

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**DISCRETE OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF GLOBAL COUNTERINSURGENCY
OPERATIONS**

by

Commander Joseph G. Rehak
United States Navy

Commander Mark A. Stroh
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE 30 MAR 2007	2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project	3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2006 to 00-00-2007			
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Discrete Operations in Support of Global Counterinsurgency Operations		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER			
6. AUTHOR(S) Joseph Rehak		5d. PROJECT NUMBER			
		5e. TASK NUMBER			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5050		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER			
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)			
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)			
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 19	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Commander Joseph G. Rehak
TITLE: Discrete Operations In Support Of Global Counterinsurgency Operations
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 19 April 2007 WORD COUNT: 5360 PAGES: 19
KEY TERMS: Special Operations Forces, Counterinsurgency, Unconventional Warfare
Foreign Internal Defense, Theater Security Cooperation Plan
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Discrete counterinsurgency operations seek to deliver capable effect, yet minimize the amount of attention drawn to the United States. The classification of the Global War on Terror as a global counterinsurgency leads to the use of counterinsurgency principles. Foremost is the legitimacy of the local government. United States involvement in an operation can damage that legitimacy. Discrete operations can be used to bolster partners, foster relationships for future operations, and quietly develop the environment. Theories have tried to describe the global terrorist insurgency and history gives credence to discrete operations. United States strategy states that military forces should engage partners to help them aid in the global counterinsurgency. USSOCOM has provided a concept of operations that seeks to provide the forces of action to the strategy. These forces are specifically organized for discrete operations and have met with success already. Approaches to the various regions and situations around the globe require specific planning and consideration.

DISCRETE OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF GLOBAL COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

Teddy Roosevelt was quoted as saying, "Speak softly and carry a big stick, and you will go far." His foreign policy touted quiet diplomacy and a strong military. The global war on terror has been classified as a worldwide insurgency. As such, the tenants of a counterinsurgency operation should be applied. Counterinsurgency operations involve supporting the legitimacy of local governments, the limitation of support for the insurgency, and the elimination of insurgent leadership. All these aims must be achieved while conducting operations in a way that does not alienate the populace, and wins the hearts and minds of the people. The best way to do this may be to display limited or no United States involvement. It may be a success to have a significant terrorist leader apprehended by a coalition partner with discrete United States support, rather than have it done by the United States forces directly. In this way, military action or diplomacy may bring about the desired effect with little or no attention drawn to the United States of America. The United States should adopt a robust capability to conduct operations in a way that minimizes the significance of United States involvement in operations.

This paper will discuss operations that engage in the global counterinsurgency battle and seek to draw attention away from United States involvement. The global terrorism threat has been examined and modeled to help create clarity in the challenge at hand. Examples in United States history have identified discrete United States engagement can have positive effects on a counterinsurgency operation. National level, Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs, and Combatant Commander strategies identify counterinsurgency operations and the need for helping legitimate partners engage in these operations. United States Special Operations Command has adopted a posture that addresses the current world environment and presents a way ahead for providing and engaging with discrete forces. Each country and region of the world will present a unique environment in the global counterinsurgency. To accomplish this task of "speaking softly" while achieving the "big stick" effects necessary, the United States will need to man, train, equip, and continually engage with specialized forces that can do so.

Discrete operations would be a way that provides effect but diminishes negative response to United States involvement. This does not mean that the United States should decrement other capabilities necessary for accomplishing a wide array of missions, some critical in support to discrete operations. The U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency, recognizes that conventional forces "contribute to successful operations and to the vital effort to cut off and isolate insurgents." The United States must maintain a balanced array of military capability to conduct the wide multitude of missions that may arise. This paper does not advocate the

dismantling of the current capabilities of the armed forces, but it does encourage the buildup and regular operations of specific Special Operations Capabilities. The Global War on Terror (GWOT) requires a robust military capability able to conduct discrete operations.

