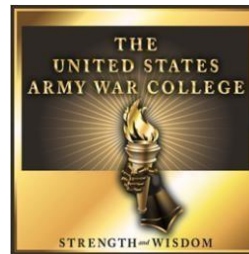# Fighting to Avoid Conflict: U.S. Counterterrorism Model in Northwest Africa

by

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14. ABSTRACT

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Fighting to Avoid Conflict: U.S. Counterterrorism Model in Northwest Africa

Africa is the battleground of the future.

—MG James Linder[1]

Predicting future threats is difficult because one cannot linearly project forward based on the events of the past. Nevertheless, at least in the near- to mid-term, the spread and atomization of violent extremism will persist as a strategic problem requiring potential United States action. The future strategic environment will tend toward separate, but interconnected and more mutually supporting threat franchises. The U.S. Government's desire will be to keep these threats local and contained. However, this multiplicity of threat, coupled with our desire to de-aggregate it, for a variety of reasons such as political acceptability, risk, limited resources, etc., necessitates a change in approach from theaters of war to something more indirect and sustainable.

Specifically, the United States will need to work through partners, instead of unilaterally. Thus, in his statement, MG Linder was not estimating the likelihood of Africa being the next theater of war. Rather, he was predicting how the Department of Defense would fight in the future – with and through partners, as exercised by SOF in Africa. As Leon Panetta, former U.S. Secretary of Defense, states, "the task of training, advising, and partnering with foreign military and security forces has moved from the periphery to become a critical skill set across our armed forces."[2] This is not a new insight, but it is also not without limitations as traditionally implemented.

Relevant to this discussion are U.S. Special Operations Forces (USSOF) operations in North and West Africa. These regions of Africa are strategic locations containing multiple weak states and several Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) that threaten U.S. persons and interests. They are not declared theaters of war. However,

every day, United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) directs numerous operations, exercises, and security cooperation activities in North and West Africa, all in conjunction with partners, many of which are aimed at countering violent extremist organizations (C-VEO). Most of these activities involve SOF.

For their part, SOF actively contain, disrupt, and degrade the threat through shaping operations. The most successful of these operations are where SOF persistently advise and assist partner forces. That SOF, where approved to engage, is successful is widely accepted.[3] How SOF conducts operations on the continent is less so.[4] To the degree that North and West Africa illustrate the future operating environment (clusters of weak states struggling to develop while simultaneously grappling with regional or transnational threats), this paper argues that the U.S. Government should consider using SOF in contested security environments to directly and persistently enable partner nation (PN) operations to promote regional stability goals globally.

First, this paper addresses key concepts and assumptions concerning the indirect approach in terms of security cooperation and shaping operations. Second, we discuss the strategic environment and threat in North Africa. From there, we address the USSOF enablement model of select partner forces in North and West Africa. Through an analysis of SOF supporting actions in North and West Africa, we present four specific insights for future potential enablement operations outside of areas of declared combat operations. First, enablement activities gain needed time for security cooperation activities such as institution building (a U.S. Army core competency) to achieve sustainable results. Second, results can be achieved within an acceptable National Security Council Staff time horizon. Third, embedding advisors at the tactical

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level accelerates strategic effects. Finally, this approach is cost effective, requires only a small footprint, and is relatively low risk, but *not* decisive by itself. Echoing Rupert Smith, proactively enabling partner forces to combat VEOs will not, by itself professionalize their defense establishments or facilitate good governance. Nevertheless, enablement forward in contested security environments does establish the requisite security conditions in which long-term diplomatic and military assistance may be decisive.[5]

The Strategic Indirect Approach

The strategic indirect approach, especially in Phase Zero, encompasses much more than solely military means.[6] In terms of using military power, the indirect approach can range from defense institution building to the tactical-level training and equipping of indigenous forces. These activities fall under the rubric of security cooperation.[7] Security cooperation's chief selling point is that it can be decisive, generates good will, and is both politically and physically low risk.

However, there are also down sides. Principally, security cooperation activities are time consuming and results are slow to evolve. Further, the United States conducts security cooperation activities only in permissive environments and away from contested areas. While this significantly lowers risk to U.S. forces by ensuring capacity building takes place in a secure environment, it does not directly aid the partner nation in combat against violent extremism or, more selfishly, provide the United States visibility into the true character of specific threats. This lack of situational awareness limits our ability to effectively exert and maintain pressure on the threat. Instead, the focus is on long-term partner nation institutional capacity building vice addressing the near-term threat. In the interim, without bringing sufficient pressure to bear, the enemy

adapts and metastasizes. The inverse can also happen; the host-nation government does not live up to its end of the bargain in readiness, which in turn allows the VEO threat to develop to the extent that they now have an over-match of capability. Thus, under security cooperation as traditionally implemented, the United States is entirely dependent on the *will* of the partner to effectively use the tools we provided. In other words, risk increases over time, often at a faster rate than the positive effects from the pure indirect approach.

Simply stated, the dilemma is both time and degree of risk. The poles of the spectrum are unilateral action, which is quick and discrete, but often politically high-risk, even within failed states, and long-term capacity building initiatives on the other, which carry low-risk but have an indefinite event horizon for effects. This dynamic creates a problem in terms of the threat. The question is how does one pressure VEOs in the near-term to buy time for the indirect approach to work? Rephrased, how does one achieve desired effects within a politically acceptable time horizon?

To be strategically successful under these circumstances one must not only address long-term, foundational problems, but also proactively address the current environment. The limits of security cooperation are, in large part, addressed by *shaping* operations (Phase 0 in defense joint doctrine). Phase 0 is an operational construct, separate and distinct, but complimentary with security cooperation activities.[8] Joint Publication 5-0 defines Phase 0 as the first step (or phase) in the continuum of military operations. Shaping activities are threat-focused. In the context of the VEO threat, Phase 0 activities are often conducted through, and with, a host nation, or multinational partners, to isolate the threat and prevent the spread of conflict.[9] As such, Phase 0

demands access, relationships, and situational awareness. Shaping activities are not necessarily the sole purview of SOF. However, the nature of the threat, as well as the unique attributes and capabilities required, often dictates SOF utilization.

As the name indicates, there is an aspect of shaping operations that anticipate, or prepare for, the potential of future conflict escalation. However, the goal is to achieve desired effects short of large-scale involvement by the United States in conflict.[10] It is also important to note that the avoidance of large-scale U.S. involvement does not equal *no* fighting by U.S. forces – limited application of combat power, whether unilaterally or in support of a partner, can help the United States achieve its strategic objectives. In addition, though the United States is conducting only shaping operations (Phase 0), our partners may be engaged in existential conflict (Phase 3). This dynamic shapes partner attitudes and perceptions of U.S. assistance accordingly.

Under these circumstances, exerting pressure on an adversary in the near-term, while simultaneously only working through a partner force or surrogate, requires the approval of direct, persistent engagement and enablement. SOF have, and are currently directly enabling and advising select partner forces to great effect in combat zones in both post-security agreement Iraq and in Afghanistan. Building the capacity and capability of the Iraqi Security Forces, coupled with our active advising and assisting of their operations, stabilized the security environment to the degree that policy makers felt that the United States could withdraw U.S. forces.[11] The United States is pursuing a similar approach in Afghanistan with the Afghan National Army and Police. United States efforts in Africa, where approved, benefit from this approach.

