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Joseph E. Osborne

Abstract

Strategic Consequences: How Executive and Organizational Decision-Making Impacts the Outcome of Unconventional Warfare

Conventional academic discussion vis-à-vis America's Special Operations Forces, is largely focused at the tactical and operational level of analysis. This means the emphasis on explaining outcomes is placed on personnel (recruiting, assessing, selecting, and training), cutting edge equipment, innovative tactics, or advanced command and control procedures. Addressing this long-standing trend, I argue that factors well beyond the widely accepted explanations for success or failure are in play. Additionally, these factors are understandable, are manageable, and may have as great or greater an impact on the outcome of a campaign as any tactical consideration. Using the narrowly defined and discrete special operations mission of Unconventional Warfare (UW) as a platform, this dissertation looks beyond the traditional explanations to expand our understanding of the role that executive level organizations play in achieving success or failure.

The central research question is: *How do the organizational actions at the executive level of government impact the success or failure of unconventional warfare?* This study builds from a foundation of five hypotheses that each attempt to address a segment of the totality of the question and form a complete answer. The hypotheses include – decentralizing control, intent coherence across stakeholders, a unified effort from those stakeholders, continuity in key personnel, and the impact of the President's attitude toward special operations. Analyzing the cases with a combination of index scoring, key aspects of Lay Epistemic and Groupthink Theory, and contextual deconstruction in the spirit of critical hermeneutics, provided the intellectual rigor to substantiate the findings.

Ultimately, the evidence demonstrates that Intent Coherence is a necessary condition for a successful outcome. Unity of Effort is also necessary but is pinned to intent coherence. Delegation is important and considered a sufficient condition because it contributes to the likelihood of success. The findings also confirm the validity of the key aspects of Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure.

Key Words: *Unconventional Warfare, Decision-Making, Strategy, Policy, Syria, Guatemala, Bay of Pigs, Cuba, Angola, Tibet.*

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A single name on an authorship line is normal, but at least in the case of this work, somewhat misleading. There is no serious research or scholarship produced that is not the byproduct of some sort of team that influences, guides, challenges, and inspires. That is also true in this case. Most significantly, my wife Jackie Osborne, someone who has always indulged my lifetime of weird pursuits and then encouraged me to get across the finish line, gets all the credit. In a nutshell, if there was no Jackie in my life, I would not be writing these final lines of my dissertation now.

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Executive Summary

Strategic Consequences: How Executive and Organizational Decision-Making Impacts the Outcome of Unconventional Warfare

Conventional academic discussion vis-à-vis America's Special Operations Forces, is largely focused at the tactical and operational level of analysis. This means the emphasis on explaining outcomes is placed on personnel (recruiting, assessing, selecting, and training), cutting edge equipment, innovative tactics, or advanced command and control procedures. Using the narrowly defined and discrete special operations mission of Unconventional Warfare (UW) as a platform, I argue that factors well beyond the widely accepted explanations for success or failure are in play, are understandable, are manageable, and may have as great or greater an impact on the outcome of a U.S. Unconventional Warfare campaign as any tactical consideration.

Addressing the research question: *How do the organizational actions at the executive level of government impact the success or failure of unconventional warfare?* This study builds from a foundation of five hypotheses that each attempt to address a segment of the totality of the question and form a complete answer. The hypotheses, derived from established principles of war and research generated observations, include – decentralizing control, intent coherence across stakeholders, a unified effort from those stakeholders, continuity in key personnel, and the impact of the President's attitude toward special operations.

A review of the current academic discussion entails a broad to narrow review structured to highlight existing work and theory on the subject and flag shortfalls or gaps. The approach for the literature used four broad categories as an organizing scheme: overarching military theory, special operations theory, counterinsurgency theory and strategic decision-making. The intent was to connect to foundational theory and literature from the likes of Sun Tzu and Clausewitz while drawing parallels to more contemporary writing where appropriate. This is particularly true in the examination of counterinsurgency literature.

Ultimately, three elements of conventional wisdom become evident throughout the literature review. First, the scholarship identifies a solid theoretical and historical underpinning to inform thinking on the link between warfare and politics. This foundation arguably addresses a grand strategy linkage but falls short concerning the impact of decisions on special operations. Secondly, with some notable exceptions, the bulk of the literature on special operations is either overly broad, or it is focused on understanding success or failure based on non-strategic factors. Finally, very little attempts to bridge the continuum from

a strategic objective to actions and outcomes. This is the niche area that begs for explanation to understand how we get from a “hand waving across a big map” in a Washington D.C. Situation Room, to a Special Forces team establishing contact with an indigenous resistance group in the Hindu Kush.

Introducing and defining key terms and the five working hypotheses were the key elements of the conceptual side of the analytic framework that allowed for tangible scoring and contextual analysis. Discussing the key elements of blending theory and the hypotheses to deconstruct and interpret information, the conceptual framework also allowed logical inferences and conclusions.

Blending elements of qualitative and historical research techniques this study examined a total of five cases drawn from an original pool of fourteen. Analyzing the cases with a combination of index scoring, key aspects of Lay Epistemic and Groupthink Theory, and contextual deconstruction in the spirit of critical hermeneutics, provided the intellectual rigor to substantiate the findings.

Choosing cases for the initial analysis was driven by factors like outcomes (successful or unsuccessful), geography, time-period, and unapologetically, researcher’s interest. Selecting Guatemala, Cuba, Tibet, and Angola as the virtual laboratory offered a good balance and mitigated the risk of cherry picking select cases to drive toward a predetermined outcome. The outcome of the initial case analysis identified clear trends and patterns with respect to the hypotheses. Delegation, Unity of Effort, and Intent Coherence emerged as viable factors with explanatory power. This set the conditions for an in-depth analysis of the 2014 Syria Train and Equip initiative using the three most correlative hypotheses.

The Syria Train and Equip case analysis loosely followed the multi-causal model to achieve a more in depth understanding of the stakeholders, motivations, and objectives of the conflict. This played an important role in staying on task in a contemporary case; with the Syrian Civil War still not fully resolved as this research finalizes, reaching logical conclusions and navigating the ambiguities and fog of the operating environment remain a challenge. Analyzing the case data and evidence employed a similar methodology to previous cases using a refined (reduced) set of hypotheses and Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory.

Ultimately, the evidence of the cases and the counterbalance of both the theoretical aspects and context informed by critical hermeneutics, demonstrated the validity of the findings. These include Intent Coherence as a necessary condition for a successful outcome. This is amplified because the very actions implicit in the hypothesis are both executive level decisions and strategic in nature. Unity of Effort is also necessary but is pinned to intent coherence. It is unlikely that any situation would exist where unity of effort could exist without the precondition of a broad understanding of objectives and intent. Delegation is important and considered a sufficient condition because it contributes to the likelihood of success. The

findings also confirm the validity of the key aspects of Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure while also identifying value of applying both theories to achieve understanding.

Identifying best practices for practitioners in the policy and strategy arena, was a positive derivative of the research. Emphasizing actions linked to the findings highlighted the importance of delegating authorities, actively pursuing intent coherence, practicing flexibility, and managing expectations with strategic patience. Addressing systemic challenges in the National Security Council highlighted the need for legislatively mandated professionalization of key staff positions.

In consolidating the analysis of five cases, this research employed a lens using five distinct hypotheses, two theories and a continuous context analysis informed by Critical Hermeneutics. Gleaning data from both historical cases and a more contemporary, and arguably still active case, reflected a blended methodological approach intended to optimize the intellectual tools available and maintain an appropriate “stand-off” to permit a broader understanding of what the research questions asks, and what the answer means. The three hypotheses identified as necessary or sufficient served as the mechanism to answer “how” organizational actions impact success or failure. This was further amplified by weaving the key aspects of the theories into the context that shaped the overall understanding of how these hypotheses are confirmed.

Considering a future research agenda, the implications of the unique methodological technique and the analytic tools applied in this study are considerable. The framework for analysis and the methodology employed has clear potential for portability as a research approach well beyond the narrow parameters of unconventional warfare. With an eye toward informing policy makers and strategists across the governmental continuum, an ultimate goal is to provide fundamental skills with broad applicability that serve as a touchstone for those charged with the monumental task of creating good policy and strategy.

Chapter I: Introduction *Questioning Failure – Questioning Success*

On the nights of 19 and 20 October 2001, just 38 days after the Al Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, two Special Forces A-Teams launched from a base in Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan and infiltrated Northern Afghanistan aboard specially outfitted MH-47 Chinook helicopters. Each team linked up with established anti-Taliban resistance movements that had been in contact with the CIA and in some cases had CIA operatives embedded. Quickly establishing rapport with the indigenous fighters, the Special Forces Teams moved with their counterparts on horseback and on foot to engage the Taliban. At a time when the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were briefing the press on an air campaign and mollifying an impatient American public, the presence of the U.S. Special Forces in Afghanistan remained a closely guarded secret. Within weeks the tide shifted dramatically. More Special Forces teams scattered across Afghanistan to organize resistance and the Taliban Stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif fell to the Northern Alliance on 10 November. The Taliban collapsed quickly with the introduction of additional U.S. ground and air assets. The city of Kandahar, spiritual and political birthplace of the Taliban, fell on 07 December 2001. What remained of the Taliban government went into hiding or fled into Pakistan.¹

With the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the midst of the Syrian Civil War, the Obama Administration announced a plan in May of 2014 to recruit, train, equip and advise a Syrian force, comprised of moderate Muslims to support the coalition efforts against ISIL. Beginning with the difficult task of recruiting and screening non-jihadist volunteers who agreed to sign pledges to only fight ISIL (despite near universal hatred of Assad), the initiative was hindered from the start. With the commitment of several hundred U.S. troops and the allocation of \$500 million dollars, the program had an initial goal of training 3,000 troops in 2015 and 5,400 additional troops each subsequent year.² By May of 2015, the Department of Defense announced the start of training for the first class of ninety recruits³. By September of 2015, less than a dozen U.S. trained Syrian fighters were actively engaged in the fight. Several weeks later the administration cancelled the program and shifted the remaining assets to established opposition groups.⁴

Introduction

The stories presented above evoke a line of inquiry that both extends beyond these two examples and begs the obvious question – how did these two campaigns turn out so differently? The Syria and Afghanistan cases were chosen to introduce this study because they highlight a quandary. In 2001, a well-trained, but largely untested force, using what amounted to “come as you are” equipment and technology, exceeded all expectations in ousting the Taliban government in a matter of months. In 2014, an equally well-trained and now highly experienced force, using battle tested equipment matched with state-of-the-art technology, and a proven command and control structure, was a failure.

The literature review presented in chapter 2 will highlight that academic discussion vis-à-vis America's Special Operations Forces, is largely focused at the tactical and operational level of analysis. This means the emphasis is placed on personnel (recruiting, assessing, selecting, and training), cutting edge equipment, innovative tactics, or advanced command and control procedures.

In this dissertation, I argue that factors well beyond the widely accepted explanations for success or failure are in play, are understandable, are manageable, and may have as great or greater an impact on the outcome of a U.S. Unconventional Warfare (UW) campaign as any tactical consideration. The overall research topic is the role and impact of U.S. executive decision making on the outcome of unconventional warfare when applied as a solution to a national security challenge. The objective of this research is to fill the gap in the causal chain that links strategic decisions to operational and tactical outcomes.

Why and What is UW?

UW is one of the core functions for the United States Special Operations Command, the Headquarters charged with providing trained and equipped special operations forces from all the services. For this research, UW provides the ideal platform to gauge the output end of the decision making process. It is, as shown below, concisely defined and discrete enough for empirical classification – it is not easily confused with other activities. There are a finite number of examples that allow a decent sampling for purposes of case study analysis while still providing broad diversity in terms of time period, political environment, geography, and most importantly, outcomes. Finally, UW has been, and will continue to be, a full-spectrum option in terms of statecraft; it has a role and applicability in both peacetime and conflict.

The U.S. Department of Defense Joint Publication 3.05 defines Unconventional Warfare 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.* This definition offers some important distinctions between UW and other types of military or interagency operations that are important for both framing and scoping the research. Examples of recent successful uses of UW include, as referenced in the first vignette, the 2001 campaign to overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan using the Northern Alliance and other opposition groups and the 2003 campaign in Northern Iraq that placed U.S. Special Forces with the Kurdish Pesh Merga. A recent unsuccessful UW campaign was the first iteration of training and advising the “Free Syrian Army” to defeat the Islamic State; introduced in the second vignette this case is explored in detail in chapter 5.

There are distinctions that separate unconventional warfare from other types of loosely similar operations like a coup d'état. While coups have historically been part of the clandestine activities of the CIA and

DoD involvement has been minimal, the observable difference is the intended outcome and the nature of the proxy elements. Ousting and replacing the sitting executive of a government is the singular objective in a coup and the agent or proxy is typically some empowered element of the state; usually the designee waiting to assume power. Another aspect of this study that bears mention is the inclusion of unconventional warfare operations conducted or led by non-Department of Defense elements – typically, the Central Intelligence Agency.

For clarity, executive decision making is the blanket term that includes those decisions, policies, and actions that emanate from the executive branch of government and the organizational systems in place to support the process; essentially, the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (in various administrations a title often used interchangeably with National Security Advisor), the National Security Council and staff, The Offices of the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of National Intelligence (a position known by various titles over the temporal window of this study), and other members of the NSC as well as informal contributors serving as part of the President’s advisory team; hereafter collectively referred to as executive decision makers.⁵ This range of positions is included to provide a structural overview and should not be misconstrued to muddy the water with personalities. History shows that key actors can, and often do, have a disproportionate impact with respect to their official position. However, this study is an analysis of systemic processes and impacts on outcome, rather than the random presence of a Henry Kissinger filling the role of Secretary of State and National Security Adviser to Presidents Nixon and Ford or Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North’s outsized influence as an NSC Staffer in the Reagan White House.

The Research Question

Several issues are apparent in framing the problem that this research will address. The primary issue is that current literature falls short in explaining how strategic level actions and decisions influence the outcomes of unconventional warfare. This includes the scholars who focus on decision making as a behavioral attribute and generally focus on the “why” of the decision rather than the impact on the outcome. An additional issue is that both current literature and practitioners focus well below strategic factors to explain the success or failure of unconventional warfare. This narrow lens has explanatory value but largely ignores the policy level factors that are the bread and butter of strategic decision makers. Finally, the shallow explanatory value of tactically focused theory leaves a gap between the outcomes and the strategic conditions set in place.

The research question that emerges from the review of the current state of knowledge is:

How do the organizational actions at the executive level of government impact the success or failure of unconventional warfare?

This question is written to find a causal chain that fills the shortfall between strategic decisions and outcome. The organizational actions are generally framed in terms of constraints, restraints, and limitations. The definitions for this framing are provided by the U.S. Department of Defense. “*Constraint*: in the context of planning, a requirement placed on the command by a higher command that dictates an action, thus restricting freedom of action”.⁶ Similarly, but with an important nuance, “*Restraint*: In the context of planning, a requirement that is placed on the command by a higher command that prohibits an action, thus restricting freedom of action”.⁷ The critical difference between constraint and restraint is the former establishes a requirement and the latter prohibits an action. Finally, limitation largely encapsulates the meaning of constraint and restraint while broadening the scope of restriction and is defined thusly; “*Limitation*: an action required or prohibited by higher authority such as a constraint or a restraint and other restrictions that limit the commander’s freedom of actions such as diplomatic agreements, rules of engagement, political and economic conditions in affected countries and host nation issues.”⁸ In addition to the broader scope of possible restriction considerations, the definition of limitation is also unique in that it recognizes the source as coming from “higher authority” where constraints and restraints are generally seen as coming from higher commands. This implicitly recognizes that limitations may be set from outside the Department of Defense.

Examples of how these factors may come into play include a *constraint* requiring local commanders to seek approval from a designated higher authority prior to maneuvering north of a specific map reference. A *restraint* may be couched as a prohibition against exceeding a specific troop limitation in a geographic area or country such as the White House and Congressionally agreed limit of 55 U.S. Advisers on the ground in El Salvador.⁹ A common *limitation* is seen in rules of engagement that may only allow U.S. personnel to return fire if fired upon or, prohibitions on alcohol consumption in predominantly Muslim countries.

Supporting Hypotheses

Presenting the hypotheses prior to establishing a theoretical anchor is a purposeful decision. For this research, military theory and the derived principles provide the basis for the hypotheses but fall short in terms of testable assertions. This requires a theoretical approach that is more transcendent; Clausewitz’s principle of maneuver asserted in the context of a major Prussian campaign, may not provide a sound theoretical basis in a complex modern context. This is why the hypotheses, born of long-standing

Clausewitz type principles are viewed and tested through the lens of more contextually relevant theories as discussed briefly below and detailed in Chapter 3.

A long-standing principle for the military is the desirability of centralized planning and decentralized execution- loosely interpreted, this means providing the objective, intent, desired end-state and, most importantly, resources into the hands of the commander charged with executing the operation. Ideally, this model cascades from the highest level to the lowest with a traceable linkage from the platoon in contact all the way to the Executive Branch. In practice, this principle has been frequently ignored. President Lyndon Johnson personally approving daily target lists for airstrikes during the Vietnam conflict are a perfect example.¹⁰ The significance of the over-centralization of control, typically referred to as “micro-management,” justifies the overarching hypothesis that:

H1- Delegated Control: The less operational control exercised at the strategic level of government will increase the likelihood of success for an Unconventional Warfare campaign.

Clear and understandable delivery of a directive or order with an equal comprehension of the overall intent is critical in setting conditions for subordinates to achieve an objective. Consider the confusion of George Armstrong Custer’s final dispatch to Major Frederick Benteen at the Battle of Little Bighorn. Custer initially conveyed the order verbally to a courier. Fearing that the soldier, Giovanni Martini, a recent immigrant with a heavy Italian accent, would not be able to deliver the message, Custer’s Adjutant, 1st Lieutenant W.W. Cooke wrote out the message. Major Benteen, miles away with several hundred troops guarding the pack wagons, received the now famous note, “*Benteen, Come on. Big village. Be quick. Bring Packs. P.S. Bring packs. W.W. Cooke.*”¹¹ For Major Benteen, among many other dilemmas faced that day, this order represented contradictory guidance; responding quickly and bringing the pack wagons was simply not possible. The misinterpretation of Custer’s order, even at this tactical engagement, had profound effect. The ensuing disaster served to vilify the native tribes and influenced U.S. Government “Indian Policy” for decades.

If this type of loose interpretation occurs at a strategic level, the results can be even more profound. Intent and directives are dynamic in that they move through a number of steps prior to being issued and initiating actions. At the executive levels of government this would be seen as the impact of intermediary executives or staffers, skewing the interpretation of intent and directives leading to a disparity between the “action desired” by the decision making authority, “action directed” by the staff, and the “action executed”. Therefore, it is appropriate to hypothesize that:

H2 – Intent Coherence: The greater the misinterpretation of intent, subsequently conveyed to executing organizations, the less likely it is that a UW campaign or operation will succeed.

Achieving a unity of effort— a condition usually best achieved by placing all participating agencies and organizations under one responsible commander or leader, is a practice that helps to eliminate confusion, simplify communications and focus the attention and efforts of all participants to a single source of guidance and decision making. Linnington also identifies “unity” as an independent variable in her work to measure a similar hypothesis.¹² For the military this is a principle, codified as “Unity of Command”, that exists for individuals in the form of a chain of command and for organizations through doctrinal command relationships. The same does not necessarily hold true for other departments and agencies within the federal government. As a result, in a complex, potentially volatile scenario where unconventional warfare is the tool chosen to achieve a national security objective, the role of lead and supporting organizations and concurrent responsibilities may be unclear. The significance of this unifying principle in focusing efforts and eliminating confusion justifies a hypothesis that:

H3 – Unity of Effort: Defining lead and supporting agencies or departments so the operationalized activities of the stakeholders are actively synchronized towards a common goal, will increase the likelihood of success.

Chapter 3 will lay out the methodology, inclusive of the research journey which made allowance for en-vivo hypotheses to emerge as a byproduct. In fact, two additional hypotheses did materialize as a result of both document analysis and through subject interviews.

The idea of consistency in leadership and key functionaries simmered in the background until the analysis of the Bay of Pigs case indicated a breakdown between two administrations. This drove the development of the first en-vivo hypothesis that:

H4 – Continuity: Maintaining key personnel in their roles as leaders, planners, and executors will increase the likelihood of success of an unconventional warfare campaign.

The overall role of the Chief Executive, while never downplayed or dismissed, was never fully considered in terms of a hypothesis because of this dissertation’s focus on organizational decision making. During subject interviews, a suggestion that the tone set by the POTUS early in the administration’s tenure, vis-à-vis special operations and covert and clandestine activity, could play an important role in influencing organizational decision making. Reconsidering the role of the President from this perspective, the hypothesis that emerged offers that:

H5- POTUS Tone: Presidential attitude and comfort with employing covert, clandestine and special operations will influence policy makers to recommend these options with greater frequency and will increase the likelihood of success of an unconventional warfare campaign.

Employing Theory as part of the Toolkit

The role of theory in this dissertation is two-fold. Following the traditional line, theory, or in this case theories, will help to explain the why and how a phenomenon exists or occurs; it gives us a perspective that helps us to understand something. The second role of theory for this dissertation is to serve as part of an active toolkit that helps to score, deconstruct, analyze, and provide context to the cases. Chapter Three will provide a more robust description of the broad menu of theories considered for this study and justify why lay-epistemic and group-think theory were selected to provide a lens to help explain the actions of both key individuals within organizations and the group dynamics.

Providing another layer of consideration in the analytic pool, Critical hermeneutics, while probably closer to a philosophy than a theory, does deserve explanation. Evolving from an early interpretivist approach to deciphering theological work, hermeneutics has become more popular in modern social sciences as critical hermeneutics. The critical nature is generally acknowledged as providing an awareness that perspective on a phenomenon is continuously influenced by a myriad of factors that include the researcher's role and motivation in understanding the phenomenon. It provides researchers a heightened sense that empirical evidence, while definitively true from one perspective, is also likely to be nuanced and ambiguous from another.¹³

Structure of the Dissertation

Following a well-established format this dissertation presents a total of 6 chapters to establish a foundation, lay out a conceptual framework, present data and analysis and argue for the findings offered in the last chapter. Examining the current state of the literature and scholarship that frames the discussion on organizational decision making in the context of UW campaigns, chapter 2 scales from large to small and broad to narrow in terms of view and perspective; opening the discussion with Sun Tzu and Clausewitz almost guarantees a principle based world view and a grand strategy perspective. Narrowing quickly to more contemporary authors and theorists, the review is structured to attempt to frame our understanding of the various influences that explain how strategic decisions cascade into tactical outcomes.

Consolidating theory, analysis, and methodology, Chapter 3 breaks down the intellectual foundation for examining the impact of executive decision making. In addition to introducing and justifying Groupthink and Lay Epistemic Theories, this chapter will detail where and how they fit into the analytic process. Explaining the analytic tools, designed to deconstruct documents and transcripts through the lens of the working hypotheses, will further flesh out the details of the process.

The methodology section of chapter 3 will focus on the mechanics of blending qualitative, historical, and theory-based techniques to separate key factors, trends, and patterns from the large volume of information. This section will also highlight the importance of critical hermeneutics as an important overlay in deciphering context and perspective.¹⁴

Applying the methodology to historical campaigns, Chapter 4 will present an overview and analysis of four cases selected from an initial pool of fourteen. The analysis will proceed from the proposition that actions at the executive levels of the U.S. Government, usually seen in the form of policies that levy requirements or constrain actions, will have either a positive or negative impact on the outcome of an unconventional warfare campaign. Each case will be discussed in terms of the five hypotheses that aim to answer the overall research question and through the lens of both Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory and Groupthink theory. This initial case analysis will serve to validate the initial hypotheses, allow refinement, and set the conditions for a more detailed examination of the Syria Train and Equip case.

Examining the U.S. Government's decision to establish a Train and Equip Program for Moderate Syrian Opposition forces, Chapter 5 will offer a more in depth understanding of the stakeholders, motivations, and objectives of the conflict. Using a sharpened set of analytics, refined by the examination of cases in chapter 4, this approach will further incorporate the multi-causal model as a framework. This chapter will be unique in the robust use of interviews as a primary source of information.

The findings and summary presented in chapter 6 will attempt to answer the research question with an approach that will tie index scoring, analysis, and contextual deconstruction into an elegant and understandable conclusion that directly responds to the "how" that is directly stated in the question and the "why" that is strongly implied.

Chapter II: Current State of the Scholarship

Review of the Literature

Scholarship on this topic that both informs the current “state of play” and the mixed methodology research approach comes from a broad interdisciplinary spectrum. Detailing the research methodology in Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive explanation of the methodology. However, in deference to the historical research that provided much of the data for this study, it is important to acknowledge the sources, writ large, that contribute to the overall body of information that informed this work. This information comes from both primary and secondary sources and much of it, while cited appropriately throughout the document, does not contribute to the ongoing dialogue. As a result, it does not rise to a level of scrutiny in the review of the literature.

Thousands of pages of declassified historical documents make up much of the primary source material that provides tangible evidence for the bulk of the historical cases. Where document analysis was hindered by the ongoing classification of primary source documents, individual subject interviews filled the gap. Transcripts and notes from these interviews, corroborated by open source materials, offered important data and insights to the examination of the Syria Train and Equip case.

Secondary source materials included no less than 30 books and an equal number of monographs. Additional background information came from Department of Defense manuals and technical publications. Official CIA after action reports, some of them several thousand pages in length, are grouped with the secondary sources even though interview transcripts with principal functionaries are included in the body of the work. Open source materials, ranging from articles covering historical events pulled from newspaper archives, articles and video archives covering the Angola Civil War, and contemporary accounts of events in Syria, aided in triangulating data and corroborating accounts from varied sources. The result of this holistic approach to existing literature and scholarship recognizes the contributory value of both a well-crafted and theoretically sound analysis and the raw, empirically derived observations coming from sources as diverse as a field notebook to a specialty publication.

The current state of knowledge on this topic is problematic. There is a shortfall in the volume of scholarship that speaks to strategic decision making and the impact on unconventional warfare. Much of the literature is policy focused, or “grey literature” directed at a target audience that circumvents the need to publish in academic journals. It is also normative and enters the dialogue with assumptions that are considered valid, offering solutions based on the expertise of the author. Accordingly, analysis of the related literature is organized to frame the best possible understanding of the state of knowledge.

As an organizational construct, the literature has been grouped into four thematic areas: overarching military theory, special operations theory, counterinsurgency theory and strategic decision making with the grey literature seeded throughout the latter three categories.

Military Theory

Approaching the literature with the intent of establishing a solid foundation and cataloguing the evolutionary waypoints, begins with an examination of the historical literature that establishes a connection between strategic objectives and actions. Military theory informs the way in which national level security objectives, supporting strategies, campaign design and operational and contingency planning are synergized. Theory, and its relationship to policy, strategy, and statecraft has evolved over time. Writing *The Art of War* in the 6th Century B.C., Sun Tzu, a Chinese general and philosopher is widely credited with establishing the foundations for the discipline of Military Science. While he is generally read as favoring decentralized execution by the military, he squarely connects the objectives of the Commander with the objective of the King that he serves – an important recognition of the connection between decision makers and decision executors.¹⁵

Articulating a more contemporary application of military theory requires a temporal leap into the 18th and early 19th Century to examine the work of classic theorists and strategists, Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine-Henri Jomini. Their work is unique for two key reasons: the endurance of their concepts and principles, and the reification of theory into the practical realm of strategy and policy. Harold Winton examines the utility of military theory to both individual practitioners and organizations. Winton sees the first task of theory as defining the field of study.¹⁶ His interpretation also draws on Clausewitz's two-part definition requiring imposing your will on an enemy and recognizing that war is an extension of policy by other means.¹⁷

Speaking on Clausewitz, Winton loosely describes him as a philosopher without strong ties to fixed rules; following a maxim that creativity should not be stifled if adherence to principles are maintained. Concerning Jomini, he found him much more dogmatic; generally believing in a more systematic approach and adherence to fixed principles.¹⁸ Milan Vego agrees and even noted that Jomini believed in principles that could be applied mathematically.¹⁹ Jomini's ideas are easily seen in practice; principles such as a requirement to have a 4 to 1 numerical advantage when attacking are universally accepted by military tacticians. McRaven's concept of achieving relative superiority, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, offers the rare contrarian perspective.

Rounding out his theory with a comparative case study of Generals George Patton and Ulysses Grant, Winton lays the groundwork for analyzing the role that military theory has on the performance of individuals. He concludes that theory can be valuable but may not be necessary.²⁰ Vego further observes that military theorists do not work in a vacuum. Rather, their theories are a byproduct of a blend of philosophy, science, culture, and social influences. Offering a cautionary note, he offers that historical case study analysis must be wary of the significant danger in cherry-picking historical examples.²¹

Providing what is essentially a primer on military theory, Vego frames it as: “a comprehensive analysis of all the aspects of warfare, its patterns and inner structure, and the mutual relationships of its various components/elements”. He offers that military theory includes political, economic, and social relationships within a society and among the societies that create a conflict.²²

The significance of Clausewitz’s assertion that “war is an extension of politics by other means”,²³ does not preclude strategy, as the linkage between policy and warfare, from being misunderstood. B.H. Liddell Hart described it as “the conceptual guidance that coordinates and directs the resources of a nation towards a political objective”.²⁴ Serving as the mechanism that allows military planners to set conditions for an employment of force, strategy is the link from national objectives to strategic and operational planning.²⁵ This concept seems straight forward but, the complexities are limitless. Sharing his thoughts on strategy, Colin Gray offers a tongue in cheek observation that those who do not have to do strategy in a tactical setting, seem to come up with an endless list of solutions.²⁶ Gray’s observation reemerges in the findings of this research where having “skin in the game” is noted for having an influence on outcomes.

The broad military theory is useful in informing a longstanding connection between the system at the seat of power and the application of military capability. Framing his theory with economics, policy, and society, Vego tightens the focus to one more applicable to an unconventional warfare approach. Similarly, Liddell-Hart’s approach that aligns national resources to achieve political objectives speaks to the same complexity. In both cases, the faint connection to applicability to Unconventional Warfare is likely tangential to the greater understanding of nuance and interconnectedness that emerges in more modern scholarship.

Special Operations Theory

Beginning the review on special operations literature, it is appropriate to examine some of the rare offerings that both focus on unconventional warfare from a strategic perspective and invest intellectual energy in maintaining the dialogue at that level. This look is not inclusive of the entirety of literature on unconventional warfare, nor does it attempt to dismiss the value of that body of work. Rather, the sweet

spot for this research is that niche of both UW and executive level decision making – that either directly or indirectly informs this research.

Abigail Linnington works from a definition of UW that states: *operations that enable a resistance movement or insurgency by providing highly specialized advisory, logistic and training support to proxy forces attempting to coerce, disrupt or overthrow an occupying or illegitimate regime*. While this definition is not a verbatim match with the current doctrinal definition used in this proposal, it accurately captures the essence of UW without the requisite terms “resistance, underground and auxiliary”. Most importantly, Linnington approaches the problem from the context of U.S. Foreign Policy and successfully elevates the discussion to a strategic level; this alone is pioneering and to say that this study aims to advance Linnington’s work is not inaccurate.

Linnington’s central question is, what factors best explain the success and failure of U.S. campaigns in support of insurgencies?²⁷ She addresses this question with a framework that examines clearly defined objectives: an alignment of policy and strategy, a unity of effort among participating agencies and, a clear tie with grand strategy. Of these, the significance of unity of effort is believed to have such import, as discussed in the “Research Question” section below, that it will be included in the analytic framework of this study as well.

Examining the various theoretical underpinnings of insurgency, wars of independence in grand strategy, and special operations in covert action, Linnington focuses on the President and National Security Council (NSC) while purposely avoiding analysis of the systemic conditions that contribute to the success of unconventional warfare.²⁸ Her research includes case studies of Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Iraq. These choices are purposeful and significant in that the Central Intelligence Agency served as the lead agency in all three - highlighting the interagency flavor of unconventional warfare.

Employing the term “Support to Resistance” (STR), Will Irwin’s three monograph series explores a sampling of 47 cases that offer a comprehensive study of past U.S. support to insurgencies and resistance movements. The broad sample that Irwin explores includes operations occurring during World War II and the immediate post-war period of jockeying for influence against the Soviets in Eastern Europe. Employing an expansive definition of resistance, Irwin includes both the commonly understood concept of support to include non-violent resistance movements such as the U.S. support to the Polish Solidarity movement. One of the key lessons in Irwin’s findings contrasts the relationship between successful STR and either wartime or peacetime conditions.

Setting the tone for his 2019 – 2020 pair of monographs, Irwin’s 2016 Occasional Paper - A *Comprehensive and Proactive Approach to Unconventional Warfare*, challenges the U.S. approach to

dealing with “gray zones”.²⁹ Several observations in Irwin’s work are supported by this research; the notion that the lead agency in an unconventional warfare effort will likely shift, the interagency flavor of UW, and the criticality of unity of effort. Examining the Syria Train and equip campaign, the shortfalls in a common objective and unity of effort, as well as an administration willing to “hope for the best” all come to the surface in chapter 5 of this study.³⁰ Irwin’s is an important voice in the UW dialogue and his work serves as a catalyst for the special operations community to be a stronger advocate for the proper application of its capabilities.

Offering a *Unified Theory for Special Operations*, Richard Rubright’s theory is concisely stated as, “special operations are extraordinary operations to achieve a specific effect”.³¹ In his analysis and justification, Rubright takes special operations out of the boundaries of purely military action and expands the paradigm to include smoke-jumpers (wilderness firefighters who parachute into wildfire areas) and other unique activities to capture the entirety of the scope of special operations. Hence the claim of a unifying theory. While he is able to fold the special operations missions under the umbrella concept, it falls short in the basic requirement of a theory; “explaining why things work the way they do.”³² Most importantly, as relates to this research, Rubright does not address any manner of causation or factors that impact success or failure.

