

PRIMER:
IRREGULAR
WARFARE AND
STRATEGIC
COMPETITION



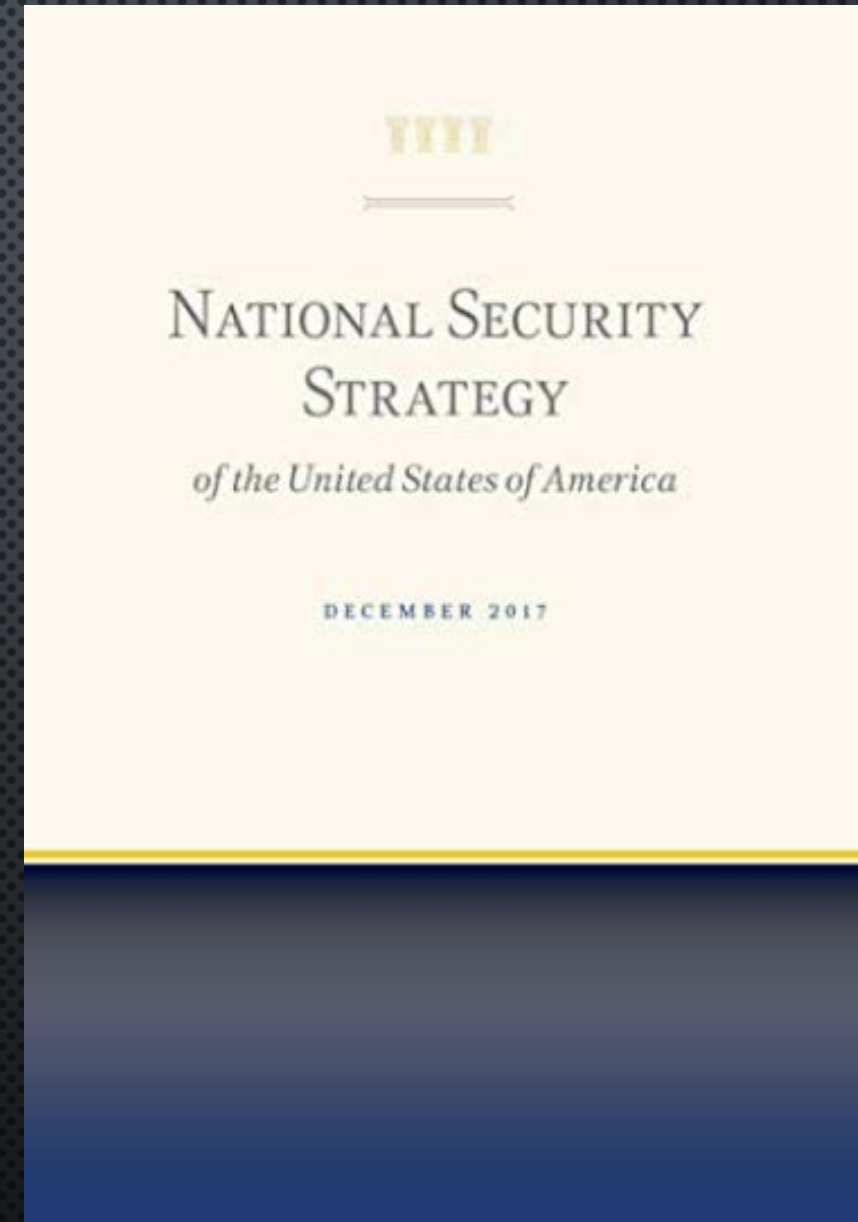
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Special contributions by COL(R) Dave Maxwell

YOU MAY NOT BE INTERESTED IN IRREGULAR
WARFARE BUT OUR ADVERSARIES ARE
PRACTICING THE FORMS OF
IRREGULAR WARFARE AGAINST US, AROUND
THE WORLD, RIGHT NOW.

NSS SHIFT TO STRATEGIC COMPETITION

- **ASSUMPTION:** SINCE THE US HAS SHIFTED THE FOCUS OF ITS SECURITY INSTITUTIONS FROM TERRORISTS TO REVISIONIST STATES, THE LESSONS AND APPLICATIONS OF IRREGULAR WARFARE ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO STRATEGIC COMPETITION.
- THE ABOVE IS FALSE
- THE TWO SETS OF CHALLENGES – TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL - SHARE CRUCIAL TRAITS



THESIS

- **WE ARE ALL CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN IRREGULAR WARFARE.** ACTIVE OR PASSIVE. KNOWINGLY OR UNKNOWINGLY.
- POLICY MAKERS AND STRATEGISTS **DO NOT HAVE A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR - OR UNDERSTANDING OF** - THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF THE OPTIONS THAT SOF CAN PROVIDE IN THE REALM OF IRREGULAR WARFARE, INCLUDING SUPPORT TO POLITICAL WARFARE (SPW) OR UNCONVENTIONAL STATECRAFT.
- ALTERNATIVELY STATED: POLICY MAKERS AND STRATEGISTS MUST HAVE A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF **IRREGULAR WARFARE OPTIONS TO EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES** IN THE FUTURE UNCERTAIN OPERATING ENVIRONMENT THAT CAN BE CHARACTERIZED AS FEW EXISTENTIAL THREATS FACING THE US BUT A WIDE RANGE OF IRREGULAR, UNCONVENTIONAL, AND POLITICAL WARFARE THREATS AGAINST OUR FRIENDS, PARTNERS AND ALLIES.