Description of Strategic Environment in North and West Africa

U.S. Government counterterrorism activities in North and West Africa are not new and have evolved significantly over the last decade and a half. Beginning with the African Crisis Response Initiative in the late 1990's, to the current multi-faceted, multi-year Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which integrated Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara as it's Department of Defense component, the U.S. Government has, and is working to create a sustainable, long-term, small footprint, and low signature solution to the violent extremist threat emanating from the region. Despite these on-going efforts, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, the Islamic State as well as their affiliates and adherents, scope, reach, influence, and nefarious activities continue to expand. This expansion presents a growing threat to U.S. persons and interests, both in Africa and in the United States. This disturbing trend led President Obama to conclude and articulate the need to coordinate complementary short- and long-term efforts at combatting extremism in North and West Africa. In light of the above strategic direction and using authorities granted in multiple U.S. Government coordinated strategic orders, USAFRICOM in 2012 focused its previous regional counter-terrorism (CT) efforts with Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA) as its implementer.[12][13]

It is important to recognize the U.S. interests in Africa as well as the intensity of those interests because strategy should be focused on shaping the strategic environment in ways that are favorable to the achievement of national ends. Using the interests as outlined in the 2015 United States National Security Strategy, many argue that all enduring U.S. interests are present in Africa.[14] However, looking globally, the intensity of these interests still falls below assessments of other regions for the United

States.[15] For example, there is great potential for expanded trade and commerce with Africa, but current levels of trade are only a fraction of that between the United States and Europe or Asia.[16] Similarly, threats from peer competitors such as Russia or China as well as terror threats emanating from the Middle East dwarf those from Africa today. The most pressing challenge in the near- to mid-term is the continent's dynamic and uncertain security environment and the concordant potential of the threat to spillover to western interests. Nevertheless, that U.S. interests fall short of vital intensity, only indicates the required U.S. strategy - one of economy of effort or force. Recognizing this, the United States is prioritizing its programs in Africa on improving the conditions within Africa in order to better provide for the security of the United States.

There is considerable academic literature on the threats emanating from North and West Africa. The intent is not to re-iterate this scholarship, but rather to highlight a few key points that are relevant to the scope of this paper. The scale of North and West Africa is vast. This is often commented on, but hard to internalize. By way of description, all of the continental United States can fit within North and West Africa. Perhaps, more appropriate when comparing counter-terrorism operations, all of Afghanistan can fit easily within just the country of Mali.

However, scale is not the only strategic factor present. The terrain is some of the harshest in the world specifically the stifling heat and aridness of the Sahara Desert, as well as the marginal soils of the Sahel. Given these environmental and geologic conditions, development has only penetrated the interior to a limited degree.[17] Lacking development and possessing limited means, the belt of countries between Mauritania to Chad are some of the poorest in the world.[18] Moreover, the lack of infrastructure,

combined with vast distances, retards the ability of these countries to secure their borders, or even to receive support (martial or humanitarian) from western countries.

Exacerbating these conditions are historic regional human movement patterns and smuggling routes; often dictated by terrain, or key features such as water sources, that transcend borders. VEOs fully exploit these same routes to move weapons, fighters, and cash. They also use them to meet, coordinate, refit, and raid knowing that North and West African states have limited ability to monitor or interdict activities taking place on these routes. The above conditions allow VEOs to not only shift locations, they also enable the various groups to leverage each other or inter-connect.

Relatively recent developments, such as the Arab Spring, the Libyan Uprising and its subsequent turmoil, the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion and subsequent Malian Coup, Nigerian fecklessness, and other North and West Africa instabilities illustrate how under-governed spaces provide a fertile environment for violent extremist organization development, penetration, and sustainability. Further supported by illicit activities, such as narcotic smuggling and kidnap for ransom,[19] AQIM, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State have capitalized on this regional instability to expand their ties across the continent.

As a result, North and West Africa extremist organizations with similar ideological goals are increasingly mutually supporting and interconnected. Additionally, the above regional- and national-centered issues, despite not being directly attributed to extremist activity, ensure that VEO gains across the Maghreb and Trans Sahel are often not aggressively challenged, or contested, by local governments who are either unable, or unwilling, to prevent the formation of a safe haven and extremist sanctuary. Given time,

VEOs will continue to entrench themselves within illicit networks as well as local society.[20] This greater inter-connectivity and entrenchment has, in the space of approximately five years, transformed AQIM, Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and their affiliates and adherents, from discrete and manageable individual problem sets for the United States on the continent, into an interconnected regional network necessitating persistent and synchronized military activities as part of a larger coherent and comprehensive U.S. Government regional response.

<center>Framework to Focus and Nest Counter-VEO Military Activities</center>

USAFRICOM, through SOCAFRICA, postures a low signature, small footprint SOF network across the Trans Sahara in response to the expanding VEO threat. The envisioned end state of SOF counter-VEO activities is two-fold: 1) VEOs and their associated networks are rendered ineffective, and 2) partner nations are capable of conducting CT operations to prevent their re-emergence. The command leverages persistent access to build PN CT capacity and, with approval, provides support to enable their operations. Simultaneously, SOCAFRICA focuses and synchronizes CT operations, exercises, and security cooperation activities across the region to ensure synergistic effect, integrating PN, coalition, and African Union actions against VEOs. Where United States and regional security interests are impacted, utilizing SOF's access, regional distribution, and fungible capabilities, SOCAFRICA supports, enables, and executes multilateral, bilateral, and unilateral action as directed. Restated, SOF puts emphasis on action through, and with, PNs while retaining the flexibility to execute U.S. unilateral action when necessary to protect U.S. interests.

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Theory to Practice – USSOF Enablement Model of African Partners

Numerous VEOs and destabilizing elements make up the threat network in North and West Africa. However, for simplicity, they can be thought of as four inter-related, but discrete bins: AQIM-Southern Zone, Ansar al-Dine, Tahwid Wal Jihad and al-Murabitun activities in Northern Mali; the historic illicit trafficking routes through the Air Mountains/Salvador Pass known colloquially as the Niger Corridor; Ansar al-Sharia, militia activities, and the Islamic State in Libya and Tunisia; and Boko Haram activities in Northern Nigeria and border regions of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon.[21]

Within each bin, SOF persistently work with partner nations to build the capacity of select units and support their operations, emphasizing the containment, disruption, and degradation of the VEO threat in Africa. Containment at the strategic level requires fundamental actions on the ground. Pushing SOF forward in contested security environments allows the United States to achieve the strategic effect of containing the VEO threat while taking into account the cultural characteristics in Africa.

In security assistance, it is often said that relationships and trust are everything. To the degree that this is true, it is especially true in post-colonial Africa where strong suspicions of western intentions still linger. Persistent presence allows SOF to build the relationships and trust, as well as the situational awareness, required to effectively build partner capability over time. Conversely, virtual presence is physical absence, which results in the absence of trust and a lack of strategic effectiveness. The dynamic of trust is not just necessary with African partners, but also with the respective U.S. country teams and other western multinational partners. All SOF operations, whether bi-lateral or regional, are conducted with full transparency to, and the approval of, the appropriate U.S. Ambassador. This ensures each SOF enabled individual operation supports the

long-term goals of the U.S. Embassy. It also builds confidence in SOF based on the maturity and discretion of SOF operators as observed over time. Similarly, the trust built over time with western multinational partners operating on the continent enables a candid dialogue on respective efforts that in turn promotes unity of effort and supporting effects.

