



Serbian Otpor symbol of the movement which ousted Milosevic in Serbia and subsequently became a model for all student revolutionary movements worldwide. CREDIT: By Le serbe - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14240808>

This monograph is the first in a planned series of three volumes that will provide Special Operations Forces (SOF) with an in-depth study of resistance movements. Mr. Will Irwin provides a wealth of case studies focused on the United States Government's support to resistance movements. For each of his case studies the author summarizes in a clear, concise manner the duration of U.S. support, the political environments or conditions, the type of operation, the purpose or objective of U.S. support, and the ultimate outcome: success, partial success, failure, or an inconclusive outcome. Unfolding world events are indicative of the need for SOF to maintain and enhance traditional unconventional warfare (UW) skills, but those skills must be assessed in the context of modern resistance movement dynamics. This work will serve as a benchmark reference on resistance movements for the benefit of the special operations community and its civilian leadership.

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JSOU Report 19-2

Support to Resistance: Strategic Purpose and Effectiveness

Irwin



JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS UNIVERSITY



Support to Resistance: Strategic Purpose and Effectiveness

Will Irwin

Foreword by Lieutenant General John F. Mulholland, Jr.

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*Support to Resistance:
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and Effectiveness*

Will Irwin

*Foreword by
Lieutenant General John F. Mulholland, Jr.,
U.S. Army, Ret.*

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From the Dean

This monograph is the first in a planned series of three volumes that will provide Special Operations Forces (SOF) with an in-depth study of resistance movements. In this first monograph of the series, *Support to Resistance*, Mr. Will Irwin provides a wealth of case studies focused on the United States Government's support to resistance movements. For each of his case studies the author summarizes in a clear, concise manner the duration of U.S. support, the political environments or conditions, the type of operation, the purpose or objective of U.S. support, and the ultimate outcome: success, partial success, failure, or an inconclusive outcome.

Unfolding world events are indicative of the need for SOF to maintain and enhance traditional unconventional warfare (UW) skills, but those skills must be assessed in the context of modern resistance movement dynamics. What changes must be made to education and training? How should doctrine be adjusted? How does the SOF community develop the next generation of UW warriors and leaders? This work will establish a foundation of knowledge upon which the reader may contemplate such questions.

The JSOU College of Special Operations is pleased to welcome retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Mulholland's contribution and foreword. I believe this to be a seminal work on the subject and, combined with the forthcoming volumes in the author's series, will serve as benchmark references on resistance movements for the benefit of the special operations community and its civilian leadership.

Michael C. McMahon
Dean, College of Special Operations

Foreword

I was asked by Mr. Will Irwin, the author of the following monograph, to write a foreword for his important and valuable work, *Support to Resistance*. As a career Army Special Forces officer, I was happy to assist a fellow special forces comrade, particularly since the scope of the monograph incorporates the foundational mission of Army Special Forces, unconventional warfare (UW). Through an exhaustive research that included a review of more than 800 declassified National Security Council-level documents from 13 presidential administrations, Mr. Irwin's *Support to Resistance* provides a valuable recounting assessment of policy decisions by the United States Government (USG) to support resistance movements around the world during and following World War II. Thanks to Mr. Irwin's work, we quickly gain a more complete appreciation for how often support to resistance movements became a policy choice by different administrations across the political spectrum, and to what consequence.

The facts, as outlined by Mr. Irwin's work, make it patently clear as to the importance of better understanding the complexities, risks, and consequences of such a policy decision. The pervasive reality of resistance by a given population against a perceived oppressive regime or occupying power is as old as the history of man as a social, communal being. Equally relevant is the history of rival states and entities assessing whether exploiting that resistance would serve as a pathway for advancing that state's own political advantage and policy objectives. Mr. Irwin presents the first detailed comparison of the effectiveness of various applications and approaches to supporting a resistance movement. It is in the interest of those relevant practitioners, planners, and elected officials with oversight responsibility to have the best possible understanding of this phenomena when considering such a policy choice for our nation as well, of course, for the greater awareness of the American people.

One needs to look no further than today's news to understand the relevance of understanding more coherently and comprehensively the complexity inherent in this particular dimension of political conflict that takes place both within existing states and between states. Certainly the use and exploitation of disaffected or rebellious peoples within one state by a neighboring

adversary or rival has been a reality of conflict in the Americas since our colonial days. The Seven Years War that was waged in Britain's American colony, what we know as The French and Indian War, saw heavy use of Native American tribes by each side of the struggle. The critical role of France in supporting our revolution against the British Crown is well-recognized. Our own civil war witnessed considerable effort by the Confederate States to enlist the support of European powers, most notably Britain, in its rebellion against the United States. Russian support to Ukrainian separatists in the Donbass region of Ukraine continues to be a hot topic of international focus and concern. Most recently, and close on the heels of our most recent presidential election, the USG publicly announced the end of its support to Syrian resistance elements contesting the al Assad regime.

Mr. Irwin uses World War II as his point of departure for assessing the USG's support to resistance (STR) as a deliberate policy tool, and rightfully so. World War II changed everything. It saw the United States emerge on the world scene as a truly significant actor and, by war's end, recognition of the United States as the leader of the free world. Although our revolutionary forefathers were intimately familiar with both the concept and employment of political and UW tactics and techniques, World War II witnessed the creation of America's first global intelligence and special operations organization, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The OSS was created to wage the intelligence and special operations campaigns that truly marked America's modern entrance into political warfare. Deeply entrenched in that OSS experience was a range of operations that were conducted in denied, i.e., enemy-controlled, territories by intelligence operatives and special operators alongside indigenous counterparts in both Europe and Asia. The OSS experience included developing familiarity and expertise with other tools of political warfare including psychological operations, political influence operations, and subversion. While not all of these operations were successful, the political and strategic potential of leveraging indigenous populations as a tool of policy was recognized and absorbed within the USG, most deeply within the newly established Central Intelligence Agency (1947) and U.S. Army Special Forces (1952). It was, however, a career foreign service officer, George Frost Kennan, who perhaps best voiced the policy import of political warfare—a label under which we can safely assign STR.

Political warfare is the logical application of Clausewitz's doctrine in time of peace. In broadest definition, political warfare is 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. They range from such overt actions as political alliances, economic measures (as ERP [European Recovery Program]—the Marshall Plan), 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.¹

Mr. Irwin's research and extensive literature review well establishes the reality that the USG has made extensive use of support to resistance movements around the world as a policy tool of the United States. Through his effective use of case studies, Mr. Irwin characterizes the different manifestations of that support, aligning them with the policy intent of that particular campaign, and subsequently evaluating the effectiveness of that campaign, often with new insights. Mr. Irwin's research brings real and meaningful value most immediately to those whose professional interest touches on the various dimensions of political conflict, political warfare, insurgency and counterinsurgency but, by no means, is that the full range of his contribution.

In closing, I commend Will Irwin's *Support to Resistance* to anyone whose interest touches the gray zone of international conflict short of open warfare. They would be well-served by including *Support to Resistance* in their professional reading, research, and study.

Lieutenant General John F. Mulholland, Jr., U.S. Army, Ret.

About the Author

Mr. Will Irwin is a Resident Senior Fellow at the Joint Special Operations University's (JSOU) College of Special Operations. He is a contractor employed by METIS Solutions in support of the JSOU mission. Since his retirement as a U.S. Army Special Forces officer, he has worked as a defense analyst, researcher, historian, instructor, and writer. His career included assignments throughout the United States, Europe, Central and South America, the Near East, the Far East, Southeast Asia, and Southwest Asia. He is a subject matter expert in strategic intelligence, strategic and operational plans and policy, special operations, and irregular warfare. Mr. Irwin culminated his 28-year military career at the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), where he was a weapons, munitions, and countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD) requirements officer. Since his retirement from active duty, he has served USSOCOM as a contractor supporting the command's advanced technology program and later as a future concepts developer. He then supported the command as a CWMD-terrorism analyst and planner in the Defense Threat Reduction Agency USSOCOM Support Cell. Upon his return to the Tampa area, he served as an intelligence analyst at United States Central Command prior to joining the faculty at the Joint Special Operations University.



Mr. Irwin holds a master of military arts and sciences degree from the United States Army Command and General Staff College and a bachelor of arts degree in history from Methodist University. He has done additional graduate study at the University of Kansas and the University of Southern California, and has served as an Arroyo Center Research Fellow at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California. He is the author of *Abundance of Valor: Resistance, Liberation, and Survival, 1944–1945* and *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944*, as well as several classified and unclassified reports and articles. Mr. Irwin has served as a guest lecturer on unconventional warfare at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

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This monograph would not have been possible without the support provided by Dr. Ken Poole, Mr. Frank Reidy, and Mr. Boyd Ballard at the Center for Strategic Studies, Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. Their generous support for my research travel and their extraordinary patience in awaiting the final product are much appreciated. The monograph was produced by the always helpful staff at JSOU Press—Mr. Rob Nalepa and Mrs. Lisa Sheldon. My colleagues, JSOU Resident Senior Fellows Dr. Pete McCabe, Dr. Paul Lieber, Dr. Dave Ellis, and Dr. Christopher Marsh were constant sources of encouragement.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to the research assistance provided by staff members at the JSOU Library at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida; the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; the National Archives and Records Administration II in College Park, Maryland; and the archives at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, Arkansas; the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas; the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, Massachusetts; the Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, California; the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California; the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Archives in Brussels, Belgium; the British National Archives in Kew, United Kingdom; the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, California; and the Hillsborough County Public Libraries in Tampa and Valrico, Florida. The attentiveness, courtesy, responsiveness, and efficiency shown the author by these people proved a tremendous help in completing the research for this study. Ms. Rachel Bomberger, Ms. Laura Mullins, and Ms. Stacy Harn at the JSOU Library were particularly helpful in making hard-to-find books magically appear by way of the interlibrary loan process.

A special thanks is also owed to Mr. Glenn Lawson and Mr. George Franco of Booz Allen Hamilton in McLean, Virginia, for allowing me to further expand on their innovative “support to resistance” concept.

Introduction

A desire to resist oppression is implanted in the nature of man.

– Tacitus

The strategic utility of supporting resistance movements or insurgencies in other states can be seen in the fact, as revealed in this monograph, that every president of the United States from World War II to the present has chosen to do so at some point while in office. These clandestine interventions have ranged from support to civil resistance movements to covert paramilitary operations to larger unconventional warfare (UW)² efforts in support of conventional military campaigns. Even presidents who, prior to their election, looked upon such activity with disfavor, found themselves compelled to use it after taking office. This monograph seeks to explain why that is so. And, because the subject mission set represents a core task for Special Operations Forces (SOF), the monograph should help SOF operators, planners, and leaders gain a better appreciation of the foundation and soundness of current Joint and Service UW doctrine. It will bring to light challenges that remain and aspects of our UW concepts and doctrine that call for adjustments or upgrades to conform to today's world. As threats and conditions evolve, so must our doctrine, and the key to some of today's challenges and requirements may be secluded in the historical experiences presented in this volume.

Support to resistance can be thought of as a means of bridging the hazy gap between soft power and hard power. The concept of soft power, as developed by Joseph Nye,³ involves influencing another political body to change its behavior through such foreign policy tools as diplomacy and economic assistance. Hard power, on the other hand, refers to the use of more aggressive military or economic measures to accomplish foreign policy objectives. These measures can range from coercive diplomacy to the imposition of economic sanctions to the threat of armed intervention. Operations of the type described in this monograph have been described as “very often the stitch in time that eliminates bloodier and more costly alternatives.”⁴

Terms and Definitions

The title for this monograph at the time the proposal was submitted was *Strategic Purpose in Unconventional Warfare*. In the course of researching and writing the paper, the title was changed to adopt the more inclusive term “support to resistance,” as used in the framework document prepared under the direction of U.S. Special Operations Command’s Force Management Directorate (FMD) for use in UW wargaming. The reason for this is threefold. First, the term applies to a type of activity that is widely recognized as being an interagency endeavor, yet interagency participants outside the Department of Defense (DOD) have never been comfortable with the term “unconventional warfare” when used in reference to operations within and against a state with whom we are not at war. Second, “unconventional warfare” is a vague term, meaning different things to different people and audiences. Many outside of DOD regard it as simply another word for irregular warfare, whereas DOD gives it a very specific meaning and views it as a subset of irregular warfare. The term “support to resistance,” or STR, on the other hand, is clear in its meaning and includes operations that would not technically fit within the DOD definition of UW, although they are very closely related. In practical terms, it represents a coordinated application of all U.S. instruments of national power to influence and empower a resistance movement, while removing any ambiguity in meaning.

Although the FMD framework document offers no working definition of STR, it does describe the concept as a “shared approach among U.S. Government departments and agencies to provide support to resistance movements that can help confront hostile state and non-state actors.”⁵ The conception is thus broader than UW, which the STR concept considers to be the DOD contribution to the more extensive and interagency STR realm. Most important to an understanding of the STR concept is that it “involves the synchronized planning and execution of a series of complex activities that require close and ongoing collaboration across USG departments and agencies.”⁶

Whereas the SOF community has traditionally considered the term “resistance” to refer to popular armed opposition to an occupation force, the STR framework and this monograph use the term in its broader sense. Joint doctrine defines a resistance movement as an “organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability.”⁷

Insurgency, on the other hand, is described as the “organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.”⁸ For the purposes of this study, then, “resistance” refers to all forms of organized political resistance to authority, to include resistance to an occupier, civil resistance, and insurgency.

With that in mind, it is important to note that, as this monograph will show, the form and nature of a resistance movement being supported will determine which department or agency of the United States Government (USG) will exercise lead responsibility. It may be the DOD, the Department of State, or the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and there may be a shift in that lead responsibility over the course of the operation. At times, STR interventions initiated by the Executive Branch of the USG have been stymied by Congress. In other cases, they have been initiated or expanded at the suggestion and even at the insistence of Congress.

Context

This study challenges the common impression that STR is something at which the USG can never be proficient or that it is seldom effective. As former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director Robert Gates has pointed out, and as will be shown in this monograph, the combined pressure provided by two resistance campaigns—armed resistance in Afghanistan and nonviolent civil resistance in Poland—carried out simultaneously throughout most of the 1980s and both supported by the United States, contributed significantly to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact. Other factors were involved as well, of course, but the resistance to Soviet expansionism and the undermining of Soviet authority over its satellite states had far-reaching effects. Supporting a resistance movement or insurgency is a way for the USG to avoid direct and costly large-scale armed confrontation with an adversary. It does so by leveraging local resources and helping to mobilize the passionately committed energy of those indigenous elements willing to stand up to tyranny. It serves U.S. national security interests by engaging a hostile government where it is most vulnerable.

Purpose (The Research Problem)

This study examines, through historical inquiry, the various strategic purposes for which STR operations have been conducted and under what

conditions they were most or least effective. A more in-depth examination of decision making and interagency coordination considerations associated with STR will appear in a follow-on monograph.

Research Questions

This study focused on two central research questions with three sub-questions.

Central Question 1: What geopolitical and strategic conditions typically result in the choice of STR as a foreign policy instrument?

Sub-Question 1a: What strategic purposes are served by supporting foreign insurgencies or resistance movements?

Central Question 2: Historically, how effective has STR been as a U.S. foreign policy tool?

Sub-Question 2a: How effective has STR been in various geopolitical circumstances (e.g., peacetime vs. wartime, supporting effort as opposed to the main effort)?

Sub-Question 2b: How effective is STR in each of the three doctrinal categories of purpose—to disrupt, to coerce, or to overthrow?

Literature Review

This study draws from a varied and interdisciplinary body of primary- and secondary-source literature to explore the topic from several perspectives. The bedrock primary source material used consists of declassified archival documents, including National Security Council (NSC) meeting minutes, National Intelligence Estimates, policy papers, and various other reports and assessments. The official written record offers insight into what was on the minds of those discussing national security issues and what information they had available to inform decision making. Because it was most often highly classified and very limited in its distribution at the time of writing, speakers and recorders made little or no attempt to sugar-coat the dialogue or make it more palatable for posterity. This research benefited from a review of more than 800 such documents produced over 13 presidential administrations.

The growing secondary literature—books and magazine articles, peer-reviewed journal articles, studies, essays, theses, and dissertations—has also been consulted. The academic and commercially published literature on

UW and covert paramilitary operations is extensive, diverse, and sometimes controversial. A comprehensive literature search was conducted and yielded considerable material for the research approach followed in this study, which seeks to expand on these previous works. A journal-storage (digital library) database review of topical peer-reviewed journal articles resulted in more than 3,000 hits, of which around 35 were eventually chosen based on a title or abstract review. A search of UW-related academic papers in the Defense Technical Information Center resulted in the selection of 19 papers deemed most relevant. A search of ProQuest Digital National Security Archive yielded a total of more than 2,000 hits, from which 31 documents were selected. A similar search using the Directory of Open Access Journals produced 148 hits, of which one document was chosen. From Academic Search Ultimate, one document was chosen from 59 hits, and a search of the Empirical Studies of Conflict failed to result in any additional articles.

This study also relied on published books, articles, and papers relating specifically to major U.S. commitments to supporting foreign resistance movements during World War II, including those in the North African and Mediterranean Theaters of Operations, the European Theater of Operations, the Southwest Pacific Area, China, and Southeast Asia. For Cold War operations, the author referred to works on: Europe and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), North Korea, China, Iran, Guatemala, Germany, Tibet, Indonesia, Laos, Cuba, North Vietnam, Afghanistan, Poland, and Nicaragua. Post-Cold War era operations covered in this study included Kuwait, Kosovo, Serbia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Sources on organizations and offices involved in STR policy, decision making, planning, and execution included works on the presidency, the NSC, the Office of Strategic Services, the CIA, and the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Other literature reviewed for the study include works on international relations, foreign policy, and general strategy theory; the role of special operations in U.S. strategy; political warfare and covert action; resistance, insurgency, unconventional and guerrilla warfare; Cold War background; coercion; civil resistance; stay-behind resistance and UW; and the Spanish-American War.

Finally, memoirs, for all their shortcomings, often illuminate personal considerations and ruminations about world events. Autobiographies and biographies of senior civilian policy and decision makers used in this

research include volumes covering the administrations of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Harry S. Truman, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, President John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson, President Richard M. Nixon, President Gerald R. Ford, President Jimmy Carter, President Ronald Reagan, President George H. W. Bush, President Bill Clinton, and President George W. Bush. Books written by former officers of the CIA were cleared for publication by the CIA's Publications Review Board. Memoirs of senior military commanders of ground campaigns that were supported by UW operations were also reviewed for their perspective.

Doctrinal publications consulted included Joint Publication 3-05.1, Unconventional Warfare (FOUO, 2015); U.S. Army Field Manual 3-05.201, Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations (2003); and U.S. Army Training Circular 18-01, Special Forces Unconventional Warfare (2010).

Approach

This work relied on comparative historical case study to determine not only the variety of strategic purposes served by supporting resistance, but an analysis and synthesis of similarities, differences, themes, and patterns that emerge from the data. The analysis also takes into consideration the varied conditions under which these operations have been carried out and leads to a better understanding of why some policies and approaches succeed while others fail.

The study of history, particularly through the use of historical case studies, has been identified by senior government policy makers as the most useful academic discipline for informing the policy making process.⁹ This was recently exemplified by Ambassador Ryan Crocker's comment that history was the academy discipline that has done the most to prepare him for his work.¹⁰ Military leaders, too, have long recognized the value of studying military history, where accounts of past conflicts, in the words of General Stanley McChrystal, "can contain revelations with unexpected applications."¹¹ "Approaching today's problems through a study of the past," wrote former CIA director Admiral Stansfield Turner, "is one way to ensure that we do not become trapped within the limits of our own experience."¹²

General Research Methodology

This study was conducted in four steps: case selection, data collection and analysis, strategic purpose determination, and assessment of outcome.

Step 1: Case Selection

Inclusion Criteria. Because of time and space limitations, this study is limited to the STR historical experience of the United States. Since several states have employed STR as a foreign policy tool, examination of the broader international experience is a topic for further research. With the exception of at least two cases in the late 19th century (Hawaii in 1893 and Cuba in 1898), World War II represents the threshold of the U.S. experience in providing support to foreign resistance movements or insurgencies. Cases used in this study, therefore, include all insurgencies and resistance movements that: 1) began during World War II or later, and that; 2) received anything more than simply rhetorical or political support from the United States. In other words, the United States provided (or attempted to provide) any of the following tangible forms of support: funding, arming and equipping, training and advising, and airlift or air strikes. United States support for the 1945–1949 Indonesian National Revolution movement, for example, is not included since that support was manifested solely in the freezing of Marshall Aid funds and the application of diplomatic pressure on the Netherlands government to acknowledge and recognize Indonesia’s independence.¹³ An additional requirement for case selection was that sufficient unclassified material on the operation must exist to render a fair assessment.

United States-backed *coups d’états*, such as those in Iran in 1953 and Guatemala in 1954, are not included in this study as they did not involve legitimate resistance movements. Also not included are operations still in progress at the time of writing for reasons of security classification and uncertainty of outcome.

Operations involving STR in opposition to proto-state, or “state-like” non-state actors are not included, as the application of UW methods and procedures in what are essentially counterinsurgency (COIN) or counterterrorism (CT) missions is a topic worthy of a separate study that allows for more focused attention.

Case Identification. The process of identifying cases began by first compiling a fairly comprehensive list of 20th and 21st century insurgencies and resistance movements based on lists provided in six sources.¹⁴

Discounting identical entries, this effort resulted in a list of 371 cases. Eliminating all cases in which the conflict culminated prior to 1940 reduced the list to 312 cases. Removal of all cases in which the United States provided

no tangible support to the insurgency or resistance movement further shortened the list to 23. Cases were then added for occasions that were, for whatever reason, missing from the lists in the six sources cited above, but where U.S. support to an insurgency or resistance movement is known to have occurred. This resulted in 22 additional cases, for a total of 45. Finally, one of the selected cases represents a lengthy campaign during which the USG changed its primary objective twice in the course of the conflict. United States support to the Afghan mujahideen during the Cold War was, therefore, divided into three cases, each of which represents a phase of the operation with a different U.S. objective. Counting these phases as separate cases because of the variation in the purpose of U.S. support added two additional cases, resulting in a total of 47 cases to be analyzed.

Step 2: Data Collection and Analysis

Primary and secondary source evidence was gathered and analyzed to provide background on the genesis of the case, an overview of USG actions and intentions, and consideration of three variables affecting the operation's outcome.

Variables. This study takes into consideration factors and conditions that can influence the outcome of STR operations by examining three variables as they pertain to each case. This examination seeks to determine which combination of variables presents the most favorable (or least favorable) prospect for success. The variables, adopted from U.S. joint UW doctrine, are: 1) political environment—i.e., whether an operation was conducted under peacetime or wartime conditions; 2) type of operation—i.e., whether an operation was an independent, main effort operation, or was conducted in support of a larger military campaign; and 3) primary objective—i.e., whether the overall purpose of the operation was to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow an adversary government or occupying power.¹⁵

Step 3: Strategic Purpose Determination

The strategic purpose and objectives of operations represented in the selected cases were determined primarily by analysis of contemporary primary source material. This effort relied heavily on declassified archival documents such as NSC meeting minutes, National Intelligence Estimates (NIE) and other documents prepared for discussion at NSC meetings, national strategy documents, NATO and theater strategic guidance and planning documents,

executive orders and policy directives, and other documents involving strategic-level deliberations and decisions. Use was also made of memoirs written by key political and military figures for context and personal views of events formally presented in official, authoritative government documents.

Step 4: Assessment of Outcome

This step involved assessing the effectiveness of the operation and resulted in the identification of each case as a success, a partial success, or a failure, with success defined as the achievement of documented U.S. national or military theater strategic objectives that the operation was intended to achieve. Cases involving operations that were initiated but never fully executed or completed are classified as inconclusive.

Several sources provided the basis for the determination of effectiveness of operations. These included academic and think tank studies and assessments; judgments by historians, defense analysts, and intelligence officials; government after-action reports; publications by the U.S. Army's Center of Military History and the CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence; and judgments offered by senior military commanders of campaigns that were supported by UW operations.

A list of the 47 cases used for this study is provided in the appendix, and a compilation of analysis results is included in the report's conclusion section.

Organization

This report is organized in five parts—an introduction, three main chapters, and a conclusion. Chapter 1 reviews historical cases where the USG supported resistance movements as a tool of disruption. Included are a wide range of examples of various applications, from subversion to detainment to economic warfare-related disruption to wartime UW applications. Chapter 2 covers STR as a tool of coercion, where the United States supported resistance movements or insurgencies as a means of pressuring a hostile foreign government to change a policy or action that is inimical to U.S. interests, including cases where the coercion is reciprocal, foreign internal defense (FID)-supporting, to bring about withdrawal, or for humanitarian purposes. Chapter 3 describes those cases where the USG worked through a resistance proxy to enable the overthrow of a hostile foreign regime, whether for rollback of communism, for preemptive intervention, or for defensive or democracy promotion purposes.

For each case presented, a standard framework is followed, with an indication of the variables as they pertain to each case and a narrative or synopsis that summarizes the background, significant points of chronology, objectives, and outcomes of each case. Due to space limitations, narrative descriptions for well-known cases have been truncated; more space is given to those cases that may be unfamiliar to the reader. Finally, the conclusion reviews the findings, implications for the USG and SOF, and areas for further study.

Key Findings

A complete summary of the case analysis is provided in the conclusions section of the report. This study reaffirms some findings drawn from earlier works, but also provides some new insights. Foremost among the conclusions drawn from this work are the following.