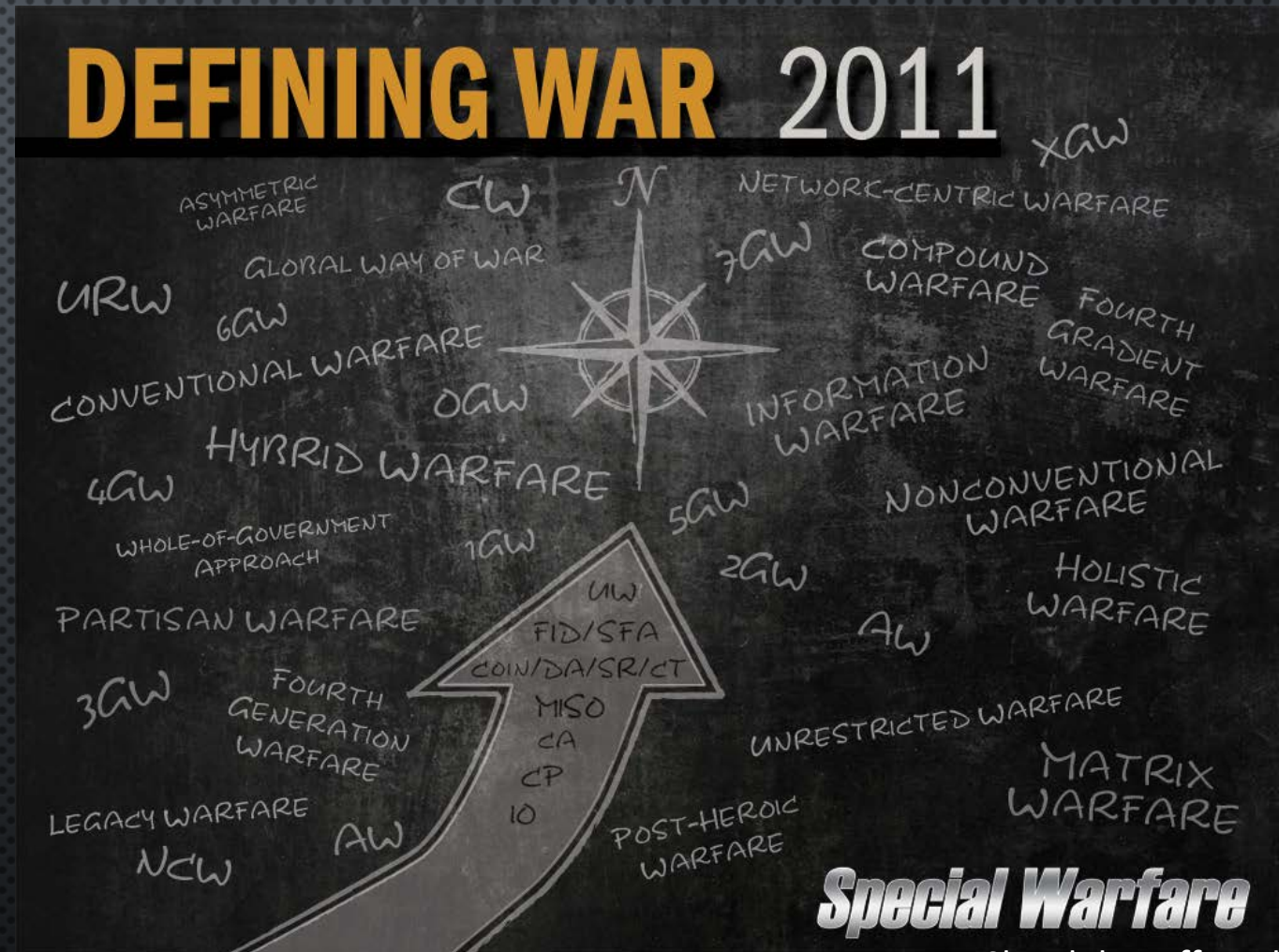
WHAT IS IRREGULAR WARFARE?

- JOINT CHIEFS (JP1):
 - VIOLENT STRUGGLE AMONG STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS FOR LEGITIMACY AND INFLUENCE OVER THE RELEVANT POPULATION(S). THIS FORM IS LABELED AS IRREGULAR IN ORDER TO HIGHLIGHT ITS NON-WESTPHALIAN CONTEXT. THE STRATEGIC POINT OF IW IS TO GAIN OR MAINTAIN CONTROL OR INFLUENCE OVER, AND THE SUPPORT OF, A RELEVANT POPULATION.



WHAT IS IRREGULAR WARFARE?

- DOD DIRECTIVE 3000.7:
 - IW CAN INCLUDE "ANY RELEVANT ACTIVITY AND OPERATION SUCH AS COUNTERTERRORISM; UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE; FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE; COUNTERINSURGENCY; AND STABILITY OPERATIONS THAT, IN THE CONTEXT OF IW, INVOLVE ESTABLISHING OR RE-ESTABLISHING ORDER IN A FRAGILE STATE OR TERRITORY."