Trust enabled Special-warfare engagements to counter violent extremist organizations in Africa follow three, non-sequential, but mutually supporting lines of effort: achievement and maintenance of access and situational awareness; enablement of partner force operations; and generation of partner capacity.[22] The first line of effort is a recognition of the necessity of access and placement. Access and placement are an essential first step to generating influence and awareness in contested security environments. Influence in turn enables the proper positioning of PN forces, and formulation of viable future options for U.S. decision-makers, whether at the country-team or national security staff level.

From access and distributed placement, the second line of effort has SOF focusing on operationally enabling select PN forces in multiple ways. Regionally, SOF operations aim to cut threat lines of communication between networked VEOs, then isolate and contain the separate elements by leveraging a full array of United States, PN, coalition, and African Union military capacities to disrupt, deny, and render ineffective the threat. The third line of effort emphasizes the development of sustainable capability at both the unit and enterprise levels. In order to gain unity of effort, SOCAFRICA, and its distributed command and control (C2) network, prioritizes and synchronizes all counter-VEO actions and activities.

With respect to the first line of operation, no operation should be conducted in a vacuum or solely by process; context is key. Access and placement cannot be built in time of crisis but must be present at the onset of a crisis. Access and placement require the development of relationships and trust, and as such, are gained over time through persistent engagement, not virtual presence. With access, SOF can observe, interpret, and report conditions, attitudes, and actions in critical security environments. This information provides decision-makers with the necessary situational awareness to include identifying exploitable opportunities.[23] None of this is possible through virtual presence.

Technical means of collection, such as Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), are pursued to characterize the environment and develop a critical base-line understanding of the enemy. However, as the former commander of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, MG Bowra, states,

> Human Intelligence remains the only platform capable of placing human judgment at the point of collection. The ability to gather impressions, discern intentions, and convey them to persons removed from the area is indispensable both in developing plans and in implementing actions designed to influence conditions and third-party actions.[24]

Following this logic, SOF reporting is not duplicative of, or competing with, but rather enhances, the larger collection enterprise. SOF activities provide valuable context and perspective to the Ambassador.[25] Further, that SOF is overtly in a country is recognition of an intersection of mutual interests between the host nation and the United States.

Stated differently, the use of SOF is a partner-centric, but threat-focused strategy. The key distinction between SOF activities versus other forms of security cooperation are their persistence and level, or type, of support. Ideally, SOF could engage across the continent with the intent to build partner capacity writ large.

However, given limited resources, prioritization is required. The intersection of priority and need is where the threat is metastasizing to the point where it may destabilize a region if left unattended. Restated, a host nation requires assistance and the United States wants to proactively address the threat. The overlap on a Venn diagram of interests between the United States and its African partners is the VEO threat.

Who the appropriate force for SOF to engage with is less clear. Pure preference points toward engaging with a like-unit (i.e., SOF-to-SOF engagement). However, preference breaks down in Africa, as designated SOF units are often marginalized due to the threat of a coup from a too specialized force, relegated to regime protection, have poor human rights records, or are simply not plugged into the networks of influence within the government. An example of the latter is the Nigerian Special Boat Service (NSBS). The NSBS is a well-trained unit but has limited applicability in the fight against Boko Haram because it is a Navy force and the Nigerian Army has operational lead in the interior. Thus, internal Nigerian military politics effectively limits the utility of the NSBS. The context and situational awareness provided by SOF can help navigate these situations.

The model used by SOF in Africa for determining the appropriate partner force is to locate a force that maintains the trust and linkage to their respective national command authority, has a good human rights record, and is closing with the VEO threat. The latter speaks to the PN's will. Will is critical in the fight against VEOs, as it is difficult to generate positive tactical and strategic effect in the near-term without it. In contrast, if a proposed partner force is not proactively engaging the threat or lacks the will to fight, that force would probably not be an appropriate candidate with which to

partner. The time to generate effects would be too long and further, if will is lacking, improvements in partner performance may not be sustainable without direct involvement by the United States.

A partner force's record and will are only a starting point. For activities to be effective, they must be nested with HN objectives and approved by their leadership. Once access and placement are achieved, and the appropriate partner is determined, engagement activities fall into multiple categories and are conducted in conjunction with, and with the concurrence of impacted country teams and host nations. All activities are nested with, and support both regional military and integrated country strategies, which results in a consistent U.S. effort.

The preferred model for SOF related activities in the second line of effort is to start with the partner force actively engaging the threat. SOF, within existing authorities, persistently advises and operationally enables the partner force beyond traditional train and equip in order to both assist in the current fight and build the partner's capability to conduct CT operations over the long-term. At its most benign, enablement is limited to information sharing and logistic assistance. For example, as LTC Beaurpere, former Commander of 3rd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group, writes, "the African Union Mission in Somalia receives indirect logistical support and information from the United States and other allies facilitating African-led operations against al-Shabaab."[26]

However, enablement often includes accompaniment and augmentation. This could take the form of operational advisement, intelligence sharing, targeting refinement, integration with air assets, and equipping, as well as any other U.S. capability that the partner may benefit from. Persistence is necessary for the building of

trust as well as continuity of operations and training. Active enablement is preferred as it incentivizes host nation action, focuses the partner force on the true threat, and provides a level of accountability for actions in the field. Additionally, there is an exponential level of situational awareness gained by accompaniment vice a pure up-stream approach to assistance. While SOF accompaniment does increase the risk of a VEO attacking an American service member, SOF position themselves to ensure contact is not expected or likely. Their role is to enable and advise the partner force, not directly engage the threat. The advantages to partner force efficacy can mitigate the risks of active enablement.

The third line of effort, developing sustainable capability at both the unit and enterprise levels, is a function of patient and persistent engagement. SOF persistent engagement is chiefly funded through 1200-series and Title 22 (TSCTP) CT programs, as well as newer mechanisms such as the Global Security Cooperation Fund and the Counter Terrorism Partnership Fund.[27] The particulars of each funding source is less important than the need for flexible fiscal authorities that support SOF's preventative strategic approach.

As Jim Thomas and Chris Dougherty of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments posits,

> The '1200 Series' authorities have helped SOF build partner capacity as part of a preventive CT strategy to deny safe haven to VEOs with minimal commitment of U.S. forces. They represent the significant shift that has taken place in security assistance since 9/11. Whereas previous authorities, such as [Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events], were suited for short-duration, military-to-military training exchanges to build general military capacity, the new 1200-series authorities are better suited to supporting long-term, persistent engagement.[28]

Working out from the persistently engaged unit, SOF seeks to put in place supporting mechanisms and enablers that directly support advisory assistance. An example of the former would be Operations and Intelligence (O&I) Fusion Cells at the most appropriate level, national-level or below. This cell, or mechanism, provides a forcing function for the host nation to overcome internal stovepipes to integrating operations and intelligence. Further, it provides a central location or mechanism for the United States and other coalition partners to share releasable intelligence such as ISR products. This is most often thought of as a crisis response activity, such as the Fusion Cell established by the United Kingdom, France, and the United States in response to the Chibok incident.[29] However, O&I cells are an inherent part of the SOF engagement model as they provide a linkage between the enabled HN operational unit and its legitimate chain of command. Also, these cells train higher-level officer functions necessary for future sustainability.

