



# SMALL WARS

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## JOURNAL

## Are Small Wars Just Big Wars That Are Smaller?: Why Our Conventional Wisdom About Small Wars Leaves Us Learning Little

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### Are Small Wars Just Big Wars That Are Smaller?: Why Our Conventional Wisdom About Small Wars Leaves Us Learning Little

Grant M. Martin

Supposedly there are some lessons we should have learned in the recent small wars within Afghanistan and Iraq. The conventional wisdom is that these lessons are mostly different in degree from “big” wars, that small wars are not fundamentally different from big wars. I assert, however, that small wars are different from big wars in kind, and therefore the lessons we learn must likewise be different in a very fundamental way. Instead of taking our usual big war conceptual construct of “tactical, operational, and strategic” *levels* of war, I propose instead that during small wars military personnel are involved in three activities: tactical actions, theoretical attempts to make the tactical actions meaningful, and policy prioritization. Before I offer a defense of this concept, I will investigate the terms “tactical” and “operational,” prior to offering a theory and logic for small wars that will differentiate them from big wars.

#### Tactical and Operational Lessons Learned

*"Small wars are operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation."*<sup>[1]</sup>

I will first explore the terms “tactical” and operational” with respect to “small wars.” In terms of lessons learned at the tactical and operational levels, our first question should be, ‘What do the tactical and operational levels mean during the conduct of small wars?’ It is my contention that we cannot use the same language, logic, and thinking about the “tactical” and “operational” levels when we are dealing with small wars as we do big wars. If big wars are related mainly to combat operations and small wars are related mainly to non-combat operations, then it might follow that the terms we use to describe the logic behind said operations should be different. Thus, the definition of “tactics” may be very different during small wars and the ways in which we visualize how they are to be combined to produce an “operational”

effect may be different as well. This should assist us in developing a theory for small wars that would then allow us to logically link any lessons learned to our theory, as opposed to offering lessons learned that may only apply to big wars.

### **The Tactical Level Within Small Wars**

*From FM 3-90: “Tactics is the employment of units in combat. It includes the ordered arrangement and maneuver of units in relation to each other, the terrain and the enemy to translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements.”<sup>[ii]</sup>*

Tactics is about winning battles and engagements and is the employment of units in combat. Thus, by definition, units, when conducting most of the activities associated with counterinsurgency would not be involved in tactics, as they wouldn't be about winning battles or engagements or even conducting combat. That is, unless we are to re-imagine everything during small wars as having a combat equivalency. For example, if we conduct what is known as a Key Leader Engagement (KLE), surely we can imagine the military tasks associated with such an event: conduct reconnaissance, movement, outer security, inner security, communication, retrograde, assessment. We can further imagine that the successful execution of those tasks should lead to the success of the “battle,” this battle being one for the “hearts and minds” of “the people.”<sup>[iii]</sup>

There is, of course, a problem with this metaphorical use of the term “tactics”: tactics in the case of a series of battles and engagements can build on one another and logically lead to success in a greater campaign, strategy, and war. This is not, however, the case during “small wars,” since the successful accomplishment of the afore-mentioned tasks might have nothing to do with how the populace ends up feeling about the effort. Comparing the “winning of hearts and minds” to “winning a series of combat engagements or battles” is disingenuous. One concerns a vast number of variables, non-linear cause and effect relationships, and long-term horizons. The other concerns a limited number of variables (normally how many troops are involved and their disposition), linear cause and effect relationships, and relatively short-term horizons.

We are left with two doctrinal choices: either we relegate tactics in small wars to only those actions dealing with combat or we conflate the two and treat them as if they can be applied in the same manner no matter the context. As ADP 3-0 states, “*In a stability operation, conversely, the same division might be given responsibility for an area of operations for an extended period, tasked to create a “safe and secure environment.” This mission requires the commander to sequence a series of tactical actions over time and space, and it requires the application of operational art.*”<sup>[iv]</sup> Thus, “creating a safe and secure environment,” according to our doctrine, can be accomplished using the same types of thinking, logic, and language as one would use while conducting a series of battles in combat towards campaign, and ultimately strategic, objectives.