Special Warfare

Sketch by Jeff Hasler
For his article on Defining War

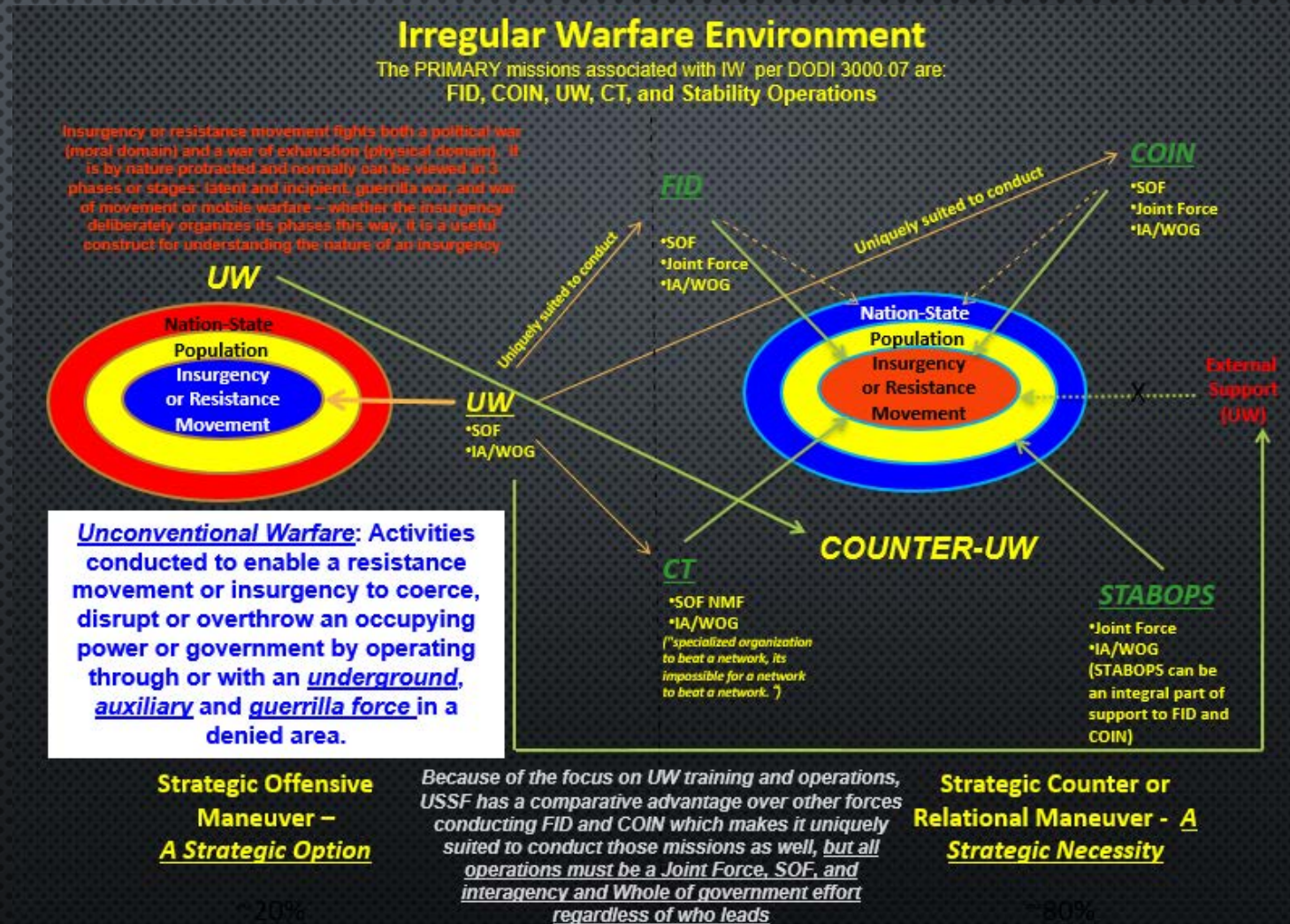
WHAT IS IRREGULAR WARFARE?

- 2018 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA):
 - IW IS MEANT TO INCLUDE "ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF PREDETERMINED UNITED STATES POLICY AND MILITARY OBJECTIVES CONDUCTED BY, WITH, AND THROUGH REGULAR FORCES, IRREGULAR FORCES, GROUPS, AND INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN COMPETITION BETWEEN STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS SHORT OF TRADITIONAL ARMED CONFLICT."



WHAT IS IRREGULAR WARFARE?

- LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED) CHARLES CLEVELAND, "THE AMERICAN WAY OF IRREGULAR WARFARE"
- "AMERICAN IRREGULAR WARFARE IS THE UNITED STATES' UNIQUE AND, IN RECENT TIMES, TROUBLED APPROACH TO CONFLICT IN WHICH ARMED CIVILIAN OR PARAMILITARY FORCES, AND NOT REGULAR ARMIES, ARE THE PRIMARY COMBATANTS. IN MOST FORMS, IT EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND GAINING LEGITIMACY AND INFLUENCE AMONG TARGETED POPULATIONS. IT IS THUS A CRITICAL CAPABILITY IN CONTESTS IN WHICH POPULATIONS, RATHER THAN TERRITORY, ARE DECISIVE."



Irregular Warfare

UW

Support an insurgency, or resistance movement against a nation state.

