army presence. It signaled U.S. commitment to the region and the seriousness of U.S. intentions. Selection of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division to spearhead U.S. involvement conveyed a message to potential belligerents, namely a resumption of hostilities would be met with overwhelming force.<sup>2</sup> In the two other sectors of the partitioned country, those under the United Kingdom and France, division sized combat units were equally unequivocal. At the country level, the Allied Command Europe (ACE) Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) ensured the military and civilian leadership were clear on the penalty for noncompliance. The Implementation Force (IFOR) began its mission as a thinly veiled hammer that would ensure the Entity Armed Forces (EAF) gave peace a chance.<sup>3</sup>

There would be few military challenges to IFOR. The EAF reluctantly, but expeditiously, complied with the Dayton Peace Accords. Instead peacekeepers would contend with indirect threats from a variety of civilian and paramilitary players on what is best described as the human battlefield. The ethnic hatred that had led to unspeakable violence and war remained in the open. Displaced peoples, with long family ties to towns now controlled by other ethnic groups, clamored for justice. The war had been fought on several levels beyond conventional armed conflict, to include civilian mob violence directed at neighbors who were of a different

ethnic background. There were few, if any, "good guys." Ethnic violence spawned the term, ethnic cleansing, and by the war's end each side would be harboring war criminals guilty of this age-old method of subjugation.<sup>4</sup>

In areas along the interethnic zone of separation (ZOS) opportunistic power brokers and their supporters replaced traditional systems of governance. These included powerful criminal elements that quickly established themselves as the community leaders or behind the scene power brokers by providing or denying measures of security or basic services. Nationalists, religious leaders, paramilitary groups and leaders of local industries vied for power or an accommodation with the powerful.<sup>5</sup> Within each ethnic group political parties emerged representing a variety of views of the Bosnian future. Some were militant ultra-nationalists while others promoted moderate policies towards other ethnic groups. Each vied for support of their population.<sup>6</sup>

Complicating the operating environment further were numerous nongovernmental (NGO) and international organizations (IO). Some simply wanted to provide help where it was needed while others were dedicated to a specific religious or ethnic group. Each had a unique view of IFOR's role and more often than not a policy which shunned associating with the military.<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. Army leadership began to understand that conventional military doctrine and force have limited application in this environment. Clearly, IFOR had succeeded against the conventional force threat by ensuring the EAF complied with Dayton. Tanks, artillery and other large weapons systems were removed from the ZOS and placed in designated weapons storage sites. IFOR tightly controlled and limited EAF movements and training. Some military units were demobilized and selected special police units were eventually disbanded. IFOR units had complete freedom of movement throughout the country.<sup>8</sup>

However, from the start IFOR began confronting the unconventional challenges posed by various factions of the Bosnian population. IFOR came to understand the EAF were only one of numerous powerful influences on events in Bosnia. Others would try to fill the power vacuum that resulted from the removal of the EAF and the lack of a viable political structure at the local, regional and national level. IFOR, and later SFOR, would have to learn who they were, how they exercised influence and what could be done to modify their behavior if necessary.

The problems for U.S. commanders were compounded by the constraints of a heightened force protection posture. After terrorists killed 283 Marines in Lebanon the U.S. military had made force protection a planning factor in every deployment.<sup>9</sup> Two years earlier the

U.S. military had learned the hard way the dangers of peacekeeping/peace making missions when it was forced to pull out of Somalia after 18 soldiers were killed.<sup>10</sup> No U.S. commander wanted a disastrous repeat on his watch. The U.S. had learned that as the world's sole superpower, the propaganda value of a dead American G.I. had gone up considerably.

The American reaction was to limit exposure of the American troops to potentially hostile populations and to ensure they had with them the military means to ensure self-protection. In a country where the ethnic animus is so deep as to cause neighbor to turn against neighbor and where every man or woman is a potential war criminal or dangerously anti-U.S., stern self-control measures are justifiable. But the U.S. Army's mission accomplishment and force protection required an understanding of what is happening in the towns, regions and across the nation, knowledge of who wields power at each level and their intentions, and what can be done to influence their activities before, during and after incidents occur. The question posed to U.S. commanders was how can U.S. forces remain the "hammer" and yet interact with the locals to the extent necessary to achieve the "fingerspitzengefühl" required.<sup>11</sup>

From this operational dilemma evolved a new and enduring role for U.S. Army SF in PKO. In Bosnia they are called Joint Commission Observers (JCO) and in Kosovo they are the U.S. Liaison Teams. But their primary function is the same; they are the interface between the conventional U.S. force and the human battlefield. These teams differed from the Civil Affairs teams because the combat expertise of the SF teams allowed them to be inserted on a permanent basis into dangerous or highly uncertain environments. These soldiers are neither intelligence operatives nor are they conducting traditional SF combat missions. Instead they cultivate and provide access to key individuals who wield power at the local, regional and national level. Perceived impartiality and a non-threatening profile are key elements in their force protection. Yet, these professionals only thinly conceal a capacity to respond lethally when threatened. They provide a window throughout which the conventional commander can better understand and respond to the concerns of the people. Their access can help mitigate crises through their personal relationship with leaders of potentially belligerent factions. They interact with the spectrum of characters that comprise the "influence hierarchy;" priests, police, criminals, EAF leaders, government officials, and a host of others that make things happen in a country that is trying to rebuild and destroy itself at the same time.<sup>12</sup>

#### HISTORY OF THE JOINT COMMISSION OBSERVER MISSION

The United Nations Protection Force, UNPROFOR, had a very difficult mission. Deployed in June 1992, UNPROFOR's force of 7000 had the mission of providing relief supplies

during the Yugoslavian civil war amidst three warring armies and their different ethnic supporters.<sup>13</sup> The situation was complex and lethal. By 1994, the regional players, as well as many member nations, viewed the U.N. forces as ineffective and weak.