As stated above, low signature, small-footprint ISR allows critical understanding of the threat that can, under certain conditions, be shared with the host nation and/or allies. This, directly supports liaison as well as security assistance and operational CT-programs and incentivizes partner nations to take action, but is persistent enough to inform unilateral activities. ISR, as an activity, is broader than just Remotely Piloted Aircraft. Long dwell platforms are critically important assets given the extreme distances of North and West Africa, but they also have relatively large footprints with respect to required personnel (> 50) and they are relatively hard to shift in time of crisis or as the threat shifts. Medium-sized manned fixed wing platforms are also necessary, as they are small-footprint, low-visibility, and are flexible enough, with the necessary approvals

from the host nation and respective U.S. Country Teams, to shift focus in response to a threat.

It is clear that intelligence collection enables operations. Preparation of the Environment (PE) activities characterize the surroundings by developing the information, human, and physical infrastructure necessary to support contingencies and potential future activities. Assistance with sensitive site exploitation allows the host nation to better develop the threat picture and link their operations. However, intelligence collection also aids in the development of long-term sustainable structures. O&I cells must be fed information to be relevant and in turn, relevancy draws partners. O&I cells, if nurtured, can become major hubs for regional activity for all partner nations. This builds the relationships and common operating methods required to build the foundation of long-term capacity.

Supporting these persistent activities are indirect and non-lethal shaping operations. Informational and Civil Military operations positively influence vulnerable populations susceptible to VEO ideology, support activities in contested environments, and generate trust and confidence in the host nation government. Active coordination has integrated SOF activities and USAFRICOM's Operation Objective Voice information operations activities into a broader whole-of-government plan as well as with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on vulnerable community messaging.[30] Additionally, focused episodic engagements such as a JCET or a Counter Narco-Terrorism event, as well as annual multi-national, inter-operability CT exercises such as FLINTLOCK-series exercises build partner capability and capacity and can support persistent CT programs. Advancing CT military-to-military relationships with

relevant multinational partners augments and supports the above activities, leading to the establishment of real and long-term capacity and capability.

Applicability to Future CT Operations Outside of Declared Combat Areas

The principle argument for expanding the practice of embedding SOF with partner forces is that it connects two traditional policy options along the spectrum of action and, as a result, accelerates effects. These traditional options are unilateral efforts on one end, which are quick and discrete, but create ill will as well as violate sovereignty, and long-term capacity building initiatives on the other that carry low-risk, but possess an indefinite event horizon for effect.

SOF enablement moves the rheostat leftward for quicker effect, by linking the partner force to the multitude of capabilities and capacities that the U.S. Government can bring to bear on a problem. Stated differently, SOF enablement is a bridge between the two options that enables the United States to shift focus between the two while still having the capacity to do both simultaneously. While host nation forces are often tough, resilient, and possess expert knowledge of the environment, including its complex cultural sensitivities, they lack higher-level war fighting capabilities. SOF enablement provides these higher warfighting capabilities. USSOF enabling of HN forces with critical capabilities, such as intelligence assets, communications, and the expertise to employ these critical capabilities effectively, accelerates the operational effects of HN operations.

The benefit of accelerated effects should not be understated. Certainly, intelligence can be shared and activities synchronized at a higher level (which they should), but this does not often translate to near-term effects on the ground. Examples of accelerated effect are numerous. After the Tuareg rebellion, and AQIM and other's

subjugation of Northern Mali in 2012-2013, SOF's presence and relationships with

Chadian and French forces enabled their rapid response.[31] Similarly, after the Chibok

kidnapping and the surge in the prominence of Boko Haram in 2014, there was

considerable pressure for action. That SOF had small, but persistent presence forward

with Nigerien, Chadian, and Cameroonian forces gave the U.S. Government situational

awareness, as well as a mechanism to push appropriate support forward.[32] Additionally,

as SOCAFRICA had small, distributed headquarters forward, SOF was able to shift

assets quickly to augment the efforts of the larger U.S. Government Interdisciplinary

Advisory Team assisting the U.S. Embassy Abuja without a loss in overall operational

effectiveness.

The positive strategic and operational effect is not solely military in nature. For

example, SOF provides the necessary security to enable the co-location and projects of

USAID. Traditional security assistance does not offer the same opportunity. The model

of SOF forward in contested environments enables other elements of power to gain

access to areas where they can have the most benefit for U.S. interests. An illustration

of this would be the creation of zones of resilience in locations in danger of VEO

influence, such as the city of Diffa in southeast Niger where over 50,000 Nigerian

refugees have fled Boko Haram.[33]

An equal part of the equation of improved performance is the incentivization of

action and improved partner force confidence. SOF, by their presence and advisement,

provide both. When Boko Haram was threatening to cross the Komudugu Yobe River

and raid into southeastern Niger, the small *Forces Armées Nigériennes* (FAN) Garrison

at Diffa valiantly repulsed several Boko Haram suicide bomber attacks. Multinational

SOF, as part of the larger counter Boko Haram effort, assisted the FAN by advising on the defense of Diffa.[34] These actions set the conditions for Chadian Forces to pass through and secure the Lake Chad border areas.

Further, SOF, by their presence, focuses the partner force on the mutually appreciated threat versus other aims or activities that run counter to U.S. objectives or interests. Shared intelligence and imagery focuses the partner force to the areas of greatest impact against the threat. This can be as simple as providing Point of Origin locations of VEO mortar or rocket attacks. Combatting VEOs that employ such tactics can seem daunting in a desert or arid environment where suitable launch locations may be infinite. However, VEOs, like most people, conserve energy, and as such, rely on the same sighted-in locations. Knowing these locations allows the partner force to defend against and interdict these VEO cells.

SOF presence forward greatly improves situational awareness and understanding. This dynamic takes two forms. First, the familiarity and awareness of being forward in contested areas provides critical situational awareness at the tactical through strategic levels. Knowing the atmospherics, who are the key players and what are the ways to influence them, what are the critical needs of the populace, to what degree have VEOs penetrated the area, and what are their principle tactics, techniques, and procedures, are just some of the atmospherics that SOF may provide. All of these atmospherics provide critical context for strategic decision makers.

As Paul Norwood and Benjamin Jensen state in their article "Three Offsets for American Landpower Dominance",

> Because the United States is often the 'away team' in any given conflict,
> U.S. forces often lack an understanding of the dynamics of local

environments. This is something traditional satellite imagery and signals intercepts cannot fix. Furthermore, U.S. forces often respond to a crisis as opposed to pre-empting it, which compounds the information challenge. The adversary has the initiative and can dictate the terms and set conditions, enabling it to operate faster than coalition forces can react. The challenge is how to win the fight for information.[35]

Thus, the benefits of forward presence, embedded in PN Phase 3 operations, outweighs the risk of being engaged by the VEO.