Hostile Nation State

Friendly Nation State

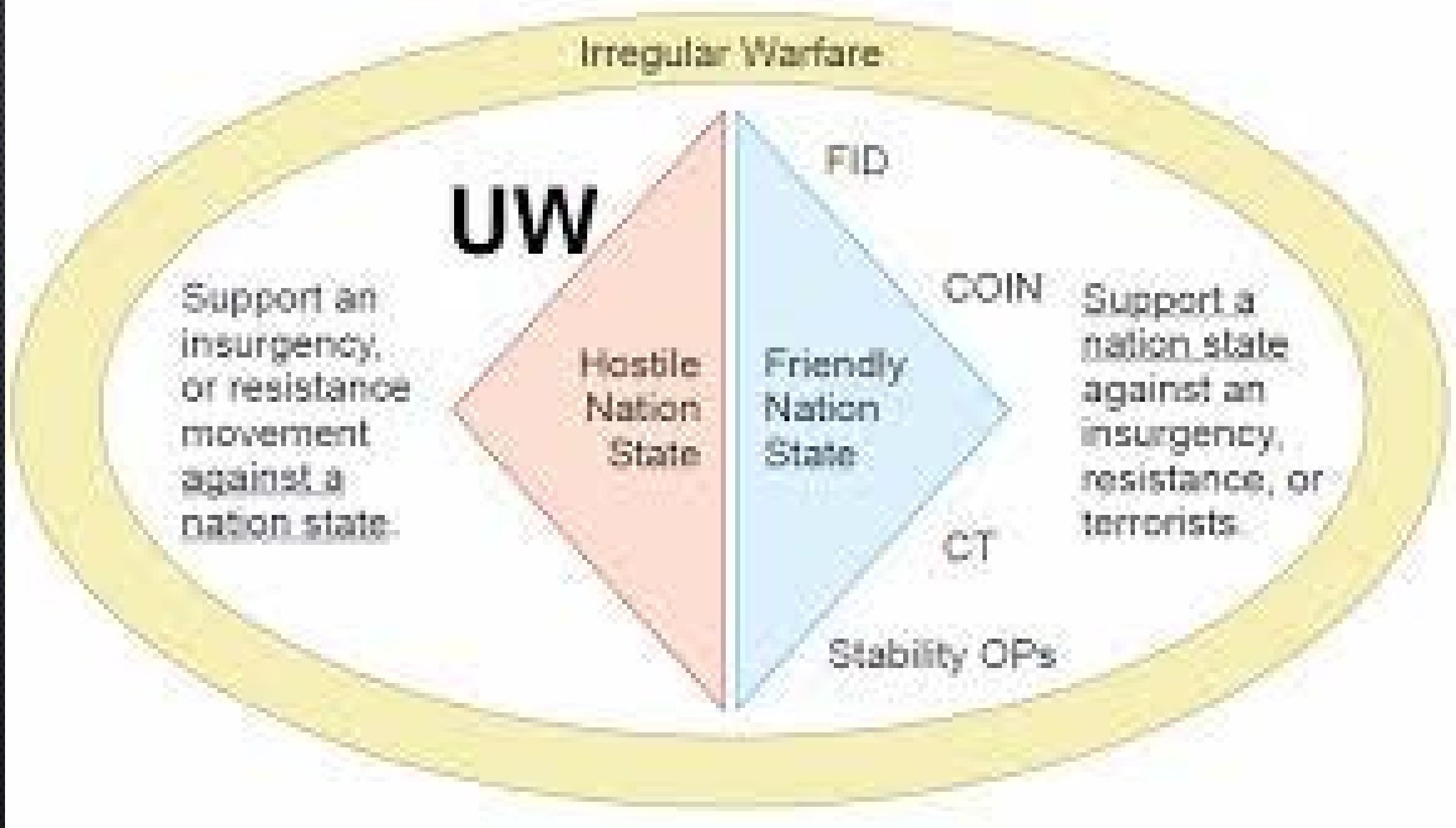
FID

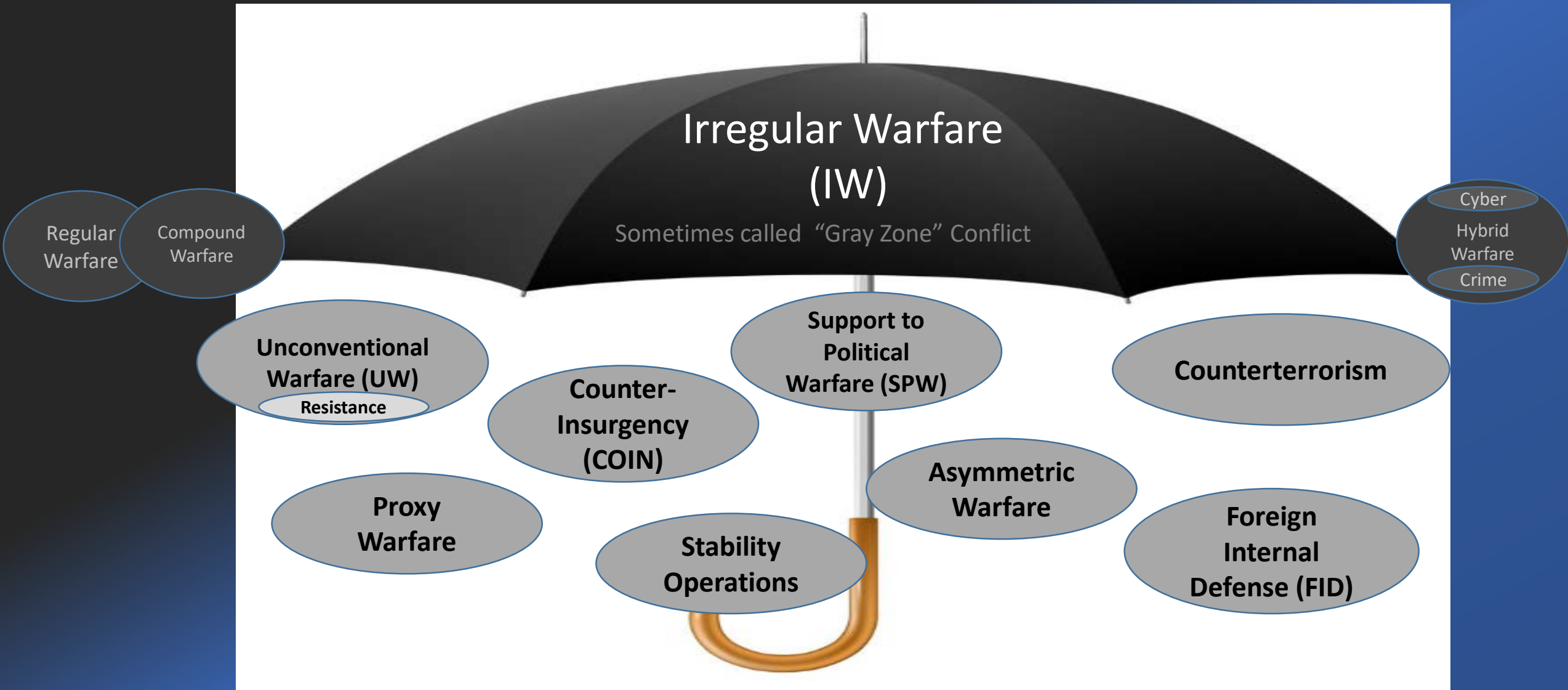
GOIN

Support a nation state against an insurgency, resistance, or terrorists.

CT

Stability OPs





There is no silver bullet diagram

FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE (FID)

- JP 3-22: THE PARTICIPATION BY CIVILIAN AGENCIES AND MILITARY FORCES OF A GOVERNMENT OR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN ANY OF THE PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES TAKEN BY A HOST NATION (HN) GOVERNMENT TO FREE AND PROTECT ITS SOCIETY FROM SUBVERSION, LAWLESSNESS, INSURGENCY, VIOLENT EXTREMISM, TERRORISM, AND OTHER THREATS TO ITS SECURITY.