“A few good Brits...” that was at least part of what General Sir Michael Rose, UNPROFOR Commander from January 1994 to January 1995, is reported to have requested of Her Majesty’s government to help him in discharging his duties in Bosnia.<sup>14</sup> In response to his call an undisclosed number of “volunteers from various British Army units” deployed and began what became known as the Joint Commission Observer program. Their primary mission was to act as military emissaries of the UNPROFOR Commander but these military professionals proved useful in a wide range of operations. These included escorting important UN relief convoys and providing eyewitness assessments to the Commander as required. In one instance the JCOs are reported to have directed airstrikes against Serb forces attacking the Muslim city of Gorazde. The program proved very helpful and was continued after Gen. Rose’s tour of duty was over. When the UN pulled out and IFOR began its mission the British led JCO program was one of the few holdovers. The effort was subsumed under the Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), at the time commanded by Brig. (UK) Cedrick Delves.<sup>15</sup>

The U.S. Army SF component of the CJSOTF had the mission of providing Liaison Coordination Elements (LCEs) to the non-NATO troop units. The LCE mission was a variant of the coalition support teams (CSTs) made famous during Desert Storm. Because both the LCE and JCO were under the operational control of the same higher headquarters, U.S. Army SF leaders learned first hand about the nature and role of the JCO mission. U.S. officers recognized early how well the requirements to conduct the JCO mission matched the core competencies of the SF soldier.

As the fighting subsided the JCO mission shifted focus to their ability to provide access to the key entity leaders with whom they had been working over the past two and a half years. Access to these key personalities had proven critical during periods when one side or the other had cut off contact with the UN, and later IFOR. The JCOs maintained and improved their relationships through official meetings and social events, as well as by more unorthodox methods such as facilitating grave visitation across the ZOS for some leaders, providing medical supplies for their ailing children, and coordinating private meetings between different factions leaders. The JCOs provided a unique and informal means of communication between IFOR commanders and the complex society in which they found themselves operating.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of 1996, though, the British Army JCO effort was reaching a point of "organizational exhaustion." The small pool of volunteers had rotated through Bosnia several times and their other skills were rumored to be languishing for lack of training. Theater and divisional intelligence organizations were well into their first year and there was some expectation within the British-run CJSOTF these agencies could do the JCO job.

Equally important was the pending assumption of command of the SFOR land component by the U.S. Commander of LANDCENT who was taking over from the British Commander of the ARRC. Wisely, the decision was made that the special operations component, the CJSOTF, was also to be under command of a U.S. officer. The nature of special operations and the national constraints on their use would be facilitated by such an arrangement. With the lead nation of the ground component passing to the U.S., the CJSOTF was to likewise become a U.S. led headquarters, resourced by the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and nominally under operational control of the Special Operations Command, Europe, the special operations component of USEUCOM.

As an important aside, the UK JCO teams had operated successfully for nearly a year in all three Multinational Division areas. With the impending deployment of U.S. teams to take their place there was some behind-the-scenes reluctance on the part of the Multinational Division Southwest (UK-led) to accept the presence of U.S. Army SF in their area. Despite last minute efforts by the UK Division Commander and the then UK Commander of the CJSOTF to end the JCO program, it was ironically the UK Army's Lt Gen Hugh Pike, Deputy to the LANDCENT Commander, who determined the mission would continue theater-wide with U.S. Army SF taking the place of the UK volunteers. In December 1996, the first U.S. Army SF JCO rotation began.<sup>17</sup>

In the early months of 1997 up to 18 JCO teams would be spread throughout the country with the bulk being in the MND-N sector. Each team numbered from 6 to 8 SF soldiers, representing a cross section of the SF team's organic capabilities. Each was commanded by a captain or warrant officer and had an intelligence/operations sergeant, a medic, and normally two communications sergeants. Team engineers and weapons specialists rounded out the team. Using the same mission profile as their U.K. predecessors, the U.S. JCOs operated from and lived in leased houses in a town in their area, drove leased civilian sport utility vehicles, and lived off the local economy. They wore uniforms without rank or patches, carried concealed weapons and normally operated in pairs. Each team had a designated area of operation. As the mission matured the supported leadership came to realize fewer JCOs could provide comparable coverage thereby lessening the cost in personnel and reducing the conventional

force quick reaction force requirements. By December 1997 the JCO program maintained 12 JCO houses, four in each Multinational Division area. In early 1997 two Italian special forces teams took up manning of two houses in the French Multinational Division (MND) area. Each MND had a U.S. SF company headquarters or Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) that exercised OPCON of its four JCO teams for the SF Battalion headquarters in Sarajevo.<sup>18</sup>

The 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group would conduct five battalion rotations of about four months each into Bosnia before the commitment was reduced to about a company size mission. The JCO command and control methodology discussed later was developed during the battalion rotations.

