

USASOC 2035



COMMUNICATING THE ARSOF NARRATIVE
AND SETTING THE COURSE TO 2035



FROM THE COMMANDER

After more than 15 years of war, the operational effectiveness of Army Special Operations Forces remains without equal. However, the future operating environment will continue to evolve with highly adaptive state and non-state adversaries seeking to challenge the status quo and our national interests. The forms of conflict employed by adversaries in the future are expected to be hybrid in nature, blending conventional and irregular capabilities, and will more often challenge the stability of regions through indirect means.

Preventing or deterring hybrid conflict short of all-out war is demanding. It requires persistent forward engagement at points of vulnerability around the world. It requires operators to understand the political, cultural, and geographic complexities of austere operating environments and the unique challenges faced by our allies and partners. It also requires an advanced understanding of adversaries and how they are evolving in an effort to gain a position of advantage. In order to meet these requirements and to counter hybrid threats of the future, ARSOF must provide the nation with a portfolio of complementary capabilities enabled by institutional and operational agility.

USASOC 2035, like its forerunner *ARSOF 2022*, provides facts and details for use by members of the force when communicating the ARSOF narrative in engagements with joint force commanders, interagency partners, and other audiences worldwide. It also provides guidance for the further development of ARSOF institutional and operational capabilities needed to counter future threats across the spectrum of conflict, especially in gray zones between peace and overt war. *USASOC 2035* incorporates *ARSOF 2022* initiatives still in progress and builds upon those capabilities already established. It presents objectives for developing future capabilities that will move ARSOF from the force of today to the force of tomorrow.

Sine Pari – Without Equal

KENNETH E. TOVO

Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding



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PILLARS OF ARSOF CAPABILITY

ARSOF Strategic Value to the Nation: Four Pillars of Capability

For more than 60 years, ARSOF have served at the tip of the spear in defense of the nation. Today, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command represents a force of approximately 33,000 personnel and more than half of the nation's SOF. ARSOF elements consistently fill more than 60 percent of all U.S. SOF deployments worldwide with ARSOF Soldiers deployed in more than 70 countries on any given day of the year, delivering strategic value to the nation through four complementary capabilities — the *Pillars of ARSOF Capability*: an Indigenous Approach to Operations, Precision Targeting Operations, Developing Understanding and Wielding Influence, and Crisis Response. They are employed throughout the operational spectrum and across all campaign phases, including interagency- or Coalition-led campaigns and operations. Together, the Pillars of ARSOF Capability provide options to shape or prevent outcomes in support of our national interests. These capabilities, coupled with tailorable mission command nodes and scalable force packages that are low-signature and employ a small footprint, are particularly suited for employment in politically sensitive environments.



INDIGENOUS APPROACH

The indigenous approach is a means to address challenges to regional stability with and through populations and partner forces empowered by persistent ARSOF engagement. Through the approach, ARSOF leverage nascent capability within populations, transforming indigenous mass into combat power. Since World War II, ARSOF elements have amassed unique institutional and operational expertise in living among, training, advising, and fighting alongside people of foreign cultures, achieving effects with and through partner forces.

Today, ARSOF training pipelines, unlike any other in the Department of Defense, produce regionally oriented, culturally astute, and language-capable personnel who can apply an indigenous approach across the spectrum of conflict in permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments. The indigenous approach provides low-cost, high-impact options to address state and non-state threats, set conditions for conventional force success, and execute sensitive activities through minimal force commitment.



PRECISION TARGETING

Precision targeting operations involve direct action and counter-network activities enabled by SOF unique intelligence, targeting processes, and technology, such as ARSOF rotary wing capabilities and armed unmanned aerial systems. Precision targeting operations are employed against uniquely difficult target sets that may require operating in uncertain or hostile environments, careful and focused application of force, and significant intelligence and operational preparation. These operations are executed by highly trained, rapidly deployable, and scalable ARSOF personnel and formations that are employed to buy time and space for other operations to gain traction, as seen in counterinsurgency campaigns. They create precise physical and psychological effects and can be used to collapse threat networks through deliberate targeting of critical nodes, as demonstrated in counterterrorism campaigns. They also include sensitive activities in support of targeting processes and the execution of operations.

The four pillars are a new way to talk about ARSOF capabilities and represent a way to define ARSOF value using simple terminology. Military doctrine contains terms that are not universally known. There are times when doctrinal terms should be used; however, when conveying the strategic value of ARSOF capabilities to a wide range of audiences, we need to simplify the narrative. The four pillars represent a means by which every member of the force can explain ARSOF capabilities to those unfamiliar with how the force provides value to joint force commanders, interagency leaders, and the nation.

**Formally assessed and selected
ARSOF soldiers, trained to an
elite level, deliver strategic
value to the nation through four
complementary capabilities —
*The Pillars of ARSOF Capability***



UNDERSTAND & INFLUENCE

Developing understanding and wielding influence are essential aspects of the value ARSOF capabilities provide joint force commanders and the nation. The SOF network of personnel, assets, and international partnerships represents the means to obtain early understanding of emerging local, regional, and transregional threats and where opportunities exist for advancing U.S. objectives. The SOF network provides capabilities needed to influence outcomes in all campaign phases and especially in conflict short of overt war.

Engagement worldwide allows ARSOF to develop long-term partner nation relationships and an advanced understanding of complex environments. Operating in culturally and politically complex environments requires ARSOF personnel to be adept at interacting and coordinating with multiple agencies and partners. Institutional training and education programs unique to ARSOF, along with long-term regionally aligned employment, provide the expertise necessary to understand complex environments and the ability to influence people and circumstances.



CRISIS RESPONSE

Crisis response, provided through CONUS and OCONUS stationed alert forces and persistently deployed and dispersed units, provides national decision makers with agile, tailorable, and rapidly employable special operations formations necessary to respond to emergencies. These forces provide options to rescue people under threat, to recover sensitive materials such as weapons of mass destruction components, to provide humanitarian relief, or to address other short notice requirements.

ARSOF crisis response capabilities leverage the SOF network and partner-nation relationships established before crisis occurs. Persistent engagement develops relationships and the advanced understanding needed in times of crisis for ARSOF to effectively employ unilateral capabilities and those created during partner-force development. Through ARSOF crisis response, a small number of operators can rapidly address emergencies in an effort to enable host nation solutions to local or regional security challenges.

PILLARS OF ARSOF CAPABILITY



■ Geographic Location:

» Iraq

■ Dates:

» 2002 - 2003

■ Highlighted Pillars:

» Indigenous Approach
» Understand and Influence

■ Outcomes:

- » Under the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)-led Task Force Viking, 42 Special Forces ODAs applied an indigenous approach to operations with Peshmerga partner forces that:
 - Successfully fixed 13 Iraqi Army divisions (more than 100,000 in personnel strength) along a 350 kilometer front known as the Green Line.
 - Enabled Coalition success by preventing these Iraqi divisions from reinforcing the defense of Baghdad or attacking the Coalition invasion force, which was driving north from Kuwait.
 - Defeated approximately 700 Ansar Al-Islam extremists fortified in a mountainous region of Northeastern Iraq.
 - Captured the cities of Kirkuk and Mosul.
 - Transferred control of Kirkuk and Mosul to conventional Coalition Forces on April 15, 2003.

Task Force Viking N. Iraq 2002-2003

■ Details:

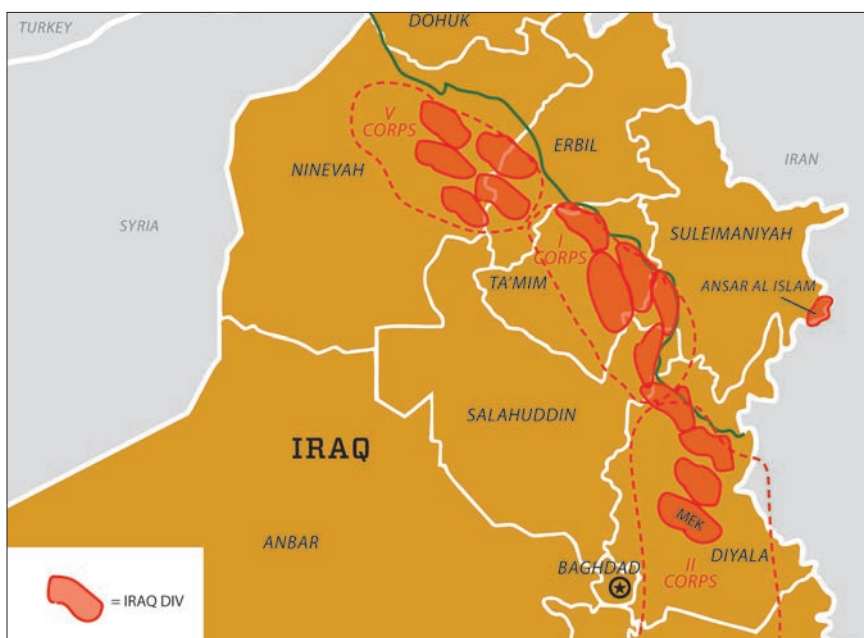
The invasion of Iraq began March 20, 2003; however, in November 2002 Army Special Forces teams began infiltrating Northern Iraq to partner with and organize approximately 52,000 Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Operating with and through Peshmerga forces, SFOD-As harassed, disrupted, and destroyed enemy units they faced, ultimately breaking through Iraqi defenses to seize all ground occupied by Iraqi Army divisions to their front. Task Force Viking Special Forces operators and their partner Peshmerga forces continued to advance against Iraqi forces until April 14 when they reached the outskirts of Baquba, north of Baghdad. Ultimately, Task Force Viking successfully fixed 13 Iraqi Army divisions, defeated 700 Ansar Al-Islam extremists, captured Kirkuk and Mosul, and set conditions for the success of the Coalition invasion.

■ Enemy Units Faced by TF Viking

- » 13 Iraqi Army divisions (2 Republican Guard divisions, 2 mechanized divisions, 1 Armored division, 8 Infantry divisions, and Fedayeen Saddam Militia).
- » Ansar Al-Islam - jihadist extremist group with ties to al-Qaeda; known to experiment with chemical and biological weapons.

■ TF Viking Personnel & Units:

- » TF Viking (5,200 person force):
 - 10th SFG (A) Headquarters (JSOTF-North)
 - 3 Special Forces Battalions
 - Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs elements
 - U.S. Air Force 352nd Special Operations Group elements
 - 173rd Airborne Brigade and U.S. Marine Corps 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (tasked to help JSOTF-N secure Kirkuk and Mosul)
- » TF Viking Partner Peshmerga Opposition Forces:
 - 30,000 Kurdish Democratic Party
 - 22,000 Patriotic Union of Kurdistan



SOJTF-OIR Syria/Iraq 2016-Present

■ Details:

In early 2016, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) stood up Special Operations Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve to synchronize the effects and activities of multiple subordinate commands in the fight against ISIS across Syria and Iraq. SOJTF-OIR serves as the SOF component headquarters of Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve and the central headquarters coordinating and directing all SOF train, advise, assist, and accompany operations with partner forces in Syria and Iraq.

SOJTF-OIR is achieving substantial gains against ISIS and has liberated cities and large swathes of territory with and through partner forces, employing an indigenous approach to operations. SOJTF-OIR advisors represent an economy-of-force effort that is achieving operational effects with victory after victory against a desperate and fractured transregional enemy. However, the key to long-term success against ISIS is preventing them from taking advantage of conditions favorable to their resurgence.

■ Outcomes:

- » Since the January 2016 stand-up of SOJTF-OIR through June 14, 2017, Coalition Forces conducted more than 12,000 air strikes in Syria and Iraq against ISIS.
- » In Syria, as of June 2017, SOJTF-OIR partner opposition forces liberated approximately 35,000 square kilometers of territory from ISIS, including cities such as Tabqah, Manbij, and Shaddadi.
- » In early and mid-2017, SOJTF-OIR partner forces dedicated efforts to seize Raqqa, Syria, the ISIS capital city, isolating much of the city in preparation for its liberation.
- » In Iraq, as of June 2017, Iraqi Security Forces and SOJTF-OIR advisors liberated approximately 70 cities, including Tikrit, Haditha, Ramadi, Fallujah, and Hit.
- » In early 2017, Iraqi Security Forces, with Coalition SOF support, successfully liberated Eastern Mosul and by June, freed most of Western Mosul.
- » These highlights demonstrate aspects of the SOJTF-OIR strategy against ISIS designed to defeat them militarily through committed and capable indigenous partner forces fighting to liberate their own people and lands.
- » Success of the indigenous approach to operations is seen in the many cities and thousands of people freed from ISIS control with and through partner forces, enabled by mature, highly trained, and dedicated SOF.



■ Geographic Location:

- » Syria & Iraq

■ Dates:

- » 2016 to present

■ Highlighted Pillars:

- » Indigenous Approach
- » Precision Targeting
- » Understand and Influence

■ Actions on the Ground:

- » SOJTF-OIR advisors on ground in Syria and Iraq provide battlefield presence, enhanced situational awareness, communications, and cutting-edge technology to vetted Syrian Opposition Forces and Iraqi Government efforts against ISIS.
- » SOF operators advise and assist battlefield commanders, provide intelligence and targeting support, and generate Coalition firepower against ISIS forces.
- » U.S. SOF have also begun training the Raqqa Internal Security Force to secure Raqqa, Syria after it is liberated.
- » In Syria, SOJTF OIR supports and enables vetted Syrian Opposition Forces including Syrian Democratic Forces (approximately 50,000 in strength).
- » In Iraq, SOJTF-OIR supports and enables Iraqi security forces, including:
 - The Iraqi Counterterrorism Service
 - The Federal Police
 - The Iraqi Emergency Response Division
 - Tribal forces

PILLARS OF ARSOF CAPABILITY

■ Geographic Location:

» Iraq

■ Dates:

» 2007

■ Highlighted Pillars:

- » Precision Targeting
- » Indigenous Approach
- » Understand and Influence

■ Actions on the Ground:

- » CJSOTF teams were not restricted by battlespace boundaries; they operated wherever critical enemy nodes were identified.
- » The application of an indigenous approach to operations enabled CJSOTF-AP forces and partnerships to cover 70 percent of populated cities and LOCs in Iraq, advancing the Coalition's understanding of threats and where opportunities were emerging to defeat a determined enemy.
- » CJSOTF-AP engaged local residents, tribes, city, and provincial government officials to gain influence.
- » CJSOTF-AP leveraged PAO, CA, and PSYOP for non-kinetic targeting/influence.