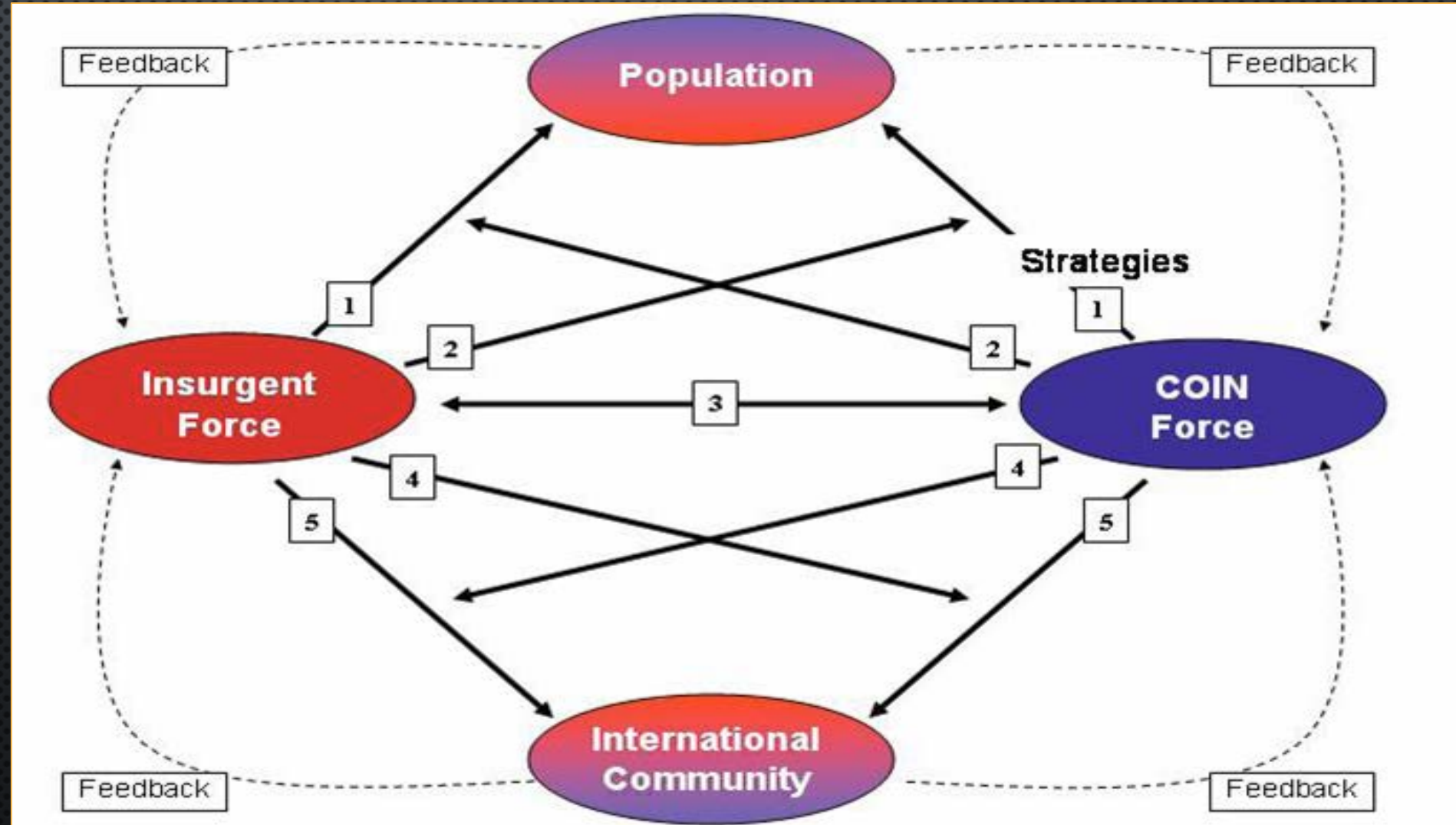
STABILITY OPERATIONS

- VARIOUS MILITARY MISSIONS, TASKS, AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED OUTSIDE THE US IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER TO **MAINTAIN OR REESTABLISH A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT**, PROVIDE ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES, EMERGENCY INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION, AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF.



COUNTER-INSURGENCY (COIN)

- JP 3-24: ACTIVITIES USED TO COUNTER THE ORGANIZED USE OF SUBVERSION AND VIOLENCE TO SEIZE, NULLIFY, OR CHALLENGE POLITICAL CONTROL OF A REGION.



PROXY WARFARE

- WARFARE PERPETRATED BY OTHERS—EITHER **KNOWINGLY** OR **UNKNOWINGLY**—ON BEHALF OF A THIRD PARTY TO PROMOTE ITS OWN INTERESTS



ASYMMETRIC WARFARE

- CONFLICTS BETWEEN NATIONS OR GROUPS THAT HAVE DISPARATE MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND STRATEGIES



COUNTER-TERRORISM (CT)

- JP 3-26: ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO **NEUTRALIZE TERRORISTS**, THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, AND NETWORKS.



Unconventional Warfare



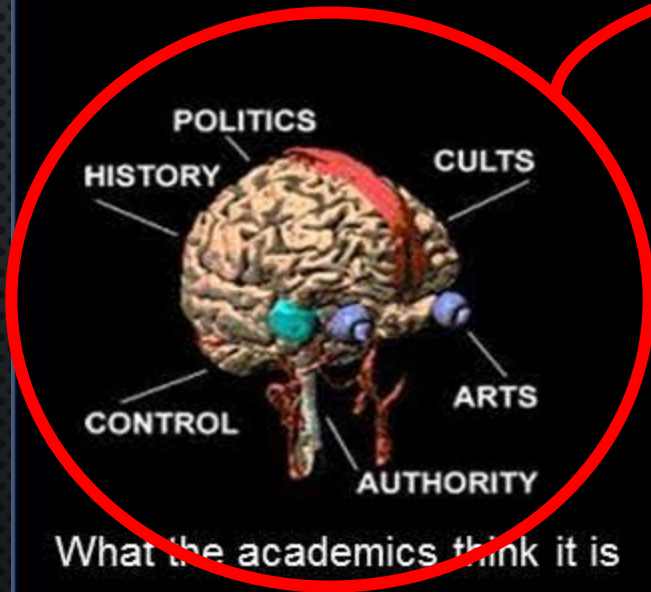
What the media thinks it is



What conventional Army thinks it is



What the JIIM thinks it is



What the academics think it is



What the young guys think it is



What the old guys think it is

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE (UW)

AKA Support to insurgency

JP 3-05 (SO): **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.