In August 1998, the JCO program was reorganized. Responding to U.S. pressure to reduce American troop strength and to avoid overextending U.S. Army SF assets, the French and British MNDs would field their own JCOs, leaving U.S. teams only in the American sector. The U.S. would continue to be the CJSOTF lead nation and the CJSOTF would continue to exercise NATO operational control over the fielded teams, assuming the command and control function of the SF battalion headquarters.<sup>19</sup>

By this time at the theater level the SFOR mission in Bosnia had matured considerably. UK, French, Italian, Spanish and German conventional units had adopted a proactive approach to dealing with the populace that called for company and battalion commanders and their subordinates to interface heavily with the community and its leaders in their areas. The units in the UK and French sectors were gaining and maintaining their own access to the civilian and military centers of power.<sup>20</sup> Non-U.S. JCOs still performed an information collection function but serve to more to facilitate the access of their local conventional units to the people.

Some allies and U.S. politicians criticised American commanders for not following the European example by becoming more engaged with the local populace.<sup>21</sup> Instead American commanders have relied on their U.S. JCOs to provide that needed interface with the populace and its leadership. Since the division has maintained an aggressive force protection posture similar to that of 1995-96 era, the JCO access and information mission remains a key component in the supported commander's peacekeeping operation.

Over the past four years, U.S. Army SF units have distinguished themselves in carrying out their JCO duties. With each rotation, units from the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group and later the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Group, improved the methodology and techniques associated with the mission. Their success in Bosnia has compelled U.S. commanders in Kosovo to request similar

support. In Kosovo today U.S. commanders are reported to obtain nearly 70% of their ground information from these teams.<sup>22</sup>

In retrospect there were some significant shortfalls in the understanding of the JCO mission and how to incorporate it into the supported commander's strategic vision and operational scheme of maneuver. The highly successful British operation during UNPROFOR and the early days of IFOR had waned in the six months leading up to the U.S. take over of the mission. The lack of a cohesive program at the time of the transfer of the mission and the lack of documentation of British JCO staff procedures meant the U.S. would have to develop its own processes. For nearly a year the program relied heavily on the energy and abilities of the individual teams to accomplish the mission, while the headquarters wrestled with the challenges of this long term special operation.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE JCO METHODOLOGY**

### **THE IMPETUS FOR CHANGE**

In late 1996, CG, MND-North, then MG Meigs asked the JCO leadership a simple, yet provocative question. "How do you know you (the JCOs) are talking to the right people?"<sup>23</sup> Reflecting on the question, and frankly because the answer was less than satisfactory, the U.S. Army SF leadership undertook a comprehensive review of how the JCOs determine their targets, report their information and respond to SFOR and division commander taskings. MG Meigs had only recently taken over MND-North from MG Nash.

<sup>22</sup>While the relationship between the U.K. JCOs and the supported commanders had been good, the UK had been very guarded about their sources and methods. During the early IFOR period, the JCOs worked for the ARRC Commander and supported the divisions through the theater headquarters. Additionally, the UK JCOs had the advantage of having been in country for a considerably longer time than the newly arrived Americans. The fact they were from an allied nation, worked directly for the ARRC Commander, had developed unparalleled expertise in the area, and had a proven ability to access the leadership of the warring factions shielded them from scrutiny by the division commanders and their staffs. By January 1997, the new American JCOs, on the other hand, would have to prove themselves and to do so required they be able to answer MG Meig's question. It would be nearly a year before a tasking system, revised doctrine and set of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) would be in place that adequately described how U.S. SF JCOs supported the SFOR Commander and his

components. During that period the U.S. JCO teams built on the contacts they inherited and developed.

The JCO methodology presented here had its genesis in the realization that in order to contend with the forces at work in the area of operation, commanders had to know the key personalities and have an appropriate degree of access to them. This access would provide an informal communication means that allowed them to communicate their concerns and intentions to SFOR. Just as the U.S. had realized from its experiences in Panama and Haiti, namely that the actions of a lone soldier in a peacekeeping environment could have strategic consequences, it became apparent that a fairly low level power broker in Bosnia could directly affect NATO's efforts countrywide and also have strategic impact.<sup>24</sup> The JCO program would assist in countering the potential for local or regional problems to negatively impact on SFOR goals. The key to the JCO targeting program would be in translating the long-term objectives of the SFOR commander into a network of contacts, friendly and unfriendly, whose influence could help achieve the desired endstates. This network would help mitigate crisis, leverage support to SFOR efforts and provide insight into the intentions of their represented groups.

Emerging information operations doctrine and more proven psychological and human intelligence operational considerations each touched on the subject of affecting the populace. But each had its limitations in the Bosnian peacekeeping mission. Psychological operations dealing with themes against targeted audience have generally long term impact and are limited in what it can do with emerging day-to-day problems. Additionally, the communist and later nationalist, regimes had subjected the Bosnians to near continuous psychological campaigns that rendered the targeted audiences skeptical of later efforts of the allies. Recruiting a human intelligence network that could provide a comparable level of access would be too costly and time consuming. Here also the history of the region was an impediment. Yugoslav intelligence agencies had been pervasive in communist Yugoslavia. Their corrupting influence would make NATO attempts in this area difficult. Lastly, the U.S. Army's Land Information Warfare Agency (LIWA) made significant progress in trying to synchronize the various military "levers" to gain a desired effect in the sector. As a staff element though they had no direct contact with the population they targeted. The JCO program with its official status, perceived neutrality and theaterwide coverage proved to be a unique capability.<sup>25</sup>

There were numerous forces attempting to obtain advantage on this battlefield and the JCOs mission was to have access to those attempting to manipulate the peace to their ends. Some wished to roll back the clock and restart the war; in other cases they wished only to exploit the situation for economic advantage. In order to gain, cultivate and maintain access to

the right people, the JCO and the JCO program managers had to know who the influential players were and how to get at them.