At the other extreme of the strategic to tactical continuum, William McRaven’s *Spec Ops - Case studies in special operations warfare: theory and practice* offers a “theory of special operations” that scopes special operations in a category that more closely matches the special operation core activity of Direct Action - *raids or strike type operations of limited duration, often conducted during a single period of darkness, with very specific or limited objectives*.³³ He develops the concept of relative superiority; an effect achieved early in an engagement, as a necessary condition for success. The methodology for this research runs into a significant selection bias issue. His use of a relatively small number of nonrandom, successful cases, drives to a preconceived outcome supporting the idea of relative superiority.³⁴ He does add depth to his case studies by a combination of interviews with participants and site visits to the location of the actions.

Looking at strategic outcomes, James Kiras offers a perspective that special operations are best viewed through the theory of strategic attrition.³⁵ In broad terms, attrition theory is understood as direct confrontation – power against power where opposing sides crash against each other until one is forced to yield. This contrasts a more commonly accepted paradigm that annihilation, or strategic paralysis theory – attacking an enemy indirectly and causing moral damage or destroying an enemy center of gravity, is an appropriate perspective for special operations. While this is intuitively valid for certain types of special operations, it does not speak to the attrition nature of unconventional warfare where the weaker opponent,

typically the insurgent, imposes “death by a thousand cuts” and simply outlasts the stronger opponent. By surviving, and carefully selecting when and where to do battle, insurgents employ maneuver and indirect tactics to ultimately achieve strategic victory. Asserting that special operations achieve the best outcomes as part of an overall campaign, Kiras notes that to achieve this they require integration with conventional capabilities.³⁶

Figuring prominently in John Arquilla’s analysis, the integration of special and conventional operations emerges in readings ranging from ancient Homeric tales to Chaim Herzog’s account of the 1972 Israeli raid to rescue hostages being held in Entebbe, Uganda.³⁷ Arquilla and Robert Spulak both recognize the role of personalities and the common traits of flexibility and creativity among SOF personnel and further identify factors and variables relevant to special operations. These attributes are posited as necessary to reduce the “Clausewitzian friction” that occurs when theory meets reality.³⁸ This acknowledgement of the “right “ personnel is consistent with the vast majority of SOF literature in pinning success on factors at the operational and tactical level. This is a valid proposition and a likely intervening variable but does not address the core of this research proposal which seeks to discover and explain strategic factors.

Overlooking the very important contributions of Linnington and Irwin, as well as Rubright’s mega-theory attempt to unify special operations theory, most of the special operations literature avoids strategic level discussion. This focus is not a sign of poor scholarship, rather it addresses many of the valid factors that explain success or failure – personnel, training, psychological make-up, specialized equipment, etc. This represents a large and diverse enough field to fill any research agenda. It also speaks to the explanatory vacuum highlighted by the two cases used to introduce this research in Chapter 1. In the Afghanistan case, a relatively inexperienced force with largely standard equipment achieved success. In contrast, in the Syria case, a highly experienced force, hardened by 15 years of combat deployments and equipped with cutting-edge equipment and technology, failed.

Counterinsurgency Theory

Offering a unique perspective in that it largely provides a mirror image to unconventional warfare, Counterinsurgency is useful when viewed as part of this Ying and Yang type of relationship. The unconventional warfare campaign is often characterized as an insurgency by the opposition government or occupying power. Both campaigns recognize the population as a type of decisive terrain; control the population – win the war. Counterinsurgency has also enjoyed an academic renaissance of sorts that began shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Examining the relevant theoretical schools provides both a foundation and an overview of what are generally considered best practices and principles in executing a counterinsurgency campaign. Somewhat unique to the world of theoreticians, the various schools and models in counterinsurgency have evolved through a building block type of development rather than as a series of counter proposals challenging previous thinking. This is reflective of both the staying power of the broad principles laid out across classic counterinsurgency theories and the “model” of an insurgency evolving from a post-colonial, intra-state, independence seeking construct, to a more globalized, multi-domain and ambiguous objective type of framework.

Surveying the extremes of this spectrum can be seen in cases like the Algerian insurrection vying for independence from France in the 1950s, to the modern Al Qaeda movement attempting to overthrow multiple governments and establish a global caliphate. Accordingly, the models and theories that are impactful to informing this strategic decision making and UW discussion are generally bound by the post-World War II communist inspired wars and revolutions for independence, through modern day militant Islamo-centric constructs.

This framing in no way dismisses the lessons derived from pre-20th century counterinsurgency experience but it does acknowledge the difficulty of extracting the value from those campaigns and applying them in a 21st century context. For example, the British government’s post-conflict punitive response to the 1745 Scottish Jacobite uprisings, or the 1902 U.S. counter-insurgency campaign on Samar island in the Philippines - notable for the order to “create a howling wilderness”.³⁹ Offering a plethora of mostly negative lessons, these and many other examples from past centuries were heavy handed at best. At their worst, they included extra-judicial killings, collective punishments, and human rights abuses.⁴⁰ In a modern context, despite ultimately successful outcomes, the validity of the tactics and the lessons learned cannot be considered valid.

Classic Counterinsurgency

The classic school of counterinsurgency is grounded in the experience and scholarship of a small group of practitioners that emerged in the second half of the 20th Century and documented their experiences and thought processes. Shaping the thinking for this school included global events and circumstances such as declining empires, confronting insurgencies in colonial holdings, and the emergence of communism as a socio-political focus of inspiration for revolutions.⁴¹

Providing a reasonable window on the foundational paradigms of classic counterinsurgency, and certainly not inclusive of all the scholar-soldiers exploring insurgent warfare at the time, the work of David Galula, Roger Trinquier, and Robert Thompson, stand out as notable. Galula and Trinquier, both French Officers with experience in Vietnam and Algeria, independently recognize many of the same factors and concepts that are germane in an insurgent environment but offer distinct perspectives on the “how to” of effective campaigning. Taken together, they offer an informative dichotomy of viewpoints and approaches.

Galula’s *Pacification in Algeria* is held in a near “old testament” status across all schools of counterinsurgency and establishes the key principle of focusing on the population.⁴² This principle is shared with unconventional warfare and is an important connecting link between the two fields. Agreeing with the population focus, Trinquier takes a more mailed-fist approach in terms of controlling the population and resources, and in handling captured insurgents.⁴³ Dedicating a full chapter to analyzing terrorism as a tactic of the insurgent, his foresight is telling. He further recognizes the multi-agency approach necessary for successful counterinsurgency and many of his thoughts have been realized in the modern Joint Interagency Task Force that has become the command and control mechanism of choice.

Working in the Malayan Civil service, Thompson was a British Royal Air Force Officer serving as a staff functionary implementing the counterinsurgency strategy of Lieutenant-General Sir Harold Briggs and his replacement General Sir Gerald Templer. Based on this experience Thompson identified principles and lessons consistent with those of Galula and Trinquier. To an even greater degree than Galula, Thompson emphasizes the “all of government approach” and the importance of competent police services.⁴⁴

Framing classic counterinsurgency theory includes broad characteristics like the population centric nature of the struggle, the need for whole of government involvement, and strategic patience. The population’s importance drives a commonly accepted tactic of separating the people from the insurgents for both tangible reasons such as denying logistics support and to control information. Techniques employed to affect this separation range from the issuance of identity cards and routine check-points, to population relocation, curfews and segregation under strict security protocols; in the Malayan Emergency, this equated to displacement of over 553,000 civilians into 557 “new villages” by the end of the emergency.⁴⁵ An additional 12,000 to 25,000 ethnic Chinese were deported to mainland China during the same time frame.⁴⁶

Describing what the classic school practitioners recognized as a necessary condition for success, the modern phrase “whole of government approach”, captures the essence of what they were trying to achieve. For Thompson, competent police with a dedicated intelligence division (Special Branch) and a permanent police presence in every new village was critical in both defeating the subversive elements of

the insurgency and forcing the guerillas to expose themselves.⁴⁷ As security focused operations segregated and safeguarded the population, the elements of good governance in the form of improved infrastructure, economic development, healthcare, and schools would establish the government's credibility. Similarly, Galula and Trinquier saw the military as part of the solution but not independently capable of creating a victory.

Refining the concept of strategic patience, Galula also ties it to the importance of the population. Recognizing that the longer a conflict continues, the conflict itself displaces the ideology of the insurgents in importance. As a result, the decisive factor in gaining popular support is convincing the population that you will win.⁴⁸ Thompson strongly advocated for strategic patience and contrasts the British Malayan experience with the U.S. in Vietnam. Notably, in the first year of the new village program in Malaya, the government established approximately 80 new villages. Each village was secured, had infrastructure in place and had a standing police presence. After advising the South Vietnamese to implement a similar program they aggressively established approximately 8000 strategic hamlets in the first year. In the absence of infrastructure, security, and a police presence, the strategic hamlet program largely fell apart.⁴⁹

Neo-Classic Counterinsurgency

Neo-classical counterinsurgency is the title used by Frank Hoffman in his 2007 analysis and review of the Army/Marine counterinsurgency manual (FM 3-24).⁵⁰ Dissecting many of the shortfalls in the manual, Hoffman tries to address the areas where classic counterinsurgency models fall short. In the broadest terms possible, the neo-classic school acknowledges the changing nature of insurgencies and builds on the principles of the classic school to address the dynamics of the environment. Leaders in this field include Hoffman, John Nagl (one of the principal authors of Field Manual 3-24 and *learning to eat soup with a knife*) and David Kilcullen – unique for sitting comfortably in both the neo-classic and global counterinsurgency schools.

Where insurgency was once viewed as a largely binary, insurgent versus government event, neo-classic thinkers recognize and embrace the ambiguity of modern environments. In that sense, the neo-classic school is a byproduct of the emergence of extremist ideologies, non-state actors, communications technology and loosely defined objectives; establishing a caliphate or ridding the world of infidels may be a grand strategy, but is imprecise when viewed as an objective, and painfully ambiguous when contrasted with the elegance of simply ousting the current government.

Learning and thinking in counterinsurgency terms was elevated, if not fully catalyzed, by the neo-classic approach. Advancing from foundational ideas like the “three block war”, first characterized by Marine Corps Commandant Charles Krulak, that described an environment where lethal combat, civic actions and infrastructure development would all happen in a relatively small area. Similarly, the “Strategic Corporal” concept acknowledged the importance of small unit leaders in terms of strategically shaping the environment.

Building on these ideas and still firmly rooted in classic counterinsurgency principles, the neo-classic scholars call for a systematic and networked approach that incorporates a stronger advisory role to strengthen host nation capabilities. The controversial 2007 “surge” of troop strength in Iraq is an example of this approach. Allowing the U.S. to secure large areas, the additional force structure helped establish a degree of legitimacy for the nascent Iraqi government. At the same time other forces were committed to training additional Iraqi police and military forces while combined U.S. and Iraqi special operations conducted an aggressive campaign targeting the insurgent leadership. As the insurgency was degraded, more of the Iraqi population aligned with the government.

Global Counterinsurgency

The global counterinsurgency school takes a significant step forward with a view towards counterinsurgency as both a new normal and a subset of the emerging hybridized nature of conflict.⁵¹ Urbanization, diaspora communities, global support through social media and electronic financing all fit into the equation that complexifies the global insurgent environment. Celeski describes the opposition-scape thusly: “Modern insurgencies are networked, amorphous, headless, transnational, and criminal, and their doctrine is a complex gray stew”.⁵² Combine this with the ability to cross borders and disperse in failed states or densely populated urban sprawls and the problem is quickly compounded. All while the insurgents are maintaining active global networks.

Perhaps the most compelling difference between global counterinsurgency theory and the other schools is the elimination of the binary constructs. The “my ideology” versus “your ideology” element persists, but the notion of state versus insurgent with an outcome manifesting as some sort of change in government is diminished. Recognizing the changing face of insurgency, global counterinsurgency theorists see the new insurgent as global, cyber savvy and skilled at perception management. In the 1990’s the founder of the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, could prompt demonstrations in Europe by picking up his phone in his Syria headquarters; an event that had a start to finish time sequence measured in days.⁵³ In contrast, modern social networks allow for near real-time messaging and information sharing. What Kilcullen calls the “web as witness” phenomena propagates and archives events as they occur,

further fueling a cycle of inspiration and motivation.⁵⁴ Even a casual observer will note the correlation between expanding social media technology and the up-tick in inspired, rather than directed, attacks.

The trend in COIN scholarship recognizes a need for innovation and interagency solutions but does not speak to the “what” or the “how” of implementation.⁵⁵ Providing insights into the dangers of disjointed strategic decision structures Andrew Stead’s article on the Reagan Administration’s support to the Nicaraguan Contra’s examines the impact of “informal” power brokers; in this case, Senator Jesse Helms, R (NC).⁵⁶ A senior political figure with an outsized influence on key voting demographics that included conservatives, evangelicals and anti-communists.

Strategic Decision Making

The scholarship on strategic decision making follows two primary approaches. A systemic approach that examines the mechanics of decision making and a theoretical approach that examines the motivations, psychological factors, and structural influences, that drive decision makers.

Identifying some common threads, the systemic approach scholars call out that the structures and processes are archaic, fail to address the interagency stakeholder community, and need system wide transformation. An additional theme is a recognition of a need to accept and adopt strategy to a changing global role for the United States.

Literature on the National Security Council (NSC) serves as an excellent entry point in this dialogue. The role of the NSC is to oversee and manage the process that allows the statutory members to advise the President on policies related to national security, The staffers typically serve in a coordination role, assessing objectives, considering supporting policies, and drafting recommendations that will go to the President.⁵⁷ Discussing the impact of the Project for National Security, Reform Paul Miller highlights the lack of a strategic planning capability and goes further in citing the Eisenhower era NSC model as a positive example.⁵⁸

Echoing this thinking, Michelle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley affirm the lack of an effective strategic planning process and focus on Eisenhower’s approach to the NSC; essentially configuring a military type staff with sufficient intellectual and analytic gravitas to provide impartial and rigorously vetted policy recommendations to address strategic issues.⁵⁹ They further cite systemic issues that impede effective decision making. Among them, the tyranny of the in-box; what Flournoy called “an environment that remains dominated by the needs of the present and the cacophony of current crises.”⁶⁰

Running a broad gamut from the individual to the organizational level, there are several theoretical frameworks and models that examine decision making. The scope of these theories and academic foundations are very comprehensive and include psychology, sociology, strategic studies, political science, international relations, and anthropology.

Tying significant causal weight into the organizational and group influences that shape the key decision maker, individual decision-making theories also examine that individual's world view and experience. The structural school within this community places significant weight on the influence of structural factors. Similarly, individual psychological models place great explanatory weight on belief systems and psychological and emotional processes.⁶¹ These are useful in examining the actions of individuals, say Presidents or National Security Advisers, but are too narrow to explain organizational processes.

Organizational decision-making theories and models that show some explanatory promise include organizational process and bureaucratic political models. In general, both models place decision making power in a small inner-circle of elites influenced by either their position or the interests of the sub-organization they represent.⁶² Borrowing from broader organization theory, the organization process model – essentially, organizations do what best fits into existing standardized operating procedures and beliefs, offers explanatory value for the sometimes inexplicable behavior of government organizations. Consider the CIA's behavior in the days leading up to the Bay of Pigs operation; a series of indicators clearly showed that the operation was likely to fail, yet the Agency's senior experts continued to advise President Kennedy to proceed with the plan.

Individual decision-making theories offer useful insights into how leaders make decisions. Explaining why a leader is guilty of vacillation or refuses to accept advice is the goal of this individual approach. With respect to this research, there is tangential usefulness in helping to understand the broader dynamic between leaders and their supporters, but in general they fall short in explaining how those decisions are translated into outcomes

Organizational decision-making theories and models include groupthink, organizational, and bureaucratic process models. In general, these models explore group behavior, power relationships in a small inner-circle of elites, and the interests of the sub-organization they represent.⁶³ In some cases, these theories offer insights into the interagency dynamics that give disproportionate weight to one agency over another. With notable exception, none of these theories contribute to establishing the casual chain from decision to effect; they stop at the decision.

The exceptions to the “stop at decision” phenomenon in most decision-making theories do not represent a radical shift, but rather important nuanced differences. Group think theory, is derived from small group

psychology. Janis (as cited in Levy and Thompson) identifies symptoms of group think that include illusions of invulnerability and rationalizing information that runs contrary to the group's collective beliefs.⁶⁴ Similarly, lay-epistemic theory offers insights as to why individuals with a strong need for cognitive closure resist challenges to pre-established beliefs despite evidence.⁶⁵ This theory was at the forefront of Bar-Joseph and Kruglanski's research on the Israeli intelligence failures preceding the 1973 Yom Kippur War.⁶⁶ Their analysis indicated that two key individuals were able to shape, and in some instances, override contrary positions that were developed within their own organization. As a result, the mobilization of Israeli Reserves was significantly delayed. This offers an important insight into the role of senior staffers and executives that can inform the understanding of organizational decision making in this study.

There are three elements of conventional wisdom that become evident throughout the literature review. First, there is a solid theoretical underpinning to inform thinking on the link between warfare and politics. This foundation is germane to these concepts "writ large" and arguably addresses a grand strategy linkage but does not explore the impact of decisions on special operations, or more specifically, unconventional warfare. Secondly, the theory on special operations is either overly broad, in the case of Rubright's unifying theory, or focused on understanding success or failure based on non-strategic factors.

Finally, the literature offers very little that bridges the continuum from a strategic objective, to strategic implementation decisions, to action. This is the niche area of knowledge that should connect the "hand waving across a big map" conceptualization of strategy that Clausewitz helps to explain, and the shock of surprise and dominating firepower that McRaven expounds.

Chapter III: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework for Analysis

Introduction

This chapter lays out an analytic framework and research methodology. Incorporating both theoretical and conceptual approaches to guide the analysis, the first section provides a brief review of the current state of decision making theory, some of which was discussed in the literature review chapter, and solidifies the rationale for the approach chosen. The second section offers a discussion of the conceptual approach that will explain the intentional inductive to deductive transition as a way to modify, remove, or add hypotheses into the analytic recipe. A review of the overall research question and broad objectives set the final parameters for the methodology section.

Providing a detailed “nuts and bolts” narrative, the final section on methodology articulates how this study employs a three-tiered approach based on qualitative techniques informed by theory that will also meet the standard of scholarly historical research. This approach creates an unavoidable tension that many methodological purists would avoid. However, the blend of theory, an analytic framework and historical evidence is intended to achieve a more thorough answer to the research question. By using multiple tools, the research will also avoid the greatest pitfall of a singularly focused study – the analytic blinders that develop when trying to shoehorn every case into a theoretical model or analytic framework.

Section I: Analytic Framework

Reviewing the theoretical playing field in more depth builds on the justification for ultimately choosing Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic Theory as the appropriate interpretive lens. Identifying and examining the defining characteristics of each of these theories provides the trigger points that associate the theory with a specific phenomenon. A section on convergence lays out the synergistic value of including both theories in the analytic recipe and concludes with a graphic representation of the concept.

Transitioning to the conceptual side, several key terms are introduced and defined. Additionally, the five hypotheses that cast a wide net over the expanse of the cases are introduced. The case analysis table is introduced to provide a model that will serve as the basis for the analysis provided in Chapter 4. Blending both the key elements of theory and the hypotheses, the final section walks the process of deconstructing and interpreting the information to draw logical inferences and conclusions. This first section concludes

with a sample of the document analysis worksheet that provides the principal building block for logical and consistent analysis.

The Analytic Playing Field

Addressing several issues, this chapter will begin by framing the primary issue of current literature shortfalls in explaining how strategic level actions and decisions influence the outcomes of unconventional warfare. This includes the scholars who focus on decision making as a behavioral attribute and generally focus on the “why” of the decision rather than the impact on the outcome. While this is important, and in some cases will be teased out in this research, it generally requires a significant investment in understanding motivation and the psychological influences of key actors. Focusing well below strategic factors to explain the success or failure of unconventional warfare is an additional issue with both the current literature and practitioners in the field. This narrow lens has explanatory value but largely ignores the policy level factors that provide the foundational knowledge of strategic decision makers. Finally, the shallow explanatory value of tactically focused theory leaves a gap between the outcomes and the strategic conditions set in place.

The overall analytic framework is driven by both conceptual and theoretical models acting as distinct, but mutually supporting toolkits. Ontologically, this affords the opportunity to categorize, group, and organize various factors to better understand the give and take in each case.

Commencing with an approach that starts as broadly deductive, the conceptual framework examines the entirety of cases with all the hypotheses in play. This is a bit of a shotgun approach that tries to incorporate every “good idea” and recommendation that emerge en-vivo as a result of document analysis or subject interviews. This landscape view of multiple cases and hypotheses will cause patterns and trends to emerge and allow a culling of those that emerge as less impactful.

Transitioning to a narrower inductive approach by eliminating two of the initial hypotheses provides a more focused approach to the Syria deep dive. A subsequent reexamination of the initial cases using the three remaining hypotheses will allow stronger inferences, a more significant case in terms of modern context, and a springboard to examine additional cases and develop proscriptive considerations for policy makers.

Providing an intellectually stable platform, the theoretical framework allows application of the hypotheses and informs the development of broad inferences. Epistemologically this is consistent with both a pragmatic approach in avoidance of the strict orthodoxy of the foundationalist or coherentist typologies, and dovetails with the interpretivist approach to theory.⁶⁷ The final bit of synergy for the framework is

interpretivism's interplay with the hermeneutic approach discussed below in the methodology section; both see the world holistically, and through a context informed lens.

An important consideration is that the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the overall framework are not sequence ordered or prioritized in terms of their application in the analysis. Assessing a phenomenon in a case, for example, the Kennedy decision to insist on deniability of U.S. involvement in the Bay of Pigs, is not first viewed as a possible byproduct of the seizing and freezing aspect of cognitive closure. Nor should this example be first considered as a hypothesis-1 confirmation of an unwillingness to delegate control. Both are valid, but become evident as part of an overall analysis where all the hypotheses and all the aspects of Groupthink and Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure are considered.

Aims and Objectives

To recap, the purpose of this research and the research question that this analytic framework is designed to answer is: *How do the organizational actions at the executive level of government impact the success or failure of unconventional warfare?* The question is written to find how a causal chain, or a confluence of factors, impact what happens between strategic decisions and outcome and ultimately how they affect the outcome itself. This is done with several hypotheses, detailed in the conceptual framework below, that speak directly to the "how" of this question. Additionally, in examining the details of each case to tease out the factors, theory is applied to help explain the dynamics in play. Identifying "if / then" conditions as a byproduct of this process, particularly those that can be applied by policy practitioners, is an added benefit.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks and models that examine decision making run a broad gamut from the individual to the organizational level. The scope of these theories and academic foundations are comprehensive and include psychology, sociology, strategic studies, political science, international relations, and anthropology. Individual decision making theories, as the name implies, tie significant causal weight into the organizational and group influences that shape the key decision maker as well as that individual's world view and experience. Similarly, individual psychological models place great explanatory weight on belief systems and psychological and emotional processes.⁶⁸ These are useful in examining the actions of individuals, say Presidents or National Security Advisers, but are too narrow to explain organizational processes.

Organizational decision making theories and models that show some explanatory promise include organizational and bureaucratic process models. In general, these models place decision making power in a small inner-circle of elites influenced by either their position or the interests of the sub-organization they represent.⁶⁹ Borrowing from broader organization theory, the organization process model – essentially, organizations do what best fits into existing standardized operating procedures and beliefs, offers explanatory value for the sometimes inexplicable behavior of government organizations. Consider the CIA’s behavior in the days leading up to the Bay of Pigs operation; As outlined in chapter 4, a series of indicators clearly showed that the operation was likely to fail, yet the Agency’s senior experts continued to advise President Kennedy to proceed with the plan.

Individual decision making theories offer useful insights into how leaders make decisions. Focusing on the individual might help to explain why a leader may be guilty of strategic vacillation or wouldn’t accept advice from advisers. With respect to UW, they fall short in explaining how those decisions are translated into outcomes.

Organizational decision making theories and models include group-think, organizational, and bureaucratic process models. In general, these models explore group behavior, power relationships in a small inner-circle of elites, and the interests of the sub-organization they represent.⁷⁰ In some cases, these theories offer insights into the interagency dynamics that give disproportionate weight to one agency over another. With notable exception, none of these theories contribute to establishing the casual chain from decision to effect; they stop at the decision.

The exceptions to the “stop at decision” phenomenon in most decision-making theories do not represent a radical shift, but rather important nuanced differences. Groupthink Theory is derived from small group psychology. Janis identifies symptoms of groupthink that include illusions of invulnerability and rationalizing information that contradicts the group’s collective beliefs.⁷¹ Similarly, lay-epistemic theory and its embedded concept of cognitive closure offers insights as to why individuals resist challenges to pre-established beliefs despite evidence.⁷² As discussed in Chapter 1 (see page 20), this theory figured prominently in Bar-Joseph and Kruglanski’s research on the 1973 Yom Kippur War.⁷³ Developing an understanding on the driving factors that shaped two key individuals, they went a long way in explaining how the decisions of a small group were able to delay, the mobilization of Israeli Reserves.

Lay-epistemic and Group-think theory will provide a lens to help explain the actions of both key individuals within organizations and the group dynamics. This is not an advocacy position for either theory but rather a conscious decision to include them in the analytic toolbox. In fact, in instances where historical evidence points to factors or outcomes that contradict the theories, evidence will carry the

debate. Similarly, the analytic framework, based on the working hypotheses, provides an additional lens for exploring the impact of the organizational actions.

Defining Aspects of the Relevant Theories

Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure and Groupthink theories each have distinct characteristics that define their applicability and relevance in explaining phenomena. In the following sections key words and phrases, typically first developed and defined by the theory author, are underlined to indicate a likely later appearance in the case analysis chapter.

Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure

Lay Epistemics holds that “judgements”, in this case generally used synonymously with “decisions”, are reached when accepted rules are applied to assess evidence in a given situation. These rules are grounded by “parameters” (beliefs) that shape the decision process and establish “subjective relevance”. Connecting evidence to judgement, is usually presented as an “if / then” rule; *If the Soviet Union establishes a satellite government in Angola, **then** U.S. interests will be negatively impacted.* Parameters also have “degrees of relevance” that can include difficulty derived from sorting evidence and information in order to make a decision. Investing the time and effort necessary to process information and make a decision is considered an issue of motivation, or a lack of. Additionally, there is a likelihood of bias towards a desired outcome. A final consideration is that the rule application and evidence gathering cycle can go on indefinitely.⁷⁴

Bringing the information processing loop to a halt, the concept of Cognitive Closure is the key to the decision making aspect of Lay Epistemic Theory. There are two types of closure in this concept. Non-specific closure is characterized by seeking any confident decision on an issue (in contrast to the continued ambiguity of the information gathering cycle). Specific closure is characterized by seeking a decision that supports a particular or desired outcome. In other words, it leans towards some preconceived notion or bias.⁷⁵

A heightened need for cognitive closure often leads to “seizing” or prematurely assuming the validity of early clues and “freezing” by locking on to a decision once it has been made regardless of new information. The most common indicators of seizing and freezing revolve around information management, leadership, and overreliance on protocols and bureaucracy. Leaders or leadership teams often block new information or offer alternative interpretations to suit desired outcomes. Discouraging new information may be done through the imposition of strict standards for clarity and presentation –

ignoring information that is not presented on a certain schedule, by a specified person, in an established format, would fit these criteria. There is also a tendency to strongly defend this position through overconfidence, disregard for contrary information, and a penchant towards authoritarianism with subordinates.⁷⁶

Groupthink

Advancing from a presumption of an existing “in group”, Groupthink Theory posits that this decision making body presents certain identifiable characteristics. Among them are the development of unique group norms and an expectation of loyalty from members. These shared norms and loyalty drive the group to seek concurrence on issues while subconsciously suppressing any type of critical thinking.⁷⁷

Some of the common indicators of Groupthink include a sense of invulnerability among members and a tendency to rationalize away any negative feedback or warnings that are not consistent with the group. Reinforcing these initial indicators is an ever-present reliance on the unanimity of group consensus that replaces critical thinking; *we can't ALL be wrong, can we?* This is compellingly demonstrated in Chapter 5 by Susan Rice's description of the behavior of the Obama National Security Council's consensus agreement with the President to delay responding to Syria's use of chemical weapons.⁷⁸ Given the pendulous weight of group agreement, members who do have dissenting opinions often censor themselves in group settings while selectively sharing concerns in more private venues.⁷⁹

Tending to demonize or stereotype the opposition, In Groups lay the groundwork to assume the moral high ground; *if the enemy is evil, then certainly our actions are justified*. The morality of the group's actions also begets a tendency to place pressure on anyone in the group who has a dissenting opinion. A final indicator is the presence of what Janis calls “mind guards”. These are group members who are positioned to control or shield adverse information from other group members, or more importantly, group leaders.⁸⁰

Identifying Groupthink as it manifests in a body is made possible by the presence of what Janis calls “products”, that are probably more easily understood as behaviors. These include limiting the overall number of Courses of Action (COAs) considered when dealing with a situation and an unwillingness to continuously reexamine a selected COA as new evidence becomes available. Assessing how to make other COA's more viable is rarely given more than cursory consideration.

Considering the best possible outcomes usually presents as an unwillingness to prepare contingency COAs to deal with foreseeable problems. Fact and opinion bias serve as the blinders that prevent the group from asking the simplest “what if” questions that any realistic planning process takes into

consideration. In the absence of expertise and experience in the group, there is likely a willingness to disregard outside expertise and fall back on the unanimity and consensus that has been established.

Convergence: Why These Theories Matter

Serving as heuristic aimpoints, the defining aspects described above play an important role during the case analysis of this research. Documents, books, articles and interview transcripts are all viewed through a kaleidoscope lens which includes the initial hypotheses and the characteristics and observable elements of the two theories. With respect to the theories, this is neither a validity test nor a determination of which one better explains in any given case. Rather, it is an example of using the right tool (theory) to better understand the entirety of factors that influenced the outcome.

Groupthink is considered most appropriate for laying bare small group dynamics.⁸¹ Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure are generally more useful in explaining individual leader or leadership team behaviors. Examining the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Bar Joseph and Kruglanski's highlight the impact of a leadership team on overall organizational performance.⁸² Recognizing the general maxim that every group has some form of leadership, either formal or informal, and that every leader / member of a leadership team exists because they are part of a group, highlights why these theories together offer a stronger explanatory power than if used independently.

Using similar characteristics, both theories describe the world at their particular level of analysis. Table 1, below, graphically bridges the key aspects. The rationalization found in Groupthink is on par with the denying and reinterpretation found in Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure. Suppressing critical thought in Groupthink is very similar to the lack of appreciation for differing perspectives and intolerance of opposing views that are indicators of Cognitive Closure's seizing and freezing characteristic. Bias is present in both theories but has impact in different ways; in Groupthink, bias is seen as a behavior towards interpreting new evidence while in Lay epistemics bias plays a role in Cognitive Closure as a desire for a specific outcome. Finally, the lack of contingency planning that is an indicator of Groupthink is a mirror image of the overconfidence that appears as an indicator of seizing and freezing whilst trying to achieve cognitive closure.

<u>Theoretical Convergence</u>		
<u>Groupthink</u>	<u>Lay Epistemic Cognitive Closure</u>	
Rationalization	↔	Denying and reinterpreting new or contrary information
Suppression of Critical thought	↔	Lack appreciation for different perspectives and intolerance of opposing opinions
Fact and opinion Bias toward evidence	↔	Bias toward outcome
Lack of contingency planning	↔	Overconfidence in current COA

Table 1: Theoretical Convergence

Section II: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides a more empirical window into the organizational decision making process using defined hypotheses that are generally observable through the analysis of archived documents, subject interviews, etc. All the hypotheses developed for this research represent some form of constraint, restraint, or limitation (defined in detail below).

Framing organizational actions in terms of constraints, restraints and limitations is a useful approach in explaining how policy is crafted and conveyed “downstream” to subordinate organizations. The definitions for this framing are provided by the U.S. Department of Defense. “*Constraint*: in the context of planning, a requirement placed on the command by a higher command that *dictates an action*, thus restricting freedom of action”.⁸³ Similarly, but with an important nuance, “*Restraint*: In the context of planning, a requirement that is placed on the command by a higher command that *prohibits an action*, thus restricting freedom of action”.⁸⁴

The critical difference between constraint and restraint is the former establishes a requirement and the latter prohibits an action. Finally, limitation largely encapsulates the meaning of constraint and restraint while broadening the scope of restriction and is defined thusly; “*Limitation*: an action required or

prohibited by higher authority such as a constraint or a restraint and other restrictions that limit the commander's freedom of actions such as diplomatic agreements, rules of engagement, political and economic conditions in affected countries and host nation issues."⁸⁵ In addition to the broader scope of possible restriction considerations, the definition of limitation is also unique in that it recognizes the source as coming from "higher authority" where constraints and restraints are generally seen as coming from higher commands. This implicitly recognizes that limitations may be set from outside the Department of Defense.

Examples of how these factors may come into play include a *constraint* requiring local commanders to seek approval from a designated higher authority prior to maneuvering north of a specific map reference. A *restraint* may be couched as a prohibition against exceeding a specific troop limitation in a geographic area or country such as the White House and Congressionally agreed limit of 55 U.S. Advisers on the ground in El Salvador.⁸⁶ A common *limitation* is seen in rules of engagement that may only allow U.S. personnel to return fire if fired upon or, prohibitions on alcohol consumption in predominantly Muslim countries.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis is derived from a long-standing principle for the military and reflects the desirability of centralized planning and decentralized execution- loosely interpreted, this means providing the objective, intent, desired end-state and, most importantly, resources into the hands of the commander charged with executing the operation. In an ideal world, this model cascades in what the military refers to as "commander's intent", from the highest level to the lowest with a traceable linkage from the platoon in contact all the way to the Executive Branch. Ideally, this allows a subordinate leader to make informed decisions and demonstrate flexibility within the parameters of mission execution; consider an example where a platoon leader is assigned a mission to capture a small hill to deny the enemy use of a bridge that is easily observed from that position – the Commander's intent is to deny use of the bridge to the enemy. If the Platoon Leader finds the hilltop heavily defended but is able to deny use of the bridge through other means (demolition, direct fire, etc) then the commander's intent can still be met. In practice, this principle has been frequently ignored. President Lyndon Johnson personally approving daily target lists for airstrikes during the Vietnam conflict are a perfect example.⁸⁷ For purposes of analysis this has been designated as "Delegated Control" and is defined as: Where constraints, restraints and limitations on the executing or lead agency have been minimized. The significance of the over-centralization of control, typically referred to as "micro-management," justifies the hypothesis that:

H1- Delegated Control: The less operational control exercised at the strategic level of government will increase the likelihood of success for an Unconventional Warfare campaign.