■ Units & Equipment:

- » 1 CJSOTF – SF Group Headquarters
- » 3 SOTFs
 - SOTF-North in Taji (SF Bn.)
 - SOTF-Central in Baghdad (SF Bn.)
 - SOTF-West in Al Fallujah (USN SEAL Bn. equivalent)
- » 7 AOBs
- » 38 SFOD-As
- » 3 Naval Special Warfare TUs
- » 6 SEAL Platoons
- » PSYOP and CA teams/personnel embedded from CJSOTF down to team levels
- » CJSOTF-AP trained, advised, & assisted:
 - 6 ISOF Battalions
 - 19 Iraqi Police Battalions
 - 39 Iraqi Army Battalions
 - 99 percent of operations were with and through Iraqi forces

CJSOTF-Arabian Peninsula

■ Details:

In 2006 and early 2007, the outcome of Operation Iraqi Freedom was largely in doubt as violence threatened stability throughout Iraq. Coalition casualties would peak in 2007 with 961 fatalities in Iraq, an increase from 872 in 2006. A Sunni insurgency in Central, Northern, and Western Iraq was in full swing as Shia militias, supported by Iran, attacked Coalition Forces and Iraqi officials across the south.

In an effort to address violent conditions across Iraq, General David Petraeus implemented an offensive campaign known as "The Surge." The campaign brought additional U.S. Army Brigade Combat Teams into Iraq with the focus of stemming the tide of violence. For the effort to gain traction, Army Special Operations Forces were called upon to provide breathing room for stability operations to take root.

■ U.S. SOF Response:

Between March and November 2007 the Special Forces led CJSOTF-AP executed partnered precision targeting operations and other activities with forces established and developed by ARSOF units. These actions provided time and space for long-term stability operations associated with The Surge to take effect. The activities, with and through partnered forces, and relationships with local citizens, influenced conditions across the country and set conditions necessary for The Surge to succeed.

■ Outcomes:

- » Partnered precision targeting operations executed by CJSOTF-AP teams suppressed insurgent cells and, in many cases, collapsed those cells by targeting critical nodes. Each partnered operation relieved pressure on conventional forces striving to establish long-term stability across Iraq.
- » Over the course of the 2007 deployment, CJSOTF-AP (a brigade-sized SOF element with countrywide reach):
 - Conducted 1,783 partnered direct-action operations
 - Captured 1,138 primary targets and 1,743 persons of interest
- » The CJSOTF indigenous approach strengthened The Surge and empowered local citizens to speak and act against the presence of foreign fighters within Western and Northern Iraq, giving rise to what would be known as the Sunni Awakening.
- » CJSOTF-AP teams also conducted 4,644 FID training events, averaging 15 partnered training events per day, and 3,011 tribal engagements during the 2007 deployment.
- » CJSOTF-AP execution of precision targeting operations and other activities with and through partner forces directly contributed to Coalition success, providing a strategic impact through tactical actions.



■ Geographic Location:

» Deployable worldwide

■ Dates:

» 2014 to present

■ Highlighted Pillar:

» Precision Targeting



ARSOF Gray Eagles

■ Details:

Precision targeting operations represent the actions of highly skilled operators executing direct action against specified targets, enabled by SOF intelligence, targeting processes, and technology. These operations are also enabled through the precision intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and kinetic strike capabilities of ARSOF Gray Eagle (MQ-1C) unmanned aerial systems.

The Army Special Operations Aviation Command currently has one company of Gray Eagles flown and maintained by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. ARSOF Gray Eagles originated from quick reaction companies stood up and stationed at Fort Huachuca. Deploying to multiple sites in Afghanistan since 2009, they supported SOF and conventional operations with armed overwatch, precision strike, and persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

In 2014, Co. E, 2nd Battalion, 160th SOAR was established at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The value of MQ-1Cs is demonstrated through the agility of the platform, supporting ISR and kinetic aspects of the fight against ISIS or other determined enemies worldwide.

■ Outcomes:

- » In 2014, E/2-160th SOAR assumed the MQ-1C mission in Afghanistan.
- » In 2015, MQ-1Cs were sent to Iraq in support SOF operations, providing immediate impact in the fight against ISIS.
- » In 2016, the unit executed more than 700 kinetic strikes in support of Iraqi security forces and Special Operations Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve advisor operations to liberate the territory, cities, and citizens of Iraq.
- » In 2016, MQ-1Cs were moved from Afghanistan to Cameroon in support of operations in the U.S. Africa Command area of operations.
- » USASOC will obtain a second Gray Eagle company in Fiscal Year 2018 with the Army transfer of a MQ-1C company from INSCOM to USASOC. The addition of a second Gray Eagle company will enable ARSOF to continue organic ISR and kinetic strike support to joint force commanders around the world without negative impact to personnel, dwell, or asset maintenance schedules.
- » ARSOAC is pursuing rapid deployment of a munition that increases MQ-1C lethality. Efforts include expediting acquisition and fielding of a MQ-1C compatible Lightweight Precision Munition, with the intent to provide greater capability for deployed commanders.



PILLARS OF ARSOF CAPABILITY



■ Geographic Location:

» Iraq, Maysan Province

■ Dates:

» May 9 - June 19 2008

■ Highlighted Pillars:

- » Understand & Influence
- » Indigenous Approach
- » Precision Targeting

■ Units & Equipment:

- » 2x SFOD-As
- » 1x Co Iraqi Special Operations Forces
- » 1x Co Iraqi Army
- » CJSOTF-AP PSYOP
- » Multiple armed Predator UAVs
- » ISR orbits
- » Entire CJSOAC fleet of MH-60, HH-60, MC-130 refueler, AC-130, and EW/SI platforms
- » Fixed wing A/C sorties (F-16s/F-15s)
- » MNC-I/CJSOTF IO & PAO support
- » JSTARS
- » Other CF and CJSOTF assets/enablers

Operation Yarborough

■ Details:

In early 2008, Jaysh Al-Mahdi-Special Groups (JAM-SG), supplied and trained by Iran, worked hard to undermine the stability of Southern Iraq through a clandestine campaign of subversion, intimidation, and assassination against Iraqi citizens and leaders. Since the April 2007 withdrawal of British forces from Maysan Province, JAM-SG dominated the capital city of Al Amarah and controlled the province. Iranian lethal aid flowed freely across the Iran-Iraq border into Al Amarah and moved deeper into Iraq from that city.

In late March, the Government of Iraq surprised Coalition leaders by suddenly shifting Iraqi national security focus to the port city of Al Basra in Southern Iraq, where the rule of law had ceased to exist. Prime Minister Maliki ordered an immediate assault by ISF to expel JAM and other militias controlling the city, initiating the Battle of Basra on March 25. Despite initial success, the poorly planned Iraqi assault stalled after 72 hours, requiring CJSOTF-AP Special Forces ODAs and their partner Iraqi forces to come to the aid of the ISF assault. The support turned the tide and by April 5 the battle was won.

The militia defeat in Al Basra left Al Amarah as the primary JAM-SG stronghold in Southern Iraq. The Coalition needed a plan that would head off a sudden charge by the Iraqi government into Maysan. The task fell to CJSOTF-AP and Army Special Forces, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs planners, who created a multi-component military deception campaign named Operation Yarborough. It would become the Multi-National Corps-Iraq main effort for May-June 2008 and the largest deception campaign conducted during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

■ Actions on the Ground:

- » Employed understanding of JAM-SG networks to psychologically disrupt them.
- » Pressured JAM-SG until offensive could begin in June to retake Al Amarah.
- » Three iterations of Yarborough were executed (May 9 – June 19, 2008).
- » First planned/executed by 5th SFG (May 2008) and then 10th SFG (June 2008).
- » Operation Yarborough campaign included:
 - Whisper campaign messaging designed to create fear of an imminent ISF attack
 - Multiple raids into Al Amarah by USSF/ISF (DA for psychological effects); supported by entire CJSOAC contingent
 - Multiple iterations of day or night snap tactical checkpoint operations in Maysan Province (vic. Al Amarah); air assault insertions by 160th SOAR or ground insertion by RG-33 armored vehicles
 - Zero collateral damage JDAM bomb drops in vacant areas surrounding Al Amarah
 - Fixed wing A/C shows of force/demonstrations over city
 - False infiltrations conducted by 160th SOAR MH-60s (vic. Al Amarah)
 - Predator Hellfire missile strikes against lethal threats
 - MISO radio broadcasts, leaflet drops, and messaging via multiple conduits

■ Outcomes:

- » Positioned MNF-I to prevent another Battle of Basra scenario and forced JAM militants into a state of constant alert, degrading their morale and combat power
- » Al Amarah clearing operations began June 19, 2008; June 19-22, Coalition and Iraqi forces seized 117 small arms caches, over 2100 mortar/artillery rounds, 873 mines, 347 RPGs, 267 rockets, 109 IEDs, 27 explosively formed projectiles, and captured over 60 JAM leaders – the city was taken without firing a shot.

Counter-Lord's Resistance Army

■ Details:

For almost two decades, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army abducted more than 60,000 children, killed tens of thousands of civilians, and caused the displacement of more than 2 million people in Northern Uganda. After moving from Uganda into Central Africa, the LRA continued to terrorize communities in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.

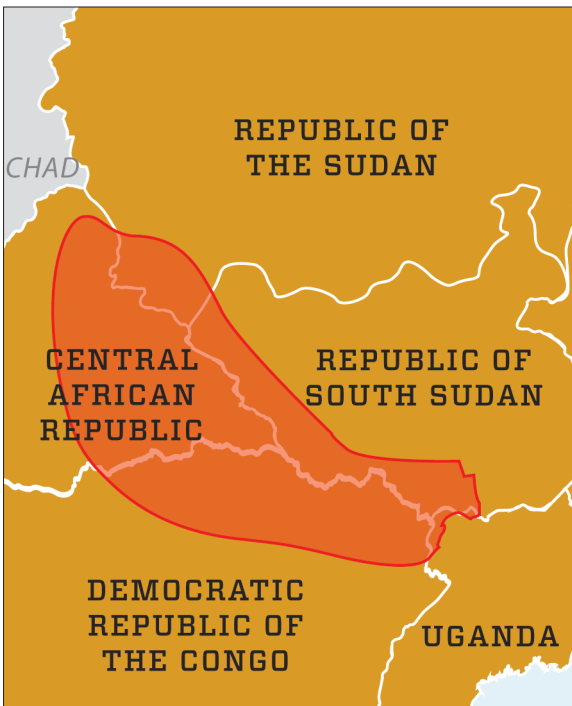
In response to the threat, Special Operations Command Forward-Central Africa executed Operation Observant Compass from 2011 to April 2017 to advise, assist, and accompany partner forces in the conduct of full spectrum CLRA combat operations across South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The U.S. Special Operations Command's determination to rid Central Africa of the LRA is reflected in the outstanding work of Military Information Support Teams, Special Forces ODAs, and Civil Affairs teams over six years. Critical to SOCFWD-Central Africa efforts to render the LRA incapable of threatening partner-nation forces, host-nation governments, and local civilians was the employment of ARSOF PSYOP Soldiers in Regional Military Information Support Teams.

■ Actions on the Ground:

- » ARSOF efforts in the mission spanned four countries and included countless ARSOF engagements with the local populace including medical and veterinarian civil-action and advise/assist programs that bolstered partner forces.
- » Regional Military Information Support Teams supporting this mission used an array of platforms such as aerial loudspeakers, leaflet drops, and key-leader engagements to counter LRA narratives while simultaneously bolstering partner-nation forces and protecting the local populace.
- » RMTs collaborated with non-governmental organizations to counter the LRA leading to the establishment of an early warning network for local villages to inform authorities of LRA activities. The network degraded LRA freedom of movement and stemmed LRA efforts to force abducted children into its ranks.
- » The mission contributed to populace protection, secured lines of communication, enabled border stability for multiple African countries, built competent partner forces, and developed strong partner relationships.

■ Outcomes:

- » The Operation Observant Compass MISO program was recognized in House Resolution 394 as one of the most effective MISO programs conducted by the Department of Defense.
- » Successfully attrited the LRA from 2,000 members to approximately 100.
- » Joseph Kony was rendered irrelevant on the world stage.
- » The RMTs developed and implemented multiple programs to counter LRA narratives, create division within the extremist group, and persuade members to defect.
- » In FY16, LRA defection increased 24 percent from the previous year with the cumulative number of defections reaching 331.
- » Approximately 95 percent reduction in civilians killed since 2010.
- » Approximately 70 percent drop in LRA abductions since 2010.
- » Five of six LRA leaders were KIA or turned over for trial at The Hague.
- » Mitigated regional instability on the borders of multiple African countries in an operational area the size of California.



■ Geographic Location:

- » Central Africa: Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan

■ Dates:

- » 2011 - 2017

■ Highlighted Pillars:

- » Understand & Influence
- » Indigenous Approach

■ Personnel & Units:

- » **ARSOF:** Multiple PSYOP RMTs, Special Forces ODAs, and Civil Affairs teams operating across Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.
- » **ARSOF Partner Forces:** Ugandan People's Defense Force, Sudan People's Liberation Army, Force Armees Centrafricaines, Forces Armees Democratique du Congo, Forces Regional Intervention.
- » **Partner NGOs:** Invisible Children; Catholic Relief Services; Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriations, Reintegration, Rehabilitation; Pathways to Peace; World Vision; Enough; and Resolve.



Mali Hotel Terrorist Attack 2015

■ Details:

The morning of Nov. 20, 2015, terrorists armed with AK-47s stormed the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, Mali, shooting anyone that came into view as the attackers entered the hotel. The hotel, located in an upscale neighborhood in Bamako, served as a hub for international guests. At the time of the shooting, the hotel was hosting diplomats working on a peace process for the country following a period of conflict with Islamic extremists involving UN and French forces in support of the Malian government.

The gunmen drove up to the hotel at the same time as a car with diplomatic plates and opened fire. Approximately 140 guests and 30 employees were in the hotel when the attack began, many of whom became hostages in the multi-hour siege that followed. At least 27 people were killed in the attack.

■ U.S. SOF Response:

U.S. Special Operations Forces played a key role in response to the terrorist attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel. An ARSOF team leader and two Marine Special Operations Command members working for SOCAFRICA responded immediately to a call for assistance from the U.S. Embassy in Bamako. They coordinated with SOCAFRICA for support and then accompanied the Embassy's Regional Security Officer to the hotel where they located and assisted extraction of Malian and American civilians, despite grenade and automatic weapon fire.