As explained previously, however, that is not how phenomena like “creating safe and secure environments” work. Creating a safe and secure environment is fundamentally different than seizing a key piece of terrain or defeating the main effort of an enemy army. The former, as noted already, is characterized by multiple variables, many of which are unknown, non-linear cause and effect relationships, and long-term time horizons. The latter is characterized by a limited amount of variables, most normally associated with “the enemy,” linear cause and effect relationships, and a shorter time horizon. As the examples within ADP 3-0 that delineate between combat and stability operations note, “...”*seize this piece of terrain*” or “*destroy this enemy formation*”...” are juxtaposed with “*create a “safe and secure environment*”

”...”[v] Seizing a piece of terrain or destroying an enemy formation are explicit tasks, they can be measured, and they are bounded in scope and time. Once the piece of terrain is seized, the mission is accomplished.

Creating “a safe and secure environment,” however, is by definition an open-ended mission and is not explicit. The terms “safe and secure” must be further defined and the local context taken into account. Additionally, “safe and secure” cannot be measured directly, they must be measured by proxies. Measuring proxies is a very difficult endeavor. Multiple variables can play a part in whether an area is “safe” and “secure.” The relationships between actions and those desired effects are non-linear: they are not easily forecasted, are often contradictory, and usually paradoxical. Thus, it should be plain to see that using the same logic, language, and thinking that we do for making tactical combat action and tactical stability-related action meaningful is not consistent with the differences in the nature of the two phenomena.

### **The Operational Level Within Small Wars**

The same logic that was used to explain why tactical level phenomena are different during small wars can be used for the operational level as well. In big wars, tactical action at some point must be linked together in such a way that an aggregated objective is met or a proximate effect moves one closer to an operational objective. The phenomena that big wars deal with are, again, linear in nature. As is explained in *Joint Publication 1-02*, the “operational” level of war is “*the level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas.*”[vi] It is either an aggregation of battles and engagements or it is a linear effect of the battles and engagements, those battles and engagements also known as the “tactical” level of war. An aggregation or linear effect of tactical activities should achieve operational level objectives and the aggregation or linear effect of operational activities should help to achieve strategic objectives.

Similar to the tactical level, however, small wars logic does not match the phenomena of big wars. Small wars imply an environment of instability, one which requires much more than sheer brute force and the defeat of conventional or even irregular forces. It is inherent within a big war that after the defeat of one side’s forces, some sort of agreement will be reached that will be relatively enforceable by both sides. It implies that the governments involved have the ability to control their respective countries and the belligerents involved after the fighting is over. Small wars imply no such thing. The logic involved in big wars involves linear cause and effect and the aggregation of activities provides the reasoning: it is rational and proximate. Actions build on themselves. In small wars, success at tactical action does not necessarily build on itself to support an aggregation that meets intermediate objectives or operational level success. Likewise, operational level success does not build towards strategic level success.

As an example, it makes sense that during *Operation Desert Storm*, the allied forces used the famous “left hook” that went around the right flank of the Iraqi Army as its “operational level” concept in order to meet the strategic objective of ridding Kuwait of Iraqi troops. As Dale Eikmeier notes, if you “must determine what arrangement of tactical actions will achieve those [strategic] objectives, you are at the operational level of war.”[vii] Thus, there were direct and linear connections between the engagements of the allied forces, the “left hook,” devised by U.S. Central Command, and the Iraqi forces leaving Kuwait and the subsequent peace agreement. The engagements could be thought of as the “tactical” level of war, the “left hook” as the operational level, the Iraqi surrender as the strategic, and the subsequent agreement as the policy objective.

When using the same structure to frame *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan, however, the logic is not the same. The policy objective was to deny Al Qaeda sanctuary within Afghanistan. That objective,

characterizing it as a small war in that what is implied is a weak to non-existing government, was an unbounded objective, one that by definition will never be reached. Additionally, the strategic objective supporting said policy, in this case a fully functioning Afghan government, was not directly tied to that policy objective. A fully functioning Afghan government may or may not deny Al Qaeda sanctuary and definitely would not guarantee a perpetual state of denial to Al Qaeda. The operational level of this effort, training Afghan security forces and conducting counterinsurgency campaigns against the Taliban and other insurgents also did not directly support the strategic or the policy objectives. Likewise, the engagements and battles that American forces involved themselves in also did not directly support the operational level activities.

