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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

AIR FORCE DOCTRINE PUBLICATION (AFDP) 3-2 IRREGULAR WARFARE

IRREGULAR WARFARE FUNDAMENTALS

Last Updated: 10 Aug 2020

This section defines irregular warfare (IW) and describes the scope of IW operations. It also summarizes the unique challenges of IW.

DEFINING IW AND ITS UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, defines IW as "a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s)." IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will. The key distinctions between IW and traditional warfare are the context and conduct of the conflict, particularly with regard to the population. Traditional warfare regards the population as peripheral to the conflict, whereas IW considers the population as central. Therefore, traditional warfare focuses on coercing an adversary's key political leaders or defeating an adversary's military capability. By contrast, IW focuses on a struggle for legitimacy and influence of a relevant population. As a result, IW requires a different level of operational thought and threat comprehension.

IW is a form of warfare that is both different from and complementary to traditional warfare and should not be viewed as a subset form of major operations. Despite this difference, it is important to emphasize that contemporary warfare often combines aspects of both.

Joint Force Irregular Warfare Operations
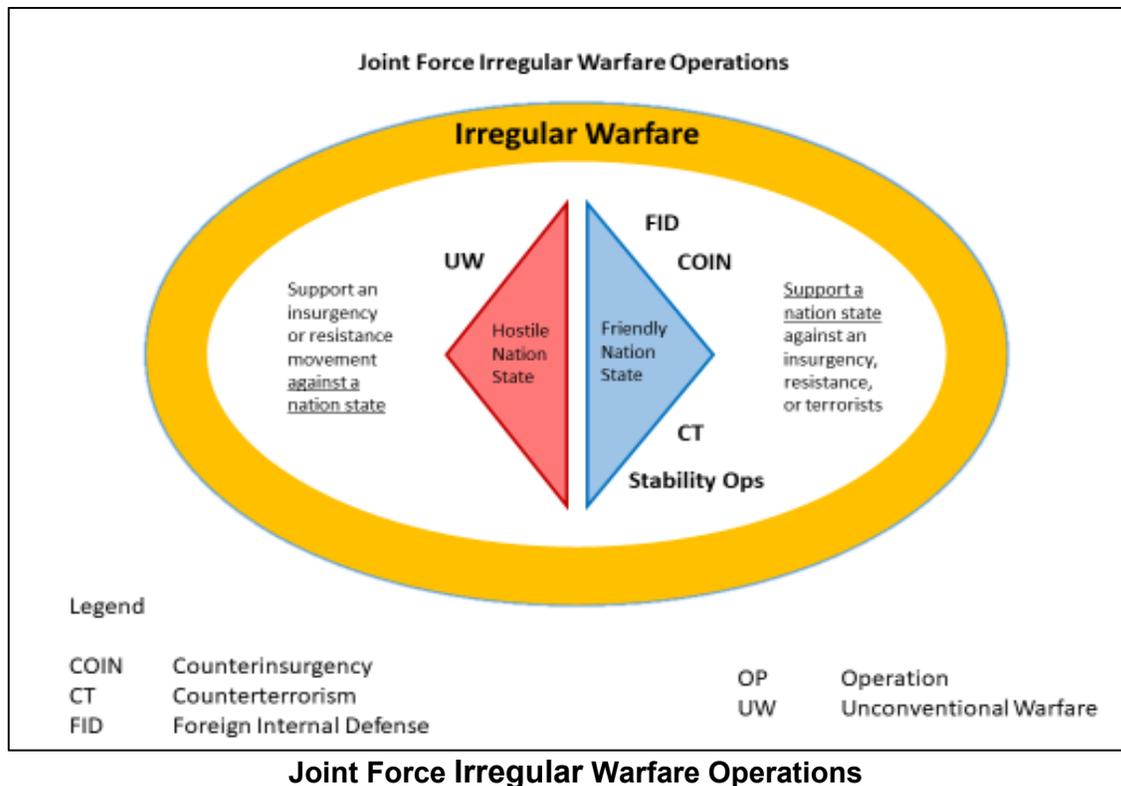
Direct IW Operations

The Department of Defense (DOD) distinguishes between direct IW operations conducted by the joint force and indirect IW activities conducted by, with, and through partner nations (PNs) to address mutual interests with the US. Each operation requires a scoping of the activity and should ensure that the proper authorities are delegated.