Current Defense Environment

Today the world faces an upheaval from non-state organizations that take advantage of insurgent type operations on a global scale. Fundamental Islamic fascists have declared war on the West and the United States. This intention has been stated, developed into a credible threat, and executed with deliberate precision and measurable effect. This challenge to the United States from a non-state fascist organization uses a clandestine infrastructure to man, equip, and carry out its aggressive acts. As a response, the United States has launched the Global War on Terrorism. This Global War may be described as a war on the fascist insurgency.¹ The current counterinsurgency involves major combat operations, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, major training missions, such as the Philippines, Georgia, and Africa, and numerous smaller missions around the world.

The discrete approach to counterinsurgency operations can be better applied against a description of the insurgency. There have been attempts to define, classify, or model the global insurgency, and though one specific description may not address all aspects of the foe, the different perspectives provide individual insights to the whole. These insights define how to approach the counterinsurgency battle, where to apply force, what battlefield environment to develop, or what type of capability to employ. These descriptions address critical elements of an insurgency and in doing so encourage the use of discrete application of national power.

Some theorists attempt to look at the worldwide insurgency as a network. This can be beneficial by providing targets, describing the foe's coordination methods, and identifying a dispersed constituency. Historical counter-network operations do not predict wholesale success. Specific nodes or isolated portions of a network may be eliminated. Attacks on a network can direct enemy attention to maintaining the network and away from other operations. A wholly network approach may fall short in overall success.²

One approach is to look at the insurgency in traditional force on force fashion and address its center of gravity for attack. In this case, the insurgent infrastructure directs, supports, and sustains the execution of violence against local regimes and Western enemies. It constitutes the insurgencies center of gravity. To defeat the insurgency, the infrastructure must be attacked and destroyed. Because the infrastructure is frequently harder to find than combatants, and is less susceptible to technological intelligence gathering, direct attack will be challenging.³ Often

an infrastructure that is synonymous with the population of a country will react negatively and encourage more insurgent support. This force on force approach can be impossible in counterinsurgency operations.

The study of terrorism as a social phenomena does not fully appreciate the whole dynamic of the global insurgency either. There are some insights available as to why and how individuals socialize into terrorist groups and how terrorism is used as a tool for communication and the gathering of resources. These theories do not provide perspectives that can predict specific results, but when added to the whole perspective, may provide significant insight.⁴

One interesting theory supposes global terrorism as a super-organism. This theory describes the foe as a group of single cells that when threatened will sacrifice individually so as to support the one individual that may fly free to find fertile ground for new growth to occur. As with the other theories this model is not complete but hints toward possible approaches that may destroy the foe.⁵

The advocated discrete approach to counterinsurgency has application in some ways against all the models presented. The use of the network model allows planners to identify key nodes in leadership, communication, support, and other areas. These can be attacked in conjunction with other infrastructure. The center of gravity identified as the support infrastructure for terrorists presents a target. That target could be better defined by the social aspects of terrorism and the fertile ground needed by the super-organism. Looked at in that light, the support infrastructure may not need to be destroyed, but it may need to be changed into non-fertile ground. A non-socially deprived population, with responsive and legitimate government, may not support an embattled terrorist group. Here the application of discrete elements of national power, military and other, may have the most effect in destroying specific terrorist nodes and building support for legitimate local governments.

Historical Counterinsurgent and Discrete Operations

The United States has a history of military operations in a counterinsurgency from which to draw lessons and look for best practices. Although no example from history can effectively predict the future, similarities can be drawn and promising approaches can be suggested. During the Indian Wars of the 19th century, United States forces had to learn and adapt tactics. At the turn of the century during the Philippine Insurgency, United States forces achieved a counterinsurgency victory. Marine Corps counterinsurgency experience in Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua was summed up in their *Small Wars Manual*. Vietnam counterinsurgency operations were extensive and in many instances successful, providing

positive lessons. United States history of counterinsurgency can provide some lessons for today's Global War on Terror.