The remainder of this paper focuses on three concepts: the Influence Hierarchy, the JCO Targeting Cycle, and JCO Measures of Effectiveness.

### THE INFLUENCE HIERARCHY

Life in every society is governed by the nearly countless decisions made by selected individuals who exercise influence over the members of the group. Sometimes these individuals have formal linkages, others are informally connected. In some categories these networks extend beyond the local level and reach to the highest levels nationally. The local party leader, for example, is subordinate to his state level counterpart, similar to the Serb division commander being subordinate to his Corps commander. Informal connections, such as friendships, business, and criminal relationships are also pervasive. The overlaying of these various formal and informal linkages in a given area form what the JCO analysts called the "influence hierarchy." Nothing of note in a town or region happens unless orchestrated or exploited by someone within the hierarchy.

The initial task was to determine who was in this hierarchy in each JCO area of operation. Figure 1 shows the categories that became the focus of intelligence and JCO analysis.<sup>26</sup> Level I were national level personalities, level II regional and level III local. Level IV were those people in the immediate vicinity of the JCO house. Co-opting or befriending those in the immediate area of the JCO house was a crucial JCO force protection measure.

## Influence Hierarchy

I	Political	Military	Police	Civic	Media	NGO	Economy	Crime	Religion	Other Misc.
II	Political	Military	Police	Civic	Media	NGO	Economy	Crime	Religion	Other Misc.
III	Political	Military	Police	Civic	Media	NGO	Economy	Crime	Religion	Other Misc.
IV *	Political	Military	Police	Civic	Media	NGO	Econ.	Crime	Religion	Other Misc.

\* Concerns addressed with non-affiliated personalities & POCs  
or  
Personalities which are in the immediate area to the JCO house (Inner Ring)

FIGURE 1. INFLUENCE HIERARCHY

The challenge for analysts was immense. Using the national level agencies and division intelligence assets and old JCO data banks, battalion analysts began identifying the key players in each JCO area. Holes in the intelligence collection scheme were identified. For example, even though the U.S. had been operating in the country for nearly two years by this point in early 1998, the intelligence community had only an incomplete listing of town mayors or their party affiliations. The intelligence community had a good grasp on the military personalities but not on the civilians who were actually running the country. Level I (national level) political and military players were fairly well known. Less known were the level I economic or media leaders and level II and III personalities in all categories. Analysts assigned to the SF Battalion headquarters in Sarajevo and the company headquarters supporting the divisions began assembling the information necessary.

Once a fairly complete picture was developed for a given area, the JCO "footprint" or current contact list was overlaid to see what gaps existed. Each area was assigned its own intelligence analyst and SF qualified operations NCO. Their job was to research the JCO data banks containing all past messages to see what references had been made to the personnel listed, how many times was he mentioned and when was the last contact. This operator/analyst team then traveled to their supported JCO team and conducted field interviews with the team members. The purpose was to validate the JCO Footprint as it existed for comparison with the influence hierarchy as it was understood at headquarters. The data bank at Sarajevo was updated to reflect contacts not previously mentioned in message traffic. Intelligence agencies were tasked to help fill in the gaps for each region.

From the number of mentions in message traffic and the field interviews the analysts were able to get a sense for the "depth" of contact the JCOs had with given personalities. Depth assessments were critical at a later stage in the tasking cycle because based on what was to be achieved some personalities would be more important than others. The JCOs efforts were to be directed at those who could achieve the SFOR Commander's objectives. Figure 2 depicts this sorting process.<sup>27</sup>

## Categorizing

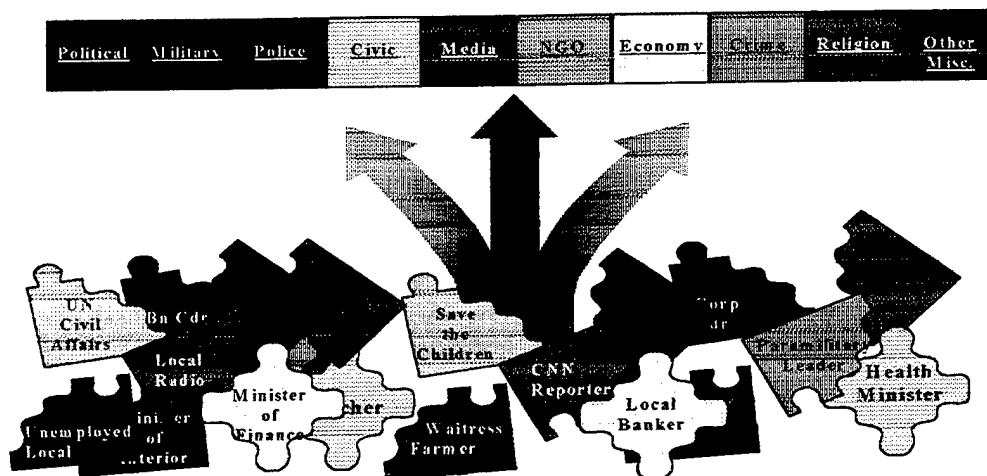


FIGURE 2. CATEGORIZING

Once the headquarters knew with whom the JCOs were talking (their JCO Footprint) and what other personalities were found in the influence hierarchy, they were able then to go on to the next step which was the actual targeting process.