Second, SOF provides situational awareness of the partner and their actions. By having SOF embed with partner forces, the United States can make better decisions on where to be, as well as where not to be if the PN does not live up to their end of the bargain. Principally, do PN forces protect the populace or exploit it; are they prone to human rights violations, are they focused on the VEO threat, or on political rivals; are the soldiers being properly paid and equipped by their chain of command; and where do they go when on an operation? SOF, by their presence, encourages proper action.[36]

Expanding the optic regionally, regionally inter-connected and enabled partner forces provide the most effective mechanism to integrate the best results in combatting VEOs at the strategic level *and* best results in PN performance at the tactical level. This is widely recognized and often regional collaboration mechanisms are established at the country-to-country level. In Africa, these include the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as more threat specific groupings, such as Nigeria and the bordering countries coalescing to counter Boko Haram. These mechanisms are vitally important, but struggle to gain effect and synchronize action in the near-term. This is where SOF is of great value.

Managing threats so as to keep them below a threshold requiring overt western engagement requires a degree of military effectiveness not easily achieved from diverse

and distributed multi-national forces. Left to their own devices, multi-national efforts to support and assist can easily become stove-piped, un-coordinated, and counter-productive, even with the establishment of regional collaboration mechanisms.[37] Military effectiveness necessitates synchronizing direction.

Many countries recognize the need for leadership and unity of effort, but may not have the capability or the trust of their regional partners to exercise it themselves. Just as the U.S. Army is the joint force integrator in the new Army Operating Concept, the combatant commands through SOF are often the multinational effort integrator.[38] USSOF contribute to the attainment of U.S. objectives indirectly by providing critical enablers and unique capabilities that permit effective integration of multinational military efforts. Of principal value to the multinational effort and host nation is the ability of U.S. forces to leverage our intelligence enterprise to target the threat, as well as our C2 structures to synchronize and cross-level understanding between partners.

Arraying operational SOF units against a problem set, including both enabling units within the focus country, as well as units from neighboring countries adjacent to the threat, provides a framework to connect and coordinate regional forces. The *entirety* of the force is synchronized and supported from a forward C2 headquarters. This distributed C2 enables the simultaneous execution of both outside-in and inside-out counter-VEO strategies.[39] As SOF presence on the ground is relatively small, this level of synchronization is well within the capability of this level of headquarters. In addition, decentralized operations are a core SOF competency, and as such, an O5/O6 headquarters can easily synchronize multiple geographically dispersed nodes.[40] Additionally, if added resources are required, the SOF command, in this case

SOCAFRICA, can shift resources within the theater, or request resources be shifted within the global network of inter-connected SOF operations.[41]

Finally, it should be noted that the time of initiation of enablement is in inverse relation to amount of support required to achieve operational and strategic effect. Stated differently, delay in action has an exponential effect on the amount of assets required and the increased risk of responding after a crisis has already developed. As the Vaudevillian Eddie Cantor stated "it takes 20 years to make an overnight success."[42]

This is not to say that SOF cannot generate immediate effect through enablement of a partner force. Nevertheless, the unknowns will be greater, the risk higher, options more limited, and the trial-and-error inherent in operations will play out under the intense media scrutiny that often accompanies a crisis. Conversely, approval of a persistent, small-footprint, low-visibility, and low-cost SOF presence forward after recognition of a threat, but prior to a crisis, increases options for action, informs our understanding of the problem, and supports our partner's efforts to secure themselves. All of which is achieved in an environment of much lower political risk as these activities are conducted *prior* to crisis. Additionally, if threats do rise to crisis levels, public confidence is increased when policymaker's decisions are informed by a nuanced situational understanding and have viable options available. This has been borne out in Africa, and can be replicated elsewhere.

Arguments against the Model

The principle argument against embedding SOF with partner forces is the fear of the militarization of foreign policy.[43] This concern is especially acute in Africa as the majority of U.S. missions are quite small. Even a relatively small U.S. military contingent can dwarf the size of the country team. Yet, USSOF efforts complement and support,

not compete against, U.S. Country Team efforts. In all but a few cases, SOF

engagement is the result of a long and deliberate adjudication process within the

interagency informed by the country team versus the more popular view of an overly

aggressive military enterprise acting independently.

When in country, SOF efforts provide critical situational awareness to the country

team, as well as help disrupt VEO activity. This buys time and space for U.S.

development and governance initiatives. An example of this is the value the United

States gains from our military relationship with the Cameroonian Rapid Response

Brigade (known by their French acronym BIR), considered by many to be one of the

best military units in the region. The United States has assisted the BIR since 2009. In

turn, our situational awareness of Boko Haram has been greatly enhanced.[44]

Additionally, it is the trust and relationships built over time by SOF with the

Cameroonian Armed Forces that facilitated the recent deployment of U.S. forces to

conduct airborne ISR operations against Boko Haram.[45]

The second argument is that SOF forward in contested security environments

risks making the situation worse. This is a variation on the "Observer Effect," action

taken regardless of scope, changes local conditions.[46] The base assumption in this

critique is that instability is a linear vector and that introduction of USSOF will change

the trend line negatively. Granted, this could be the case given the complexity of many

contested situations. The inverse could also be true as there is an inherent risk in

inaction. Rhetoric heralding individual solutions to complex problems is just that –

rhetoric. The reality is that no one perfect action will stabilize failing states or combat

regional threats. There are lots of ideas—ignore the problem, engage in selective

unilateral action, build a regional coalition, coerce local leaders, etc. — but no one can be sure how much any of these measures will actually effect the situation over time.

Policymakers should therefore approach specific complex national security problems as a research-and-development challenge, not as one-time policy decisions. Experimentation and learning are essential in the pursuit of policies to address the threat indirectly. Approval of a low visibility, small footprint SOF presence forward buys time for slower evolving policy options as well as provides the situational awareness necessary to inform other policy deliberations.

Conversely, a lack of presence forward significantly degrades situational awareness as the threat continues to metastasize. This accrues political and physical risk for the United States. Low information can inadvertently drive satisficing decisions based on concerns over risk, resulting in missed opportunities while costs for future interventions in the problem set continue to grow and become more unpalatable. Situational awareness is the key to sound policy decisions that effectively mitigate and balance risk given the complexity of the national security problems in the region.

Strategic upsets – or *ruptures stratégiques* – are a defining attribute of the modern security environment.[47] Stability can dissolve quickly and, as such, the ability to respond rapidly and appropriately will be more important than in the past for policy makers.[48] SOF activities, given their small scope, enables refinement of options through relatively low-cost trial-and-error (e.g., are we positioned optimally, are we engaged with the correct partner force, are our partner's intentions counter to our own, etc.). More importantly, by engaging early, SOF may be able to assist the host nation de-escalate, or degrade, a threat over time so as to contain it versus permitting it to regionalize.

Thus, early engagement by SOF potentially mitigates threats from growing until they appear in the American media cycle as a crisis.