Thus, for instance, an engagement directed at empowering local governance in Herat might actually undermine the growth of governance at the national level. Likewise, an operation to eradicate the drug trade in Kandahar might actually hurt forces who were also fighting the Taliban. Similarly, training Afghan security forces, an operational level activity, potentially has no direct link to the strategy of a fully functioning Afghan government, since the training itself could be seen as further evidence of continued government weakness. In small wars, as noted, the inherent weakness of the government involved means that politics are the priority, especially if the external entities involved have not defined very specific and explicit interests that they expect to gain from the effort. Thus, an interest of, say, “extracting so many tons of oil for our use,” might provide the military what they need to linearly link their activities to policy objectives. Absent something as pragmatic and explicit, however, most small wars of today will most likely contain the non-linear connections as shown in the Afghanistan example. This demonstrates that “the operational level” cannot be seen in the same way for small wars as it can for big wars.

### **A Theory for Small Wars**

Based on the points made in the sections above, I will propose a theory about so-called “small wars.” First, I will note what small wars are not. Small wars are not wars in which the two main sides in a conflict enjoy relatively sound government with the power to impose their will on both war-making and peace enforcement. Small wars are also not fought between two sides through mainly the use of conventional troops and formations. Small wars are also normally not characterized by declarations of war or formal surrenders. The theory I propose for small wars thus notes its difference from big wars and, ultimately, further defines the idea that the U.S. engages in small wars for our own political purposes and due to some other country’s instability.

Thus, the purpose of the effort is divorced by its very nature from the activities on the ground. This is in direct contradiction to big wars, whose actions are directly linked linearly to its political purposes. In small wars there is no connection between ends, ways, and means. This is true even in those rare instances wherein the external party’s purpose is directly linked to the battles and engagements at the tactical level. This is because the purpose of the internal regime will never be as simple as a surrender of a formal authority. The causes of instability are multiple and complex, therefore any tactical activities during such instability will be impossible to arrange in time and space to reach objectives that will enhance stability. Stability, like politics itself, is not an explicit phenomenon. Stability, thus, is characterized by emergence, complexity, non-linearities, counterintuitive phenomena, and defined by paradox.

These arguments support several assumptions about small wars that practitioners and students can use in their thinking, research, preparation, and conduct of small wars. These assumptions are that small wars’ tactical activities, that is the battles and other actions that troops engage in will usually not support “higher level” or aggregated objectives. Further, higher level objectives will also not support strategic objectives. Lastly, strategic objective attainment will often have no meaningful effect on the attainment of policy objectives. Indeed, policy objectives themselves, during small wars, can often be seen to be at odds with

national interests of both the external countries involved as well as the country experiencing the small war.

### **The Logic of Small Wars**

Based on the theory above, small wars have a logic all of their own. This logic, as it is different, requires different considerations and fundamentals than big wars. A small war is thus one in which an external government intervenes in the affairs of another country in a manner that addresses a weakness of governance for said country. Thus, the external party's policy objectives related to the intervention can be multiple, contradictive to other national interests, dynamic, and marked by paradox. The strategic objectives can likewise be characterized and often will not be linked to the policy objectives in a linear manner. Any engagements that troops involve themselves in will likely not be linked to the campaigns in which they are supposedly supporting. Campaigns will often have little to do with any strategic level objectives and will often contain a logic and context of their own.

This kind of logic means that small wars are best characterized as non-linear and complex activities that involve emergent phenomena and contradictive policy activities, and are defined by paradox. It would follow that, since the logic of big wars is different than the logic of small wars, the ways in which we view small wars should be different and the tools we use to understand and evaluate small wars should also be different. Unfortunately, most of those we listen to with respect to small wars only address the differences at the tactical level and don't even entertain the idea that small wars are fundamentally different.