■ Actions on the Ground:

- » Units/Personnel stationed in Mali: ARSOF team leader and two MARSOC Marines assigned to SOCAFRICA who worked with U.S. Embassy and SOCAFRICA Headquarters personnel.
- » ARSOF team leader and MARSOC operators notified SOCAFRICA Headquarters personnel who shifted aviation assets from Niamey, Niger, for ISR coverage of the incident site and casualty evacuation via non-standard aviation aircraft.
- » SOCAFRICA forward-staged and increased the alert posture of the AFRICOM Crisis Response Force at Ramstein Air Force Base for on-order movement to Mali.
- » ARSOF operators, working with French SOF from Burkina Faso, accompanied the French force that deployed to Bamako and advised/accompanied the Malians and French on-site at the hotel.

■ Outcomes:

- » Actions taken by U.S. SOF operators at the time of the crisis resulted in the rescue and evacuation of 19 Malian and American civilians.
- » 27 civilians were killed in the hotel by terrorist gunmen before Malian security forces secured the scene. Many more would likely have been killed if not for the actions of a few U.S. SOF operators.
- » The U.S. Embassy reported that the rescue was possible because of the aid of U.S. SOF personnel and praised them for effective teamwork and interagency cooperation during the crisis.
- » These SOF operators successfully evacuated the civilians without sustaining any casualties.
- » The incident displays the high return on investment that the DoD gets from placing mature, experienced SOF operators forward in likely trouble spots; connecting them across a common network and providing command relationships that enable viable, rapid responses to crises.



■ Geographic Location:

- » Bamako, Mali, West Africa

■ Dates:

- » November 20, 2015

■ Highlighted Pillar:

- » Crisis Response



Bosnia Flood Response 2014

■ Details:

In 2014, the ARSOF Civil Military Support Element Bosnia and Herzegovina was called on to respond to devastating flooding that hit the country May 15-25. Bosnia and Serbia were hardest hit as the River Sava and its tributaries reached the highest level in more than 150 years, affecting more than 2.6 million people.

BiH is a complicated and dynamic environment. The national government is designed to give three opposing ethnicities (Serb, Croat, and Bosniak) a voice and position within the government, with the three ethnicities having representation in each of the national offices. Further, the country is divided into two entities and one district: The Federation of BiH, whose population is mostly composed of Bosniaks and ethnic Croats; the Republika of Srpska, which is primarily comprised of ethnic Serbs; and the Brcko District, which is less than 1 percent of the size and population of BiH.

The CMSE worked to enhance the reputation and utility of the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) in the eyes of the population. In response to the flooding, the team coordinated with the Republika of Srpska Civil Protection Forces and the AFBiH to put together an appropriate response.

NATO and EUFOR Althea forces also supported the AFBiH in the effort to save lives in Bosnia, while the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry deployed a small, high-risk rescue force to assist in Serbia. The Russian contingent was comprised of only 70 personnel, but its effect in the region caused many Bosnian Serbs to look toward Russia for help.

■ Actions on the Ground:

- » The CMSE countered the destabilizing effect of the Russian response by focusing on efforts to clean up overwhelming damage caused by the flood and landslides. The team also supported thousands of dislocated persons.
- » The ARSOF CMSE, European Union, UN, NATO, numerous non-governmental agencies, and the AFBiH began a "Build Back Better" campaign that included school refurbishment. During a school event, the team learned that many isolated mountain communities had not received support. These areas had ties to the Mujahedeen, making them a target of Islamic extremist recruitment efforts.
- » Working through the FBiH Ministries of Health, the UN's disaster response Health and Sanitation cluster, Austrian Forces Disaster Response Unit, and the U.S. Country Team, the CMSE:
 - Identified five villages that met criteria for support (proximity, susceptibility, location, addressable disaster-related issues).
 - By placing the AFBiH in front and using AFBiH aviation, the CMSE expanded its influence and that of the BiH national government, while building a system that facilitated CMSE recurring engagements with local powerbrokers in specific targeted areas.
 - Impacted five villages in the targeted area in less than two weeks using their skills and OPFUND. Two weeks later, the program spread through local leaders to 10 additional villages, reaching more than 25,000 people.
 - Joint project with UNDP and USAID spent \$40,000, reaching 80,000 people, increasing CMSE influence with international partners and expanding CMSE BiH operations into 13 communities in less than 30 days.

■ Geographic Location:

- » Bosnia and Herzegovina, Balkan Peninsula, Southeastern Europe

■ Dates:

- » May 15-25, 2014

■ Highlighted Pillars:

- » Crisis Response
- » Understand and Influence

■ Outcomes:

- » Contained or mitigated the effects of the disaster and prevented further loss of life or property.
- » Restored order in the immediate aftermath of the flood. Reestablished normalcy through reconstruction and rehabilitation shortly thereafter.
- » Gained access and exerted influence over a vulnerable population with the intent to legitimize an identified powerbroker and/or government.

ARSOF Highlights 2016-2017

ARSOF remain fully engaged worldwide, operating in small numbers with the autonomy, authorities, funding, and skills necessary to make a difference at the strategic level. The past year continued a trend of high operational tempo across the force as ARSOF elements were persistently engaged in all six Geographic Combatant Commands.



USAFRICOM

In the U.S. Africa Command, USASOC Soldiers enabled host-nation partners to counter violent extremist organizations in Somalia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, and other countries where the influence of ISIS ramped up hostilities by affiliated organizations like Boko Haram.

Special Forces Soldiers continue to man SOG-Forward-North/West Africa to synchronize joint SOF effects on behalf of Special Operations Command-Africa. Special Operations Command-Africa's top priorities also include support to humanitarian assistance/disaster response across the Continent and building the capacity of African partner nations to address their issues using a regional approach. The goal of the command is to take care of problems when they are small instead of allowing them to become larger issues.



USCENTCOM

In the U.S. Central Command area of operations, ARSOF operated with partner forces, to maintain pressure on insurgent networks in Afghanistan, enabling Afghan forces to retain control of key cities under threat from Taliban. Additionally, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) established Special Operations Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve as the SOF component headquarters of Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve and is synchronizing SOF activities and effects in the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The stand-up of SOJTF-OIR is impacting the fight as ARSOF Soldiers and other U.S. SOF members and their partners make gains, including the liberation of Tikrit, Haditha, Ramadi, Fallujah and many other cities and areas in Iraq. In Syria, SOJTF-OIR efforts have enabled opposition forces to seize key cities and more than 35,000 square kilometers of territory from ISIS.



USEUCOM

In the U.S. European Command area of operations, Special Forces, Psychological Operations, Civil Affairs Soldiers, and Army Special Operations aviators are countering Russian aggression through combined training with our European partners and allies. Atlantic Resolve is a demonstration of the U.S. government's commitment to collective security by strengthening alliances through military exercises and training events. These partnerships built SOF capabilities in countries like Ukraine, the Baltic States, and Uzbekistan, to name a few. The Special Forces establishment of Special Operations Command-Forward Eastern Europe synchronized those efforts in the region with tremendous impact on the counter-Russia line of effort and in countering the ISIS recruitment message in countries like Bosnia and Kosovo.

These missions represent a small percentage of those executed by ARSOF over the past year. They serve to amplify the fact that ARSOF is the only U.S. Special Operations Command formation to maintain a worldwide presence year round in all Geographic Combatant Command areas of responsibility.



USNORTHCOM

In U.S. Northern Command, Special Operations Command-North, in partnership with the interagency and regional SOF, synchronizes operations against terrorist networks, employing ARSOF to defend the homeland and respond to crisis. USASOC Soldiers in the U.S. Northern Command provided training, advice, and assistance to Mexican partner forces and enabled their operations against transregional criminal organizations through fusion cell activities.

SOCNORTH's Area of Responsibility encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles. It also includes the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.



USPACOM

In U.S. Pacific Command, Special Forces, Rangers, the Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs maintain an enduring presence throughout the theater to develop key relationships with vital U.S. partners. Recent engagements included partner force capability development in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Nepal. USASOC also maintains a Special Forces battalion forward stationed in theater, committed to Special Operations Command-Pacific and a rotational Special Forces company on the Korean Peninsula in support of Special Operations Command-Korea. USASOC's PACOM-focused elements are dedicated to indigenous partnerships and interagency coordination with key strategic allies.



USSOUTHCOM

In U.S. Southern Command, Special Forces, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs teams trained with host-nation forces in Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. These and other efforts in the region focused on achieving effects against the trafficking networks leading to the U.S. southern border.

In Colombia, ARSOF Soldiers enabled a host-nation mission that captured and destroyed drug making chemicals and labs valued in excess of \$28 million. Instability caused by drug traffickers, if left unchecked, can threaten hard-won stability in Colombia and elsewhere in the region. SOC-SOUTH is also responsible for the annual *Fuerzas Commando*, a special operations skills competition and senior leader seminar designed to promote military-to-military relationships, interoperability, and regional security.

ARSOF EFFECTS ACROSS THE JOINT CAMPAIGN PHASES

ARSOF capabilities are particularly suited for employment in the gray zone between peace and overt war; however, ARSOF capabilities are applicable to all phases of joint campaigns. A critical aspect of SOF-CF interdependence, interoperability, and integration (SOF-CF I3) is to ensure conventional and inter-agency partners understand how ARSOF capabilities can open windows of opportunity for their success in joint campaigns. Achieving this goal requires members of the force to accurately describe ARSOF effects across all joint campaign phases.

ARSOF elements represent a multi-spectrum force, focused on the human terrain, and optimized for

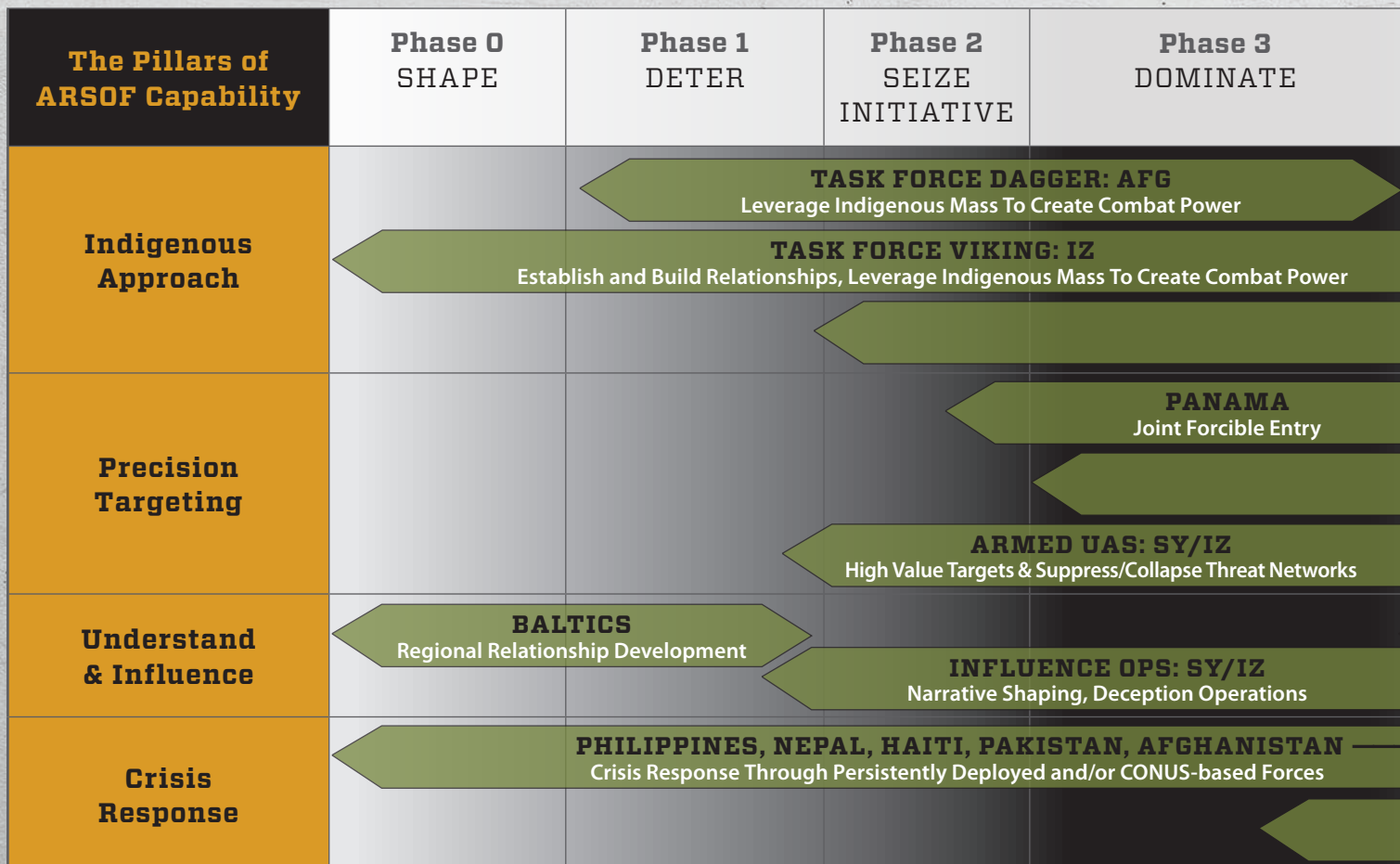
competition in the gray zone; however, SOF capabilities in gray zones and later phases of joint campaigns are largely dependent on developing relationships and an advanced understanding of complex environmental dynamics before Phase 3 conflict occurs.

The current joint campaign construct, represented by sequential phases, is linear in nature. As a result, campaign phasing tends to drive attention toward the generation of physical and lethal effects on a road to war in Phase 3. In actuality, these phases are not independent of one another or compartmented. Conditions in an operating environment are often complex, with activities for various phases bleeding into other

phases without a clearly defined beginning or ending.

ARSOF capabilities available in Phase 3 require preparatory efforts in earlier phases. These capabilities include leveraging indigenous mass, transforming it into combat power that can be employed in support of major combat operations. Providing a trained and capable partner force for Phase 3 operations requires investment of time, ARSOF personnel, and resources in early phases. It is within peacetime or gray zone environments that ARSOF develop relationships that lead to an advanced understanding of trends, emerging threats, social, and political friction points, and cultural complexities in an

ARSOF Through the Joint Campaign Phases



operating environment. Such knowledge becomes an enabling factor for conventional force commanders as conditions escalate toward overt war.