Clear and understandable delivery of a directive or order with an equal comprehension of the overall intent is critical in setting conditions for subordinates to achieve an objective. Moving through a number of steps prior to being issued and initiating actions, intent and directives are part of a dynamic process. At the executive levels of government this would be seen as the impact of intermediary executives or staffers in the interpretation of intent and directives leading to a disparity between the “action desired” by the decision making authority, “action directed” by the staff, and the “action executed”. For this analysis this is designated “Intent Coherence” and is observed in the evidence as: Clearly understood guidance with an equal comprehension of the overall intent across all participating departments and agencies at all levels. Therefore, it is appropriate to hypothesize that:

H2 – Intent Coherence: The greater the misinterpretation of intent, subsequently conveyed to executing organizations, the less likely it is that a UW campaign or operation will succeed.

Achieving a unity of effort– a condition usually best achieved by placing all participating agencies and organizations under one responsible commander or leader, is a practice that helps to eliminate confusion, simplify communications and focus the attention and efforts of all participants to a single source of guidance and decision making. Linnington also identifies “unity” as an independent variable in her work to measure a similar hypothesis.⁸⁸For the military this is a principle, codified as “Unity of Command”, that exists for individuals in the form of a chain of command and for organizations through doctrinal command relationships. The same does not necessarily hold true for other departments and agencies within the federal government. As a result, in a complex, potentially volatile scenario where unconventional warfare is the platform chosen to achieve a national security objective, the role of lead and supporting organizations and concurrent responsibilities may be unclear. For this research this is designated as “Unity of Effort” and is observed when – All participating agencies are responsive to, and compliant with, a single source of guidance and decision making. The significance of this unifying principle in focusing efforts and eliminating confusion justifies a hypothesis that:

H3 – Unity of Effort: Formal designation of a lead agency or department and the supporting agencies and departments so the operationalized activities of the stakeholders are actively synchronized towards a common goal, will increase the likelihood of success.

The idea of consistency in staff, leadership and supporting personnel is desirable in any undertaking involving specialized roles and skills necessary to achieve a desired outcome. Consider the disruptive aspects of half of a crew of firefighters being replaced in mid-shift or even the sudden insertion of a

substitute teacher in a classroom full of teenagers. Emerging en-vivo during archival document analysis the broad idea of consistency seemed all too apparent when examining the Bay of Pigs case – a campaign where planning and execution straddled two administrations (see Chapter 4.). For this research the hypotheses that encapsulates the notions surrounding consistency across multiple commodity areas is designated “Continuity” and is observed when disruption is minimized by maintaining key influencers such as leaders, planners and implementers in position throughout the operation. Accordingly, the hypothesis is offered that:

H4 – Continuity: Maintaining key personnel in their roles as leaders, planners, and executors will increase the likelihood of success of an unconventional warfare campaign.

Given that policy recommendations are often the byproduct of a preestablished understanding of the attitude and willingness of the Chief Executive to consider an option, the predisposition of the President towards special operations can be a factor in organizational behavior. Rising to consideration en-vivo as a result of multiple unsolicited recommendations during subject interviews, the idea that the President sets the tone for how his principal advisers and their corresponding staffs develop policy recommendations has merit at face value. For this research this is designated as “POTUS Tone” and is understood as the President’s attitude and comfort towards employing special operations to achieve national security goals. Therefore, it is appropriate to offer the hypothesis that:

H5- POTUS Tone: Presidential attitude and comfort with employing covert, clandestine and special operations will influence policy makers to recommend these options with greater frequency and will increase the likelihood of success of an unconventional warfare campaign.

The format for tracking the conceptual analysis of each case is designed to provide a quick reference for the hypotheses, the data justifying a yes / no score and additional explanatory notes. A completed worksheet is included with each case in chapter 4.

Factor:	Scored as:	Determined By:	Notes:
Delegated Control - where constraints, restraints and limitations on the executing or lead agency have been minimized.	Yes: ***** No:		
Intent Coherence – Clearly understood guidance with an equal comprehension of the overall intent across all participating departments and agencies at all levels.	Yes: ***** No:		
Unity of Effort – All participating agencies are responsive to and compliant with a single source of guidance and decision making	Yes: ***** No:		
Continuity – Disruption is minimized by maintaining Key influencers such as leaders, planners and implementers in position throughout the operation	Yes: ***** No:		
POTUS Tone - Presidential attitude and comfort towards employing special operations to achieve national security goals	Yes: ***** No:		

Taken together, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks represent the blocking and tackling type of fundamentals that are necessary to deconstruct each case with a logical and consistent approach. Cross informing and mindful of context – arguably more important in research using partially redacted documents, the hypotheses and theories are relevant both independently and when considered as a whole. Each source document and subject interview transcript is considered in this light. While seen as cumbersome at face value, the process ultimately requires consideration of five hypotheses and two theories when analyzing each piece of evidence. A process facilitated, and most importantly kept consistent, through use of individual document worksheets. The document worksheets provide the fundamental building blocks, the DNA so to speak, for each of the case worksheets. The completed example below was part of the Guatemala case analysis in Chapter 4.

Figure 1- CIA Memorandum for the Record Authorizing PBSUCCESS, Washington, 12 August 1953

Factor	Score	Definitive or inferred	Notes:
Delegated Control	Y	D	Para 2.a. and b. Mem details “green light” to proceed to CIA.
Intent Coherence	Y	D	Para 2. D. General Smith (State) streamlining liaison with his office.
Unity of Effort	Y / N		General tone places everyone “on the same page” however, Para 3. Does cite a dissenting opinion raised within State.
Continuity			
POTUS Tone			

Each document facilitates a rapid scoring with a yes or no, a determination if the score is definitive or implicit, and a notes section allows the information to be pinpointed in the document and provide any clarification.

Section III: Methodology

The research methodology for this study is, arguably, anchored on historical research providing the bulk of the data that is scrutinized using qualitative techniques informed by theory. By not strongly adhering to any particular methodological dogma, the approach could invite scrutiny from methodological purists would avoid. However, blending theory, an analytic framework, and historical evidence, is intended to achieve a more thorough answer to the research question. By using multiple tools, the research avoids the greatest pitfall of a singularly focused study – the analytic blinders that develop when trying to shoehorn every case into a theory or model.

Sitting juxtaposed to the neatly defined aspects of the theories supporting this research, hermeneutics and critical hermeneutics open the door for including an interpretive approach to the data and evidence presented. Offering that hermeneutics is anchored on five operating parameters, Kinsella describes them thusly; Understanding rather than explanation; Interpretation influenced by the perspectives of the observer / interpreter; History and language both frame and limit understanding; A researcher must acknowledge their role as a translator of context; Hermeneutics is imbued with and embraces ambiguity and the complexity of real world scenarios.⁸⁹ Defining hermeneutics and more importantly for this research, critical hermeneutics, is rarely done in a way that can be described as elegant or succinct. Arguing that critical hermeneutics is only understood through a conjunction of the theories of meaning, action, and experience, Roberge takes a long and meandering journey that finally concludes that “critical

hermeneutics reflects the many discrepancies that constitute our historical, social, and cultural universe”.⁹⁰

Embracing both Kinsella’s assertion that hermeneutics is an implicit philosophical underpinning for qualitative research and the inherent comfort with ambiguity, this research applies a working definition of critical hermeneutics: *An interpretivist approach that informs knowledge formulation and understanding through application of traditional analytic tools and research methods as well as conscious deconstruction of the context (historical, motivational, political, etc.) to inform conclusions and findings.* The conclusion to this chapter uses the metaphor of “true north” to describe the utility of the various theories, hypotheses and methodologies employed in this research. In that spirit it would not be inaccurate to describe critical hermeneutics as the “hard-drive” for this research; constantly running in the background and providing the operating system for all other programs and applications.

Focusing on the defining aspects of Lay-epistemic and Group-think theory provides a lens to help explain the actions of both key individuals within organizations and the group dynamics. Similarly, the conceptual framework, based on the working hypotheses, provided an additional lens for exploring the impact of the organizational actions.

Each phase of research employed document analysis with the third phase incorporating unstructured and semi-structured interviews. The unit of analysis for this study is the Unconventional Warfare campaign or operation. The dependent variable is the success or failure of each campaign. The initial plan included three independent variables: Delegated Control, Intent Coherence, and Unity of Effort. As anticipated, two additional variables emerged as likely factors. Continuity of key personnel emerged during the archival document analysis of the Bay of Pigs case. Presidential attitude and comfort, referred to as POTUS Tone, with clandestine and covert operations was recommended by an interview subject.

Success or failure of each case is determined by the stated intent and objective that the campaign or operation was intended to achieve. As observed in the Tibet case, objectives may legitimately shift over time as political considerations evolve during the phases of an operation, this determination has to be assessed using an ordinal approach and a judgement call. The ordinal approach scored independent variables with “yes” or “no”, substantiated by evidence derived from case related materials (documents, transcripts, etc.). In some cases, this determination was empirically verifiable - did the “bay of pigs” operation intended to overthrow the Castro regime succeed? No. Ergo it was not successful by the standards for this study. The judgement call comes into play when determining if a changed objective was a post-facto attempt to limit reputational damage. Examining the timing of documents and statements made to the press and triangulation against originating documents will assist with those determinations.

A broad overview of the methodology began with a first phase establishing sufficient knowledge of the fourteen or so instances that the United States has employed unconventional warfare since 1947. Selecting the initial tranche of cases was based on the current Department of Defense definition of unconventional warfare. This did prompt some surprises; Guatemala was initially considered as likely to fall out because it has, for years, been informally referred to as a coup. While the outcome may have been the same, the primary factors that define UW were present in the Guatemala operation. Brazil, initially thought to be a strong candidate for closer scrutiny was eliminated from consideration because it lacked most of those same characteristics.

Selecting 1947 as the “early bookend” was based on the 1947 National Security Act which established the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency. This “wavetops” overview of the cases, largely derived from secondary sources, was independently insufficient for analytic purposes. However, it did highlight aspects of each of the cases and allow determination of a “short list” of representative cases for follow on analysis.

Selecting cases for the next phase was based on temporal, geographic and outcome criteria. Using a reasonable temporal distribution across the 1947 to 2014 timeline prevented a snapshot effect of a narrow timeframe. Selecting cases from a diverse geographic range was done for much the same reason; if all cases were derived from a single region it would degrade the generalizability of the findings. By the same token, considering the similarities found in a region to contrast varying outcomes also lends some rigor to the process. Finally, outcome was based on both success and failure; a common outcome across cases would justifiably point to cherry picking. A final consideration in the initial culling of cases was managing the sheer volume of information and the scope of the research.

Responding to the criteria listed, and unapologetically to researcher’s curiosity, the cases selected for the next phase were Guatemala, Cuba (the Bay of Pigs), Tibet, and Angola. Guatemala and Cuba are both regionally and temporally similar. The outcomes, one a resounding success and the other the very definition of failure, are why they are included. For these two cases one of the driving considerations was that many of the key players on the U.S. side were involved on both operations and yet, the outcomes were completely different.

Selecting Tibet and Angola is a result of meeting all three of the separation criteria (region, time, and outcome). Tibet was in play from the early 1950’s to 1970. Angola was a significantly shorter campaign largely focused on 1975-1976. Tibet is located in Southwest Asia astride the Himalaya Mountains on India’s Northern border while Angola is on the Southwest coast of Africa. In terms of outcome, Tibet was a successful campaign while Angola is considered a failure. Tibet offers an added value because the

campaign ran through four U.S. Presidential administrations. The figure below depicts the flow of the entirety of cases considered through the four chosen for initial analysis and the final case.

Initial Cases		UW Screened Cases		Analysis Cases		Final Case	
Iran 1953		Guatemala 1954		Guatemala 1954		Syria 2014	
Guatemala 1954		Tibet 1952-70		Tibet 1952-70			
Tibet 1952-70		Cuba 1961		Cuba 1961			
Cuba 1961		Brazil 1964		North Vietnam 1964-70			
Brazil 1964		North Vietnam 1964-70		Ghana 1966			
North Vietnam 1964-70		Ghana 1966		Angola 1975-76			
Ghana 1966		Angola 1975-76		Afghanistan 1979			
Angola 1975-76		Afghanistan 1979		Nicaragua 1979			
Afghanistan 1979		Nicaragua 1979		Afghanistan 2001			
Nicaragua 1979		Afghanistan 2001		Iraq 2003			
Afghanistan 2001		Iraq 2003		Libya 2012			
Iraq 2003		Libya 2012		Syria 2014			
Libya 2012		Syria 2014					
Syria 2014							

Table 2: Case screening and selection

The culmination of this phase resulted in a foundation that at least superficially, validated or invalidated the hypotheses. The details of this part of the methodology are discussed in both the individual case analyses in chapter 4 and in the findings in chapter 6. Each case analysis includes a case summary, an analysis framed by both the hypotheses and the theories, and a scoring table. Identifying hypotheses that had minimal effect across the four cases was an important outcome of this phase.

Applying the lessons from the analysis of the four cases in phase two and eliminating two of the hypotheses from consideration, are key conditions that were set for the examination of the Syria Train and Equip program. Employing continued document analysis and the addition of subject interviews, are the defining characteristic of the final phase. Avoiding what Maxwell calls “analytic blinders” the narrative analysis approach for this research employs what he further refers to as connecting strategies to develop a holistic understanding of the context and the relationships of the various elements.⁹¹ The information gleaned from participant interviews provides important context about organizational atmospherics and morale that are not yet available in archive or library collections. The culmination of the final phase produced a thorough analysis of the Syria Train and Equip Program (chapter 5) using both the analytic framework and theories.

Data Collection Method

Establishing sufficient historical background to establish a foundational knowledge of each case was the basis for the methodology for the initial step of the research. This was also the critical step for ensuring cases that did not meet the definitional standard of Unconventional Warfare were removed from the pool. Corroborating and triangulating the facts of the case through multiple sources set the conditions for document analysis applying critical hermeneutics. Unpacking the details through these multiple lens, allowed analysis against the hypotheses generated framework.

Establishing a baseline of the facts surrounding each case was an iterative process of foundational reading. This is based on the premise that there is no sense in trying to unpack the nuance of a historical event without first developing a solid background. Reviewing archived historical documents related to the case from both official and open sources was the next step. The archived documents represent hundreds of thousands of pages of data. Fortunately, most of this data has been properly catalogued and archived allowing for a focus on relevant material. Employing two levels of screening, the first phase is a purposive approach to reduce the volume to a manageable level. The first level entailed an initial screening to identify sections dedicated specifically to each case. For example, a search on the State Department History Office web site began with “PBSUCCESS”, the code name for the Guatemala operation, this was further filtered by “The Intelligence community, 1950-55” and “Guatemala 1952-54”. As a result of this initial and more or less superficial level of screening, hundreds of documents were identified.

Focusing on document topic and the elimination of routine, administrative and unrelated documents, a second level of screening culled out mundane documents such as embassy reports on local agricultural activity. Capturing and categorizing, at the same time, relevant information like an Ambassador’s assessment of the local political opposition groups. Ontologically, this was the most significant “cut” of grouping data into the first piles of “what matters” and “what doesn’t matter”.

Subsequent analysis of the remaining documents is guided by a scoring / reference sheet that allowed a rapid framework driven analysis and scoring of each document. These documents were subsequently rolled into the overall case analysis score sheet that was previously discussed in the conceptual framework section of this chapter.

This approach, while seemingly cumbersome and certainly time consuming, is appropriate because a standard content analysis sampling scheme would have likely missed important information. Again using the Guatemala example, a congratulatory telegram from CIA Director Allen Dulles to the CIA Station in

Guatemala applauds the efforts of the U.S. Ambassador and includes the statement “*his wholehearted support and cooperation with our efforts and our personnel are deeply appreciated...*”.⁹² Representing a “smoking gun”, this verbiage confirms both the Intent Coherence (H.2) and Unity of Effort (H.3) hypotheses. If this document was missed because it fell outside of a sampling plan, an important piece of evidence speaking directly to the hypotheses would go unnoticed.

Understanding the context(s) (historical, personal, and post-facto) of the various messages, documents, memoranda, etc. is where hermeneutics come into play. This is an important aspect in terms of a more holistic understanding of the case and did influence the addition of two hypotheses en-vivo. Consider the U.S. involvement in Angola in the early and mid-1970s; a full understanding of the executive level decision making is simply not possible without including the context of the cold war, the fall of South Vietnam, the Watergate scandal and loss of trust in government, and the overall impact of domestic politics.

Transitioning to the detailed analysis of the Syria Train and Equip case, document analysis shifted from declassified archived and historical documents to an examination of open source unclassified documents and contemporary reports. Providing an important source for deciphering the intent and motivation of leaders and high-level functionaries, speeches, congressional testimony, and media interviews, filled many gaps and provided critical triangulation and corroboration. Using a narrowed field of hypotheses based on the outcome of the phase one cases, shortened the analytic field and allowed a sharper focus on “what matters”. The use of a single case and refinement of the variables/framework allowed for a comprehensive study of the Syria case to determine causal relationships and provided an opportunity to tease out the effect of those intervening variables and establish some degree of understanding on how these impact outcomes. Serving as a primary source, the data from the subject interviews folds into this analysis to clarify any inconsistencies, provide situational context to written material, and bridge the gap between written archival material and the perceptions and general understanding of actual participants.

Interviewing subjects who performed various functions related to the Syria Train and Equip initiative offered the most telling insights and partially filled the void from the currently inaccessible official records. Leveraging previous professional connections and snowballing to increase the number and background of respondents, developed a pool of subjects who served on the National Security Council Staff, The Department of State, The Department of Defense and within the intelligence community. Interviews were semi-structured and conducted in person or telephonically. In some cases, the location of the interviews prohibited use of recording devices so careful note taking was employed. In total, the subject interview process involved three trips to Washington DC and the surrounding National Capitol Region, three trips to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and one trip to United States Special Operations

Command in Tampa, Florida. The data and information resultant from these interviews is incorporated in the chapter 5 analysis of Syria Train and Equip as well as the overall findings and conclusions. While protection of the interview subjects is discussed in the case analysis it bears repeating that all interview subjects signed informed consent forms and understood the degree of confidentiality that is available.

Data was derived from multiple sources with the bulk coming from:

- The Department of State Office of the Historian maintains the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity. Additionally, they maintain copies of official message traffic that passed between the white house, CIA, various U.S. Embassies, and federal departments and agencies involved.
- The New York Times daily editions published during specific time periods relevant to each case.
- The Digital National Security Archive at The George Washington University. This archive houses a wealth of documents and materials that include transcripts of oral interviews of key government functionaries associated with a number of the cases under review in this study.
- The Library of Congress in Washington D.C. holds records and transcripts of congressional hearings, committee reports and official documents from across the federal government.
- John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Archives is located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The archive contains official documents, records, reports and other records.
- The Central Intelligence Agency Library releases and digitally archives millions of pages of unclassified documents each year. The library also archives documents and reports that provide insights to the inner working and processes of CIA leadership.
- Various news outlets and journals.

Conclusion

This chapter breaks down the intellectual to mechanical linkage that make up the thought processes that guide this research and serve as a “true north” when the research process is occasionally confronted by potential diversions. Presenting a three-part breakdown, I offer both theoretical concepts and an analytic framework as the intellectual foundations for examining the impact of executive decision making. This is followed by the methodological process employed to allow both analysis and a determination of findings.

Examining the broad theoretical playing field assisted in justifying Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic Theory as the appropriate interpretive lens. Presenting the defining characteristics of each of these theories identified the trigger points that associate the theory with a specific phenomenon and highlighted areas of commonality. A section on convergence presented the synergistic value of including both theories in the analytic recipe and introduced a graphic representation of the concept.

Introducing and defining key terms and the five working hypotheses were the key elements of the conceptual side of the analytic framework. Two important tools were introduced: The case analysis table and a document analysis worksheet. The models that were used as both analytic guides and for scoring provide the principal building block for logical and consistent analysis. The conceptual framework also discussed the key elements of blending theory and the hypotheses to deconstruct and interpret the information that allowed logical inferences and conclusions.

Focusing on the mechanical parts of the research, the methodology section describes a three-tiered approach that employed qualitative techniques (document analysis) informed by theory that strove to meet the standard of scholarly historical research. Incorporating subject interviews for the final case on Syria was discussed in terms of both justification and the techniques employed.

Throughout the methodology section, the significance of document analysis is made clear. The archived documents from the various sources provided a comprehensive record of meeting minutes, memoranda for record, and correspondence (in the forms of cable traffic) related to the cases in this study. Representing policy, control mechanisms, and guidance (in the form of constraints or limitations), the documents tell the story of the various U.S. government departments and agencies. They also allow examination of the processes through a lens of Groupthink and Lay Epistemic theory. They often include reports filed by CIA Officers involved in the operations; providing an unfiltered set of perceptions, this very select cadre were both privy to strategic level decisions and present to see those decisions operationalized.

Likewise, the role of subjects who consented to be interviewed for this research, cannot be overstated. In a research environment where most documentary evidence is still classified and the missteps of some recent events are still raw, these primary source subject interviews offered the first unvarnished look at key interactions at the executive levels of the U.S. government. The perceptions and insights from the interview subjects comprise a significant portion of the “analytic meat” discussed in chapter 5.

Examining selected cases through the theoretical and conceptual constructs, the following chapter offers the operationalization of this research in four case briefs. Each brief provides an overview of the historical facts surrounding the case and then provides an analysis. The subsequent chapter, a deeper examination of the 2014-15 Syria Train and Equip Program, follows much the same format but with fewer hypotheses in the framework and a much stronger reliance on subject interviews and contemporary open source documents.

Chapter IV: Winners and Losers and Unravelling “Why”

Introduction

This chapter will present an analysis of four selected cases from an initial population of the fourteen cases described in Chapter 3. The analysis itself is focused on examining the proposition that actions at the executive levels of the U.S. Government, usually seen in the form of policies that levy requirements or constrain actions, will have either a positive or negative impact on the outcome of an unconventional warfare campaign.

Selecting cases for the initial analysis was driven by several considerations. Achieving a balance in terms of successful and unsuccessful outcomes and finding both similar and dissimilar cases; Cuba and Guatemala are considered similar because many of the same actors were in play for both campaigns. Angola and Tibet are dissimilar in temporal terms and because of geographic separation. Other cases had similar qualities but also increased the overall investment in time and effort with a likely minimal return on investment for this research.

The analysis of the initial cases is based on a broad overview, intended to provide the historical highlights of each instance without going into the depth of an individual case study. Each case is then discussed in terms of the five hypotheses that aim to answer the overall research question and through the lens of both Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory and Groupthink theory.

A table is included at the end of each case that aligns evidence to the appropriate hypothesis and specifies the source in the “determined by” column and amplifying information in the “notes” column that drills down on the specific verbiage or text that the evidence is drawn from. Sources are numerically designated using standard Arabic numbering protocol – 1., 2., etc. Corresponding notes for each source are linked using the same numeric designation in parentheses – (1), (2), etc. Each document was examined applying critical hermeneutics to better understand the historical, personal, and post-facto context of the material. Further examination of each document through the lens of the hypotheses allowed for a simple yes / no scoring to mitigate bias and potential evidentiary cherry picking. To assist in readability, the yes / no documents and notes are separated in each column (where necessary) by a row of asterisks (****).

A final screening of the initial analysis using the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 3 and the alignment of evidence in the accompanying table was applied against the defining aspects of both Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory and Groupthink Theory. The theoretical analysis is noted in the final paragraphs of each case analysis.

This initial case analysis is considered a first step and sets the conditions for the detailed analysis of the final case in Chapter 5, the 2014 Train and Equip initiative in support of Moderate Syrian Opposition (MSO) Forces to counter the threat of ISIS. The results of this initial phase will both modify the working hypotheses (removing or adding as well as possible definitional adjustments) and allow a stronger validation of the remaining hypotheses using a more contemporary case.

Guatemala

Conducting an unconventional warfare operation codenamed PBSUCCESS, the United States sponsored the overthrow of the government of Guatemala in June of 1954. U.S policy toward Guatemala was grounded in NSC 68, arguably the most important post-war policy crafted by the U.S. State department and approved by President Harry Trumann in April of 1950.⁹³ In as concise terms as possible, this 50 page document established the policy that the United States would compete with the Soviet Union economically, politically, and militarily to contain and push back Soviet sponsored communism.⁹⁴ Spawning a myriad of cascading policies, NSC 68 informed the establishment of NSC 144/1, which laid out broad guidance for interaction with all of Latin America.⁹⁵ A 1951 State Department policy also emphasized the dangers of growing communist influence inside the Guatemalan government.⁹⁶ In view of this, the Trumann administration, followed by the Eisenhower administration adopted the stance that a more favorable government would be in the U.S. national interest.

Commencing in 1950 the CIA initiated PBFORTUNE, a multi-pronged campaign that included economic, informational, diplomatic and ultimately paramilitary elements.⁹⁷ Employing economic leverage was an easy option for the Administration; the U.S. was Guatemala's largest trading partner and a principal market for both coffee and bananas. The later, a principal commodity for the controversial United Fruit Company (UFCO), a major landholder in Guatemala and arguably the most affected by Guatemala's agrarian reform and land seizure and redistribution. UFCO continuously lobbied the U.S. government to intervene in Guatemala to put a stop to what was widely believed to growing communist influence.

The informational aspect of the campaign was primarily centered on radio and other media (leaflets, planted news stories, etc.) that fell under the separate codeword SHERWOOD.⁹⁸ Operating across multiple agencies, the CIA coordinated efforts with the United States Information Agency (USIA) and even orchestrated the unwitting support of the Catholic Church to deliver anti-communist messages.⁹⁹ Broadcasting from secure locations in neighboring countries, the radio messaging played an important role in spreading misinformation and encouraging the Guatemalan Army to defect during the actual combat phase of the campaign.¹⁰⁰

Leveraging the friendly relationship with the leaders of El Salvador and Honduras the U.S. was able to ensure sanctuary for the selected leader of the operation, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, and his accompanying forces. Engaging the participants at the 10th inter-American Conference in Caracas in March 1954, the State Department worked to disseminate and buttress the U.S. position and mitigate any possible pushback from regional states.¹⁰¹

Commencing on 18 June 1954, forces loyal to Castillo Armas crossed into Guatemala from Honduras and El Salvador. A simultaneous internal uprising by various resistance groups that included elements in the Guatemalan Army and Police created a near panic in Guatemala City. This was compounded by night time air raids targeting the cities fuel supply.¹⁰² With “voice of liberation” broadcasting news of continued success for Castillo Armas’ forces, their apparent ability to fly over the Capitol unopposed by the Guatemalan Air Force, and sporadic gunfire around government buildings, it didn’t take long for Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz to see the writing on the wall. He stepped down on June 27, 1954 and spent the remainder of his life in exile in Mexico.

Consolidating on the rapid victory of the paramilitary campaign was quick work for the United States. Overall control of decisions on the ground passed to Ambassador John E. Puerifoy who oversaw the establishment of a controlling Junta and new government in Guatemala.¹⁰³ The CIA’s forward headquarters for Operation PBSUCCESS in Opa Locka Florida was shut down and the forward operating base at “France’s Field” in Panama quickly reverted to an abandoned airfield. Colonel Castillo Armas assumed the presidency on 02 September 1954. An office he held until his assassination in 1957.

Case Analysis: Guatemala

Summary: The Guatemala case provides a rare example of a “cut and dried” result where the U.S. objectives and desired end-state were fully achieved. Contributing to the outcome, nearly two years of planning and preparation, much of it clandestine, has to be acknowledged as a major factor. There is also significant evidence that the hypotheses that form the analytic framework for this research were in play.

Delegation of Control (H-1), in this case to the CIA, played a major role in the positive outcome of this campaign. Exercising this control through both further delegating to executing subordinates, and close collaboration with other government departments, the CIA Director demonstrated his willingness to decentralize decision making to the extent possible. Effective delegation did not guarantee an entirely smooth process; at one point the State Department’s objection to a clandestine export license prompted the CIA Director to briefly cancel the operation.¹⁰⁴ However, the preponderance of message traffic, memorandums and other records corroborate that the CIA was in charge of the Guatemala operation. The

evidence also shows further delegation within the CIA to both forward operating headquarters and agents on the ground, and minimal interference or constraints placed on the executing elements.

Playing with a stacked deck with respect to **Intent Coherence (H-2)**, the CIA benefited from long standing relationships that had little to do with a deliberate process. The CIA Director, Allen Dulles, was the younger brother of the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Allen Dulles was preceded as CIA Director by General Walter Bedell Smith, who then became an Under Secretary of State for John Foster Dulles and had been the Chief of Staff for then General Eisenhower during the Second World War. At the senior level, there was an existing network and continuous dialogue that carried through to subordinate levels. Exemplifying this network and unique partnership is the CIA's involvement in preparing and briefing the new Ambassador to Guatemala, John Puerifoy.¹⁰⁵ A career State Department Foreign Service Officer, Puerifoy would later be lauded in correspondence by Allen Dulles for his support to the operation.¹⁰⁶

Analyzing the factors that make up **Unity of Effort (H-3)**, reveals both strong evidence that unity played a role in the positive outcome, and some indications that it was not uniform across all stakeholders. Starting at the very top, Director Dulles took pains to ensure the CIA and State Department were aligned to the same objectives.¹⁰⁷ This effort trickled down to the subordinate levels where CIA, in particular, worked diligently to keep all participants informed and focused on the objectives.¹⁰⁸ One notable exception, in what could be perceived as a “red flag” showing a lack of unity, the Department of Defense appears to have been largely left out of “the loop” with respect to the Guatemala operation. The Army Attache' in Guatemala filed a report in 1952 that accurately described the general plan for a coming revolt – to include naming the revolt leader, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas (CIA Codename John H. Calligeris). Ironically, the Army Intelligence section (G-2) was largely dismissive of the report. Rather than paint this incident as a tangible example of lack of unity, it is more appropriate to recognize it as an example of the close compartmentalization and tight security surrounding the operation.

Playing only a minor role in this case, largely because of a lack of turmoil in the administration, **Continuity (H-4)** was still achieved and even fostered by some of the key actors. Many of the same considerations discussed under unity of effort such as long-standing relationships, continuous dialogue, etc. minimized the disruptions to planning. The CIA Director went so far as to leave a “personal for” copy of a memorandum covering the next steps concerning Guatemala with Walter Smith, his predecessor at the CIA then serving as Under Secretary of State.¹⁰⁹

Absent from much of the record concerning Guatemala is any sense of the **POTUS Tone (H-5)** with regard to employment of special operations. President Eisenhower’s military background probably made him the most equipped, of all post-war Presidents, to be “comfortable” with use of covert and clandestine capabilities. As a result, while he clearly approved of and authorized the Guatemala operation, he did so with a very workmanlike approach that conveyed neither great enthusiasm nor distrust.

Viewing the Guatemala case through the theoretical lens of Groupthink reveals some close parallels to the characteristics and symptoms described by Janis.¹¹⁰ At the onset of the process the National Security Council was an “In Group” with established norms, an expectation of loyalty from members and a desire to seek concurrence on recommendations presented for decision. There was also an underlying sense of morality in any situation when confronting the threat of communism. Counter-balancing the negative effects of Groupthink was President Eisenhower’s leadership style. Eisenhower often used multiple sub-groups to address the same policy question, required dissenting opinions, and generally encouraged critical thinking. In effect, he intuitively implemented many of the recommendations Janis developed to mitigate the negative effects.

Approaching Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure from the same viewpoint, leads to a similar situation. Aspects of Lay Epistemics, particularly the subjective relevance of Guatemala as a national security concern, are clear. The relationship of, “if” Guatemala becomes a full-fledged Communist State, “then” U.S. national security will be impacted, played an important role in connecting evidence to judgement and decisions. And, a clear bias towards establishing a non-communist government was pervasive. Similar to the effects seen when looking through a Groupthink lens, Eisenhower’s leadership played a significant part in mitigating the most egregious effects. In seeking closure, which in this instance looked like a strong recommendation for his approval, Eisenhower remained largely non-specific and did not telegraph a desire for a specific approach to achieve an outcome.

Factor:	Scored as:	Determined By:	Notes:
Delegated Control - where constraints, restraints and	Yes:	1. Chronology Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency 08 Oct 52.	(1) Para 4 and 5. Show CIA in lead with DOS on the same page and CIA Director giving final approval.