During the Indian Wars of the 19th century, the United States adapted tactics to the conflict and developed principles for fighting a counterinsurgency. Primary principles were, close civil military coordination, firm and fair governance, and reform of education and business. In addition, policies provided for limiting mistreatment and civilian casualties. Tactics included disrupting insurgent Indians by inserting friendly Indians into their groups. Other principles included dispersing the enemy, using mobility, and employing surprise. The lessons learned from the Indian Wars recognize the multifaceted approach necessary for counterinsurgency operations, but specifically disrupting the Indians from within gets at the type of operations that keep the United States from looking like an oppressor.⁶

During the Philippine Counterinsurgency from 1899 to 1902, the United States was able to successfully use small unit operations to put down the insurrection. Some of the tenants from that conflict were: to avoid large unit search and destroy missions, maximize use of indigenous forces, and win support with better hospitals, schools, and infrastructure. Legitimacy for the Filipino regime was supported by allowing former insurgents to form opposition political parties. Brigadier General John J. Pershing recognized the importance of the local culture. He tailored the force and tactics to the specific people of that area. The Philippine Counterinsurgency addresses a number of approaches needed in a counterinsurgency, but specifically recognizes that operations are not United States operations, but operations by locals, for the good of locals, through the actions of locals.⁷

The Marine Corps captured its lessons learned from counterinsurgency operations in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1940 *Small Wars Manual*, emphasizing that small wars are not fought with conventional methods. Operations in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua presented a vague operating area that placed a "keynote" on good relations with the population. Heavy-handed military action should be considered in light of the relations. United States forces are encouraged to use indigenous forces to establish security and give no slack to the insurgents. Other primary considerations focus on supporting the people rather than destruction, and achieving gains with as little use of force and loss of civilian life as possible. These lessons learned clearly point out the importance of indigenous forces, actions other than conventional, and the importance of good public relations during the operation.⁸

In Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams focused on pacification by partnering with the population to secure the countryside. 5th Special Forces Group members trained indigenous tribesmen into Civilian Irregular Defense Groups to conduct operations against the Viet Cong

and the North Vietnamese. The indigenous forces were tasked to: destroy insurgent infrastructure, provide local security, protect infrastructure, exploit indigenous intelligence nets, and provide civic support and propaganda against the insurgency. The indigenous forces were funded to stay relevant. This approach to counterinsurgency emphasizes the need to put a local face on the actions, support the local population, and maintain legitimacy of the local rule of law.⁹

The Phoenix program, as part of the Vietnam lessons learned, provides some insight as well. In conjunction with the empowering of the tribal countryside, the Phoenix program attacked the Viet Cong infrastructure, specifically targeting key insurgent leaders. These operations were kept discrete and in doing so achieved surprise, mobility, and supported legitimacy for the local government. Large scale operations could have had collateral damage that would have alienated some locals. Reckless destruction and the killing of suspected insurgents would not have supported the rule of law and government legitimacy. The Phoenix program recognized that apprehending insurgent leaders in accordance with the law went a long way for gaining local support for the legitimate government, and it also avoided the stigma of a state death squad. The program recognized the importance of retaining the support of the people in the attainment of the military objective.¹⁰

Historic examples may not provide the exact methods by which to deal with challenges today. The actions and accomplishments of those faced with similar problems may provide guidance for the current conflict. In all of the above examples, an overly heavy-handed approach was not advocated and indigenous actions were needed to support the counterinsurgency effort.

The Need for Discrete Operations to Support COIN

As stated in Counterinsurgency Field Manual 3-24, the nature of operations involves actions by the government of a contested country. This suggests that United States forces should not be in the limelight during counterinsurgency operations. The embattled government is called to select lines of operation, secure the populous in initial base areas, regain control to achieve stability, expand operations to secure and support the people, and be perceived as capable and legitimate. A heavy-handed United States military will do none of these things. These things can be done as a combined mission between a contested government and the United States, taking care that the contested government maintains legitimacy. The United States must facilitate the above actions. This will involve United States forces that can specifically train the contested government forces.

Support for a Counterinsurgency Military

The United States cannot fall into the trap of fighting the kind of war it wants to fight. Recognizing the Global War on Terrorism as a worldwide insurgency, the United States must move to develop a military that is robust in prosecuting that kind of warfare. Conventional forces are relevant in this security environment and well into the future. They constitute a deterrent, decisive resource for conventional warfare and a flexible kinetic delivery system when used in conjunction with discrete counterinsurgency forces. They are the teeth in the counterinsurgency military and critical against a militarized insurgency. The service support elements of conventional forces, from base support to intelligence, are critical to the success of discrete counterinsurgency forces. They provide the longevity, information, communication, and strength of the small unit. The special forces soldier is unique in this system in respect to his training, training ability, and experienced field craft. The United States has fought counterinsurgencies and conventional wars in the past. The United States has optimized its force for a global conventional and strategic confrontation in the Cold War. Now, the United States must man, train, equip, and operate globally to fight a counterinsurgency.

