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Assess Intermediate Force Capabilities (IFC) and concept of operations for application during the Competition Phase in an environment of GPC

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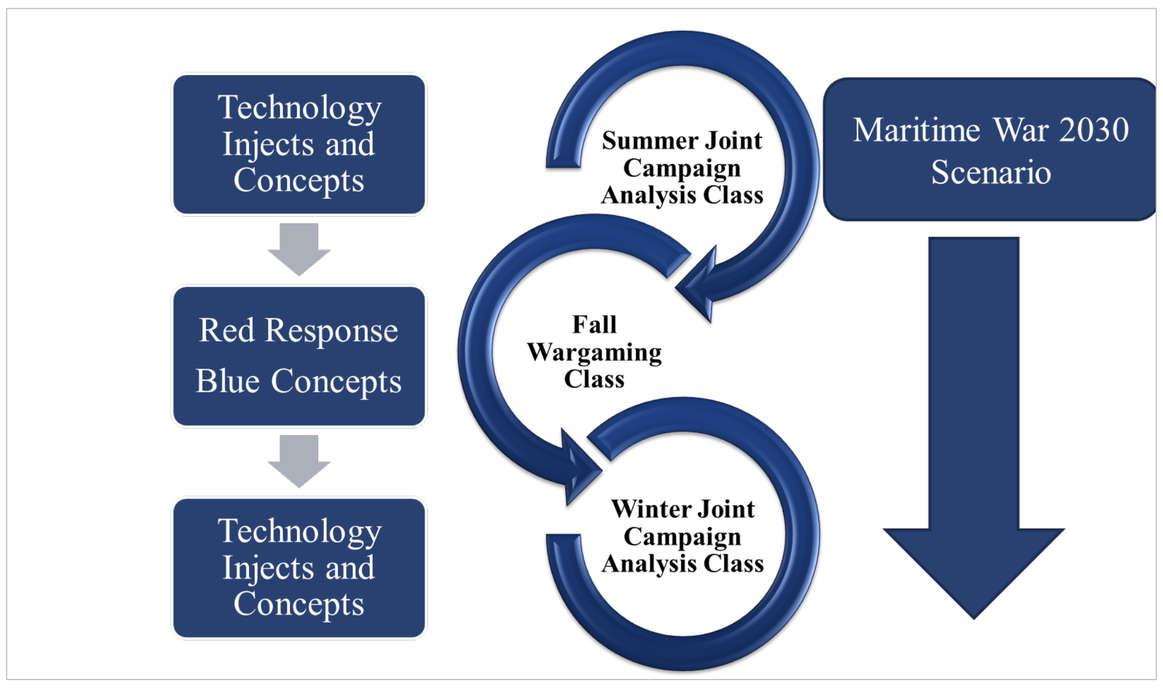
Intermediate Forces Capabilities and SOF "Non-Lethal in the Grey Zone"

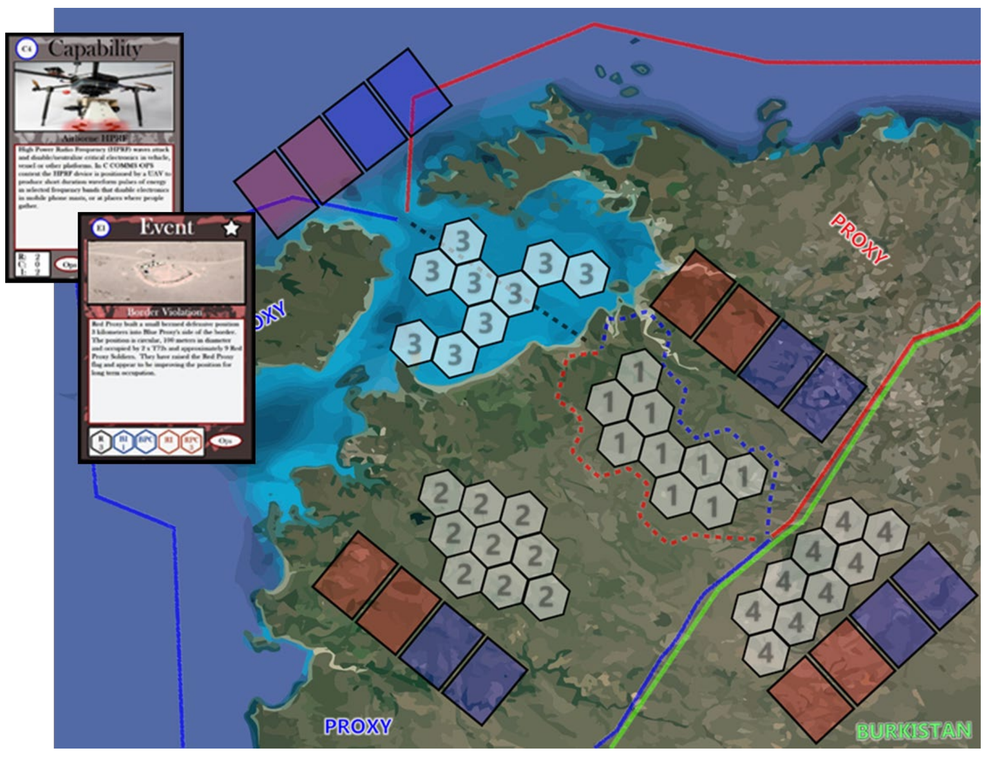
Naval Postgraduate School

Objective

The objective of this effort is to identify and assess intermediate force capabilities and potential concepts of operations to gain a desired strategic effect against a great power competitor during the competition phase in the Grey Zone. Utilizing the NPS Warfare Innovation Continuum examine the operational utility of intermediate force capabilities for Special Operations Forces to attain and maintain a position of advantage in the grey zone while deterring lethal conflict escalation.



NPS Warfare Innovation Continuum



NPS Wargame Non-Lethal in the Grey Zone

Wargamed Examined Issues:

The overarching objective of this effort was to determine the operational utility of IFCs for SOF to attain and maintain a position of advantage in the grey zone while deterring lethal conflict escalation.

This effort focused on gaining insights into the following two major issues:

- What utility do Intermediate Force Capabilities provide SOF to maintain advantage in the grey zone?
- What are the risks of using Intermediate Force Capabilities?

Findings and Conclusions

- IFCs do have the potential to provide utility to SOF to maintain an advantage in the gray zone while countering lethal conflict. When appropriately used, IFCs leverage technology to offer SOF increased options to confront adversaries, both state and non-state, and influence malign behavior in low-intensity conflicts or in conflicts below the threshold of violence. The proper use of IFCs hinges upon training, education, dissemination, permissions, and authorities. Furthermore, understanding the operational environment is crucial to ensure the effective use of IFCs and to understand the second and third order effects of potential proliferation of IFCs to host nation or partner forces.
- The risk of using IFCs is not significantly more than the risk associated with the current conduct of SOF doctrinal tasks. However, there are some caveats concerning the perceptions of risk associated with IFCs that may constrain their application.

  The greatest risk of using IFCs is the inability to prevent poor media interactions or malign adversary narratives from creating a counter-productive response that actually increases the risk of violent confrontation or increases the difficulty of accomplishing friendly force objectives.

Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities

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