<p>limitations on the executing or lead agency have been minimized.</p>	<p>2. CIA Memo proposing specific actions prior to onset of PBSUCCESS 16 May 1954.</p> <p>3. Memorandum From [name not declassified] of the Central Intelligence Agency to the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, Central Intelligence Agency (King).</p> <p>4. CIA Memorandum for the Record Authorizing PBSUCCESS</p> <p>5. CIA Memorandum, Director cancelling all plans of action 09 Oct 1952</p> <p>6. CIA PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida to the CIA Station in Guatemala.</p> <p>7. CIA Report Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹¹¹.</p> <p>8. CIA Telegram from Director Dulles to Ambassador Puerifoy.</p> <p>9. CIA Telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency Director to Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida.</p> <p>10. CIA: Telegram from the CIA Station in [place not declassified] to the Central Intelligence Agency June 52.</p> <p>11. From Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida to the Central Intelligence Agency 09 July 1954</p>	<p>(2) Proposals indicate decentralized planning.</p> <p>(3) Para 1. CIA clearly acting in a lead role</p> <p>(4) Para 2.a. and b. of the Memorandum details “green light” to proceed to CIA.</p> <p>(5) CIA Director cancelling op at behest of DOS - affirming that they are an executive agency not a policy source.</p> <p>(6) CIA providing direction to the operational headquarters.</p> <p>(7) Entire report reflects coordination and decision making executed by a forward “commander” more likely the CIA Officer in Charge.</p> <p>(8) Personal Msg from Dulles emphasizing the important role of Calligeris. ** This is a key instance of Dulles stepping outside of his purview and across departmental lines / chain of command.</p> <p>(9) CIA leadership of the operation confirmed.</p> <p>(10) Message clearly indicates CIA officer (author) has broad guidance and some authority to take initiative</p>
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		<p>12. From Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida to the CIA Station in Guatemala 20 May 54.</p> <p>13. Memorandum from the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, Central Intelligence Agency (King) to the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Wisner)</p> <p>14. Telegram from Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida to the Central Intelligence Agency 18 Feb 1952.</p> <p>15. Telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency to the CIA Station in Guatemala 30 June 1954.</p> <p>16. CIA Western Hemisphere Division, Central Intelligence Agency to the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Wisner) July 52</p>	<p>(11) Forward HQ providing policy recommendations to CIA HQ.</p> <p>(12) Policy and action guidance from Forward HQ to CIA Station in Guatemala.</p> <p>(13) Para 6. J.C. King is delegated within CIA to take lead on the agency’s top priority</p> <p>(14) Message from FWD HQ recommending policy and actions to CIA HQ.</p> <p>(15) Para 3 aligns Ambassador (Department of State) under CIA director. CIA clearly in charge up to this point (smoking gun).</p> <p>(16) Report from WH Division – informs the senior leadership of current situation and pending events (notably, does not ask for approval)</p>
	<p>.....</p> <p>No:</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>1. CIA Telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency to Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida.</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>(1) CIA HQ clarifying and directing policy / actions post operation re: management of General Calligeris</p>
<p>Intent</p> <p>Coherence –</p> <p>Clearly</p>	<p>Yes:</p>	<p>1. CIA Memorandum for the Record Authorizing PBSUCCESS</p>	<p>(1) Para 2. D. General Smith (State Department)</p>

<p>understood guidance with an equal comprehension of the overall intent across all participating departments and agencies at all levels.</p>	<p>No:</p>	<p>2. CIA MFR on Briefing of Ambassador John E. Peurifoy re: Guatemala.</p> <p>3. CIA Report Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency.</p> <p>4. CIA: Telegram from the CIA Station in [place not declassified] to the Central Intelligence Agency June 52.</p> <p>5. Memorandum from the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, Central Intelligence Agency (King) to the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Wisner)</p>	<p>streamlining liaison with his office.</p> <p>(2) Para 3. Indicates Ambassador Peurifoy fully on board in a supporting role.</p> <p>(3) Conveys strong understanding of the overall objectives.</p> <p>(4) Para 7. Understanding of parallel efforts.</p> <p>(5) Para 1. Appointment of Ambassador Peurifoy. General Smith as lead in State Department.</p>
<p>Unity of Effort – All participating agencies are responsive to and compliant with a single source of guidance and decision making</p>	<p>Yes:</p>	<p>1. Chronology Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency 08 Oct 52.</p> <p>2. Memorandum From [name not declassified] of the Central Intelligence Agency to the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, Central Intelligence Agency (King)</p> <p>3. CIA PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida to the CIA Station in Guatemala.</p> <p>4. CIA Telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency Director to</p>	<p>(1) Para 1 and 2. Indicate solid cross coordination with DOS (at high level).</p> <p>(2) Para 3 and 4. Director Dulles personal effort to make sure DOS is on the same page.</p> <p>(3) Message shows careful orchestration between departments / agencies.</p> <p>(4) Includes Ambassador Puerifoy among recipients of congratulations as a key team member.</p>

		<p>Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida 30 June 54</p> <p>5. CIA Telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency to Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida July 54</p> <p>6. CIA Telegram from the Central Intelligence Agency to Operation PBSUCCESS Headquarters in Florida 27 June 1954.</p> <p>7. CIA: Telegram from the CIA Station in [place not declassified] to the Central Intelligence Agency June 52.</p> <p>8. Memorandum for the Record Allen Dulles 08 March 53.</p> <p>9. Memorandum from the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, Central Intelligence Agency (King) to the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Wisner)</p>	<p>(5) Para 3. All players now taking lead from Ambassador Puerifoy (JMBLUG)</p> <p>(6) Internal memo prompting cross-agency coordination to employ PSYOP in support of Armas and diminish his ties to UFCO.</p> <p>(7) Para 9. Synchronizing effort with larger operation to ensure success.</p> <p>(8) MFR Lays out a whole of govt effort supporting the CIA UW campaign. Shared this info with Walter Bedell Smith (Under Secretary of State)</p> <p>(9) Para 5. Further clarifies supporting and supported relationships.</p>
	<p>----- No:</p>	<p>----- 1. CIA Memorandum for the Record Authorizing PBSUCCESS. 2. CIA Memorandum for the Record – Central America Situation 3. CIA Memorandum, Director cancelling all plans of action 09 Oct 1952</p>	<p>----- (1) While the general tone places everyone “on the same page” Para 3. Does cite a dissenting opinion raised within State. (2) CIA deferring to State vis-à-vis policy decisions, but State not supporting based on an</p>

		<p>4. CIA Report on Army Attache' report on potential Guatemalan Coup</p>	<p>export permit concern – more an issue of maintaining deniability.</p> <p>(3) Turbulence in the process – in this case generated over export approvals, However, the fact that the Director CIA was willing to cancel reflect everyone on same page.</p> <p>(4) Report filtered through Department of the Army at Pentagon indicates DoD oblivious to CIA preparations. (Likely more an indication of good security / compartmentalization than lack of unity of effort)</p>
<p>Continuity – Disruption is minimized by maintaining Key influencers such as leaders, planners and implementers in position throughout the operation</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>No:</p>	<p>1. Memorandum for the Record, Allen Dulles 08 March 53.</p>	<p>(1) Shared this with W.B. Smith – former CIA Director and the Under Secretary of State.</p>
<p>POTUS Tone - Presidential attitude and</p>	<p>Yes:</p>		

comfort towards employing special operations to achieve national security goals	<p>.....</p> <p>No:</p>		
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Tibet: Resistance to Chinese Hegemony

Beginning in 1950 the new Communist Government of China began steps to establish governance over Tibet, a remote theocracy with a long history of complex relations with Chinese authority. Using a “silk gloved fist” approach, early Chinese expansion was a mix of friendly overture and gentle occupation by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), combined with a rapid and violent response to resistance. Achieving some notable success, significant Tibetan resistance was immediate although not well organized. A July 1950 Tibetan attack against the Chinese garrison at Dengko, effectively wiped out the 600 strong PLA detachment.¹¹²

Providing support to the Tibetan resistance became a CIA initiative and responsibility in 1951 and was reaffirmed in 1956¹¹³. This support was a result of both agreements with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives (to include his older brother), as well as overarching national security objectives outlined in NSC 5429/5 which among other objectives includes - *Assist where necessary and feasible non-Communist Government and other elements in the Far East to counter Communist subversion and economic domination.*¹¹⁴ Integrating paramilitary, political, and propaganda aspects, the CIA led operation held to objectives that were largely consistent, although reasonably fluid over time based on regional and international events.

Expanding their presence to the point of occupying the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in September of 1951, Chinese control became more assertive. Chinese missteps and heavy-handed behavior catalyzed organized Tibetan resistance beginning in 1955 and by late 1956, full scale guerilla warfare had broken out in Eastern Tibet. Throughout the nascent stages of the Tibetan resistance the Central Intelligence Agencies Special Activities Division had established contacts within the various groups and even infiltrated a small number of teams to act in an advisory and intelligence capacity.¹¹⁵ By 1959, President

Eisenhower had formally approved continued support to an active resistance. That same year the CIA surpassed 800,000 tons of equipment and material airdropped to the various groups since the start of the resistance.

Boiling over in March of 1959, Tibetan discontent manifested as widespread protests and demonstrations in Lhasa. Fearing the local PLA Garrison was laying a trap for his arrest when he was summoned to attend an event without his normal bodyguards, the Dalai Lama slipped out of the capitol with a small entourage and made a harrowing two-week journey on horseback and foot to the Indian border.¹¹⁶ For much of the trip, and unbeknownst to the Dalai lama, he was discreetly escorted by CIA trained agents that had parachuted back into Tibet the previous year and embedded with the Tibetan resistance fighters.¹¹⁷ Granting Asylum to the Dalai Lama, the Indian Government also permitted the formation of a government in exile in Dharamsala in Northern India.

Despite these setbacks, the CIA continued to work with Tibetan resistance groups that established camps in the Mustang area of northern Nepal. Funding additional initiatives, such as the establishment of “Tibet houses” in major cities around the world, supporting Tibetan diplomatic efforts, and scholarship programs to U.S. Universities, set the foundation for the Tibetan government in exile to establish a presence on the global stage.

Launching from bases in Nepal, the Tibetan resistance groups continued active operations against the PLA. One instance in particular, sometimes referred to as the “blue satchel raid”, produced what some call “one of the greatest intelligence hauls in the history of the agency”.¹¹⁸ Providing the first insight into Mao’s failing “great leap forward”, The 1500 pages of highly classified documents contained the first news of the ongoing famine, and very frank correspondence between senior PLA Commanders – many expressing frustrations over the current state of affairs.¹¹⁹ Additional success from the Mustang based Tibetans were largely in the intelligence gathering area; sensors surreptitiously placed in Northern Tibet helped the CIA monitor Chinese communications and detect early nuclear tests. These successes did not come without a cost. Increasing PLA numbers and security operations took a heavy toll on both the resistance fighters and Tibetan civilians.

As the effectiveness of paramilitary operations waned, much of the emphasis of Tibetan resistance shifted to the international arena and propaganda and politics took a more prominent role. The Dalai Lama became a recognizable international figure as the face of “Free Tibet” and Tibetan representatives remain an unofficial but ubiquitous presence in the United Nations. Chinese pressure on the Indian and Nepalese governments further constrained the paramilitary operations. Ultimately, the Nixon Administration’s decision to normalize relations with Communist China put an end to the program in 1972.¹²⁰

Emerging at the height of the Korean war and disappearing as the Vietnam conflict was in its final stages, the Tibet campaign was always a “one-off”; overshadowed by the events that comprised the highlights of the cold war. Mention of Tibet rarely if ever rose above the fold in American newspapers. The Hungarian revolt of 1956, the U-2 Spy Plane incident, the Bay of Pigs, China’s incursion into Northern India, The Berlin wall, The Cuban Missile Crisis, various revolutions and coups in Latin America and Africa, all provided a smoke-screen that was useful to the CIA, but perhaps less so to the Tibetan government in-exile. In the end, many vestiges remain. Tibet Houses can be found in 14 Cities around the world and “Free Tibet” bumper stickers can still be seen on vehicles whose owners have no idea they are indirectly promoting a CIA generated movement. The Dalai Lama is still an influential voice although significantly marginalized by many; his visits to the Obama White House in 2014 and 2016 were carefully managed to be extremely low key events.¹²¹ Despite less than satisfying outcomes for many, the Tibet campaign was a success. It largely achieved its stated goals and ultimately served as an important bargaining chip in the U.S. decision to normalize relations with China.

Case Analysis: Tibet

Summary: The Tibet case offers an example of a long-term campaign that largely went unnoticed outside of intelligence and diplomatic circles. By some measures, the CIA support to the Tibetan resistance was inarguably successful. Examining the case through the lens of the hypotheses that form the basis for this research reveal significant confirmatory trends. **Delegating control (H-1)** of the Tibet operation (as well as other covert operations) to the Central Intelligence Agency is a decision rooted in the 1954 National Security Council Directive on Covert Operations (NSC 5412/2).¹²² Through the duration of the operation the relationship between the CIA, as the lead agency, and the other departments and agencies remained the same. While there is some evidence of constraints placed on the U.S. Embassy in India, these deal with both specific diplomatic language and parameters concerning delivery of a message regarding Tibet;¹²³ this example of control being retained and exercised at a very high level appears to be an anomaly in an otherwise decentralized environment. Given the historical context of a need for both careful wording and the nuance of realpolitik, it was appropriate.

Offering less compelling evidence in archive documents but still demonstrably present in the Tibet case, **Intent Coherence (H-2)**, is substantiated through corroborating sources. One example was the support from the Department of Defense that allowed the CIA to train Tibetan resistance fighters at Camp Hale Colorado.¹²⁴ Additionally, the CIA documents referenced as item 1 and 2 in the Intent Coherence block of the case matrix indicate a multi-year consistency in both program objectives and cross-communication between departments.

Demonstrating the most significant influence on the outcome of the Tibet case, the **Unity of Effort (H-3)** across agencies and departments within the U.S. Government was evident. Exercising overall authority, the CIA had both reporting and coordination requirements embedded within their authorities that ensured active deconfliction of efforts across the government. This prompted a fair amount of give and take within logical areas of responsibility; State department strongly influenced decision making with respect to diplomatic initiatives and interactions and often maintained a “big picture” perspective that influenced strategies.¹²⁵ Beginning with the 1954 Directive on Covert Operations, The National Security Council fulfilled its role as a directing and coordinating body with respect to Tibet.¹²⁶ In that capacity they effectively synchronized efforts and conveyed staff recommendations to the President for approval and guidance.¹²⁷

Maintaining consistent goals and objectives was a hallmark of the Tibet campaign and was a significant factor in achieving and preserving **Continuity (H-4)** throughout the campaign. Emerging during a period when the nascent Communist Chinese government was establishing itself both domestically and internationally, Sino-Soviet policy was focused on containment and countering communist initiatives.¹²⁸ Forming the foundation for future policies, the objectives and goals largely remained unchanged, across three presidential administrations, from the onset of the Tibet campaign through its conclusion.¹²⁹

Analyzing the Tibet case from a theoretical standpoint reveals an operation that seemed to avoid most of the negative aspects of both Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure and Groupthink theories. Lay epistemics is at play in the early stages of committing to Tibet and determining the subjective relevance to U.S. national security policy. In the end, the notion that “if” we support an active Tibetan resistance, “then” we will cause additional hardship to the Chinese Communists, prevailed among senior decision makers. Once established as a broad objective, policy makers avoided the freezing aspect of cognitive closure by adjusting the broad objectives and flexing the intermediate objectives based on current events and circumstances; when active resistance inside of Tibet was no longer viable, they shifted to cross-border intelligence gathering and then to political, propaganda and diplomatic fronts.

Delegating control of various aspects of the Tibet campaign had a dampening effect on any tendency to fall into Groupthink. Decentralizing significant authority all the way to forward deployed CIA Officers largely eliminated an “in group” from forming. As a result, some of Janis’s prescribed steps for preventing Groupthink occurred more or less organically.¹³⁰ Hindering the use of outside experts because of the need for secrecy, “in-house” expertise routinely crossed agency and department lines and served to challenge views and prevent myopic policymaking.

Factor:	Scored as:	Determined By:	Notes:
<p>Delegated Control - Where constraints, restraints and limitations on the executing or lead agency have been minimized.</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <p>*****</p> <p>No:</p>	<p>1. CIA: Memorandum for the 303 Committee, Washington, January 26, 1968.</p> <p>2. CIA, Memorandum for the Special Group Washington, January 9, 1964.</p> <p>3. Memorandum for Record – discussion with the President on Tibet, 04 Feb 1960</p> <p>4. National Security Council Directive on Covert Operations 1954</p> <p>5. National Security Council Memorandum for Record, Discussion with President on Tibet, 04 Feb 1960</p> <p>*****</p>	<p>(1) While cross departmental coordination is clear, Para 3, appraisal of current programs, shows the CIA has been delegated the bulk of the operational control.</p> <p>(2) Para. 3 citing a Dec 1963 meeting where the Special Group approved CIA control of Tibet ops. Also, Cornell University program and Tibet Houses under CIA sponsorship.</p> <p>(3) Para 1. CIA clearly has responsibility for the Tibet Campaign.</p> <p>(4) Para 4. Assigns covert operations responsibility to the CIA.</p> <p>(5) Document clearly reflects CIA has been delegated the authority to run the Tibet operation</p> <p>*****</p> <p>(1) Para 2 & 4 indicate both a highly centralized decision and</p>

		1. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in India Washington, March 22, 1966	significant constraints on the message delivery.
Intent Coherence – Clearly understood guidance with an equal comprehension of the overall intent across all participating departments and agencies at all levels.	Yes: No:	1. CIA: Memorandum for the 303 Committee, Washington, January 26, 1968. 2. CIA, Memorandum for the Special Group Washington, January 9, 1964	(1) Para 2. Outline of Program Objectives (2) Para 1. Consistent through the 1968 report to the 303 committee.
Unity of Effort – All participating agencies are responsive to and compliant with a single source of guidance and decision making	Yes:	1. CIA DCI notes for Senate Foreign Relations Committee 27 April 1959. 2. CIA: Memorandum for the 303 Committee, Washington, January 26, 1968 3. CIA, Memorandum for the Special Group Washington, January 9, 1964 4. DOS Memorandum of conversation December 1965	(1) Document infers strong consensus and info sharing at higher echelons of government concerning Tibet. (2) Para 5. Coordination showing DOS and Ambassador’s informed and engaged with the program. (3) Para 4. Coordination with DOS and DoD. (4) Deputy Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson meeting with Tibetan representative

	No:	<p>5. National Security Council Directive on Covert Operations 1954</p> <p>6. NSC Memorandum for Record, Discussion with President on Tibet, 04 Feb 1960</p> <p>7. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in India Washington, March 22, 1966</p>	<p>Thondup (the Dalai Llama's brother)</p> <p>(5) Para 4. D. Directs CIA to inform other agencies as appropriate / necessary. Para 7. B. directs coordination between agencies and the coordinating board.</p> <p>(6) Document reflects strong DOS and CIA synergy</p> <p>(7) Para 2. DOS led the discussion to back away from the Tibet Government in exile initiative.</p>
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<p>Continuity – Disruption is minimized by maintaining the same overall goals and objectives and retaining Key influencers such as leaders, planners and implementers, in position throughout the operation</p>	<p>Yes:</p>	<p>1. CIA: Memorandum for the 303 Committee, Washington, January 26, 1968.</p> <p>2. Memorandum for Record – discussion with the President on Tibet, 04 Feb 1960</p> <p>3. NSC Memorandum for Record, Discussion with President on Tibet, 04 Feb 1960</p> <p>4. Note to the National Security Council by Executive Secretary James Lay, NSC 5429/5, 22 December 1954</p>	<p>(1) Para 2 cites NSC 5913/1 – a document originating in the Eisenhower Administration (Note this CIA memo was drafted at the end of the Johnson Administration.</p> <p>(2) POTUS approved the program’s continuation following a brief by CIA Director Allen Dulles.</p> <p>(3) DCI briefed on the existing plan and overall history, following some discussion the continuation of the plan was approved.</p> <p>(4) Objectives a, c, and d, lay out foundational policy vis-à-vis Communist China. Course of action e. authorizes covert action.</p>
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	No:		
<p>POTUS Tone - Presidential attitude and comfort towards employing special operations to achieve national security goals</p>	Yes: No:		

Cuba: The Bay of Pigs

Calling for infiltration of small teams to establish communications points on the island and report on conditions in their area, Operation Pluto (later renamed Zapata) was the CIA's proposed course of action for dealing with an increasingly militant and communist leaning Fidel Castro. Conceived by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the final years of the Eisenhower administration, the operation was initially designed as a counter-revolution, taking advantage of the large number of Cubans dissatisfied with the increasingly dictatorial tendencies of Fidel Castro. These teams would act as the focal point for later infiltrations of larger and more capable guerilla units that would organize, train, and lead the local Cuban resistance movement.¹³¹

Taking advantage of an environment that was ripe for organizing a resistance, the original plan was a classic unconventional warfare approach that had potential for success. Just two years after seizing power, Castro had imposed severe restrictions on individual liberties, had seized and nationalized an enormous amount of private property, and through an increasingly aggressive security apparatus, arrested

hundreds of political opponents. By the time of the Bay of Pigs operation in April 1961, thousands of Cubans were in jail for opposing the regime, firing squads had eliminated over five thousand former government officials and political opponents, and 800,000 had fled the island.¹³²

Changing circumstances, to include the pending change in the U.S. Presidential Administration and the Soviet Union's increasing willingness to provide modern military equipment to the Cubans, prompted a modification of the plans.¹³³ Among the increasing amount of military hardware making its way to the island from the Communist Bloc, was a shipment of modern fighter aircraft and a training package to prepare Cuban pilots. The potential ability of the Cuban Air Force to interdict resupply flights for the guerilla campaign was deemed a significant enough threat to make the guerilla option untenable.

Responding to the increasing Cuban military capabilities, the plan changed to an overt invasion of the island by a force comprised entirely of Cuban exiles; U.S. involvement was to remain covert. The plan was predicated on the landing force of approximately 750 fighters seizing sufficient territory to establish an airfield and allow the announcement of a new provisional government. Serving as a rallying cry across Cuba, thousands of disenfranchised Cubans would rise up and unleash a massive revolt against the Castro Government. At some point in this developing scenario, the U.S., ostensibly uninvolved up to this point, would recognize the provisional government, throw its full support behind it, and lobby the Organization of American States to do the same.

Changing the nature of the operation and the increasing complexity of what was looking more and more like a full-blown military operation did little to increase the Department of Defense's involvement. Requests to provide logisticians to assist in the planning stages were politely but firmly rebuffed by the Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles. Additional recommendations by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to significantly revise¹³⁴ the plan and timeline were also ignored.

In implementation, things did not go smoothly. In large part, the operation, and U.S. involvement, were poorly kept secrets. The Castro government had been rallying citizens with warnings of a U.S. invasion since late in 1960. The location and photos of the training camps in Guatemala used by the invasion force were published in U.S. newspapers a month prior to the landings. Just days prior to the invasion the New York Times printed a story indicating that the training camps were empty and intimating that this spelled the end for Fidel.¹³⁵

Consisting of what appeared to be a combined arms team, the invasion force, Brigada 2506, was largely a paper tiger. The force was comprised of a ground component primarily trained as infantry with a small contingent of tanks, an air component equipped with World War II era B-26 Marauder medium bombers, and a maritime component of converted merchant transports. The unit was reasonably well trained but

never exercised above the small-unit level nor as a combined arms team incorporating their air component and armor formations. Additionally, they never trained for or practiced the techniques necessary to conduct an amphibious assault. Transporting them to Cuba as the maritime component, their ships were poorly converted and lightly armed merchant vessels and not configured for landing operations. The small boats used to transport the troops to the beaches were, as one participant described them, “the little aluminum boats that you buy from Sears Roebuck”¹³⁶.

The planned air attacks to destroy the small air force that Castro had available, were only partially successful and subsequent attacks were cancelled because of White House concerns that U.S. involvement would be revealed. With three to four World War II vintage prop aircraft and converted jet trainers, the remaining Cuban Air Force managed to sink two of the landing ships on the first day of the operation and essentially established air superiority over the battle space. Most significantly, one of the ships that was sunk, carried the entire ammunition resupply for the Brigada.

Coming ashore after 3:00 P.M. because of the air attacks and an unanticipated coral reef blocking access to the beach, any real chance at surprise or momentum was blown. Initial successes were short lived and a vigorous counterattack by Cuban Army and Militia forces quickly isolated the attacking force to the area surrounding the beach landing zones. Cuban reinforcements armed with newly acquired Soviet tanks and artillery maintained a constant pressure on the shrinking Brigada positions.

Facing a looming disaster and repeated requests to intervene with U.S. forces, President Kennedy allowed minimal indirect support to the force; unmarked U.S aircraft were permitted to overfly the invasion beaches (but take no action) and U.S. Destroyers were authorized to move in to assist with evacuating the wounded.¹³⁷

By day three it was all over. The surviving Brigada 2506 members, facing 20,000 to 40,000 Cuban soldiers, out of ammunition, and having fought without sleeping or eating for three days, surrendered. Held incommunicado by the Castro regime, a small number were summarily executed and the remainder were sentenced to 30-year prison terms. Their sentence was used as a bargaining ploy when the Castro government successfully negotiated for 52 million dollars in food and medical aid to secure their release in December of 1962.

Case Analysis: Cuba – The Bay of Pigs

Summary: The Bay of Pigs case is unique for the scale of the operation, the scale and scope of the resulting historical analysis, and the long-term impact on U.S. - Cuban relations. Indeed, the Bay of Pigs operation may be the most analyzed military and foreign policy disaster of the 20th Century. With respect

to the hypotheses and the overarching research question a number of trends are confirmed. **Delegating control** through the reduction of constraints, restraints and limitations was clearly not achieved by either the Eisenhower or nascent Kennedy administrations. Notably, even President Eisenhower's frustration at not having "someone in charge" failed to snap the various stakeholders out their "rule by committee" protocol.¹³⁸ Likewise, the lack of **intent coherence** is a dominant factor. A broad misunderstanding of acceptable conditions for executing the plan, anticipated outcomes, and responsibilities for various aspects of the operation, seemed to be endemic across the critical departments and agencies. This is no more apparent than the Director of the CIA openly disagreeing with, and perhaps indicating that he would not comply with, President Eisenhower's guidance vis-à-vis Cuban anti-Castro groups.¹³⁹

Achieving **unity of effort** remained as elusive as, and is perhaps related to, the lack of intent coherence. That is not to say that it was not recognized as a desirable factor in the operation. There were at least two instances of high-level efforts that portrayed an intent to unify and synchronize efforts.¹⁴⁰ This is countered by at least thirteen documented instances of dissonance between departments and senior officials. Identifying significant problems with the plan, a Department of Defense Staff Study offers the most compelling evidence of disunity.¹⁴¹ The study could only muster a faint endorsement of two courses of action but only on the condition of significant revision. Reflecting some efforts at unity of effort, the case analysis must also be considered in the context of the source documents. When weighed against the preponderance of evidence it becomes clear that the Secretary of State's memo to the President painted an aspirational picture that was not grounded in reality.¹⁴²

Examining the documentary evidence indicates some desire to responsibly transition between administrations and ensure some level of **continuity**. There are two documented instances that capture very high-level individuals, the President and the Secretary of State, engaging with their respective replacements to discuss the Cuba plan.¹⁴³ Contrasting these high-level efforts, there is significant turbulence across the departments and agencies on how and when to include the new administration, the impact of the change in administration on Latin American governments, and impacts to the overall plan and concept. Clearly, continuity was not achieved. The final hypothesis, **POTUS tone**, is aimed at teasing out the President's attitude towards employing the full array of special operations and covert and clandestine capabilities. In this case, the evidence supports a positive POTUS tone through the end of the Eisenhower administration. This is not surprising given Eisenhower's depth of leadership and executive experience in the military and past success during his own administration. However, there is no indication that this same attitude carried over to President Kennedy.

Addressing the decision process and subsequent impact on outcomes in the Bay of Pigs case from the perspective of Groupthink is a well-travelled path. Indeed, Janis speaks to the Bay of Pigs as an exemplar

in his 1971 Article that largely introduces the concept.¹⁴⁴ There is substantial evidence in this case that aligns with the symptoms and behaviors of Groupthink and validate the explanatory value of this theory. The presence of an “in group”, the rationalizing of contradictory information, self-censorship, little to no contingency planning and mindguards that selectively shared information with President Kennedy. The self-censorship was apparently endemic across all the members of the NSC and the various supporting departments; Kennedy was reportedly incensed at the post-debacle NSC meeting when the previously silent members unloaded lengthy criticisms that revealed previous misgivings with the operation.¹⁴⁵ Addressing the development of many of the recommendations that were ultimately operationalized, Groupthink still falls short in explaining how these recommendations were reified.

Kennedy and the other key decision makers were neither members of an in group, nor operating in a vacuum. In other words, their decisions were informed. Calin and Prins would explain the decision formulation as a byproduct of a lack of executive experience.¹⁴⁶ In Kennedy’s case this is true but does not address his key adviser’s wealth of executive experience and how that failed to influence him. Similarly, it does not address his lack of military experience (his World War II command of a P.T. Boat notwithstanding) and how his senior military advisers failed to bridge the experiential gap.

Applying Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure theory helps fill in the missing piece of the puzzle. Given the gravitas of trusted and seemingly knowledgeable advisers it is easy to understand how their recommendations established the subjective relevance for Kennedy. The cognitive closure aspect that Kennedy needed was specific and required an outcome that included plausible deniability of American sponsorship. The Bay of Pigs case strongly affirms the impact of the hypotheses presented and makes a strong case for validating Groupthink’s explanatory value with respect to the recommendations and advice provided to the senior leaders. Likewise, this case provides an equally strong validation for Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure’s value in explaining how senior decision makers processed recommendations into operational decisions.

Factor:	Scored as:	Determined By:	Notes:
Delegated Control - where constraints,	Yes:		

<p>restraints and limitations on the executing or lead agency have been minimized.</p>	<p>**** No:</p>	<p>***** 1. Memo of meeting with President Eisenhower 05 December 1960 2. Memorandum for the Record Washington, Conclusions of Dean Rusk's 22 January Meeting on Cuba. 3. Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Willauer and various DoD representatives, Washington, January 13, 1961. 4. MFR of the Taylor Committee 24 April 1961. 5. MFR Paramilitary Study Group meeting 18 May 1961.</p>	<p>***** (1) Page 5, 6 President Esienhower repeatedly asks about the wisdom of having an "individual Executive" in charge of all the various efforts. (2) Paragraph 5. Discussion of selecting a landing site (3) Page 5. Willauer comments and Spore and Willauer exchange. (4) Page 1. Use of Napalm and Cuban crews on USN ships. Page 18. Admiral Burke. (5) P19. Running the operation from DC</p>
<p>Intent Coherence – Clearly understood guidance with an equal comprehension of the overall intent across all participating departments</p>	<p>Yes: ***** No:</p>	<p>***** 1. Memorandum for record – conversation between General Taylor and Mr. Thorsud – 6 May 1961</p>	<p>***** (1) Conversation concerning the Combat Air Patrol (CAP)</p>

<p>and agencies at all levels.</p>		<p>2. Hawkins: Policy Decisions required for conduct of Strike Operations against Government of Cuba – 4 Jan 61</p> <p>3. Memo of meeting with President Eisenhower 05 December 1960</p> <p>4. Memorandum for the Record Washington, Conclusions of Dean Rusk’s 22 January Meeting on Cuba.</p> <p>5. Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Willauer and various DoD representatives, Washington, January 13, 1961</p> <p>6. MFR if the Taylor Committee 24 April 1961.</p> <p>7. MFR Paramilitary Study Group meeting 18 May 1961.</p> <p>8. NSC Memo from Belk to Lay concerning a Cuba Policy paper Dec 1959.</p> <p>9. NSC Marchant to Admiral Burke Policy Memo March 1960####</p> <p>10. CIA Memo – Special Group Mtg 05 Jan 1961.</p>	<p>(2) Page 6. Recommendation to cancel if policy would not provide adequate TAC Air.</p> <p>(3) Page 2. Allen Dulles openly contradicts Eisenhower’s guidance on the various anti-Castro factions.</p> <p>(4) Intro paragraph outlines that all stakeholders were in a wait and see mode awaiting guidance.</p> <p>(5) Page 1. Ambassador Willauer’s comments and also Page 6. Willauer comments on Agency “deliverables”. Note that he seems to contradict his earlier statement vis-à-vis an economic embargo.</p> <p>(6) Page 8. Bobby Kennedy statement. Page 16 exchange between Kennedy, Burke and Hawkins.</p> <p>(7) P. 4 Lemnitzer. P6 statement concerning SECDEF impression of JCS opinion.</p> <p>(8) NSC and State advocating a methodical approach to developing Cuba Policy.</p>
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			<p>(9) Paragraph C and D (top of Page 4) Strong advocacy for a patient and diplomatic heavy course of action.</p> <p>(10) Para 2.</p>
<p>Unity of Effort – All participating agencies are responsive to and compliant with a single source of guidance and decision making</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <p>*****</p> <p>No:</p>	<p>1. SECSTATE memo to POTUS Dec 1960*</p> <p>2. Memorandum for the Record Washington, 22 January 1961.</p> <p>XXX Jack Bissell Interview PP. 23 – 24, 39.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>1. Bundy Memo to POTUS Feb 61</p> <p>XX DOS Assistant Secretary Mann Memo</p> <p>2. DOS COAs regarding opposition to Castro 17 Feb 1961</p> <p>3. Memorandum for record – 6 May 1961</p> <p>4. Memo of meeting with President Eisenhower 05 December 1960</p> <p>5. Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Willauer and</p>	<p>(1) SECSTATE memo outlines a unified and synchronized effort between State and CIA. Also lays out intent to include Treasury as needed</p> <p>(2) Conclusions of Dean Rusk’s meeting on Cuba</p> <p>*****</p> <p>(1) Sec State Bundy urges Kennedy not to buy into an invasion adventure...</p> <p>(2) Page 3. Para 5 seems to contradict recommendations in other DOS documents.</p> <p>(3) Conversation between General Taylor and Mr. Thorsud (page 4)</p> <p>(4) Page 3. Dillon(DOS) points out that the covert operation is widely known in Central and South America and the UN.</p>

		<p>various DoD representatives, Washington, January 13, 1961</p> <p>6. MFR if the Taylor Committee 24 April 1961.</p> <p>7. MFR Paramilitary Study Group meeting 18 May 1961.</p> <p>8. Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation – Air Operations.</p> <p>9. CIA Official History of the Bay of Pigs Vol II – Participation on Foreign Policy.</p> <p>10. CIA Memo – Special Group Mtg 05 Jan 1961.</p> <p>11. Staff Study Prepared in the Department of Defense Washington, January 16, 1961.</p> <p>EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE MILITARY COURSES OF ACTION IN CUBA.</p>	<p>(5) Page 3. Willauer comments.</p> <p>(6) Page 7. General Gray Statement. Page 14 General Taylor.</p> <p>(7) Page 3. General Lemnitzer equivocates on degree of support. P7 on understanding of Guerilla aspect. P11-12, P14 - 16 JCS not involved in C2.</p> <p>(8) Page 20. Richard Drain Statement. Page 25 Billy Campbell statement.</p> <p>(9) Page 48, 53, 92, 92. Significant disconnect between CIA and DOS regarding interactions with Guatemala. CIA provided support to Guatemala to counter revolt without informing Ambassador.</p> <p>(10) Paragraph 1.</p> <p>(11) Staff study permeated with DoD assertions that the plan was not likely to be successful unless significant revisions were implemented.</p> <p>NOTE: <u>This is a smoking gun</u></p>
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			<u>document with respect to a lack of unity of effort.</u>
Continuity – Disruption is minimized by maintaining Key influencers such as leaders, planners and implementers in position throughout the operation	Yes:	1. Memo of meeting with President Eisenhower 05 December 1960 2. Memorandum for the Record Washington, Conclusions of Dean Rusk’s 22 January Meeting on Cuba. *****	(1) President Eisenhower planned on discussing with POTUS elect Kennedy. (2) MFR prepared by T. Barnes outlining CIA responsibilities regarding other Agencies and departments. *****
	**** No:	1. DOS MFR 03 Jan 1961 2. Hawkins: Policy Decisions required for conduct of Strike Operations against Government of Cuba – 4 Jan 61 3. Memo of meeting with President Eisenhower 05 December 1960 4. Memorandum of Conversation between Ambassador Willauer and various DoD representatives, Washington, January 13, 1961 5. MFR if the Taylor Committee 24 April 1961.	(1) Page 1. Discussion of breaking relations with Cuba (para 1) and follow up on when to include the new administration (2) Page 4. Discussion on incoming administration. (3) Page 4. (Partial) DOS rep points out that Latin countries are concerned with the U.S. transfer of power (4) Page 6 Willauer comments on the new administration. (5) Page 6. General Grays statement.