### **How are Considerations and Fundamentals Different in Small Wars?**

Most of what people actually talk about when they talk about small wars fundamentals is tactical in nature and they further assume the levels are the same in small wars as they are in big ones. I assert that small wars are different and especially so in their relationship between actions on the ground and policy objectives. For small wars I see three kinds of phenomena that we can loosely categorize. First, there are activities, what the military normally calls "tactics," that describe the actions on the ground, whether it be a KLE or a battle. There are also "theoretical attempts," normally what the military calls "strategy" and even sometimes "operational art." Above the theoretical level there are multiple policy objectives and national interests of the major players involved. In order to truly understand a small war endeavor, military thinkers have to understand what drives the theoretical attempts to make tactics meaningful. Further, they must constantly investigate how the major policies and national interests of their country influence the effort in a very contextual manner.

In terms of "the theoretical," these are all of the conscious and unconscious concepts that describe the assumptions we have about how we will accomplish our strategic objectives. For example, training the amount of Afghan police in the way in which we did in the years following the defeat of the Taliban government amounted to a theory, largely unstated, about how we envisioned stability being attained in Afghanistan. It assumed that we could train the police sufficiently, that training was one of the most important things we could do, that the amount of police we were aiming at training was feasible, and that it was best to control the police from the central government as opposed to a more provincial or district-level approach.

There were more assumptions, but, suffice it to say these were untested assumptions based on conventional wisdom. Worse, our assessment constructs were not structured in a way that would have told us that our assumptions were wrong. Instead, our assessment constructs were built in a way to prove that what we were doing was right. Lessening violence was reported as a positive. Greater violence was reported as a positive as well: being interpreted as an indicator of greater presence in enemy-controlled areas. Because the overall campaign in Afghanistan entailed multiple commanders, multiple politicians, and yearly rotations of units and intermediate commanders, there never really has been an attempt to

objectively question the assumptions that underpin our strategy.

Thus, when talking considerations and fundamentals of small wars, one must understand that considerations and fundamentals have to be very different in kind, not just in degree. Worse, most of the considerations and fundamentals of the two thinkers we will focus our analysis on below, that of GEN Anthony Zinni and David Kilcullen, are not even that different in degree. We should not assume that the ways in which change happens within small wars and how organizations learn during them are the same phenomena during big wars.

In terms of how organizations learn, it is my contention that during big wars learning is hyper-focused on meeting campaign objectives and that units involved in direct fighting are hyper-focused on meeting tactical objectives. Politicians, likewise, are focused on meeting their policy objectives. When the politicians and the generals engage, they are all very intent on strategic objectives. All of these people and their organizations are directly involved in assessing proximate effects and directly attribute effects to causes that they largely control or have some influence over. Additionally, change during big wars is normally very quick and linearly linked to some cause. These are also similar phenomena during small wars at the lower levels. Tactical level units, normally companies and platoons, are very focused on learning tactical lessons. Likewise, these organizations are directly involved in assessing effects and attributing these effects to proximate causes in a linear manner.

During small wars, however, those engaged in “operational” and “strategic” activities actually display very different behavior than that which operational and strategic level organizations display during big wars. During small wars, as stated earlier, “higher” level organizations actually apply theory, whether conscious or not, as to how they intend to meet policy objectives with the tactical actions of the forces they control. Their theoretical endeavors are not tested, as their assessments are tied to proving their plans to be valid, as opposed to attempting to discover invalid assumptions and feedback mechanisms are delayed and not proximate during small wars. Worse, their theoretical activities are not treated as the application of theory, instead conventional wisdom is treated as universal law. Even worse than that, organizational behavior that is rational, yet contrary to policy objectives or national security interests, is routinely ignored. Systems and processes that exist for other purposes, but that run counter to small wars efforts, take precedence. Thus, their effects on small wars are not even admitted, much less mitigated. Lastly, the complexity and paradoxical nature of the lack of linkage between national security interests, multiple policy objectives, and tactical action are mostly treated as flaws of the U.S. political process, instead of being seen as inherent to small wars in general.

### **Applying our Logic to the Considerations of GEN Zinni and Fundamentals of Kilcullen**

Now that we have laid out how our logic makes considerations and fundamentals during small wars different, we can apply that logic to some of the examples GEN Zinni<sup>[viii]</sup> and David Kilcullen<sup>[ix]</sup> offer. GEN Zinni’s considerations attempt to show how current military concepts are different in degree during small wars. Conducting mission analysis, determining centers of gravity, identifying end states and using measures of effectiveness are all tactical in nature during small wars. For tactical objectives, these and other big war tools may be sufficient, but they do not apply to any “levels” higher than the tactical, due to the nature of small wars. Lining “up military tasks with political objectives” implies a linear environment.