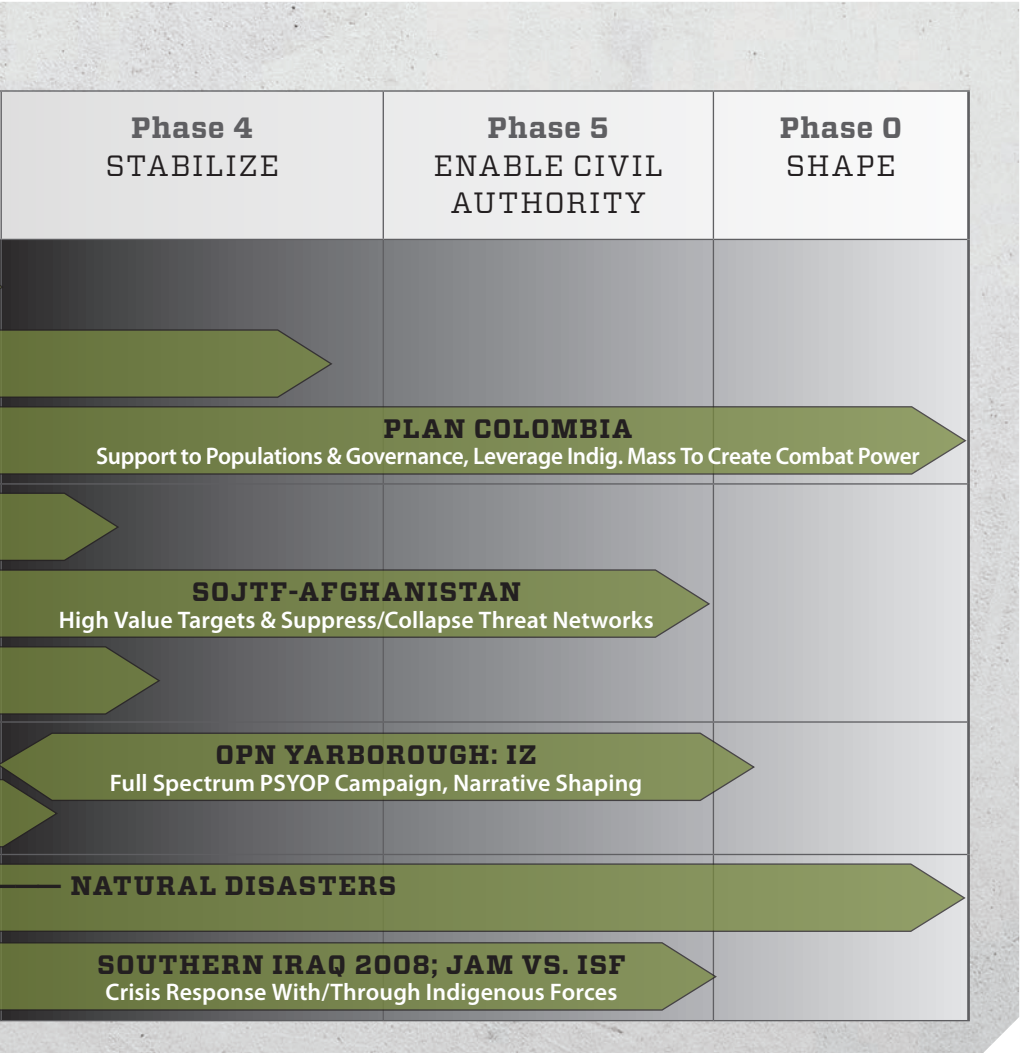
A few examples include efforts to train, equip, and assist with organizing indigenous forces to resist an occupation or delay enemy consolidation of gains. These efforts create the ability to synchronize resistance activities with joint force commanders in a way that opens windows of opportunity for conventional forces. Leveraging indigenous mass and transforming it into combat power provides the ability to attack enemy C2 nodes, air defense systems, and lines of communication with and through partner forces. Preparation efforts in early phases of joint campaigns

also enable mobilization of populations to act through demonstrations, work force strikes, social discord, and reporting on enemy activities.

ARSOF engagement and human interaction in early phases provide situational understanding of key local personalities of influence and a means to gain information, enabling intelligence and targeting processes. Building partner capacity in counterterrorism and police forces in Phase 0 leads to establishment of security forces capable of assisting with rear area and population security, targeting enemy forces, and providing counter-intelligence support to mitigate subversion and sabotage in Phase 3. Additionally, understanding of human terrain in early phases can help promote

national resilience, counter enemy narratives, and influence populations to create cognitive effects and multiple dilemmas for the enemy.

During Phases 0-2, the joint force conducts multi-domain activities to expand maneuver, generating both physical and cognitive effects in order to deter adversaries, assure allies, and deny or defeat enemies. Persistent SOF activities in Phases 0-2 can reduce the quantity and intensity of conflicts that reach Phase 3 combat operations, allowing the joint force to concentrate efforts. The key is employing SOF early so capability options are available in Phase 3 that can be leveraged to open windows of opportunity for joint force success in high intensity conflict.



Examples of ARSOF effects across joint campaign phases

Following are operational examples of ARSOF effects across joint campaign phases. These examples demonstrate that the four Pillars of ARSOF Capability are complementary, creating a layered portfolio of tactical capabilities that can have strategic effects in support of joint force commanders and their campaigns.



Photos from top: SF Soldiers blend in with their Afghan counterparts in Afghanistan while calling for close air support in 2001. U.S. Army photo; Soldiers from the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) comprised Task Force Dagger in the opening days of Operation Enduring Freedom. Known as the Horse Soldiers, the teams rode horseback in Afghanistan while working with factions of the Northern Alliance. U.S. Army photo; Members of An Nasiriyah ISWAT prepare for a partnered direct action raid with their SF advisors in 2008. U.S. Army photo

TASK FORCE DAGGER: AFGHANISTAN

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. homeland, Army Special Operations Forces were called upon to deliver the nation's first response. In October 2001, a small number of Special Forces Soldiers from 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), serving in Task Force Dagger infiltrated Afghanistan aboard 160th Special Operations Aviation aircraft from Karshi-Khanabad Airbase in Uzbekistan. Once on the ground, they applied an indigenous approach to partner with the Northern Alliance through Phases 1-3 of the joint campaign. Their efforts leveraged and organized the indigenous mass of multiple factions, enabling employment of partner force combat power against the Taliban. Through that partnership, Special Forces Soldiers developed an advanced understanding of the environment and the enemy, enabling efforts to influence conditions and outcomes. The Northern Alliance and their SF advisors, along with interagency partners, the 75th Ranger Regiment, and other SOF elements, overthrew the Taliban government, effectively clearing the way for an interim government to be sworn into office late December 2001.

CJSOTF - ARABIAN PENINSULA: IRAQ

In Iraq, the indigenous approach was employed by Special Forces, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs units to enable Coalition stability operations during Phases 4-5 of the joint campaign (2003-2011); an effort that was enabled by 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and 75th Ranger Regiment operations. Under Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula, Special Forces units built, developed, and advised more than 20 Iraqi Special Operations Forces and Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics battalions. Special Forces executed thousands of partnered direct action operations with these units to suppress insurgent cells. Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs Soldiers worked with and through these and other partner forces, as well as the local population, to understand and influence conditions in support of the Coalition stability mission. Together, these efforts bought time and space for Coalition force stability operations to gain traction and achieve long-term effects. The ARSOF indigenous approach in Phases 4-5 also established enduring Iraqi units of action that now spearhead the Government of Iraq's fight against ISIS in Phase 3; a fight that is enabled by ARSOF and joint SOF advisors.

The long-term and often repeat rotational application of ARSOF in Iraq developed understanding of the complex cultural, political, and adversarial dynamics at play within the operating environment. Advanced understanding enabled ARSOF to wield influence within cities, rural communities, and over enemies. Relationships developed over years of commitment in Iraq provided ARSOF with the contextual understanding needed to respond with and through partner forces to crisis when hostile entities took hostages, attacked Iraqi Security Forces, or attempted to take control of city centers, as seen when the Jaysh Al-Mahdi militia attempted to seize cities across southern Iraq in 2008.

These examples highlight actions executed by USASOC members that made a strategic difference in support of joint campaigns and efforts to address crisis. They are a few of the many examples of how ARSOF operators employ the four Pillars of ARSOF Capability in complex environments.

ZAMBOANGA CRISIS: PHILIPPINES

U.S. Army Special Operations Forces have maintained an enduring relationship with the Philippine Armed Forces since 2002, building partner capacity to address threats to stability and the established government. In September 2013, the long-term partnership between ARSOF, primarily 1st Special Forces Group (A), and Filipino forces was put to the test in an environment characterized as Phase 5 of the joint campaign construct.

On the morning of Sept. 8, 2013, the town square in Zamboanga City was engulfed in a 28-day crisis that left more than 100,000 people homeless and 180 insurgents dead. The Sulu State Revolutionary Command attacked the city to disrupt peace talks concerning a long-standing dispute over representation of the Muslim population in the government. During the crisis, more than 200 people were taken hostage.

Within 24 hours of the attack, the Government of the Philippines deployed troops to the city and emplaced a naval blockade. Filipino leaders, including the President of the Philippines and key members of the military and police forces, converged on the area. Advised by ARSOF operators in country, the Filipino leaders established their first ever fully operational joint TOC. At the TOC, ARSOF members stayed in constant contact with partner forces operating across Zamboanga, guiding and mentoring them as fighting continued. On Sept. 16, negotiations between insurgents and the government failed, leading to an escalation in violence. Over the next several days, fighting spread and the death toll rose until Filipino forces were finally able to overwhelm the insurgents and force their surrender, enabling the Philippine Government to take control of the city.

The Filipino and ARSOF response to the attack on Zamboanga City validates the effectiveness of 15 years of partnership. It also represents how the ARSOF indigenous approach to operations generates combat power for use when crisis erupts.



PORT-AU-PRINCE EARTHQUAKE: HAITI

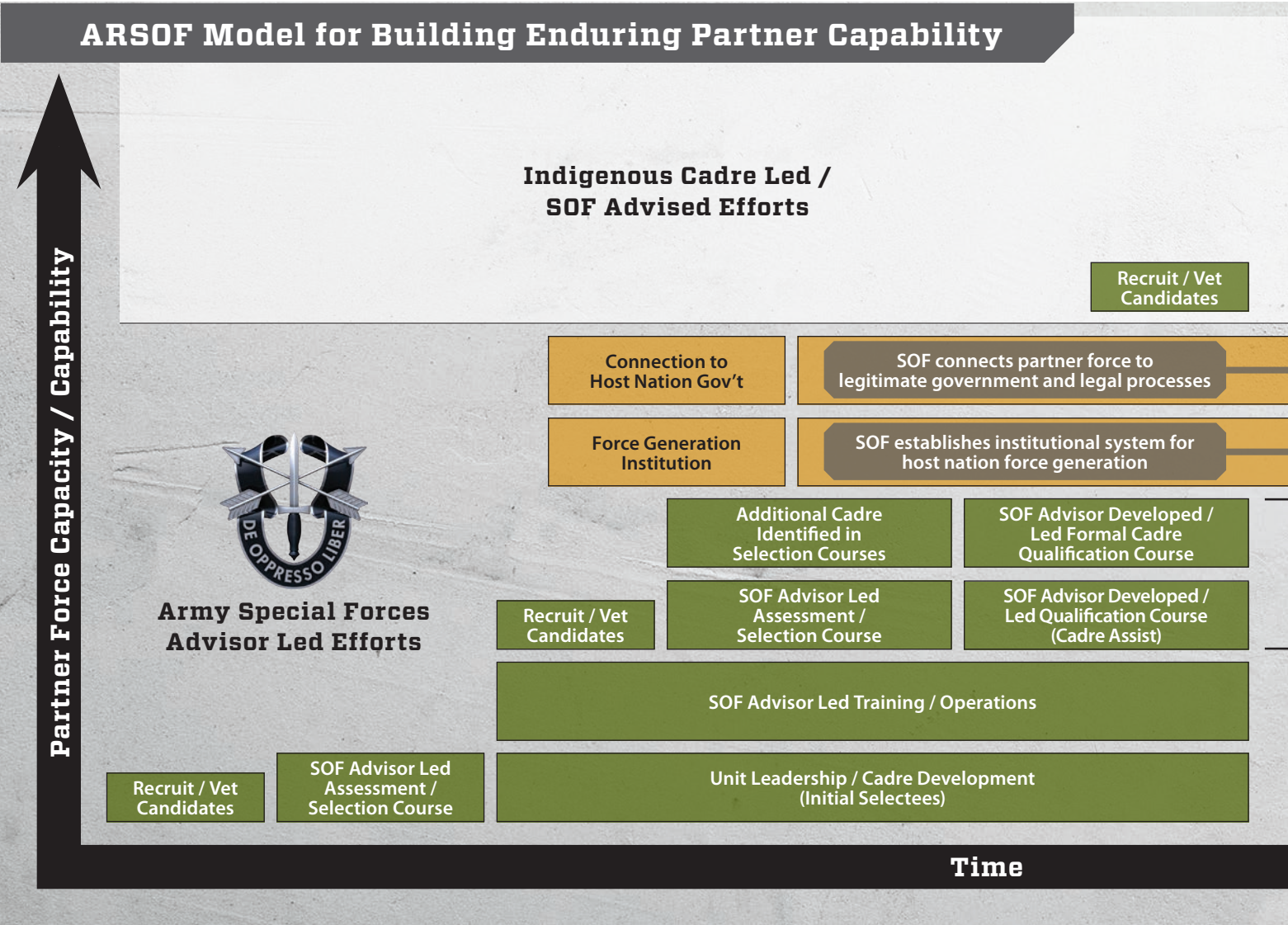
On Jan. 12, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, killing as many as 300,000 people and destroying much of the city infrastructure and that of its surrounding areas. In response to the crisis, the 98th Civil Affairs Battalion conducted humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations in the country from January through April, working through Phases 4 and 5 of the joint campaign. The battalion established a humanitarian-assistance coordination center that assessed and analyzed civil vulnerabilities, conducted civil-information management, and developed the humanitarian common operating picture. The battalion played a critical role in the evolution of Operation Unified Response from the life-saving phase through the life-sustaining phase and into recovery and transition.