		6. Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation – Air Operations. 7. CIA Memo – Special Group Mtg 05 Jan 1961.	(6) Page 56 re: change in concept. (7) Paragraph 4.
POTUS Tone - Presidential attitude and comfort towards employing special operations to achieve national security goals	Yes: No:	1. Memo of meeting with President Eisenhower 05 December 1960	(1) Eisenhower's comfort with and willingness to employ covert operations is evident throughout.

Angola

Admonishing his staff over leaks concerning U.S. Policy on Angola, Secretary of State and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger forcefully asserted, "this is not a whorehouse; we are conducting national policy".¹⁴⁷ Thus, the scene is almost set for the frustrations associated with one of the most complex U.S. foreign policy interactions of the second half of the twentieth century. Viewed through a cold war lens, the U.S. involvement in Angola and Southern Africa ultimately involved the Soviet Union, Cuba, direct involvement of half a dozen African States, the Organization for African Unity, and the United Nations. The U.S. arguably broke contact with this chapter during the Clinton Administration but the book was not fully closed until the death of UNITA Leader Jonas Savimbi in February 2002. This case examines the onset U.S. covert involvement in 1975 and 1976.

Angola is on the Southwest African Coast with the Atlantic Ocean forming its western border. In the post-World War II era of receding colonialism, Angola, then a Portuguese colony, was bordered on the South by Southwest Africa (present day Namibia), on the east by Zambia and in the north by Zaire (present day Congo). Southwest Africa was administered by South Africa which maintained a significant military presence as a result of a longstanding insurgency by the Southwest Africa People's Organization or SWAPO. SWAPO in turn routinely used bases established in Angola to launch operations against the South African regime which invited frequent South African military incursions.

On November 11, 1975 Angola was granted independence from Portugal following a 1974 military coup that largely punctuated the latter country's final grasp on colonial power¹⁴⁸. For Angola, this was an end of twenty-five years of a war of independence that saw three major groups vying for the ouster of the Portuguese government as well as control of the government that replaced them. The cost to Portugal was significant. Since 1960 they had lost over 12,000 dead¹⁴⁹. For the Angolans, the price for their independence would still be tallied for years to come.

The three opposition groups that fought for Angolan independence were the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA), the Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola (FNLA) and the Uniao Nacional Para a Independencia Total de Angola (UNITA). Of the three groups, the MPLA was the most politically anchored in communist principles and actively sought sponsorship and accommodation with the Soviets and Cuba. The FNLA, led by Holden Roberto, was largely anchored in tribal nationalism but could, as many popular movements tend to, shift toward socialism depending on the political winds. UNITA was also a bit of a chameleon movement. Their leader, the Charismatic Jonas Savimbi, was equally at ease courting U.S. Senators or Chinese Maoist revolutionaries¹⁵⁰.

Approaching independence found the MPLA the most organized and politically disciplined among the groups. The FNLA was the strongest militarily and had received the bulk of U.S. support funneled through neighboring Zaire¹⁵¹. UNITA was the largest political group and held the largest voting bloc. Notably, the MPLA was the most powerful group in the capitol of Luanda and their leader, Agostinho Neto, correctly believed that Luanda represented a real-life game of "capture the flag" and whoever was holding it at the moment of independence had a reasonable claim of legitimacy. Powering through festering internal divisions within his Party, Neto executed several political moves to set favorable conditions for the MPLA; in the months preceding independence, he ensured exclusive Soviet backing for equipment, reaffirmed close ties with his internationalist brothers in Cuba, and established rapport with outgoing Portuguese military and administrative officials. He even, opened MPLA offices in Luanda to prepare for a transfer of power¹⁵².

Signing the Alvor Agreement in January of 1975, all three opposition movements and the outgoing Portuguese government set the terms for a smooth and peaceful transition to a coalition government. Unifying the military and holding free and fair elections within nine months were some of the conditions of the agreement. By November, the MPLA had already decided to seize unilateral power once the Portuguese formally relinquished control.¹⁵³

As Angola lurched through the contractions that would ultimately spawn a civil war, the U.S. found itself in a politically turbulent period. Driven by a series of international gaffes and setbacks, the global standing of the U.S. was perceived by many to be tarnished. The Vietnam war was ostensibly concluded in 1973 by the Paris Peace Accord; an agreement ignored by the North Vietnamese government which marched into the South Vietnamese Capitol of Saigon on April 30, 1975.¹⁵⁴ Domestically, on the tails of controversy from a break-in of the Democratic National Committee and a subsequent cover-up (the Watergate affair), President Richard Nixon resigned. This first ever resignation of a U.S. President fueled an already growing distrust of national institutions among the American public. The nascent Administration of President Gerald Ford, already burdened with the albatross of being an unelected president, found itself with the growing image of “the gang that couldn’t shoot straight”.

In the context of the significant loss of faith in U.S. institutions and principles, the friction between the executive and legislative branches was palpable. Keeping the focus on governmental shortcomings, Senator Frank Church, a noted critic of the Vietnam war since 1965, challenged the executive branch at every opportunity. Senator Church was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence which came to be known as the Church Committee. His challenges to the administration’s policy of containment and his opposition to the use of covert activities and interventions placed him in direct confrontation with Kissinger and others in the administration.¹⁵⁵

Facing an upcoming U.S. national election, and both a strong primary challenger in former movie actor and California Governor Ronald Reagan, as well as a crowded field of Democratic Party challengers, Ford allowed reelection concerns to influence his decision making.¹⁵⁶ The political need to show tangible accomplishments to the voting public, driven in part by National Security Adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s beliefs, made the competitive space of Africa and the emerging contest in Angola seem like a worthwhile effort.

Pushing the approach that led to the U.S. initiating a CIA led covert operation, Kissinger strongly advocated funding and arming the FNLA and UNITA with the bulk of the effort going to the former. Using the cover provided by neighboring Zaire, the U.S. began shipping weapons and equipment to the

FNLA in July of 1975. Delivering tons of supplies and providing trainers, the operation was successful from the administrative and logistics standpoint but, did little to make the FNLA a competent or capable force.¹⁵⁷

Complicating the U.S. approach to Angola was Savimbi's willingness to accept support from the apartheid state of South Africa; a pariah nation that was sanctioned, boycotted, and shunned in every possible international venue. For the U.S., guided by National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 39, the South Africans had a singular redeeming quality of being staunchly anti-communist. They also had a willingness to flex their military muscle and had an established relationship with Savimbi's UNITA organization. Thus, they were a ready-made platform for funneling aid to UNITA.

The South Africans also saw their national interests threatened by an MPLA government in Angola – so much so that their 1975 “incursion” almost succeeded in capturing Luanda.¹⁵⁸ Only the rainy season, the well-timed destruction of a key bridge, and most importantly, the increasing numbers of Cuban troops and 122MM rockets in the battlespace, prevented a dramatically different outcome.¹⁵⁹

With significant tactical defeats on the battlefield and a domestic political environment that was becoming increasingly challenging, the off-ramp for the Ford Administration could not have come sooner. Cutting off all subsequent funding for Angola in February 1976, Congress made the decision an easy one. Kissinger recognized the program was effectively over and with that, the CIA lost their biggest advocate.¹⁶⁰

Case Analysis: Angola

Summary: The Angola case is an examination of a bite-sized chunk of a conflict that raged from the early 1960's until, arguably, the death of Jonas Savimbi in 2002. Complicated by U.S. domestic political pressures, the Cold War, and the misunderstood relationship between the Cubans and the Soviet Union, the case highlights unique dysfunction at the executive levels of the U.S. Government.¹⁶¹ **Delegating Control (H-1)** of the operation to the CIA was partially realized, but further delegation beyond the CIA Headquarters was haphazard at best. Directing an interagency working group chaired by the CIA, the 40 Committee laid the groundwork for a tightly coordinated effort. The reality fell far short with much of the management, control, and record keeping, being retained in the CIA's Africa Division.¹⁶²

Micromanagement of logistics operations, tactical level weapons employment and training advice, often by CIA Officers and analysts with little real experience, were a matter of routine. Minutes from the working group meetings indicate a routine bias toward tactical decision making and a willingness to overrule recommendations coming from forward echelons.¹⁶³

Achieving a consensus of **intent coherence (H-2)** across the involved entities proved elusive. This was evidenced across departments and agencies with examples ranging from slightly out of synch, all the way to completely disconnected. Laying out courses of action that were built around the objective of “winning” the contest in Angola, the CIA ultimately deployed 83 CIA Officers to manage the air, ground, maritime and propaganda aspects of their operation with a 24.7 million dollar budget.¹⁶⁴ Offering a similar perspective, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger advised President Ford to do something that offers confidence of winning, or staying neutral.¹⁶⁵ Viewing the problem set from his perspective as the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger defined the objective as “not to get a final victory but to balance off the Soviets”.¹⁶⁶

In the absence of any real intent coherence it is not surprising that there was significant evidence of a lack of **Unity of Effort (H-3)**. That is not to say there wasn’t some sort of window dressing; various meeting minutes and Stockwell’s account all confirm that there was significant interagency representation at the Angola Working Group and the NSC meetings on Angola included the usual cast of Defense and State Department officials.¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, participation and attendance did not translate into effective coordination or synergy. The absence of synergy, or even positive synchronization, was pervasive both within and between departments. The State Department group charged with developing policy recommendations for Angola was out of step with their own Secretary’s objectives.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, the CIA saw significant internal friction compounded by overseas CIA Officers adding their own interpretation of what should be done; a glaring example of this was the Kinshasa Chief of Stations use of a “work-around” to bypass CIA Headquarters and purchase a ship to convert into a patrol craft.¹⁶⁹

Emerging as an important actor with respect to unity of effort in this case, the legislative branch exercised their oversight responsibilities on the executive branch by controlling the CIA’s funding. Working from a position of minimal trust following the Vietnam experience, much of the Congress was highly skeptical and generally opposed to CIA activities. This mistrust was magnified when the CIA Director briefed several “misrepresentations” to Senators and both State Department and CIA officials were caught lying to Congress.¹⁷⁰

Based largely on the limited temporal window selected for the Angola case, **Continuity (H-4)** did not emerge as a significant factor. An expanded window, perhaps covering the Carter and Reagan administrations activities vis-à-vis Angola, would certainly highlight continuity as either a positive or negative influence on outcomes. **POTUS Tone (H-5)** as defined for this research, also failed to make a significant showing as a factor. Most records indicate neither a strong positive nor negative sentiment concerning special operations on the part of President Ford. His decision to launch the Mayaguez rescue operation is noted, however, this use of conventional marines in a highly overt operation should not be

misconstrued.¹⁷¹ The same would not be true if this factor took into account the willingness of the President’s National Security Advisor to employ covert and special operations.¹⁷²

Viewing this case through the theoretical lens of both Groupthink and Lay Epistemics highlights and validates aspects of both. Groupthink was a factor in the Angola Working Group chaired by the CIA but seemed to be less so in the NSC Principals meetings – Secretary Schlesinger’s appeal to develop a course of action that would lead to a “win” demonstrate a lack of the self-censorship and desire for unanimity that are established symptoms of Groupthink.¹⁷³ At the same time, both decision making bodies show similarities to the aspects of Lay Epistemics mapped out by Arie Kruglanski.¹⁷⁴ The need for specific cognitive closure to support the desired objectives of Secretary Kissinger bears striking similarity to the same phenomenon captured by Kruglanski and Bar-Joseph’s examination of the failings of Israeli intelligence in the days and hours preceding the 1973 Yom Kippur War.¹⁷⁵

Overlaying aspects of both theories affords a stronger explanatory paradigm for how this case played out. Both Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure and Groupthink highlight aspects that are variously described as symptoms, behaviors, or products, that emerge in the evidence. These include lacking appreciation for differing perspectives, intolerance of opposing views, rationalizing why warnings and negative feedback don’t apply and, overconfidence on the part of the group or of key leaders.

Factor:	Scored as:	Determined By:	Notes:
Delegated Control - where constraints, restraints and limitations on the executing or lead agency have been minimized.	Yes: ***** No:	1. Stockwell, John. In Search of Enemies – A CIA Story ***** 1. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 20 Oct 1975 2. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 10 Nov 1975	(1) Pg. 95. the 40 Committee (NSC) orders the formation of an Interagency working group ***** (1) Working group notes indicate that control is being held at the NSC level. (2) Para 1 and 3. d. Working group engaging at the tactical level.

		<p>3. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 27 Oct 1975</p> <p>4. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 03 Nov 1975.</p> <p>5. NSC Meeting notes from Kissinger, 27 June 75</p> <p>6. Stockwell, John. In Search of Enemies – A CIA Story</p>	<p>(3) Working group is having discussions at the tactical level – utilization of trainers (para 3) and aircraft (para 3d)</p> <p>(4) Para 1 and Para 4. Working group is staying engaged on tactical military matters. Para. 2 Working group overrules Consul General’s recommendation to close U.S. Embassy in Luanda</p> <p>(5) Kissinger seems to be the one in charge. Even to the degree of providing the President his talking points (script).</p> <p>(6) Pg. 71. CIA HQ managing logistics from Langley, e.g. “get more 4.2 mortar ammunition”. Pg. 72. The Chief of the CIA Africa Division “centralized too much control as his desk”.</p>
<p>Intent</p> <p>Coherence –</p> <p>Clearly understood guidance with an equal comprehension of the overall</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <p>*****</p> <p>No:</p>	<p>*****</p>	<p>*****</p>

<p>intent across all participating departments and agencies at all levels.</p>		<p>1. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 10 Nov 1975</p> <p>2. Briefing Memorandum from the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Lord) to Secretary of State Kissinger, Washington, April 12, 1976.</p> <p>3. DOS Briefing memo from Nathaniel Davis to Henry Kissinger Angola Courses of Action June 75.</p> <p>4. NSC Meeting notes from Kissinger, 27 June 75.</p> <p>5. Statement by Secretary of State Kissinger, Washington, January 29, 1976.</p> <p>6. Stockwell, John. In Search of Enemies – A CIA Story</p>	<p>(1) Para 3.c. very confusing “way ahead” vis-à-vis the South African forces.</p> <p>(2) Policy discussion regarding Southern Africa is very different than objectives outlined in CIA documents</p> <p>(3) Pg. 1. Objectives of prevent MPLA takeover and promote ascendance of friendly group not consistent with CIA objectives.</p> <p>(4) Kissinger’s prep notes for Ford outline broad objectives but then present only 1 of 3 COA’s that can possibly achieve the objective. Also emphasize that COA as an opportunity, etc.</p> <p>(5) Pg. 4. Objectives not consistent with CIA Objectives.</p> <p>(6) Pg. 94, Kinshasa Chief of Station recommendations to rapidly expand program scope and increase resources was out of touch with overall intent. Pg. 212, Kinshasa Chief of Station uses “work-around” to bypass</p>
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			CIA HQ refusal to purchase a ship.
Unity of Effort – All participating agencies are responsive to and compliant with a single source of guidance and decision making	Yes:	1. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 20 Oct 1975 2. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 27 Oct 1975 3. Stockwell, John. In Search of Enemies – A CIA Story	(1) Paragraphs 2.a and 4.a – State Department and DoD representatives participating in the group and working initiatives. (2) All stakeholders are present. (3) Pg. 159. Angola working group run by CIA had significant representation by State, Defense and CIA
	***** No:	***** 1. Meeting Minutes, Angola Working Group 03 Nov 1975 2. DOS Briefing memo from Nathaniel Davis to Henry Kissinger Angola Courses of Action June 75 3. DOS Message on Policy Risks concerning Angola Oct 75. 4. NSC Meeting Minutes June 27, 1975. 5. Statement by Secretary of State Kissinger, Washington, January 29, 1976. 6. Stockwell, John. In Search of Enemies – A CIA Story.	***** (1) Para 2 and b. Consul General not on same page with working group. (2) Executive Summary – Davis’ note that military actions not commensurate with risk. (3) Drafters (State Dept. employees in Kinshasa) identified U.S. policy regarding Angola and advise against current course of action (4) Pg. 4. Kissinger in disagreement with his own

		<p>7. New York Times, 07 November 1975.</p>	<p>department's recommendation.</p> <p>Pg. 7. Secretary Schlesinger recommends going in to win or staying neutral.</p> <p>(5) Pg. 6. Kissinger statement concerning briefings to and informing congress about covert ops in Angola not corroborated by other sources – in some cases contradicted.</p> <p>(6) Pg. 168. Interagency working group pushed back on CIA request to escalate – “suggested that it was a CIA ploy to get more money”. Pg. 169, Head of Africa Division controlling content of meeting minutes. Pg. 182, State, Defense and CIA at odds over providing Redeye Missile systems. Pg.208, Secretary of Defense consistently denies use of USAF tactical airlift.</p> <p>(7) Congressional oversight, and in this case umbrage, over the CIA's Angola activities places the CIA and administration at odds with congress.</p>
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Continuity – Disruption is minimized by maintaining Key influencers such as leaders, planners and implementers in position throughout the operation	Yes: No:		
POTUS Tone - Presidential attitude and comfort towards employing special operations to achieve national security goals	Yes: No:		

Outcome and Discussion

The outcome of the initial case analysis identifies clear trends and patterns with respect to the hypotheses. Delegation, Unity of Effort, and Intent Coherence emerge as viable factors with explanatory power. This sets the conditions for an in-depth analysis of the 2014 Syria Train and Equip initiative using the three most correlative hypotheses. Additionally, applying the remaining hypotheses with a focused view toward teasing out overlapping areas of applicability may lead to additional inferences about synergy.

Chapter V: Syria Train and Equip - *Who left the Interns in Charge?*

Introduction

The U.S. Government's decision to establish a Train and Equip (T&E) Program for Moderate Syrian Opposition (MSO) forces to fight the ISIS terrorist organization came to fruition in the third year of the Syrian Civil War. Representing an overt, defense-centric approach, the T&E Program was not the only U.S. effort centered on Syria but it was the only initiative that did not include the removal of Bashar Al Assad in some manner. Focusing on ISIS, the T&E Program represented a rare, singularly focused effort, in a region beset by security and diplomatic challenges; Cambridge historian Richard J. Evans cited distinct parallels between the current Mideast regional situation and pre-World War I Europe: "rival Islamic factions standing proxy for the rivalry between Shia Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia, while an additional element of danger is provided by Israel, with its nuclear arsenal, and again Iran, with its persistent attempts to build one. China and Russia are lining up behind one side while NATO and the US line up behind the other"¹⁷⁶. In retrospect, Evans somewhat pessimistic assessment may have been understated.

This case, the Train and Equip Program, is an examination of a small but important chapter in the overall post – Sadaam and post Arab Spring societal upheaval in the Middle East. This case clearly meets the definitional standards required of an Unconventional Warfare Campaign: Activities conducted to enable – *the actual training and equipping* – a resistance movement or insurgency – *the Moderate Syrian Opposition (MSO)* – to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power – *overthrowing and defeating the occupying ISIS pseudo government* – by operating with or through an underground, auxillary and guerilla force – *the MSO fighters comprised the Guerilla force with their local networks in Syria providing the underground and auxiliary* – in a denied area – *the ISIS controlled territory in Syria*.

Going forward, this chapter begins with a discussion of nuances and changes in the overall methodology that are necessary for a deeper analysis of the Syria T&E Program. Following sections address ethical concerns and considerations regarding the subjects who consented to be interviewed for this case and the IRB approved protections that are in place. Setting the scene for a more detailed analysis, an overview of the Syrian Civil War is followed by a more in-depth examination of the Train and Equip Program that correlates many of the events in the operational space to the concurrent policy development and decision making in Washington D.C.

Following the same format applied in the lighter examination of the initial cases, analysis of the actions and decisions are viewed through the lens of the three remaining hypotheses and the foundational theories. The conclusion of this case addresses findings unique to this case, saving the broader findings and conclusions derived from all the cases for consolidation in chapter 6.

Notes on the methodological approach

Examination and analysis of this case is consistent with the approach used in the previous cases with the exception of a table demonstrating how evidence and data align to a specific hypothesis. The reasons for excluding the table are two-fold; first, the majority of the data and evidence in previous cases was derived from archived documents and largely historical sources. In this case, the bulk of the information was from largely contemporary open source materials and subject interviews; neither of which lent itself to cataloguing and tracking in the table. Secondly, attempting to force the wrong analytic tool into play would risk creating epistemological errors and would also likely skew the overall findings. The law of Maslow's Hammer tells us, "if your only tool is a hammer, all of your problems will start to look like nails". In that spirit, and in an effort to avoid the Einstellung effect, the table was removed from the analytic toolbox for the Syria T&E case.¹⁷⁷

Examining the Syria Train and Equip (T&E) Program presents a number of challenges that prompted a somewhat different approach to analysis and data gathering. In contrast to the previous cases where much of the archival data has been declassified, and in some cases significant historical publications have laid out a rich field of secondary source information, the Syria case is far too current. Most official documents concerning Syria are still classified and many of the key participants are reticent to share information. Most background information on the Syrian Civil War was derived from open source reporting (speeches, journal articles, news stories, recently published memoirs, etc.) and, most significantly, from subject interviews. A total of eleven subjects from multiple Federal Departments and Agencies agreed to be interviewed for this research.

Examining the Syria case was facilitated by employing the multi-causal model. This tool is appropriate for a number of reasons. Providing an internal looking and logical framework for breaking down the varied factors, make it a good fit for a complex scenario like Syria. Allowing for a comprehensive integration of the "syndrome of factors" that cause violence, arguably presents a better approach to understanding than a simple timeline based narrative of events.¹⁷⁸

Recognizing that the number of subjects is considered insignificant from a quantitative standpoint, the positions and responsibilities exercised by the participants were of such a nature that they offer a rare

view of the internal machinations that surrounded this case. In broad terms (which will be clarified shortly) they include Presidential Appointees, senior ranking State Department Officials, Senior Civilian Defense Department Officials and Flag and General Officers. Additionally, Staff members – both civilian and military, and key functionaries charged with implementing T&E, provided unique perspectives and depth. In many cases, participants remain in some form of active service or are likely to be nominated to significant government positions in the future. This circumstance prompted certain considerations addressed in the next section.

Ethical Considerations

The group of subjects that participated in this research prompt a personal ethical stance that may seem excessive to an outsider, and certainly exceeds most institutional standards for protection of human subjects. In every subject interview, participants were briefed on this researcher's strongly held position on protecting sources prior to reviewing and signing an IRB approved informed consent document. Access to the unique group of subjects for this research came as a result of both previous professional relationships and subsequent connections using snowballing to ensure balanced input from a cross section of stakeholder communities. The snowballing aspect itself was carefully managed during conversations with subjects to preclude inadvertent confirmation of any previous subject identities. This technique prevented any given subject from knowing other participants, with the exception of the person who introduced them and possibly any individual that they subsequently contacted in order to make a follow-on connection. The typical scenario for how this played out was a question from the subject, *"have you spoken with Ambassador X? He / She may have some important insights for you."* A typical response was along the lines of; *"I appreciate the tip and while I can't reveal who I have spoken with, just as I will never reveal that I have spoken with you, if I were to seek an appointment with them at a later date, could I use you as a reference or possibly ask you for an introduction"?* In almost all cases, subjects were very appreciative of the safeguards in place.

The key elements of the IRB approved measures designed to ensure subject protection include the removal of any "by name" references in any documents (to include notes and transcripts). Assigning each participant a coded identifier for management and tracking purposes ensured actual names were known only to the researcher. An added layer of protection was created by ensuring primary source material that is uniquely attributable to a discrete set of individuals was only cited if independently corroborated by multiple sources; this creates an additional layer of obfuscation for anyone attempting to determine identities. In practice, this means that information derived from a meeting (for example) with a small number of participants, that included my interview subject, had to be corroborated by another source prior

to being cited in the case. This measure specifically reduces exposure to identification through a narrow process of elimination.

Additional protections included measures to safeguard hardcopy data and electronic media (thumb-drive) in a safe in a locked office. All notes, documents and data were secured in that safe and any identifying information is separated from data collected. All work was conducted on a password protected computer which is also secured in the safe when not in use. The primary researcher is the only individual with access to the office and the safe.

The Civil War – an Overview

Growing from civil unrest and demonstrations that coincided with the broader “Arab Spring”, Syria has been in a civil war since 2011. The uprising against the regime of Bashar Al Assad escalated into a full conflict within a matter of months. Evolving from demonstrations, to armed self-defense, to forming brigades, communities actively opposed and ejected pro-Assad forces. Characterized by Magnus Lundgren, the Syrian civil war is considered as “the most acute, politically significant, and complex among contemporary civil wars”.¹⁷⁹ Initially seen as a pro-democracy movement, the conflict quickly evolved to include sectarian battle lines pitting the majority Sunni population into various camps opposing the Shia Alawite dominated regime. Stefan de Mistura, U.N. Special Envoy to Syria estimated in April 2016 that the death toll was more than 400,000.¹⁸⁰

The contest now includes Syrian Kurds, Lebanese Hezbollah fighters, an Al Qaeda off-shoot currently known as Jabhat Fateh Al-Sham (the Front for the Conquest of the Levant) and previously as the Nusra Front, both the U.S. led coalition and Russians providing air support for various proxies, and the remnants of the Islamic State (ISIS). Although ISIS was a late arrival onto the scene and have largely been eliminated, they initially seized significant territory in Syria and Iraq and imposed a harsh brand of Sharia law. Establishing a new digital front in the war, ISIS combined medieval style public beheadings with a 21st century strategic communications savvy and an appreciation for timing. The “#AlleyesonISIS” twitter campaign was launched to coincide with the fall of the Iraqi city of Mosul.¹⁸¹

Shrugging off any lingering animosities from their eight-year war with Iraq, Iran entered the operational space supporting both the Iraqi government and Assad in recouping territory and retaining power respectively. The U.S. presence peaked with several thousand troops in Iraq in advisory roles and others, not so secretly, in Syria executing a counter ISIS campaign alongside proxy forces. The Russians committed forces into Syria in support of Assad and both the U.S. and Russia have conducted air strikes against various belligerents. Commenting on the complexity of the operational space and parallels

between the current Mideast situation and pre-World War I Europe, Cambridge historian Richard J. Evans noted... ”rival Islamic factions standing proxy for the rivalry between Shia Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia, while an additional element of danger is provided by Israel, with its nuclear arsenal, and again Iran, with its persistent attempts to build one. China and Russia are lining up behind one side while NATO and the US line up behind the other”.¹⁸²

In August 2016, Turkey sent forces across the border into Syria on an operation ostensibly supporting “Free Syrian Army” forces in clearing ISIS elements away from the border. This operation has been widely recognized as intended to prevent the Syrian Kurdish Group known as the PYD, from establishing a contiguous territory under Kurdish control along the Turkey’s southern border.¹⁸³ In December of the same year, Syrian Government forces, strongly supported by Russia and Iran recaptured the city of Aleppo. A strategic defeat for the anti-Assad resistance and largely seen as guaranteeing that Assad and the Baath will remain in power.¹⁸⁴ In 2019, the U.S. mission to destroy ISIS was largely achieved with the raid that killed the group’s leader Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. Baghdadi’s death, combined with the elimination of all but remnants of any effective fighting force, prompted a distancing from the Syrian Kurdish forces that had been fighting as U.S. proxies and a significant drawdown of U.S. combat forces inside of Syria proper.

Causation Factors

Applying the multi-causal model as a format for peeling back the Syria conflict is appropriate because it allows for a more comprehensive integration of the “syndrome of factors” that cause violence.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, it is arguably the best fit in terms of the development and evolution of the Syrian Civil War. Finally, the model is ontologically sound as an organizing tool and creates no conflict with, and to some degree compliments, the theories, hypotheses, and overall hermeneutic approach of this research. Figure 1. (below) provides a snapshot of the model with the details discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

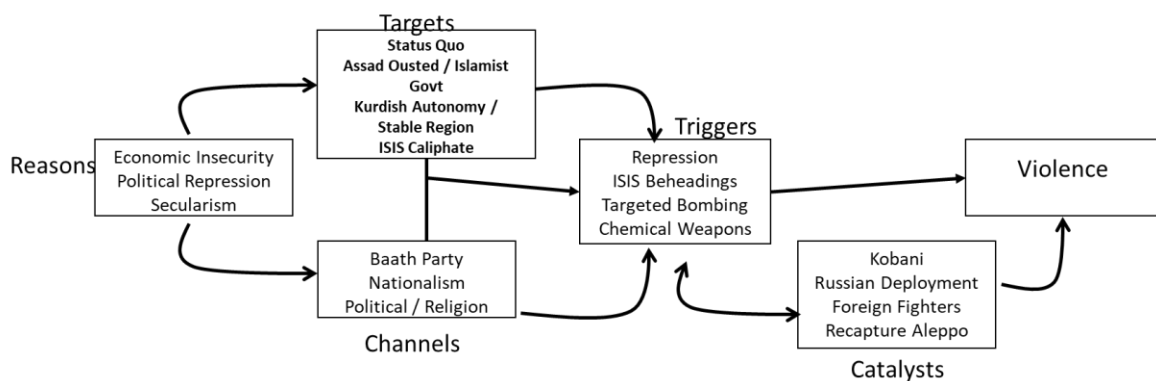


Figure 1: Factors in the Multi-Causal Model

Examining the root cause of the conflict is made complex by the rapid escalation that occurred in Syria and the overall complexity of the stakeholder landscape. The historical facts cite March 2011 when, riding the wave of the Arab-spring uprisings and sparked by the arrest and mistreatment of a group of teenagers who had painted anti-Assad slogans, pro-democracy demonstrations occurred in scattered locations around the country. Responding in a typically heavy-handed fashion, Syrian security forces only served to escalate the conflict. By June of 2011, neighborhood militias were forming and arming to counter the Syrian Army tactics.

Arresting a group of graffitiists may have been the actual spark, however, long established structural issues have plagued Syrian society. Dominating virtually every aspect of Syrian life, the Baath Political Party's dominance of Syrian society set the conditions for an insider-outsider tension that simmered for decades. During the reign of Hafez Al Assad, the economy functioned along lines of what could be considered old money enterprises receiving some sort of advantage from the government, new money based on oil and defense services, and the state bureaucrats that controlled government contracts.¹⁸⁶ Attempts at modernizing and marketization during the decade prior to the conflict outbreak, only served to create a greater economic disparity between haves and have-nots.

Repressing opposition political parties is an established practice under the Baathists. In February of 1982 the Assad regime, then led by Hafez Al Assad, largely destroyed the city of Hama and killed 20,000 to 40,000 of its own citizens to suppress an Islamist uprising.¹⁸⁷ Functioning as the regime's secret police, the Shu'bat al Mukhabarat al Askariyya, typically shortened to Mukhabarat or Military Intelligence Directorate, is an additional feature of Syrian life under the Baathists. The Mukhabarat is routinely cited by human rights organizations for arrests without warrant, detention, torture, and "disappearance" of regime opponents.¹⁸⁸

Playing an important role in the Baath-Assad power continuum, religion is a carefully balanced factor in Syrian society. Comprising the largest religious group in Syria Sunni Muslims represent about 70% of the population. Shia and Druze Islamic sects are a significant minority each comprising about 3%. Christians represent approximately 11% of the population. Notably, the Assad family are Alawite Muslims, a group that comprises approximately 11% of the population.¹⁸⁹ Some orthodox groups do not consider Alawites truly Muslim, while the Ayatollah Khomeini once loosely acknowledged a Shia - Alawite commonality.¹⁹⁰ A designation that has helped foster Syrian - Iranian relations. While the tensions of a minority religious group controlling the government seem self-evident, they are in fact compounded by the generally secularist approach of the Baath party. For a religious Sunni, a non-Sunni in control of the

government is made worse by politicians in control of the government who only assume a degree of religiosity when necessary. While this could be said of almost any multi-faith society, the underlying tension of the Sunni – Alawite – Shia balance in Syria, has never strayed far from a point of volatility.

Outcomes and Objectives

The objectives of the various belligerents are diverse. Beginning with the center of the storm, the government of Syria would like nothing more than a return to status quo. They have repeatedly labeled the other parties to the conflict as criminal elements, terrorists, and outsiders. Delegitimizing the opposition allows them to effectively convey that there was no true grievance other than criminals and anarchists acting outside of the law.

Lacking cohesiveness, the opposition groups are fighting for a variety of reasons, but removal of Assad and the Baath Party is generally a common trait. Moderate groups such as the Free Syrian Army tend to cite broader democratization of a Syrian government and establishment of rule of law. The Free Syrian Army has broad appeal among western and regional supporters because it represents a centrist line that could be described as not too religious but not too secular.