“Coordinate everything with everybody” is likewise a tactical task. It makes sense to coordinate before rolling out of the base with all entities that might be in the area. At higher levels, however, coordination is not as important as shared appreciation. This implies learning. Coordination implies execution, which, again makes sense during big wars and at the tactical level in small wars. Learning, however, is much more important than execution in small wars. “Knowing the culture and the issues” is not as important

above the tactical level, instead knowing one's own culture and organization are much more vital during small wars. Finally, "start[ing] or restor[ing] key institutions as early as possible" is a tactical, measure of performance type of activity. During small wars we have to understand that doing so, and doing so in the way in which we do so, are theoretical in nature and most likely will be done in contradiction to other objectives.

David Kilcullen's articles, or fundamentals, are, similar to GEN Zinni's, big war tools that are tweaked by degree to fit his own theory on small wars. He advises to "conduct IPB, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace." This is a tool for big war intel sections that utilizes mostly categorical analyses to "understand" the enemy and the environment. It does not, however, offer a different tool that can handle the complexities of small wars. "Diagnosing the problem," which, "looks like mission analysis," is likewise a big wars tool which assumes we can conduct root causal analysis, no matter the context, and that the preferred tool is the big wars linear tool of mission analysis.

"Organizing for intelligence" and "smart and innovative companies have developed in-house intelligence sections" makes sense to me, because I assert that small wars should be company-centric. Having said that, however, I suspect Kilcullen's purpose for this is for targeting. I would assert that in small wars shared learning is a key requirement and that means that a company's in-house intel section's main purpose during small wars is to assist its higher headquarters in learning. "Taking stock regularly" is just another big wars tool that is improperly and disastrously applied to small wars. Metrics in paradoxical and contradictory environments can be very illusory and many times these efforts result in obstacles to learning as they become corrupted by legacy systems and processes that serve other political interests.

In conclusion, Kilcullen's and GEN Zinni's lessons learned are mainly tactical-level lessons for small wars practitioners, but do not address the differences in the operational levels of small wars. To assume that the operational level during small wars is simply different in degree as opposed to kind is a bad assumption in my view. I will now offer a different set of lessons to learn at the tactical and operational levels during small wars.

### **Offering a Different Set of Lessons to Learn at the Tactical and Operational Levels During Small Wars**

At the tactical level, big wars and small wars look mostly the same in terms of the kinds of thinking and the conceptual tools we should use. The tactical level in big wars can be at very high levels in terms of the amount of troops involved. Divisions of more than 10,000 troops can be engaged in "tactical" activity during big wars. In small wars, however, companies and below are normally the main tactical-level units. That is, divisions do not normally maneuver across the battlefield conducting operations during small wars. Proximate effects, linear causality, and deterministic planning are mostly sufficient for tactical level activities. A battle is a battle and a key leader engagement is a key leader engagement. The activities may be conducted by any echelon, and whatever echelon or group is involved with proximate cause and effect are involved in "the tactical." The mission to kill or capture Osama bin Laden was a good example of a tactical action in a small war: its cause and effects were easy to measure as they were proximate and linear in nature. The same thinking, planning, and execution tools used during big wars were used for that operation.[\[x\]](#)

At the higher levels, small wars and big wars look vastly different. Small wars force higher headquarters, those who are managing the tactical units, to conduct theoretical speculation as to the best ways with which to meet strategic and policy objectives. This theoretical speculation is often done unconsciously, just as when NATO Training Mission- Afghanistan (NTM-A) ordered the pay of police to increase in 2010. The assumption was that the increase would result in lower attrition. The other assumptions were

that lower attrition in the police would help build stability in the country and that higher pay for the police would not result in unforeseen negative consequences. There were many reasons to believe that those assumptions were wrong, but NTM-A's assessments office was not in the business of measuring whether those assumptions were wrong. Instead, NTM-A's assessments office found metrics that supported the assumption that paying the police more was a good thing.<sup>[xi]</sup>

Thus, in small wars, at the "higher levels," or those levels concerned with theory speculation, it is more important to conduct learning across personnel turnover and political event timeframes. This is juxtaposed with being concerned with execution and measuring effects of operations within personnel turnover and political event timeframes. Coordination, while very important at the tactical level, is not as important as building shared understanding. This implies that the "higher" headquarters must not assume they know more than the "lower" headquarters. All units must be in the business of being open to learning, questioning conventional wisdom, and testing the assumptions of our conscious theories and identifying the unconscious theories that are guiding our actions.