CA teams augmented the disaster-response team from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and performed liaison with the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. They also provided the JTF-H commander, Lieutenant General P.K. Keen, interface with USAID, the UN, the international humanitarian community, and specific representatives of the government of Haiti. ARSOF CA efforts were essential to normalizing life in Haiti following the earthquake.



Photos from top: Army SOF with Philippine Partner Forces, survey damaged areas of Zamboanga City, Philippines, after rogue members of the Sulu State Revolutionary Command attacked the district. U.S. Army photo by SPC Andrew Robertson; An Army Special Forces Soldier studies the hide site of an enemy sniper after the attack. The snipers were taken out by recent graduates of the Philippine Army sniper course developed by U.S. Army Special Forces. U.S. Army photo; Haitians left homeless following the earthquake in 2010 gather in a displaced persons camp. U.S. Army photo.

HOW WE BUILD PARTNER FORCES





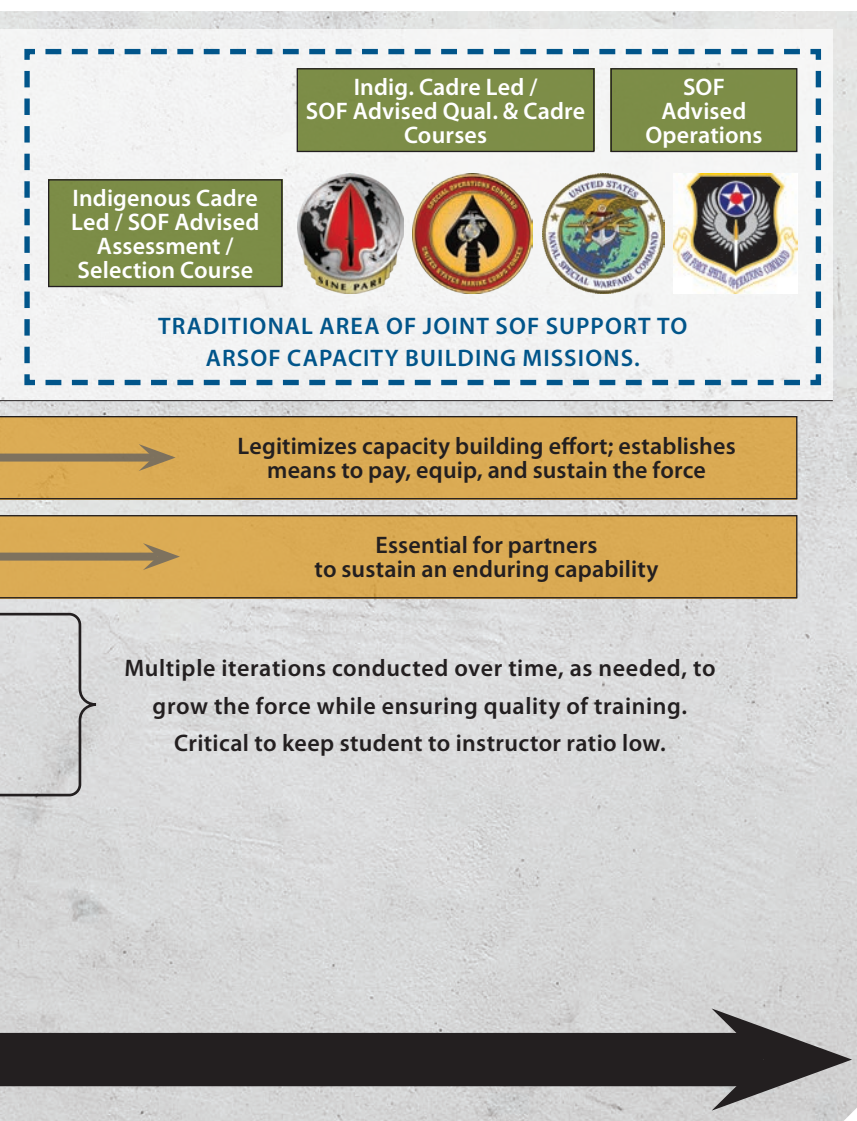
TRANSFORMING INDIGENOUS MASS INTO COMBAT POWER

ARSOF Approach to Building Partner Forces

Members of ARSOF continue to build and develop effective partner forces in countries around the world to win against determined enemies. The success of those forces is facilitated by the way in which ARSOF build partner capacity. Aspects of the ARSOF approach include:

- » Deliberate focus on rapport building
- » Advisor/trainer continuity across multiple rotations of engagement
- » Establishment of an institutional system for partner training and force generation
- » Emphasis on leader development including a proactive cadre of noncommissioned officers
- » Advisor proximity to the partner force in living, training, and operating environments
- » Recognition that partner capacity building takes time
- » Development of unit identity, *esprit de corps*, and a unique organizational culture
- » Quality of partner-force equipment

The vignettes on the following pages highlight successes of the ARSOF approach to building partner forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Colombia. Each example demonstrates cases in which ARSOF built, trained, and developed effective partner forces through persistent and deliberate engagement. These vignettes represent only a few of the many partner forces around the world that endure and succeed as a result of ARSOF partnership.



HOW WE BUILD PARTNER FORCES



Iraqi Counterterrorism Service

The Iraqi Counterterrorism Service represents an elite military force, organizational structure, and institutional force generation capability, all of which were built by U.S. Army Special Forces beginning in late 2003. Growth and development of the force was fostered through partnered training and operations with U.S. Special Forces and other SOF elements through December 2011. Following the official U.S. military withdrawal from Iraq in 2012, advise and assist efforts with the CTS were again initiated by U.S. Special

Forces under the U.S. State Department. The U.S. Special Forces advisor relationship with CTS continues today as the Government of Iraq faces new security challenges. Current composition of this Iraqi force includes the CTS Headquarters, the Counterterrorism Command (CTC), three Iraqi Special Operations Forces Brigades operationally controlled by the CTC, and a training institution known as the Academia. Approximately 10,000 Iraqi soldiers now serve under the CTS with each ISOF Brigade containing 2,000-2,500 soldiers.

Over the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 17, 2003-August 31, 2010) and Operation New Dawn (Sept. 1, 2010-December 15, 2011), U.S. Special Forces established and developed various Iraqi military special operations and police special weapons and tactics units in cities across Iraq. The effort to build and develop the CTS stands as one of the most successful of these initiatives. It began with U.S. Special Forces recruiting and screening Iraqi personnel in late 2003 following directives issued by the U.S. Secretary of Defense. The directives called for the establishment of the 36th Iraqi Civil Defense Corps Battalion and the Iraqi Counterterrorism Force. These two battalions were formed, trained, and employed by U.S. Special Forces until May 2004 when U.S. Central Command directed the stand-up of an ISOF brigade. U.S. Special Forces incorporated the two partner units into the new brigade, making the 36th ICDC Battalion, the 1st Battalion (Commandos), and ICTF the 2nd Battalion of the new ISOF Brigade. U.S. Special Forces also established a force generation and training institution within ISOF in 2004, designated the Iraqi Special Warfare Center and School (later renamed the Academia) that was modeled on the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

U.S. Special Forces and ISOF partnered training and combat operations steadily expanded the size and capabilities of ISOF between 2004 and 2007. By December 2007, the ISOF Brigade reached



a personnel strength of 3,500 highly trained Iraqi soldiers. In the spring of 2007, U.S. Special Forces created the CTC to operationally control ISOF and the CTS Headquarters to advise the Iraqi Prime Minister on counterterrorism and related issues. The CTC and CTS were designed to connect ISOF to the Iraqi Government and provide a conduit for resourcing the formation after the U.S. withdrawal. The CTC became subordinate to the CTS soon after being established, effectively linking ISOF to the legitimate authority of the Iraqi Government.

Between 2008 and 2009, U.S. Special Forces began transitioning control of CTS, to include the CTC and the ISOF Brigade, to the Iraqi Government while partnered operations and training continued. In May 2008, Iraqi Government and CTS leaders decided to expand ISOF to 8,500 personnel and by July 2009, with the support of U.S. Special Forces advisors and trainers, the 2nd ISOF Brigade was established. The 3rd ISOF Brigade was established in the spring of 2013, also with the support of U.S. Special Forces advisers. Following the stand-up, CTS personnel strength peaked at approximately 13,000 in the fall of 2013.

Although the CTS faced challenges related to force expansion and moves by the Iraqi Prime Minister to advance sectarian agendas post U.S. withdrawal, the CTS remained highly effective. From 2004 through 2011, partnered U.S. Special Forces and CTS operations detained more than 9,000 insurgents and terrorism suspects. Similar trends in detainee

numbers were seen through 2013 as well, indicating ISOF effectiveness beyond U.S. Special Forces partnered operations.

The rise of Islamic State, or Daesh, opened a new chapter in CTS history and provided new evidence of ISOF effectiveness, resiliency, and adaptability. Daesh occupation of Fallujah and much of

The Iraqi Counterterrorism Service represents an elite military force, organizational structure, and institutional force generation capability, all of which were built by U.S. Army Special Forces.

Ramadi in early 2014 created an emergency for the Iraqi Government. The Iraqi response fell largely to the CTS as the force designated to spearhead attacks to retake the cities and other occupied areas within Western Iraq. In each case, the CTS displayed tenacity and valor uncommon to other Iraqi forces as they gained ground

and surged to new areas of Daesh occupation to again lead attacks. Amid the intense combat responsibility carried by CTS forces in early 2014 as they battled Daesh, ISOF operators successfully rescued approximately 1,000 university students held by Daesh in Ramadi.

Today, the CTS is the Iraqi Government's force of choice to lead attacks to retake Daesh-occupied cities, shouldering the majority of the combat burden in the current fight. The CTS spearheaded operations to retake Tikrit, held on at the Baiji oil refinery when other Iraqi units retreated, routed Daesh at Haditha, and liberated Ramadi. In April 2016, the CTS seized the city of Hit from a Daesh occupying force. While many Iraqi units are seen as ineffective against Daesh, the CTS holds key terrain and seizes new ground against a determined enemy.

As the CTS faces new challenges in the fight against Daesh, it has adapted and transformed. CTS forces, once designed for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency precision raids have transformed into combined arms maneuver forces that employ armor and indirect fires in a synchronized manner. The organization is countering Daesh tactics and continues to demonstrate the will to fight, the innovation to succeed, and dedication to assigned missions despite shouldering the heaviest combat burden of any Iraqi force.

Photos: Iraqi Army soldiers go through the CTS selection process. The CTS is Iraq's elite counterterrorism force and has proven to be an effective fighting force against ISIL. U.S. Army photos by SSG Alex Manne





Afghan Special Operations

The Afghan Special Operations Kandaks represent battalions primarily built and developed by U.S. Special Forces with training support from other SOF elements including U.S. Navy SEALs, U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Teams, and NATO SOF members. There are now 10 SOKs divided between two brigades under the Afghan National Army Special Operations Corps headquarters (ANASOC). ANASOC also contains a force-generation institution, the ANASOC School of Excellence, in charge of selecting and training SOK Soldiers. The SOKs, two brigade headquarters, ANASOC headquarters, and the institution were established in a partner capacity-building effort that began in 2007.

Each Kandak consists of three Afghan National Army Commando companies and one company of ANA Special Forces. The Afghan Commando companies are modeled after U.S. Army Ranger formations and represent elite light-infantry forces that execute reconnaissance, direct

action, and internal defense operations. They are often employed to clear insurgents from key terrain normally held by Afghan local police forces. The ANASF are modeled on U.S. Army Special Forces units and conduct a variety of similar missions to their U.S. counterparts including air assaults, reconnaissance, and partner-force training. The ANASF aid U.S. Special Forces in training and mentoring Afghan local police.

In order to create the ANA Special Forces companies, the best performers were selected from the Commando companies to fill leadership roles in the new Special Forces elements. While the Commandos were trained in direct action techniques and skills by U.S. Special Forces teams, it was to the Afghan Special Forces personnel that U.S. Special Forces advisors passed on some of their most important lessons: how to think strategically, how to negotiate complex challenges, and how to engage the population and build trust.

Before the December 2014 U.S. troop reduction, the Afghan SOKs were advised and accompanied by U.S. Special Forces. Now the SOKs primarily fight independently; an option made possible by the successful application of the ARSOF approach to building partner forces.

On Sept. 28, 2015, the SOKs and other ARSOF partner forces were put to the test when Taliban militants took control of Kunduz City. The response of Afghan special operations units was swift and effective, as the SOKs played a substantial role in recapturing the city on Oct. 1. The victory highlighted the increased role of the SOK soldiers in countering insurgent operations around the country. Jawid Kohistani, a Kabul-based military analyst, explained that by, "using their superior tactics and training, they were able to take control of Kunduz with minimal casualties and inflict maximum casualties on the enemy." The swift recapture of Kunduz proved that the SOKs represented, "elite

fighters who can win battles," according to Sediq Sediqqi, spokesperson for the Afghan Interior Minister. In yet another positive assessment of SOK capabilities, Atiqullah Amarkhail, a military expert and former Afghan general, said, "When it comes to local forces, they're the best-trained and best-armed to deal with the security challenges in our country."

In early 2017, there were 17,000 Afghan special operations troops and in March 2017 the Afghan Government announced a long-term plan to double the size of the force, which currently carries out nearly 70 percent of ANA offensive operations countrywide. ANASOC forces represent a small fraction of the 300,000-strong Afghan Army;

become trusted friendships over time between ARSOF and partner force operators. ARSOF personnel influence the culture of partner units through these strong connections, transferring values to the partner force; respect for human rights, rule of law, and civilian control of the military. Persistent engagement and proximity to a partner force are key aspects of the ARSOF approach to building partner capacity and essential to establishing enduring connections between forces.

While visiting the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg in 2011, then-Brig. Gen. Lawang, head of ANA Special Operations Forces, acknowledged the unique relationship between his forces and U.S. Special



"It was to the Afghan Special Forces that the U.S. Special Forces passed on some of their most important lessons: how to think strategically; how to negotiate complex challenges; and how to engage the population and build trust."

however, they are the force of choice for the Afghan Government in times of crisis and for the most challenging operations.

As seen in countries around the world where ARSOF elements build partner forces, persistent engagement and close proximity to the partner force in living, training, and operating environments produce results. Persistent engagement and close proximity facilitate development of strong relationships between advisors and partners. Professional relationships

Forces. He noted that while U.S. Special Forces have long been referred to as a "brotherhood," he had the opportunity to see a new brotherhood develop out of the unique relationship between his force and the U.S. partners. "Our partnership has changed to brotherhood between our forces," he explained. "We work together, train together, eat together, and we spend time together. When we go into the field and shed blood — we do it together."