Overall, from 1940 to the present, nearly 70 percent of STR operations were conducted for disruptive purposes. The non-disruptive cases were about equally divided between coercion and overthrow. Of the 47 cases reviewed, 23 were judged to be successful in accomplishing the documented objectives. Another two were determined to have been partially successful. Of the 47, 20 were judged to be failures. The final two cases, both from World War II, were designated inconclusive as the war ended before they had proceeded far enough to assess their effectiveness. Since the end of the Cold War, three of seven total STR operations were conducted for disruptive purposes (43 percent) and two of the three were successful. Decisions to conduct STR operations for disruptive or coercive purposes often present an ethical consideration, in that the objective of the United States seldom matches that of the resistance. Typically, the resistance is fighting for its independence or at least some level of autonomy. The U.S. operation is conducted solely for the purpose of disrupting some activity or policy of the targeted country, and at some point, when it is felt that the operation has served its purpose, it is terminated. The resistance, now bereft of external support, is left to deal with government forces on its own.

Most STR operations were carried out under wartime conditions, with those being nearly twice as successful as cases conducted under peacetime conditions. Wartime STR has succeeded around 60 percent of the time. Just over a third of STR operations carried out under peacetime conditions have been successful.

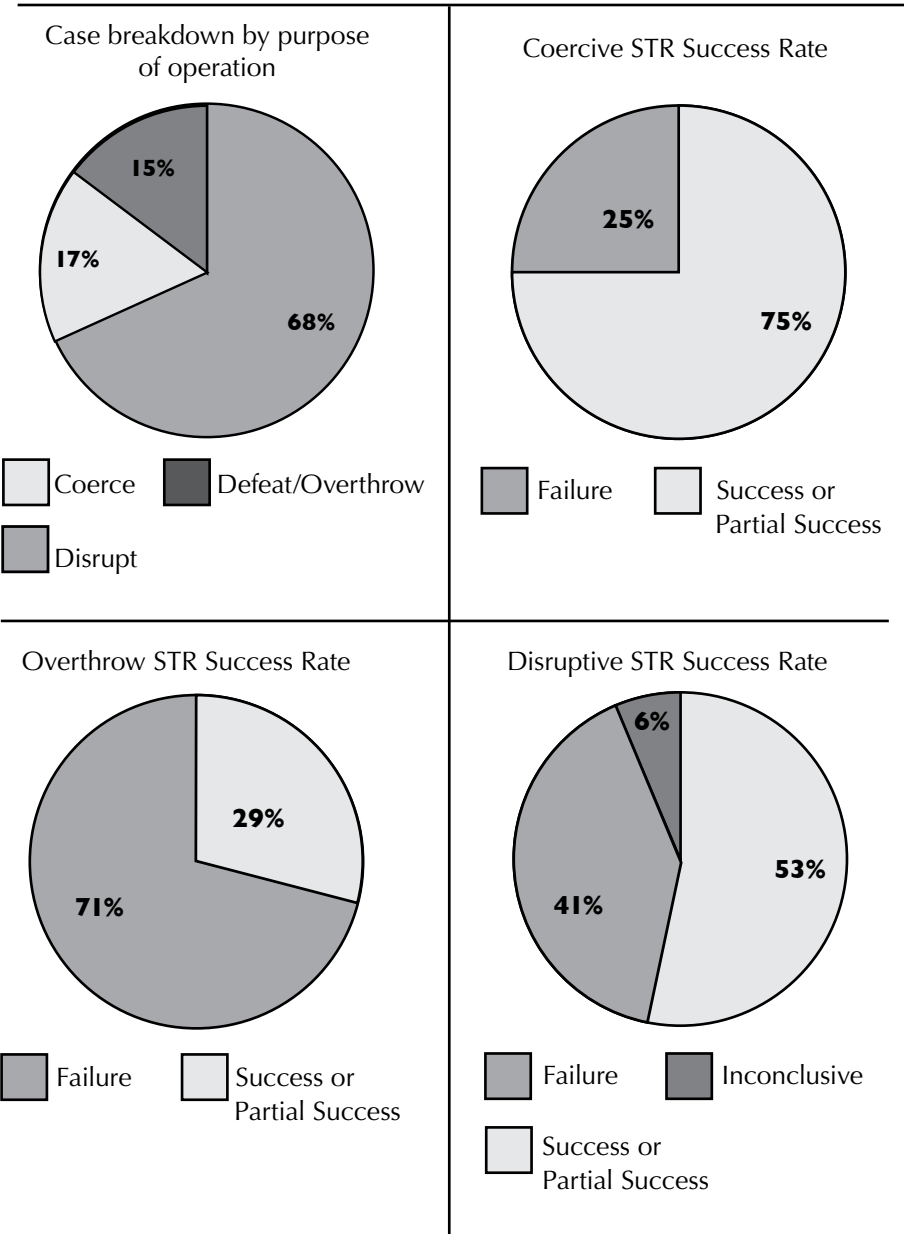


Figure 1. Case breakdown by purpose of operation. Source: Author.

Support to resistance is most effective when conducted in direct support of a military campaign rather than as an independent or main effort operation. In just over a third of the cases, STR was conducted in support of a military campaign, and around two out of three of these cases were successful. The remaining two-thirds of cases were conducted as independent, or main effort operations; roughly half of these were successful. In their comprehensive 2007 study, *United States Special Operations Forces*, David Tucker and Christopher Lamb expressed what had long ago become conventional wisdom—that UW “works best in close cooperation with large conventional forces that can keep the enemy’s security forces too busy to track down the unconventional units.”¹⁶ This study upholds that assertion. There may be several factors that contribute to this. In addition to the measure of survivability provided when adversary security forces are preoccupied with engaging large conventional forces, UW operations in support of larger campaigns—at least to some degree—could possibly be forgiving of minor tactical errors or security lapses, whereas such lapses are usually catastrophic when they occur in independent or main-effort STR operations.

Overall, since 1940, STR has been least effective when used for the purpose of overthrowing a regime and most effective when used for coercive purposes. Support to resistance operations for overthrow purposes since 1940 were successful only 29 percent of the time, and only 17 percent of those conducted during peacetime succeeded. Most were conducted under peacetime conditions; the only overthrow operation conducted during wartime (Afghanistan in 2001) was successful. Operations conducted for disruptive purposes have a 53 percent success rate. Seventy-five percent of STR operations carried out for coercive purposes have succeeded (including two partial successes), and 80 percent of those conducted during peacetime were successful, making coercion clearly the most effective use of STR. In the post-Cold War years, three of the total seven operations were conducted for overthrow purposes (43 percent) and two of the three were successful. The numbers are identical for cases involving disruptive STR cases.

Mission compromises caused by breeches of security have accounted for nearly half of all failed STR operations. In no less than 8 of the 20 failed operations, the target country leadership and security forces knew of the impending operation before it ever started. In target countries such as Romania, the USSR, Poland, the Baltics, and Yugoslavia during the early Cold War years, agents infiltrated by parachute only to be met on the drop zone by hostile

security forces who were expecting them. The same thing occurred with nearly all agents dropped into North Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Preparations for the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, including training of the rebel force by U.S. Army Special Forces at a secret base in Guatemala, were the subject of news stories in *The New York Times* and other U.S. newspapers during the weeks leading up to the operation. When the invasion finally came, Castro was not in the least surprised or unprepared.

Support to nonviolent civil resistance seems to be more likely to succeed than support to armed resistance. This study appears to corroborate the assertion by others that “external support for nonviolent opposition movements is more likely to have favorable results than external support for violent ones.”¹⁷ Such a conclusion cannot be drawn conclusively based on the cases reviewed here. Available unclassified information revealed only two cases of the United States supporting nonviolent civil resistance, both of which were successful. This is, however, an insufficient number of cases to be statistically meaningful. This is an area deserving of much more study. In fact, a study on external support to nonviolent resistance is currently underway at the University of Denver.

Support to resistance most often addresses immediate issues and short-term rather than longer-term interests. While considering long-term effects and second- or third-order consequences of a contemplated STR operation is a laudable aspiration, it is not always effective. Policy decisions for actions involving STR are usually made in response to pressing issues that require immediate attention. Many people, for example, have concluded years after the fact that a long-term consequence of U.S. aid to the mujahideen Afghan resistance during the 1980s was that it led directly to the formation of anti-American terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The implication, of course, is that the United States should not have provided assistance to the mujahideen. But viewing history through the lens of informed hindsight can offer distorted views. As William J. Daugherty put it, “Presidents are not clairvoyant ... they act on what they perceive to be the best interests for the country and the world at that time and are only able to hope that history will prove them wise.”¹⁸ In fairness, the reader of history should also consider the alternative. Choosing against supporting the Afghan resistance in 1979, Daugherty argues, “might have stunted the growth of Islamo-fascist terrorism, but it might also have prolonged the power and influence of the Soviet state,” which was a much graver threat to the world than is terrorism.¹⁹

Moreover, it should be remembered that the former Soviet Union bears much more responsibility for arousing Islamic extremism by invading and occupying Afghanistan than the United States does for coming to the aid of the Afghan rebels. Islamic extremism would have been roused whether or not the United States intervened.

One thing common to all 47 cases reviewed in this study is the fact that the targeted state was ruled either by an unfriendly occupying force or by a repressive authoritarian regime. Much has been written recently about the current global decline of democracy and the rise in authoritarian forms of government, where single-party regimes, strongmen, or autocratic military juntas have survived or have taken control of countries whose inhabitants have had at least some exposure to democracy or who have seen limits placed on freedoms they once enjoyed.²⁰ In some significant countries, strong leaders have held on to power for many years, some going so far as to declare themselves president for life. Tactics used by many of these leaders for maintaining power include arresting or otherwise marginalizing political rivals, hand-picking challengers to ensure “landslide” election victories, establishing controls over the judiciary, severely curtailing or even blocking citizens’ access to the internet, stifling free expression, quashing all forms of protest, censoring and intimidating the media, and jailing or otherwise neutralizing unsupportive journalists. Some very prominent world leaders, in the words of two writers, are taking “a slow and steady approach to dismantling democracy.”²¹ Other governments are described as “illiberal democracies,” where, in the words of Ambassador James Dobbins, “representative institutions were more than mere trappings but not yet sufficient to operate as an effective check on those in power” and where “corruption and criminality were rampant.”²²

One *Foreign Affairs* writer concludes that “the world is experiencing the most severe democratic setback since the rise of fascism in the 1930s.”²³ Another analyst cites research that characterizes “personalist authoritarians” as aggressive adventurists, unpredictable internationally and often pursuing risky foreign policies, and “capable of carrying out volatile policies with little notice.”²⁴ Today, there are several countries around the world that fall into this category. Both Russia and China have boldly demonstrated expansionist tendencies, prompting Eastern European countries and the Baltic States to study resistance and UW as a defensive measure.

The point of all of this is that conditions are developing throughout the world that could lead to significant levels of popular discontent—conditions that historically have spawned some form of resistance. This could include both nonviolent and violent forms of resistance. Antigovernment demonstrations, according to a 2017 study on conflict trends and drivers, “show a somewhat volatile trend.” This report also recognizes “a sharp upward trend in instances of guerilla warfare in recent years” and that guerrilla warfare “does seem to be one of the few forms of violence that is enduring and increasing even as other types of conflict begin to disappear.”²⁵

Some of this unrest is likely to impact U.S. interests. The U.S. diplomatic, intelligence, and defense communities would benefit from a much improved ability to forecast resistance activity and, where U.S. interests are at risk, to rapidly develop comprehensive interagency responses and possible intervention scenarios. A study of past STR efforts can contribute to an enhanced understanding of what conditions are most or least favorable for an STR intervention and what approaches have been particularly effective and which approaches should be avoided.

As stated earlier, the following three chapters are devoted to the three categories of purpose or objective for UW operations described in U.S. Joint and Service doctrine—disruption, coercion, and overthrow. Chapter 1 follows with brief case narratives for all U.S. operations carried out in support of resistance movements or insurgencies for disruptive purposes.

Chapter 1. Support to Resistance as a Tool of Disruption

Any nation that uses [partisan warfare] intelligently will, as a rule, gain some superiority over those who disdain its use. – Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

“Disruption prevents or impedes someone or some entity from doing something it would prefer to do.”²⁶ It is accomplished by isolating, destabilizing, and undermining the authority and legitimacy of a hostile foreign government or occupying power. This can include subversive activities designed to exploit the inevitable political, ethnic, religious, or ideological fault lines that lie within all societies and governments. Subversion can be designed and conducted to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength, as well as the morale and legitimacy, of a state or state-like adversary. Much of this will be performed or supported by the indigenous underground element. Disruption can also impede an adversary’s ability to carry out its own plans. Disruption is an integral component of traditional warfare, and it is most often the purpose of unconventional warfare operations conducted in support of military campaigns. It might also include sabotage or attacking enemy lines of communication.

As a matter of historical record, the United States has a proven and effective capability to conduct UW in support of a larger military campaign. One of the most effective uses of UW in support of a military campaign is to distract or divert the enemy’s resources and attention away from the main battle area. When conducted in support of imminent air or sea landings of friendly forces, UW can be very effective in interdicting enemy lines of communication, impeding the movement of reinforcing enemy forces to the landing area.

As this chapter will show, and again this does not include cases where the United States supported or instigated a coup d’état, most offensive covert paramilitary operations conducted by the CIA’s Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), the predecessor of the Directorate of Operations, during the early years of the Cold War were conducted for disruptive purposes. As James Callanan explains, they were carried out as “essentially harassment

exercises.”²⁷ The one exception of those early operations was the “rollback” operation conducted against Albania from 1949 to 1954, in which Washington made an “outright attempt to overthrow a communist regime within the Soviet orbit.”²⁸ Of course, there was always the hope that such disruptive operations might stimulate more widespread popular resistance within the target country.

The purpose of some larger-scale, sustained operations, such as in Tibet or during the early years of post-Soviet invasion operations in Afghanistan, was simply to make aggression on the part of China or the Soviet Union “as politically costly as possible.”²⁹ The reason behind U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s decision to raise the cost of Soviet aggression by supporting the mujahideen was that “unless the Soviets recognize it has been counterproductive for them, we will face additional invasions or subversion in the future.”³⁰

Chapter 1 Sections	
A. Subversive Disruption	Romania (1946), Yugoslavia (1948–1949), USSR (1948–1954), Romania (1949–1953), Poland (1950–1952)
B. Detaining, Diverting, or Distractive Disruption	Greece (1943–1944), Yugoslavia (1943–1944), Albania (1943–1945), China (1951–1953)
C. Containment or Sustained Cost-Imposing Disruption	Tibet (1956–1969), Afghanistan: First Phase (1979–1984)
D. Campaign Supporting Disruption	Philippines (1941–1945), North Africa (1942–1943), France (1942–1944), Burma (1942–1945), Italy (1943–1945), Netherlands (1943–1945), Czechoslovakia (1944–1945), Poland (1944–1945), Malaya (1944–1945), Germany (1944–1945), China (1944–1945), North Korea (1950–1955), Kuwait (1990–1991), Iraq (2002–2003)
E. Lines of Communication Disruption	Norway (1943–1945), Denmark (1943–1945), Indochina (1945), Laos (1960–1973)
F. Political Disruption	Thailand (1942–1945)
G. Retaliatory Disruption	Afghanistan (1999–2000)

A. Subversive Disruption

Most support to resistance operations conducted in the very early years of the Cold War, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, were intended to have a subversive effect. They involved the recruitment of operatives from among the large populations of displaced persons in Western Europe following World War II, the training of those men, and their infiltration back into their homelands to sow internal dissent, incite popular uprisings, and encourage organized resistance. Subversion again became the purpose of support to a civil resistance movement in Poland during the 1980s, when, in the words of President Ronald Reagan, “One of man’s most fundamental and implacable yearnings, the desire for freedom, was stirring to life behind the Iron Curtain, the first break in the totalitarian dike of Communism.”³¹ Here, the operation was meant to subvert not only the communist Polish government, but the entire system of Soviet control and authority over its satellite states.

Romania, 1946	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 1 month (July to August 1946)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

In the early years of the Cold War, the United States and Britain undertook several covert actions in an attempt to destabilize the communist governments of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Some operations were initiated through contact with existing resistance elements within the country, although nearly all of these had been penetrated by the Soviets. Where legitimate resistance elements did not exist, attempts were made to create them.

President Harry S. Truman, after disbanding the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS) immediately following the war, replaced it by creating the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) on 1 January 1946. This organization would become the CIA with passage of the National Security Act of 1947.

General Hoyt Vandenberg became the second director of central intelligence on 10 June 1946. One of his first acts was to create, within the CIG, an office to oversee clandestine espionage and subversion operations. The new Office of Special Operations, or OSO,³² immediately focused on Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet forces based there.

Concerned about possible Soviet plans to invade and occupy Turkey, Pentagon officials sought a way to cut an invading Soviet army’s supply lines through Romania. Military planners went to work on the problem and OSO was soon planning its first covert operation as a means of supporting them. Plans called for the insertion of OSO operatives, who would then work with Romania’s anti-communist National Peasant Party to transform it into a resistance movement with the help of agents the OSS had left behind after the war. Unfortunately, in the intervening years, Soviet intelligence had deeply penetrated this network of agents.

Beginning as early as July 1946, OSO began working with National Peasant Party leaders to organize a partisan warfare capability to be activated in the event of a Soviet invasion of Turkey, which at the time was deemed by the Pentagon to be a matter of concern.³³ Within a matter of weeks, Soviet and Romanian officials uncovered the operation. The two American operatives on the ground, an Army major and lieutenant, along with the former Romanian intelligence officer who was assisting them, fled the country. In the ensuing crackdown, all members of the legacy OSS network were arrested, charged with treason, and imprisoned.³⁴

Yugoslavia, 1948–1949	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 3 months (Late 1948 to January 1949)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

Kremlinologist and political warfare advocate George Kennan, on 27 September 1947, sent a concept paper to James Forrestal, the nation’s first secretary of defense, describing the need for a “guerrilla warfare corps.”³⁵

This, Kennan argued, would provide a means for the USG to “fight fire with fire,” thereby enhancing the nation’s security. Secretary Forrestal agreed.³⁶

The newly organized National Security Council (NSC) issued Directive 10/2 on 18 June 1948, officially launching a worldwide campaign of anti-Soviet covert operations. As executive agent for the mission, the OPC was established. While the OPC was to reside within the CIA, it was to take direction from the State and Defense Departments. Among the first requirements expressed by the Pentagon was the capability of organizing and supporting “guerrilla movements ... underground armies ... sabotage and assassination.”³⁷

OSS veteran Frank Wisner was appointed by the State Department to head the OPC, which was charged with nothing less than liberating the countries of Eastern Europe from communist control and rolling the border of the Soviet empire back to Russia’s pre-war frontier. In late 1948, as in Romania two years earlier, OPC officials hoped to rekindle resistance within Yugoslavia by reestablishing old contacts and by dropping a small number of Yugoslavian refugees who had been anti-communist Chetnik resistance fighters during World War II. These agents were to determine if anti-communist resistance could be revived.³⁸

The former Chetnik guerrillas fell into the hands of authorities, who had been awaiting their arrival on the drop zone. When the uninformed U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, Cavendish Cannon, learned of the incident from unofficial sources, he proceeded to “lambaste the State Department for undermining the subtle policy of encouraging Tito” in his rift with Moscow.³⁹

USSR, 1948–1954	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 71 months (Fall 1948 to September 1954)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

During this period, the United States conducted low-level covert paramilitary operations within the Soviet Union to harass and destabilize the

communist government. It was hoped that agents trained and infiltrated into the USSR could contact existing resistance groups, and even encourage and stimulate further internal dissension and resistance.⁴⁰

The Ukraine

Following the war, tens of thousands of displaced persons from Central and Eastern Europe filled camps located in the West. Defectors continued to arrive in the West for several years. According to one prominent national security historian, as many as 500 per month continued to arrive as late as 1951.⁴¹ The CIA's OPC, predecessor of the Directorate of Operations, began a recruitment effort to find operatives who could be trained as intelligence collectors and radio operators and parachuted into the USSR. The displaced persons camps in Western Europe became the Agency's premier recruiting source.⁴²

In the fall of 1948, during the earliest tense years of the Cold War—when many in government believed that war between the Soviet Union and the West could erupt at any time—two men escaped from the Ukraine and made their way westward and out of Soviet territory. They proved to be couriers, sent by the leaders of a resistance group in the Carpathian Mountains that was committed to gaining independence for the Ukraine, and they intended to make contact with American officials and solicit support for the cause of Ukrainian resistance.⁴³ OPC planners learned of several promising anti-communist resistance movements active in the Ukraine. There were the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the rival National Labor Alliance.⁴⁴ A cell in Munich claimed to politically represent a group called the Supreme Council for the Liberation of the Ukraine.⁴⁵

Recruiters from the OPC decided to enlist the two Ukrainian couriers and prepare them to become the first team of agents to be parachuted into the USSR. The men underwent 10 months of intense training in intelligence collection and radio procedures. The resistance group they represented was assigned the code name NIGHTINGALE.

Air operations by the Agency into Eastern Europe and the USSR were supported by the U.S. Ninth Air Force in West Germany. On 5 September 1949 the men were flown from an airfield in the American sector of West Germany in an unmarked C-47 flown by an East European crew with no apparent ties to the USG. Upon crossing from Polish to Soviet airspace, the aircraft was detected by Soviet radar but there was no attempt to intercept

it. The plane continued to the Ukraine, where the two men jumped. American controllers in West Germany received a radio message four days later indicating that they had arrived safely,⁴⁶ but it is doubtful that the message was sent by the Ukrainian agents, who, by most accounts, were both killed shortly after landing.⁴⁷

Over the next five years the agency dropped dozens more, nearly all ending up in the hands of the Soviets, who used them to radio for more men and supplies to be dropped and then killed them. After five years of failed missions, the agency called a halt to the project. The CIA's history of the operation later admitted that "the Agency's effort to penetrate the Iron Curtain using Ukrainian agents was ill-fated and tragic."⁴⁸

The Baltics

The next area within the USSR for OPC to attempt penetration was the Baltic States region of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The initial American effort was in support of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), which had begun picking up partisans from the Baltic countries in 1948. These men were taken back to England for training, after which the British planned to put them ashore in their homelands from modified German World War II E-boats—a craft somewhat similar to American Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats. These operations were penetrated by the Soviet Secret Service, the *Ministerstvo gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti*, or Ministry of State Security (MGB), from the very beginning.⁴⁹

Organized resistance within the Baltic States—including that by the famed Forest Brothers—essentially ceased by 1950. It ended in Latvia with a final skirmish in February 1950. Some small, isolated, bands of guerrillas still existed in Estonia and Lithuania, but they had become essentially inactive.

The United States began its involvement in Baltic operations by funding the E-boat operations in exchange for intelligence gathered by the operatives placed ashore. The CIA began to harbor doubts about the SIS agents by the summer of 1950 and decided to begin infiltrating its own partisan operatives. The first team of three departed Wiesbaden, West Germany, in a C-47 piloted by two Czech fliers, both Royal Air Force (RAF) veterans. The agents successfully parachuted undetected into Lithuania and became involved in some limited guerrilla operations. A second team was dropped in April 1951, but most of the men were soon captured and a radio operator was forced to send messages to the Munich CIA station under MGB control.

Additional teams were dropped as the operations continued into the fall of 1954, at which time both the British and Americans halted further operations when they appeared to be of no value.⁵⁰

Moldavia (today the Republic of Moldova)

The Soviet news agency Tass reported the arrival by parachute of two U.S. agents into the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic in August 1951. Both men were captured shortly after landing.⁵¹

Again, as with all the other operations attempted behind the Iron Curtain, efforts by the OPC proved woefully unsuccessful, and, in most cases, the agents inserted into denied territory never returned.⁵² Several factors contributed to the repeated failures, but probably the most significant was the lack of understanding by the OPC of the extensive and efficient counter-intelligence and security measures employed in these countries. A network of secret government informants lived and worked among the people for years. OPC planners, according to one analyst, “knew so little about resistance forces and the security apparatuses of various targeted regimes that their plans, even if they had been well implemented, stood little chance of success.”⁵³

Added to the security challenge was the fact that no American or British operatives were inserted into denied territory, for the obvious reason that their capture would clearly show U.S. or British involvement. When agents were parachuted in or landed by boat, few arms or supplies accompanied them because the teams first had to make contact with resistance groups. The resistance fighters viewed the lack of American or British representatives and the scant material support as a lack of commitment on the part of the Western powers.

Because of the communist infiltration of the displaced persons camps that served as the recruiting pool for operatives, and because of the strength and efficiency of the communist security apparatus, the unfortunate agents were nearly always captured upon landing or shortly thereafter. The CIA ceased all operations involving the insertion of agents into the USSR in 1954.⁵⁴

Romania, 1949–1953	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 50 months (Spring 1949 to a least June 1953)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

As in other Eastern European countries, OPC also conducted operations aimed at destabilizing the communist government of Romania in the early years of the Cold War.

General Nicolae Rădescu, Romania's last noncommunist leader, a conservative army officer who served as chief of the Romanian general staff in 1944 and as prime minister from 1944 to 1945, considered ways to oppose the communist regime then running the country. Rădescu was living in the United States, where he and other exiled political figures from Romania formed the Romanian National Committee, an anti-communist organization that claimed to serve as the country's government-in-exile. The committee had the support of former King Mihai I, who had abdicated the Romanian throne in 1947.