The words of Sir Robert Thompson recounting lessons learned from previous counterinsurgency operations reinforces that this global counterinsurgency will require a strategic view and strategic direction.

It is a persistently methodical approach and steady pressure which will gradually wear the insurgent down. The government must not allow itself to be diverted either by countermoves on the part of the insurgent or by the critics on its own side who will be seeking a simpler and quicker solution. There are no short-cuts and no gimmicks. (Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*)

The US has optimized its force for a global conventional and strategic confrontation in the Cold War. During the 80s buildup and the Cold War arms race, the services focused on conventional forces at the detriment of special forces. The Air Force ranked Special Operations Forces low on its list of priorities. The Navy focused on the 600-ship fleet. Army Special Forces capability “dwindled.”¹¹ This focus of effort may have been needed and, some would argue, is what helped win the Cold War. At that time, the world environment and the Reagan strategy supported a robust conventional force. Just as the strategy of the 80s was tailored to a specific world environment and supported by military preparation, in the current world environment, new strategies need to be developed and the military must respond.

Strategies and Action

The nation has assessed the world environment and challenges ahead, and identified our strengths and weaknesses. Direction has been given in the form of official statements, directives, and strategies.

The National Defense Strategy emphasizes the importance of influencing events before challenges become more dangerous and less manageable. It builds upon efforts in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review to develop an adaptable, global approach that acknowledges the limits of our intelligence, anticipates surprises, and positions us to handle strategic uncertainty. It recognizes that GWOT brings new opportunities to work with allies and partners to create conditions favorable for a secure international order. Here the United States must be careful in playing a leading role in the world; the attention leadership brings could become a vulnerability.¹²

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism identifies that action needs to be taken outside the United States. Specifically, the United States must attack terrorist capacity to operate and deny them any nation from which to launch terror. Both of these missions will entail significant interaction with allies and other coalition partners. The capability to conduct the types of operations that will attack and deny terrorists needs to be manifest in the military. It needs to also take a form that can be effective in all environments. The nation has recognized the unique world environment and current challenges and has directed focus and transformation to address them.¹³

The Department of Defense has responded to the call to arms with the Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support. This document recognizes the insurgency's view of the battlefield as being worldwide and responds with a layered defense that must operate forward. Not only are other United States agencies identified for collaboration, but international partners are specifically identified as part of the strategy. Partnering with other countries will require significant investment in time and manpower. Relationships need to be built and capabilities developed. It will be too late and more costly to engage the global insurgency once it has a foothold in a struggling country.¹⁴

The National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism, published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, specifically identifies operations that require significant investment in relationships with partner nations and operations against terrorists abroad. Training missions are required to bring partners self-policing capabilities. Continuous military operations are also called for to set the conditions for success of the United States or coalition. Senior military

leaders have identified what needs to be done, where it needs to be done, and when it needs to be done.¹⁵

The United States armed forces need to engage with countries worldwide on a continuous basis. This recognition of forces and mission was relayed to the combatant commanders in the National Military Strategy. The Global War on Terror is seen as being a long enduring circumstance. Over this enduring war, operations are expected to be of a long term nature as well. Planners are specifically directed to include War on Terror forces and operations in the Baseline Security Posture. This means that War on Terror operational costs are part of normal operating costs. This recognition only emphasizes the significant need to engage on a continuous basis.¹⁶

The direction has been given by civilian leadership and senior military leadership. The formulation of action falls to the level of the geographic Combatant Commanders and Special Operations Command (SOCOM). The activities discussed in the strategy directing documents must be carried out by the commanders who direct military forces. The services and SOCOM have a role to support the worldwide campaign in material, capabilities, and manning. Obviously, falling short in the force provider role will significantly restrict what the Combatant Commanders can accomplish.