Photo left page: U.S. Army Special Forces work alongside partner forces in Afghanistan. *U.S. Army photo by SSG. Russell Lee Klika.* **Photos right, from top:** Afghan key leaders of the 6th Special Operations Kandak and their U.S. mentors conduct a mission readiness exercise near Kabul, Afghanistan. *U.S. Army photo by SPC Connor Mendez;* An Afghan commando leader from the 6th SOK gives a mission brief to his company about an upcoming operation. *U.S. Army photo by SPC Connor Mendez;* 1st SOK Commandos speak with a villager in Nangarhar province. *U.S. Army photo by PFC Sha'Quille Stokes;* A 1st SOK Commando finds drugs after searching a compound. *U.S. Army photo by PFC Sha'Quille Stokes;* Soldiers from the 8th SOK and partner Coalition special operations forces conduct a patrol near Daykundi province. *U.S. Navy Photo by Petty Officer First Class Jacob Dillon*

HOW WE BUILD PARTNER FORCES



Colombian Armed Forces

U.S. SOF engagement in Colombia is regarded by many diplomats and military officials as one of the most effective capacity-building efforts to date and serves as a reminder that persistent engagement is critical to success. ARSOF partner-capacity building in Colombia began during the 1960s and included military trainers, Civil Affairs personnel, and Psychological Operations specialists tasked with establishing new units. U.S. Special Forces established the first Colombian Special Forces battalion in 1970. By the end of the decade, three Colombian Special Forces battalions were active and receiving persistent training. American interest in Colombia increased in response to the rise of the Colombian cocaine industry and the brutality of drug kingpins. The U.S. deployed multiple SOF elements to train Colombian forces for operations against the cartels.

The U.S. efforts expanded in 1998 under Plan Colombia to address threats posed by multiple insurgent groups and in response to the transition of operations by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or the FARC, from guerrilla warfare to overt conventional warfare. Plan Colombia increased resources available to the armed forces and concentrated on elite civil and military

units and capabilities. It increased the U.S. military advisory presence, permitted the provision of advanced technology to Colombian forces, and increased the size of the anti-narcotics police commandos, known as the *Junglas*, from one to four companies under the training and mentorship of SF. The plan funded the creation of a counternarcotics brigade consisting of battalions with access to the quantity and quality of helicopters used by U.S. air assault battalions.

From 1999-2007, SF worked to establish and expand partner capacity in the *Junglas*. In 1999, SF began creating the dedicated counternarcotics battalions and their brigade headquarters. The expansion of Plan Colombia widened the scope of SF training to include counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and counterinsurgency. In support of the wider scope, SF also focused on boosting the capabilities of two additional existing elite units. Those units were the Special Forces Commando Brigade and a dedicated hostage-rescue unit designated the Unified Action Groups for Personal Liberty. Additionally, SF Soldiers were instrumental in establishing the Commando Brigade, Rapid Deployment Force, and the Urban Counterterrorism Special Forces Group. Other U.S. SOF support to Colombian partner forces

between 1999 and 2007 included U.S. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations personnel who worked to advance the legitimacy of the Colombian government over that of insurgents and drug traffickers. U.S. Navy SEALs also conducted partnered training for riverine units tasked with patrolling Colombia's 18,000 km of navigable waterways.

By 2007, Colombian units were motivated and actively engaging insurgents and traffickers in enemy controlled territory and in safe havens outside of Colombia. Colombian Soldiers were following strict codes of conduct and using discretion in their application of force. The former officer-centric Colombian Army model was replaced with one that centered on a proactive NCO cadre focused on solving problems at the tactical level. Additionally, the U.S. SOF built, trained, and developed partner forces were beginning their own efforts to train partners across Central and South America to include Argentina, Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.

The Colombian government and security forces demonstrated the results of long-term U.S. SOF engagement in 2008, locating and rescuing 15 high-profile hostages held by the FARC. These hostages included three American citizens captured in 2003 and the former Colombian presidential candidate, Ingrid Betancourt. During the operation, disguised Colombian SOF personnel met with FARC captors and led them to believe that the disguised operators were members of a sympathetic organization. The hostages were freed without firing a shot.

By 2010, Colombian SOF units were considered by U.S. advisors to be on par in training and equipment with U.S. SOF and more capable than many of their counterparts from countries around the world. Additionally, Colombian SOF and police units were executing partnered training in more than 20 countries in Central and South America and Africa while contributing to Coalition efforts in Afghanistan. These measures of effectiveness stand as proof that persistent efforts to build partner capacity in Colombia were successful.

The ARSOF Approach to Partner Capacity Building



Each of the examples in this section from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Colombia demonstrate that the ARSOF approach to partner capacity building is deliberate, persistent, and requires a long-term view of how a partner unit will progress. These and other key aspects of the SOF approach follow:

Rapport Building

Strong rapport between advisors and members of a partner force is an essential and foundational aspect of the ARSOF approach to capability development. All efforts to build partner capacity begin with developing strong rapport and trust between advisors and the partner force.

Advisor/Trainer Continuity

Aligning the same units for multiple rotations with a partner force provides continuity of focus and a consistent trajectory for partner force development. Advisor and trainer continuity also enables stronger rapport to develop over years of engagement.

Leader and Cadre Development

Successful ARSOF efforts to build partner capacity include a major emphasis on developing partner force leaders and a trained cadre of proactive NCOs ('train the trainer').

Institutional Development

The establishment of an institutional system for the host nation to conduct force generation through standardized training allows partners to sustain an enduring capability. Establishing an institutional framework is integral to the ARSOF approach to partner capacity development. Although not detailed in this document, an institutional focus was also instrumental in Colombia, as with all successful ARSOF partner capacity-building efforts.

Quality of Equipment

Partner forces should be equipped in a manner that facilitates execution of assigned missions and operations at the level of performance expected of them. Appropriate equipment further facilitates development of a partner force's confidence, *esprit de corps*, and unit identity. When considered in context with methods of assessment and selection, training, and partnered operations, equipping becomes a multiplying factor for the development of a resilient force.

Proximity in Living, Training, and Operating Environments

ARSOF trainers practice what they teach in combat and other operations with partner forces, when possible. Proximity in training and operations equates to greater gains in partner abilities over a shorter period of time. Ideally, ARSOF members live among, train, and fight alongside the partner force. Personal observation during accompanied operations allows U.S. advisors to evaluate partner force performance and provide feedback during operations to more rapidly advance partner force learning. Proximity is also crucial in transferring values to the partner force — respect for human rights, rule of law, and civilian control of the military are best inculcated in the partner force as they see it modeled on a daily basis by their U.S. advisors. In Colombia, U.S. SOF members were not permitted to accompany partner forces during combat operations. The constraint required a longer period of partnership before gains in capability translated to operational successes for Colombian forces.

Unit Identity, *Esprit de Corps*, and Unique Organizational Culture

Resilience in a partner force is fostered over the long-term through strength of unit identity, *esprit de corps*, and a unique organizational culture. ARSOF enable development of these aspects by treating partner force members as respected peers that are specially selected and trained to a degree that fosters trust in combat between advisor and partner. ARSOF capacity building efforts seek to create conditions within a partner unit that develop confidence and bond members while building strong unit identity, *esprit de corps*, and a special organizational culture. Without these elements, a partner force will likely fracture when faced with adversity.

Partner Capacity Building Takes Time

Building quality elite units cannot be rushed and requires sustained and persistent effort over years, even when advisors are permitted to accompany and advise partner forces during combat operations. After forces are built and institutional development is complete, episodic reengagements are often necessary to help the partner force evolve to changing demands.

Building effective security forces is challenging. However, through deliberate employment of the ARSOF approach to building partner capabilities, partner forces can develop, endure, and succeed.



A Joint Force, Global Network, and Advocate for SOF-CF I3

U.S. Special Operations elements operate and fight as a joint force with operators and units serving as nodes in a global network. Each node contributes to greater SOF understanding of transregional trends, opportunities, or threats in support of joint force commanders, Ambassadors, or other elements of the U.S. Government. SOF capabilities are rapidly deployable, scalable, and tailorable by nature with worldwide reach. Within the joint force, many ARSOF personnel and formations are regionally aligned, contrib-

“Interdependence, interoperability, and integration between conventional forces and special operations across the Total Army complements strategic readiness to conduct decisive action.”

— Army Campaign Plan 2017 —

uting to the SOF network’s understanding of environments through use of advanced language skills and a high level of cultural and regional expertise. These aspects uniquely position SOF, and specifically ARSOF, to contribute to joint campaign success through better SOF-conventional force interdependence, interoperability, and integration. As the nation faces dynamic and changing conditions in the global security environment, it is SOF-CF I3 that will help maximize effectiveness of our nation’s military operations across all phases of joint campaigns.

USASOC Efforts to Advance SOF-CF I3

In 2015, USASOC initiated efforts to improve the way in which SOF and CF elements function together in training and operating environments. These efforts continue and build upon successes achieved in past years through:

- » SOF-CF training at home station and OCONUS
- » Establishment of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (the U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence) Security Force Assistance Foreign Weapons Course for CF Soldiers
- » ARSOAC support to conventional aviation units preparing for campaign plan requirements
- » Special Operations Center of Excellence collaboration and exchanges with the Army Centers of Excellence
- » 75th Ranger Regiment personnel contributions to CF (75th Ranger Regiment Charter)
- » USASOC and FORSCOM partnership for SOF-CF communications/network connectivity testing and validation
- » USASOC units participating in 16 Combat Training Center rotations and four of nine MCTP iterations in FY16
- » USASOC units participating in 18 CTC rotations, one JMRC rotation, and five MCTP (Warfighter Exercises) in FY17
- » Participation in Army Force 2025 and Beyond (F2025B) processes

Photos left page (top left, down): SOF and CF Soldiers participate in a role playing exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La. *U.S. Army photo*; CF Soldiers receive training on all-terrain vehicles from SF Soldiers. *U.S. Army photo by SPC. Robert Venegas*; SOF and CF Soldiers collaborate during a joint exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La. *U.S. Army photo*; SF Soldiers receive training on TOW missiles from CF Soldiers during a live fire exercise. *U.S. Army photo by SPC Alexis Conception*; **Photo left page (top right):** CF Soldiers attend the Security Force Assistance Foreign Weapons Course at the U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence. *U.S. Army photo by SSG Robert Burley*; **Photo right page:** MG William P. Yarborough is briefed on the MATA Course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, circa 1962. *U.S. Army photo*.



ARSO elements conduct partner capacity building around the world with a daily presence in more than 70 countries; however, there are more than 190 nations on Earth. Geographic Combatant Command requirements for building partner capacity far exceed SOF's capacity to address the needs of all nations and partner forces.

In recent years, the U.S. Army has fielded forces for advise and assist missions by assigning elements from within Brigade Combat Teams to fill partner capacity building requirements; a mission the Army has had for more than 40 years. Assigning these missions to BCT units deconstructs brigades and negatively impacts their readiness to address high-intensity conflict contingencies.

There is a capability gap when it comes to dedicated forces trained and available to meet GCC partner building capacity demands. The U.S. Army is moving to address the capability gap through establishment of Security Force Assistance Brigades. The SFABs will provide dedicated force structure to institutionalize the Army's commitment to SFA and to meet GCC SFA demands without deconstructing BCTs or degrading readiness. They will also provide senior Army leaders the capability and flexibility to expand the force in the event of a larger contingency.

In early 2017, the U.S. Army announced its intent to stand-up six SFABs — five Active Component and one National Guard — between 2017 and 2024. Although these elements will be much smaller than a traditional BCT, they will provide a platform from which the Army can quickly build full BCTs if requirements emerge for force expansion. The SFAB initiative represents the Army's effort to optimize force structure to address a long-standing mission requirement the U.S. Army has had since Vietnam.

As an example of past efforts, the U.S. Army established the Military Advisor Training Academy at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, during the 1960s to address requirements for Vietnam. The Army intends to establish a new MATA at Fort Benning, Georgia, as part of the training pipeline for SFAB members with a projected capacity to graduate 750 Soldiers per year. Language and cultural training will also be part of the training pipeline. SFAB members will be trained to focus on advise and assist missions in permissive or semi-permissive environments. ARSO is positioned to enable SFAB success through training efforts such as the USAJFKSWCS SFA Foreign Weapons Course and other collaborative initiatives specifically designed to train conventional U.S. Army personnel. Ultimately, SFABs are a means for the Army to address its long standing requirement to advise and assist host nation conventional forces and to fill often unaddressed capacity development requirements in GCCs globally.



The Future Operating Environment

While ARSOF elements maintain long-standing missions like those in Colombia and Mali, the force must also prepare for the future. The future operating environment will be populated by state and non-state adversaries that employ hybrid forms of conflict to challenge U.S. influence internationally. Competing nations such as Iran, Russia, North Korea, and China will challenge the current international security dynamic as they seek greater influence over regional neighbors. Additionally, a variety of violent extremist and criminal organizations will attempt to advance their agendas transregionally at the expense of populations and established forms of governance. These state and non-state actors will likely exploit opportunities to diminish U.S. military, economic, and/or political dominance until internal conditions or exterior deterrence changes their course.

Although the possibility of overt confrontation remains a persistent aspect of the future environment, adversaries will more likely challenge the stability of regions and U.S. interests through indirect means in the gray zone between peace and overt

war. Adversarial actions in gray zones will seek to achieve irreversible gains at the expense of U.S. interests, as our adversaries leverage asymmetric technologies, disaffected minority elements of populations, and exploit weak governance. This changing character of war is enabled by the hyper-connected nature of the global environment, allowing hostile entities to influence vulnerable populations and hijack local grievances in ways that threaten regional security. The growing nature of this threat was highlighted by the raging fire of the Arab Spring, and continues today. Threats to stability in gray zones will likely emerge more rapidly, requiring the U.S. to have immediately employable options to counter adversarial actions. Ultimately, these challenges have driven, and will continue to drive, the need for ARSOF's unique capabilities and skills, broadening the lens and challenging the idea that ARSOF should train for a certain threat matrix or execute campaigns in a single kind of conflict.