To many observers and some consumers of the daily JCO message traffic, the JCO mission appeared to be an intelligence operation. As explained above the mission was one to provide access and a two-way communications means. Of course, in the pursuit of this access excellent information was a valuable byproduct.

### THE JCO TARGETING METHODOLOGY

Military operations are undertaken to achieve the Commanders objectives. The JCO program similarly sought to support the SFOR Commander by providing him access to key personalities and intelligence derived from their contacts. However, until the targeting process was employed the effectiveness of the program was dependent on each individual team's contact list (footprint) as derived from their general understanding of the need for contact with the local populace. In many cases the JCO teams had done a credible job in sensing who was important in their area. What they were not in a position to do was to identify and "operationalize" the SFOR Commander's guidance into discussion points that should be impressed upon the appropriate contact. They also had to rely on their own inherent understanding of an individual's position in the community to determine the level of contact they

should maintain (depth). The targeting process at the center of Figure 3 would address these shortcomings.<sup>28</sup>

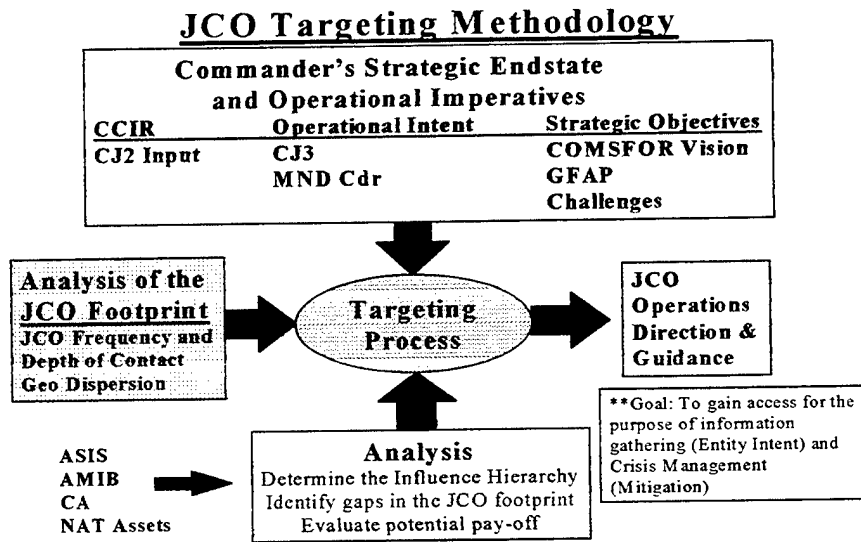


FIGURE 3. JCO TARGETING METHODOLOGY

The result of the product would be operational guidance sent from the SF Battalion headquarters, collocated with the CJSOTF and SFOR headquarters in Sarajevo, through the Division SOCCE to the JCO teams. Given the level of effort and the intelligence assets required the bulk of the analysis was by necessity conducted at the first level of command (the battalion) where a standing staff structure existed. Battalion operations personnel collaborated with their counterparts in the subordinate SOCCEs in order to ensure their supported commander's concerns were represented and considered.

At the heart of the methodology is the JCO targeting process, which can best be described as a derivation of the intelligence cycle. Renamed the JCO Targeting Cycle the steps would ensure a continuous process of requirements development, collection planning, target analysis, dissemination (tasking and guidance), evaluation, and review would take place. In Bosnia, the cycle was completed once a week. The Battalion Operations Center Director (S3) and S2 would oversee the efforts of the operation and intelligence analyst pairs. Each pair was dedicated to one MND area and its four JCO teams. Once the process was in place these teams became very possessive of their JCO teams. This loyalty helped keep the flow of information from the field to the headquarters open. The cycle and timelines are reflected in

Figure 4.<sup>29</sup> A review of the overall JCO program was conducted monthly using the measures of effectiveness described below.