(Strategic decision – National Level/COCOM execution)

(CIA and Special Forces - Sometimes shared battlespace)



GUERRILLAS

CAREFUL PLANNING OF EACH OPERATION IS A GREEN BERET'S SPECIAL TALENT. HE USES HIS BRAINS
©PCGC U.S. Army Photo Prtd in U.S.A.

41
GREEN
BERETS

TRADITIONAL STRATEGIC UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE OBJECTIVES MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

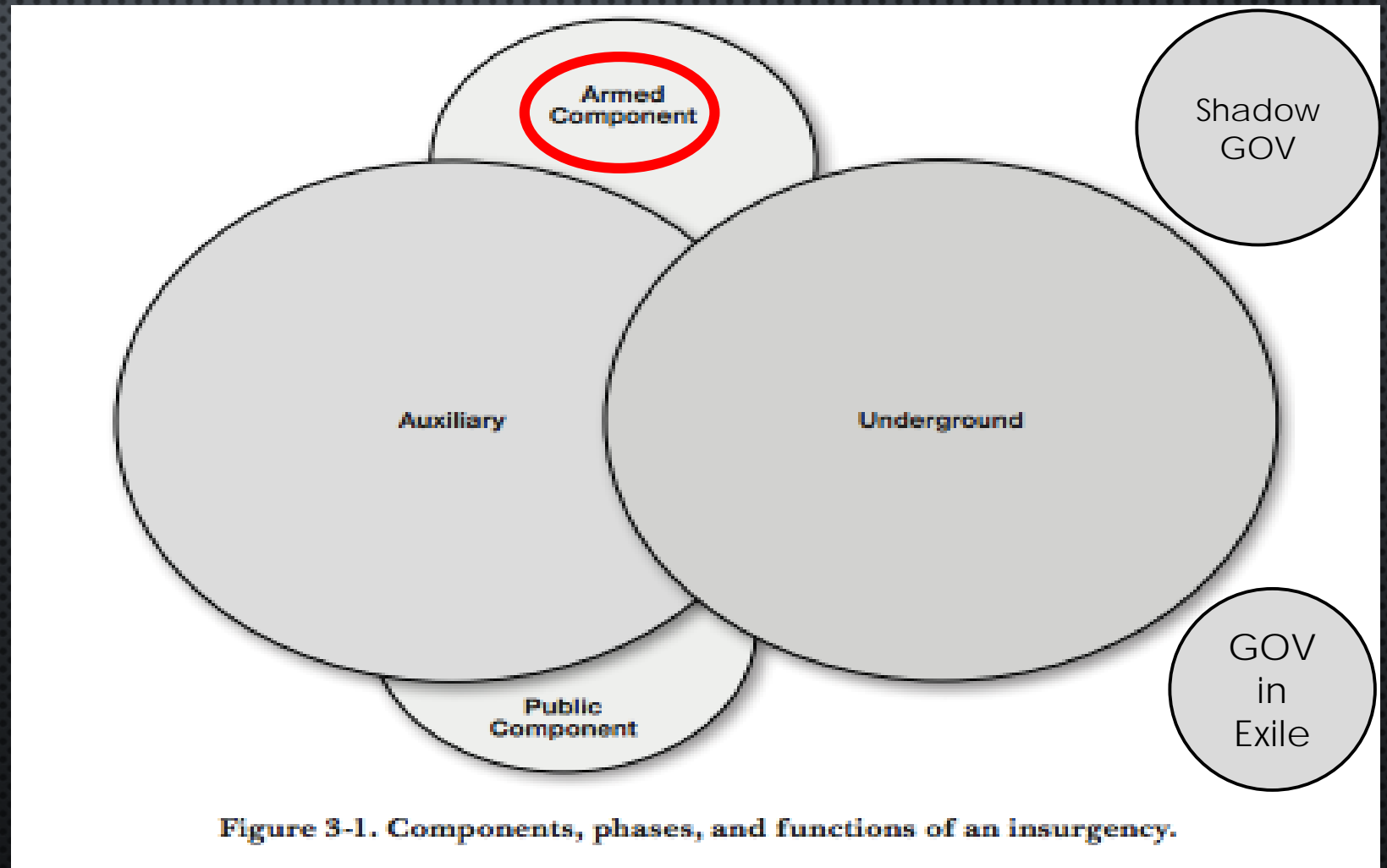
- **UNDERMINING THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY** OF THE TARGET AUTHORITY.
- **NEUTRALIZING THE TARGET AUTHORITY'S POWER AND SHIFTING THAT POWER** TO THE RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION.
- **DESTROYING THE CONFIDENCE** AND WILL OF THE TARGET AUTHORITY'S LEADERSHIP.
- **ISOLATING** THE TARGET AUTHORITY FROM INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC AND MATERIAL SUPPORT WHILE OBTAINING SUCH SUPPORT FOR THE RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION.
- OBTAINING THE **SUPPORT OR NEUTRALITY** OF THE VARIOUS SEGMENTS OF THE SOCIETY.
- **TERRORISM** CAN AND DOES SUPPORT MOST OF THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES
- **UW AND TERRORISM ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE**



WHY WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND UW

- WE ONLY FOCUS ON THE ARMED COMPONENT
- NOTE RELATIVE SIZE

The terms special warfare, guerrilla warfare or unconventional warfare (UW) all mean roughly the same thing: operations by specialized forces to advise, assist and accompany local partners conducting resistance warfare against a hostile state or occupying force.