Closely related to the fear of making a situation worse is the fear of the death of an American Soldier. This optic is less a concern for the individual well-being of discrete actors and more about whether media coverage of a killed SOF operator will catastrophically hamper or set back American foreign policy in a region. The raid to seize two of Mohamed Farrah Aidid's lieutenants in Mogadishu in early 1993 is often cited as example.[49] A more appropriate example is the reaction to the death of MSG Joshua Wheeler in Iraq in 2015. His actions in support of the partner force he was enabling were widely lauded, but more relevantly, his death did not meaningfully change the trajectory of the public debate on countering the Islamic State.[50]

The degree of risk of forward engagement, and the decision of whether or not to accept it, often directly correlates to a threat's degree of visibility within the American news cycle, its commensurate U.S. political sensitivity, or the fear that any action may exacerbate the already negative trajectory of the threat. Rephrased, the contentiousness of SOF utilization is often linked to the complexity and sensitivity of a particular issue. Ironically, these are the very same compelling arguments for early engagement. For example, persistent SOF engagement in Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, to include forward enablement over the last five years when North Africa was relatively below the national consciousness, allowed the United States to quickly respond to and contain the growing regional Boko Haram threat after the Chibok School Girls kidnapping on 14 April 2014. Similarly, SOF enablement of the African Union has led to

the removal, or arrest, of four of the top five International Criminal Court Lord's Resistance Army indictees.

The opposite is also true. With the deterioration of security in Libya, the United States withdrew its presence, to include SOF. This lowered near-term risk, but has retarded the United States ability to maintain situational awareness and relationships with key personalities. If at some point the United States chooses to engage the growing VEO threat in Libya, then action may initially be sub-optimal as U.S. forces re-orient to the environment, vet partner forces, and build relationships and supporting infrastructure.

Conclusion

Given the cost and inconclusiveness of the past ten years of war, U.S. policy makers seem more inclined to embrace options short of war (Phase 0) to gain influence and achieve their foreign policy goals. Often this will take the form of partner support. However, it does not necessitate that the pendulum swing back to traditional forms of engagement – that by themselves, may not be adequate for the demands for responsiveness and security in the modern age.

Given the 21st century security environment, traditional security cooperation efforts must be augmented by more proactive and direct advisory assistance efforts; similar to those conducted in formal theaters of war as well as the contested zones of Africa. USSOF, with their knowledge of local environments and dialects, must be allowed to persistently enable PN/HN forces forward in contested security environments. Episodic engagement does not facilitate the forging of the deep relationships with local actors crucial to gaining the requisite situational awareness or maintaining the constant pressure needed to disrupt and degrade threats to the United

States. A strategy of persistent low-level, small-footprint engagement, to include over-the-shoulder assistance in contested security environments, does not equal permanent presence. The desired resultant condition is one where enabled partner nation forces are developed to the point that they are capable of conducting CT operations on their own to prevent VEO re-emergence, or support a regional neighbor doing the same. It is this level of development that lays a foundation for successful long-term traditional security cooperation activities.

The best example of enabling action is the success of the Chadian *Groupement Speciale Anti-terroriste* (SATG) in Mali. In 2012, exploiting the Taureg rebellion, groups aligned with al-Qaida subjugated the northern half of Mali. Early January the following year, these groups pushed south to just North of the key city of Segou on the Niger River and were threatening the capital, Bamako. Later that month, the SATG, in a column of about 100 light vehicles, mostly Toyota Land Cruisers, departed Chad and transited across Niger to Mali to support the multi-national effort to restore Malian sovereignty.[51] Prior to leaving Chad, Brig. Gen. Abdraman Youssouf Mery, the SATG Commander, cautioned his officers. "We are going outside of our borders now. We are going to help the population, our fellow Africans, so we have to respect the laws and the rules of these foreign countries and respect human rights. Remember, we are going there to bring peace to our neighbors."[52]

Through relationships with the FAN built over time through TSCTP programs and Flintlock-series exercises, the SATG crossed the length of Niger (1,500 Km of Sahara Desert) with the support of the FAN with all of their vehicles in only three days. A feat not easily achieved, even for U.S. Forces. Once in Mali, the Chadian forces fought north

another 1,500 Km toward the VEO sanctuary along the mountainous border with Algeria.[53] By late February, the Chadians began clearing the Massif de Tigharghar, to include the Valley of Ametetai, a key terrorist stronghold.[54] The highpoint of the Chadian campaign came on 1 March when it was announced that the SATG had secured the VEO safe haven and killed Abou Zeid, a prominent AQIM Commander and a principle actor in the subjugation of Northern Mali, during the operations.[55] Afterwards, when their support of the defense of Mali was complete, they returned to Chad triumphant and elated that Africans could join together to help Africans outside of a Western paradigm. Afterwards, GEN Mery graciously credited the persistent support of SOF prior to the conflict as strongly contributing to the success of the SATG.[56]

The SATG example shows that enablement does work and effects can be achieved in the near-term. It also shows that U.S. forces forward were not necessary when a crisis emerged later. Simply stated, persistent advisory assistance mitigates risk, increases flexibility and achieves the desired conditions for U.S. and PN security by containing threats. In the final analysis, SOF's ability to unobtrusively enable PN operations that in turn prevent crises from escalating should be used outside theaters of war, where appropriate, to allow the United States to avoid direct armed conflict.[57] Stated differently, SOF should be allowed to fight with, and through, partners so that the United States may stay in Phase 0.

Endnotes

[1] Eliza Griswold, "Can General Linder's Special Operations Forces Stop the Next Terrorist Threat?" *New York Times Online*, June 13, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/magazine/can-general-linders-special-operations-forces-stop-the-next-terrorist-threat.html?_r=0 (accessed October 6, 2015).

² Leon E. Panetta, "Building Partnership in the 21st Century," public speech, U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, June 28, 2012, http://archive.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1691 (accessed December 15, 2015).

³ Jim Thomas and Chris Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2013), x.

⁴ Doctrinally, SOF have two critical capabilities: special warfare and surgical strike. When discussing the indirect approach, special warfare is the relevant concept. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 3-05 defines special warfare as "the execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment." U.S. Department of the Army, *Special Operations*, Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 3-05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, August 31, 2012), 1-5, http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp3_05.pdf (accessed September 30, 2015).

⁵ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008) 272-280. This paper defines *decisive* as achievement of a desired sustainable political outcome. To the degree that supported countries have the ability defend themselves absent assistance from the United States and their military is capable, honorable, and responsive to its elected officials, the desired political outcome is achieved. Addressing immediate threats by directly enabling partners buys time for institution capacity building, but is not decisive in and of itself at the strategic level.

⁶ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operational Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), III-38-44, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp5_0.pdf (accessed December 2, 2015). "A campaign is required whenever pursuit of a strategic objective is not attainable through a single major operation." Joint doctrine breaks down the natural cycle of a campaign into a flexible six-phase model to arrange combat and stability operations. The six phases of activity are Shaping (Phase 0), Deterrence, Seize the Initiative, Dominate, Stabilize, and Enable Civil Authority. "A phase can be characterized by the "focus" that is placed on it. Phases are distinct in time, space, and/or purpose from one another, but must be planned in support of each other and should represent a natural progression and subdivision of the campaign or operation. Each phase should have a set of starting conditions (that define the start of the phase) and ending conditions (that define the end of the phase). The ending conditions of one phase are the starting conditions for the next phase. Phases are necessarily linked and gain significance in the larger context of the campaign. … The theater operational design includes provision for related phases that may or may not be executed."

⁷ JP 1-02 defines security cooperation as "All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation." U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 8, 2010, as

amended trough January 15, 2016), 212, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf (accessed December 2, 2015).