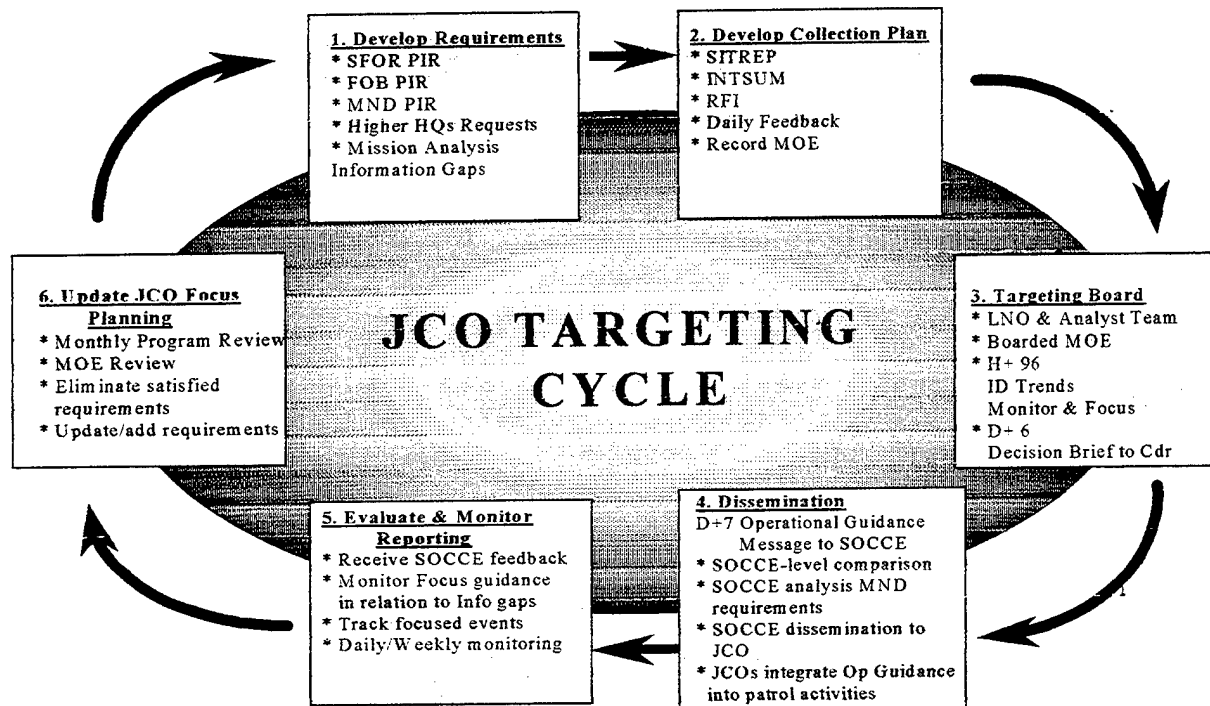


FIGURE 4. JCO TARGETING CYCLE

Brcko was the first test of the new targeting scheme. The SFOR headquarters worried that no matter what the March announcement was, one faction or other would not be happy and violence was possible. It had happened before over the disposition of the bridge in Brcko. Understanding the Commander's objective to mitigate any violent response to the decision, the responsible JCO analytical team cell set about studying the Brcko JCO list of contacts (JCO footprint.) Having studied the last episode of violence in Brcko, the analysts identified several individuals that were key to either calming their group or inciting trouble. It was noted that the JCO footprint did not include three individuals who the analysts thought were key. They were a local political party chief, the chief of uniformed police for the Brcko police force and a local thug thought to be a Serb paramilitary. They gathered information about the three and prepared to justify a tasking to the JCO team to meet with these men. They presented their case at the weekly targeting meeting where after asking questions about the thug and how he was to be approached, the battalion commander approved the tasking message. The background

information was handcarried to the JCO team for their study. The tasking was sent in late January. By the March Brcko deadline, the JCO team had fairly good contact with all the key players. Unfortunately, the decision was deferred for an additional year.<sup>30</sup>

## MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

In order to quantify the JCO programs contribution to the effort and to answer the question posed by MG Meigs more completely, the battalion operations staff developed two different measures of effectiveness (MOE). The SF Battalion Executive Officer, acting in his capacity of the Forward Operations Base (FOB) Director oversaw the two programs.<sup>31</sup> The results of his analysis were used in the monthly reviews to ensure the program remained sufficiently focused on the operational commander's objectives. Given the amorphous nature of the SFOR peacekeeping mission any attempt to help quantify progress was welcome. The JCO MOE programs have received considerable attention as a result.

The first to be described is simply the matching of information and intelligence found in the daily JCO situation reports with CINC and CG priority information requirement (PIR). A matrix was created which listed the PIRs along the horizontal axis and the different JCO teams along the vertical axis. The dedicated intelligence analysts for each area would review each day's message and nominate information found in the report for MOE credit. As a result, the monthly review could then see what PIR were over reported and which were under reported. Additionally, this analysis helped identify which contacts were yielding the most useable intelligence. Mindful that the JCO program provided information as a secondary byproduct of gaining and maintaining access to key personalities in the community, guidance to the teams would only suggest themes to discuss with contacts. In a few instances, JCO teams would meet with contacts or make new contacts to answer critical, short-fused PIR.

The second MOE directly tied the JCO footprint to the Influence Hierarchy. How good was the JCO team's access to the key personalities in their area as reflected by the command's guidance to gain and maintain contact with designated (targeted) individuals? For example, if the JCO team was being postured by the command to help mitigate problems that could result from a particular Brcko arbitration decision, did the JCO team have access to the personalities who the command's analysis said could cause SFOR problems? If they had contact with the targeted individuals, was the contact at an appropriate level (depth)? Depth was important because for many nonofficial players, such as political party chiefs, economic leaders or crime bosses, the JCO's ability to access them immediately before or during crisis may be dependant on having developed a highly personal relationship with the JCO. Obviously, the quality of the

information was likely to improve in cases where the relationship was deep. Analysts would "exercise" their JCO footprint by testing the contacts against notional situations that could require JCO assistance.