The first tools the Combatant Commander has to support the national direction are the Theater Strategy, Posture Statements, and the Theater Security Cooperation Plan. Through these, the commanders gave direction, focused effort, and planned. The European Command identified that it would enable democracies to defeat terrorist extremists and identified early proactive Theater Security Cooperation engagement that can minimize future engagements. The Pacific Command pointed out the low cost benefit of Theater Security Cooperation and specifically addressed developing the professionalism of partner non-commissioned officers. This would build capability and strengthen a military partner's respect for human rights, significant in maintaining legitimacy. The Central Command Theater Security Cooperation plan specifically points out the Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program that builds global Counter-Terrorism expertise, but also increases indigenous capabilities. This and other exercises enhance partner capability to fight terrorism and extremism in their own borders. The Regional Combatant Commanders have integrated National Strategy directly into their Theater Security Cooperation plans and made an effort to reduce United States signature in operations.¹⁷

SOCOM Role as Lead in GWOT

United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) is the lead in prosecuting the Global War on Terror. As the lead, SOCOM has the unique position of executing a service-like function and that of a Combatant Commander.¹⁸ The Special Operations Command responded to the national strategic documents and the direction of military leadership with the Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2006. The Capstone Concept also addressed the findings in the Quadrennial Defense Review that called for special operations capabilities that will be engaged worldwide. The Capstone Concept lays out how SOCOM will carry out its functions. The document provides a detailed concept of operations that clearly defines the roles and missions of the command and its forces. This document should be the basis for some of the processes in prosecution of the Long War or the Global War on Terror.

SOCOM understands that an unconventional approach is necessary to not only defeat the current foe, but to eliminate the environment that similar enemies can exploit in the future. Special Operations Forces (SOF) must not fall back to methods used in previous conflicts. SOCOM will stay dynamic in the approach it takes to the current conflict. The Capstone Concept recognizes the strategic planning necessary to develop, train, equip, and employ SOF now and in future operations. It also presents a Concept of Operations that provides objectives and capabilities necessary to accomplish the objectives.¹⁹

The objectives include: leading the Global War on Terror, establishing a worldwide presence to shape the environment, and fielding a responsive, mission-focused force. This approach recognizes the challenge presented in a worldwide counterinsurgency operation and the direction provided by senior leadership. The worldwide presence provided by small SOF teams is the best choice for supporting partner capabilities.²⁰ It allows a minimal United States footprint or discrete presence, but also provides forces in remote areas that can gather information about the foe or be employed to eliminate specific critical targets. SOCOM supports higher directives by leading, fielding, and employing a special capability able to empower partners, engage terrorists, and remain small enough to keep attention from United States forces.

SOCOM has identified the capabilities necessary to achieve the objectives. The capabilities describe organization of expeditionary forces, the development of specific force capabilities, network capabilities, equipping the forces, and providing intelligence. With the other capabilities supporting the organization of the expeditionary capability, the Joint Expeditionary Special Operations Forces, SOCOM has addressed the way in which it will achieve the objectives of persistent SOF presence and quick reaction forces.²¹ Here SOCOM

has hit the requirement called for by leadership on the mark. The expeditionary forces will provide the organization from which to leverage the other capabilities. This force can be massaged to meet the specific requirements of a mission and shaped to provide the capabilities necessary for success. That could mean providing a small force on an extended or reoccurring basis. These would train partner forces in the conduct of counterinsurgency or counter terrorism operations. Here the effects could be highly successful by having partners that can conduct counterinsurgency and counter terrorism operations without significant United States involvement.

SOCOM forces are uniquely manned, trained, and equipped to fight a terrorist foe. Certain forces are trained to be experts in Direct Action missions, the kind of operations that have United States forces engaging the enemy. Unconventional Warfare and Foreign Internal Defense capabilities are best to help our allies develop their own forces to engage the enemy. Psychological operations, used in information warfare, can also be conducted by SOF. The effect of psychological operations on their own might bring about successes without military trainers involved or direct military action. SOF already have a strong base in the capabilities required to conduct discrete counterinsurgent operations.