Direct IW Operations fall under one of the following categories: counterinsurgency (COIN), counterterrorism (CT), foreign internal defense (FID), stability operations, and unconventional warfare (UW). The figure, "Joint Force Irregular Warfare Operations," displays the five recognized core IW activities as discussed in DOD policy.

Counterinsurgency is defined as the comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes. The purpose of an insurgency is to overthrow and replace an established government or societal structure, or to compel a change in behavior or policy by the government or societal structure.

COIN operations require commitments of assets and personnel. The US normally conducts COIN operations when its mutual strategic interests with a PN are at stake and the PN is incapable of conducting any substantial operations, the situation has

deteriorated significantly (approaching a failed state environment), or when there is no effective government in power (i.e., a failed state).

An insurgency may extend beyond the borders of a single threatened state. Non-state actors such as transnational terrorist and criminal organizations often represent a security threat beyond areas they inhabit. Some pose a direct concern for the US and its partners. Non-state actors often team with insurgents to profit from a conflict. Insurgencies can expand to include local, regional, and global entities. In certain circumstances dictated by law and policy the US may employ forces not only to help defeat an insurgency in a single country, but also to defeat non-state adversaries operating in other countries or ungoverned areas. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction[1] and related dual-use technologies, as well as the ability to affect international commerce, give small, non-state organizations potentially disproportionate capabilities. For more information, see JP 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.

Counterterrorism[2] activities and operations seek to neutralize terrorists and their organizations and networks by rendering them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals. Successful CT necessitates stable, protracted engagement that leads to familiarization with the operating environments and facilitates security and stability for key populations. It requires a coordinated use of the instruments of national power to negate the terrorist network's physical or psychological violence and undermine its power, will, credibility, and legitimacy among the population. Security is of the utmost importance. In its absence, terrorist networks are able to exacerbate or exploit a population's grievances and gain influence. For more information see JP 3-26, *Joint Combating Terrorism*[3].

Foreign internal defense is defined as participation by civilian agencies and military forces of a government or "international organization in any of the programs or activities undertaken by a host nation (HN) government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, violent extremism, terrorism, and other threats to its security" (JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*). FID is often conducted in conjunction with COIN, CT, special operations, etc., in support of a PN. However, it is not solely a military function. The diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power are keys to successful FID. Special operations forces and general purpose forces both play critical roles in preparing for and executing FID activities to include assessing, advising, training, assisting, and equipping IW partner forces. For more information, see AFDP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*.

Stability Activities are various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the US in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, and to provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. For more information, see JP 3-07, *Stability*.

[1,2,3] Common access card required.

Unconventional warfare[4] is defined as "activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area" (JP 3-05, *Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*[5]). UW operations can be used to exploit a hostile power's political, military, economic, and psychological vulnerability by developing and sustaining indigenous resistance forces to accomplish US and coalition strategic objectives. UW can include a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by, with, and through indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.

US Special Operations Command is the lead DOD component for UW, although in some cases general purpose forces support is required. UW operations are usually conducted in enemy-held, enemy-controlled, or politically sensitive territory. For more information see JP 3-05, *Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*[6].

Indirect IW Activities

In general, conducting indirect IW by, with, and through partner nations is preferable to conducting direct IW operations. This mostly entails enabling partner nations to conduct effective IW operations.

Under the umbrella of security cooperation programs, the DOD is involved in a variety of activities, as part of the whole of government concept, by, with, and through PNs to build partner capacity and assist with internal defense and development. This may include things such as education, bilateral agreements, and foreign military sales. The DOD is also prepared to employ joint forces in support of executing security assistance initiatives through joint missions in both combat and non-combat environments. The DOD conducts security force assistance (SFA) to provide expertise to support the development of capacity and capability of foreign security forces and other PN governmental institutions.

The US engages with PNs in various activities to support the PN's government legitimacy and help develop internal defense and development strategies to meet both US and PN objectives.

Security Cooperation (SC) is defined as "All DOD interactions with foreign security establishments to build security relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and partner nation military and security capabilities for self-

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[4,5,6] For official use only; common access card required.

defense and multinational operations, and provide United States forces with peacetime and contingency access to allied and partner nations" (JP 3-20, *Security Cooperation*).