By May 1948, General Rădescu viewed the 20,000 Romanian refugees of military age scattered throughout Germany and Austria as a source for recruitment of underground guerrilla warfare operatives. The OPC would take full advantage of the displaced person camps for recruiting operatives, and there was no shortage of resistance elements within the country. Intelligence reporting in the spring of 1949 indicated that surviving resistance groups of nationalist partisans—locally they were called the *haiduci*—were holding out in the hills of Transylvania, in central Romania. Many of the groups were led by former army officers. Romanian security forces had made several unsuccessful attempts to roust them. According to reports, the partisans were lightly armed and probably held only enough ammunition for defensive purposes. Clothing and medical supplies were in short supply, although local communities supported the groups as best they could, providing shelter, food, and information.

The CIA’s station chief in Bucharest assisted OPC by making discreet contact with the partisans and reported to Washington that at least 11 groups existed with a combined strength of perhaps 30,000 men. They were scattered from the Carpathian Mountains in the north to northern Moldavia in the east and to the lowlands of the Danube and Prut Rivers farther south. The Bucharest station was able to provide funds and radio equipment to the groups. Positioned as they were, the partisans served as an important intelligence network capable of reporting on Soviet and Romanian troop movements that might indicate preparations for a push into Western Europe. In such an event, they would also be in position and capable of harassing or interdicting such forces.⁵⁵

Beginning in 1949, OPC recruited Romanian refugees and trained them in camps in France, Italy, and Greece. They were formed into small teams and parachuted into the Carpathian Mountains with a mission of organizing resistance teams capable of industrial sabotage and running clandestine transportation networks. Infiltrating the teams “blind,” without pre-established contacts on the ground to receive them, however, resulted in the capture of the agents. OPC persisted, continuing to occasionally drop other teams into the country. This continued into the early 1950s. Nearly all of the agents dropped were captured on the drop zone and later executed or were killed in ensuing firefights. The last known anti-communist resistance fighter active in Romania was killed in the Banat Mountains in 1962. The overall goal of the resistance fighters and the American OPC—to stimulate widespread insurrection against the state—was never realized.

Poland, 1950–1952	
Duration of U.S. Support	25 months (November 1950 to December 1952)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

In collaboration with the British SIS, the CIA trained personnel and inserted them into Poland in the early 1950s with the purpose of destabilizing the ruling communist government.

The Polish anti-communist resistance group known as the Home Army was disbanded at the end of World War II, with most of its members shipped off to Siberia by the Soviets. During the summer of 1945, a Polish army colonel formed a new resistance movement using networks developed by the Home Army. The movement was called Freedom and Independence, or WIN, and communist government authorities estimated that the organization had 80,000 followers by the end of the year.⁵⁶

A large majority of these resistance members, however, surrendered to authorities during an amnesty period in February and March 1947, resulting in the destruction of WIN as a viable movement. Some WIN members made it out of Poland and found their way to London, Washington, and Paris, where they worked to convince intelligence officials that WIN was being rebuilt and would be in need of support. SIS began recruiting agents from Polish exiles, many of them army veterans, and began training them for operations inside Poland.

The Western powers were particularly interested in developing a resistance potential in Poland because fears of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe abounded and the Soviet lines of communication mostly ran through Poland. The British began a program called BROADWAY in 1947, seeking to parachute agents into Poland to link up with WIN. The CIA began formal collaboration with the BROADWAY program in London in November 1950. The agency's OPC began parachuting agents, arms, explosives, and funds to WIN, unaware that the resistance organization was by now dead due to communist counterintelligence successes.

For two years, deception operations on the part of Polish communists continued to neutralize U.S. operations, with most agents being captured shortly after landing. Eventually, a BROADWAY agent escaped Poland and was able to alert the Americans that they had been tricked. The CIA completely closed down the program in December 1952.⁵⁷ In the judgment of historian Richard Shultz, Poland quite simply represented another misadventure in what was becoming a pattern of failure.⁵⁸

Poland, 1981–1989	
Duration of U.S. Support	90 months (December 1981 to June 1989)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Perhaps the most unusual U.S. STR experience, and one of the most successful, was the assistance provided to the Solidarity (Solidarność) movement in Poland from 1981 to 1989. The support program had the dual purpose of promoting democracy in Poland and undermining Soviet authority in its most important satellite country. Carried out simultaneously with the operation in support of the mujahideen in Afghanistan, it was part of a two-front conflict that had history-changing results. For these two resistance campaigns—one a nonviolent civil resistance movement and the other a violent armed resistance—played an unmistakably key role in bringing about the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Much of what transpired in Poland during the 1980s, it has been argued, began with a visit by Pope John Paul II to that country, his homeland, in June 1979. In defiance of the communist system, the Pope directly attacked the notion of the Polish people’s devotion to the state superseding their faith.⁵⁹ Soviet officials, not wanting to incur international censure by silencing the Pope, were powerless to stop what was happening. The Pope’s visit spurred a reawakening of Catholicism among the people of Poland, and eventually kindled the spirit of resistance to communist oppression.

The Solidarity movement was born when Lech Walesa (Wałęsa), a devout Catholic, led 17,000 workers at the Lenin Shipyards on strike on 14 August 1980.⁶⁰ Although the unrest and strikes in Poland began as a protest concerning an increase in the price of meat and its availability, the range of demands expanded in the following weeks until they began to threaten “not only the economic stability of Poland, but also its political stability.”⁶¹ Demands grew to include better living conditions and political reforms.

The labor unrest in Poland put the Soviets in a difficult position. Accommodating the changes demanded by the workers endangered the entire East European communist system. A military intervention by the Soviets, on the

other hand, would severely damage U.S.-Soviet relations and invite international condemnation. As of 20 August 1980, Moscow appeared to be waiting to see if Polish leader Edward Gierek could resolve the situation.⁶²

Strikes spread throughout the country over the following week. At the end of August, Polish officials signed the Gdańsk Agreement, legalizing Solidarity as communist Eastern Europe's first independent trade union. The Soviets, fearful of news of these events reaching their own population, greatly stepped up jamming of radio transmissions in the Russian language by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Voice of America, and Deutsche Welle.⁶³ Another developing dynamic was the relationship between the workers and the intellectuals of Poland. Until now, the workers focused on grievances such as meat prices while the intellectuals agitated for civil rights. By late August 1980, for the first time, the two groups were forming an alliance.⁶⁴

CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner alerted President Jimmy Carter on 19 September 1980 that Soviet military activity indicated a preparation for intervention. The Soviet leadership would likely give the new Polish leader, Stanislaw Kania, some time to regain control of the situation, but the Soviets might employ military force, if necessary, just as they had in Hungary in 1956 and again in Czechoslovakia in 1968, to ensure that Poland's status as a Warsaw Pact partner was not jeopardized. All this time, other East European countries were watching nervously from the sidelines. Soviet leaders considered the Polish movement to be potentially contagious in that it had proven that such working-class movements could be effective in forcing concessions from a communist government. The threat could possibly even spread to the Soviet Union itself. It thereby posed a threat to the entire communist system and Soviet control over its satellites.⁶⁵

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In early December, President Carter sent a Hotline message to Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, warning him that a Soviet invasion of Poland would result in grave consequences for U.S.-Soviet relations. At the same time, the president sent messages to the leaders of France, Germany, China, and India, asking them to do likewise. Many years later, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of their archives, researchers learned that the Soviets had, in fact, planned to invade Poland on or around

5 December 1980. Soviet leaders issued orders at 6:00 p.m. on 5 December cancelling the invasion. President Carter's message had effectively alerted Soviet leaders of the potential political cost of intervention. Now, the CIA began to contemplate ways in which the dissident Poles might be supported.⁶⁶

Future CIA director and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates became the National Intelligence Officer for the USSR and Eastern Europe on 24 November 1981. In his first analysis of the Polish situation, Gates described it as "intolerable to the Soviet Union" and that the Solidarity movement "had reached a point where they struck at the foundations of communist power in Poland, the security forces."⁶⁷ The Polish leadership was facing a very serious challenge to its authority. Solidarity had made six political demands on the government and threatened widespread strikes if these demands were not met by noon on 27 November. With the threat of Soviet intervention, the Polish government was unlikely to give in to the demands.

When General Wojciech Jaruzelski initiated martial law on 13 December 1981, thousands of Solidarity leaders, including Walesa, were rounded up and detained by Polish security forces. Many were formally charged with crimes such as treason and subversion, and at least nine members were killed. Thousands more were able to avoid arrest and sought protection in churches or simply went underground. The government outlawed the Solidarity movement, which now had some 10 million followers.⁶⁸ Widespread beatings and arrests of citizens followed. Solidarity immediately went underground. Printing equipment used in the preparation of pro-Solidarity propaganda was seized by the government.

Lech Walesa traveled to Rome and met with the Pope in 1981; Reagan administration officials began doing so as well. In a meeting arranged through the CIA's station chief in Rome, CIA Director William Casey met with Cardinal Casaroli, the Vatican's foreign minister, in 1981.⁶⁹ President Reagan met one-on-one with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican Library on 7 June 1982. The two men talked at length about Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe and particularly about the situation in Poland. The most important and far-reaching agreement made during the meeting was that there was a need for "a clandestine campaign to hasten the dissolution of the communist empire."⁷⁰ This ambitious goal, the men agreed, would begin with actions intended to keep the Solidarity movement alive, destabilize the Polish government, and eventually enable its extrication from the Soviet orbit.

United States Secretary of State Alexander Haig dispatched Ambassador at Large Vernon Walters to Rome to meet with his Vatican counterpart, Cardinal Casaroli, and with the Pope. All agreed that the Polish government had to be pressured to change its behavior and that actions were needed to isolate Poland within the international community. Meanwhile, the U.S. and Vatican approach would be to continue support to the now underground movement. The Reagan administration relied heavily on information provided by the Vatican's extensive network, including the Pope's envoys to Poland.⁷¹

Vernon Walters reportedly met with the Pope on at least a dozen occasions, serving as a conduit for messages between President Reagan and the Pope, and CIA director Casey routinely flew to Rome to meet and exchange information with the Pope. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Pio Laghi, the Vatican's Apostolic Delegate and later Pro Nuncio to the United States, made frequent visits to the White House to confer with National Security Advisor William Clark or with the president himself.⁷²

Both the Reagan administration and the Vatican believed that a free, democratic Poland would encourage similar developments in other Eastern European countries and would seriously undermine Soviet authority and influence. But it all depended firstly on keeping the Solidarity movement alive, and the White House initiated a covert action for that purpose. The covert operation's objective was two-fold: to support the Polish Solidarity Trade Union in its fight for reforms and to undermine the oppressive oversight of the Polish government by the Soviet Union. It very much supported the concept of the rollback of communism.

Truly a whole-of-government effort, U.S. support to Solidarity "was a blend of covert and overt, public policy and secret alliances."⁷³ Congress was not only aware of the covert aid being provided to Solidarity; they enthusiastically supported it. The effort also enjoyed bipartisan support. Polish-born Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had served as President Carter's national security advisor, now served in a consulting role to CIA Director Casey.

The CIA, largely due to the "gutting" of the Clandestine Service by CIA Director Turner, had few remaining contacts in Eastern Europe and almost none in Poland itself. By late January 1982, however, the Vatican was proving helpful by providing critically important information and in coordinating contacts inside Poland. The agency benefitted greatly from tapping into the Vatican's vast network throughout Eastern Europe.⁷⁴

The CIA program got underway in late 1982.⁷⁵ In addition to money for the payment of fines and legal assistance for Solidarity leaders brought into court, the United States provided advice, food, clothing, and tons of other nonlethal support, primarily in the form of communications equipment: computers and word processors, printing presses and ink, fax machines and copiers, telephones and telex machines, shortwave radios, transmitters, video cameras, and other office equipment. Equipment bound for Solidarity usually arrived at the Polish port of Gdansk by ship from Denmark and Sweden, packed in mislabeled crates. Dockworkers unloaded the crates, which were then separated from other cargo by the shipyard manager before Polish authorities were able to complete their inspections. The crates were then transported by truckers who were all secretly working in support of Solidarity.⁷⁶ Support provided to Solidarity by the USG grew from \$2 million to \$8 million during the mid-1980s.

Additional assistance came from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)—the largest federation of unions in the United States—with the organization’s president, Lane Kirkland, and his aide, meeting with White House officials from time to time to advise the administration on the preparation of propaganda materials, Solidarity organizational assistance requirements, and procedures for the delivery of supplies to Solidarity.⁷⁷

To reach the people of Eastern Europe, and as a means of clandestinely communicating with Solidarity leaders through coded messages, the Reagan administration made greater use of public broadcasting programs such as Radio Liberty, Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe (RFE). In March 1981, it was estimated that at least two-thirds of the adult population of Poland, some 16 million people, regularly listened to RFE during crises such as the ongoing strikes. RFE—their only Western source of news—was broadcast for ten minutes, every hour on the hour.⁷⁸ “Even the poorest farmers in poor southeastern Poland,” claimed a 12 February 1981 State Department cable, “are RFE listeners.”⁷⁹ In December 1981, RFE began a new service, a “radio bridge,” which allowed Poles in the West to send messages to relatives in Poland. Those in the West could call a message into the RFE broadcast station, which then included it in a daily two-hour radio broadcast. The broadcasts reached an estimated 48 million East European listeners.⁸⁰ RFE broadcasted daily to five East European countries in six languages. Its sister

service, Radio Liberty, broadcast in Russian to the Soviet Union. The stations, which began operating in 1950, are funded by the U.S. Congress.⁸¹

In addition to the public broadcasting programs, clandestinely provided transmitters allowed Solidarity to boldly interrupt state-run radio and television programs with audio and visual messages, “including calls for strikes and demonstrations.”⁸² Largely as a result of U.S. aid, Solidarity challenged state-controlled media by publishing underground newspapers and distributing mimeographed bulletins in nearly every Polish city and town. By one account, underground periodicals numbered over 400 with an estimated circulation of more than 30,000.⁸³

On 2 September 1982, the White House released National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 54, “United States Policy Toward Eastern Europe,” classified Secret at the time. In the document, President Reagan announced that he had determined that “the primary long-term U.S. goal in Eastern Europe is to loosen the Soviet hold on the region and thereby facilitate its eventual reintegration into the European community of nations.”⁸⁴

Solidarity, led by Lech Walesa, eventually included millions of members. Support from the Vatican, the United States, and others, along with diplomatic efforts and several notes of warning from President Reagan to Soviet President Brezhnev not to intervene, eventually had the desired result. Martial law was lifted in July 1983, following another visit by the Pope. In October of that year, Walesa received the Nobel Peace Prize. Round Table Talks, held in early 1989, resulted in a compromise in which the government agreed to hold free elections. On 4 June, Solidarity emerged as the winner by a large margin.

That election victory began a historic chain of events. Opposition to communism spread throughout Eastern Europe, with authoritarian governments being overthrown in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria by year’s end. Walesa became president of Poland in December 1990. Dissolution of the Warsaw Pact came in July 1991, and the Soviet Union completed its disintegration in December of that year.

B. Detaining, Diverting, or Distractive Disruption

This category of disruptive STR refers to the strategic objective of tying down enemy forces to prevent their movement to other fronts or battle spaces. Also

included are UW or paramilitary operations aimed at diverting resources or distracting attention from other areas or engagements.

Greece, 1943–1944	
Duration of U.S. Support	22 months (February 1943 to December 1944)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Main effort UW (Mediterranean Theater of Operations)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Support to resistance forces in the Balkans was the manifestation of an economy of force strategy for that region. Partisans, without the benefit of friendly nearby conventional forces, could attack German and Italian lines of communication, sabotage supply dumps, and tie down large numbers of enemy forces, thus preventing their employment on more decisive fronts.⁸⁵ OSS faced two major challenges in this region, aside from the German and Italian occupation forces. First was the dominant role played by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), who had lead responsibility for UW operations in this part of the world in accordance with a June 1942 agreement between SOE and OSS. This meant that all operations conducted by the OSS Special Operations Branch had to be under SOE direction. This resulted in some ridiculous consequences. The Greek Operational Group (OG) of the OSS was formed from army personnel recruited out of Greek-American communities in order to provide a force fluent in the language and familiar with local customs. SOE leaders, however, prohibited OG members from conversing with the local population in Greek because the SOE officers were unable to understand the conversation. The second challenge OSS faced was a typical feature of all Axis-occupied Balkan countries—Greece, Yugoslavia, and Albania—and one that only complicated the Allied UW effort. Resistance elements in this region were fighting two wars—one the war against the occupying Axis force, the other a civil war between rival factions, typically nationalist or communist.

The Greek army capitulated to the invading Germans in April 1941. A British expeditionary force sent to support the Greeks pulled out within a

month and took the Greek monarch, King George II, with it. As in Albania and Yugoslavia, two main resistance groups emerged—one communist, the other republican—engaged in fighting one another while simultaneously battling the Germans.⁸⁶

In keeping with the June 1942 agreement, the British had the lead for special operations in the eastern Mediterranean, so all OSS Special Operations Branch and OG Branch elements operating within Greece did so under SOE leadership. Operations conducted by SOE and OSS sought to divert, interdict, and tie down German occupation forces, thus preventing their redeployment elsewhere.⁸⁷

Special Operations (SO) Branch operatives began arriving in Greece in March 1943 and by October were providing arms to the communist Greek People's Liberation Army (known by its Greek initials ELAS), the armed branch of the Greek Resistance movement (Greek initials EAM), the country's largest and strongest resistance movement. They also supported the socialist National Republican Greek League (EDES) group.⁸⁸ By 1944, ELAS had a strength of 20,000 regulars and 10,000 reserves, while EDES could field only 6,000 regulars and 4,000 reserves.⁸⁹ But OSS support was not limited to arming and training *Andartes*, as the local partisans were known. In December 1943, an OSS dental officer parachuted into Greece. In the ensuing months he established a clandestine hospital whose international staff included Americans, Russians, Greeks, and Italians.⁹⁰

In February 1944, OSS operatives succeeded in brokering an important agreement between EAM and EDES, ending for a time the internecine fighting between the two and assigning specific combat areas to each group to focus their efforts on operations against the Germans.

Regular aerial resupply operations by U.S. Army Air Force C-47s began in early March 1944. In addition to arms and other supplies, these aircraft also dropped leaflets and additional operators.⁹¹

OSS OG sections operated in Greece between January and October 1944, infiltrating by sea and air to harass German forces, attack German headquarters, interdict trains and truck convoys, and destroy rail lines and bridges.⁹² The Greek OG had been recruited and trained in the United States beginning in February 1943. The primary objective of these operations was to impede the egress of German units from Greece, thereby preventing their deployment to more critical areas of Western Europe and making their withdrawal

as costly as possible. Operations began in earnest in April and by July there were eight OG teams deployed throughout the country.⁹³

German forces withdrew from Greece between late August and early November 1944. OSS elements continued to operate in Greece until December, when civil war broke out between rival resistance groups. In all, 25 SO Branch agents and 174 Greek OG personnel deployed to Greece. They facilitated the operations of 40,000 *Andartes*.⁹⁴ A total of 76 operations were executed; 349 enemy troops were known to be killed and another 196 wounded; an additional 1,794 were believed to have been killed or wounded; 15 bridges were demolished; six miles of railroad line were blown; 14 trains were ambushed; and 61 trucks were destroyed.⁹⁵

Yugoslavia, 1943–1944	
Duration of U.S. Support	16 months (August 1943 to December 1944)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Main effort UW (Mediterranean Theater of Operations)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

German forces assaulted Yugoslavia in April 1941, compelling the Yugoslav military to surrender after two weeks. Seventeen-year-old King Peter II, who had come to power as the result of a military *coup d'état* just three weeks earlier, fled the country to establish a government-in-exile.

By June, two major resistance groups had emerged. First was a nationalist group, the Chetniks (Četniks), under Yugoslav General Staff officer Colonel Dragoljub (Draza) Mihailović, fighting to restore the monarchy. Among the Western Allies, Mihailović gained early prominence. Less well known until 1943 was Josip Broz (Tito), communist leader of a group called the Partisans. The Chetniks and the Partisans fought a fierce civil war throughout the war. In time, the Allies discovered Mihailović to be the more cautious of the two and a man known to collaborate with the occupiers if doing so crippled the Partisans. Tito, on the other hand, became an aggressive leader, dedicated to ridding his country of the occupying Germans and Italians and establishing

a Marxist-Leninist government. By 1942, both factions had declared the other to be its principal enemy, followed by the German and Italian occupiers.⁹⁶

Facing these resistance groups was an occupation force of 15 Reichswehr divisions, augmented by some 100,000 indigenous troops. British and American leaders in Italy, engaging 26 German divisions in that country, welcomed any resistance activity that would tie down those divisions in Yugoslavia.⁹⁷

By May 1943, the British had become disenchanted with the Chetniks and their reluctance to fight the Germans. By summer, the British began shifting support from the Chetniks to the Partisans with airdrops to Tito's forces beginning in June. In September, Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent a mission under Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean to Yugoslavia to make contact with Tito's forces and assess their fighting ability. The OSS, meanwhile, sent SO officers to the headquarters of both Mihailović and Tito. At least initially, Maclean would command all SOE and OSS forces deployed to Yugoslavia.⁹⁸

SOE-OSS relations were beginning to fray by late 1943, and by year's end General Donovan had decided that OSS would run its own independent operations in Yugoslavia.⁹⁹ On 18 August 1944, all OSS SO personnel in Partisan-held Yugoslavia were reassigned to the new Independent American Military Mission commanded by U.S. Army Colonel Ellery C. Huntington, Jr. This included 11 officers and 10 enlisted men.¹⁰⁰ Operating mostly along the Adriatic shore and on offshore islands, the OSS Yugoslavian OG operated in Yugoslavia between January and October 1944.¹⁰¹

After Allied forces landed in Italy, the infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply of SOE and OSS elements in Yugoslavia, Greece, and Albania was accomplished mostly by boats belonging to the OSS Maritime Unit (MU). The fleet of 16 MU vessels, called P-Boats—one of them skippered by Hollywood star Sterling Hayden—operated throughout the Adriatic from a location in southeast Italy.¹⁰² The OSS established a base at Bari, Italy, from which these boats operated. Up to January 1944, American shipping from Italy of supplies provided by the British amounted to 155 ships delivering 11,637 tons—an amount that facilitated the activation of 30,000 guerrillas.¹⁰³ On return trips to Italy, the boats often carried wounded guerrilla fighters for hospitalization. In late August 1944 alone, “in less than 24 hours, Allied transports evacuated 1,059 wounded Partisans and 19 other personnel.”¹⁰⁴ In a letter from Marshal Tito to U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, the Partisan leader thanked the president for the material support to his Army of National Liberation.¹⁰⁵

By mid-1944, Josip Broz Tito led a Partisan force of 200,000.¹⁰⁶ An intensive German offensive aimed at destroying Tito's forces, launched in late May 1944, failed in that objective, but "the cost to the Partisans had been high. The 1st and 6th Partisan Divisions, which bore the brunt of the fighting, suffered some 6,000 casualties."¹⁰⁷ Yet Tito's influence and force continued to grow and by the fall of 1944 his Partisans numbered more than 300,000.¹⁰⁸

Meanwhile, a guerrilla force operating in northern Yugoslavia and southern Austria, supported by an OSS team consisting of two U.S. Army officers and a radio operator and working with explosives and other supplies received by parachute drop, was able to effectively shut down the main double-track rail line through the area. This closed a vital line of communication needed for supplying German forces in the Balkans, southern Russia, and north-eastern Italy for periods of up to five months.¹⁰⁹

The U.S. Army Air Force issued "Safe Area" maps to its pilots, showing those areas under Partisan control to which the men should move once on the ground.¹¹⁰ OSS operatives on the ground organized escape routes for downed aircrews. Historian Dušan Biber later recorded that "from August 9, 1944, until December 27, 1944, the Americans evacuated 432 American airmen from Chetnik territory and more than 2,000 Allied airmen from the territory under the control of Tito's Partisans."¹¹¹

Just prior to the Red Army's arrival to aid Tito in his liberation of Belgrade on 20 October 1944, Tito's chief of staff issued an order freezing American and British officers in place at Partisan headquarters. With victory in sight and no longer in need of Allied support, the Western Allies were being squeezed out of the picture. American and British officers with Partisan units in the countryside experienced a growing hostility on the part of Tito's forces.¹¹² General Mihailović was captured by Tito's forces in March 1946, was tried in June for collaboration with the Germans, and was executed on 17 July 1946.¹¹³

"The Allies," wrote a senior OSS officer serving in Yugoslavia, "still regarded the Partisans as a band of irregulars who had made a useful but peripheral contribution in a backwater theater of the war."¹¹⁴ But their contributions were such that Winston Churchill later proclaimed that, "No fewer than 21 German divisions were held in the Balkans by Partisan forces."¹¹⁵

While historians, analysts, and students generally agree that Allied support to the Yugoslav resistance was highly successful, despite Tito's decision to side with the Soviets over the Western Allies in the end, they differ in the

details. By one account, the Partisans “effectively fixed in place 35 German and Italian divisions, consisting of roughly 660,000 soldiers in the western Balkan region during 1941–1945,”¹¹⁶ preventing their redeployment and use in other theaters. According to another study, Partisan and Chetnik forces combined “tied up over 700,000 Germans and partnered Axis forces.”¹¹⁷ The authors of a 2014 article wrote that SOE and OSS combined “achieved this effect with never more than 100 Allied personnel on the ground in the denied area. The number of Axis personnel killed in the Balkans is estimated at 450,000. This extremely favorable force ratio and its associated effects commend UW as a low-cost, high-reward method of warfare.”¹¹⁸

One assessment best summed up how successful an independent, main effort UW operation could be. “The Yugoslav experience showcased that a guerrilla war, managed and directed by trained advisors, could achieve great strategic ends without conventional military commitment and limited resourcing.”¹¹⁹

Albania, 1943–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	28 months (May 1943 to September 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Main effort UW (Mediterranean Theater of Operations)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

From November 1943 to February 1945, the United States and Britain conducted a little-known UW operation in Albania that, due to the size of the country and its population, paled in comparison to operations carried out in support of the major Allied conventional force campaigns elsewhere. In all, the OSS employed no more than around three dozen officers and men in occupied Albania.¹²⁰ The operation had three objectives: disrupt enemy operations in such a way as to tie up several German divisions in and around Albania, thus preventing their use in Italy or elsewhere; encourage the Germans to consider the possibility of an Allied invasion in the area; and rescue any downed Allied airmen resulting from bomber strikes on the Romanian oil fields. Remarkably, the operation continued over a period of two years

despite the fact that the resistance leader, Enver Hoxha, “disliked Americans” and “hated the British.”¹²¹ He likely tolerated the Americans because of their ability to call in airstrikes and provide funds.