SOCOM units have had success in the early stages of the GWOT in the Middle East and in other areas. Forces in Afghanistan worked alongside Northern Afghan Warlords to bring indigenous Afghan military power to bear on the Taliban. Forces in Iraq have trained Iraqi forces to be more effective in counterinsurgency operations. As the Iraq military takes more responsibility for enforcing the rule of its own law, it provides more legitimacy for the Iraqi government. Operations in the Middle East have shown the positive effect of SOF conducting discrete operations.²²

The recent and current operations in the South Pacific by Joint Special operations Task Force – Philippines can be looked at as a success on another front in the Global War on Terrorism. Al Qaeda linked organizations were identified as operating in the area. A plan was drawn up to address the security vacuum on the island and the pro-insurgent environment. Special Operations Forces were well trained to conduct special missions in support of the plan. Through the conduct of Special Operations, the Joint Special Operations Task Force has helped the Philippines re-establish control and degrade insurgent activity in the operating area.²³

Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines recognized that the political situation would not allow United States direct involvement in combat operations. The Task Force employed foreign internal defense, civil-military operations, and information operations to affect a successful outcome. These operations were characterized by local forces conducting the

missions with some United States military advisers or trainers involved. This can be looked at as a good example of the right amount of United States presence, and perceived presence, providing the desired effects. Had these forces operated in a way that was more forceful or showed a heavy military or political United States hand in the operation, the insurgents could have capitalized on chinks in the public relations armor.²⁴

The Role of Low Visibility Operations in Different Environments

The United States needs to be aware of the diverse nature of the terrorist insurgency and the global environment. The worldwide Islamic insurgency is at different stages in different locations. In Iraq there is guerrilla warfare. In Saudi Arabia there is a transition from latent to warfare. In Egypt there is propaganda, but rarely violence. Each country is different and will require a tailored approach for operations.²⁵ Just as the progression of the insurgency may differ by country, the political relationship the United States has with that country will also differ. The United States may work with allies, be challenged by competitors, or exploit ungoverned spaces. Every challenge presented by the global insurgency needs to be appreciated and responded to in respect to its specific characteristics.

Discrete operations do not constitute a cookie cutter answer to the global insurgency occurring from nation to nation and region to region. Each environment will require a specific application of the elements of national power. In conjunction with the other elements of national power, the military element must be applied carefully and thoughtfully. In some cases an overt display of military power may be what is needed to show a questioning ally that the United States fully and openly supports their efforts. In another case a fledgling and unstable ally may require a quiet United States military approach in order to gain support but maintain sovereign legitimacy.

The United States approach to supporting the Global War on Terror will take as many shapes as there are different countries and regions of the world. Just as partnership particulars will change from one ally to the next, the approach must take into consideration that an area of operation may be governed by a competitor or even be an area that has no effective governance. The Global War on Terror could provide an opportunity for new relationships to be built with what were once competitors. In a transition of relations such as that, an overt display of United States military interaction may not be the best course of action. A lighter approach may be required. In ungoverned spaces, allied or friendly neighbors to that space may be willing to partner with United States forces and conduct operations there. A quiet United States military approach may be what is necessary for this friend to maintain sovereign legitimacy and

avoid unpopular flaunting of the relationship. These examples only touch a couple of the possibilities that may be encountered.

Partners

In the case of a first world, long time ally, the United States might only help in a discrete way by providing information that will aid the ally, or access to technology that supports the ally's operations. In the case of a country that does not have significant capability, the United States may need to participate in long term interactions that foster relationships and build indigenous forces. The National Defense Strategy points out that, "we will help partners increase their capacity to defend themselves and collectively meet challenges to our common interests." Our ally's pledge of allegiance is not enough for the global counterinsurgency, and the United States should assess ally capability and where possible, help increase allies' capability. In the face of a threat that requires capability immediately, relationships still need to be strong to help coordinate and facilitate the welcome use of United States forces. Relationships need to be strong with all allies, no matter what level their capability, so that quick dialogue can occur in the face of impending danger.