Small wars are linear in nature only at the tactical level and only in an illusory way. Above that they are non-linear in nature, often contradictory, and always paradoxical. Thus, big wars conceptual tools are not the right tools for small wars. We have to understand ourselves even more than we do those we are fighting, fighting with, and living with. The "operational" level might not even be a useful conceptualization in many small wars, instead it may be better to view things as either tactical, theoretical, or policy-related. Tactics would be the action on the ground and be very proximate cause-and-effect focused. The theoretical would be concerned with questioning the assumptions we have about our operations and learning across timeframes. The policy level would be concerned with politicians setting policy objectives and attempting to balance different political interests. The theoretical level would have to intimately concern itself in a very honest way about the policy level.

## **Conclusion**

If small wars are simply smaller than "big" wars, then maybe we can use the same conceptual tools and only tweak our lessons learned based on a difference in degree. If, however, small wars are fundamentally different in kind, in their nature, than big wars, then it follows that the conceptual tools we use to make sense of and prosecute them should be different. Thus, it may help us to envision a new construct for small wars other than the "tactical-operational-strategic" construct that fits the "ends-ways-means" linear rationality that drives our big wars thinking. Instead, small wars are those characterized by non-linearity, non-proximate cause-and-effect, contradiction, and paradox. As such, a better construct for thinking about small wars may be "tactical-theoretical-policy." Those involved in tactics during small wars may find some of David Kilcullen's and GEN Zinni's lessons valuable. Those involved in trying to make those tactical activities mean something in terms of strategic and policy objectives, may find it more useful to view themselves as being at the "theoretical" level. A level at which theories are consciously or unconsciously tested and which learning and shared understanding are the most important requirements, yet also the rarest of phenomena.

## **End Notes**

[i] From the front page of the *Small Wars Journal*, smallwarsjournal.com, attributed to the *Small Wars Manual*, 1940.

[ii] Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, JUL 2001, p 1-1.



[iii] Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, DEC 2006, p A-5.

[iv] Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, OCT 2011, p 10.

[v] Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, OCT 2011, pp 9-10.

[vi] Joint Staff, Joint Publication 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, FEB 2016, p 176.

[vii] Eikmeier, Dale. "Operational Art and the Operational Level of War, are they Synonymous? Well it Depends." 9 SEP 2015, *Small Wars Journal*.

[viii] GEN Anthony Zinni's considerations as noted in the Small Wars Journal post on 13 February, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/general-zinnis-considerations-revisited-again>

[ix] Kilcullen, David, LTC, Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency, IOSphere, Summer 2006, [http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/iosphere/iosphere\\_summer06\\_kilcullen.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/iosphere/iosphere_summer06_kilcullen.pdf)

[x] The killing of Osama bin Laden should not be confused with a strategic level operation, just as a general officer-level KLE is not a strategic level event. Proximate phenomena with linear causal logic is tactical in nature, no matter who conducts or why. Even to the extent it met a policy objective of the administration, that policy objective was tactical in nature and it is very arguable whether or not it led to any sustained advantage or long-term resilient change.

[xi] Author's experience, while assigned to NTM-A, CJ5 section, in 2010.

## About the Author



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LTC Grant M. Martin is a Special Forces officer in the U.S. Army. He has served in Afghanistan and South America. He graduated from The Citadel, has an MBA from George Mason University, and an MMAS from the School of Advanced Military Studies. He is a Ph.D. candidate at North Carolina State University's Public Administration program with special interest in researching the organizational obstacles within SOCOM and DoD to effective Irregular Warfare. He has been published in the *International Journal*, *Military Review*, *OODA.com*, and the *Small Wars Journal*, in addition to contributing to chapters in two textbooks on Design Thinking.

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