Italy had invaded and occupied Albania in April 1940. Then, when Italy switched to the side of the Allies in September 1943, several German divisions moved in to protect lines of communication.¹²² Resistance by several groups began immediately upon occupation by German forces.

In keeping with the Western Allies’ policy of supporting anyone willing to fight Nazi Germany, and particularly those most capable of doing so, in Albania the OSS chose to work with communist partisans led by Enver Hoxha. General Hoxha’s partisan group, the communist Provisional Peoples’ Government (*Lëvizja Nacional-Çlirimtare*), or LNC, was about 20,000 strong.¹²³ As was the case elsewhere, OSS objectives in Albania did not align exactly with Hoxha’s objectives. The Western Allies were solely interested in defeating the Germans. Hoxha, on the other hand, in addition to fighting the Germans, was simultaneously fighting a civil war against two rival factions—all competing to determine Albania’s post-war form of government. Collaborating with the Germans while fighting Hoxha, the Balli Kombëtar (National Front), or BK, was an anti-communist nationalist organization. The third faction, the Legality Party (Legality Party) was a group that sought the return of exiled King Amhed Zog to power.¹²⁴

The OSS, along with Britain’s SOE, supplied Hoxha’s partisans with weapons and food, but they also provided advisors and shared intelligence. Although the American teams sent to Albania were from the Secret Intelligence (SI) Branch of OSS, rather than the SO Branch or the OGs, the SI operators did not confine their activities to gathering and reporting intelligence. In June 1942, General Donovan entered into an agreement with

In June 1942, General Donovan entered into an agreement with the British that divided the world into areas where either OSS or SOE would have the lead in special operations (as UW was then known).

the British that divided the world into areas where either OSS or SOE would have the lead in special operations (as UW was then known). Both Allies were free to conduct intelligence operations anywhere. In accordance with the agreement, all special operations carried out in the Balkans were to be directed and led

by British officers. General Donovan sometimes skirted this arrangement

by allowing his SI teams to engage in limited special operations activities. In Albania, at times, SI teams fought alongside the partisans and called in airstrikes in support of Hoxha. Primarily, though, the mission of the SI teams was to maintain liaison with the resistance and monitor the movement and operations of German divisions in Albania. If those divisions were not kept busy fighting the resistance, the Allies feared, they might be sent as reinforcements to Italy.

OSS began inserting teams along the Albanian coast in mid-November 1943 to support Hoxha's movement. In all, five SI teams were sent to Albania from November 1943 through Victory in Europe (V-E) Day,¹²⁵ each with the missions of gathering intelligence, harassing German forces, and arranging for the recovery of downed aircrews.

At least one OSS team also had an advisory assistance or liaison mission. Led by Army Captain Thomas E. Stefan, the team entered Albania in early April 1944 with the mission of joining Hoxha's partisan headquarters staff and helping the difficult and reclusive communist leader in his fight against the Germans. The son of Albanian immigrants, Stefan grew up in New Hampshire and spoke the same Albanian dialect as Hoxha. Over a period of weeks, he developed a close relationship with the contentious resistance leader.¹²⁶

While most of the OSS teams were extracted when German anti-partisan operations were stepped up, Captain Stefan's team remained with Hoxha. On 28 November 1944, when partisan forces celebrated the capture of the country's capital city of Tirana, Stefan marched with Enver Hoxha in the victory parade.¹²⁷ According to author Peter Lucas, "The people of Tirana, generally sympathetic to the Balli Kombëtar, or even to King Zog, were in a state of shock. They found it hard to believe that these men, this ragtag army, these Communists had been able to defeat the Balli, and force the Germans to abandon Tirana."¹²⁸ Reportedly, Hoxha's victory speech was filled with praise for the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, "neither of which had contributed anything to the Partisans' victory, but barely mentioned—let alone thanked—either Great Britain or the United States, which had."¹²⁹

In supporting Hoxha's guerrillas, U.S. Army Air Force C-47s flew 301 successful sorties during 1944, dropping 602 tons of supplies to LNC guerrillas. The American planes delivered an additional 172 tons by making 86 landings in Albania. These operations cost the Americans two aircraft and crews.¹³⁰

China, 1951–1953	
Duration of U.S. Support	33 months (February 1951 to November 1953)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Korean War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

An unusual three-approach series of paramilitary operations were carried out against Communist China during the Korean War in a failed attempt to draw Chinese troops and attention away from Korea. The CIA led in carrying out the operations, which had been recommended to the president by Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The first attempt by DOD and the CIA to gain presidential approval for covert paramilitary operations against Communist China came in October 1949, the same month that Mao Tse-tung declared victory in the Chinese Communist Revolution and establishment of the People's Republic of China. President Harry S. Truman, at that time, chose not to pursue the matter. The defeated Nationalist Chinese government fled to the offshore island of Taiwan to form the noncommunist Republic of China.

In the early morning hours of 25 June 1950, communist North Korean forces invaded South Korea, causing the United Nations (UN) to pass a resolution two days later recommending that its member states assist South Korea. Seoul fell to the North Korean People's Army on 28 June. On 30 June, President Truman ordered U.S. forces into action, alongside other United Nations forces, to restore peace and the pre-war border.¹³¹

Having learned of the potential for covert paramilitary operations in Communist China, General J. Lawton Collins, then U.S. Army chief of staff, sent a top secret memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 10 July 1950 recommending that such operations "be conducted in China by the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), to reduce the Chinese communist capabilities to reinforce North Korean forces, to attack Formosa, and to support Viet Minh forces [in Vietnam]."¹³² Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg endorsed the concept for initiating "unconventional warfare in China" on 20 July.¹³³ Four days later, Chairman of the JCS General Omar N.

Bradley, U.S. Army, endorsed the recommendation to Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson.¹³⁴

United States Eighth Army forces crossed the 38th Parallel on 9 October 1950 and continued their attack northward, taking the North Korean capital of Pyongyang ten days later. On 25 October, Communist Chinese forces launched an all-out offensive into North Korea, killing and capturing many UN forces. Seoul fell on 4 January 1951 as UN forces were forced to pull back to a line 40 miles south of the city.

Several discussions at NSC meetings in January 1951 included consideration of what President Truman described as “the possibility of some military action which would harass the Chinese communists and of efforts which could be made to stimulate anti-communist resistance within China itself, including the exploitation of Nationalist capabilities.”¹³⁵ NSC documents listed, among several other courses of action against Communist Chinese aggression, the stimulation of centers of resistance within China, organizing and supporting anticommunist Chinese guerrillas, and to support guerrilla activities in Korea itself.¹³⁶ CIA analysts prepared an assessment of existing and potential resistance elements within China.

Another CIA memorandum, distributed to senior NSC officials on 11 January, claimed that although some level of active resistance could be maintained indefinitely in some areas of China, such resistance posed no danger to the communist regime and might be capable, at most, of diverting some military forces, which was all the JCS was hoping for at the time.¹³⁷ On 17 January, the CIA report recommended that the president approve an operation to furnish immediately “all practicable covert aid to effective anti-communist guerrilla forces in China.”¹³⁸

The agency was not the only source of prodding for President Truman to take action. The president later wrote that General MacArthur had argued all along that the U.S. objective should be “the splitting of the present supporters of Mao Tse-tung and the developing of strengthened resistance movements,” believing that the United States “should be more aggressive than we have been so far at creating stronger dissension within China.”¹³⁹

A National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) published in January described China as an authoritarian state well along in the process of consolidating its power. While it estimated, based on “the slight evidence available,” that there might be as many as 700,000 men engaged in active resistance that included guerrilla warfare, it also spoke of strong police controls, effective

regime controls on the army, and a lack of evidence of any serious cleavages within the government. Resistance elements were judged to constitute no serious threat to the regime. Communist China, according to the NIE, was not only capable of committing more top tier forces to Korea, but also retained the capacity to intervene in Indochina should its Viet Minh client there be seriously threatened. But China was, the report concluded, vulnerable to resistance elements receiving external support.¹⁴⁰

Based, perhaps, on this NIE, President Truman approved an NSC directive calling for covert support to anti-Communist Chinese guerrillas. In complying with this directive, the CIA carried out three unrelated covert paramilitary operations within the People's Republic of China. The first of these was called the Li Mi Project and it involved making use of remnants of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) army which had fled from China's southern Yunnan Province at the time of the 1949 defeat in the revolution. Several sizable elements had crossed the border into Burma and remained encamped there. The strongest of these was a 1,500-man force from the 97th KMT Division under General Li Mi. The general had established the Yunnan Anti-Communist National Salvation Army, gathering in scattered remnants of the KMT army, along with Burmese peasants from the surrounding area, and training them at a remote camp in the mountains. By late 1950, he had a force of around 4,000 troops, but they were poorly equipped.¹⁴¹

The OPC drafted a proposal for an operation to make use of Li Mi's force to attack into Yunnan, hopefully thereby stimulating further resistance among the province's population. CIA Director General Bedell Smith, U.S. Army, strongly opposed the idea and argued that China had more than enough troops to deal with such an incursion while continuing to fight in Korea. President Truman overruled him and directed that the operation proceed.¹⁴²

To equip Li Mi's force with modern weapons, a covert airlift mission called Operation PAPER was initiated to ferry arms and ammunition from Okinawa to Bangkok beginning on 7 February 1951. OSS OG veteran Al Cox was in charge of the overall operation, while OSS Detachment 101 veteran Sherman B. Joost handled the transshipment of arms and ammunition from Bangkok's Don Muang airport to northern Thailand, where the Thai border police arranged for final delivery of the cargo to Li Mi. Airdrops of arms began in March, as American advisors also arrived.¹⁴³

Li Mi's force entered Yunnan in late April or early May 1951, making good initial progress for 60 miles inside China, continually resupplied by air, and linked up with local guerrilla forces. As the force threatened an airfield at Mengsa, Communist Chinese forces reacted effectively and drove the National Salvation Army forces back into Burma with heavy losses. With a force that had by then reached a strength of 12,000, one of Li Mi's subordinates entered China again in July 1952 but proved no more successful. The OPC halted the Li Mi project after the second failed operation.¹⁴⁴

The second covert operation, begun in February 1951, involved pro-Nationalist guerrillas operating in China. While the Taipei government claimed control of a million dissidents on the mainland, the JCS Joint Intelligence Group placed the number at probably around 600,000, still a respectable number. Chiang Kai-shek, though, despite his claims, probably exercised almost no control over them and perhaps less than half of them were considered to be loyal to him. "There is considerable question," read the 17 January NIE, "as to whether the Nationalists could mobilize popular support on the mainland or command the effective cooperation of present guerrilla forces."¹⁴⁵ External support to the guerrillas, judged the JCS Joint Intelligence Group, would likely "accelerate the tempo, increase the combat effectiveness, and widen the area of guerrilla activity."¹⁴⁶

Beginning in March 1951, a very active CIA base in southern Taiwan, headed by former OSS Detachment 101 commander Colonel Raymond W. Peers, U.S. Army, had a 600-person contingent conducting radio and leaflet propaganda operations, guerrilla training and logistical support, and special air operations. Operations were also run from the offshore island of Quemoy. Agency personnel functioned under U.S. Navy cover. For purposes of official deniability, air operations into China were flown in unmarked aircraft flown by civilian pilots. Civil Air Transport (CAT), the CIA proprietary airline that flew covert missions in support of paramilitary operations, later to be renamed Air America, was also headquartered on Taiwan. Further support came from the U.S. Air Force.¹⁴⁷

The first OPC-trained Nationalist Chinese guerrillas, a group of 175, were put ashore on mainland China in September 1951. Their first task was to establish a guerrilla base on the mainland. Soon after being put ashore in China and beginning movement inland, this force was attacked and destroyed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). A second operation with 200 guerrillas from Quemoy met a similar fate. As a result, the decision was

made to abandon large-scale operations. Several fairly successful coastal raids and sabotage missions followed.¹⁴⁸

Despite the string of failed operations, the NSC, in late December, continued to view support to anti-communist guerrilla forces in Communist China as a viable course of action.¹⁴⁹ Parachuting agents deep inside mainland China proved considerably more difficult than landing guerrillas on the coast. The first missions, all tasked with creating intelligence networks or resistance groups, were flown in daylight on 15 and 17 March 1952 to western China. All four agents dropped were lost. Many more missions followed, including into inner and outer Mongolia. Some missions were flown from Clark Air Base in the Philippines.¹⁵⁰

The third and final covert paramilitary program for Communist China, code-named TROPIC, involved support for guerrilla groups that had no ties to Nationalist China. These guerrillas came to be called the “Third Force.”¹⁵¹ Third Force operations were kept secret from Chiang Kai-Shek’s Nationalist government. An area of particularly active support comprised the Manchurian provinces of Liaoning and Kirin (Jilin), both adjacent to North Korea. The plan called for dropping trained guerrillas into Manchuria to recruit local dissidents. Additional tasks included gathering and transmitting intelligence and arranging the recovery of downed American aircrews. The guerrillas would be resupplied by airdrops.¹⁵²

Recruiting of Third Force guerrillas got underway in Hong Kong in 1951, and those selected were taken to the OPC training complex on Saipan, where they underwent training for parachute insertion and guerrilla warfare.¹⁵³

The Third Force project met with disaster in 1952. Team WEN, a four-man team of agents led by Chang Tsai-wen, was dropped into Kirin Province in July of that year. An agent named Li Chun-ying had accompanied Team WEN as an observer and in October he radioed that he was ready to be extracted. The OPC, by that time, had developed a method for conducting in-flight pickups of agents on the ground in denied areas. The pickup of agent Li was scheduled for 29 November 1952.¹⁵⁴

Two CAT personnel who had been trained on the in-flight recovery system, Captains Snoddy and Schwartz, flew the recovery mission. Two CIA officers, John T. Downey and Richard G. Fecteau, were also aboard the C-47 sent to pick up the Chinese agent. In fact, Li Chun-ying had been captured and the request for pickup was actually made by the communists. It was a trap. When the C-47 came in at a low altitude for the pickup, it was shot

down. Snoddy and Schwartz were killed; Downey and Fecteau were captured and tried. Downey was sentenced to life in prison, while Fecteau received a sentence of 20 years. Both men were released in the early 1970s.¹⁵⁵

Just three and a half weeks before the attempted pickup of agent Li, General Dwight D. Eisenhower won a landslide election victory to become the next president of the United States. With the change in administration came a transition in the form, scope, and assertiveness of U.S. operations in support of resistance. “The containment theory sketched out by Truman’s advisers,” as one author put it, “hardened into the brinkmanship of the Eisenhower era.”¹⁵⁶ In addition to backing coups in Iran and Guatemala, the White House would launch aggressive STR campaigns in Tibet and Indonesia.

The covert paramilitary operations against Communist China during the Korean War caused little discomfort for Beijing, but they were costly for the United States and its proxy forces. In the Third Force program alone, out of 212 Chinese agents dropped into Manchuria and elsewhere on the mainland between 1951 and 1953, “101 had been killed and 111 captured. Most had surrendered on arrival, and some had been killed by ‘outraged peasants.’ Five Americans had died (three B-29 crew members and Snoddy and Schwartz) and thirteen had been captured.”¹⁵⁷

C. Containment or Sustained Cost-Imposing Disruption

Resistance movements have sometimes been supported by the USG as a means of containing the spread of communism or for the purpose of punishing aggression by imposing the greatest amount of cost on the aggressor.

Tibet, 1956–1969	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 150 months (Summer 1956 to early 1969)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

The communists completed their takeover of China and proclaimed a new Chinese government on 1 October 1949. Within six weeks, reports began filtering into the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, that the Chinese Communists were preparing to move into Tibet. Accordingly, the Tibetan government on 19 November requested civilian and military assistance from Washington.¹⁵⁸

As China tried to impose its sovereignty over Tibet, the people of the country's Kham region began an armed revolt against the occupiers in 1956. Violent and costly encounters with the better equipped Chinese PLA followed. Soon Tibetans began forming a volunteer resistance army that was independent from the legal Tibetan army, and incidents of guerrilla warfare spread throughout eastern and northeastern Tibet. Gompo Tashi Andrutang, a prosperous 51-year-old trader from Litang, became instrumental in pulling together the disparate resistance groups throughout Tibet and merging them into a national Tibetan resistance movement known as the Volunteer Freedom Fighters for Religious and Political Resistance.¹⁵⁹

Beginning in the summer of 1956, the CIA provided an extensive covert program of training and arming the Tibetan partisans in an operation code-named STCIRCUS.¹⁶⁰ The objective of the operation was to disrupt the Chinese occupation of Tibet, making it as costly as possible for Communist China.

"The primary objective," according to CIA Far East Division officer Sam Halpern, "had little to do with aiding the Tibetans: It was to impede and harass the Chinese Communists," using Tibetan manpower. The driving force behind the program, Halpern continued, was "pressure from the State Department to keep the Communists off balance in Asia."¹⁶¹ Halpern further explained: "The whole idea was to keep the Chinese occupied, keep them annoyed, keep them disturbed. Nobody wanted to go to war over Tibet ... It was a nuisance operation."¹⁶² A participant and historian of the operation described it as "doing anything possible to get in the way of the Chinese Communists."¹⁶³ The Tibetans on the other hand, believed that they were fighting for their independence and that the Americans were helping them toward that end.¹⁶⁴

Beginning in December 1956, Tibetan resistance fighters were taken in small numbers to undergo a four-and-a-half-month training program in weapons, communications, intelligence collection and reporting, and guerrilla warfare tactics at a CIA training facility on Saipan. The men received parachute training in Okinawa. The first two teams parachuted back into

Tibet in the fall of 1957.¹⁶⁵ Training of additional teams continued at a site on the east coast of the United States, but by early 1958 instructors determined that the low altitude was causing the Tibetan trainees to become sick. To overcome this problem, DOD offered the use of Camp Hale in the Colorado Rockies as a training venue and the CIA accepted. The trainees relocated to Camp Hale on Memorial Day 1958, and over a period of several years around 700 Tibetan fighters completed a six-month guerrilla training program there. The trainees made their three qualifying jumps at a nearby airfield.¹⁶⁶

The Tibetan rebels formally established a resistance army known as Chushi Gangdrug in 1958.¹⁶⁷ The first arms and supply airdrop—the weapons were mostly untraceable Lee-Enfield rifles—was successfully made by CAT, using a C-118 on loan from the Air Force and taking off from Okinawa, in July 1958. A second arms drop came on 22 February 1959, and three more teams were dropped in January 1960.¹⁶⁸

Later, the U.S. Air Force began providing the larger-capacity C-130 transport aircraft, allowing the agency to double the size of the loads. The C-130s followed a flight path that took them from Takhli in Thailand, over Burma, then India, and finally crossing the Himalayas to reach Tibet. The planes then returned to Takhli. By the fall of 1959 the U.S. Forest Service was providing parachute delivery officers for the airdrops into Tibet.¹⁶⁹ Air Force Major Harry C. “Heinie” Aderholt took over as commander of the airlift to the Tibetan resistance in January 1960. From 1957 through 1961, CIA flights dropped more than 250 tons of arms and ammunition, medical supplies, radios, printing presses, and other equipment.¹⁷⁰

In Tibet, the guerrilla force reached an estimated strength of 35,000 by 1959 and began gaining control of significant areas of the country through a series of attacks on Chinese occupation forces. Largely due to an uprising in the capital city of Lhasa on 10 March 1959, the Chinese dissolved the Tibetan government on 28 March and began a very effective counter-guerrilla campaign, overrunning guerrilla bases and strongholds. The Dalai Lama escaped to India just before the Chinese began shelling the palace and Lhasa’s population. Chinese ground forces, supported by an entire air division, began serious attacks against the guerrillas in January and February 1960.¹⁷¹

On 4 February 1960, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles briefed President Eisenhower on the status of the Tibetan operation and asked for approval to continue. Eisenhower was growing concerned about the terrible price the Tibetans were paying; around 87,000 of them had been killed in

1959 alone. The president asked Secretary of State Christian Herter for his opinion. Herter responded, “not only would continued successful resistance by the Tibetans prove to be a serious harassment to the Chinese Communists but it would serve to keep the spark alive in the entire area.” Eisenhower approved continuation of the operation. After a brief halt during 1960, flights were resumed by President Kennedy in March 1961.¹⁷²

Although the resistance had reached a strength of around 100,000,¹⁷³ it was on the ropes by 1960. In 1961 they began operating from an area of neighboring Nepal known as “Mustang”.¹⁷⁴ This provided a secure sanctuary area from which to launch operations and return to afterward. On one particularly profitable patrol, in October 1961, guerrillas ambushed and destroyed a Chinese convoy. A PLA deputy regimental commander who was killed in the ambush was carrying a pouch filled with some 1,600 classified documents which proved to be an intelligence windfall. The U.S. intelligence community found them to contain details of suffering in China brought about by Mao’s

A PLA deputy regimental commander who was killed in the ambush was carrying a pouch filled with some 1,600 classified documents which proved to be an intelligence windfall.

Great Leap Forward and how it affected PLA morale. They also revealed that China was in no way capable to retaking Taiwan and that a serious rift was developing between Communist China and the USSR.¹⁷⁵

By the mid-1960s, though, Chinese forces were fighting back more effectively and the Tibetans suffered significant losses. Between 1957 and 1961, only 12 men had survived out of 49 who had been dropped into Tibet. The agency made its last airdrop in May 1965, and the United States ceased all support to the Tibetan resistance in early 1969.¹⁷⁶

In the opinion of historian Richard Shultz, “Of all the denied-area operations at the time, the Tibetan program was the most successful, at least in the short term,” causing Communist China to “divert significant manpower and resources.”¹⁷⁷

Afghanistan (First Phase), 1979–1984	
Duration of U.S. Support	65 months (July 1979 to December 1984)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

After the December 1979 Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, the USG began providing support to the mujahideen Afghan resistance with the limited political objective of making the continued occupation of that country as costly as possible for the Soviet Union. Afghanistan was a client state of the USSR during the early 1970s, when the Soviets sold military hardware including jet fighters and tanks to the south Asian country and trained its army and air force. In July 1973 Mohammad Daoud Khan came to power in a coup that overthrew King Zahir and resulted in the establishment of the Republic of Afghanistan. Wishing to distance the country from the Soviet Union, Daoud sought and received a generous aid package from Iran.¹⁷⁸

In 1976, Daoud declared the Parcham and the Khalq—the two main factions of Afghanistan’s communist party, the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)—illegal. Moscow grew uncomfortable with the direction Daoud was taking. After an April 1978 *coup* against Daoud, the USSR threw its support behind the new PDPA government under Nur Muhammad Taraki.

Resistance to the new regime by tribal leaders and religious groups began immediately after Daoud’s ouster and grew during the first weeks of 1979. As the early turbulence grew into widespread rebellion against the Marxist government, Pakistan backed the Afghan Muslim insurgents. The mujahideen, a loose coalition of seven effective but factionalized rebel organizations, was in considerable need of arms and other material.¹⁷⁹

White House National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski warned President Jimmy Carter of Russia’s long-standing desire to push southward until gaining access to the Indian Ocean. On 3 July 1979, President Carter signed a presidential finding calling for a modest covert program providing non-lethal assistance to the Afghan mujahideen resistance.¹⁸⁰ The USG

strategic objectives included: reversing Soviet aggression in Afghanistan, demonstrating U.S. interest and concern to the Pakistanis, and demonstrating to the world the U.S. resolve to contain Soviet adventurism in the Third World. An initial budget of \$500,000 was to support three lines of effort: financial assistance, medical supplies, training, and other nonlethal assistance, to be funneled through Pakistan to the resistance; propaganda to discredit the Soviets; and financial aid to Afghan expatriates to enable anti-Soviet demonstrations.¹⁸¹

In mid-September 1979, amid widespread rebellion against the government, Hafizullah Amin deposed Taraki and began a series of repressive policies. The Soviets disliked Amin and were shocked when the new leader ordered Taraki killed. Moscow decided that Amin had to go, and on 12 December General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and the Politburo ordered the invasion of Afghanistan and the formation of a new army headquarters, the 40th Red Army, to carry it out.¹⁸²

On 21 December 1979, seven weeks after Iranian radicals seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, President Carter signed a finding that directed the intelligence community to “maintain contact with those who might want a more responsible and democratic government in Iran.” He then instructed National Security Advisor Brzezinski to “keep Congress out of the decision-making process on findings I issue for covert operations around the world. This is none of their business; they are to be informed, not consulted.”¹⁸³ The president then turned his attention to the situation in Afghanistan. One of his earliest and most important acts was pulling together a secret alliance of the United States, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia to arrange the funding and arming of the mujahideen.