The JCO footprint analysis also helped cull the contact list to improve the efficiency of the effort. Contacts that were of marginal value were phased out. Additionally, the MOE process ensured that the headquarters helped the JCOs avoid inappropriate contacts. For example, while several occasions presented themselves to have JCOs meet with national level leaders or known war criminals to do so would have either compromised other efforts underway by the CINC's staff or potentially legitimized notorious figures.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Building on a highly successful British program, the JCO program established a new and unique role for U.S. Army SF in peacekeeping operations. Using this core of professional, mature special operations soldiers as his eyes, ears and voice in the affected communities, the JTF Commander or CINC can mitigate the risk to his conventional force by reducing their exposure to the population. Bosnia and Kosovo have validated the requirement for such operations and highlighted the ability of SF to conduct them in a discrete and highly effective manner.

The success of the individual JCO operator can be attributed to that mission's dependence on his core competencies as an unconventional warrior. Their success validates the institutional and unit training focus he receives. When on the few occasions a problem with the deployment of a JCO team member has surfaced, the SF community responded swiftly and with a firm hand. Over the course of the past four years some of these soldiers have completed their second, third and even fourth rotation to the Balkans. The improvement in their Serbo-Croatian proficiency has given them a greater ability to understand the nuances of the ever-changing, complex peacekeeping environment. The individual SF operator has consistently served with distinction in the Balkans.

The efforts of successive SF Battalion headquarters to standardize a staff process for conducting effective control of the JCO operation were examples of innovation borne of necessity. Through a process of trial and error, commanders identified three tenets to be true when organizing for long-term special operations. First, it became apparent that a robust operations and intelligence staff was required to process the internal reports and external intelligence products. The headquarters had to monitor the daily reports, conduct its own "targeting" and task subordinate elements with a long-term objective in mind. The mission of

gaining and maintaining access required an understanding of the culture, the personality involved and knowledge of the group he represented. A premium was placed on innovation, guile and finesse. The second point is that computers, data base software and the ability to manipulate them were essential. The battalion operations and intelligence sections came to rely on an in-house database to manage and cross-reference the volumes of information the JCO operations required. The program was developed by one of the SF sergeants on temporary duty to the battalion operations section. Lastly, the key to success was a direct and active information exchange with national and international intelligence agencies operating in theater. Once the JCO methodology was developed the more the process was understood by these agencies and the more responsive they became in providing the information needed for JCO targeting and analysis.

Above the operator level the SF experience in the Balkans has identified some training and doctrinal challenges. As demonstrated the year-long trial and error method used to develop a method of exercising command and control for the JCO program highlights a shortcoming in the training regime for SF commanders and staffs. Of the five core SF missions; foreign internal defense (FID), counter-terrorism (CT), direct action (DA), special reconnaissance (SR), and unconventional warfare (UW), only UW requires a staff to conduct the day-in and day-out planning and analysis that simulates those required in SF peacekeeping missions.<sup>32</sup> Peacekeeping, counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare campaigns could be called sustained special operations; significantly different from the currently popular concept of Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO).<sup>33</sup> The former form of conflict would appear the more prevalent, though less acceptable, of the two.

Given the expense and time required to conduct unconventional warfare field exercises, they are only rarely conducted today. Instead commands are more likely to conduct short-term exercises focusing on direct action or special reconnaissance. While valuable vehicles for training on proper staff techniques and the military decision making process, they do not simulate the complexity of a counterinsurgency, guerrilla warfare or peacekeeping operation.

The exercising of effective command and control in special operations that last for months and years, not days or weeks requires doctrinal and training attention. The techniques and staff procedures inherent in such operations are slowly passing from the community's institutional memory. Gone are the Vietnam veterans and SF leaders of the 1970s and 1980s who actually conducted such operations or planned the annual UW exercises to train staff and subordinates.

Since the end of the cold war, some influential Special Operations Forces (SOF) leaders have increasingly come to question the relevance of the UW mission. To many UW was an outmoded form of war, not unlike its mirror image, counterinsurgency. For a period, some within the SF community discouraged the mention of UW in connection with SF training plans. Not surprisingly, USSOCOM's funding priorities habitually list UW as one of its lowest priority missions, and as a result funding for large-scale UW exercises is limited. Today, like its conventional combat arms counterparts, the cornerstone of SF battalion training is the Combined Training Center rotation. Based on the unit's mission letters and the battalion commander's guidance, these exercises routinely focus on short-term missions, such as DA and SR. These differ with the SF experience in Bosnia in as much as such operations are usually of a short duration and use fairly prescribed methods of passing mission taskings and target intelligence.<sup>34</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Commanding JCO operations in support of peacekeeping missions, as demonstrated by the process described above, is likewise a long-term, staff intense proposition. The JCO methodology when finally developed matched the CINC's operational requirements with JCO operations. But the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia afforded the U.S. Special Forces community the opportunity to learn as you go. Similar long-term ventures, be they other peacekeeping or counterinsurgency operations, under more lethal circumstances will not be as forgiving. The current resurgence of UW at the U.S. Army Special Forces Command and the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School forecasts an increasing likelihood of Special Forces units being committed to long-term peacekeeping, counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare operations. The next step is to create and adequately fund an exercise program that ensures the commanders and staffs are trained and ready for these sustained special operations or long-term "dirty little wars."

Word Count: 6,908

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Larry F. Wentz, ed., "Bosnia-Setting the Stage," Lessons From Bosnia: The IFOR Experience, (Washington D.C.: DOD Command and Control Research Program, National Defense University, 1997), 25-26.