Forms of Future Conflict:

The chosen forms of conflict for future adversaries are expected to be hybrid in

nature, blending conventional, irregular, informational, and Cyber capabilities to advance state and non-state agendas. The Cyber environment will be central to many adversarial actions as hostile state and non-state actors attempt to influence populations. Hostile entities will continue to challenge stability in the security environment through actions short of maneuver warfare and approaches that may be indirect in nature. Hybrid forms of conflict offer cost effective means to challenge U.S. influence internationally. Indirect approaches allow adversaries to avoid confronting U.S. power or provoking an international response while seeking irreversible gains in the regional balance of power. As a result, hybrid forms of conflict that challenge U.S. dominance and influence through indirect approaches are the likely choice for adversaries of the future.

Globalization, Technology, and Speed of Threat Development:

In a world shaped by globalization, unpredictable and rapid technological change will force shifts in political,

Impacts on ARSOF Capabilities

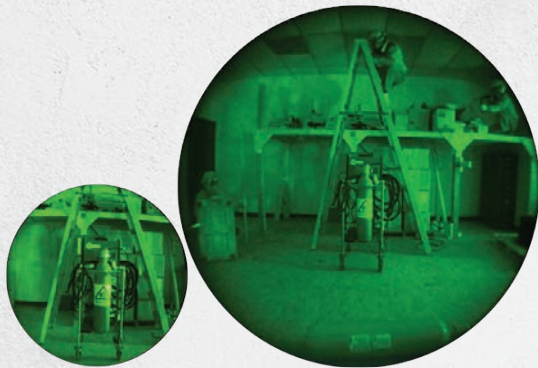
military, and economic power. The barriers for adversaries to acquire and develop advanced technology, including Cyber and access denial systems, will diminish. Adversaries will need minimal investment to employ social media and informational technology to influence vulnerable populations, spread their ideologies, gather support, fund operations, crowd-source intelligence, and share techniques. Access to advanced technology provides adversaries with viable alternatives to high-intensity warfare. It provides a means to initiate less-attributable forms of conflict to offset U.S. strengths, particularly in the gray zone. These aspects of the future environment will accelerate the speed with which threats can develop.

Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: The proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, high-yield explosive weapons, and the means by which they are delivered will pose an increased threat to U.S. interests and international security in the future. The diminishing costs associated with WMD technology and the potential for destabilized governments to lose control of weapons will challenge security and interests of nations around the world to an unprecedented degree.

Decision Space in Gray Zones: The first, and possibly most important, step to preventing and mitigating these threats is detecting emerging threats before they irreversibly erode U.S. influence and destabilize regions. Early understanding of emerging threats will be essential in the future operating environment for national leaders to have adequate decision space necessary to develop policies and plans that counter adversarial actions. The U.S. will require the means to obtain early understanding of threats and the capability to control escalation of crisis to deter threats from developing into greater challenges that require a large commitment of national resources.

ARSOF effectiveness over the next 20 years requires USASOC to evaluate implications of the future operating environment and to initiate action in an effort to provide capabilities for use by the force in the years ahead. Following are aspects of the future operating environment that warrant specific focus for USASOC capability development and their implications on the force.

- 1. State actors of the future will likely possess advanced access denial and communications detection, denial, and encryption technology; transregional non-state actors will employ evolving technology to conceal and encrypt communications and deliver lethal attacks with minimal personnel, requiring ARSOF to:**
 - » Employ targeting processes/systems that maintain an advantage over adversaries
 - » Avoid or mitigate detection and geolocation in denied, semi-permissive, and permissive environments
 - » Be capable of moving greater distances and with more efficiency (aviation and other mobility capabilities)
 - » Employ integrated air defense system penetration capabilities for rotary wing and unmanned aerial systems
 - » Employ advanced unmanned aerial systems and intelligence collection capabilities at the tactical level
 - » Engage hostile threats over greater distances
- 2. Forms of conflict in the future are likely to be hybrid in nature, blending conventional and irregular capabilities, requiring ARSOF to:**
 - » Advance direct-action and hostage-rescue capabilities
 - » Develop and leverage strong joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partnerships
 - » Achieve SOF-CF interdependence, interoperability, and integration
 - » Maintain a portfolio of complementary capabilities across the spectrum of special operations
 - » Fully understand the aspects of hybrid conflict and codify doctrine for operations to counter hybrid threats
 - » Evolve intelligence collection, analysis, and synthesis capabilities, particularly with regard to understanding and characterizing the Human Domain and indicators/warnings for gray zone threats
- 3. Cyber-based technology will become more important for targeting, situational awareness, intelligence analysis, mission command, and to influence vulnerable populations and governments, while Cyber security will become more difficult to guarantee. These issues require ARSOF to:**
 - » Counter threat communications, influence, and operational planning/execution in the Cyber realm
 - » Protect friendly networks from advanced Cyber threats
 - » Integrate Cyber capabilities into operations (influence operations, digital deception, communication disruption, and disinformation campaigns)
- 4. Threats to stability in operating environments are likely to emerge more rapidly in the future, requiring ARSOF to:**
 - » Achieve sustainable full-spectrum readiness across the force
 - » Be rapidly deployable to counter emerging threats
 - » Quickly detect, analyze, and understand emerging threats
 - » Enable swift/sound decision making processes at the tactical/operational levels
 - » Establish strong relationships with host-nation partners using advanced language, regional expertise, and cultural capabilities
- 5. Diminishing costs associated with WMD technology and the potential for destabilized governments to lose control of weapons require ARSOF to:**
 - » Be capable of tracking, monitoring, and countering WMD
 - » Be educated/trained for counter WMD related operations



Standard View

Wide View

Technology

- » USASOC is exploring wide field of view night vision devices. The WFOV-NVG is a PVS-31A with canted lenses that increases the field of view from 40 to 70 degrees.
- » USASOC G6 is executing a plan to field SOF SIPR/BICES networks and computers at each of the National Guard Special Operations Detachments to support upcoming deployment requirements. SODs are planning augmentation teams that are now OPCON to USASOC.
- » USASOC G3/G9 staff members are examining currently fielded counter-UAS systems and those available in the near future. Effort includes USASOC Component Subordinate Command/Component Subordinate Unit vignettes that enable comparison of known threats and capabilities. G3/G9 members participated in test evaluation events during early 2017, identifying near-term solutions for deployed force requirements.

Current USASOC Initiatives Underway

USASOC is executing the following efforts as short term (0-2 year) initiatives to better position the force to address current requirements worldwide. These initiatives represent aspects of *USASOC Strategy 2035* and *USASOC Campaign Plan 2035*. Summaries of both documents are presented in this section.

1. **Restore Balance:** to achieve a 1:2 deployment to dwell ratio for all ARSOF formations and to implement use of Army-wide readiness systems and processes.
2. **Solidify 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) as a Deployable and Force Providing Headquarters:** to complete the manning of 1st SFC (A) while advancing Cyber, ISR, and Counter-UAS capabilities in 1st SFC (A) and across the force.
3. **Communicate the ARSOF Narrative:** to communicate the unique nature and capabilities of ARSOF to various audiences, including SOF components, conventional forces, and interagency partners.

USASOC Strategy 2035 — Summary

In an effort to define capabilities required to enable ARSOF to counter threats of the future and to open windows of opportunity for joint force success, USASOC produced *Strategy 2035*. It contains objectives for capability development categorized across time; short-term (Ready the Force), mid-term (Mature the Force), and long-term (Invest in the Future Force). These categories and related objectives represent guidance from the USASOC Commanding General for ARSOF readiness to fulfill requirements of the current operating environment, to mature the force to meet mid-term demands, and to invest in future capabilities. The categories and objectives follow (*note: below numbers are for reference only and do not suggest a particular order or priority*):

The full *USASOC Strategy 2035* can be downloaded from the USASOC website at www.soc.mil — click on the link under Hot Topics on the right-hand side menu.

READY the Force (Short Term):

1. Maintain advanced hostage rescue and direct action capabilities
2. Develop and implement new ARSOF Sustainable Readiness Model
3. Improve SOF-CF interdependence, interoperability, and integration
4. Improve joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partnerships
5. Improve understanding of the full range of ARSOF capabilities with external audiences
6. Identify the right ARSOF Active Component/Reserve Component balance
7. Invest in language, regional expertise, and cultural capability development
8. Identify more responsive mechanisms to deploy forces when needed (e.g. address the slow nature of the Request for Forces process)
9. Review unfinished *ARSOF 2022* objectives; complete valid unfinished requirements
10. Improve ARSOF human/spiritual performance, behavioral health, social readiness, and resilience (objective recently added to represent Preservation of the Force and Family)

MATURE the Force (Mid Term):

1. Adapt ARSOF hostage rescue and direct-action capabilities to incorporate improved technology, processes, and techniques
2. Develop capabilities to track, monitor, and counter WMD

3. Incorporate education/training into ARSOF learning institutions to enable operations that track, monitor, and counter WMD
4. Empower decentralized Mission Command (COP and situational awareness via hand-held data, blue force tracking systems, and secure communications)
5. Increase ARSOF clandestine and low visibility technology (mobility platforms, weapons systems, and communications technology — secure, unsecure, and non-attributable systems)
6. Improve ARSOF intelligence collection, analysis, and synthesis capabilities that enable understanding and characterization of the human domain and provide indicators/warnings for gray zone threats
7. Codify ARSOF doctrine and education for foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and support to resistance movements (up to and including UW)
8. Invest in education initiatives that prepare operators to develop effective partnerships in foreign cultures and to build partner capabilities
9. Create and implement education models that train operators to rapidly integrate into, and excel within, ambiguous environments
10. Invest in hybrid conflict research/education within ARSOF institutions
11. Integrate IT networks across organizational/institutional boundaries
12. Streamline resourcing/capability development processes to be more agile/adaptive

INVEST in the Future Force (Long Term):

1. Procure the technology and weapons systems that keep ARSOF on the cutting edge
2. Procure mobility systems that are agile enough to quickly deploy, resilient enough to operate in austere environments, and require minimal maintenance/logistics
3. Procure C2 and intelligence technology that improve the speed and ease with which we process/synthesize information at the tactical and operational levels
4. Procure communications and intelligence systems that facilitate rapid collective understanding of the environment, adversarial actions, and emerging threats
5. Develop and integrate systems and processes that enable operator/leader level decision making
6. Develop and incorporate methods and technology that improve our ability to influence populations and to understand/address how adversaries and their proxies do the same (Cyber and related capabilities)
7. Integrate Cyber capabilities into operations to include influence operations, digital deception, communication disruption, and disinformation campaigns at the tactical and operational levels
8. Obtain technology to protect friendly networks from advanced Cyber threats
9. Obtain next generation unmanned aerial systems that provide longer operational range, over horizon observation, and can be launched/recovered by tactical units
10. Obtain the next generation of ARSOF rotary wing capabilities for transport and fire support that have longer range and greater fuel efficiency
11. Obtain capabilities for ARSOF rotary wing and unmanned platforms to penetrate integrated air defense systems
12. Create the system/opportunities to retain enabler personnel in ARSOF for more of their careers
13. Implement alternative military/civilian career models that are more attuned to the demands of the future operating environment



Readiness

- » Civil Affairs personnel from 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) partnered with U.S. Army and Japanese leaders to establish the first Civil Affairs course for the Japan Self Ground Defense Force. A pilot of the 40 hour course was held in May 2016, with 24 students. Content of the course focused on CA support to peace-keeping/stability operations at the theater level. In June 2016, 3rd Bn., 1st SWTG (A), sent instructors to a Civil Affairs Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Response SME Exchange, which also included trainers from New Zealand, Malaysia, and Canada.
- » USASOC 's request to upgrade 32 Warrant Officer positions in the 160th SOAR was approved by HQDA Force Management. The action upgrades pilot positions from CW2 to CW3 and adds additional CW5 positions effective 2018.
- » USASOC is partnered with Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Lab to develop a readiness tracking program and dashboard interface. The intent is to integrate all readiness related data sources into a user friendly interface that allows easy viewing of personnel/unit status, deployment to dwell, language ratings, special skills, equipment and other aspects of readiness. It will allow users to query unit-level status/data or drill down to the individual level.



USASOC Campaign Plan 2035 — Summary

In order to initiate capability-development actions that meet the objectives identified in the previous section, USASOC created *Campaign Plan 2035*. The campaign plan operationalizes *USASOC Strategy 2035*, synchronizing objective completion with commander priorities and the strategic planning process; the process responsible for programmatically producing future capabilities for the force. The campaign plan strategic framework links USASOC's enduring mission statement responsibilities (man, train, equip, educate, organize, sustain, and support) to *USASOC Strategy 2035* objectives and the SPP. This linkage highlights how commander priorities, force development efforts, and resources interact to produce decision points and identify areas of potential risk. The campaign plan strategic framework captures the Ends, Ways, and Means of achieving the commander's vision. The strategic framework depicts the command's enduring mission responsibilities as Lines of Effort (The Means), that extend across three time horizons (The Ways). The Ends for all capability development efforts are represented by the four Pillars of ARSOF Capability.

USASOC Campaign Plan 2035 — Strategic Framework

WAYS = Strategic Framework (Time-phased approach)

READY (0-2 YEARS)

Position the force for the demands of the current operating environment.

MATURE (3-7 YEARS)

Advance ARSOF capabilities to meet mid-term demands.

INVEST (8-20 YEARS)

Develop capabilities to meet challenges of the future operating environment.

MEANS = Readiness Centric LOEs and Sub-LOEs

LOE #1: PREPARE

"...ARSOF to meet the nation's demands"

Sub-LOEs	MAN	<i>Prepare authorized personnel by grade & skill</i>
	TRAIN	<i>Prepare Soldiers & units</i>
	EDUCATE	<i>Prepare current & future ARSOF personnel</i>

LOE #2: PROVIDE

"...the nation's premier SOF to JFCs & IA Leaders"

Sub-LOEs	ORGANIZE	<i>Provide trained & ready forces</i>
	EQUIP	<i>Provide equipment to trained & ready forces</i>
	SUSTAIN	<i>Provide force sustainment</i>

LOE #3: PRESERVE

"...our force & unique mandate"

Sub-LOE	SUPPORT	<i>Enable & preserve our team & legacy</i>
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Campaign Plan LOEs and Sub-LOEs: The campaign plan aligns the objectives for capability development listed in *USASOC Strategy 2035* under one of three lines of effort: Prepare, Provide, and Preserve. The objectives are then categorized under sub-lines of effort (sub-LOEs) assigned to specific USASOC staff sections or subordinate commands. The sub-LOEs are: Man, Train, Equip, Educate, Organize, Sustain, and Support.