By this time, the various mujahideen groups had seized control of all but five of the country’s 28 provinces. To Moscow, it seemed that a neighboring communist state was about to fall to rebels.¹⁸⁴ On Christmas Eve, the USSR launched an all-out invasion of Afghanistan. Troops airlifted to Bagram air base set out for Kabul to take control of Amin’s government. Meanwhile, two Soviet mechanized divisions entered Afghanistan from the north; those were soon followed by two more. Once in Kabul, the Soviets killed Hafizullah Amin and installed Babrak Karmal as the new Afghan president.

In Washington, President Carter feared that if the invasion succeeded it might encourage the Soviets to expand farther into the oil-rich Gulf region. The president saw the Soviet incursion as “a direct threat to the security

of our country.”¹⁸⁵ His expression of that concern, that “an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America” became known as the Carter Doctrine.¹⁸⁶ To the people of the United States, the president said, “A Soviet-occupied Afghanistan threatens both Iran and Pakistan and is a steppingstone to possible control over much of the world’s oil supplies.”¹⁸⁷

Within 48 hours of the Soviet invasion, President Carter signed a second finding for Afghanistan, authorizing an expanded covert paramilitary campaign that included arms, funding, and advisory assistance. The purpose of the program was to harass the Soviet forces through support to the Afghan resistance, thus increasing the costs of occupation.¹⁸⁸ Like the Reagan administration in later years, the Carter White House wished to turn the Soviet occupation into a political and military quagmire, to make it a “Russian Vietnam,” and thereby discourage further Soviet intervention in the Third World.¹⁸⁹ “We’re determined,” President Carter confided in his diary on 28 December, “to make this action as politically costly as possible.”¹⁹⁰

In a 28 December phone conversation, Pakistani President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq told President Carter that his country now faced the Soviet threat and that he wanted U.S. aid, both for Pakistan and for the Afghan resistance. The two presidents agreed that U.S. aid to the mujahideen would be funneled through Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) organization and that both countries wished to keep the arrangement covert, in other words to maintain plausible deniability.¹⁹¹ To CIA Director William Casey the following year, Zia explained that he felt the amount of support should be just enough to “keep the pot boiling” but not enough to allow “the pot to boil over,” which would open Pakistan up to the threat of Soviet attack.¹⁹² Pakistan also permitted the establishment of training bases and safe areas within its territory.

The first planeload of arms shipped by the United States arrived to the mujahideen around 7 January 1980, just two weeks after the Soviet invasion.¹⁹³ As of the following week, there were no less than seven Soviet divisions, including 85,000 troops, in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁴

The following January, newly-elected President Ronald Reagan and his CIA Director William Casey began their covert war against the ‘evil empire’ of the Soviet Union. President Reagan decided to continue the Afghanistan operation under the Carter finding. The goal was “to pay the Soviet Union back for Vietnam” by causing it to become bogged down in a quagmire.¹⁹⁵

Officially, the program would be in support of a newly expressed U.S. policy aimed at containing and, over time, reversing Soviet expansionism.¹⁹⁶ And the success realized through 1984 would lay the groundwork for eventual expansion.

D. Campaign Supporting Disruption

Operations in support of larger conventional force military campaigns are widely viewed as the most successful application of unconventional warfare.¹⁹⁷

The Philippines, 1941–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	44 months (December 1941 to August 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Philippine Islands, Leyte, Luzon, and Southern Philippines Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

In a surprise attack on Sunday morning, 7 December 1941, planes from a Japanese carrier task force struck ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States declared war on Japan the following day. Within hours of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese bombers hit Clark Field in the Philippines, destroying much of the United States Far Eastern Air Force. Japan’s main assault on the Philippines came in mid-December 1941 when they landed an invasion force on the island of Luzon, where the bulk of 130,000 Philippine and American forces in the country were located. Although war had swiftly come to the Pacific, Allied grand strategy assigned priority to the campaign in Europe, ensuring that reinforcements would not come soon to U.S. forces in the Pacific.

When the Japanese assault came, the Philippine Army was a poorly trained militia armed largely with obsolescent weapons. As a result of the Japanese attack, General Douglas MacArthur, then in retirement and serving as military advisor to the Philippine government, was recalled to active

duty in the U.S. Army and named commander of all U.S. armed forces in the Southwest Pacific.

American and Philippine forces were unable to halt the Japanese advance and, on 23 December, General MacArthur ordered a withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula. This action resulted in heavy losses on both sides and left his force under siege with insufficient supplies of food and ammunition. General MacArthur had planned for an active defense at the beaches of Luzon, where he hoped to defeat invading forces as they came ashore. An avid student of military history, he understood the potential of guerrilla warfare and considered the development of such a stay-behind force within the Philippines. His concept included the establishment of an underground intelligence network composed of businessmen and rural laborers, backed by a guerrilla force in the mountains built around a cadre of selected Filipino reservists.¹⁹⁸ The rapid landing and advance of Japanese forces, however, precluded further development of General MacArthur's guerrilla warfare concept. He was, therefore, forced to resort to an improvised form of UW.

More for personal reasons than any other, General MacArthur banned OSS from his theater of operations, preferring instead to organize and run his own intelligence activities and special operations. At the time of the fighting withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula, several individuals or small groups of American and Filipino officers became isolated throughout northern Luzon, cut off from General MacArthur's forces. As the surrender of U.S. forces became imminent, others received permission from their commanders to head to the hills to engage the enemy in guerrilla warfare. They began forming guerrilla units from Filipino troops who had survived the destruction of the Philippine army, as well as with civilian volunteers.¹⁹⁹

In December 1941, the senior U.S. Army officer to be cut off in northern Luzon, Colonel John P. Horan, reorganized his Philippine Scout Battalion into a guerrilla regiment. United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) headquarters on Corregidor approved the designation of Horan's regiment as the 121st Infantry. Soon many other army personnel who had escaped capture, along with independent bands of Filipino guerrillas, integrated themselves into the 121st. One such guerrilla band was led by an American officer named Walter M. Cushing.

When President Roosevelt ordered General MacArthur to Australia to begin preparations for an eventual Allied offensive to regain the Southwest Pacific, the general planned to maintain contact with the remnants of

his command and other guerrilla forces from his headquarters some 3,500 miles away. He wanted those elements hiding out in the islands to keep him apprised of the situation and to make preparations to support his eventual return. He charged Major General William F. Sharp in Mindanao with overseeing the buildup of guerrilla forces in the southern islands. He also sent Colonel Claude A. Thorp back to Luzon to organize guerrilla units in the central part of that island.²⁰⁰

Meanwhile, on 9 April 1942, Major General Edward P. King, commanding all American and Philippine forces on Bataan, surrendered what remained of those forces after a bitterly fought campaign.

In July 1942, General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) headquarters organized an office—the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB)—to be responsible for intelligence operations, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, and propaganda. The AIB was subordinate to the assistant chief of staff, G-2, Major General Charles A. Willoughby. One section of AIB, Special Operations Australia, was set up with the assistance of SOE and was charged with organizing resistance, sabotage, subversion, propaganda dissemination, and harassing attacks on enemy lines of communication.

As small guerrilla groups began organizing and growing, they radioed appeals for support to General MacArthur's headquarters. Communications technicians at SWPA headquarters began receiving signals in July 1942.²⁰¹ By fall they had established fairly regular communications.

In January 1943, General MacArthur sent a young naval officer to the Philippine island of Mindanao, by submarine, as a representative of the AIB. The officer began assessing the strength and capabilities of guerrillas on the island, while simultaneously establishing reliable communications with MacArthur's headquarters. In accordance with the general's directions, as relayed by the naval officer, all guerrilla forces were brought under the command of the U.S. Army and MacArthur. The guerrillas were ordered to lay low for the time being.²⁰²

As the brutal Japanese occupation proceeded, more and more Filipinos formed pockets of resistance, and many such groups turned to Americans for leadership. Two U.S. Army officers with no background in guerrilla warfare, Captain (later Colonel) Russell W. Volckmann and Captain Donald D. Blackburn, both of whom had evaded capture at Bataan, joined the guerrilla movement in northern Luzon. Volckmann on Luzon, and Lieutenant Colonel Wendell W. Fertig on Mindanao, became the two most active and effective

guerrilla leaders among the Americans. These officers trained guerrillas in ambush techniques and demolitions and, while mostly abiding by AIB's instructions to avoid armed confrontation with the Japanese, did take their guerrillas on occasional ambush patrols to instill confidence and capture supplies. Volckmann eventually organized five guerrilla regiments.

On 15 May 1943, General Willoughby established the Philippine Regional Section (PRS) to oversee guerrilla operations in the Philippines. To implement this control mechanism over Philippine operations, Colonel Courtney Whitney, director of the PRS, began recruiting and training hundreds of volunteers for guerrilla advisory service. These men were to be infiltrated throughout the Philippine archipelago to work with native guerrilla units. More than 400 of these advisors—American and Filipino—were inserted by October 1944.²⁰³ Colonel Whitney's role was considered so important that he was assigned an office next to General MacArthur's at SWPA headquarters.²⁰⁴

A fleet of U.S. Navy submarines began making repetitive runs to the main Philippine islands, clandestinely delivering tons of weapons, ammunition, explosives, radio equipment, and badly needed medical supplies to the guerrilla bands. Shipments also included millions of dollars in counterfeit pesos with which the guerrillas could purchase supplies locally.²⁰⁵

In northern Luzon, Colonel Volckmann eventually built up several large guerrilla organizations under his command—the 11th Infantry, 14th Infantry, 15th Infantry, 66th Infantry, and the 121st Infantry—with a total strength of around 8,000 fighting men by 1944. This could rapidly be expanded to 15,000 men by activating an organized reserve.²⁰⁶ Auxiliary elements of the resistance—those citizens who voluntarily provided the guerrillas with food and other supplies, assisted in building camps, and transported and stored arms and ammunition—were organized into units called “Bolo Battalions.” Women volunteers formed a separate unit known as the Women's Auxiliary Service. Their contributions included providing entertainment, making clothing, providing medical care, and serving as intelligence operatives.

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On 12 October 1944, in preparation for the Americans' return to the Philippines, U.S. Sixth Army commander Lieutenant General Walter Krueger sent two officers by Catalina flying boat to Leyte on an important pre-invasion mission to link up with guerrilla forces and make preparations for the invasion landings. The U.S. invasion commenced at 1000 hours on 20 October 1944, with General MacArthur landing with the third wave. Fighting on Leyte concluded by Christmas day.

Other islands came under attack, with U.S. forces landing on Mindoro, south of Luzon, on 15 December, and at Lingayen Gulf on Luzon on 9 January 1945. On that day, Colonel Volckmann received a message placing all guerrilla forces under the command of General Krueger. Three days after the landing at Lingayen Gulf, Sixth Army headquarters sent a PT boat to pick up Volckmann and deliver him for a meeting with General Krueger and his staff. On the following day, Volckmann was taken to General MacArthur's office for a meeting with the general, and then to Admiral Royal's flagship for a meeting with him. When senior U.S. and Japanese officers met at Baguio for the formal surrender by the enemy, Colonel Volckmann was seated at the table.²⁰⁷

Throughout the battles to retake the Philippines, guerrilla forces tied down Japanese forces, obstructed enemy troop movements, cut communications, provided information to conventional units, and operated coast-and air-watch stations. A Ranger unit sent by Sixth Army headquarters to observe the guerrillas of the 66th Infantry in the field later reported that guerrilla units composed of native Igorots, following each ambush of Japanese troops, stacked the enemy dead "like so much cordwood and then methodically counted them." From January through March, the 66th "killed over four thousand Japanese, destroyed many trucks, and seriously reduced the enemy's ability to live off the land. There can be no question but that the 66th substantially weakened Yamashita's defense of the Baguio area."²⁰⁸ When necessary to bolster the guerrilla regiments for some operations, Sixth Army attached field artillery battalions of 105-millimeter howitzers to the regiments.

Filipino guerrillas fighting throughout the islands earned the respect and praise of U.S. Army commanders at all levels. After the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945, General MacArthur and General Krueger described the contribution made by the guerrillas as being equal to that of a front-line U.S. infantry division.²⁰⁹ In all, Volckmann's forces lost 1,441 men killed in

action.²¹⁰ Even General Yamashita, commander of Japanese forces in the Philippines, “lamented that the whole Filipino population had become a vast guerrilla system whose intelligence gathering and sabotage had surpassed all his calculations and fears.”²¹¹

The United States Navy made a vital contribution to guerrilla warfare operations in the Philippines. Between 1943 and 1945, 19 submarines from the U.S. Seventh Fleet carried out 41 resupply missions to the Philippine Islands, smuggling in some 1,325 tons of supplies.²¹²

A JCS staff colonel in the Pentagon later observed that “one of the largest, best-organized, and most successful of U.S. guerrilla forces operated in General MacArthur’s theater. It was not an OSS detachment or a regular military unit, but rather a group under the direction of a few U.S. Army officers in the Philippines who refused to surrender and eluded capture by the Japanese.”²¹³

North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia), 1942–1943	
Duration of U.S. Support	16 months (January 1942 to May 1943)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Algeria-French Morocco Campaign and Tunisia Campaign)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

One of America’s earliest experiences in UW came in 1942, and it was to be a proving ground of sorts for OSS. It involved intelligence gathering, sabotage, resistance, and the recruitment and preparation of a stay-behind UW force. It began under OSS’s predecessor organization, the office of Coordinator of Information (COI), and “was carried out by only ten Americans working under State Department cover” out of the U.S. Legation—a diplomatic presence below that of an embassy—in Tangier.²¹⁴

French North Africa in 1942 was under the control of the collaborationist and puppet Vichy government in German-occupied France. COI Director Colonel William Donovan dispatched Colonel William O. Eddy, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, to Tangier in early January 1942. Eddy was to work

in close cooperation there with Robert D. Murphy of the State Department. The two men would collaborate on a range of subversive and clandestine activities targeted not only at the Germans, but also at the Vichy French authorities in North Africa, with whom the United States still maintained diplomatic relations, and even on a contingency operation involving Spain. While Murphy saw to political negotiations with French leaders, Eddy would oversee intelligence and special operations with indigenous and French resistance elements.²¹⁵

Anglo-American leaders had agreed at the Arcadia Conference in Washington in January 1942 that the most feasible place for them to initially engage Axis ground forces would be in North Africa in the fall of that year. During the spring, Colonel Donovan began to explore the possibility of organizing a resistance force among the indigenous population of Northwest Africa to support Allied operations. The intent would be to disrupt the operations of any German forces that would move into the area in response to the Allied landings, as well as to address a contingency involving Spain.

Spanish Morocco, in northwest Africa, was the venue for intrigue by both Allied and Axis elements. The Allies were already aware of pro-Nazi officers among President Francisco Franco's Spanish army, and that German sabotage schools were training agents and infiltrating them across the border from Spanish Morocco to French North Africa. In July 1942, OSS (COI had undergone a reorganization and redesignation in June) intercepted a message from a Spanish island off the coast of Africa which indicated significant subversive activity in the planning stages. Intelligence officials in Washington added this to other disturbing indicators and concluded that Franco was leaning toward abandoning Spain's neutrality and joining the Axis. With planning for the Allied invasion of North Africa well underway, military officials began to consider that, if the Allies succeeded in getting ashore and moving eastward toward Tunisia, Spain might grant passage of German forces through the Iberian Peninsula to cross the Strait of Gibraltar and attack into the rear of the Allies.²¹⁶

In preparation for such a contingency, Colonel Donovan wanted a guerrilla force—recruited, armed, and trained by OSS—to serve as a “stay-behind” resistance force capable of performing sabotage, intelligence, and guerrilla warfare activities against German forces, and perhaps even Spanish forces, should they occupy Africa by crossing the Strait of Gibraltar from Spain.²¹⁷

To undertake this mission, Donovan recruited Dr. Carlton S. Coon, a distinguished Harvard anthropology professor and author of the textbook *Principles of Anthropology*. Coon, a specialist on the tribes of North Africa, was an Arabic speaker and had traveled throughout northwest Africa for his anthropological studies between 1924 and 1939. He personally knew many of the tribal leaders in the area, particularly among the native Riffian population. Upon joining COI in the spring of 1942, he was assigned to the SO Branch. He was immediately sent to SOE's secret Camp X in Ontario for instruction in UW, including training in communications, use of weapons and explosives, and the fundamentals of guerrilla warfare.

Coon departed for Spanish Morocco in May 1942 under "reluctantly granted State Department cover."²¹⁸ COI/OSS had a very small presence in Morocco, operating out of the American Legation in Tangier, a port city on the Maghreb coast some 37 miles across the Strait from Gibraltar. Tangier's neutral status made it a hotbed for espionage and smuggling operations. As Coon understood it, his job entailed making contact with the Riffian tribes and preparing for any military development, most probably the approach of German forces from Egypt and Libya or from across the Strait of Gibraltar via Spain.²¹⁹ In the event of the arrival of such forces, the OSS operatives were to employ locally-recruited Riffian irregulars in rural Morocco to carry out sabotage and small-scale guerrilla attacks aimed at disrupting German operations.

Upon his arrival in Tangier, Coon began working undercover as a "special assistant" to the U.S. consulate general in the American Legation. He was joined by a few other OSS operatives, including former Boston insurance executive Gordon Browne and U.S. Army Major Jerry Sage.²²⁰ Major Sage would later be immortalized when his name was added to that of a small town in North Carolina in the title of the culminating exercise for U.S. Army Special Forces training—ROBIN-SAGE.

At the time of their arrival in Tangier, the OSS men were unaware of Allied plans to land forces in North Africa later that year. In the meantime, planning for the invasion continued in the United States and Britain. According to these plans, an American task force would land along the western coast of French Morocco and two task forces, comprised of British and American troops, would land on the Algerian coast. Once ashore, these predominantly U.S. forces would attack eastward while the British Eighth Army attacked in a westerly direction from Alexandria. The liberation of North Africa would

secure Allied supply routes through the Mediterranean and prepare a place from which to launch operations against Southern Europe. OSS was tasked with doing what it could to facilitate the Allied operations and to minimize or disrupt Axis operations. An additional function would be intelligence collection and reporting.

Coon first recruited two influential leaders to aid him in recruiting a guerrilla force. First was the leader of a powerful religious brotherhood in northern Morocco who was assigned the code name STRINGS. The second, an important Rif tribal leader, was code-named TASSELS.²²¹

Once a sufficient number of men had been recruited with the help of STRINGS and TASSELS, the next task was to arrange for arming and equipping the men. To accomplish this, Coon volunteered to serve as a diplomatic courier, making weekly trips on a Portuguese tugboat between the American Legation in Tangier and the British Consulate in Gibraltar. SOE had agreed to supply the weapons and explosives Coon required from their ample stocks on Gibraltar. On the return leg of several such trips made between late August and early October, prior to the 8 November Allied landings, Coon clandestinely smuggled loads of arms, ammunition, explosives, and other equipment to the British Legation in Tangier. Upon arrival in Tangier, he transferred the shipments to the American Legation and then smuggled them out of the Spanish zone and on to Casablanca. There, the shipments were broken down and delivered to resistance groups in Algiers, Oran, and Tunis.²²²

Colonel Eddy later estimated that Coon and Browne eventually controlled some 10,000 irregulars. Other estimates went higher, with one source referring to 20,000 Riff tribesmen, “all eager to murder Spaniards.”²²³ Although the guerrilla force did successfully carry out limited sabotage operations and perform intelligence collection functions, its primary mission of disrupting the operations of German forces arriving from Spain was never tested.

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The Allies also believed that certain elements of the Vichy French presence in French Morocco and Algeria could be helpful by serving in a Free French resistance role to facilitate the Allied landings,

hopefully improving the odds for the successful establishment of a beach-head and holding down casualties on both sides. Some Frenchmen, in fact, were already organizing themselves for that purpose and had established contact with U.S. State Department officials, volunteering their service. This group included a police commissioner, officers in France's intelligence service (the *Deuxieme Bureau*), industrialists, and French army officers.²²⁴

As early as March 1942, Robert Murphy had met with French underground leaders and prepared a list of arms requirements for a resistance movement. Back in Washington, however, Donovan believed the list of requirements to be extravagant and the skeptical JCS refused to provide the arms.²²⁵

Colonel Eddy then went to London in late July to brief senior army officers on the French underground proposal. When told that it could result in minimal resistance from Vichy French forces during the Allied landings, the officers—Generals James Doolittle, George Patton, and George Strong—gave their endorsement. In August, Murphy and Eddy were told of the planned Allied invasion of North Africa, and that the collaboration with the French resistance in North Africa, to be led by French General Henri Giraud, was to be enthusiastically pursued. Eddy then traveled to Washington in September, where the JCS approved the OSS plans for support of Operation TORCH.²²⁶

Trusted French military leaders were informed of the impending Allied invasion of North Africa by General Mark Clark when he was put ashore in Algeria by submarine for a clandestine meeting on 22 October 1942, although details of dates and landing locations were withheld. The French leaders appointed a French officer to command resistance activities at each port area.

On D-Day for the TORCH landings, the French underground in Morocco and Algeria went into action and, despite interference from Vichy collaborationist leader Admiral Jean François Darlan, provided invaluable service to the Allies. They helped by redirecting units that were put ashore in the wrong place, acted as guides, sabotaged coastal artillery batteries, and cut German communications in some locations.²²⁷ Concern about the threat through Spain lingered among the Allied high command well after the Allied landings. General Clark ordered Coon to remain in Oujda and in touch with his Riffian guerrillas until Tunis fell to the Allies, which came when all remaining German forces in Tunisia surrendered on 8 May 1943.²²⁸

When General Eisenhower had first been appointed to command the Allied invasion of North Africa, General Marshall asked him to find a role

for Colonel Donovan’s organization in the operation. On 23 December 1942, General Marshall sent Colonel Donovan a letter commending OSS for its contribution to the Allied victory.²²⁹ The OSS had succeeded in proving its value as a force multiplier.

France and Belgium, 1942–1944	
Duration of U.S. Support	28 months (June 1942 to October 1944)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Normandy, Northern France, Southern France, and Ardennes-Alsace Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

In June 1942, (then) Colonel Donovan’s Coordinator of Information (COI) organization began collaborating with Britain’s SOE in the conduct of special operations (UW) on the Continent. Operations in occupied France were well underway by SOE’s French Section, or F-Section, which was infiltrating agents to work as organizers with the French Resistance throughout France. With the establishment of OSS London Mission in July 1942, OSS became fully engaged in supporting F Section, though in a limited capacity initially.²³⁰

Special Force Headquarters (SFHQ) and Special Projects Operations Center (SPOC). By late 1943, the OSS SO Branch presence in London had grown to a point where an informal combined special operations headquarters existed. The organization was officially established as SOE/SO Headquarters on 10 January 1944, at which time SOE and OSS/SO became jointly responsible for all F-Section operations.²³¹ The new headquarters, led by a British director and an American deputy director, was redesignated Special Force Headquarters (SFHQ) in May 1944. A satellite headquarters, the Special Projects Operations Center (SPOC) was established in Algiers to support UW operations in Southern France.

F-Section Circuits. A circuit was usually composed of an organizer, his lieutenant, and a radio operator. It could also include a courier. The team was inserted into occupied France by way of parachute, airlanding by plane, or by sea, with the mission of organizing, training, and equipping

the underground component of the French Resistance, and training and directing saboteurs recruited locally.²³² Circuit personnel included men and women, military or civilian, operating covertly and clandestinely in civilian clothes and with forged identity documents. They organized underground networks; selected and trained couriers, demolition personnel, weapons instructors, intelligence gatherers, and networks of auxiliary support personnel; and identified and reported to London the location and description of safe houses and drop zones for parachuting arms, explosives, and other supplies. OSS's SO Branch established a French Desk in London that began work in February 1943, contributing individual SO operatives to join SOE circuit organizers in the field in France and to form similar teams "composed entirely of SO personnel."²³³ The first OSS man, a radio operator, entered France in May 1943 to join F-Section's INVENTOR circuit.²³⁴ On 13 June, two U.S. Army lieutenants parachuted into occupied France to establish the SACRISTAN circuit, the first circuit to be organized by OSS/SO.²³⁵ As of D-Day there were more than 20 F-Section circuits in operation throughout France, and they had already armed tens of thousands of guerrillas in maquis groups in every region.²³⁶ A total of 85 OSS officers, enlisted men, and civilians deployed to France for operations with dozens of F-Section circuits.²³⁷

Operational Groups (OGs). Colonel Donovan considered America's rich ethnic diversity, with communities still steeped in the customs and traditions of their homelands, still speaking their native languages, to be a tremendous resource for UW. In 1941 he developed a concept for an organization composed of men recruited from these ethnic populations. Country-oriented groups of such personnel would receive special training and would then parachute into occupied territories that corresponded to their ethnic background. The JCS approved the OG concept and authorized their establishment on 23 December 1942. Organized as the U.S. Army's 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion (Separate) (Provisional), the force included one company for French operations. Plans, as finally developed, called for OGs to be parachuted into German-occupied territory with a special mission such as sabotage. Following completion of that mission, they would link up with the nearest resistance group, where they would then provide training to the partisans. OSS OGs began operating behind German lines in France in August 1944.