Driven by more fundamentalist underpinnings, religiously motivated groups include Jabhat Fateh Al-Sham (hereafter referred to as Jabhat), and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or ISIS. Jabhat finds its roots in Al Qaeda and similarly believes no Islamic state can exist without imposition of strict Sharia Law. Ousting Assad, eliminating the Baath Party, and establishment of a religious state are their objectives. Holding a more extreme view than Jabhat, ISIS believes in imposition of Sharia, tolerates no variance from their strict interpretation, and ultimately believe their role is to reestablish an Islamic Caliphate and set conditions for a final apocalyptic battle that will occur in or around the Syrian town of Raqqa.

Moving slightly away from the center of the storm, the Syrian Kurds have emerged as important actors in the Syria conflict. The Rojava Kurds (as they call themselves) are closely linked to the Kurdish PKK and follow the teachings of Abdullah Ocalan.¹⁹¹ Sensing an opportunity in the conflict, the Rojava Kurds believe Ocalan's brand of Marxist and utopian political views will provide both the discipline and dogma to achieve some form of Kurdish territory and self-governance as an outcome. Coupling this objective with a long-term practice of utility maximization has afforded the Kurds a degree of situational political flexibility that other belligerents have not enjoyed. In some areas, the Kurds co-exist with Syrian government troops and in others they are actively fighting them.¹⁹²

Forming the periphery of the Syria storm includes groups like the Iranians and their proxy forces that include various Iraqi Shia Militias and Lebanon based Hezbollah. The Iranian's objective in Syria supports the Syrian Government's objective – maintain Assad in power. Considering Syria as part of their axis of influence in the region, the Iranians believe the loss of a friendly state diminishes the perception of Iran as a regional power. From a practical perspective it will also increase the difficulties in maintaining open lines with Hezbollah.

In contrast, a coalition of predominantly Sunni states including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Jordan all provide varying monetary and military support to the anti-Assad factions as part of the U.S. led coalition. The objective for these regimes is seeing Assad ousted from power and installation of a democratic Sunni government.

On the very fringes of the Syrian conflict storm, but with outsized interest and influence, are the regional and global powers. These include Turkey, the European Union, Russia and the United States. Sitting in a unique position as a border state with Syria, Turkey has shifted positions throughout the conflict. Early on, Turkey strongly supported the removal of Assad; a position that has been tempered with more conciliatory language as the government of Recep Erdogan has come to grips with an outcome that looks more and more like Assad retaining power.¹⁹³ Most recently, Turkey has emerged as a strong backer of the Free Syrian Army and launched several incursions into the Northern Syrian Cantons. Turkey continues to oppose any manner of a Kurdish autonomous territory on their southern border.

The European Union represents the group of countries that are most significantly impacted by the flow of Syrian refugees. Many of the EU States also provide military support to the U.S. coalition fighting against ISIS. While there has been some equivocating on the details, the EU position seeks Assad ousted and a democratic government installed.

Partnering in an alliance with the Syrian government, Russia provides a rare pro-Assad voice in international diplomatic circles. Providing both material support in the form of weapons and equipment, they also provide direct support in the form of airstrikes, advisers and direct combat by Russian Special Forces and contract mercenaries. The Russians are unique in their objective of a post conflict Syria with Bashar Al Assad still in power and the Baath Party retaining control of the government.

The U.S. is regionally the most active of the outside powers. Leading the anti-ISIS coalition, the U.S. supports the Free Syrian Army, provides advisers and equipment to the Iraqis, and following the battle of Kobani, dramatically increased support to the Rojava Kurds. The U.S. objectives may be the most complex of any stakeholder. Under the Obama administration there were mixed messages but they generally included a democratically elected, moderate, and stable government in post conflict Syria. The

Trump administration shifted focus to eliminating ISIS within Syria and then drawing down U.S. troop presence to a minimal footprint.

The U.S. has called for Assad's ouster and subsequently tempered that position with an invitation for the U.N. to arbitrate the final outcome. Assad's use of chemical weapons on his own citizens prompted various responses from the U.S. including strong condemnation from President Obama and a cruise missile strike following each use from the Trump Administration. The U.S. also wants a stable region with NATO ally Turkey firmly in the U.S. camp, ISIS defeated, the Iraqi government stabilized, Iranian ambitions for regional hegemony contained, and a new Syrian government that will accept a balance of power vis-à-vis Israel.

Examining the various stakeholders and groups in this conflict is challenging. Using a similar approach to the previous examination of targets, it begins in the center of the conflict storm with the supporters of the Syrian government. Politically, the Baath Party remains the foundation of this group and is the dominant factor in any discussion of the Syrian government's role. Controlling politics is not the only power base of the Baath, they dominate every aspect of Syrian life. If you wanted a business license or favorable tax rate, being a Baathist was in your best interest. Similarly, if you needed an expedited passport or access to a hospital for your children, the same held true. If you were an Alawite or a career military or intelligence official, you were most likely a Baathist.¹⁹⁴ This nexus of political, economic, social, and security controls, form the cleavage that separates government supporters from the rest. A rift that may tie directly to conflict causation.

The opposition groups are significantly fragmented. A 2013 BBC report estimated that there may be as many as 1,000 separate groups¹⁹⁵. No single opposition group holds a monopoly on the characteristics that define the cleavages. There are feminist sub-groups active within Islamist dominated groups and there are Islamist sub-groups active within the Rojava Kurdish construct. The sheer complexity begs some sort of artificial construct as an analytic point of departure.

In that spirit, in broad terms, they are considered in terms of national, political and religious identities as an ontological framework. The Kurds have cross-regional presence that moved to the forefront of their identity when they were ignored in the post-World War I colonial map drafting exercise that still defines most Middle East borders. Traditional Kurdish lands run from northern Iran in the east to the eastern provinces of Syria with significant presence in Iraq and Turkey. In Syria, the Kurds are dominated by the PYD political party with strong socialist and communist roots. For this group, Kurdish nationalism, Marxist-socialist dogma, and the cult-like authority of Abdullah Ocalan, form the pillars that define their identity.¹⁹⁶

Political identity, writ very broadly, is the dominant factor in the supporters of the Free Syrian Army – a moniker that provides the umbrella for a collective group of loosely affiliated Brigades and Fronts. Their supporters capture the grievance side of the greed and grievance discourse and range from political outcasts such as pro-democracy parties, to gender focused grass roots women’s rights organizations that were, and continue to be, routinely marginalized and excluded from Syrian political life.¹⁹⁷

Religious identity helps to define the most significant characteristic driving the cleavage for a large portion of the opposition. These groups could be further divided into very moderate (there is at least one sub-group in the Free Syrian Army that identifies as Islamist), Islamists focused on establishing a religious state, and Jihadist groups such as Al Nusra and ISIS that take Islamic orthodoxy to a violent and uncompromising extreme. Their objective is purely religious and focused on establishment of a caliphate.

Escalating Violence

Tracking the escalatory triggers for increasing violence in Syria has been difficult given that they are almost as plentiful as the number of belligerents in the battlespace. In the earliest days of the unrest when there was still a chance of preventing full scale revolution, the rough handling of a group of teenage detainees was clearly an escalatory trigger. Surprising given that the Syrian police had probably done the same thing dozens, if not hundreds of times in the past and elicited no response.

Intensifying the government’s attitude, the 2012 detonation of a bomb at the Syrian Ministry of Security killed Bashar al Assad’s brother in law and a senior Syrian General. Prompting an immediate security crackdown in Damascus, this event eliminated any willingness to negotiate on the part of the Syrian Government. Coincidentally, the Syrian General was also the highest-ranking Christian in the Syrian Armed forces and his death largely galvanized the Christian Minority in their support for the Assad regime.

Employing chemical weapons in 2013, against largely civilian targets, was a very high-profile escalation by the Assad regime. Prompting significant international outcry and diplomatic maneuvering between the Russians and the U.S., the internal response to this attack was limited to increased entrenchment between belligerents. By this point all the parties had staked out their positions. Consistent with the unpredictability of triggers, much smaller scale chemical attacks in 2017 and again in 2018 prompted a swift and targeted response by the U.S. unilaterally (2017) and with allies (2018).

In terms of influencing the rate, duration, and intensity of the Syrian conflict, the preponderance of catalysts are generated by outside actors. These catalysts come from neorealist influenced state actors and through the informal network of foreign fighters and Jihadis that flow in and out of the region.

Providing the backdrop for a confluence of internal and external factors that changed the conflict dynamic, the Battle for Kobani was the exception. Placing Syrian Kurds besieged by ISIS fighters in a border town with all safe ingress and egress controlled by the Turks, this was a no-quarter battle. Allowing some refugees to evacuate, the Turks prohibited Kurdish reinforcements or supplies from crossing into Kobani from Turkish territory. The U.S., in a diplomatic conundrum, carefully exerted pressure on Turkey and quietly provided air support to the Kurds. In the end, against all odds and predictions, the Kurds prevailed and emerged as one of the more effective anti-ISIS groups in the battle space and the backbone of the Syrian Defense Force (SDF). As I observed in a previous case study, given the marketing savvy of the Kurds, they would likely have benefitted regardless of the battle's outcome; Kobani was going to be portrayed as either the Rojava Kurd's Masada, or Stalingrad.¹⁹⁸

A significant catalyst to the conflict came with the 2015 deployment of Russian military forces into Syria. Introducing advanced Russian ground attack aircraft and special operations units had a telling effect on the battlefield. These forces provided sufficient impetus for the Assad regime to seize the initiative and go on the offensive in many areas. The Syrian government's 2016 recapture of the city of Aleppo is indicative of the shifting fortunes in the battlespace. Changing the strategic balance in favor of the Assad regime, Aleppo's fall increases the likelihood that Assad will retain power and shifts the Syrian government's stance in any future negotiations.

Foreign fighters entering the battlespace are symptomatic of an increasing Islamization among the rebel groups. This is a catalyst that could transform the reasons for fighting from what was sparked by democratization movements to a move toward Islamic extremism. While the impact of foreign fighters is negligible, the symbolism of brothers joining the fight is powerful and serves to internationalize the cause.

Train and Equip

Examining the 2014 - 2015 Train and Equip program must include policy positions and precursor programs that date as early as 2011. These factors set conditions and contributed to the entirety of the campaign. The story of executive level decision making and the resultant strategy and policy decisions begins in August 2011, when President Barak Obama made the public statement that "the time had come for President Assad to step aside".¹⁹⁹ Echoing a commonly held sentiment, particularly among western leaders and allies, this Presidential guidance would still require over a year of internal discussion before manifesting as a U.S. Policy.

Advancing with what was described as a “half-hearted” and hesitant approach to ramp-up any type of action generating policy, the NSC focused on avoiding a repeat of the 2011 Libyan regime change.²⁰⁰ Or worse yet, stumbling into an Iraq style conflict.²⁰¹ Legitimate concerns given the administration’s inability to prevent anarchy in Libya, and the fresh memory of the Iraq war. While not singularly attributable to these concerns, the standard operating procedures in the National Security Council and the White House, adapted a comfort with indecision. In what Welch and Bailey charitably described as “a long bureaucratic approval process,” may have started as a conscious decision to be thorough.²⁰² Unfortunately, the broad consensus indicates a cumbersome and ineffective NSC decision making process that one source described as “uniquely dysfunctional with an ability to focus on minutiae”.²⁰³ Illustrating how challenging the bureaucracy had become is an often repeated joke between Defense Department staffers preparing to brief the NSC to, “make sure they knew the tire pressure on the aircraft wheels and the location of the last covered and concealed position”.²⁰⁴

Continuous debate, both internal to the administration and involving the legislative branch, strongly contributed to an iterative process with respect to strategy and official policy on Syria. In spite of President Obama’s 2011 statement, what the U.S. wanted and was willing to do to achieve it, was developed in fits and starts over the next several years. To be certain, the complexity of the operating environment was a major detriment to developing a clear way ahead. In one telling chapter, the U.S. Ambassador to Syria attended some peaceful anti-government and human rights focused meetings. An action that could only be construed as challenging the Assad regime. At the same time, one of the opposition groups, the Al Qaeda affiliated Nusra Front, was detected surveilling the U.S. Embassy as a precursor to an attack. A threat deemed serious enough to recall the Ambassador and close the Embassy.²⁰⁵

Recognizing the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, also known as the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), in December 2012, President Obama triggered several unintended consequences.²⁰⁶ Most significantly, it reinforced the message to the Syrian government that the future of Syria would not include Assad (and by extension the Baath Party). Casting a wide net over dozens of disparate opposition groups, The SNC was a broadly inclusive body in terms of unifying the various counter-Assad movements, but was still not “all inclusive”. President Obama’s legitimization of the SNC also delegitimized the groups that fell outside the circle – a stigmata that was hard to overcome.

Beginning with low risk initiatives that loosely fit the criteria of being humanitarian and non-lethal, these overt efforts did little to modify Syrian government policy or behavior.²⁰⁷ An additional CIA covert program, known as “Timber Sycamore” provided a platform to engage with, and provide military equipment to various resistance groups that were actively engaged inside of Syria. This program did have

an anti-Assad component that would prove to be a countervailing factor in the Train and Equip program.²⁰⁸

The Genesis of the Program

As the administration struggled with clarifying objectives and policy formulation they released, what amounted to a “call for papers” across the federal interagency. Soliciting good ideas for engaging and solving the Syria problem and the Assad regime, the request basically asked, “what more can we do to prod Assad into negotiating?”. Responding, as did countless other recipient departments, agencies and commands, the U.S. Central Command’s special operations component headquarters (SOCCENT) prepared and submitted a 3-page concept centered on the traditional unconventional warfare precept of equipping, training, and advising, an indigenous force.²⁰⁹ Operating by, with, and through indigenous partners is a proven special forces technique for achieving objectives with a small commitment of troops and comparatively minimal U.S. cost in terms of resources and risk to forces.

Reflecting the administration’s tendency to deliberate in detail, the SOCCENT concept disappeared into the bureaucratic process and was assumed to have been dismissed. The subsequent beheading of American Journalist James Foley in August 2014 and the stream of ISIS execution videos flowing out of Syria and Iraq, shifted the administration’s focus from bringing Assad to the negotiating table, to countering ISIS. The Foley execution in particular, had a galvanizing effect and created an emergency like atmosphere. The administration’s commitment to doing something was still not enough to solidify any sort of policy objective. In an emergency NSC meeting chaired by Deputy National Security Advisor Lisa Monaco, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff offered that a review of the Administration’s objectives would allow for a focused discussion on possible targets or response options. Her response was to direct a review of all possible targets.²¹⁰ This was taken to mean that objectives had not been formulated.

Ultimately, The SOCCENT concept, a 3-page document originally crafted to pressure the Assad regime, was selected as the course of action to counter ISIS. Moving rapidly, SOCCENT and United States Central Command worked to flesh out a full plan that required resourcing and authorities that up until that point, did not exist. Many of the authorities requested by SOCCENT went unanswered for over a year. Fundamental issues such as providing medical evacuation and fire support to the Moderate Syrian Opposition (MSO) forces were among the most pressing.

Decision Making Inside the Beltway

In other areas the Administration's guidance was clear and placed significant limitations on SOCCENT. The requirement to only recruit Syrians willing to fight against ISIS and not the Assad regime was problematic at every level. In the words of one high level State Department Official, "everyone thought the 'fight ISIS only' policy was a stupid idea".²¹¹ This same source identified "fatal flaws" in the administration's approach to Syria:

- An understanding that President Obama was not going to war with Assad.
- The U.S. personnel conducting Train and Equip could not be a combatant force.
- There was no U.S. coherent strategic approach. This included a failure to make Assad's removal a national objective; it remained more of an aspiration.
- The administration never connected the campaign against ISIS to the campaign against Assad.

Both Secretary of State John Kerry and others had concerns with the ISIS only approach, but in principle, supported the Train and Equip initiative as a program with solid value.²¹² There were however, significant disagreements across the interagency with the Train and Equip program as the correct option. A senior State Department Syria expert characterized the White House's behavior toward alternative courses of action as a "hesitancy to ramp up".²¹³ Providing Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) to the Syria resistance groups through the Timber Sycamore program were among the alternate recommendations provided to the White House. This was vetoed citing serious concerns about the systems falling into the hands of terrorist groups. The administration went so far as to warn other coalition members not to provide MANPADS.

Establishing a no-fly zone to protect civilian and refugee population areas within Syria was also considered and rejected by the White House. This decision was squarely contrary to number two of the top three policy guidelines which he understood to be:

1. Don't allow for a chaotic fall of Bashar Al Assad
2. Protect Syrian Civilians
3. Avoid catastrophic conflict with Iran, Russia, etc.

This inconsistency was proven in later years when the U.S. established and enforced no-fly areas to protect Kurdish populations. One state department official presented a logical argument that this single decision caused enormous loss of civilian life, a massive refugee exodus into Europe and ultimately contributed to the rise of right-wing populist movements in the EU countries.²¹⁴

Friction and disagreements between policy makers carried over to the highest levels. Writing in an Op Ed shortly after his resignation, Robert Ford, the former Ambassador to Syria, concluded his highly critical position on the Obama Administration's Syria policy stating; *"We don't have good choices on Syria anymore. But some are clearly worse than others. More hesitation and unwillingness to commit to enabling the moderate opposition fighters to fight more effectively both the jihadists and the regime simply hasten the day when American forces will have to intervene against Al Qaeda in Syria"*.²¹⁵ Ford should also be counted among those who disapproved of separating the efforts against Assad and ISIS.

Revealing further friction at high levels in the administration, National Security Advisor Susan Rice did not include the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, General (Retired) John Allen, in a NSC Principal's meeting on Syria. A possible oversight but, given the subject matter and the role he was filling, his exclusion from this policy making body could be considered an indicator of internal tensions and disagreements. Given that Dr. Rice only mentions General Allen one time in her book, despite the important position he was given by the President and his role managing the counter ISIS coalition, this indicator of tension seems to be substantiated.²¹⁶

Operationalizing Decisions

SOCCENT, as the Department of Defense lead for Train and Equip, moved forward with establishing forward bases for training areas and logistics hubs. The command reconfigured as a Combined Joint Interagency Task Force (CJIATF) and within the headquarters, was structured for whole of government teamwork. Senior State Department and CIA representatives were defacto deputies to the Commanding General. The staff was organized with liaison positions from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). In general, if an agency or department had a way of contributing, there was a place for them on the staff. This was also true of regional and coalition partners, particularly from Turkey, Jordan and Iraq because of their shared borders with Syria.

With SOCCENT laying the groundwork, significant policy issues remained that could only be resolved in Washington. The SOCCENT Commander, Major General Michael Nagata, had to simultaneously finalize the plan, provide briefings to congress and continuously engage his chain of command and policy makers to address critical issues that were unresolved. The most pressing included:

-Fire Support: Would we be allowed to provide fire support to ensure the moderate Syrians would have success on the battlefield? Would we provide that support if they were engaged by regime forces?

- Medical Evacuation: Would we provide evacuation and follow on care if any of the Syrian Resistance forces were wounded?

- ISIS prisoners: Following the rules of land warfare and the Geneva accords is a given, but what do we physically do with them? Set up holding camps? Return them to country of origin?

- Stabilization: What is the plan if our forces are successful against ISIS? What does stabilization look like? How do we avoid creating a security vulnerability that either the Syrian regime or the Russians will take advantage of?²¹⁷

Difficulty in recruiting and retaining fighters was one part of the fallout from the policy gaps. This was in addition to the issues created by the initial limitations established by the Administration – the ISIS only pledge and the restriction on accompanying the Syrian fighters into combat. The latter restriction was so significant that it was a widely held belief among the SOCCENT Staff that this program would not work if the U.S. Special Forces trainers could not accompany the MSO into the fight.²¹⁸

The ISIS only pledge reflected a serious naivete on the part of the NSC concerning the cultural dynamics in Syria. Many fighters were localized in their motivations; events in and around their home village compelled them to join the resistance. Others were more sophisticated and had either political or religious motivation. Many, if not most, saw ISIS as just another resistance group and acknowledged they were radicals that would have to be dealt with at some point. Almost universally, individual fighters and groups recognized Bashar Al Assad as the problem and were willing to fight for his removal.²¹⁹

The challenges of recruiting were impacted by both local and self-imposed problems. Human rights vetting to ensure that none of the potential recruits had past affiliations or a history of criminal behavior is standard fare in this type of operation. However, past affiliations, no matter how brief or under what circumstances could also eliminate a potential recruit. Any Syrian who had been coerced to fight for Al Nusra for a brief period prior to defecting, was considered an Al Nusra associate and denied a slot in the MSO.²²⁰ Coming to grips with localized issues presented a significant challenge to recruiting and organizing for combat. Recruits would only agree to fight alongside people from their home village and refused to take orders from strangers. Many also objected to the notion of leaving their home district to fight – threats to a home village constituted the only motivating factor and once the threat was eliminated, many saw no reason to continue fighting.

To be certain, some aspects and lessons from the T&E Program carried over to successor programs with positive impacts. Most importantly, applying the lesson of accepting risk and committing resources to achieve stated objectives was a tangible change. Contrasting what one subject described as “reluctant

actors who were unwilling to accept risk or make decisions but still wanted results”, when discussing the Obama NSC, the U.S. support to the SDF allowed U.S. Advisers to accompany their trainees into combat.²²¹ In addition to policy changes, significant numbers of vehicles, equipment, and facilities, all vestiges of the T&E Program, migrated into other programs – primarily the SDF support.

Case Analysis: Syria Train and Equip Program

Summary: The Syria Train and Equip case offers a much more recent retrospective of events than the previous cases and in that light, may also prove more useful for national security practitioners and strategists. There is little debate that this program failed to achieve the objectives of engaging and defeating ISIS with a Proxy Syrian force. Responding to a question during a September 2015 Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing, General Lloyd Austin’s response concerning the number of trained fighters the T&E Program had produced was, “it’s a small number, the ones that are in the fight, we’re talking four or five.”²²² This was a near final punctuation mark on a 17-month, 500-million dollar program.

The examination of Syria T&E follows a similar format to earlier case analysis. The hypotheses under consideration have been refined as a byproduct of the “natural selection” that occurred in the analysis of the previous cases. Reducing the hypotheses under consideration to Delegation of Control, Intent Coherence, and Unity of Effort, creates a more focused conceptual framework. Both Groupthink and Lay Epistemic Theories remain in play throughout this analysis.

Metering the release of important authorities and holding policy decisions until either the last possible moment, or at a point too late to matter, is indicative of a trend to fail to **delegate control** (H-1). Centralizing decision making for key policy and operational direction had a tangible negative impact on the T&E Program. Providing casualty evacuation and supporting fire, generally understood to be close air support, remained unanswered questions for over a year.²²³ Preempting the notion that an answer would not be necessary until the MSO fighters were ready to cross back into Syria, the Defense Department emphasized the negative impact from this policy void; particularly on recruiting and retention of viable fighters.

Limiting U.S. participation by restricting any type of U.S. Advisors from accompanying their MSO proxies into Syria was widely recognized as a showstopper for the CJATF personnel closest to the problem. Justifying this limitation with loosely articulated responses that emphasized that this was not a U.S. combat operation and providing air support would be viewed as escalatory, offered no conciliation to

the CJATF personnel.²²⁴ One participant characterized the challenges as dealing with the childlike behavior of an NSC wanting everything, but not being willing to do anything for it or commit to it.²²⁵

The criticality of Combat Advisers accompanying their Syrian counterparts was never resolved during the T&E Program. Proving the value of this critical requirement did not come until August 2016 when U.S. Advisers accompanied Syrian Defense Force (SDF) units, comprised of both Kurdish and former MSO fighters, into combat and cleared the Mara Line West of the Euphrates River.²²⁶ One observer to this action described approximately 30 days of SDF attacks that were successfully repulsed by ISIS. Following the introduction of a U.S. Army Special Forces Team in an “advise and accompany” role, the objective was successfully taken in three hours.²²⁷

Releasing varying guidance and lacking a mechanism for coordination among U.S. Government stakeholders, significantly undermined the ability to achieve **intent coherence** (H-2) among the participants. As cited earlier, the CJATF established to command and control the T&E program was built for interagency inclusiveness. In practice, this did not achieve the outcome intended. Offering high praise for the USAID personnel assigned to Syria in support of their “start forward” program, Subject 03 also bemoaned the fact that only seven or eight USAID personnel were in Syria at any given time; in his words “not a big investment”.²²⁸

Playing out in sometimes dangerous fashion, the lack of intent coherence created competition between U.S. stakeholders and even coalition members. Unhindered by the “anti-ISIS” pledge and only minimal vetting requirements, the CIA’s covert program was able to recruit more and better fighters, pay and equip them better, and supported their anti-Assad ideals. Leaving “table scraps” for the T&E Program as far as a recruiting pool and even access to equipment, was a constant challenge. In just one instance, a T&E element of U.S. and MSO personnel were directed to leave a logistics warehouse in Turkey because, as their Turkish Army Liaison explained, “another group is coming - you can’t be here, and these guys don’t particularly like American’s either”.²²⁹

Highlighting another of the multiple challenges to the intent coherence hypothesis, the episode at the warehouse likely involved one of the extremist groups that were heavily supported by the Saudi’s, Qatar, and Turkey. Contributing to the confusion on the ground and the proliferation of different opposition groups, the CIA and other “external patrons” were adding to the frictions in the operational space.²³⁰ Largely without regard to the motivation or ideals of the groups they were supporting, the coalition members acted in what they believed to be their own interests by supporting anti-Assad groups with a commonly held belief that they would be able to “rein them in” when necessary. At the same time these

interests conflicted with the focus on ISIS and undermined the T&E Program. This ongoing parallel effort was well known and largely ignored by the U.S.

Dissenting opinions and tension at the executive level of government manifested as varying degrees of cooperation and coordination in the operational space. These de-linkages of priorities and efforts give a strong indication that the program lacked **unity of effort** (H-3). Snubbing General Allen by not including him in the NSC Principals meeting, while clearly a juvenile stunt, is probably more telling if viewed as an indicator of more significant issues within the government's leadership. Disconnected efforts by various departments and agencies created a briar patch of competing efforts, priorities, and desired outcomes.

Achieving a diplomatic solution under the Geneva I framework was a primary State Department objective. Overt messages to the Assad Regime consistently conveyed that the Syrian people would be the ultimate arbiters of the next Syrian government. Including a transitional governing body in the construct, they even secured a guarantee from the Syrian National Council to negotiate every position in the new government.²³¹ While this seemingly routine diplomatic effort was underway, the CIA was providing lethal support to a broad range of resistance groups – to include those considered too extreme for the SNC.²³² Viewing these actions from a Syrian Government perspective, it is understandable how these seemingly contradictory actions could lead to misinterpretation.

Viewing these same actions from within the various departments of the U.S. Government, the same premise holds true. While the T&E Program was manacled with restrictions on recruiting and selecting moderate Syrians, the CIA was training and equipping groups that were, and are, considered extremist.²³³ At the operational level the actions and events of the various participants were well known if not frequently observed; imagine the challenges of watching CIA trained Nusra Front fighters raid a warehouse full of equipment earmarked for the T&E Program, and having no response. Coming on the heels of the Obama Administration's failure to enforce the chemical weapons "red line," the warehouse raid prompted several key leaders from the SDF to defect to the Nusra Front.²³⁴ Rounding out a triumvirate of disparate initiatives, the State Department's focus in 2014 – 2015 remained unchanged; compel the Syrian government to go to Geneva for serious negotiations.²³⁵ All of this points to a systemic shortfall in achieving any level of unity of effort.

Examining the T&E program through the lens of **Groupthink** reveals that some of the defining aspects come to the surface and offer explanatory insights. This is particularly evident in Susan Rice's account of the Obama Administration's National Security Cabinet meeting following the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons. Providing a near set piece example, Rice describes the unanimity symptom of Groupthink in the consensus agreement with the President's logic and his proposed course of action to get

congressional approval for any military action. She also shares a perception that is consistent with self-censorship on the part of some attendees.²³⁶

Examining the case through Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure, is less clear cut but still teases out some demonstrable examples of the need for specific closure. Relying on a heavily bureaucratic and cumbersome process at the NSC is indicative of the “freezing” aspect of cognitive closure. Disregarding differing perspectives is also evident through much of the policy development from 2011 forward. Insisting on detailed vetting of MSO fighters and rejecting a no-fly zone to protect Syrian civilians, were both policies refuted by the later employment of largely unvetted Kurdish YPG fighters and the successful establishment of no-fly zones.²³⁷

Findings

Tempting as it is to declare “too early to tell”, there is a grain of truth in that elegant, if not overly dismissive, finding. However, there is sufficient data and evidence to examine this case based on the conceptual framework and theories validated and refined in the examination of the previous cases. Delaying examination of this case, for at least a decade or longer, while waiting for the release of classified documents and more robust literature on the T&E Program, would miss an opportunity to garner unvarnished impressions and recollections from the interview subjects. This may also set the stage for later research that will have access to the full suite of forensic data that will likely remain classified for at least a decade. However, it is important to determine what we can based on the information available.

Delegating control (H-1) by consciously minimizing constraints, restraints and limitations was not achieved in the Syria T&E Program. Remaining silent in the face of urgent requests from the operational and tactical commanders is more akin to wishing a problem would go away rather than employing the concept of “no policy is a policy”. The later approach is only viable if no demand for a decision has been established or there is a willingness to let a subordinate accept the risk of making the decision. In the Syria case, the combination of tightly held limitations such as the “ISIS only” pledge and the failure to make decisions in response to a critical request like casualty evacuation, point to the freezing aspect of cognitive closure on a scale akin to strategic vacillation.

Achieving **Intent Coherence (H-2)** through consistent guidance equally understood by all participating agencies and departments was a significant shortfall in the Syria T&E Program. Demonstrating this assertion most tangibly was the disconnect in the objectives for the CIA and the T&E Program. The CIA’s support to anti-Assad factions created an environment where the T&E Program had to compete

against another U.S. Government agency for resources and recruits. This is almost a perfect example of incoherence of intent.

Developing a degree of **Unity of Effort (H-3)** through responsiveness to a single source of guidance and decision making showed mixed results in the Syria T&E Program. Organizing the CJIATF to integrate both outside agencies and coalition partners clearly shows a strategic savvy and understanding of the importance of all parties working toward a common goal or objective. This purpose “built for teamwork” organization, the highest headquarters actively managing the program, was unfortunately the lone bright spot. Subordinate elements of the CJIATF had frequent issues with other government agencies that point to a breakdown in responding to a common source of guidance. At the executive levels of government, similar breakdowns were common. Within the State Department, the Syria Desk had little interaction with the Counter-ISIS Office. Within the NSC, Susan Rice had little regard or understanding for Turkey’s role and advised the President to minimize their involvement.

While not clearly linked to the hypotheses or the theories, two separate phenomena regarding motivation were observed and reported in multiple subject interviews. Anticipation of the administrations goals and objectives, typically by senior level bureaucrats, influenced policy formulation in the absence of, or prior to, receiving actual guidance. This could be categorized as “second guessing” or some form of preconceived notion and it did have an impact; at a minimum, the energy expended by subordinates developing errant courses of action was inefficient. At this point the impact of this phenomenon is not fully understood but is intriguing none the less.

The second phenomenon does appear to tie in with the Groupthink symptom of “Mindguards”. Various subjects shared a sense of protectionism coming from the NSC with respect to the President’s image and legacy as a peacemaker. The ideas of not labeling the T&E Program as a combatant force, avoiding catastrophic conflict, opting out of imposing no-fly zones, and even delaying the decision of air support because it would be seen as escalatory, are all consistent with this perception.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined The U.S. Government’s decision to establish a Train and Equip Program for Moderate Syrian Opposition forces to fight the ISIS terrorist organization. Occurring as a sub-plot in the midst of the greater context of the Syrian Civil War, this program ran from 2014-2015. Progressing from an overview of the regional conflict and then a more detailed, but brief, history of the Civil war to provide a more or less contemporaneous situational understanding.

An analysis of the conflict loosely following the multi-causal model offered a more in depth understanding of the stakeholders, motivations, and objectives of the conflict. It also served as a scene setter for a discussion on the T&E Program. This approach, using a tool commonly applied to develop peacemaking and conflict intervention strategies for ongoing strife, proved enormously useful in examining a contemporary case. Where archival data is largely non-existent, the multi-causal model framework provided a solid template for guiding the conversations during subject interviews to focus on factors that shaped decisions. This helped circumvent the “campfire story” phenomenon and concentrate on deciphering why decisions were crafted and how they impacted the outcome.

Examining the T&E Program included discussion of the conditions that laid the groundwork during the preceding years, the start of the program, decision making at the strategic level, and operationalizing those decisions in the theater. Analyzing the case data and evidence employed a similar methodology to previous cases using a refined (reduced) set of hypotheses and Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory. Findings followed the same format as the analysis, focusing discussion using the lens provided by the hypotheses and theoretical foundations. Two additional observations, not rising to the level of being addressed within this research, were noted as a prompt for future study.

Chapter VI: Finding and Holding *True North* in a Bureaucratic Fog Bank

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold; first it presents findings of each case based on an index scoring of the hypotheses, an analysis of the theoretical impact, and a contextual analysis guided by hermeneutics. Secondly, it draws lessons from the aggregate analysis and determines the role of the hypotheses and frames how they answer the overall research question. Finally, offering both discussion and argument, it presents lessons for practitioners and ultimately proffers systemic solutions intended to mitigate some of the more entrenched bureaucratic disfunction highlighted by the cases.

This research was introduced by two vignettes intended to act as both scene setters and to spark curiosity. With a perspective now informed by significant research and analysis, a brief revisit to these two “scene setters,” is in order:

On the nights of 19 and 20 October 2001, just 38 days after the Al Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, two Special Forces A-Teams launched from a base in Uzbekistan and infiltrated Northern Afghanistan. Quickly linking up and establishing rapport with the indigenous fighters, the Special Forces Teams moved with their counterparts on horseback and on foot to engage the Taliban. Within weeks the tide shifted dramatically. More Special Forces teams paired with additional resistance forces and the Taliban collapsed quickly. The city of Kandahar fell on 07 December 2001 and the remaining Taliban government went into hiding or fled into Pakistan.