WHY WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND UW

WE ONLY FOCUS ON THE "TIP OF THE UW ICEBERG"

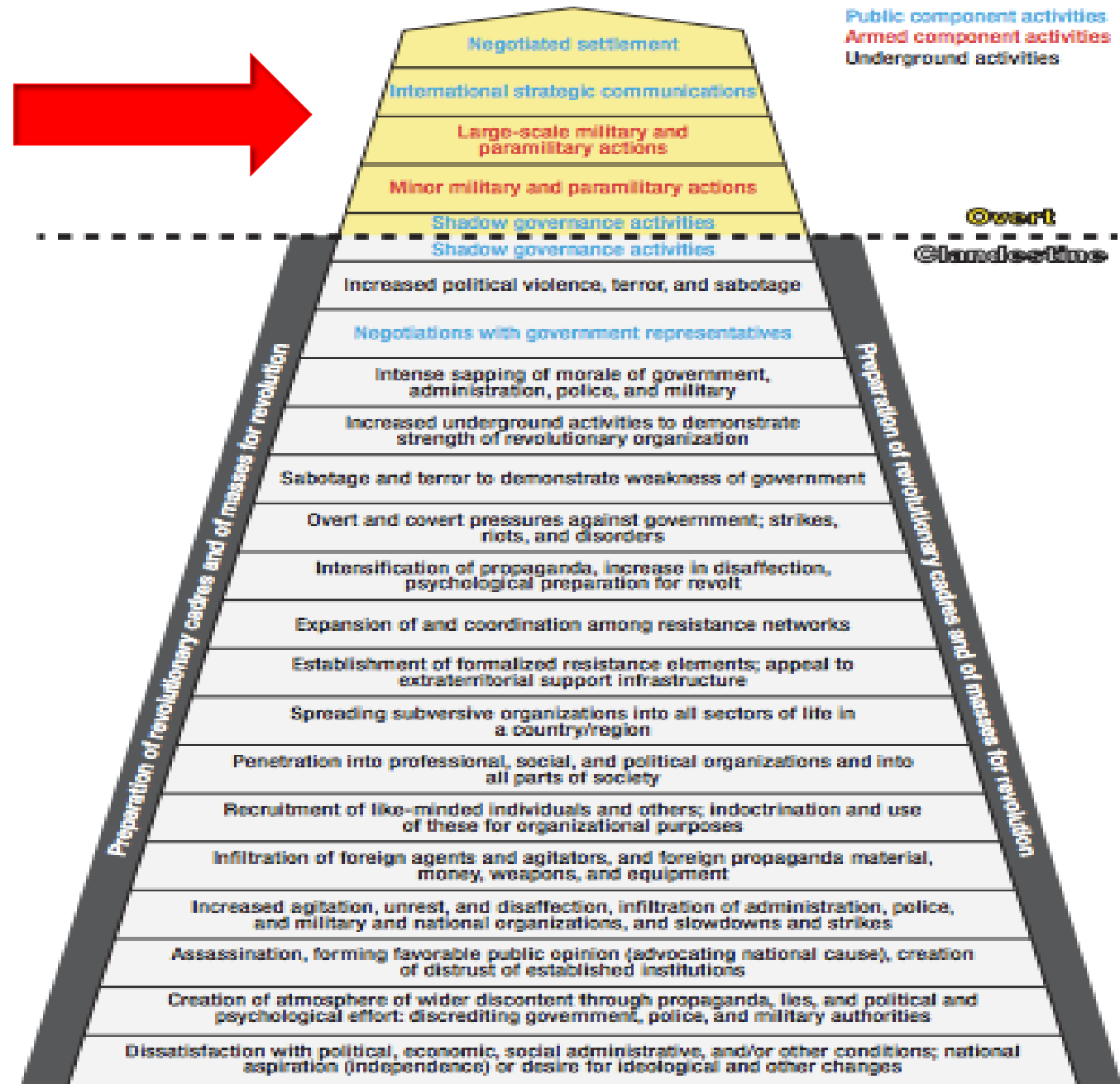


Figure 1-1. Covert and overt functions of an underground.

COUNTER-UW

- OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED AGAINST AN ADVERSARIAL STATE OR NON-STATE SPONSOR OF UW IN ORDER TO DECREASE THE SPONSOR'S CAPACITY TO EMPLOY UW TO ACHIEVE STRATEGIC AIMS.
- MAY COMPREHENSIVELY EMPLOY POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, MILITARY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE IN ORDER TO AFFECT BOTH AN ADVERSARIAL SPONSOR'S WILL AND CAPABILITIES.
- IN EXECUTION, COUNTERING-UW EFFORTS ARE LIKELY TO BE CHARACTERIZED AS PROTRACTED AND PSYCHOLOGICAL-CENTRIC IN NATURE.
- FOCUS ON DECREASING THE SPONSOR'S EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE UNDERGROUND, AUXILIARY, OR ARMED FORCE OF AN INSURGENCY OR RESISTANCE.

This is not merely countering insurgency but a strategy to counter state and/or non-state actors who are exploiting the conditions of revolution, resistance, and insurgency (RRI).



WHY COUNTER-UW?

- REDUNDANT? COIN, FID, SFA STABILITY OPERATIONS, ETC?
- UW BEING EFFECTIVELY EMPLOYED BY ADVERSARIES AROUND THE WORLD
- IRREGULAR WARFARE THREATS ARE PREDOMINANTLY POLITICAL – UW IS POLITICAL
- ENEMIES CONDUCT POLITICAL MOBILIZATION
- EMPLOY UNDERGROUNDS AND AUXILIARIES AND SOMETIMES GUERRILLA FORCES
- SUBVERSION AND SABOTAGE
- ALL OF THIS MUST BE COUNTERED –
 - THESIS: UW EXPERTISE PROVIDES THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATION TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO COUNTER ENEMY UW STRATEGIES AND OPERATIONS



SUPPORT TO POLITICAL WARFARE (SPW)