[8] The line is blurry between *Security Cooperation* and S*haping* activities. Some argue that the two concepts are equal or that *Shaping* is a sub-set of the broader term of *Security Cooperation*. However, this paper argues that the difference between the terms is in the intent of the activity conducted. JP 5-0 dated 11 August 2011 supports both interpretations. U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operational Planning*, III-42.

[9] Ibid., III-41.

[10] The goal of the U.S. Military is always to achieve the strategic objective with the minimum use of force or effort. In the context of the continuum of operations discussed above, the U.S. Military seeks to avoid having to escalate from *shaping* activities to *deterrence* or decisive operations.

[11] Panetta, "Building Partnership in the 21st Century." The author would caveat the quote by positing that U.S. Forces working through and with the Iraqi Security Forces created the conditions (a relatively secure environment) for another element of national power (in this case diplomacy) to achieve a sustainable political settlement. That a sustainable political settlement was not reached and the subsequent Sunni revolt highlights the limits of a purely military approach.

[12] In late 2011, USAFRICOM modified its counter-terrorism strategy from one that was partner-centric to threat-centric. As presented in this paper, the change or re-focus was a recognition that the near-term threat had to be addressed *concurrent* with long-term institutional capacity building initiatives. Stated differently, in terms of intensity of interests, USAFRICOM recognized that the VEO threat was the "why", not the partner force. Intensity of interests drives choice. In the case of Africa, this dynamic affects when, where and with whom, and why we choose to partner with a particular actor based on the context of the situation and the resources available. This not because our African partners do not matter – it is because of the need to manage limited SOF resources for maximum effect.

[13] For simplicity and clarity, this paper uses the terms Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Counter-Violent Extremist Organizations (C-VEO) interchangeably. Within the military, C-VEO is the broader term incorporating both unilateral and multilateral actions whereas CT usually refers to just unilateral actions. However, this nuance may not familiar to a general reader. Further, C-VEO is unwieldy when read and the distinction between the two terms is not central to understanding the argument herein.

[14] See Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 2, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed February 12, 2016) for articulation of enduring National Interests. That these interests are at play in Africa, see John P. Banks, et al., *Top Five Reasons Africa Should Be a Priority for the United States* (Washington, DC: Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings, March 2013), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Reports/2013/04/africa-priority-united-states/04_africa_priority_united_states.pdf?la=en (accessed January 10, 2015). Additional sources include scholarly products supporting the 2014 United States Africa Leaders' Summit.

[15] Interests vary in intensity or prioritization and categorization of this variance (the terms used) can vary as well. For this paper, *Vital* refers to a situation or objective affecting an enduring interest that if not dealt with, will have severe consequences. See Alan G. Stolberg, "Crafting National Interests in the 21st Century," in *The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Vol. II: National Security Policy and Strategy,* 5th ed., ed. J. Boone Bartholomees (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2012), 19, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1110.pdf (accessed January 29, 2016). With respect to the intensity of American interests in Africa, see Laura R. Varhola and Thomas E. Sheperd, "Africa and the United States – A Military Perspective," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 35, no. 6 (January 2014): 325- 332, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10803920.2013.855546 (accessed February 22, 2016).

[16] Office of the United States Trade Representative, "Countries and Regions," https://ustr.gov/countries-regions (accessed March 3, 2016).

[17] April A. and Donald L. Gordon, *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2007), 2.

[18] World Bank, "GDP per Capita (Current US$)", http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?order=wbapi_data_value_2013+wbapi_data_value&sort=asc (accessed February 12, 2016).

[19] Wolfram Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region,* The Carnegie Papers (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2012), 1, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sahel_sahara.pdf (accessed February 12, 2016).

[20] Exemplary of penetrating society over time is the use by Mokhtar Belmokhtar of marrying into several tribes across the Sahara and Sahel in order to facilitate access and support. See Norman Cigar and Stephanie E. Kramer, *Al-Qaida after Ten Years of War: A Global Perspective of Successes, Failures, and Prospects* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 30, 2012), 136, https://books.google.com/books?id=fXiTYOM2BsgC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed February 12, 2016). Another example is the Islamic State penetration of Libyan society by leveraging Libyans who have fought with them in Syria and have recently returned. See Jon Lee Anderson, "ISIS Rises in Libya," *New Yorker Magazine Online,* August 4, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/isis-rises-in-libya (accessed February 12, 2016).

[21] David M. Rodriguez, *Statement of General David M. Rodriguez, USA, Commander, United States Africa Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee,* Posture Statement presented to the 114th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, March 26, 2015), 6, http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/Rodriguez_032615.pdf (accessed January 6, 2016). See also Dr. J. Peter Pham, "The Imminent Threat to the United States," Testimony before the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence of the House Committee on Homeland Security on Terrorism in Africa, 114th Cong., 1st sess., April 29, 2015, 6-8, http://docs.house.gov/meetings/HM/HM05/20150429/103382/HHRG-114-HM05-Wstate-PhamJ-20150429.pdf (accessed January 6, 2016).

[22] These lines of effort were formulated by RDML Losey in early 2012 as the model for SOF operations on the continent. Subsequent commanders have continued to bin activities similarly.

Their first publication was in Special Warfare Magazine. Guillaume (Will) Beaurpere, "Waging Special Warfare in Africa: The Case for Integrated Engagement," *Special Warfare Magazine* 26, no. 1 (January-March 2013): 38, https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/11420 (accessed December 15, 2015).

[23] Kenneth R. Bowra and Colonel William H. Harris Jr., "Regional Engagement: An ARSOF Approach to Future Theater Operations," *Special Operations Magazine* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 6, https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8272 (accessed December 15, 2015). Doctrinally, these activities would fall under the term Preparation of the Environment (PE). JP 3-05 defines PE as preparation for potential operations. "PE is conducted during the shape phase of an operation as well as for developing and preparing for the entry of forces and supporting agencies to resolve conflicts using either lethal or nonlethal actions." U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations,* Joint Publication 3-05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 16, 2014), II-4-5, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_05.pdf (accessed December 2, 2015).

[24] Ibid., 6.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Beaurpere, "Waging Special Warfare in Africa: The Case for Integrated Engagement," 39.

[27] Overtime, individual 1200-series funding sections have changed names, which can be confusing (e.g., what had previously been referred to as Section 1206, has now become Section 2282). For simplicity, most people still refer to persistent mechanisms as "1200-series authorities" vice listing out each individual frequently name-changing authority.

[28] Thomas and Dougherty, "Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces", 39.

[29] On 15 April 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped approximately 200 female students from the town of Chibok in Northeastern Nigeria. International condemnation of the incident was immediate and resulted in the United States sending an interdisciplinary U.S. government advisory team to Nigeria, at the request of the Nigerian government and in coordination with international partners, to provide technical and investigatory advice. See U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Under Secretary of State Sarah Sewall Meets Nigerian Officials in Abuja," May 13, 2014, http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/pr_05132014.html (accessed February 16, 2016).

[30] The White House, "FACT SHEET: Partnering to Counter Terrorism in Africa," August 6, 2014, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-partnering-counter-terrorism-africa (accessed December 9, 2015).