In May of 2014 the Obama Administration announced a plan to recruit, train, equip and advise a Syrian force, comprised of moderate Muslims to support the coalition efforts against ISIL. Charged with recruiting vetted non-jihadists who pledged to only fight ISIL, the initiative was hindered from the start. Resourced with several hundred U.S. troops and a \$500 million dollar budget, the program had an initial goal of training 3,000 troops in 2015 and 5,400 additional troops each subsequent year²³⁸. By May of 2015, the Department of Defense announced the start of training for the first class of ninety recruits²³⁹. By September of 2015, less than a dozen U.S. trained Syrian fighters were actively engaged in the fight. Several weeks later the administration cancelled the program and shifted the remaining assets to established opposition groups.

These cases offered a number of potential lines of inquiry based on a painfully obvious question – how did these two campaigns turn out so differently? In 2001, a well-trained, but largely untested force, using what amounted to “come as you are” equipment and technology, exceeded all expectations in ousting the Taliban government in a matter of months. In 2014, an equally well-trained and now highly experienced force, using state of the art equipment and technology, fell flat and the program was abandoned. The findings in this chapter offer an explanation that goes beyond the vignettes and ties back into the overall research question.

Beginning with the findings, this final chapter is structured to present a logical approach employing both index scoring, analysis, and contextual deconstruction guided by critical hermeneutics, to lay bare the fundamental elements of how the answer to the research question is formed. Examining individual cases, and then the cases as a whole, sets the conditions to tease out patterns and trends that emerge across the entirety of the sampled sources. All of this provides the content that defines the standing of each hypothesis and ultimately gets at the “how” of the research question.

Providing the conclusion to both this chapter, and to the overall research study, the second part of this chapter addresses findings that were unexpected, and where questions were left unanswered. Shortfalls are noted as opportunities and this section attempts to set the stage for additional research. As a segue to the conclusion, this chapter closes with a brief recap of lessons, in the form of, “do’s and don’ts,” that have become evident during this research. While normally reticent to cross into normative verbiage, this section is the exception that is directly addressing practitioners in the field. A follow-on to best practices takes a swing at solutions for the greatest systemic challenge, the National Security Council.

Reviewing the overall research study, the final section recaps the contribution of each chapter leading to the findings and conclusion. Following the overall format of the study, a recap of the literature review, methodology, and both chapters providing case analysis, synopsizes the study. Finally, a pitch to use this overall research, the methodology, and the tools, as a springboard for advancing the dialogue, closes this phase of the research agenda.

Findings

Aiming to weave the hypotheses and theories into a tightly framed and rigorously justified response to the research question, these findings are derived from a systematic approach that utilizes the full analytic tool-kit. Presenting each hypothesis as a part of the construct and dissecting their impact, lays bare each piece of the puzzle. Reviewing both the research question and hypotheses, for likely the final time before

they transition from propositions to answers, is appropriate as an antecedent to diving into the actual findings.

Written to tease out the causal chain, or the confluence of factors, the overall research question is: *How do the organizational actions at the executive level of government impact the success or failure of unconventional warfare?* Arguing that the actions and decisions do have some type of impact, each of the hypotheses represent a logical construct that would answer, at least partially, some aspect of the research question. The overall intent was to build sufficient layers of knowledge and understanding to get at the “how” that is at the core of the question. Crafting three hypotheses initially, the methodology acknowledged the likelihood of emergent hypotheses. The slightly condensed version of the initial three hypotheses that are detailed in Chapter 3 are:

- *H1- Delegated Control: Less control at the strategic level will increase the likelihood of success.*
- *H2 – Intent Coherence: The greater the misinterpretation of intent, the less likely that operation will succeed.*
- *H3 – Unity of Effort: Defining lead and supporting agencies or departments so the operationalized activities of the stakeholders are actively synchronized towards a common goal, will increase the likelihood of success.*

Two subsequent hypotheses, also condensed below, emerged as a result of research and subject interviews. The two en-vivo hypotheses are:

- *H4 – Continuity: Maintaining key personnel will increase the likelihood of success.*
- *H5- POTUS Tone: Presidential attitude towards special operations will increase the likelihood of success.*

These en-vivo hypotheses ultimately failed to “make the cut” for application in the final case analysis. Continuity proved to be an inconsistent condition in terms of impact on success or failure. POTUS Tone or the President’s attitude and comfort with employment of special operations, emerged as a largely null hypothesis in the context of decision making for a UW campaign. This is further addressed in the detailed findings below.

Advancing logically with a step by step approach, the evidence demonstrated the validity of the findings that include Intent Coherence is a necessary condition for a successful outcome. Unity of Effort is also necessary but is pinned to intent coherence. Delegation is important and considered a sufficient condition because it contributes to the likelihood of success. Confirming the validity of the key aspects of Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure is also achieved in this chapter.

Recalling that Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure are based on parameters that establish “subjective relevance” expressed in terms of the “if / then” rule, will help identify when these aspects are called out in the findings. Likewise, Groupthink Theory derives its foundation from the existence of an “in group” that drives concurrence while suppressing critical thinking. These aspects also emerge in the findings, particularly as relate to Hypothesis – 1, Delegation of Control.

Examining each case by scoring hypotheses, assessing theory, and applying critical hermeneutics, offers a rigorous and balanced assessment. Presenting in the order originally introduced in both chapter 4 and 5, each of the cases from chapter 4 is evaluated using simple index scoring of the hypotheses with the outcome displayed in an accompanying table. Providing further elaboration based on the hermeneutic approach of providing context, sets the condition for evaluating the impact of the theories in play. Teasing out and identifying trends and patterns in each case is the final aspect that sets the stage for a presentation of findings.

Diverging slightly from the format applied in the initial four cases, the Syria Train and Equip case, reliant on unclassified materials and participant interviews, and consistent with the approach used in the case analysis in chapter 5, does not use index scoring. Applying roughly the same format as the initial four cases, the findings for Syria T&E are derived from a heavier reliance on the critical hermeneutics deciphering the various unclassified open source materials and the information provided during subject interviews.

Diving into an additional layer of findings through use of index scoring helps to decipher the true impact of each of the five hypotheses applied against the initial four cases. The scoring displayed in each case table reflects the total of the data entries in each case analysis substantiating or contradicting each hypothesis as shown in Chapter 4. This is followed by a discussion of the three hypotheses used to examine the Syria T&E Program.

Sifting out the key elements from the patterns and trends is the bread and butter of the findings – just what does it all mean? This section rolls earlier observations into a comprehensive empirical context that, while short of an “ah-ha” moment, connects the dots in a logical way. Substantiating and building on simple observations with sufficient rigor and reasoning, it aims to validate the inferences and findings. Transitioning to the overall research question, the next section applies the fundamental element of each of the three hypotheses and explains how each one form the building blocks of the overall findings and contribute to answering the research question.

Case Findings

Guatemala

Presenting a heavy weight of evidence supporting the hypotheses, the Guatemala case establishes a foundation for identifying emerging patterns. Delegating Control(H-1) was corroborated by 16 distinct instances scored as a “yes” in document analysis. This is countered by a single “no” that, while significant in terms of content, is barely notable in the overall trend of strong delegation. Scoring, from a numerical perspective, slightly less impressively, Intent Coherence(H-2) was clearly present across the continuum of stakeholders. Corroborating this assertion, intent coherence is scored as a “yes” in five instances with zero instances of a ”no” score.

Playing an important role in the outcome, unity of effort (H-3) is present as a factor in this case but is also contradicted by some evidence challenging the overall hypothesis. Scoring nine “yes” points of corroboration is somewhat counterbalanced by four instances where the evidence shows unity of effort was a definitive “no”. While there is no weighting or assignment of significance to each point of corroboration, a more nuanced look at the data, discussed below, will shed some light on these seeming contradictions. It is notable that regardless of the context or the significance of the event, some friction was clearly present among the decision makers in this case. This is important for two reasons, the first being the “reality check” that dispels any myths about everyone working and playing well together all the time. In a bureaucracy, that would be as rare as a Unicorn. Secondly, there was a work aspect to making this sort of operation happen. Disagreements were part of the process and they had to be addressed. This is further discussed in the context section on Guatemala below.

Achieving Continuity (H-4), played a minimal role in the Guatemala case, largely because there was no transition of administrations. Some internal personnel changes did occur, but either through good fortune or personal initiative of the individuals involved, disruption was minimized. Only a single instance of an action supporting the hypothesis scored a “yes”. There are no instances that rose to the level of scoring a “no”. Deriving any sense of the POTUS Tone (H-5) also remained elusive for the Guatemala campaign. No evidence or citations are noted as “yes” or “no” scores. Table 1 below provides a scoring breakdown of the hypotheses applied to Guatemala case.

Table 3 Guatemala Hypothesis Scoring

	Yes	No
<i>H-1 Delegation of Control</i>	16	1
<i>H-2 Intent Coherence</i>	5	0
<i>H-3 Unity of Effort</i>	9	4
<i>H-4 Continuity</i>	1	0
<i>H-5 POTUS Tone</i>	0	0
<i>Total</i>	31	5

Applying the aspects of Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory, the Guatemala case presents sufficient aspects of both to, at least partially, validate their viability; this is addressed more thoroughly in the conclusion. Offsetting many of the negative aspects of Groupthink that were clearly present in the NSC and the Cabinet, Eisenhower’s innate skills as a former Chief of Staff and Executive served as an effective counterbalance. The same held true for the aspects of Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure that could have led to a very different outcome. Setting the example for the staff by asking hard questions, insisting on divergent opinions, and not telegraphing his desires, again, counterbalanced the negative effects. Leadership clearly played a role.

Weaving context into the face value findings teases out some important nuance and the first indications of emerging patterns. Dissecting the corroborating actions for Unity of Effort (H-3), lessens the impact of the four elements that received “no” scores. Two of the issues cited are legitimate indicators of a disconnect with respect to unity of effort; a dissenting opinion within State Department and State’s concern over an export license leading to an operational compromise.

Requiring some level of context, the other two issues, while legitimately indicating friction, also come with caveats. Willingness to cancel the operation on the part of the CIA Director, could have been histrionics, but given Director Dulles’ background it may also reflect his understanding of the rank structure among government departments and a need to codify decisions. Submitting a report on a looming insurrection in Guatemala, a prediction subsequently downplayed by the Pentagon, the handling of the Army Attache’s analysis could be construed as an indicator of the Defense Department being “out of the loop”. In reality, this more likely reflects effective operational security and careful management of “need to know” information. Defense was out of the loop, but not by accident or shortcoming.

Opening the door to the first glimpse of emerging patterns, the Guatemala findings indicate a potential correlation between Intent Coherence (H-2) and Unity of Effort (H-3). Emerging initially in the case

analysis of the Bay of Pigs case in chapter 4, this will be further discussed later in this chapter. Developing from the ideas first articulated in chapter 3, the similar aspects of Group Think and Lay Epistemics, when considered together, are stronger. The increased validity of the two foundational theories is a byproduct of the overlap in their units of analysis and in a similar overlap found in real world organizations and decision making bodies.

Tibet

Operating outside the glare of world attention, the CIA program to support a Tibetan resistance movement was a multi-decade success. Delegating control (H-1) is reflected in five instances assessed as a “yes”, ranging from 1954 to 1968, that corroborate consistent delegation to the CIA. Only one document indicated a “no” vote showing a lack of delegation. Achieving Intent Coherence (H-2) is substantiated by evidence, but not much; two documents affirm the hypothesis with a “yes” score while there are zero that indicate “no”.

Offering the most compelling affirmation of a hypothesis, Unity of Effort (H-3) is corroborated by seven citations in the “yes” category and none in the “no”. Spanning multiple administrations, the Tibet case does see Continuity (H-4) as an important factor. Four points of corroboration are cited as “yes” with no evidence justifying a score of a “no”. Oddly, despite spanning multiple administrations, POTUS tone (H-5) is inconsequential in the Tibet case with no score. This phenomenon begs some speculation as to why the attitude of the Chief Executive may not be in play as a factor. There is a high likelihood that attitude, as it does with many aspects of life, takes a back seat to rationality. In other words, you can like something, but choose something else because of the perceived benefits. With respect to POTUS tone, this can go both ways; the Tibet campaign got results, so any favorable or unfavorable attitudes were likely displaced by the positive outcomes. This first glimpse of what may be an intriguing collateral research effort will resurface in the conclusions to this chapter.

Table 4 Tibet Hypothesis Scoring

	Yes	No
H-1 Delegation of Control	5	1
H-2 Intent Coherence	2	0
H-3 Unity of Effort	7	0
H-4 Continuity	4	0
H-5 POTUS Tone	0	0
Total	18	1

Avoiding the more serious negative aspects that characterize Group Think and Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure, the practitioners in the Tibet case may have been lucky or good; either way, most of the pitfalls were avoided. Establishing the subjective relevance of countering the Sino-Soviet Communist threat quickly gave way to a degree of strategic flexibility that was responsive to changing operational considerations. Countering the Communist Chinese apparently being the only meter on that flexibility. Eliminating the existence of an “in group” by decentralizing and delegating had a similar impact on avoiding the Groupthink traps.

Wrestling with context in the Tibet Case is unique because of the duration of the operation. Expanding communism, and the varying perceptions of the relative threat it represented overlay most of the decision making vis-à-vis support to the Tibet resistance. Beginning during the Eisenhower administration, support to Tibet was catalyzed by a perception of the threat of Sino-Soviet global domination. Remaining constant, to varying degrees, this held true even beyond the Sino-Soviet split in 1960. Ultimately, the Nixon initiative to establish diplomatic relations with Communist China changed the calculus and removed the convergence of interests between the U.S. and the Tibetan Government in exile.

Where the CIA clearly had the lead in Tibet, the evidence citing strong unity of effort tells a story of the CIA and State Department generally working in synch and towards a common objective. Substantiating the trend raised earlier, this is indicative of the correlation between Intent Coherence and Unity of Effort.

Cuba: The Bay of Pigs

Offering a counterbalance to the unquestioned affirmation of hypotheses and overall success of the Guatemala case, the Bay of Pigs operation is widely recognized as a failure. Demonstrating a significant shortfall in delegating control (H-1), the Administration’s significant limitations and the retention of authorities are reflected in zero “yes” scores and five “no” scores corroborating the lack of delegation. Orchestrating a consensus of intent coherence (H-2) across the participating departments and agencies, was a dismal if not dominating failure for the NSC and executive branch. This is reflected in zero “yes” points of corroboration and ten instances that corroborate a lack of a common understanding.

Proving as elusive as intent coherence, with the exception of what amounted to window dressing, achieving unity of effort (H-3) was never realized during this operation. Only two instances corroborate a “yes” score while eleven instances were scored as a “no”. Notably, one of the “yes” scores is based on a very aspirational memorandum to the President assuring interagency cooperation. Occurring immediately prior to the operation, a presidential transition should have provided sufficient impetus for achieving

continuity (H-4). It did not. Evidence indicates only two, high level attempts that justify a “yes” score. Contrasting these efforts, there are seven points corroborating a “no” score.

Providing one of the rare empirical examples of POTUS Tone (H-5), the Bay of Pigs case does tease out President Eisenhower’s ease with employing covert and clandestine capabilities. Reflected by one “yes” score and zero “no” scores, this is fairly “light” in terms of evidentiary weight, but does reflect the unvarnished opinions and commentary from Eisenhower.

Table 5 Cuba: The Bay of Pigs Hypothesis Scoring

	Yes	No
H-1 Delegation of Control	0	5
H-2 Intent Coherence	0	10
H-3 Unity of Effort	2	11
H-4 Continuity	2	7
H-5 POTUS Tone	1	0
Total	5	33

The principal author of Groupthink Theory, Irving Janis, made significant use of the Bay of Pigs operation to explain Groupthink. These findings are consistent with his. Featuring aspects such as an “in group”, rationalization, an absence of contingency planning, and self-censorship, are just a part of the Groupthink boxes that can be checked-off as meeting the criteria. Unfortunately, many of the intuitive countermeasures that came into play during the Guatemala case, failed to transition into the later years of the Eisenhower administration or the new and untested Kennedy administration. Answering most, but not all of the failings, Groupthink does not help decipher the actions and motivations of the very small group of senior decision makers.

Filling the theoretical gap, Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure theory addresses the unit of analysis that Groupthink does not – the individual or small leadership team. Offering an important perspective into the decision process, the need for specific cognitive closure on the part of President Kennedy is readily apparent. Freezing on the decision to go forward with the operation is further substantiated by denying information or recommendations that ran counter to the decision; Kennedy’s Secretary of State advised against the operation almost two months prior to the start date.

Offering solid evidence of a negative outcome supporting the emerging trend of a correlation between Intent Coherence (H-2) and Unity of Effort (H-3), the Bay of Pigs case helps to open the aperture on how

this correlation could matter. Achieving different outcomes in terms of success or failure, recalling that this is the dependent variable being influenced by the hypotheses, further solidifies the concept. This will be addressed in greater detail later in this chapter in the section on emerging patterns, trends and inferences.

Angola

Exemplifying dysfunction at the senior executive levels in key departments and agencies of the U.S. Government, is a fair descriptor for the decision making and management of U.S. support to Angolan resistance movements. Delegating control (H-1) was attempted through an NSC directive but never operationalized or implemented beyond the CIA Headquarters. There is only one NSC document that justifies a “yes” score while six “no” scores are tallied by corroborating documents. Demonstrating broad interagency discordance, Intent Coherence (H-2) never came close to a level that would justify a “yes” score affirming the hypotheses. In contrast, there are six instances that are scored as a “no”.

Achieving unity of effort (H-3) was an objective substantiated by what amounted to a smokescreen of activities that never managed to operationalize beyond attending meetings and writing memorandums. There are three instances noted in the documents that substantiate a “yes” score while “no” is corroborated seven times.

Determining issues of Continuity (H-4) and POTUS Tone (H-5) for the Angola case could not be corroborated. Both Hypotheses being scored as null, reflected as Zeros in table 4 below.

Table 6: Angola Hypothesis Scoring

	Yes	No
H-1 Delegation of Control	1	6
H-2 Intent Coherence	0	6
H-3 Unity of Effort	3	7
H-4 Continuity	0	0
H-5 POTUS Tone	0	0
Total	4	19

Examining this case with the theoretical lens of both Groupthink and Lay Epistemics reveals the applicability of both theories; independently and in areas where their aspects converge. Factoring heavily in the CIA’s Angola Working Group, Groupthink was significant but not all pervasive across the government. Demonstrating a lack of the self-censorship and desire for unanimity, Secretary

Schlesinger's appeal to develop a course of action that would lead to a "win", runs contrary to the established symptoms of Groupthink. At the same time, both decision making bodies show similarities to the aspects of Lay Epistemics mapped out by Kruglanski. Supporting the desires of Secretary Kissinger clearly show the impact of seeking specific cognitive closure.

Affording a stronger explanatory paradigm, overlaying aspects of both theories brings a greater clarity for how this case played out. Highlighting aspects of both Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure and Groupthink in a single view, with a solid appreciation for the appropriate unit of analysis, is proven as a useful perspective by this case.

Considering the context of Angola must include a lens that encompasses the impact of the domestic political situation in the U.S. at the time. Suffering a significant loss in the confidence of U.S. institutions, the American public was worn raw by the inelegant handling of the Vietnam chapter, the Watergate scandal, and the forced resignation of President Richard Nixon. Campaigning for reelection amidst this turmoil, President Ford and his advisors clearly sought an opportunity to restore some degree of credibility in their leadership. The impact on decision making concerning Angola is clear.

Presenting a mixed picture and the message that best efforts and maintaining appearances are often, not good enough, the Angola case highlights some significant dichotomies. Designing the structure that would normally support delegation, intent coherence, and unity is not sufficient to achieve these goals. The working group, the NSC, and even the CIA hierarchy all acted as stakeholders in the Angola enterprise without actually buying in to the process through either resource commitment, oversight, or leadership. Exercising control of the actual operations and retaining control of all meeting notes and other records, the CIA's Africa desk essentially micro-managed the Washington end of the Angola campaign.

Syria Train and Equip

Offering distinctly different considerations in terms of research methodology and data sources, the findings related to the Syria Train and Equip initiative are presented in a slightly different format. Reflecting the greater reliance on subject interviews and contemporary, open source documents, dependence on critical hermeneutics moves to the forefront and index scoring is taken out of the presentation. Additionally, only three hypotheses are applied against the Syria case as a result of the initial analysis.

Combining highly restrictive limitations and a cumbersome decision making process, the T&E program never achieved a systemic delegation of control (H-1). Shunning a clear demand signal for both guidance and a relaxation of the tightly held limitations, the NSC opted for an approach that looked very much like

a desire for problems to self-resolve without significant policy commitment on the part of the administration.

Demonstrating a shortfall of intent coherence (H-2) understates a scenario that not only failed to meet the general standard of “guidance equally understood”, but actually prompted competition between U.S. Government participants. Reinforcing the point raised in the Angola findings, the inherent insufficiency in building the structure to support delegation, intent coherence, and unity, was reified by countless points of friction at the tactical level.

Carrying over the dichotomy of an effective structure performing ineffectively, mixed results at various levels were the outcome with respect to Unity of Effort (H-3). Arguably, mixed results could be more correctly assessed as not realizing it at all. The lone bright spot, the CJIATF, established a structural and cultural framework that was unique to the various agencies and departments working the “Syria problem” but did not have a means to influence organizational behavior outside of their immediate span of control. Exemplifying this dysfunction, U.S. Government entities in the operational space vying for resources and Government agencies in Washington D.C. were fraught with internal friction between executives and department heads.

Considering the theoretical foundations of this research when viewing the Syria case requires some flexibility in established paradigms. Taking into account the parameters of Lay Epistemics without applying the concept of Cognitive Closure is key to this perspective. Recalling that Cognitive Closure is the necessary element to bring information processing to a halt; evidence indicates the NSC largely stayed in the rule application and evidence gathering phase. A potentially indefinite process that helps to explain the significant delays in policy formulation.

Inferring from the available evidence, it is clear the decision making process of Lay epistemics demonstrated in the Syria T&E Program was anchored on parameters that are tied to the subjective relevance (the if/then rule) of potentially undesirable “then we risk” outcomes; *If we provide close air support, then we risk escalating the conflict; if we confront Assad, then we risk conflict with Iran or Russia.* Holding the highest degree of relevance within the NSC, the risk averse parameter clearly drove them into the trap of indefinite evidence gathering.

Presenting evidence of the applicability of Groupthink Theory comes from the observations of interview subjects. Projecting an image of protectors or mindguards, several subjects offered the perception of NSC staffers assuming a self-appointed role of protecting the President. This may be loosely tied to the observation of anticipating needs and desires without actual guidance that was raised in chapter 5.

Consolidated Hypotheses Findings

Displaying a balanced array of points of corroboration either affirming or denying the various hypotheses in the initial four cases where index scoring was applied, table 5 offers a snapshot of the total array of yes or no points of corroboration, per hypothesis, and in total. Indicating, at least initially, a balanced finding that could be misconstrued as a “sometimes yes, sometimes no”. Fortunately, this quick tally provides not much more than raw totals that become meaningful once further dissected.

Table 7 Consolidated Corroboration Scores

	Yes	No
H-1 Delegation of Control	22	13
H-2 Intent Coherence	10	16
H-3 Unity of Effort	21	22
H-4 Continuity	7	7
H-5 POTUS Tone	1	0
Total	61	58

Examining the consolidated scores in terms of overall operational success or failure shows a significantly different array. Focusing on the combined score of Guatemala and Tibet, the two cases recognized as successful, table 6 shows the significant imbalance (~10:1) of evidence and data that affirm the hypotheses in a successful outcome.

Table 8 Hypothesis Scoring - Guatemala and Tibet

	Yes	No
H-1 Delegation of Control	21	1
H-2 Intent Coherence	7	0
H-3 Unity of Effort	16	4
H-4 Continuity	5	0
H-5 POTUS Tone	0	0
Total	49	5

Contrasting the finding presented in table 6 shows a predictably dichotomous outcome that tees up a potentially expanded research agenda addressed in the future research section below. Applying the same scrutiny to the combined score of Cuba and Angola, the two cases acknowledged as unsuccessful, shows a significant imbalance (~ 5:1) of evidence and data that negate or at least counter, the hypotheses in an unsuccessful outcome.

Table 9 Hypothesis Scoring - Cuba and Angola

	Yes	No
H-1 Delegation of Control	1	11
H-2 Intent Coherence	0	16
H-3 Unity of Effort	5	18
H-4 Continuity	2	7
H-5 POTUS Tone	1	0
Total	9	52

Presenting findings on the Syria Train and Equip Program using the same index type scoring is not possible because of the different data and collection methods. Simply stated, there is no consolidated index scoring on Syria T&E with which to draw findings that are comparable to the initial four cases. As a result, discussion on how, and how much, any one hypothesis impacted the overall outcome is a little fuzzier and a little more shrouded by the things that are currently unknowable.

Deconstructing Syria T&E requires much more use of corroboration and context and less reliance on previously classified documents. Consistent with the case analysis in chapter 5, it is a narrower focus using only three hypotheses (as compared to 5 in the other cases).

Delegating control (H-1) was never effectively achieved in execution of the T&E Program. Consistent reticence to delegate authorities to executing commanders and strategic vacillation in terms of setting policy aligned with national security objectives, set a tone of micromanagement that persisted for the duration of the program. Disseminating national security objectives in an effort to achieve Intent Coherence (H-2) also fell short. The inability to translate doing “just enough” into meaningful guidance resulted in inconsistent understanding and broad latitude in translation across departments, agencies and among senior executives; the understanding of intent was not consistent or coherent.

Achieving Unity of Effort (H-3) was, as demonstrated in other cases, dependent on achieving intent coherence (H-2) as a precondition. A circumstance never achieved in the Train and Equip case.

Competing for resources with the CIA and other DoD programs, the T&E Program was further sub-optimized by a lack of synchronization with the State Department and USAID.

Emerging Patterns, Trends and Findings

This section presents, in the order of significance, the final standing of each hypothesis with respect to its significance and how this impacts its contribution to answering the overall research question.

Acknowledging the correlation between Intent Coherence (H-2) and Unity of Effort (H-3) may simply be an intuitive acknowledgement of two hypotheses that are closely related. The common knowledge standard supports the notion that you cannot have all stakeholders working toward a common objective (Unity of Effort) if there is no common understanding of that objective (Intent Coherence). This would seem to indicate that Intent Coherence is a necessary condition for Unity of Effort but not necessarily for overall success. Examining the index scoring on tables six and seven show that Intent Coherence, at least in these four cases, is an all or nothing factor in terms of outcome; Success was supported by positive intent coherence at a score of seven to zero while failure was supported by negative intent coherence by a score of sixteen to zero. No other hypothesis demonstrated such an imbalanced scoring.

Establishing this trend as valid – at face value, does not alone answer the questions in a definitive way. However, there is sufficient “smoke” to indicate some sort of “fire” with respect to H-2 and H-3. Viewing Intent Coherence (H-2) independently, without considering correlation with other hypotheses, solidifies the finding. Considering the context of the index scoring, the theoretical foundations, and the critical hermeneutics analysis of all the cases, a reasonable inference can be made that:

Intent Coherence (H-2) among the strategic stakeholders is a necessary condition for an overall successful outcome.

Intent coherence justifies as a necessary condition for success because of the very actions implicit in the hypothesis are both executive level decisions and strategic in nature. Developing the policies, strategy, and plans, and then disseminating them as the objective and guidance across the continuum of participating stakeholders, is the bread and butter of executive level organizations within the U.S. Government. Achieving “buy-in”, in terms of a single common understanding from across that same continuum is that highly sought after, but rarely achieved circumstance that makes synergy possible. This is consistent with, and reinforces, Irwin’s finding on the correlation of wartime STR being more successful than peacetime efforts; War, as an overarching condition, has a tendency to focus participants and force a clarity in communications that can be easily muddled in more ambiguous political environs of peacetime competition.

Influencing the ability to achieve Unity of Effort (H-3), the presence of Intent Coherence (H-2) is justifiably seen as a necessary precondition. This advances Linnington's proposition that variables in a UW Campaign are often interdependent.²⁴⁰ Holding this relationship as a constant allows a better understanding of the gravity of Unity of Effort. Surveying the Unity of Effort (H-3) scores, overall success is supported by positive unity of effort at a ratio of 4:1. The corresponding result in unsuccessful cases is supported by a negative unity of effort at a ratio of 3.5:1. A significant disparity but still, not as powerful as the Intent Coherence scores.

Weaving both the theoretical aspects and the critical hermeneutics into an understanding of Unity of Effort sheds additional light on the nuances of this hypothesis. Considering the actions of the organizations expected to work together to achieve a common goal, highlights the extremes of synergy or dysfunctionality that can be seen in the highly successful Tibet case, or the disastrous Angola case. Arguably, not as influential as Intent Coherence, it is still reasonable to infer that:

Unity of Effort (H-3) among participating departments and agencies is a necessary condition for an overall successful outcome.

Failure to Delegate Control (H-1) creates a delayed authorization and approval process that has tangible impacts at the operational and tactical level. Adding the limitations of a bureaucracy that is not attuned to responding to new requirements with any degree of agility further increases inefficiency in the process. Consider the single request for use of close air support for the Moderate Syrian Opposition; a simple NSC directive to the Combatant Commander to develop criteria and a protocol and submit it for approval through DOD to the NSC would have been a simple and effective response. The NSC could alter the criteria, retain an appropriate degree of oversight, and likely dictate reporting requirements while setting conditions for operational and tactical commanders to make timely decisions. Instead, a desire to avoid the perception of escalating the conflict, left this unanswered for over a year and negatively impacted recruiting, retention, and force employment planning.

Assessing the impact of delegation of control in the context of Groupthink and Lay Epistemics unveils significant considerations. Delegation acts as an effective counterbalance to many of the symptoms of Groupthink and may have the same overarching impact on the negative aspects of lay epistemics. The further delegation is pushed down the chain, the greater the impact on any "in-group" tendencies. Symptoms such as rationalization and stereotyping are significantly reduced when those charged with planning are also executing the plan and highly likely to be impacted by failure. Having "skin in the game" matters. Given the strong showing in index scoring, and the counterbalance resultant from the contextual analysis it is appropriate to infer:

Delegation of control (H-1) is sufficient to achieve an overall successful outcome but not independently necessary.

Concerning Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory, a similar finding surfaces from the investigation but does so as a result of shifting the unit of analysis. Effective delegation of control removes the centralized leader / leader team from the equation. Pushing authority and control down the chain takes this theory away from the executive level decision making that is the focus of this research. Is there an applicability for Lay Epistemics to explain decision making at the operational and tactical level? Absolutely. The key take-away however, is that delegation of control mitigates many of the negative aspects of Groupthink and Lay Epistemics.

Addressing the Research Question

How do the organizational actions at the executive level of government impact the success or failure of unconventional warfare?

Answering the overall research question, these findings point to specific hypotheses and theory driven effects that influence, and potentially determine, success or failure. The preponderance of evidence culled from the historical document analysis, open source materials and participant interviews, connect the dots between action and outcome. The intent in this section is to consider each hypothesis as a building block that when coalesced, will answer the research question.

Delegating significant control of an Unconventional Warfare operation to the lowest competent level does contribute to the success of the campaign. The inverse is also true; retaining control of specific authorities and approvals that are tactical and operational by nature, will generally be sufficiently deleterious to guarantee failure. Reducing constraints, restraints, and limitations to those that have a clear purpose, and providing authorities to subordinate organizations is both uncomfortable and necessary. Where the line is drawn as to the appropriate level of delegation vice retention of control and oversight, is often more art than science but one common axiom states – “if you get to the point of discomfort in delegation, you are probably close to right”.

Ensuring Intent Coherence across the stakeholders is necessary to achieve success. Driving every outcome, both positive and negative, this seemingly intuitive notion of having everyone on the same page is now proven under the scrutiny of an intellectually rigorous process. Even with the narrow perspective provided by five cases, the significance of intent coherence is so compelling as to allow an inference of its general applicability.

Creating an environment where Unity of Effort is reflected in the operationalized activities of the stakeholders, actively synchronized towards a common goal, is vital. The correlation of this hypothesis with intent coherence is undeniable – where intent coherence is strong, unity of effort is strong and vice-versa. The “chicken or the egg” aspect of this correlation is also, largely solved; Intent coherence sets the conditions for Unity of Effort.

Understanding the pitfalls and negative aspects of both Groupthink and Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure makes them avoidable. More significantly, the steps used to mitigate the negative symptoms often lead to a better process for organizational decision making. President Eisenhower’s leadership style encouraged dissenting opinions and forced more options on to the table; inadvertently, or perhaps intuitively, derailing the most egregious effects of Groupthink.

Effective delegation brings a quick end to the “seizing and freezing” indicators of authoritarianism and intolerance found in Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure. Likewise, the same effect occurs by inhibiting the prerequisite “group” that forms the “in group” and associated norms in Groupthink theory. Pushing authorities, control, and decision making away from the more deliberative end of the policy formulation structure, occurs in successful outcomes.

Limitations of this Research

The most glaring shortfalls of these findings circle back to methodology and data collection and are common to research that employs case studies – not enough cases to achieve broadly generalizable conclusions and, gaps in the data used to analyze the case and infer findings. These are legitimate concerns that have been mitigated to the extent possible. All the cases under initial consideration are included in the study and could be analyzed using the same techniques; this is arguably, the next right step in a research agenda focused on this topic. Similarly, the data does not include every possible document spread across various archives and Presidential Libraries. However, all the documents that were included in the study were reviewed using the document scoring checklist described in chapter 3 to minimize the risk of missing any critical verbiage.

The pool of interview subjects, although small, included a sampling from across the departments and agencies that typically make up the stakeholders in implementing national security (see Appendix A: Interview Subjects). Additionally, perspective bias was reduced by including both mid and high-ranking individuals. This technique was proven effective when perceptions of the level of Unity of Effort in the Syria CJATF could be seen as divergent, or even contradictory, based on the different interview subject’s position.