The 34-man OGs provided invaluable support to Operation ANVIL, the Allied invasion of Southern France beginning 15 August 1944. French

Resistance elements, supported by OG teams, killed or wounded more than 1,000 of the enemy, captured another 10,000, and demolished 32 bridges.²³⁸ They also prevented the destruction, by the Germans, of transportation facilities needed by the advancing Allied ground forces. On a particularly successful operation on 31 August 1944, a small party of OG officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), along with a Maquis officer, accepted the surrender of a German regiment of five battalions, comprising “two colonels, six majors, 22 captains and lieutenants, and 3,794 enlisted men.”²³⁹ A total of eight OG teams deployed to France from England²⁴⁰ and another 14 teams from Algeria.²⁴¹ In all, this included 355 officers and enlisted men.²⁴²

Special Air Operations. SO London began to expand its organization to assume a growing share of the Allied special operations effort. Accordingly, to mirror an existing British capability, SO London formed an Air Operations Section, to which the U.S. Army Air Force assigned a full group of four squadrons of B-24 Liberator bombers, reconfigured for special air operations, by the end of 1943. These squadrons became known as “The Carpetbaggers.” In all, from January through September 1944, OSS airdropped more than 5,000 tons of supplies to the resistance, which represented slightly over half of the total delivered by OSS and SOE combined.²⁴³

Jedburghs. The Jedburghs were established in 1943 as joint, multi-national three-man special forces teams whose purpose was to organize, equip, train, and, when necessary, lead indigenous guerrilla forces in operations aimed at disrupting enemy supply lines and communications, delaying enemy forces from reaching the main battle area, and forcing the enemy to divert combat units from the front lines to rear area security missions. Each team was composed of one British or American officer; one French officer; and one British, American, or French enlisted radio operator. The U.S. contingent included officers from all armed services. The Jedburghs were to augment the circuits throughout France, helping to direct and coordinate the operations of a rapidly growing French Resistance. Jedburgh teams began parachuting into occupied France on the night of 5/6 June 1944, the eve of D-Day. In all, SFHQ formed and deployed a total of 87 Jedburgh teams.²⁴⁴ From early June through the middle of September 1944, OSS personnel served on 34 Jedburgh teams sent to France from England and 14 teams from Algiers.²⁴⁵ Official OSS figures indicate that a total of 276 Allied Jedburgh personnel deployed to France, Belgium, and Holland, from June through September. Of these, 83 were American.²⁴⁶

Special Inter-Allied Missions. Several Special Inter-Allied Missions, organized in much the same manner as the Jedburghs, but including as many as eight to ten officers and men, were organized and deployed to perform liaison missions with French Resistance regional commanders.

Army and Army Group Special Force Detachments. To provide special operations advice to field army and army group commanders and staffs, and to provide a communications link with deployed Allied special forces, SFHQ organized and deployed a sizable staff element (30–60 officers and enlisted men) with each headquarters, where they were attached to the staff G-3 section.

Nearly all of France and Belgium was liberated by October 1944. Having been called “the largest resistance uprising in history,”²⁴⁷ the French Resistance reached a peak strength estimated at 300,000.²⁴⁸ The contribution of Allied special forces, both OSS and SOE, can be seen in the effectiveness of the resistance forces they enabled. By the night of 5 June 1944, Allied bombers had destroyed 18 of the 24 bridges over the Seine and had knocked out more than 5,000 locomotives. Added to this were the more than 700 locomotives already destroyed or damaged by the French Resistance in the four months leading up to D-Day.²⁴⁹ As a result, rail traffic nationwide in France on the eve of D-Day was running at 30 percent of its January level.²⁵⁰ In one week beginning on D-Day, guerrillas “cut or blew up over 1,000 railroad lines to prevent eight enemy divisions from immediately entering the battle of the beaches.”²⁵¹ General Eisenhower got the time needed to bring ashore in Normandy a force strong enough to break out from the lodgment area. The French Resistance, aided by Allied special forces, made nearly 500 more railway cuts by the end of June, as well as ambushing untold numbers of German convoys bound for the battlefield in Normandy, and rendering German telecommunications almost completely ineffective.²⁵²

Perhaps the most important and relevant judgment of the effectiveness of the French Resistance and the Allied special forces that supported them comes from the senior commanders and others who witnessed first-hand the value of their contributions. Allied military leaders were generous in their appraisal of the role of the resistance fighters. At the close of the war in Europe, General of the Army Eisenhower wrote, “In no previous war, and in no other theater during this war, have resistance forces been so closely harnessed to the main military effort.”²⁵³ The general had been so pleased

with the support provided by French Resistance to the OVERLORD campaign that he strongly urged his Mediterranean Theater counterpart, British General “Jumbo” Wilson, to capitalize on their support during the invasion of Southern France in mid-August 1944. In his final report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, General Eisenhower estimated the value of the French Resistance to have been equal to 15 divisions.²⁵⁴ SOE historian Dr. William Mackenzie, however, has pointed out that “it makes little sense to translate the Resistance into an equivalent value of divisions and squadrons because it did things which no divisions and squadrons could have done.”²⁵⁵

From Lieutenant General Lucien K. Truscott, Jr., who commanded the U.S. corps in the invasion of Southern France, came this assessment:

So effective were the Maquis that the Germans moved only in large numbers. The Maquis were well provided with arms and explosives by the Allies, and Allied officers [i.e., F-Section circuits, Jedburghs, OGs, and Special Air Service] with communications had parachuted in to assist them in coordinating their operations. We had expected a good deal of assistance from them and we were not disappointed. Their knowledge of the country, of enemy dispositions and movements, was invaluable, and their fighting ability was extraordinary.²⁵⁶

Brigadier General Frederick B. Butler, whose task force led the Allied attack northward from the beachhead following the invasion on the Riviera coast, declared that “without the Maquis our mission would have been far more difficult, if indeed not possible.”²⁵⁷ The official history of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division includes the statement that, “A major factor aiding the speed and success of our movement was the activity of the French resistance groups.” The history continues by describing how “whole towns were seized and held to await our coming.”²⁵⁸

Ralph Ingersoll, a planning officer on General Omar N. Bradley’s Twelfth Army Group staff, had been skeptical of the value of the resistance while he was still in England. After entering combat in France, however, he changed his opinion. He later wrote of how he and his fellow officers viewed the resistance operations as supported by OSS and SOE. “What cut ice with us was the fact that when we came to France the resistance was so effective that it took half a dozen real live German divisions to contend with it, divisions which might otherwise have been on our backs in the Bocage.”²⁵⁹

Officers on General George S. Patton's Third Army staff were equally appreciative of the work of the French Forces of the Interior (FFI), as the French Resistance was known. Colonel Robert S. Allen wrote, "over 30,000 armed FFI rendered invaluable fighting and intelligence aid to the spearheads. These unknown and humble resistance combatants, fighting heroically and effectively, deserve undying tribute for their great contribution to this crucial victory."²⁶⁰ An officer at a corps headquarters operating under Third Army wrote General Patton with particular praise for the OSS and SOE special forces (SF): "SF operations, including the employment of FFI personnel in support of this corps, have been particularly effective. It is believed that a very definite role has been created for SF personnel."²⁶¹ A report from the 117th Reconnaissance Squadron observed that "strong support was received from the local Maquis who were well organized in this vicinity by the OSS."²⁶²

Historians, too, have recognized the contributions irregular forces and their SF mentors made to the Allied victory. University of Florida Professor Emeritus of History Arthur Layton Funk, who specialized in American-French relations during World War II, wrote, "The Maquis brought substantial assistance to the regular forces."²⁶³ Historian and archivist Lawrence H. McDonald wrote: "So successful were the Jedburgh teams that General Eisenhower requested additional SO support for resistance groups and for acquisition of tactical intelligence."²⁶⁴ In the words of historian Bradley F. Smith, "The ability of the resistance to strike hard and increase the momentum of its blows at least as rapidly as did the Germans and the Vichy police owed a very great deal to the agents, arms, and supplies sent in by the Western governments."²⁶⁵ Finally, in the opinion of historian Jay Jakob, "The important role played by the British and U.S. secret services in the liberation of France is indisputable."²⁶⁶

The most immediate and important mission assigned to the FFI was in supporting the Allied landings in Normandy during Operation OVERLORD. By conducting road, rail, and telecommunications sabotage, they were to help prevent or delay the movement of reinforcing German divisions to the Normandy battlefield. According to historian M. R. D. Foot, the FFI played a major role in preventing eight German divisions from reaching the Allied beachheads in Normandy and on the Riviera coast of France.²⁶⁷ From June through August, the resistance, under the direction of Allied special forces such as the Jedburghs and OGs, successfully executed a total of 885 rail

By conducting road, rail, and telecommunications sabotage, they were to help prevent or delay the movement of reinforcing German divisions to the Normandy battlefield.

cuts, 140 telecommunications cuts, 75 road and waterway cuts, and 44 cases of industrial sabotage. They destroyed 322 railroad locomotives, attacked 24 German convoys, and shot down seven German aircraft.²⁶⁸ In an Allied report on resistance contributions in the first ten days following D-Day, General Bradley’s staff “stated that, in their

opinion, the over-all action of French Resistance has resulted in an average delay of 48 hours being imposed on movement of German formations to the bridgehead area.”²⁶⁹

The official OSS history provides an important observation in recognizing that SO operations in the European Theater of Operations were “the first major, and very educational, experience of its kind in U.S. history.”²⁷⁰ It, along with experiences gleaned from operations in Burma and the Philippines, provided the basis for U.S. Army UW doctrine crafted in the post-war years.

Burma, 1942–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	38 months (April 1942 to June 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Burma, India-Burma, and Central Burma Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

One of the most successful UW operations conducted during World War II was that carried out by OSS Detachment 101 in Burma to disrupt Japanese operations and enable the reopening of the Burma Road between India and China.

The Allied high command viewed Burma as an economy-of-force theater from the very beginning, due primarily to the country’s rugged and restrictive terrain.²⁷¹ Central and northern Burma was populated by several isolated and politically marginalized ethnic groups, two of the most prominent being the Kachin and Karen peoples. It was from among this population that Detachment 101 formed such an effective UW force.

The country's strategic value lay in the fact that the Nationalist Chinese Army, a U.S. ally, depended on lines of communication through Burma for supplies. Beginning in 1939, China's supplies came from Rangoon by rail as far as Lashio, and were then hauled by truck over the Burma Road to Kunming, China. In January 1942, Japan invaded Burma with two divisions from neighboring Thailand, interdicting the overland supply route to China in the process. Supplies then had to be flown from northeast India over the Himalayas to Kunming, a limited-capacity process that really didn't get started until late 1943.

To replace the Rangoon-Kunming land route, the Allies began constructing a new overland route originating at Ledo, near the India-Burma border. This project, however, was blocked by enemy forces occupying the area around the northern Burmese town of Myitkyina, the main base for the 15,000-man Japanese 18th Division.²⁷² The Japanese also used planes based at an airfield at Myitkyina to attack U.S. transport flights.

On 14 April 1942, President Roosevelt's Coordinator of Information (COI, and later Director of OSS), Colonel William J. Donovan, established Detachment 101. With the missions of guerrilla warfare, intelligence gathering, propaganda dissemination, sabotage, air strike target identification, and downed aircrew rescue, Detachment 101 became the first U.S. military unit created specifically for the conduct of UW in enemy territory.²⁷³

Eager to get his new unit into the field to test the concept, Colonel Donovan dispatched Major Carl Eifler to China to propose OSS support to Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell, chief of staff and principal advisor to Nationalist Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and senior U.S. commander in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater. Eifler arrived in Chungking on 31 July 1942 and reported to General Stilwell, who asked Eifler why he was there. When Eifler explained that he was sent to organize guerrilla warfare operations in China, General Stilwell responded that this would not be possible since the Generalissimo was "dead against any foreign unit operating secret organizations in China."²⁷⁴

Several days later, Eifler was summoned to meet again with General Stilwell. The general questioned Eifler at length about his unit and then told him that he was approving the OSS operation, but that he wanted Eifler's organization to operate in Burma rather than China. According to Eifler, General Stilwell said that "the disruption of shipping in Rangoon meant more to him than any operations" that might be conducted in China. The general then

instructed Eifler to return to India to establish and prepare his unit. When Eifler asked whom he should accept orders from in India, General Stilwell responded, “No one; I am giving you a free hand.”²⁷⁵

Upon returning to New Delhi, the G-3 at CBI headquarters told Major Eifler that he considered the most important role for Detachment 101 would be that of denying the use of Myitkyina airfield to the Japanese. This would entail a wide range of guerrilla warfare and sabotage activities, including the destruction of bridges and railroads and attacks on gasoline shipments.²⁷⁶

Once the detachment arrived in theater, it established a base camp in northeastern India. There, the men of the detachment recruited 50 Burmese refugees, including some former Burmese military personnel, and trained them in the use of weapons, demolitions, communications, ambushes, and unarmed combat. After all attempts to infiltrate Burma on foot were thwarted by the Japanese, Detachment 101, with the aid of Brigadier General Edward H. Alexander, chief of Air Transport Command in the theater, developed an airborne capability and began infiltrating Burma by parachute.²⁷⁷ The detachment began dropping teams into Burma in early February 1943. The force grew as Kachin and other tribesmen were recruited, armed, and trained. Operating in rugged jungle terrain ideally suited to guerrilla warfare, the large force of primitive Kachin tribesmen proved effective in gathering intelligence, destroying enemy supply dumps, attacking road and rail lines, scouting in advance of Allied ground forces, and rescuing downed Allied airmen.²⁷⁸

Detachment 101 more than proved its utility to General Stillwell, so much so that he approved an expansion of the unit both in terms of size and span of operations. At the same time, British authorities in the theater “became alarmed at the expansion of an American clandestine agency completely free from their control, and, for a period, sought to check the growth of Detachment 101.”²⁷⁹

By December 1943, Donovan, now a brigadier general, decided that Eifler had to be replaced due to health issues. Command of Detachment 101 passed to Colonel William R. Peers, who had been the detachment’s operations and training officer.

American engineers continued construction of the new road as the OSS force waged its aggressive UW campaign throughout northern Burma. Eventually, the new road was linked to the old route and the first truck convoy made the 928-mile journey from Ledo to Kunming in February 1945.

At its peak strength, there were some 549 U.S. Army officers and men in Detachment 101. According to the official OSS history, the highest strength of the Detachment’s native guerrilla force was 9,200.²⁸⁰ The detachment and its guerrilla force were credited with 5,447 known enemy personnel killed, with estimates of additional enemy casualties running as high as 10,000. They also captured 64 Japanese soldiers in the course of their operations. As for sabotage conducted on enemy convoys and lines of communication, Detachment 101 demolished 51 bridges and derailed 9 trains. It accounted for the destruction of 277 enemy military vehicles and some 2,000 tons of enemy supplies. Another 500 tons of supplies were captured. Of particular value was the detachment’s rescue of at least 232 downed Allied airmen. Records further indicate that Detachment 101 and its guerrilla force “provided 90 percent of all intelligence gathered by the Allied Northern Combat Command and designated 65 percent of ground targets engaged by the Tenth U.S. Air Force.”²⁸¹ Detachment 101 had accomplished its mission by 15 June 1945, having virtually cleared its area of operations of Japanese forces. The unit was withdrawn from Burma that month and was deactivated on 12 July 1945.²⁸²

OSS operations in Burma are widely recognized by special operations historians as one of the most successful UW experiences in World War II. Detachment 101’s contribution was recognized by award of the Presidential Unit Citation in January 1946.²⁸³ Historian Troy Sacquety, who has described Detachment 101 as “a model clandestine and special operations unit,”²⁸⁴ further noted that the unit “developed standards and practices that very much made it a forerunner organization to U.S. Army Special Forces.”²⁸⁵

Italy, 1943–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	24 months (April 1943 to April 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rome-Arno, North Apennines, and Po Valley Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Approval of a JCS directive on 23 December 1942 authorized OSS to organize ethnically focused groups to serve as “operational nuclei” for UW operations in enemy occupied territory. A recruiting program got underway

in 1943, with recruiters seeking volunteers from U.S. Army units who had Italian, Norwegian, French, Greek, or German language skills. Candidates mostly came from infantry and engineer units and were typically men whose parents were immigrants and who had grown up in a bilingual household. Radio operators were recruited from U.S. Army Signal Corps units or schools, and the Medical Corps was the source for medical personnel.²⁸⁶ Italian-American candidates began reporting to OSS Headquarters for training in April 1943, and the Italian OG was the first such unit to be activated.²⁸⁷

OGs were unable to take part in operations in Sicily due to lack of transportation. Instead, the groups trained and prepared for operations on the Italian mainland. The priority task assigned to the American OSS and British SOE for operations on the Italian mainland was to direct the dislocation of communications and maintenance of German forces in Italy. Next in order of priority was the task to “continue activities to build up communications, to supply arms, equipment, and stores to existing [resistance] organizations, and to form new reception committees and resistance groups.”²⁸⁸

In September 1943, following Italy’s capitulation to the Allies, the Italian chief of staff and military deputy to the King of Italy, General Giuseppe Castellano, with the backing of Marshal Badoglio, offered to the Allies the services of Italian prisoners of war as saboteurs behind German lines. General Castellano confessed to being “much impressed” with the work of OSS and SOE, and he hoped that Italian volunteers could be of some help. SOE and OSS welcomed the offer and suggested to Allied headquarters that the general be asked to sign a circular encouraging prisoners of war to volunteer for such work. Allied special operations planners were particularly interested in acquiring Italian radio operators, demolition experts, and officers capable of leading guerrilla bands.²⁸⁹ OSS and SOE provided training for all those who volunteered.

After the September 1943 Italian capitulation, the resistance grew in size, strength, and unity. Many former members of the Italian Army joined the resistance. Six major political parties in the north came together to form the *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale per l’Alta Italia* (Committee for National Liberation in North Italy, or CLNAI), with headquarters in Milan. By the spring of 1944 the CLNAI claimed authority over all resistance groups in North Italy, and it was generously financed by OSS and SOE.²⁹⁰ With the support of OSS and SOE, this organization effectively supported American and British ground operations.

OSS support came not only from OG sections operating deep in occupied Italian territory. OSS detachments operating from bases on the French and Swiss borders equipped and trained guerrilla forces, “sabotaged enemy equipment, harassed and delayed enemy forces in movement, took over whole areas behind enemy lines, and even held mountainous sectors of the Allied line.”²⁹¹ OG elements also occupied key islands off the coast of Italy, where they operated signal and observation posts and launched teams for raids on German facilities along the country’s northwestern coastline.

Other OG sections parachuted into northern Italy to organize, equip, train, and direct the guerrilla warfare operations of groups of Italian Resistance fighters known as *Partigiani* (Partisans). As in France, resistance and OG elements disrupted German supply lines and tied down enemy troops in rear area security operations. OGs operated in northern Italy from September 1943 to October 1944. General Mark Clark, whose Fifth Army had the job of cracking German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring’s mountain strongholds, exhorted the Partisans operating farther north to increase their activities. This was accomplished as abundant supply drops and news of the approach of Allied forces created a quickly growing Partisan force. From June to August 1944 alone, according to a report by Kesselring’s own intelligence officer, German casualties inflicted by the Partisans totaled 5,000 killed and 25,000 to 30,000 wounded.²⁹² In a February 1945 letter to his senior commanders, Kesselring noted that the “execution of partisan operations shows considerably more commanding leadership.”²⁹³ By the fall of 1944, Partisan forces were able to go on the offensive, striking German forces unmercifully as they withdrew from the Gothic Line.²⁹⁴

With their presence and operational capabilities deep in the German rear area, the OGs and other SO missions, as well as SOE and OSS/SI teams, were of utmost value to Fifth Army and Fifteenth Army Group as they battled a strong and stubborn enemy. OSS and SOE elements were not only needed for critical sabotage and guerrilla warfare work, but as the only eyes and ears the Allies had behind enemy lines.²⁹⁵ Fifth Army so valued the service of the resistance that it established a hospital for Partisan wounded near the front. In October 1944, an Allied corps commander “credited OSS-directed partisan groups with having prevented a far-reaching enemy break-through.”²⁹⁶

Aerial resupply of the Partisans lagged severely in September 1944, when all available long-range aircraft in the Mediterranean Theater were diverted to drop supplies to the desperate Polish resistance battling German forces

in Warsaw. Both OSS and SOE, however, were able to step up delivery of supplies during the winter. Allied planes dropped 149 tons in November, another 350 in December, roughly 175 in January, and 592 in February. With improved spring weather, some 890 tons were dropped in March 1945. When Allied forces entered Florence, they found that the local resistance had accounted for 500 German casualties, had impeded the German retreat by destroying seven major road and rail bridges, and turned over a trove of highly classified papers seized after ambushing a staff car carrying Japanese naval and military attaches. Over 100 pounds of top secret correspondence between Field Marshal Kesselring and forward commanders were turned over to OSS by a resistance group near Genoa. Included was a list of German espionage agents in Italy.²⁹⁷

Partisans operating in the north during the fall and winter of 1944–45 enjoyed critically important support from the truly invisible element of the resistance—the common people of the farms and villages. According to one OSS veteran of the Italian campaign, as OSS and partisan elements moved through the darkness in enemy territory, citizens along their projected route “locked up their dogs [to prevent them from barking] and left their doors open for emergency refuge.”²⁹⁸

In the early morning hours of 4 December, 823 heavily armed partisans of the 28th Garibaldi Brigade attacked 2,500 Germans manning concrete bunkers protected by armor and artillery. The enemy was taken by surprise, not only here, but over a wide area. “All across the area north of Ravenna, various partisan units went after different German strongholds, many of which surrendered after finding themselves surrounded.”²⁹⁹ The British Eighth Army later invited the Garibaldi Brigade to join in the main battle line, fighting alongside regular army forces.

A similar large-scale Partisan push occurred in late April 1945 as the Allied ground offensive crossed the Po River. Partisan groups, accompanied by OGs, rose up throughout northern Italy in support of Allied operations. They interdicted key escape routes leading to the Brenner Pass, executed roadblocks, and ambushed German columns. In Genoa, some 15,000 Partisans operating under the direction of OGs nabbed 3,000 prisoners while seizing and preventing the destruction of port facilities badly needed by the Allies. Italian Partisans could eventually take credit for the capture of 81,000 enemy troops.³⁰⁰

Italian OG sections carried out 29 major missions throughout Italy between 8 September 1943 and 2 April 1945, with more than 75 OSS teams of various types operating behind enemy lines.³⁰¹ The resistance had cleared entire regions in northern Italy of German forces. Field Marshal Kesselring admitted that unit convoy movement, with the exception of large, heavily armored columns, was virtually impossible.³⁰² In one writer's judgment, OSS- and SOE-supported Partisans:

kept as many as seven German divisions out of the line. They also obtained the surrender of two full German divisions, which led directly to the collapse of the German forces in and around Genoa, Turin, and Milan. These actions pinned down the German armies and led to their complete destruction. Throughout northern Italy, partisan brigades in the mountains and clandestine action groups in the cities liberated every major city before the arrival of combat units of Fifteenth Army Group.³⁰³

That author also recognized the important contribution of OSS and SOE to this success. "The partisans' success was largely attributable to the arms and supplies parachuted to them by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the OSS and to the brilliance of the intelligence networks developed by members of the Resistance in constant touch with Fifteenth Army Group headquarters via secret radios."³⁰⁴

General Mark Clark, the senior American commander in Italy, later wrote that the Italian Partisans "played an important role in attacking the rear areas of the German defenses in northern Italy," and that they "fought bravely and made great contributions to our final victory."³⁰⁵ According to General Clark, the "services which the Partisans performed were many, varied, and important and included the capture of many towns and villages."³⁰⁶

Hostilities in Italy ended at noon on 2 May 1945, the same day that Berlin fell to the Red Army.

The Netherlands, 1943–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	21 months (August 1943 to May 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Rhineland Campaign)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

German forces invaded Holland on 10 May 1940, resulting in the evacuation of the Dutch government to England and the surrender of the Dutch armed forces. During the years between the commencement of the occupation of Holland and the entry of Allied ground forces into the Netherlands from the border with Belgium, the Dutch Section of SOE and later, SFHQ, parachuted dozens of agents, usually in teams of two, to begin arming and organizing the Dutch Resistance. Unfortunately, nearly all of those infiltrated up to the summer of 1944 were captured and eventually executed.

Participation by U.S. forces in UW operations in Holland came primarily as a supporting role to a major Allied ground and airborne operation in September 1944, but preparation and recruitment of the men to carry out that mission began nearly a year earlier. OSS joined other Allied special operations forces in the Jedburgh project, which organized, prepared, and employed multinational three-man special forces teams. Since the Netherlands would eventually become an operational area for Jedburgh operations, members of exiled Dutch forces in the United Kingdom were recruited to participate. In the United States, a few of the personnel recruited for Jedburgh operations came from Dutch-American families and had some ability in the Dutch language. These men teamed up with the Dutch Jedburgh personnel during the train-up period in England in early 1944.

As Allied ground forces approached Holland during the late summer of 1944, the Dutch Jedburgh teams were alerted for employment. In September, they took part in Operation MARKET-GARDEN, British Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery’s ambitious attempt to seize three bridges in Holland, along with the connecting road corridor, as a means of gaining a bridgehead across the Lower Rhine. For several reasons, but primarily because of

an underestimation of the strength of enemy forces in the target area, the operation was a tragic failure.