<sup>2</sup>Wolfgang Biermann and Martin Vadset, eds., "After Dayton – Write off the U.N.?", in U.N. Peacekeeping in Trouble: Lessons Learned from the Former Yugoslavia, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Aldershot Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1999), 349.

<sup>3</sup>Richard L. Layton, "Command and Control Structure," Lessons From Bosnia: The IFOR Experience, Larry F. Wentz, ed., (Washington D.C.: DOD Command and Control Research Program, National Defense University, 1997), 36-43.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Blystone, "In Bosnia, ethnic cleansing scars are difficult to heal," 31 August 1997; available from <http://www.cnn.com/world/9708/31/bosnia.pm/>; Internet; accessed 26 February 2001.

<sup>5</sup>"USAID Congressional Presentation FY 1997," available from <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp97/countries/ba.htm>; Internet; accessed 26 February 2001.

<sup>6</sup>"CIA – The World Factbook 2000 – Bosnia and Herzegovina," available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bk.html>; accessed 26 February 2001.

<sup>7</sup>Wentz, 61.

<sup>8</sup>Biermann and Vadset, 357.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas K. Adams, U.S. Special Operations Forces in Action – The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare, (London: Frank Cass Publishing, 1998), 188.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 262-266.

<sup>11</sup>Wentz, 413-414.

<sup>12</sup>Wentz, 70.

<sup>13</sup>"Wars of Yugoslav Succession," available from <http://encarta.msn.com/index/conciseindex/C0/0C044000.htm>, accessed on 27 January 2001.

<sup>14</sup>This quote was attributed to General Rose by a member of the original U.K. volunteers who deployed as a result of his request for help from the British government.

<sup>15</sup>The JCO program was a very sensitive operation that had only an indirect connection with the Joint Military Commission called for in the Dayton Accords. Command and control of the operation was felt best accomplished by the Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) assigned to support the Allied Command Europe (ACE) Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC).

<sup>16</sup> Wentz, 70.

<sup>17</sup>These events occurred in November 1996 during the transition from U.K. to U.S. leadership. I was the Deputy Commander and observed first hand these incidents.

<sup>18</sup>This was the configuration of the US JCO program when 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A) assumed control of the JCO operation in December 1997.

<sup>19</sup>This mission was transitioned to multinational teams by 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), commanded by LTC Tom Rendall. Their comprehensive plan for preparing the allied JCOs included training, area familiarization, and contact hand off. The U.S. teams then validated the readiness of the Allied JCO teams to assume this mission.

<sup>20</sup>By April 1998, British conventional soldiers were attached to U.S. JCO teams in the U.K sector (MND-NW.) In this sector, the conventional commanders themselves were very proactive in maintaining access to local and regional leaders.

<sup>21</sup> CJSOTF staff officers from the U.K., the Netherlands and France repeatedly commented on U.S. force protection measures being overly restrictive and detrimental to the U.S. units' ability to conduct peacekeeping.

<sup>22</sup> 70% was quoted from LTC Mark Rosengard, Deputy Commander, 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group which maintains the Special Forces Liaison Team.

<sup>23</sup>This quote was reported to me by CPT John Weidanz, SF, who was the Commander of the Special Operations Command and Control Element in MND-N during the first two months of MG Meigs' tour in Bosnia. BG Jeff Lambert had tasked me to analyze the SF requirements (JCO) for MG Meigs' division.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Cucolo, "Grunt Diplomacy: In the Beginning There Were Only Soldiers," Parameters, Vol. XXIX, (Spring 1999), 125-126.

<sup>25</sup>Mark R. Jacobson, "Tactical PSYOP Support to Task Force Eagle," Lessons From Bosnia: The IFOR Experience, Larry F. Wentz, ed., (Washington D.C.: DOD Command and Control Research Program, National Defense University, 1997), 200-204.

<sup>26</sup>Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG(A)), "JCO Methodology," Briefing slides, Fort Carson, Colorado: 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), January 1998. Framing the operating environment in terms of the "influence hierarchy" was fundamental to developing the JCO targeting process.

<sup>27</sup>Commander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), "JCO Training," Briefing slides, Fort Carson, Colorado: 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), July 1998. The categorizing schematic was developed by LTC Tom Rendall to describe how the JCO teams determine where their contacts are in the "influence hierarchy."

<sup>28</sup>Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), "JCO Methodology," Briefing slides, Fort Carson, Colorado: 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), January 1998. The JCO Targeting Methodology was developed by the

author in concert with SGM Ron Schuman. The schematic shown here was drafted on the evening of 25 December 1997.

<sup>29</sup>Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A), "JCO Methodology" Briefing. The JCO Targetting Cycle was adapted from the Intelligence cycle by MAJ Bob Waltemeyer, Executive Officer – Director, Forward Operations Base (FOB), 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG(A) during its Bosnia tour.

<sup>30</sup>Jacobson, 193.

<sup>31</sup>The Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) were developed by MAJ Waltemeyer, in collaboration with CPT Sean Doherty, FOB Intelligence Officer.

<sup>32</sup>Adams, 308-309.

<sup>33</sup>Henry H. Shelton, "A Word from the Chairman," Joint Force Quarterly, Spring 2000, 5.

<sup>34</sup>Adams, 305-306.



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