The following pages present the LOEs, sub-LOEs, and objectives, with each of the objectives organized in the time horizon intended for delivery of new capabilities; Ready-short term (0-2 years), Mature-mid-term (3-7 years), and Invest-long term (8-20 years). By organizing the objectives in this way, the campaign plan assigns execution of capability development efforts to offices or commands of primary responsibility, ensuring a single point of contact is identified and accountable for delivery of capabilities the force needs, now and into the future.

Note: A summary of the campaign plan is presented here and on the following pages. The full *USASOC Campaign Plan 2035* can be downloaded from the USASOC website at www.soc.mil — click on the link under Hot Topics on the right-hand side menu.



ENDS = Pillars of ARSOF Capability

Indigenous Approach

The indigenous approach is a different lens through which to view challenges to regional stability, to view them as problems to be solved by empowered populations living in the region. It includes core tasks such as foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare and involves advise, assist, and accompany type activities. Through an indigenous approach, ARSOF personnel live among, train, advise, and fight alongside people of foreign cultures, achieving effects with and through partner forces.

Precision Targeting

Precision Targeting operations involve direct action and counter-network activities enabled by SOF unique intelligence, technology, and targeting processes. Precision targeting operations can be employed against uniquely difficult target sets that require long range movement and careful application of force. They can be employed to buy time and space for other operations to gain traction, as seen in counterinsurgency efforts. Precision targeting operations also collapse transregional threat networks through deliberate targeting of critical enemy nodes as seen in counterterrorism campaigns.

Understand and Influence

Developing understanding and wielding influence are essential aspects of the value SOF capabilities provide the nation. The SOF network of personnel, assets, and formations represent means by which to obtain early understanding of trends, emerging transregional threats, and where opportunities exist. Employment of the SOF network also provides capabilities needed to influence outcomes, especially in environments experiencing conflict short of overt war.

Crisis Response

Crisis Response through alert forces and persistently deployed and dispersed units, provides national decision makers with the agile and rapidly employable special operations formations necessary to respond to emergencies. These forces provide options to rescue people under threat, to recover sensitive materials such as weapons of mass destruction components, or other short notice requirements.

Medical Developments

- » USASOC has partnered with the Army Medical Command to develop a pilot telemedicine program for SOF physician assistants and medics. The effort addresses a capability gap in trauma treatment in low-intensity/asymmetric operating environments. The program will train PAs and medics to perform specific trauma surgeries with the aid of trauma surgeons at a military treatment facility hub via telemedicine technology.
- » 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) and CJSOTF-S recently fielded remote telemedicine pilot program kits to deployed units in the CENTCOM theater of operations. It enables on-call virtual medical consultation and integrates CONUS and forward-based medical personnel into the patient treatment cycle at outstations until medical evacuation is possible.
- » USASOC is also working with trauma medical staff at Ryder Trauma Center in Miami, Florida, to explore future integration of ARSOF into the RTC telemedical network. The intent is to teleconnect ARSOF medics with CONUS-based surgeons when surgical stabilization is required in remote locations worldwide.
- » USASOC medical personnel are evaluating the latest advances in ultrasound guided musculoskeletal and spine medical procedures. The findings will be shared with other Army medical personnel to expand treatment options for wounded and injured Soldiers.

Each of the objectives in the following section has a reference number at the end to show its corresponding location in USASOC Strategy 2035 (example: [READY #1]).

LOE #1: PREPARE

PREPARE ARSOF to meet the nation's demands. This LOE focuses primarily on USASOC Institutional or Generating Force responsibilities, which are those missions that generate or maintain the operational capabilities employed by joint force commanders. The USASOC mission statement reflects this responsibility as it identifies requirements to MAN, TRAIN, and EDUCATE ARSOF. These requirements comprise the three sub-LOEs for capability development in this section.

>> MAN

Prepare authorized personnel by grade & skill. *Sub-LOE manager: USASOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G1.*

READY (Short-Term)

- » **AC/RC Balance:** Identify the right ARSOF Active Component/Reserve Component balance [READY #6]

INVEST (Long-Term)

- » **MIL/CIV Models:** Implement alternative military/civilian career models that are more attuned to the demands of the future operating environment. [INVEST #13]

>> TRAIN

Prepare Soldiers and Units. *Sub-LOE manager: USASOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G3.*

READY (Short-Term)

- » **Maintain HR/DA:** Maintain advanced hostage rescue and direct action capabilities. [READY #1]

MATURE (Mid-Term)

- » **HR/DA Adaptation:** Adapt ARSOF hostage rescue and direct action capabilities to incorporate improved technology, processes, and techniques. [MATURE #1]
- » **CWMD Tracking:** Develop capabilities to track, monitor, and counter WMD. [MATURE #2]

INVEST (Long-Term)

- » **Cyber Integration:** Integrate Cyber capabilities into operations to include influence operations, digital deception, communication disruption, and disinformation campaigns at the tactical and operational levels. [INVEST #7]

>> EDUCATE

Prepare current & future ARSOF personnel. *Sub-LOE manager: U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.*

READY (Short-Term)

- » **LREC Investment:** Invest in language, regional expertise, and cultural capability development. [READY #7]

MATURE (Mid-Term)

- » **Train CWMD:** Incorporate education/training into ARSOF learning institutions to enable operations that track, monitor, and counter WMD. [MATURE #3]
- » **Codify Doctrine:** Codify ARSOF doctrine and education for FID, COIN, CT and support to resistance movements (up to and including UW). [MATURE #7]
- » **Partner Investments:** Invest in education initiatives that prepare operators to develop effective partnerships in foreign cultures and to build partner capabilities. [MATURE #8]
- » **Ambiguity Education Models:** Create and implement education models that train operations to rapidly integrate into, and excel within, ambiguous environments. [MATURE #9]
- » **Institutionalize Hybrid Conflict:** Invest in hybrid conflict research/education within ARSOF institutions. [MATURE #10]

LOE #2: PROVIDE

PROVIDE the nation's premier SOF to JFCs and interagency leaders. This LOE focuses primarily on operational or Operating Force responsibilities, which are those missions that support units in combat or other operations. The USASOC mission statement reflects this responsibility as it identifies requirements to ORGANIZE, EQUIP, and SUSTAIN ARSOF. These requirements comprise the three sub-LOEs for capability development in this section.

>> ORGANIZE

Provide trained and ready forces. *Sub-LOE manager: USASOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G3.*

READY (Short-Term)

- » **Readiness Model:** Develop and implement a new ARSOF Sustainable Readiness Model. [READY #2]
- » **Improve SOF/CF I3:** Improve SOF-CF interdependence, interoperability, and integration. [READY #3]
- » **Improve JIIM-P:** Improve joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partnerships. [READY #4]
- » **Build the ARSOF Brand:** Improve understanding of the full range of ARSOF capabilities with external audiences. [READY #5]
- » **Responsive Force:** Identify more responsive mechanisms to deploy forces when needed. [READY #8]

>> EQUIP

Provide equipment to trained and ready forces. *Sub-LOE manager: USASOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G8.*

READY (Short-Term)

- » **ARSOF 2022 Requirements:** Review unfinished ARSOF 2022 objectives; complete valid unfinished requirements. [READY #9]

MATURE (Mid-Term)

- » **Decentralized MC:** Empower decentralized Mission Command (COP and situational awareness via hand-held data, blue force tracking systems, and secure communications). [MATURE #4]
- » **Increase Clan Tech:** Increase ARSOF clandestine and low-visibility technology (mobility platforms, weapons systems, and communications technology – secure, insecure, and non-attributable systems). [MATURE #5]
- » **Agile SPP:** Streamline resourcing and capability development processes to be more agile/adaptive. [MATURE #12]

INVEST (Long-Term)

- » **Edge Tech:** Procure the technology and weapons systems that keep ARSOF on the cutting edge. [INVEST #1]
- » **Agile Mobility:** Procure mobility systems that are agile enough to quickly deploy, resilient enough to operate in austere environments, and require minimal maintenance/logistics. [INVEST #2]
- » **Improve C4I:** Procure C2 and intelligence technology that improve the speed and ease with which we process/synthesize information at the tactical and operational levels. [INVEST #3]
- » **Expedite OE Understanding:** Procure communications and intelligence systems that facilitate rapid collective understanding of the environment, adversarial actions, and emerging threats. [INVEST #4]
- » **Decision-enabling:** Develop and integrate systems and processes that enable operator/leader level decision making. [INVEST #5]

Information Sharing

USASOC G2 is leading an effort designed to provide Intel analysts from across the Department of Defense and intelligence communities access to SOF-specific reporting that was previously inaccessible. The project integrates Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and other SOF-specific reporting into a DCGS compatible repository known as the ARSOF Data Warehouse. The data can then be shared through the DCGS Integrated Backbone federation with all who have access to DCGS-Army and DCGS-A Lite. For the first time, analysts across the intelligence community will be able to access valuable SOF-specific reporting and include that data in their assessments as they support operations globally. The project represents a substantial breakthrough in SOF, CF and JIIM interdependence, interoperability, and integration.

Campaign Plan Assessment

While the campaign plan synchronizes the command's activities toward achieving capability development, it requires regular venues to assess progress. The Campaign Plan assessment methodology allows for both bottom-up feedback and top-down guidance to adapt the plan as necessary. There are a number of assessment forums to gather this information:

- » **Capstone Assessment:** USASOC Commanders' Conference serves as the semi-annual venue for commanders to receive updates on objective completion based on the Commanding General's priorities. Key outputs from this forum are prioritization of resources and approval of changes to the strategy.
- » **Commander Informed Assessment:** The EOC oversees the continuous improvement of the strategic planning process as it relates to *USASOC 2035*. This assessment is a targeted evaluation of the enterprise's efforts as determined by commander priorities and in preparation for the Capstone Assessment. Objectives rotate quarterly so that each receives an annual assessment. The Deputy Commanding General for Force Modernization and Development and the Deputy to the Commanding General co-chair this event. The key outputs are preparing objectives for commander review and vetting recommendations for the strategy, campaign plan, or POM.
- » **Steady State Assessment:** Solutions-based assessment that offers a holistic assessment of the enterprise's efforts toward achieving the force of 2035. This assessment is unconstrained by priorities. The Deputy to the Commanding General chairs this meeting on a bi-monthly basis. The key outputs are linking solutions to objective completion and identifying/proposing improvements to the campaign plan.

- » **Population Influence:** Develop and incorporate methods and technology that improve USASOC's ability to influence populations and to understand/address how adversaries and their proxies do the same (Cyber and related capabilities). [INVEST #6]
- » **NEXGEN UAS:** Obtain next generation unmanned aerial systems that provide longer operational range, over horizon observation, and can be launched and recovered by tactical units. [INVEST #9]
- » **NEXGEN Rotary:** Obtain the next generation of ARSOF rotary-wing capabilities for transport and fire support that have longer range and greater fuel efficiency. [INVEST #10]
- » **NEXGEN Counter-IADS:** Obtain capabilities for ARSOF rotary-wing and unmanned platforms to penetrate integrated air defense systems. [INVEST #11]

>> SUSTAIN

Provide force sustainment. *Sub-LOE manager: USASOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G4.*

INVEST (Long-Term)

- » **Enabler Careers:** Create the system/opportunities to retain enabler personnel in ARSOF for more of their careers. [INVEST #12]

LOE #3: Preserve

PRESERVE our force & unique mandate. This LOE focuses primarily on USASOC's responsibility to ensure the personal readiness of assigned Soldiers, Army Civilians, and their Family Members. The USASOC mission statement reflects this responsibility as it identifies the requirement to SUPPORT ARSOF. This requirement, therefore, becomes the single sub-LOE for this section.

>> SUPPORT

Enable & preserve our team & legacy. *Sub-LOE manager: USASOC Deputy Chief of Staff, G8.*

READY (Short-Term)

- » **Health of the Force:** Improve ARSOF human/spiritual performance, behavioral health, social readiness, and resilience. Recently added as an objective to represent Preservation of the Force and Family. [READY #10]

MATURE (Mid-Term)

- » **Gray Zone Indicators:** Improve ARSOF intelligence collection, analysis, and synthesis capabilities that enable understanding of the Human Domain and provide indicators and warnings for gray zone threats. [MATURE #6]
- » **IT Network Integration:** Integrate IT networks across organizational/institutional boundaries. [MATURE #11]

INVEST (Long-Term)

- » **Cyber Defense Tech:** Obtain technology to protect friendly networks from advanced Cyber threats. [INVEST #8]

CONCLUSION

In an era of uncertainty, ARSOF must continue to provide the nation with a portfolio of complementary capabilities to address future hybrid threats. *USASOC Strategy 2035* defines how ARSOF will evolve to meet the demands of the future operating environment. The strategy outlines the future operational and institutional capabilities necessary to counter threats across the spectrum of conflict. *USASOC Campaign Plan 2035* operationalizes *USASOC Strategy 2035* and guides the command's capability development efforts. Together, the Strategy and Campaign Plan represent the way forward for ARSOF capability development in an effort to ensure the force remains *without equal* for decades to come.



ARSOF PROMISE TO THE NATION

**I PROTECT THE NATION,
WITHOUT FEAR,
WITHOUT FAIL,
WITHOUT EQUAL.**

INDIGENOUS APPROACH



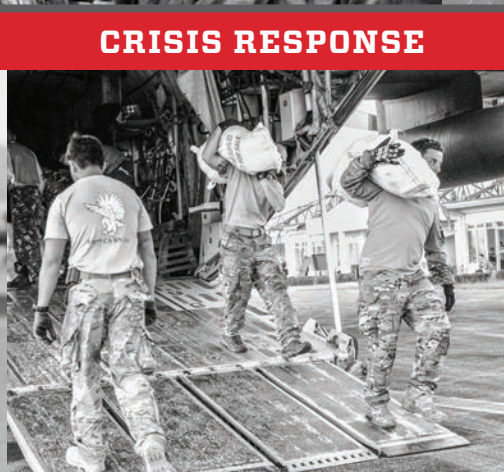
PRECISION TARGETING



UNDERSTAND & INFLUENCE



CRISIS RESPONSE



Formally assessed and selected ARSOF Soldiers, trained to an elite level, deliver strategic value to the nation through four complementary capabilities —

THE PILLARS OF ARSOF CAPABILITY