- POLITICAL WARFARE:
 - THE EMPLOYMENT OF **ALL THE MEANS AT A NATION'S COMMAND**, SHORT OF WAR, TO ACHIEVE ITS NATIONAL OBJECTIVES. SUCH OPERATIONS ARE BOTH **OVERT AND COVERT**. –GEORGE KENNAN
 - THEY RANGE FROM SUCH OVERT ACTIONS AS POLITICAL ALLIANCES, ECONOMIC MEASURES, AND "WHITE" PROPAGANDA TO SUCH COVERT OPERATIONS AS CLANDESTINE SUPPORT OF "FRIENDLY" FOREIGN ELEMENTS, "BLACK" PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AND EVEN ENCOURAGEMENT OF UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE IN HOSTILE STATES.
 - THE USE OF POLITICAL MEANS TO COMPEL AN OPPONENT TO DO ONE'S WILL, BASED ON HOSTILE INTENT. –PAUL SMITH
 - THE **CALCULATED INTERACTION BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT AND A TARGET AUDIENCE**, TO INCLUDE ANOTHER STATE'S GOVERNMENT, MILITARY, AND/OR GENERAL POPULATION.

Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited

UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



SOF Support to Political Warfare

White Paper

Final

10 March 2015

DEFINITION AND TERMINOLOGY PARALYSIS

- **LITTLE WARS**
- **SMALL WARS**
- **GUERRILLAS**
- **GUERRILLA WARFARE**
- **PARTISAN WARFARE**
- **ASYMMETRIC WARFARE**
- **LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**
- **LOW INTENSITY OPNS**
- **INSURGENCY**
- **COUNTERINSURGENCY**
- **COIN**
- **TERRORISM**
- **COUNTER-TERRORISM**
- **ANTI-TERRORISM**
- **IMPERIAL POLICING**
- **NATION BUILDING**
- **INTERVENTION**
- **IRREGULAR WARFARE**
- **WARS AMONGST PEOPLES**

- **OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR**
- **MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR**
- **OOTW**
- **MOOTW**
- **GRAY AREA PHENOMENA**
- **REVOLUTIONARY WAR**
- **INSURRECTION**
- **COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPNS**
- **COUNTER DRUG OPNS**
- **PUNITIVE OPNS**
- **PEACE OPNS**
- **SMALL SCALE CONTINGENCIES**
- **STABILITY OPNS**
- **SASO**
- **NATION ASSISTANCE**
- **OCCUPATION**
- **UNCOMFORTABLE WARS**
- **4GW**
- **5GW**
- **CIVIL WARS**
- **AND MANY MORE!**

“The American defense community is especially prone to capture by the latest catchphrase, the new-sounding spin on an ancient idea which as jargon separates those who are truly expert from the lesser breeds without the jargon.”

- Colin Gray

WHO PRIMARILY
CONDUCTS
IRREGULAR
WARFARE?



FUNDAMENTAL SOF ACTIVITIES

- SURGICAL STRIKE IS THE EXECUTION OF ACTIVITIES IN A **PRECISE** MANNER THAT EMPLOY SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN HOSTILE, DENIED, OR POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS TO **SEIZE, DESTROY, CAPTURE, EXPLOIT, RECOVER OR DAMAGE DESIGNATED TARGETS, OR INFLUENCE ADVERSARIES AND THREATS.**
- SPECIAL WARFARE: THE EXECUTION OF ACTIVITIES THAT INVOLVE A COMBINATION OF **LETHAL AND NONLETHAL** ACTIONS TAKEN BY A **SPECIALLY TRAINED AND EDUCATED** FORCE THAT HAS A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURES AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE, PROFICIENCY IN SMALL-UNIT TACTICS, AND THE ABILITY TO **BUILD AND FIGHT ALONGSIDE INDIGENOUS COMBAT FORMATIONS IN A PERMISSIVE, UNCERTAIN, OR HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT.**
- THE SPACE BETWEEN PEACE AND WAR, OR THE **GRAY ZONE** —
 - **REVOLUTION, RESISTANCE, INSURGENCY, TERRORISM, AND CIVIL WAR**



SO WHAT? (1/3)

- THE FUTURE IS CHARACTERIZED (NOT EXCLUSIVELY OF COURSE) BY STATES AND NON-STATE ACTORS CONDUCTING UW
- SOF IS ORGANIZED, EDUCATED, TRAINED, EQUIPPED AND OPTIMIZED FOR BOTH (BUT DOES NOT CONDUCT THEM UNILATERALLY OR IN A VACUUM BUT AS ONE ELEMENT OF THE MEANS IN SUPPORT OF A JOINT CAMPAIGN AND NATIONAL STRATEGY)
- EVEN WITH THE GREATEST SURGICAL STRIKE CAPABILITY IN THE WORLD, THERE IS A NEED TO **PRIORITIZE AND RESOURCE CORRECTLY** (BUT NOT NECESSARILY EQUALLY) OUR SPECIAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES.



SO WHAT? (2/3)

- WE NEED **STRATEGISTS AND POLICY MAKERS** WHO HAVE A DEEP (OR AT LEAST SUFFICIENT) UNDERSTANDING OF AND VALUE THE STRATEGIC OPTIONS OF OFFERED BY UW AND COUNTER-UW.
- EFFECTIVE IRREGULAR WARFARE IS COUNTER-INTUITIVELY CHARACTERIZED BY **SLOW AND DELIBERATE EMPLOYMENT** – LONG DURATION ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES, RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUSTAINMENT.
- **SOF WILL ALWAYS HAVE A ROLE** IN GRAY-ZONE CONFLICT AND MAJOR COMBAT OPERATIONS



SO WHAT? (3/3)

- **NOT PHASE ZERO**
 - STANDS ALONE AS AN OPTION OR SUPPORTS OTHER GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES
 - **ITS OWN CAMPAIGN PLAN**
- **NOT "LEFT OF BANG"** – IF EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN NO NEED FOR BANG
- **EVOLUTION OF IW WITH TECHNOLOGY, SURVEILLANCE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA INNOVATIONS**



UW and Counter-UW as
strategic options
Not appropriate in every situation

Change the narrative from Terrorism to
enemy's UW strategy

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS



Bring a UW mindset to
strategic problems

Provide options to policymakers
and strategists