[31] One could argue that the U.S. failure in Mali was a direct result of our lack of visibility in what was going on in the Northeastern border regions and the poor condition of Malian units prior to them finding themselves in combat against the Tuareg and Ansar al-Dine. Directly embedding SOF forward in contested environments prior to 2012 would have given the United States the ability to observe the conditions in Northern Mali as well as support the Malian Armed Forces, potentially preventing the cascade of negative events. Contrastingly, SOF's long standing relationship with regional French forces allowed the United States to quickly support French offensive efforts in 2013.

[32] The Chibok incident also highlights the importance of HN *will*, or lack thereof in the case of Nigeria, in combatting VEOs given their lack of progress and lack of utilization of the assets that were sent.

[33] Griswold, "Can General Linder's Special Operations Forces Stop the Next Terrorist Threat?"

[34] Prior to Boko Haram's attacks on Diffa, a supporting western nation pulled its forces out of the area based on its assessment of risk to its own forces and the corresponding political risk. That the United States stayed and supported the FAN has resulted in a stronger relationship with Niger and has subsequently increased the mutual collaboration against the VEO threat.

[35] Paul Norwood and Benjamin Jensen, "Three Offsets for American Landpower Dominance," *War on the Rocks*, November 23, 2015, http://warontherocks.com/2015/11/three-offsets-for-american-landpower-dominance/ (accessed February 24, 2016).

[36] Exemplary of this is the French effort in Operation SERVAL where the Malian troops who had collapsed earlier in the face of Tuareg and Ansar-al-Dine, increased in effectiveness when *bien encadré* with French small unit leaders.

[37] An example of an ineffective attempt at regional security cooperation was the Algerian-led *Comité d'Etat-major Opérationnel Conjoint* (CEMOC) based in Tamanrasset. The CEMOC was "meant to coordinate counterterrorism operations between Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger." Trust was absent between partners. The sharing of intelligence and coordinated actions at borders did not happen. As a result, the CEMOC was not effective and subsequently discontinued. See Kal Ben Khalid, "Evolving Approaches in Algerian Security Cooperation," *CTC Sentinel*, June 29, 2015, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/evolving-approaches-in-algerian-security-cooperation (accessed March 4, 2016).

[38] U.S. Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October 1, 2014), 17, http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp525-3-1.pdf (accessed September 30, 2015).

[39] Illustrative of an outside-in and inside-out approach is the U.S. effort to counter Boko Haram. Boko Haram is both an internal threat to Nigeria and a regional destabilizer. As such, U.S. efforts are bifurcated between assistance to the Nigerian Army to disrupt and degrade Boko Haram (inside-out) and assistance to bordering states to contain Boko Haram (outside-in). Both efforts need to be synchronized for best effect. The regional positioning of SOF enables this coordination.

[40] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations,* Joint Publication 3-05, III-2.

[41] SOF may shift assets between regional combatant commands in support of counter-terrorism operations with the consent of the respective combatant commanders.

[42] BrainyQuote, "Eddie Cantor," 2016, http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/e/eddiecanto309843.html (accessed March 8, 2016).

[43] Ambassador Karl Eikenberry believes that "America's foreign policy has become excessively militarized over the past few decades" in his article. Karl Eikenberry, "The

Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy," *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy* 35, no. 1 (2013): 7, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10803920.2013.757952 (accessed February 28, 2016).

[44] Peter Pham, "U.S. Sending Troops to Cameroon to Monitor Boko Haram," *PBS News Hour*, October 16, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/u-s-sending-troops-cameroon-monitor-boko-haram/ (accessed February 21, 2016).

[45] The White House, "Letter from the President – War Powers Resolution Regarding Cameroon," October 14, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/10/14/letter-from-president-war-powers-resolution-cameroon (accessed February 21, 2015).

[46] "In science, the observer effect refers to changes that [an] act of observing has on the phenomenon being observed." For further elaboration, see Psychology Wiki, "Observer Effect," http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Observer_effect (accessed March 4, 2016).

[47] Francois Heisbourg, "A Surprising Little War: First Lesson of Mali," *Survival*, 55, no. 2 (April-May 2013): 12, https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2013-94b0/survival--global-politics-and-strategy-april-may-2013-b2cc/55-2-02-heisbourg-2805 (accessed February 24, 2016).

[48] Ibid.

[49] Benjamin Runkle, "The Lost Lessons of "Black Hawk Down"," *War on the Rocks*, October 3, 2013, http://warontherocks.com/2013/10/the-lost-lessons-of-black-hawk-down/ (accessed January 25, 2016). On 3 October 1993, a small USSOF contingent conducted a "raid to capture two lieutenants of Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed." During the conduct of the operation, two U.S. helicopters were shot down. As a result, the operation shifted to a recovery mission. Due to the increased time in the objective area, thousands of Aideed's forces were able to surround the U.S. force and frustrate their efforts to retrograde to a safer location. The battle lasted fourteen hours and resulted in eighteen American deaths, 84 wounded, and one service member in militia custody. More traumatically, images were broadcast globally of Somali militiamen dragging the remains of U.S. service members through the streets of Mogadishu. American forces were withdrawn from Somalia shortly thereafter. The events of October 1993 had a scoping effect on U.S. foreign policy for the remainder of the Clinton Administration. "A week after 'The Battle of Mogadishu,' the USS Harlan County withdrew from the Haitian harbor of Port-au-Prince due to an orchestrated riot by fewer than 200 hundred lightly armed demonstrators. The Clinton administration later declined to intervene to prevent repeated atrocities in Bosnia and genocide in Rwanda due to its experiences in Somalia."

[50] On 27 October 2015, only five days after MSG Josh Wheeler's death in Iraq, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the administration's intention to expand the U.S. military role in the campaign against the Islamic State. He stated, "we won't hold back from supporting capable partners in opportunistic attacks against ISIL, or conducting such missions directly, whether by strikes from the air or direct action on the ground. Last week's rescue operation was led by Iraqi Kurdish forces, with U.S. advisers in support. One of those U.S. accompanying advisors, Master Sergeant Joshua Wheeler, heroically acted to ensure the overall success of the mission and lost his life in the process. The death of any service member is a tragedy, and as I told his family and teammates this weekend, I offer my condolences to Master Sergeant Wheeler's loved ones for their loss.

While our mission in Iraq is to train, advise, and assist our Iraqi partners, in situations such as that operation – where we have actionable intelligence and a capable partner force – we want to support our partners." Source: Ash Carter, "Opening Statement on Counter-ISIL," http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/15-10-27-united-states-military-strategy-in-the-middle-east (accessed February 12, 2016).

[51] Africa Defense Forum, "Into the Terror Sanctuary: Chad's Intervention in Northern Mali Offers Lessons in Resolve and Sacrifice," *ADF Magazine,* September 2, 2014, http://adf-magazine.com/?p=1616 (accessed December 16, 2015).

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Andrew Ruszkiewicz, "Assistance Beyond Luck: Synchronizing Engagements in the Global SOF Network," in U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *2015 Special Operations Essays*, Joint Special Operations Report 15-2 (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: JSOU Press, 2015), 4, https://jsou.socom.mil/JSOU%20Publications/JSOU15-2Essays2015_final.pdf (accessed December 16, 2015). It should also be noted that Chadian forces as a whole were able to effectively integrate their operations with the French as part of SERVAL. It is this level of interoperability that adds power to enabled forces and helps build sustainable coalitions.

[57] Thomas and Dougherty, "Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces", xvii.