Security Assistance (SA) is defined as a "group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended; the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended; or other related statutes by which the US provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, lease, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives, and those that are funded and authorized through the Department of State to be administered by Department of Defense / Defense Security Cooperation Agency are considered part of security cooperation" (JP 3-20). SA fosters interoperability between US forces and our allies. Within applicable legal and policy constraints, Air Force personnel can train and equip friendly foreign forces. Staffs should consider this requirement during planning to ensure appropriate coordination within the joint force. The DOD and other government agencies train foreign militaries and law enforcement personnel through several different programs, some funded by accounts within the DOD budget and others by the Department of State-administered foreign aid budget. SA is designed to help selected countries meet their internal defense needs and to promote sustainable development and growth of responsive institutions. The joint force commander should distinguish between personnel assigned to a combatant command performing a train-and-advise mission and military personnel training host nation forces pursuant to authorities under Title 22, United States Code, *Foreign Relations and Intercourse*, and who fall under the authority of the country's Chief of Mission. Those personnel performing a Title 22 security assistance mission, by law, are restricted from performing duties of a combatant nature. If the military personnel are performing a Title 22 security assistance mission of a non-combat nature in a host nation with a security environment akin to a combat zone, the Chief of Mission may delegate or defer the responsibility for force protection to the combatant commander. Iraq is an example where there is a mix of Title 22 foreign military sales cases and Title 10 training occurring simultaneously.

Delivery of foreign military sales items can be performed in conjunction with combined operations and contingencies or with other training programs conducted by the geographic combatant commands. These operations may also be conducted by various departments and agencies of the US government.

Security Sector Assistance (SSA). United States SSA policy is aimed at strengthening the ability of the US to help allies and PNs build their security capacity, consistent with the principles of good governance and rule of law. SSA is mandated by Presidential Policy Directive 23, *Security Sector Assistance*. SSA refers to the policies, programs, and activities the US uses to:

✪ Engage with foreign partners and help shape their policies and actions in the security sector.

- ✪ Help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate institutions to provide security, safety, and justice for their people.

- ✪ Enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges.

- ✪ Build PN's medical capacity and capability to respond and take care of its citizens.

DOD programs should be conducted to achieve four SSA goals:

- ✪ Help PNs build sustainable capacity to address common security challenges, to disrupt and defeat transnational threats; sustain legitimate and effective public safety, security, and justice sector institutions; support legitimate self-defense; contribute to US or partner military operations which may have urgent requirements; maintain control of their territory and jurisdiction waters including air, land, and sea borders; and help indigenous forces assume greater responsibility for operations where US military forces are present.

- ✪ Promote partner support for US interests through cooperation on national, regional, and global priorities. Priorities include military access to airspace and basing rights; improved interoperability and training opportunities; cooperation on law enforcement, counterterrorism, counternarcotic, combating organized crime and arms trafficking; countering weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and terrorism; and intelligence, peacekeeping, and humanitarian efforts.

- ✪ Promote universal values, such as good governance, transparent and accountable oversight of security forces, rule of law, transparency, accountability, delivery of fair and effective justice, and respect for human rights.

- ✪ Strengthen collective security and multinational defense arrangements and organizations, including helping to build the capacity of troop- and police-contributing nations to United Nations and other multilateral peacekeeping missions, as well as through regional exercises, expert exchanges, and coordination of regional intelligence and law enforcement information exchanges.

Security Force Assistance (SFA) is defined as "the DOD activities that support the development of the capacity and capability of FSF [foreign security forces] and their supporting institutions" (JP 3-20) SFA is conducted to assist PNs in their efforts to defend against transnational and internal threats to stability. SFA spans the range of military operations and includes military engagement, security cooperation, crisis response, and contingency operations. It can even be accomplished during major operations and campaigns in support of US national strategic objectives. SFA should be closely coordinated with relevant US Government agencies. FID and SFA are similar at the tactical level, where advisory skills are applicable to both. At the operational and

strategic levels, both FID and SFA focus on preparing foreign security forces (FSF) to combat lawlessness, subversion, insurgency, terrorism, and other internal threats to their security. However, SFA also prepares FSF to defend against external threats and to perform as part of an international force. For more information see JP 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, and JP 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense*.