Five of the six Dutch Jedburgh teams deployed in September during Operation MARKET-GARDEN included OSS officers and NCOs, eight men in all. Each division involved in the airborne assault had a Jedburgh team attached to provide liaison between the airborne division and the Dutch Resistance in its area of operations. Two teams with OSS personnel parachuted in with Allied forces—one with the U.S. 82d Airborne Division and one with the British 1st Airborne Division. A separate team landed by glider with the airborne corps headquarters. An additional team was dropped into Holland a week before the operation began. A few additional Jedburgh missions, employing many of the same men from the earlier operations, were carried out later but were ineffective as they were quickly overrun by Allied ground forces.

Allied support efforts to the Dutch Resistance had been plagued from the very beginning by the capture, over a period of many months, of virtually all Allied agents dropped into Holland. Many of these agents were forced by the Germans to send radio messages to England requesting additional agents and arms, which then fell into the hands of the enemy. An official assessment of the MARKET-GARDEN operation and the role played by Allied special forces summarized the failure: “The history of Dutch Resistance is not a happy one, because of the misfortunes which beset them before D-day, and the impasse reached at Arnhem in September 1944. But in spite of all these setbacks Dutch resistance did exist even if it was poorly equipped, ill-organized, and ‘riddled by German agents.’”³⁰⁷

Czechoslovakia, 1944–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	8 months (September 1944 to May 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Central Europe Campaign)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

As Allied forces closed in on Czechoslovakia in late 1944—Soviet forces from the east and U.S. forces from the west, the Czech resistance movement staged uprisings in 1944 and 1945. The OSS provided planeloads of arms and

other supplies and infiltrated some three dozen operatives to train and advise the Czechs in sabotage and guerrilla warfare. With no Allied forces reaching them in time, however, the resistance was quickly crushed by German occupation forces, and the OSS men met with a tragic end.

General Eisenhower had no intention of investing American lives in an effort to take Prague, or to advance far into Czechoslovakia at all. Prague was a purely political, rather than a military objective, and General Marshall backed the Supreme Commander in his decision. The Russians had Prague in their sights and would likely be first to reach the Czech capital.

In late August 1944 the Czech resistance mobilized and began an armed insurrection against their German occupiers. Apparently the uprising had been instigated by the Czech government-in-exile in London in anticipation the impending liberation of their country by advancing Soviet forces. Unfortunately, the Czechs had made no arrangements for supplies or other external support. The rebellion was joined by two mutinous divisions of the Slovak Independent Army, which seized Banska Bystrica, far to the east of Prague, for their headquarters. The resistance then used the town's radio station to proclaim their mobilization and to request assistance from the Allies. Through the Czech government in London, OSS arranged for teams to be infiltrated into the country, and the Slovak Army and the partisans prepared a local airfield for their arrival.³⁰⁸

In late July 1944, the Russians had agreed to a U.S. request to send military missions into Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary for the purpose of locating and recovering downed airmen, and this now provided a cover for teams to enter Czechoslovakia. OSS teams began arriving in the Banska Bystrica area in mid-September with missions that included intelligence gathering, recovery of downed Allied aircrews, support to the Czech resistance, and liaison to the Czech Army. At least three small teams—WOLFRAM, DAWES, and HOUSEBOAT—operating in uniform, arrived by parachute or by B-17 bombers that airlanded at the airfield prepared by the partisans. The two teams delivered by B-17 were accompanied by five tons of arms, ammunition, medical supplies, and food for the partisans. The OSS men were to train the partisans in sabotage and guerrilla warfare. Meanwhile, the B-17s departed for their return flight with 15 recovered airmen aboard.³⁰⁹

A large OSS/SO team parachuted into the Tatra Mountains on 25 September, but after failing to link up with the resistance, the men went into hiding. Meanwhile German forces began intense and widespread operations

to destroy the resistance, and the OSS men radioed requests for additional teams. A second group of B-17s, six this time, arrived at Banska Bystrica on 7 October carrying 20 more tons of weapons and delivering another five OSS teams consisting of 16 operatives. When the planes departed they carried 28 Allied airmen.³¹⁰

By 26 October, the disintegrating resistance evacuated Banska Bystrica. The OSS men, now numbering 37, along with several recovered pilots, formed four small groups to accompany the fleeing guerrillas. The terrified guerrillas set off over snow covered mountains in hopes of reaching the Red Army, but they met with disaster as they froze to death by the dozens. In a final attempt to break out, the remaining OSS men and pilots reunited and continued their march through the mountains. Day after day, men froze to death or were captured until the few remaining survivors were caught by the Germans and sent to Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria. There, the men were tortured for information and all were executed on 24 January 1945. With the help of a partisan girl, two OSS officers successfully evaded capture and made their way some 50 miles to Russian lines.³¹¹

One other OSS agent, a native Czech, parachuted near Prague in late February 1945, to link up with contacts in the city. Although he was unable to establish radio contact, he did succeed in organizing a small resistance group that later took part in a 5 May Prague insurrection. While the Russians had promised to break through to aid the Czechoslovaks within two weeks, it ended up costing them the lives of 120,000 men and taking two months, by which time they were too late to assist.³¹²

Poland, 1944–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	7 months (September 1944 to April 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Independent UW (Eastern Front)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

For most of World War II in Europe, the United States provided material support to the Polish Resistance through the British SOE, perhaps in a manner that could be viewed as UW by proxy. The United States provided the equipment and supplies and SOE delivered it.³¹³ The exception came when

the Polish Resistance, the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*), rose up in armed rebellion in what became known as the Warsaw Uprising.

The Polish Resistance was considered by some to be the most thoroughly developed resistance movement in World War II. James Grafton Rogers, the planning chief at OSS Headquarters in Washington during the war, provided a succinct description of the resistance organization after a July 1943 office call by some of its leaders:

The Poles have a whole government underground, an executive, an army, parliament, guerrillas, courts, all managed by wireless from London. Every Pole can be ordered out, as a duty, but only a few hundred thousand belong. ... They reach across France in the coal areas, where 500,000 Poles emigrated since the First World War. ... They use American dollars to buy guns and information. Want no weapons as they get them by purchase, theft or blackmail from the Germans.³¹⁴

On 1 August 1944, as the Red Army was reaching the eastern suburbs of Warsaw and German occupation forces were beginning a withdrawal from the city, the Polish Resistance initiated a massive uprising, timed to benefit from those two events. The Soviets, however, held in place, allowing the Germans to regroup and, over a period of two months, crush the rebellion in a battle that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands on both sides. In August, the chief of staff of the Polish forces in exile arrived at OSS headquarters in London and pleaded for massive airdrops of supplies to the resistance in Warsaw. For several weeks the Soviets prevented planes of the Western Allies from reaching the Poles by refusing to allow their aircraft to land on Soviet occupied territory.

Finally, in September, the Soviets gave in to pressure from the West and allowed some flights in. At that time, all available long-range aircraft in the European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operation were diverted to fly missions dropping supplies to the underground in Warsaw. According to the official published history of OSS, this diversion of aircraft had serious consequences for the Italian Resistance, whose supply drops were cut off at a critical time as they battled German forces who were conducting concentrated counterguerrilla operations.³¹⁵ Unfortunately, the supplies dropped to the Poles were not enough to save them.

The Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), in a curious message to General Eisenhower on 12 May 1945, four days after the end of the war in Europe, declared that OSS and SOE should no longer be providing “supplies for sabotage and intelligence activities” to the Polish government-in-exile in London. The CCS understood that these operations had been terminated sometime earlier.³¹⁶ General Eisenhower relayed the message to the OSS base in London that same day and asked when such support was last provided.³¹⁷ OSS London responded: “Last transfer of equipment and supplies to Polish Government in London by OSS effected 11 April 45 per your directive. No further supplies of equipment will be transferred to them.”³¹⁸

No amount of supplies at that point would have saved the Polish Resistance.

Malaya, 1944–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 14 months (Summer 1944 to September 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Main effort UW (South-East Asian Theater of Operations)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

One of the least known and least effective of OSS UW operations was a minimal effort carried out against Japanese occupation forces in Malaya, and it came at a time when OSS-SOE relations had reached an all-time low.

The unusually close relationship between the OSS and the British SOE during the Allied campaigns in Western Europe began to diminish markedly as General Donovan increased OSS activity in other areas. Throughout UW operations in the Balkans—Yugoslavia, Greece, and Albania—SOE demanded that all such operations be conducted under its direction in accordance with the June 1942 agreement between General Donovan and SOE in which various theaters were designated for American or British lead. As OSS grew and improved its capabilities to a point that at least equaled that of SOE, General Donovan was eager to get his agency more involved throughout the world. This aggressive approach resulted in increased tension between the two Allies as operations shifted to the South-East Asia Command (SEAC),

which was a British-dominated theater established in 1942 under the command of British Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten.³¹⁹

SOE had begun preparing for a war contingency calling for UW operations in Malaya as early as July 1941. In August of that year, a full four months prior to Japan's attacks in December, SOE completed a detailed plan for the organization of stay-behind parties throughout Malaya. These parties would be led by British officers trained in irregular warfare and would include Malay, Chinese, and Indian personnel who were familiar with the country. The parties' mission would be, in the event of invasion and occupation by enemy forces, to gather and report intelligence, conduct sabotage and guerrilla warfare against enemy lines of communication, and disseminate propaganda. The plan was forwarded to Governor and Commander-in-Chief Malaya Sir Shenton Thomas for his review. Thomas disapproved the proposal at that time, but it was resurrected and instituted four months later after the Japanese landing at Kota Bharu, in far northern Malay near the Thai border, and the simultaneous bombing of Singapore.³²⁰

The Japanese invasion of Malaya came on 8 December 1941. Invading forces swept through all of the Malayan peninsula by 15 February 1942 and British forces surrendered.³²¹ Indigenous resistance movements began to appear shortly after the Japanese invasion, with the first large organization being the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union. Later, a military wing was organized under the name of Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), sometimes referred to as the Anti-Japanese Union Forces (AJUF).³²² This group eventually grew to be the strongest in Malaya, with a presence throughout the peninsula.

SOE's Far East operating arm, known as Force 136, had the mission of arming and training the MPAJA. The British were somewhat cautious in dealing with the MPAJA, however, because of its reported communist leadership. Force 136 also supported Malay-based and Kuomintang (Nationalist) Chinese groups.³²³

Beginning in December 1941, a few young Force 136 officers infiltrated deep into the Malayan jungle to implement the stay-behind plan, all the while operating in close proximity to the invading Japanese forces.³²⁴ The British made contact with the MPAJA, became fully engaged with the group, and by the end of the war Force 136 would arm and train a force of a few thousand MPAJA guerrillas.

British, and especially SOE, hostility toward the OSS was aggravated by British concerns of the political implications of U.S. personnel operating with Southeast Asian populations that London considered to be British subjects. Largely as a means of providing some protection to American forces and interests in the Theater, General Donovan created a new OSS unit, Detachment 404, for command and control of all OSS operations in Southeast Asia except for northern Burma, where Detachment 101 operated.³²⁵ An OSS officer named S. Dillon Ripley took command of Detachment 404 headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon (today Sri Lanka), where SEAC headquarters was also located. SEAC headquarters included a planning and operations element known as “P Division” that was responsible for approving and coordinating all clandestine operations within the theater. A British naval officer served as head of P Division; an OSS officer served as his deputy.³²⁶

OSS planned to conduct limited clandestine operations on the Malayan peninsula, supporting Malayan resistance and gathering intelligence, to include monitoring British SOE and SIS activity.³²⁷ An early plan for an operation code-named JUKEBOX emerged in the summer of 1944. Possibly in support of OSS operations in support of the Free Thai movement in Thailand, JUKEBOX involved activities designed to stimulate resistance in Kelantan, the northernmost Malay state bordering Thailand and under Thai control.³²⁸ Kelantan had been transferred to Thailand by the Japanese in 1943 (Thailand and Japan were technically allies) and remained a Thai province until it once again came under British protection in August 1945.

The JUKEBOX operation was eventually cancelled and planning began for Operation JUKEBOX II. P Division, however, insisted that JUKEBOX II be carried out jointly with an SOE operation called OATMEAL. Infiltration was to be made by British submarine and OSS, dependent upon British transportation in the theater, had no choice but to agree. Shortly before departing, though, the men of OATMEAL refused to work with the OSS men, so JUKEBOX II was also cancelled. The OATMEAL operation proceeded on its own, but the entire team was soon captured by the Japanese.³²⁹

OSS launched a team of three OSS men and three Malay born Chinese agents in Operation CAIRNGORM on 9 November 1944. The team’s mission was to contact a Chinese resistance group and operate with them for the remainder of the war. The men parachuted into the Malay jungle, linked up with Chinese guerrillas, and began harassing Japanese forces.³³⁰ But at OSS headquarters in Ceylon, nothing was heard from the team for several

The team's mission was to contact a Chinese resistance group and operate with them for the remainder of the war.

months.³³¹ When the commander of Force 136's subordinate Group B complained that the CAIRNGORM operation had not been coordinated with him and that it did not include a British officer, Force 136 headquarters responded, "I think we must assume that OSS will continue to operate in Malaya, and you should therefore concentrate on ensuring that we give the lead in policy and that they conform to it rather than on attempting to freeze them out altogether. ... We are awaiting with great interest details of CAIRNGORM."³³²

SOE continued to demand that British Force 136 officers lead all operations conducted in Japanese-occupied British territory, i.e., in Burma and Malaya. They intended to press the matter in an upcoming meeting with General Donovan. As for operations in Thailand, the British recognized that the Americans would likely never concede leadership to SOE, just as SOE would never concede it to OSS.³³³

The CAIRNGORM mission was followed by CAIRNGORM II in May 1945. Nothing had yet been heard from the first operation.³³⁴ Once in the field, the CAIRNGORM II team linked up with a British party, Operation PONTOON, which had infiltrated in February 1945.³³⁵

Subsequent integrated OSS-Force 136 operations did not go well. Friction continued for several months, but by August, after OSS assigned a full-time liaison officer to Group B, relations did improve somewhat and integration of operations improved as well.³³⁶

Probably the final OSS team to be infiltrated into Malaya was Operation YOUNG, which parachuted into the northern reaches of the Malayan state of Johore on 9 August 1945 to collect intelligence and to assist SOE parties working with the AJUF 3rd Regimental Group Area. The team, after reporting that the AJUF was completely communist, was still in a position to witness the withdrawal of Japanese forces at the time of Japan's surrender.³³⁷ In a 15 September 1945 memorandum, Lieutenant Colonel Amos D. Moscrip, the operations officer for OSS headquarters, India-Burma Theater, wrote that the only team that OSS still had on the ground in Malaya was Operation CAIRNGORM, and that radio communication with the team "is not entirely satisfactory."³³⁸

The Allied effort in Malaya by the late summer of 1945 was aimed at building up a guerrilla force that could support Allied landings on Malaya,

which were first expected to come in August. The target date was then slipped to October and possibly would not happen before winter. The invasion never came before Japan surrendered. As a point of interest, plans for Operation ZIPPER, the Allied invasion of Malaya, included plans for the insertion of Jedburgh teams.³³⁹ A British Military Administration formally assumed control of Malaya from the Japanese occupiers under the provisions of the surrender agreement signed by Japan on 15 August 1945.³⁴⁰

Germany and Austria, 1944–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	8 months (September 1944 to May 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Central Europe Campaign)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Inconclusive (begun but not fully executed by war's end)

In September 1944, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEP) G-3, in a directive signed by General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff (and future CIA director) Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith, directed SFHQ to begin subversive operations and sabotage within Germany with the intention of "hastening the surrender or disintegration of the German armed forces" and "crippling the German war effort as a whole."³⁴¹

In the "Sabotage" section of the January directive, SHAEP G-3 made it clear that sabotage activities were a second priority after the subversive activities. Sabotage should be directed at: "Enemy rail communications to the Western Front, particularly those leading into the Ruhr [industrial area]; Enemy telecommunications; Enemy war factories, particularly those employed on V weapons" [rockets]; and "Public utilities."³⁴²

A follow-up SHAEP directive dated 29 January 1945 elaborated on the September directive, providing detailed objectives for both the subversion and sabotage efforts. With regard to the former, the directive clarified that subversive activities in Germany were to be aimed at "bringing about the downfall of Germany from within." This was to involve contacting and exploiting "any dissident German elements which may appear," especially those that encourage desertion or mutiny by German servicemen.

Furthermore, SFHQ was to conduct operations to organize groups of workers to initiate strike activities. “You should concentrate your efforts,” the directive continued, “primarily on transportation workers, telecommunication operators, and fuel and power utility employees, calling for local and general strikes when conditions offer a reasonable chance for success. You will NOT arm dissident German elements save in exceptional circumstances and with the express permission of this Headquarters.”³⁴³

Such “exceptional circumstances” arose for U.S. Army Captain Aaron Bank of OSS’s SO Branch, who was selected as one of the operators who would help implement this plan. Bank must have been skeptical with regard to the idea of finding “dissident German elements” after his first meeting with the chief of SFHQ’s German desk. “He told me apologetically,” Bank later wrote, “that the Allied advance had been so swift that the OSS hadn’t had a real opportunity to do any advance planning for covert activities in Germany.” Although the officer hoped to have more information in about a week, he added that thus far, “We have no definite information on which to base a resistance/guerrilla operation.” His hopes were further deflated when an officer at the SO Branch desk told him that they had “no information on dissident groups that have a guerrilla potential.”³⁴⁴ Security was simply too tight.

In early 1945, however, he was told that a different approach was to be tried. Bank was given a mission designed to use an unorthodox form of resistance. The bizarre and risky plan, code named IRON CROSS, called for him to “raise a company strength unit of German defectors, military and civilian,” and form them into an ersatz German Gebirgsjäger (mountain infantry) company, complete with German uniforms. Upon completion of an intense training program, the unit would parachute into the expected final Nazi holdout area, or “National Redoubt,” in the Bavarian and Austrian Alps. Once on the ground, they would engage in “subversion, sabotage, and guerrilla actions; and above all capture high-ranking Nazis.”³⁴⁵

Recruiting produced a unit of around 170 men, mostly prisoners of war, who then completed weeks of difficult training near St. Germain, France. Bank worked with air planners to choose a drop zone near the Inn Valley in Austria. He was still waiting for a break in the weather over the drop zone when he was notified that the U.S. Seventh Army had already pushed into the Inn Valley in Austria, thus negating the need for his mission. Years later he learned that the real reason for their cancellation was due to State

Department pressure and the diminished Allied tolerance for accepting risk at this late stage in the war.³⁴⁶

Jedburgh teams were also in the process of being assembled and briefed for missions into Austria in the last weeks of the war, but it is unclear from surviving records whether or not the teams ever infiltrated prior to the end of the war in Europe.

China, 1944–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	8 months (December 1944 to August 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (China Defensive and China Offensive Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Because the invading Japanese had occupied most of China’s coastal areas, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the nationalist Chinese leader, established a temporary capital in Chungking, some 500 miles inland. Other than a small OSS presence, the only Allied military unit in China in 1942 was the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force, based at Kunming.³⁴⁷

Since American operatives would be easily noticeable in China, then Colonel Donovan and his SO Branch chief, Robert Solborg, in January 1942, eager to initiate guerrilla and sabotage operations in China, devised a scheme for using Korean personnel. Not surprisingly, this ignored the complexities of Chinese-Korean political relations and was immediately denounced by the Chinese.³⁴⁸

That early awkward attempt was followed, after a three-year hiatus during which Chiang Kai-Shek prohibited foreign clandestine activity in China, with a successful UW campaign. In December 1944, General Donovan appointed Colonel Richard Heppner chief of the OSS mission in China, reporting directly to Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who had succeeded General Stillwell as chief of staff to Chiang and commander of all U.S. forces in the theater. Heppner appointed Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Willis as head of his SO Branch and Lieutenant Colonel A. T. Cox as head of a new Chinese OG. The creation of an independent OSS organization in China

resulted largely from General Donovan's constant complaining about being locked out of Chiang Kai-Shek's theater. The new command benefitted from the German surrender in Europe, which freed up many OSS operatives to be shifted to East Asia to carry out secret intelligence and special operations.

The Chinese Operational Group (OG). To help improve the performance of the Nationalist Chinese army, U.S. and Chinese leaders agreed, in January 1945, to create a force of Chinese commandos under the mentorship of an OSS OG. The Chinese Army was to provide enough troops to form 20 commando units. Unlike the European OGs, no ethnic Chinese-American personnel were recruited for the Chinese OG. Rather, the unit was assembled from men gathered largely from veterans of OG and Jedburgh operations in Europe. The entire OSS Chinese OG, when finally assembled, included 160 officers and 230 enlisted men.³⁴⁹ They would provide the leadership and form the cadre around which the Chinese commando units would be formed, each of which was to include 154 Chinese troops and 19 OSS officers and men.³⁵⁰ Although the Chinese army's contribution to the effort was less than expected, both in terms of the number and the quality of trainees, OSS equipped and prepared the commandos with an eight-week course in weapons, guerrilla tactics, and parachuting at a base in Kunming. In the end, a total of seven commando units saw action before hostilities ended. "Although the commandos later suffered severe losses in the field," wrote an OSS historian, "they exhibited a fighting spirit rare in the other Nationalist combat units, but lack of coordination and their subsequent misuse as line infantry were major problems. Nevertheless, by the time the Japanese finally surrendered in August 1945, the commandos appeared to have become an effective fighting force."³⁵¹

Special Operations (SO) Teams. In addition to the OG, four-man teams of SO operators were conducting guerrilla warfare against Japanese forces in southern China using Chinese partisans by the summer of 1945. OSS veterans of European Jedburgh and OG missions, as well as other SO Branch personnel, conducted effective UW with the Chinese guerrillas. An example of the operations conducted by the SO teams was a mission successfully completed by Team JACKAL. This team was led by U.S. Army Colonel Frank Mills and Major Paul Cyr, an OSS officer who had completed two Jedburgh missions in France. Team JACKAL carried out an operation to destroy a mile-long railway bridge over the Yellow River. The strategic value of the bridge was evident by the loss of 2,000 Japanese soldiers aboard the troop

train that was crossing the bridge at the time it was blown on 9 August 1945, the very same day the American Air Force dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. The train and its cargo of enemy troops dropped into the Yellow River as two full spans of the bridge collapsed.³⁵²

As judged by historian and archivist Lawrence H. McDonald, the Jedburghs who transferred to the China Theater upon the liberation of France met with “the same success as in Europe.”³⁵³ In the words of historian David Hogan, “On balance, OSS UW operations in China were successful “but came too late in the war to have much of an impact.”³⁵⁴

North Korea, 1950 to 1955	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 60 months (December 1950 to 1955)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Korean War)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (First UN Counteroffensive 1951, CCF Spring Counteroffensive 1951, UN Summer–Fall Offensive 1951, Second Korean Winter 1951–1952, Korea Summer–Fall 1952, Third Korean Winter 1952–1953, and Korea Summer 1953 Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

Communist North Korean forces invaded South Korea in the early morning hours of 25 June 1950. On June 30, President Harry S. Truman ordered U.S. forces into action, alongside other United Nations forces, to restore South Korean sovereignty. This entailed the restoration of peace and the restoration of the pre-war border.³⁵⁵

Communist China intervened in November 1950. Many anti-communist North Koreans fled to islands off Korea’s northwest coast. Far East Command and Eighth United States Army (EUSA) took action to exploit the opportunity to organize a North Korean guerrilla force. On 15 January 1951, EUSA headquarters established a guerrilla section within the office of the G-3. One month later, this section deployed a six-man cadre to the large island of Paengnyong-do to begin organizing, equipping, and training a partisan force to conduct UW operations behind enemy lines under Eighth Army and United Nations command.³⁵⁶

Far East Command (FECOM) established the Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRAK) in November 1951 with the intention of consolidating control of all guerrilla operations in Korea. Unfortunately, CCRAK was never given any command authority. At the same time the Army was forming CCRAK, the CIA established a headquarters to supervise all of its paramilitary and intelligence operations in theater. The organization was named Joint Activities Commission, Korea (JACK), with Jedburgh veteran U.S. Army Major John K. Singlaub detailed to the Agency as deputy commander. Several other Army personnel were detailed to JACK, as well.³⁵⁷

The overall partisan force organization underwent several designation changes until November 1952, when it became known as UN Partisan Forces Korea (UNPFK). EUSA then established a unit designated Recovery Command, 8007th Army Unit, on 15 January 1953. This unit was to use guerrillas to gather information on UN prisoners of war, as well as tactical intelligence, and establish escape and evasion networks to aid downed UN aircrews. Agents were inserted on the mainland by Korean junks and were to return to be picked up after a specified number of days. Most failed to return.³⁵⁸ One team commander, a U.S. Army first lieutenant, later commented, “We expended a lot of energy for little result. I wish we had better briefings and training before we went. There was a total lack of coordination.”³⁵⁹

The UN objective of restoring the South Korean state was achieved and China, North Korea, and the United States signed an Armistice on 27 July 1953. In September 1953, a couple of months after the armistice and during a time when the guerrillas were being demobilized, with some being incorporated into the South Korean Army, there was one final redesignation. UNPFK became United Nations Partisan Infantry, Korea (UNPIK). In the end, the guerrilla command, regardless of what name it was operating under, proved somewhat successful at times at the tactical level. The real problem was at theater level, where the dizzying parade of organizational changes never resulted in an operational or theater-strategic role for the guerrillas.³⁶⁰

Upon the signing of the Armistice, UN forces ceased parachuting guerrillas and agents behind North Korean lines, but, according to one source, infiltration by ground and sea continued into 1955. At that time, most of the U.S. Army Special Forces personnel, who had been assigned to Korea after being among the first graduates of Special Forces training at Fort Bragg’s Special Warfare Center, continued training or demobilizing guerrillas.³⁶¹