Falling outside of the original scope of this research, but emerging as a shortfall, these findings do not adequately address the significance of the degree or scope that the relationship between the hypotheses have on the overall outcome. This is particularly evident given the relationship between Intent Coherence (H-2) and Unity of Effort (H-3). How much Intent Coherence must be achieved to also achieve Unity of Effort? How much is necessary for an overall positive outcome? And, perhaps most importantly, is it possible to measure it? There are certainly ways to get a sense of Intent Coherence but aligning it with an empirical metric, presents a unique challenge that is certainly worthy of further study.

The following section provides recommendations for future research, strategic and doctrinal implications and lessons for practitioners who need to translate executive guidance to decisions in the field.

Recommendations

Future Research

Addressing those areas where hypotheses fell short of expectations or raised secondary questions, coincides nicely with the next logical step of mitigating the shortcomings typical of case study research. Accordingly, the initial step in future research should focus on increasing the N to confirm/reject the current findings and strengthen the generalizability of the results and their implications. Approaching this challenge iteratively, the first phase should apply the same analytic approach to the seven remaining “UW Screened Cases” identified in Chapter 3. Subsequent phases could further focus on cases with specific regional or geo-political considerations to expose and explore additional nuances that could serve as the basis for emerging hypotheses in subsequent studies. There is a myriad of cultural and environmental factors that must be considered in developing a tailored regional strategy; for example, contrast the factors presented in the former Yugoslavia with the long running Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka.

Expanding research beyond the unique mission set of Unconventional Warfare is an appropriate test of the broader efficacy of Intent Coherence (H-2) as a necessary condition for success. Following this research path could ultimately expand the applicability beyond special operations to broader security initiatives and even to engagement programs; reaching into the so called “smart power” initiatives that came into vogue during Secretary Clinton’s time at the State Department.²⁴¹

Deselecting Presidential tone and attitude towards special operations as a viable hypothesis in the context of unconventional warfare, still leaves a lingering question. Revisiting POTUS tone as a factor against a broader operating parameter may lead to data and observations that were not present in the narrowly defined research box of unconventional warfare. Considering different data sources and historical cases

would be a necessary variance from the current construct, but the overall hypothesis would remain largely unchanged.

Revolving around the question of proportion, the degree to which Intent Coherence, when considered as a precondition, effects Unity of Effort, is intriguing. How much intent coherence is necessary? A lot? A little? How much is sufficient? Is it possible to invest too much energy in one and still not achieve the other? Can these, sort of nebulous constructs be assigned a value? Can that value be observed and measured? Can the measurements be articulated in a way that allows comparison with outcomes? Finally, can those outcomes be translated in a way that is meaningful to practitioners?

Offering a fairly broad tangent for future research, The Department of Defense offers a unique condition among Departments and Agencies in that it publishes very specific guidance for almost everything. This ranges from DOD Directives and Instructions (DoDDs and DoDIs) to periodic reviews (the Quadrennial Defense Review) to strategic guidance like the National Defense Strategy and, most relevant for this study, various publications and manuals that serve as the doctrinal guidance for the conduct of Joint Operations. This, somewhat dogmatic cultural circumstance provides an “indirect influence” opportunity for DoD to be a change agent for the broader stakeholder community.

Joint Publications (JP) provide guidance within specified commodity areas such as personnel, logistics, planning, signal, and operations. In effect, this is how the Department of Defense expects subordinate organizations to function in execution of the National Defense Strategy that was derived from the overall National Security Strategy. Too broad to be a plan, these publications provide the “how-to” aspect necessary to achieve the goals and objectives that are embedded within detailed planning documents.

Joint Operations are addressed broadly in JP 3-0 with specific subcategories addressed in subordinate JPs in the 3-0 series. For example, JP 3-01 is Countering Air and Missile Threats and JP 3-05 is Special Operations. Presenting guidance, usually in the form of an equivocating “should” rather than a mandating “will”, JP 3-08 lays out reasonable guidance for “Interorganizational Cooperation” and dedicates an entire appendix to the benefits, structure, and considerations for a Joint Interagency Task Force.²⁴² This guidance was supplemented by a 2019 Joint Guide for Interagency Doctrine.

Both publications represent strong plays by DoD to place into doctrine practices that would likely influence the outcome of a UW Campaign. The potential research agenda here must be centered on the DoD side of the equation and question the ability of DoD to influence the interagency. Is Joint Doctrine a viable demand signal for generating interagency cooperation? Would stronger mandates in the doctrine have a greater impact? The fact that joint doctrine often is interpreted as a loose guideline, should help to manage expectations of this particular line of research.

For Practitioners: Things to Do and Things to Avoid

Presenting the findings from the examination of five cases where the U.S. employed Unconventional Warfare as a strategic option has, as an unintended benefit, identified guidelines with broad applicability. To argue, upon review, that these are common sense, is only partially correct. These best practices are sensible but, the examination of the cases in this study, and arguably any extension of this research into a broader sampling of cases, will largely disprove the notion that these practices are common.

Delegate as a first choice. Delegation is an enabling factor that equips subordinate organizations to carry out the policy and achieve the objectives established as national interests. Delegation optimizes staff efficiency by focusing energy on tasks and problems at the appropriate level. Delegation counterbalances Groupthink and many of the negative aspects of Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure. Delegation is tailorable and does not prevent appropriate oversight or reporting requirements of subordinate organizations.

Countering the positive actions associated with delegation, it is equally important to avoid attempting to control things that are:

- Outside the scope of your organizational expertise or experience
- Outside of your current time zone.

The first bullet requires little explanation but does demand a degree of maturity and self-awareness. Whether appointed, anointed or canonized into a position, practitioners must be intellectually honest as to the significance and scope that their expertise and experience carries. Simply having a title or working in a department is not, in itself, a qualifying credential. The second bullet oversimplifies a debilitating symptom of lack of delegation; for example, the impact of a 7-8 hour time lag between Washington DC and the Middle East is profound. Typically, it compounds the delay in responses and from a practical standpoint tends to degrade the effectiveness of forward headquarters over time by extending working hours; 16-20 hour workdays are not uncommon for forward deployed organizations engaging Washington in real time. And while these two examples are tangible and problematic, the real benefit of “staying in your time zone” is that it indicates a baseline understanding of appropriate roles and functions.

Drive Intent Coherence. There are two pieces to this practice. First, clearly establish and articulate the vision, goals, and objectives that define success, and disseminate them. Secondly, actively ensure that participants are “on the same page”. There are countless techniques to make this work – management by walking around, inspections, informal visits, randomly quizzing subordinates several levels below the leadership, etc. Ultimately, this is a leader responsibility at every level and requires unambiguous

emphasis from the top down. Intent Coherence itself is so critically important that subordinate leaders that fall short in applying this best practice, should be replaced.

Practicing strategic and operational flexibility by modifying or shifting intermediate objectives, based on changing situations or operating environments, will contribute to a successful outcome. In the Tibet case, the overall objective of countering Sino-Soviet aggression remained largely static while the campaign had to shift from internal resistance, to cross border operations, to intelligence gathering and ultimately to a propaganda and politically focused effort.

Practicing strategic patience is another solid lesson exemplified by the Tibet case. Unconventional Warfare is (potentially) a long game that requires many layers of condition setting, verification, and trust building. Some recent cases, the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in 2001, and the Kurds in Northern Iraq in 2003, have had significantly shorter operational campaigns. The Northern Alliance was one of the few remaining anti-Taliban groups in Afghanistan that had both leadership and organization. Rallying around a small number of Special Forces Teams they successfully defeated the Taliban in months. For the Kurds in Northern Iraq, a similar circumstance of existing organization and leadership gelled around the American Special Forces and quickly defeated significant formations of Sadaam Hussein's Army. For a multitude of reasons, these cases are anomalies and should not be considered as solid precedent. Tibet spanned decades and even Guatemala took several years of planning and preparation prior to initiation.

Leadership matters. This is true at all levels of the decision-making process and is manifested in the contrasting styles seen across the cases. Eisenhower's approach in the Guatemala case, demanding multiple options and never punishing dissenting opinions dovetailed with his overall use of the NSC as a problem solving and coordinating organization. Notably, this did not seem to carry through during the planning and work-up for the Bay of Pigs; Eisenhower's 1955 heart attack may have played a role in reducing his direct involvement in directing day to day operations.

Producing indecisiveness and a lack of clarity, the leadership displayed by Ford and Kissinger stands in stark contrast to Eisenhower's approach in Guatemala. The true cautionary note from these cases may be for leaders who appoint or manage subordinate leaders. Ford carried Kissinger over from the Nixon Administration and kept him on as both the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State. The contradictory nature of these roles should have been evident; the person in charge of diplomacy is also the person that advises the President on when to use force. In other cases, selecting subordinate leaders who are routinely like-minded can create an echo chamber and set conditions that will manifest as Groupthink.

Systemic Considerations

Advising practitioners is a pragmatic, and possibly more achievable approach to optimizing the outcome when the U.S. employs a UW solution to a national security challenge. However, this tactic falls short in terms of addressing systemic issues that will likely act as impediments to effective UW. The National Security Council is an arena that demands consideration for systemic overhaul. A second systemic consideration, the portability of both the methodology and the analytic framework applied in this research, is discussed in greater detail in the final conclusions.

Functioning in concept as an interdepartmental coordinating agency, the National Security Council has often operated as a reflection of the Chief Executive's personality and leadership style. Allowing a reasonable degree of flexibility, the legislation creating the NSC provides each administration the latitude to use the organization as it chooses. While this inherent flexibility has appeal, it has, over time, also contributed to periods when the NSC has been underutilized and ineffective.

Recognizing many of the issues inherent in the current NSC construct, Flournoy and Brimley offered a series of recommendations directed at the President and National Security Adviser.²⁴³ Beginning with a Quadrennial National Security Review their approach lays out a logical and reasonable set of steps to optimize an interagency process centered on an effective and efficient NSC.²⁴⁴ Systemically, this falls short; not on the basis of a bad recommendation but rather, by laying the corrective actions at the feet of the President. Again, creating a temporary solution that has no staying power beyond the next electoral cycle.

Echoing Flournoy and Brimley, Miller presents a compelling argument for recreating the Eisenhower era Planning Board as part of the NSC structure.²⁴⁵ Fulfilling a role considered critical to policy making, the Planning Board's recommendations, once approved, were passed to the Operations Coordinating Board for implementation. A process that reduced distractions and optimized the effectiveness of both boards. Once eliminated by the Kennedy administration in 1961, the Planning Board was never effectively duplicated. Miller's recommendation, also sound and logical, is directed at the National Security Advisor. Like Flournoy and Brimley's recommendation, this creates a temporary solution at best.

Achieving a systemic solution to problems that span multiple administrations will only come when mandated by law. There is ample precedent for legislative involvement and intervention. The 1947 National Security Act, the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986, and the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the 1987 DoD Authorization Act, all forced transformative changes. This is both the impetus and precedent for this recommendation: Congress must pass legislation to professionalize the National Security Council.

Professionalization entails both personnel and structural changes. The legislation must require the establishment of a small professional cadre of permanent senior staffers that bring experience and expertise from the defense, intelligence, and diplomatic arenas. The current structure of the National Security Council descends from the legislatively mandated NSC to the Principals Committee (NSC minus the POTUS), to the Deputies Committee, and then to various working groups. This cadre would best fit as Permanent Assistant Deputies in the Deputies Committee (DC) with one additional slot as the Permanent Assistant Deputy to the National Security Advisor.

This staffing approach would dovetail nicely in a committee where the Deputies often send surrogates to represent their departmental equities. At the same time, the Permanent Assistant to the National Security Advisor will be well positioned to maintain a strategic perspective and counterbalance any tendency toward parochialism. By aligning the Permanent Assistants with their respective departments, they are automatically chartered to think strategically as NSC staffers while representing the capabilities and limitations of their departments.

Structurally, the legislation should include a permanent office within the NSC responsible for continuous professional development and process improvement. This office and staff can be derived from the existing permanent NSC Staff but should fall under the new Permanent Assistant Deputy to the National Security Advisor. Participation in this program must be driven by the Permanent Assistant Deputies and made mandatory for all staffers. Centering in-house professional development on a program of scenario simulations, case study round tables, and guest speakers, while not perfect, is both achievable and necessary. On the job training and previous experience may or may not prepare a new staffer for the type of challenges that extract a horrible cost when magnified by strategic vacillation or poor decision making; Dealing with another Rwanda type genocide scenario or a global pandemic should be managed by the most highly qualified and vetted professionals using a unified, consistent and coherent approach.

This recommendation for a legislative solution addresses continuity issues presented by routine staff rotation and administration changes while dampening the impact of political agendas tainting what should be intellectually rigorous policy and strategy development. As a further benefit, it addresses the inherent insufficiency of simple, and typically temporary, reorganization. The lessons from the Syria CJATF and the Angola debacle demonstrate that building a proper ark, will not guarantee the cooperation of the animals.

Conclusion

Consolidating the analysis of five cases, the findings presented in this chapter are derived from bringing together five hypotheses, two clearly relevant theories and a consistent application of critical hermeneutics. Addressing the complexity of unraveling both the historical record and more contemporary accounts into manageable data, these findings reflect a blended methodological approach intended to optimize the intellectual tools available and maintain an appropriate “stand-off” to permit a broader understanding.

Examining the current state of the academic discussion concerning strategic decision making and Unconventional Warfare, the literature review presented in Chapter 2 follows a broad to narrow assessment. Structured and organized to both highlight existing work and theory on the subject and flag shortfalls or gaps, the approach used four broad categories as an organizing scheme: overarching military theory, special operations theory, counterinsurgency theory and strategic decision-making.

Discussing broad military theory as the scene setter, the literature review began with a discussion of 6th Century Chinese General and Philosopher, Sun Tzu, who was arguably the first to codify that the objectives of the Commander must align with the objective of the King that he serves. Introducing Clausewitz and Jomini the discussion leapfrogs into a relatively more modern context that introduces the modern principles of war. Subsequent discussion all trailed back to echoing, in some manner, Clausewitz’s assertion that “war is an extension of politics by other means”.²⁴⁶

Reviewing the subsequent section on Special Operations theory, the discussion began with an examination of two of the more recent, and relevant contributions to both Unconventional Warfare writ large, and a connection to strategic decision making. Approaching the problem set of UW from a foreign policy perspective, Abigail Linnington’s research applies a framework of defined objectives - an alignment of policy and strategy, a unity of effort among participating agencies and, a clear tie with grand strategy. Finding that the presence of three or more of the variables increased the likelihood of achieving stated goals, Linnington also found the policy-strategy match variable as the most significant.²⁴⁷

Employing the term “Support to Resistance” (STR), Will Irwin’s three monograph series explores a sampling of 47 cases that offer a fairly comprehensive study of past U.S. support to insurgencies and resistance movements.²⁴⁸ As referenced earlier, one of the key lessons in Irwin’s findings show the relationship between successful STR and either wartime or peacetime conditions. The remainder of the Special Operations section highlights the tendency to avoid strategic level discussion. This is not indicative of a lack of rigor but more a reflection of those tactical and operational factors that explain

success or failure – personnel, training, psychological make-up, specialized equipment, etc, receiving more attention. This is not surprising given a topic large and diverse enough to fill any research agenda.

Counterinsurgency (COIN) serves as a mirror image, in many ways, to Unconventional Warfare. It has also become a vogue topic among strategic theorists and academics for the past two decades.

Accordingly, the next section makes some effort to capture the foundations and evolution of the field with examinations ranging from classic counterinsurgency theorists like David Galula, Roger Trinquier, and Robert Thompson, to the neo-classic and global counterinsurgency approaches of Hoffman and Kilcullen.²⁴⁹ The trend in COIN scholarship is shown to recognize a need for innovation and interagency solutions much like the approach for successful UW.

Reflecting a two-part systemic approach, the scholarship on strategic decision making, tends to either examine the mechanics of decision making or uses a theoretical approach that unravels the underlying psychology and structural influences that generate decisions. This section captures the normative inputs of Michelle Flournoy, Shawn Brimley, and Paul Miller, as well as the multi-discipline offerings from Levy and Thompson, Bar-Joseph and Kruglanski, and Janis, among others.

The ultimate results of the literature review indicate that there is solid theoretical underpinning to inform thinking on the link between warfare and politics. Further, theory on Special Operations is either too broad or addressing a different problem set within the topic. Finally, and with the notable exception of some recent work, the intellectual bridge that connects decision making to outcomes is underdeveloped.

Presenting a three-part breakdown, Chapter 3 offers both theoretical concepts and an analytic framework as the intellectual foundations for examining the impact of executive decision making. This was followed by the methodological process employed to allow both analysis and a determination of findings.

Examining the broad theoretical playing field assisted in justifying Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic Theory as the appropriate interpretive lens for this study. The defining characteristics of each of these theories identified the trigger points that associate the theory with a specific phenomenon and highlighted areas of commonality. A section on convergence presented the synergistic value of including both theories in the analytic recipe and introduced a graphic representation of the concept.

Introducing and defining key terms and the five working hypotheses were the key elements of the conceptual side of the analytic framework. Two important tools were introduced: The case analysis table and a document analysis worksheet. These tools served as consistent analytic guides and as score sheets. Discussing the key elements of blending theory and the hypotheses to deconstruct and interpret information, the conceptual framework also allowed logical inferences and conclusions.

Focusing on the mechanical parts of the research, the methodology section described a three-tiered approach that employed qualitative techniques (document analysis) informed by theory that met the standard of scholarly historical research. Incorporating subject interviews as primary sources for the final case on Syria was discussed in terms of both justification and the techniques employed. Throughout the methodology section, the significance of document analysis is made clear. The archived documents from the various sources provided a comprehensive record of meeting minutes, memoranda for record, and correspondence (in the forms of cable traffic) related to the cases in this study. Representing policy, control mechanisms, and guidance (in the form of constraints or limitations), the documents tell the story of the various U.S. government departments and agencies. They also allow examination of the processes through a lens of Groupthink and Lay Epistemic theory.

Likewise, this section highlighted how the role of subjects who consented to be interviewed for this research, could not be overstated. In a research environment where most documentary evidence is still classified and the missteps of some recent events are still raw, these primary source subject interviews proved critical.

Diving into the substance of the data, Chapter 4 presented an overview and analysis of four cases selected from the initial pool of fourteen. The analysis was focused on examining the proposition that actions at the executive levels of the U.S. Government, usually seen in the form of policies that levy requirements or constrain actions, will have either a positive or negative impact on the outcome of an unconventional warfare campaign. Each case was discussed in terms of the five hypotheses that aim to answer the overall research question and through the lens of both Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory and Groupthink theory.

Analyzing the initial cases revealed clear trends and patterns with respect to the hypotheses. Delegation, Unity of Effort, and Intent Coherence emerged as viable factors that are applicable across cases. Continuity and POTUS tone were shown to be less impactful within the scope of this research. Aspects of both Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure Theory and Groupthink Theory were evident in the four cases.

Meeting the primary goal of correlating hypotheses and theory as playing a role in four cases of unconventional warfare, this chapter affirmed that positive and negative outcomes can be linked to the hypotheses. This further set the stage for an in-depth analysis of the Syria Train and Equip Case presented in chapter 5.

Examining the U.S. Government's decision to establish a Train and Equip Program for Moderate Syrian Opposition forces, Chapter 5 deconstructed the strategic decision making surrounding this approach to engaging the ISIS terrorist organization. Correctly seen as a sub-plot in the greater context of the Syrian

Civil War, this program ran from 2014-2015. Progressing from an overview of the regional conflict and then adding a more detailed, but brief, history of the Civil war, the chapter provides a more or less contemporaneous situational understanding.

Offering a more in depth understanding of the stakeholders, motivations, and objectives of the conflict, an analysis formatted along the multi-causal model served as a scene setter for a discussion on the T&E Program. Using this approach, employing a model commonly applied to develop peacemaking and conflict intervention strategies for ongoing scenarios, proved enormously useful in examining a contemporary case. It also provided a solid framework for guiding the conversations during subject interviews to focus on the factors that shaped decisions.

Examining the T&E Program included discussion of the conditions that laid the groundwork during the preceding years, the start of the program, decision making at the strategic level, and operationalizing those decisions in the theater. Analyzing the case data and evidence employed a similar methodology to previous cases using a refined (reduced) set of hypotheses and Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemic / Cognitive Closure Theory. Findings followed the same format as the analysis, focusing discussion using the lens provided by the hypotheses and theoretical foundations. Presenting the findings in the first half of this chapter required aligning the hypotheses into an index scoring scheme for each of the cases, with the exception of Syria, to establish baseline scores and create a foundation to serve as a jumping off point. Notably, Syria was analyzed using largely the same format with the exception of the index scores. Building from the individual case findings, consolidated scores and inferences demonstrated the strong validity of three of the hypotheses. Contextual and theoretical deconstruction served to confirm the defining aspects of both Groupthink Theory and Lay Epistemics / Cognitive Closure Theory.

Identifying the key elements that affirm the hypotheses, further assigned some degree of significance to each. Intent Coherence emerged as a necessary condition. Unity of Effort is also necessary, but based on a correlation with Intent Coherence, is less likely to create a positive outcome as a stand-alone condition. Delegation, while important, did not emerge as independently necessary for a successful outcome.

Addressing the overall research question, as postulated in the early development of this research, the three hypotheses served as the mechanism to answer “how” organizational actions impact success or failure. This was further amplified by weaving the key aspects of the theories into the context that shaped the overall understanding of how these hypotheses are confirmed.

Discussing shortfalls of the findings, from both a methodological, and emerging en-vivo perspective, identified both legitimate gaps and the mitigations that were intended to act as a counterbalance.

Identifying shortfalls also serves as an intellectual springboard for expanding this study into a more

comprehensive research agenda. A final section, targeting an audience of practitioners, identified what appear to have emerged as best practices and considerations for policy makers considering Unconventional Warfare as a solution for a national security challenge.

Looking to the future, the implications of the unique methodological approach and the analytic tools applied in this study are considerable. The framework for analysis and the methodology employed has clear potential for portability as a research approach well beyond the narrow parameters of unconventional warfare. Counter insurgency, the juxtaposed mirror like operation to UW, is a likely first choice to examine using this lens. Beyond research, applying the hypotheses and theories in a practitioner's setting as a series of touchstones, a way of circling back to fundamentals, could help to set and maintain the conditions for both sound organizational behavior and strategic decision making.

Appendix A: Interview Subjects

Important considerations concerning privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity concerns for the interview subjects: The subjects who agreed to participate in this research include Presidential Appointees, senior ranking State Department Officials, Senior Civilian Defense Department Officials and Flag and General Officers. Additionally, Staff members – both civilian and military provided unique perspectives and depth. In many cases, participants remain in some form of active service or are likely to be nominated to significant government positions in the future. Prior to the interview, participants were briefed on this researcher's strongly held position on protecting sources prior to reviewing and signing an IRB approved informed consent document. Access to the subjects was a result of both previous professional relationships and carefully managed snowballing to ensure balanced input from a cross section of stakeholder communities. To mitigate concerns about the integrity of the interview process, a single copy of a cross-reference record is maintained by the researcher and has been reviewed by this dissertation's Committee Chair.

For clarification, and with the intent of maintaining effective obfuscation, certain terms of reference are applied throughout:

- Position locations are limited to the Department or Agency level
- Senior - when applied to a Uniformed Military or DoD civilian, is anyone holding the Rank of Lieutenant Colonel or above or GS 14 and higher. This ranges to Four Star equivalents, Senior Executives and Assistant / Under Secretary Appointees
- Senior – when applied to State Department, Intelligence Community or NSC personnel is anyone at the GS-14 level or higher This ranges up to all levels of Foreign Service Officers, Ambassadors, Senior Intelligence Service and Assistant / Under Secretary Appointees

Interview Subjects

Subject 01 – A Senior DoD Officer with routine access to both DoD and NSC meetings concerning Syria.

Subject 02 – A Senior DoD Officer with routine access to DoD meetings concerning Syria.

Subject 03 – A Senior DoD Officer who helped plan and implement many of the decisions related to Syria.

Subject 04 – A Senior DoD Official with routine access to both DoD and NSC meetings concerning Syria.

Subject 05 – A Senior DoD Officer with routine access to DoD, NSC and Intelligence Community meetings concerning Syria.

Subject 06 – A Senior State Department Official who helped develop the State Department positions and policy concerning Syria.

Subject 07 – A Senior State Department Official with Broad interagency experience and routine access to senior decision makers concerning Syria Policy

Subject 08 – A Senior State Department Official with a long-standing Mideast portfolio and routine access to policy and planning discussions concerning Syria.

Subject 09 – A Senior State Department Official with a long-standing Mideast portfolio and routine access to policy and planning discussions concerning Syria.

Subject 10 - A Senior State Department Official with routine access to policy and planning discussions concerning Syria.

Subject 11 – A Senior DoD Officer with extensive Middle East experience and routine access to planning and policy discussions concerning Syria.

An additional Interview Subject, unrelated to Syria, provided primary source insights to the Bay of Pigs campaign in Chapter 4.

Subject CP02 – A veteran of the amphibious landing force, Brigada 2506. Subject was eventually taken prisoner by the Castro government and held until an agreement between the U.S. and Cuba secured the release of all remaining prisoners.

An added layer of protection was created by ensuring primary source material that is uniquely attributable to a discrete set of individuals was only cited if independently corroborated by multiple sources; this creates an additional layer of shrouding and reduces exposure to identification through a narrow process of elimination.

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² J. Stewart Welch, Kevin Bailey (2016) “In Pursuit of Good Ideas – The Syria Train and Equip Program.” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, No 36

³ Ashton Carter (Secretary of Defense) and Martin Dempsey (CJCS General), “Defense Department Briefing,” Pentagon, May 7, 2015, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?325902-1/defense-department-briefing&start=602>

⁴ Welch and Bailey, "In Pursuit".

⁵ Department of State Office of the Historian, Milestones 1945-1952, National Security Act of 1947, Notably, the original text of the 1947 act designated an executive secretary to head the NSC with the role of managing the NSC shifting to the Assistant for National Security Affairs in 1953. The title National Security Advisor has no legislative foundation but is commonly used as a title for the position – a practice used throughout this dissertation with apologies to true NSC scholars. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/national-security-act>

⁶ United States Department of Defense (2017) *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Planning*, Glossary – Part II, Terms and Definitions. GL7.

⁷ Ibid GL14.

⁸ Ibid GL 11.

⁹ U.S. Government Accounting Office (1990) *El Salvador, Extent of U.S. Military Personnel in Country*, A fact sheet prepared for Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Washington D.C.

¹⁰ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam* (New York, NY: Viking Pr. 1983). 415

¹¹ BENTEEN'S OFFICIAL REPORT, July 4, 1876, taken from the ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR, 1876 Pages 479 – 480 <http://www.littlebighorn.info/Articles/benteen1.htm>

¹² Linnington's hypothesis states – “Unconventional warfare is more likely to achieve U.S. national security goals when there is unity of effort among the USG agencies charged with campaign implementation”. In her framing of this as a variable she places the emphasis on evaluating the largely voluntary/willing participation of agency and department heads in supporting the UW campaign. My hypothesis is anchored on the operationalization of the policy to achieve a degree of synergy.

¹³ Kinsella, Elizabeth Anne (2006). “Hermeneutics and Critical Hermeneutics: Exploring Possibilities within the Art of Interpretation”. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum:Qualitative Social Research*, 7(3), Art. 19, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0603190>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sun Tzu, (CA 6th Century B.C. – 1983) *The art of war*, (Delacorte Press, NY). 30

¹⁶ Harold Winton, (2011) “An imperfect jewel: Military theory and the military profession”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 34:6, 854

¹⁷ Ibid 855.

¹⁸ Ibid, 859.

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- ¹⁹ Vego, Milan (2011) “On military theory”, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, NDU Press Issue 61
- ²⁰ Winton, “An Imperfect Jewel”, 874
- ²¹ Vego, “On Military Theory”, 62-63
- ²² Ibid 60.
- ²³ Carl Von Clausewitz, (1832) (Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret) *On War*, (Princeton University Press 1989,) 87.
- ²⁴ Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart, (1967) *Strategy*, (New York, Praeger), 322.
- ²⁵ Joe Osborne, (2016) “Advancing a Strategic Theory of Special Operations”. *Small Wars Journal*, May 2016
<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrn/art/advancing-a-strategic-theory-of-special-operations>
- ²⁶ Colin S. Gray, (1999) “Why strategy is difficult”, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Summer 1999, 7.
- ²⁷ Abigail T Linnington, (2013) *Unconventional warfare in U.S. foreign policy: U.S. support of insurgencies in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Iraq from 1979 - 2001*, Doctoral dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, ProQuest LLC, 44.
- ²⁸ Ibid. 45.
- ²⁹ Will Irwin, *A Comprehensive and Proactive Approach to Unconventional Warfare*, (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: The JSOU Press, 2016), 1.
- ³⁰ Ibid, 15
- ³¹ Richard W. Rubright, *A Unified Theory for Special Operations* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: The JSOU Press, 2017)
- ³² Ravitch, Sharon M. and Riggan, Matthew, *Reason & Rigor* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012). 20-21.
- ³³ William H. McRaven, (1995) *Spec Ops - Case studies in special operations warfare: theory and practice*, (Novato CA, Presidio Press). 2-3.
- ³⁴ McRaven’s cases range from the 1940 German assault on the Belgian fort at Eben Emael, to the 1976 Israeli raid on Entebbe to rescue hostages.
- ³⁵ James D Kiras, (2006) *Special operations and strategy*, (New York, Routledge).
- ³⁶ Ibid. 5
- ³⁷ John Arquilla, (Ed.) (1996) *From Troy to Entebbe - Special operations in ancient and modern times*, (Lanham Maryland, University Press of America). xviii
- ³⁸ Robert G. Spulak, (2009) “A theory of special operations - The origin, qualities, and use of SOF”, *Military Technology, MILTECH* special edition, 25.
- ³⁹ David L. Fritz, "Before the "Howling Wilderness: The Military Career of Jacob Hurd Smith, 1862-1902," *Military Affairs*, no. 4 (1979): 186
- ⁴⁰ These examples are not intended to spark debate over the human rights aspect of the heavy-handed and in some cases criminal conduct on the part of counterinsurgents. They are cited because they are from a different era and occurred at a time when counterinsurgency tactics were brutish, inhumane, and often lethal. That they were arguably successful in no way advocates the efficacy of the techniques employed.
- ⁴¹ Frank G. Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?" *Parameters* 41, no. 4 (Dec 22, 2011): 87.

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- ⁴² David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2006). 246.
- ⁴³ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 2. pr. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1964). 43-44, 48.
- ⁴⁴ Robert Grainger Ker Thompson Sir, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (Saint Petersburg (Fla.): Hailer Publishing), 2005, c1966. The theme of whole of government resonates throughout Thompson's writing but is most clearly laid out in Chapter 4 on "Principles of Counterinsurgency" 55-64 and is reinforced in his final chapter "Feet on the Ground" beginning on 165.
- ⁴⁵ R. W. Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1972). 36-37.
- ⁴⁶ Low Choo Chin, "The Repatriation of the Chinese as a Counterinsurgency Policy during the Malayan Emergency," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, no. 3 (2014): 363
- ⁴⁷ Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*.
- ⁴⁸ Galula, *Pacification*, 246.
- ⁴⁹ Komer, *Malayan Emergency*, 83-84.
- ⁵⁰ Hoffman, Neo-classical, 71
- ⁵¹ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains* (London: Hurst, 2013). 104-107
- ⁵² Joseph D. Celeski, "Strategic Aspects of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* 86, no. 2 (Mar 1, 2006): 35.
- ⁵³ Diane E. King, *Kurdistan on the Global Stage: Kinship, Land, and Community in Iraq* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hjfqx>. 149.
- ⁵⁴ Kilcullen, *Mountains*, 104-105, 107, 268.
- ⁵⁵ David J. Kilcullen, Remarks delivered at the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington D.C. 28 September 2006.
- ⁵⁶ Andrew Stead, (2014) "What You Know and Who You Know: Senator Jesse Helms, The Reagan Doctrine and the Nicaraguan Contras", *49th Parallel* Vol 33.
- ⁵⁷ Richard A Best, (2001) *The National Security Council: an organizational assessment*, (Huntington NY, Novinka books). 6-7
- ⁵⁸ Paul D. Miller, (2013) "Organizing the National Security Council: I Like Ike's", *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43 no.3, Center for the Study of the Presidency.
- ⁵⁹ Michelle A Flournoy and Shawn W Brimley, (2006) "Strategic Planning for National Security, A New Project Solarium", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 41, NDU Press. 81.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid
- ⁶¹ Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War*, 1. publ. ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). 162-163.
- ⁶² Ibid and similarly described in: Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision – Examining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971) 68, 78-79, 147, 154.
- ⁶³ Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 180.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.

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- ⁶⁵ Lay-epistemic theory addresses the processes whereby individuals form their knowledge on various matters. This includes all possible contents of knowledge such as attitudes, opinions, beliefs impressions, stereotypes, statistical inferences, and causal attributions. (From the University of Maryland <https://terpconnect.umd.edu/>)
- ⁶⁶ Uri Bar-Joseph and Arie W. Kruglanski, "Intelligence Failure and Need for Cognitive Closure: On the Psychology of the Yom Kippur Surprise," *Political Psychology* 24, no. 1 (Mar 1, 2003): 75-99.
- ⁶⁷ Stephen Hetherington (Ed), 2012, *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers*, (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group) 167, 232-234.
- ⁶⁸ Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 129.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, 162.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid, 174.
- ⁷¹ Irving L. Janis, "'GROUPTHINK'," *Psychology Today* (1971).
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- ⁷² See note 63 above.
- ⁷³ Bar-Joseph and Kruglanski, "Intelligence Failure", 75-99.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid
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- ⁷⁶ Arie W. Kruglanski and Donna M. Weber, 1996, "Motivated closing of the mind: "seizing" and "freezing"," *Psychological Review*, Volume 103. 264.
- ⁷⁷ Janis, "GROUPTHINK".
- ⁷⁸ Susan Rice, 2019, *Tough Love, My Story of Things Worth Fighting For*, (New York: Simon & Schuster) 364.
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