Competitors

In the case of prosecuting the counterinsurgency in a competitor's country, the United States needs to tread carefully. Two options present themselves, use the challenge as an opportunity for better relations with the competitor or carry out operations adverse to the competitor. Conventional action may be an option in either case and discrete operations may also be an option. In fostering a new relationship, SOF could conduct Foreign Internal Defense in a limited way to help indigenous forces counter the insurgency. In an adverse way to the competitor, as with Afghan warlords, SOF forces could help mobilize local people as an aid to toppling a government that outright supports terrorism or does not respond to international responsibility.

Ungoverned Space

In a state that does not have the ability to enforce the rule of law, the international community is obligated to defend these states against use by terrorists.²⁶ The United States needs to be ready to operate in the ungoverned regions, but may not want to be heavy-handed militarily. This would be an opportunity to use discrete forces to bolster a partner near the contested region. Either through previous training, the partner would have the forces necessary, or through the use of small United States units working in conjunction with the

partner, a capable force could be brought to bear. The international community and the United States cannot turn away from the dangerous vacuum of ungoverned spaces.

Conclusion

Discrete military forces are critical for the global battle now ensuing. Models, history, and doctrine have all helped to draw light on the significant military force needed to fight the global terrorist insurgency. Strategies recognize the importance of supporting partners worldwide and not going the long war alone. United States Special Operations Command has adopted a posture that addresses the current world environment, and presents a way ahead for providing and engaging with discrete forces. Each country and region of the world must be approached as its own unique case. The United States needs to man, train, equip, and continually engage with specialized discrete forces that can do so.

The warfare of today and tomorrow needs to look significantly different to minimize the potential threats of adversary organizations. A full spectrum of capability to conduct actions of war must be maintained for use against conventional threats. These cannot always be resident in the United States arsenal. Discrete operations can help to bolster partner capabilities and foster relationships that leverage United States capability. The transnational aspect of the world economy and organizations requires a focus on getting potential adversaries by surprise, in a timely manner, and amidst the fluid world environment. This type of responsiveness requires forces widely dispersed and through discrete operations United States trained partners or United States forces can quietly swing the big stick of soft spoken security.

Endnotes

¹ Ken Tovo, "From the Ashes of the Phoenix: Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgency Operations," *Special Warfare* 20 (January-February 2007): 7.

² Robert G. Spulak, Jr. and Jessica Glick Turnley, "Theoretical Perspectives of Terrorist Enemies as Networks," *Joint Special Operations University Report 05-3* (October 2005): 2.

³ Tovo, 10.

⁴ Spulak and Turnley, 3.

⁵ John B. Alexander, "The Changing Nature of Warfare, the Factors Mediating Future Conflict, and Implications for SOF," *Joint Special Operations University Report 06-1* (April 2006): 32.

⁶ Robert M. Cassidy, "Winning the War of the Flea, Lessons from Guerilla Warfare," *Military Review* 84 (September-October 2004): 41.

⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Tovo, 8.

¹¹ David E Hill, Jr., *The Shaft of the Spear: US Special Operations Command, Funding Authority, and the Global War on Terrorism*, Strategy Research Project. (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2006), 2.

¹² U. S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy of The United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2005).

¹³ White House, *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington D.C.: White House, 2006).

¹⁴ U. S. Department of Defense, *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2005).

¹⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1 February 2006).

¹⁶ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2004, A Strategy for Today; A Vision for Tomorrow*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2004).

¹⁷ Statements made to the Senate Armed Services Committee from the Regional Commanders; James L Jones, U.S. European Command, 7 March 2006.; William J. Fallon, U.S. Pacific Command, 7 March 2006.; John P. Abizaid, U.S. Central Command, 16 March 2006.

¹⁸ Hill, 1.

¹⁹ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Capstone Concept for Special Operations*, (MacDill AFB: U.S. Special Operations Command, 2006), 5.

²⁰ Ibid., 9.

²¹ Ibid., 11.

²² Joseph D. Celeski, "Operationalizing COIN," *Joint Special Operations University Report 05-2*, (September 2005).

²³ William Eckert, "Defeating the Idea: Unconventional Warfare in the Southern Philippines," *Special Warfare* 19 (November-December 2006): 18.

²⁴ Ibid., 19.

²⁵ Tovo, 9.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy of The United States of America*.