UW, as carried out by U.S. forces during the Korean War has been generally viewed as unsuccessful for many reasons. At the highest levels there was little or no strategic or operational direction provided to those charged with conducting operations. The Army-trained guerrilla force experienced some tactical-level success, but they operated with very little guidance or supervision, largely because FECOM and EUSA “were frankly unsure how to employ them.”³⁶² Another factor contributing to the failure was a poor and constantly changing command and control structure. The ad hoc structure that did exist “diffused authority and blurred lines of responsibility, rather than centralizing.”³⁶³ There never was a serious attempt at building a joint or combined UW command, which led to a lack of theater-level planning and coordination.³⁶⁴ Operations also suffered from an almost total lack of FECOM-CIA coordination.³⁶⁵

Both FECOM and the CIA failed in important aspects of UW during the conflict. Early in the war, as a result of the loss of American lives on a mission deep behind enemy lines, FECOM prohibited any further participation in such operations by U.S. personnel. This decision left the UW effort hamstrung and would have disastrous consequences. According to historian Michael Krivdo, at least seventeen more missions were conducted adhering to the “no U.S. personnel” restriction, creating a “vicious cycle” where “succeeding waves of poorly qualified, inexperienced Korean guerrillas were committed to one-way operations where none survived.” “As a result,” Krivdo continued, “more than 400 Korean guerrillas were parachuted into North Korea between 22 January 1952 and 19 May 1953 and none were ever seen again.”³⁶⁶

As happened in the USSR and Eastern Europe and would later occur in Vietnam, the CIA trained its guerrillas and agents and inserted them into North Korea, but they never returned. “The lack of CIA familiarity with Communist-imposed social controls meant that this practice continued throughout the war.”³⁶⁷ The Tucker and Lamb work, *United States Special Operations Forces*, best sums up the Korean experience: “unconventional warfare in the Korean War accomplished little, but wasted a lot of precious manpower.”³⁶⁸

Kuwait, 1990–1991	
Duration of U.S. Support	4 months (September 1990 to January 1991)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Gulf War)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Defense of Saudi Arabia Campaign, Liberation and Defense of Kuwait Campaign)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Iraqi armored forces led an invasion of the neighboring state of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The small, oil-rich nation fell within days and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein’s forces occupied Kuwaiti territory up to the border with Saudi Arabia. With the occupation of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein controlled 20 percent of the world’s oil reserves and many believed he contemplated moving into eastern Saudi Arabia, a move that would increase his control to 45–50 percent of oil reserves.³⁶⁹

President George H. W. Bush outlined his decision on a U.S. response to Iraq’s aggression in a Secret policy document on 20 August 1990. He described how vital U.S. interests were placed at risk by the unprovoked invasion and occupation of Kuwait by forces of the government of Iraq on 2 August and laid out four objectives that would guide U.S. policy relating to the crisis: “the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait; the restoration of Kuwait’s legitimate government to replace the puppet regime installed by Iraq; a commitment to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf; and, the protection of the lives of American citizens abroad.”³⁷⁰

The United States was, prepared, if necessary, to enforce compliance with sanctions imposed by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The president announced that he had ordered the deployment of U.S. military forces to the region “to deter and, if necessary, defend Saudi Arabia and other friendly states in the Gulf region from further Iraqi aggression; and to enforce the mandatory Chapter 7 sanctions under Article 51 of the UN Charter and UNSC Resolutions 660 and 661.”³⁷¹

To ensure the defense of Saudi Arabia, President Bush deployed the XVIII Airborne Corps to that country in an operation named DESERT SHIELD. Beginning in mid-September, U.S. Army Special Forces helped to reconstitute and prepare the Kuwaiti military to take part in the liberation of their country by training Kuwaiti soldiers in Saudi Arabia. They trained a total of 6,357 troops, forming a Kuwaiti Special Forces battalion, a commando brigade, and three infantry brigades.³⁷² More in the way of UW, Special Forces also helped build the Kuwaiti resistance from bases in Saudi Arabia, though the role of the resistance was confined mainly to intelligence gathering and reporting.³⁷³

On 29 November 1990, the UNSC adopted Resolution 678, which authorized members to use “all necessary means” to enforce all UNSC resolutions if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991.³⁷⁴ A large, multinational coalition, now armed with a UN mandate, was prepared to liberate Kuwait. On 12 January, the U.S. Congress voted to authorize President Bush to use force in carrying out UN Resolutions. With the deployment of an additional corps, VII Corps from Germany, the United States participated in Operation DESERT STORM, which commenced on 17 January 1991 with air strikes on Iraq. A swift ground campaign followed in February and the liberation of Kuwait was completed by the first week of April 1991.

The commander of United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, had never been a strong supporter of SOF and had never developed much confidence in them. As a result, in Operation DESERT STORM he “used SOF reluctantly and conservatively.”³⁷⁵ He did, however, later make brief but favorable mention in his war memoir of the success of SOF in deep reconnaissance missions, behind-the-lines raids, advisory assistance to Arab units, and the work to reorganize and equip the Kuwaitis.³⁷⁶

Iraq, 2002–2003	
Duration of U.S. Support	14 months (February 2002 to April 2003)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Global War on Terror)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Operation IRAQI FREEDOM)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

America's most recent large UW experience came in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the U.S.-led coalition attack on Iraq, which began on 20 March 2003, although work with the resistance had begun well before that. Despite the phenomenal success experienced by SOF and the CIA in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001, when debate began about an operation to defeat Saddam Hussein, agency officials cautioned the Bush administration that a very different approach was needed for Iraq. A campaign to bring down Hussein would require a comprehensive operation employing all instruments of national power.³⁷⁷ Iraq, after all, was not the backward country that Afghanistan was; it possessed "substantial infrastructure and military capability."³⁷⁸

Preparation began as early as February 2002, when the CIA resurrected their Northern Iraq Liaison Element (NILE) teams among the Kurdish population of northern Iraq.³⁷⁹ CIA and SOF operatives began infiltrating Northern Iraq as early as July 2002 to organize and support the Kurdish resistance.³⁸⁰ They worked continuously over many months under austere conditions and under the threat of Iraqi security forces to prepare for the coming campaign. Intelligence officers recruited a broad network of agents for gathering and reporting data on Iraqi forces. U.S. Army Special Forces personnel were introduced to those who would take part in military operations—sabotage and guerrilla warfare.³⁸¹

In the spring of 2003, USCENTCOM was given the mission of ending the regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and the Baath party in Iraq.³⁸² Hussein was widely viewed as a threat to U.S. interests throughout the 1990s, since the Gulf War of 1991 and well before 9/11. Iraq under Saddam, a state supporter of terrorism, was a danger not only to the region but to the entire world. The greatest fear was that Iraq might someday acquire weapons of mass destruction and get them into the hands of terrorists.³⁸³ Saddam Hussein was seen as such a menace to world peace that the U.S. Congress had even passed legislation in 1998 explicitly and openly making regime change in Iraq a U.S. foreign policy goal.

Operating in support of the Combined Forces Land Component Command for the invasion of Iraq, Special Operations Command, Central (SOC-CENT) planned to establish a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, or CJSOTF, in the Kurdish Autonomous Zone in northern Iraq. Composed mostly of forces from the U.S. Army's 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), the task force would conduct UW operations with Kurdish Peshmerga forces

to tie down several Iraqi Corps north of Baghdad. CJSOTF-North, also called Task Force Viking, included an Air Force SOF element from the 352nd Special Operations Group (SOG) to serve as the Joint Special Operations Air Detachment.³⁸⁴

The United States was prepared to arm the two largest Kurdish factions, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), but difficulties arose in delivering the large shipments of weapons required when Turkey balked at permitting U.S. planes to transit its airspace.³⁸⁵ The situation worsened. Plans called for CJSOTF-North's UW operation to be conducted in support of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, which would enter Iraq from Turkey. That division, however, was stopped when the Turkish government decided to deny the transit of ground forces, as well. Because of this, Task Force Viking transitioned from a supporting force to a supported force responsible for tying down several Iraqi divisions in the north to prevent them from moving to engage the invasion force from the south. To reinforce the 10th Special Forces Group, USCENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks dropped the 173rd Airborne Brigade a week after D-Day.³⁸⁶ Task Force Viking was also later assigned tactical control of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).³⁸⁷

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM kicked off on the night of 19 March 2003. Within a few days, planes of the 352nd SOG landed 51 Special Forces A-Detachments into northern Iraq.³⁸⁸ As the multinational force invasion continued, more than 60,000 Peshmerga fighters, fighting alongside their Special Forces advisors, succeeded in fixing 13 of 20 Iraqi divisions along a 350-kilometer front north of Baghdad.³⁸⁹ In addition, Task Force Viking eliminated a rear area threat, the terrorist group Ansar al-Islam, secured oil fields, and captured the key northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul.³⁹⁰

Efforts by the 5th Special Forces Group to coordinate the operations of Shia resistance in Southern Iraq, though, were less successful. The Shia did not have the benefit of operating from a self-governed sanctuary, as did the Kurds, and the quick tempo of the war did not allow adequate time to organize an effective UW campaign in the south.

Iraqi forces were defeated, and Saddam Hussein's regime collapsed within five weeks from the commencement of operations. In assessing the contribution of SOF to the victory in Iraq, analysts Tucker and Lamb wrote, "SOF's ability to lead the fight in the North became the decisive element in victory in that area of operations. In a tacit acknowledgment of the importance of SOF

in the fight in Northern Iraq, for the first time in American military history, conventional brigades were placed under the command of a SOF colonel.³⁹¹

E. Lines of Communication (LOC) Disruption

Most UW operations, to some degree, include a requirement to interdict enemy lines of communication. This section of the disruption category describes STR operations that were conducted with the *primary purpose* of interdicting, cutting, or harassing enemy lines of communication, those routes that connect a military force in the field with its support base or that otherwise provide fairly secure movement of forces from one part of a theater of operations to another.

Norway, 1943–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	25 months (April 1943 to May 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

German forces invaded Norway and Denmark in operations beginning on the night of 8–9 April 1940. After evacuation of the royal family to establish a government-in-exile in London, the collaborator Vidkun Quisling took over the government, which was then ruled throughout the war by a German Reichskommissar with Quisling’s puppet government assisting.³⁹²

Both OSS and SOE, operating under SFHQ, organized, armed, and sustained resistance forces in Norway. The Norwegian counterpart of SOE and OSS Special Operations Branch was F.O. IV. The main resistance organization operating in Norway was Milorg, which took its orders from the Norwegian chief of staff through F.O. IV.³⁹³

OSS activated the Norwegian OG in April 1943 under the command of SFHQ and with a liaison connection to the Norwegian military attaché. The OG, recruited in the United States, arrived in Scotland in December 1943,

where they began advanced training under the direction of the Scandinavian Section of SFHQ. Just prior to the Normandy invasion, SHAEF decided to commit the Norwegian OG to post-D-Day operations in France.³⁹⁴ In December 1944, the Norwegian OG that had been employed in France was reconstituted to form the NORSO (Norwegian Special Operations) Group, with an authorized strength of four officers and 50 enlisted men.³⁹⁵

The most significant wartime OSS operation in occupied Norway involved disrupting German operations by interdicting critical enemy lines of communication. Upon the completion of SFHQ operations in France, Major William E. Colby, who had earlier served on a French Jedburgh mission, was appointed commander of the NORSO Group. Colby divided the group into two teams for employment—a main unit of three officers and around 30 enlisted men, designated NORSO I, and a second unit of one officer and 18 enlisted men, under the command of First Lieutenant Roger Hall, designated NORSO II. Aside from the two team leaders, nearly all of the men on the OG were Norwegian nationals or Norwegian-Americans. Four members of the Norwegian underground accompanied the team.³⁹⁶

Allied intelligence had learned that there were at least 150,000 German troops concentrated in the Narvik and Tromsø areas of Northern Norway. These crack ski and mountain forces were preparing to move southward to position them for employment in the defense of the German homeland. General Eisenhower was determined to prevent the movement of these enemy forces toward Germany and was counting on the OSS teams to stop them. With road transportation out of the question because all roads were still blocked from heavy winter snowfalls, the Germans planned to use the single-track Nordland Railway line for the first leg of their southern movement to Trondheim, a port in central Norway.³⁹⁷

Operation RYPE got underway in March 1945 with a mission of intensified railway sabotage to interdict German troop movement from Northern Norway. The first NORSO contingent departed the United Kingdom, in uniform, for Norway on 24 March.³⁹⁸ The NORSO I part of the RYPE operation started out badly, with jumpers and equipment bundles scattered over a 36-square mile area and, six days later, a plane carrying the remainder of the NORSO I team crashing in inclement weather conditions, killing six of Colby's men. Colby was left with 20 Americans and the four Norwegian underground members to accomplish a mission that he judged called for at least 35 men.³⁹⁹

When the team set out on skis to find their target, the men of NORSO I were loaded down with a variety of weapons and 180 pounds of TNT. Unable to reach the Grana Bridge according to their initial plan, the team settled on the long Tangen Bridge. The men planted their entire stock of TNT on the bridge and watched as the structure disintegrated when blown. Then the men started out for their base, an underground hideout some 30 miles away, on skis, pursued the entire way by German planes and ground troops. Eventually, the men reached the base, where they rested and feasted on elk. Four days later they received an air drop of supplies.⁴⁰⁰

The Allies considered it “imperative that the number of troops reaching Germany from Norway should be kept to the minimum,” and that those that did succeed in withdrawing be delayed as long as possible.⁴⁰¹ By April

The Allies considered it “imperative that the number of troops reaching Germany from Norway should be kept to the minimum,” and that those that did succeed in withdrawing be delayed as long as possible.

1945, operations in support of resistance organizations took on a new importance as Germany needed the reinforcement of over 15 divisions then located in Scandinavia—12 in Norway and three and a half in Denmark. The German divisions located in Norway in April 1945 included an aggregate strength of as many as 200,000 troops. Added to that were the German Air Force units with a total

strength of 50,000 and Naval forces estimated at 60,000. There were also some 5,000 German police in Norway.⁴⁰² RYPE and three other SFHQ missions attacked the Nordland Railway eight times between 15 and 28 April 1945, achieving their mission of delaying the retreat of enemy forces to Germany.⁴⁰³

The troops of the NORSO Group constituted the only uniformed Allied forces in Norway at the time of the German capitulation. On 7 May 1945, SHAEF announced the surrender of all German air, sea, and land forces. At that time, NORSO II had arrived in Norway and assisted Norwegian authorities in accepting the surrender of German forces in the town of Namsos. The team also seized Vaernes airfield, still occupied by German forces, and disarmed a large number of SS troops at the airfield.⁴⁰⁴ NORSO I soon joined NORSO II at Namsos and assisted in supervising the surrender and policing of some 10,000 Germans.⁴⁰⁵

After press announcements revealed that the neutral Swedish government had cooperated with Allied intelligence and special operations projects

during the war, General Donovan wrote a letter to President Truman informing him of the character and extent of such cooperation. He described how the positioning of OSS personnel in Sweden enabled them to collect intelligence on Germany and to support Norwegian and Danish resistance movements. OSS officers were attached to the American Legation in Stockholm and to consular officers in other cities, such as Malmö on Sweden's southernmost coast. "At all times," General Donovan wrote, "the greatest possible care was taken not to jeopardize" U.S.-Swedish relations. All activity was conducted with the knowledge and "tacit consent" of the Swedish government.⁴⁰⁶

Radio stations in Sweden allowed OSS to relay communications from resistance forces in Norway and Denmark to SFHQ in London. Stores of arms and ammunition, explosives, and other equipment were secretly stored in Sweden. When required in the field, materiel was either dropped by parachute into Norway or Denmark or moved by sled across the border into Norway. Hundreds of tons of material were successfully sent to the field in this manner. In Norway, these materials were used in guerrilla warfare against German convoys and in "continuous sabotage" of railway lines between Oslo and ports along Sweden's southern coast.⁴⁰⁷ Another sizable supply operation was carried out that involved the smuggling of 140 tons of arms, ammunition, plastic explosives, food, and clothing. By the beginning of April 1945 some 70 tons had been successfully shipped.⁴⁰⁸

By 24 May 1945, OSS had a total of 37 personnel in Norway. This included four officers and 24 enlisted men of the NORSO Group, as well as several Civil Affairs personnel attached to OSS.⁴⁰⁹ When Norwegian Crown Prince Olaf returned to Trondheim from England, the NORSO men served as an honor guard and remained with him during the parade held in his honor on 10 June.⁴¹⁰ The RYPE mission was deemed an "unqualified success," although at the cost of 14 airmen and 10 special forces personnel killed. The NORSO group returned to the United States in late June 1945.⁴¹¹

Denmark, 1943–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	21 months (August 1943 to May 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Denmark was unique as the only Western European state to allow the Germans to occupy their country without a fight. The government and the king, even the police and the military staffs were allowed to carry on their business, at least for the first three years. On 29 August 1943 the Germans took complete control of the country with an occupation force estimated at 85,000 from all Services.⁴¹²

As with the Norwegian Resistance, the Danish Resistance was noted for its “relative solidarity” and its avoidance of the internal political divisions so evident in the resistance organizations in other countries.⁴¹³ In the opinion of historian William Breuer, “as resistants to Nazi tyranny, the Danes had no equal in Europe.” The Danish underground’s action arm was known as “The Princes” and its components included “The Priests,” whose specialty was the surveillance of harbors and maritime sabotage; “The Barristers,” saboteurs of German telecommunications; “The Brewers,” specialists at sabotaging electric grids; and “The Painters,” who attacked railways and locomotives.⁴¹⁴

Both OSS and SOE maintained subordinate organizations, operating under cover, in neutral Sweden. The SOE Stockholm Mission had been operating for nearly five years, while OSS’s WESTFIELD Mission had only been operational for 16 months by April 1945. The function of both organizations was to collect intelligence, maintain communications with Scandinavian resistance forces and SFHQ elements in the field, and enable the support of those resistance forces.⁴¹⁵

Supply operations to the Danish Resistance could be complicated, with SOE shipments often moving from England to Stockholm, then by British government courier to Gothenburg, where an SOE agent transloaded the materiel to a boat for passage to Jutland. Similarly, OSS shipments arriving at

the American Legation in Stockholm were carried by a special WESTFIELD courier to Malmö on the southern coast, where the materiel was loaded onto a boat for shipment to South Denmark. The WESTFIELD mission also managed radio communications from the field using a new, ultra-high frequency system that was much less susceptible to German direction-finding operations than older systems.⁴¹⁶

The Danish Resistance had mastered the task of shepherding clandestine travelers through their country. OSS agents needing to penetrate Germany found the easiest route to be from Sweden to Denmark by boat, with the help of the WESTFIELD Mission, then from Denmark to Germany with the assistance of the underground.⁴¹⁷

On 19 August 1943, SOE suggested that 10 to 20 Danish-American personnel should be recruited in the United States for service with the Danish Secret Army. In the first week of January 1944, the Scandinavian Section at SOE/SO Headquarters in London learned from Washington that the Danish-American recruiting effort netted only two officers and one enlisted man. Plans for the establishment of a Danish OG were therefore dropped for lack of enough personnel, but a Danish desk was set up within the Scandinavian Section with OSS Captain Kai Grandjean Winkelhorn, a U.S. Army Transportation Corps officer, as the desk officer.⁴¹⁸

For the purposes of SOE/SO, operations with the Danish Resistance were carried out under British control. SOE had been active in Denmark earlier than OSS, but SO Branch's WESTFIELD mission, operating from neutral Sweden, had become quite active and important. It ran the only functioning clandestine boat service for the delivery of personnel and supplies into Denmark and carried out sabotage and other operations with the underground. Sabotage of railroads and factories serving the German war effort had been very effective.⁴¹⁹

Special Force Headquarters (SFHQ)—as SOE/SO Headquarters had been renamed in May 1944—decided in early September to send a few Anglo-American special operations missions into Denmark in the near future,⁴²⁰ but the need to do so gained urgency by early 1945. The importance of Denmark to the Allies was its position as a transit corridor for some of the German forces withdrawing from Norway. Troops were shuttled by boat from Norwegian ports to the Danish port of Aarhus and then moved by rail to the homeland. German troops stationed in Denmark might also begin a withdrawal to Germany.⁴²¹

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German military and security officials in Denmark were becoming increasingly alarmed at the tempo and effectiveness of sabotage by the resistance. This was particularly true of attacks on factories working for Germany and railway sabotage that seriously impaired the movement of

reinforcements to the Western Front.⁴²² On 25 January 1945, SFHQ ordered its chief organizers in Denmark to increase railway sabotage against German troop movements to the maximum.⁴²³ Organizers were Danish officers who had been trained in the United Kingdom and had been temporarily commissioned as captains or lieutenants in the British army.⁴²⁴ Explosives and other supplies parachuted into Denmark during 1944 and the first two months of 1945 totaled over 268 tons. By the end of March, reports indicated that the Danish underground had succeeded in paralyzing railway traffic and disrupting telecommunications in Jutland. Rail traffic southward was virtually brought to a stop for long periods of time, and, as one OSS report noted, “not one train arrives in Germany without having been subject to sabotage.”⁴²⁵

By early March, plans were being made for the introduction of Jedburgh teams into Denmark. As in France and the Low Countries, the Jedburghs would assist in organizing resistance elements and would serve as a liaison and communications link between the Allied high command and the resistance. They would also organize and execute direct action operations, especially to preserve vital facilities and infrastructure from destruction by retreating Germans, and were to be prepared to accept the surrender of German forces in Denmark on behalf of the supreme commander.⁴²⁶ An officer with the rank of major was considered to be needed for negotiating with Germans of higher rank. If the Germans decided to fight in Denmark, the Jedburghs would assist in organizing Danish resistance groups for guerrilla operations.⁴²⁷ The “BRAM” teams, as the Jedburgh teams bound for Denmark were called, would be dropped into all regions throughout Denmark.⁴²⁸ Because of the scarcity of forested areas, it was certain that all Jedburgh personnel would need to change into civilian clothing after landing by parachute.⁴²⁹

Six Jedburgh teams were to be formed, each consisting of a British or U.S. officer as leader, a Danish officer, and a radio operator.⁴³⁰ Each team was to be dropped along with 24 equipment and supply containers,⁴³¹ just

as had been done during Jedburgh operations in France. Personnel requirements called for men who were in good physical condition, capable of parachute operations. No Danish language ability was needed for the British and Americans, but the Danish officers would need some knowledge of English.⁴³² Many, if not most, of the British and Americans who were eventually selected had served on Jedburgh missions in France. British Major N.A.C. Croft was appointed commander of the entire Danish Jedburgh project. The intent was to have at least some of the teams ready for deployment by 12 April 1945.⁴³³

The last surviving document in the SOE archival files relating to the BRAM Jedburgh teams is a directive for all personnel to be issued their equipment and report to SFHQ headquarters on 6 May 1945.⁴³⁴ There is no evidence in available records to indicate that the teams ever deployed to Denmark. German forces in Denmark, by most accounts, surrendered to Field Marshal Montgomery on 4 May 1945; the formal surrender document was signed by German leaders on the night of 8 May. As of 24 May 1945, OSS still had 11 personnel in Denmark.⁴³⁵

Indochina (Vietnam), 1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	4 months (May to September 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (China Offensive Campaign)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Inconclusive (begun but not fully executed by war's end)

Unconventional warfare operations in Southeast Asia were hampered by the disparity of interests between the United States and its two close allies—the United Kingdom and France—that were seeking to restore their colonies. The Americans were at a disadvantage in operating in the region, where those British and French colonial interests still lingered. The U.S. military especially lacked familiarity with the area then known as “Indo-China” (comprising the current states of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) and its people. By 1945, the United States and the OSS would become caught up in an emerging dynamic within Indochina, that of Vietnamese nationalistic aspirations versus French colonial recovery.

President Franklin Roosevelt felt strongly that European colonialism contributed to the start of World War II, and he was of the opinion that Indochina, rather than reverting to a French colony, should instead be placed under an international trusteeship at war's end, with a granting of its independence at the earliest possible date.⁴³⁶ Although the president had strong feelings about preventing the reestablishment of colonies, none of this appeared in official U.S. policy. In fact, State Department officials had, on three separate occasions since 1942, assured the French that the United States supported the post-war sovereignty of France over all its former colonies and territories. Still, the president's personal viewpoint permeated U.S. strategic thinking and influenced decisions.

Japanese forces began entering Tonkin, the northernmost region of Vietnam, in July 1940. Japan's axis partner Germany had just fought France to capitulation, and the resulting armistice allowed France to maintain a collaborationist puppet government in the town of Vichy in unoccupied Southern France. When Japan completed its occupation of French Indochina, it entered into a co-existence agreement with the Vichy French authorities in Saigon.

In late 1942, at the time of the Allied landings in North Africa and the establishment of a provisional Free French government there, General Eugène Mordant, commander of all French forces in Indochina since 1940, contacted the provisional government in Algiers. Apparently on instructions from General Charles De Gaulle, Mordant retired from active service and turned over his command in Indochina to his second-in-command. De Gaulle then appointed Mordant leader of a French resistance movement in Indochina. Arrangements were made for parachuting Free French officers and arms, ammunition, and other supplies to help Mordant run resistance operations in preparation for possible Allied landings on the Indochina coast. Many French army units in Vietnam were relocated from their garrisons to the mountains to avoid being surrounded by Japanese forces in the event of Allied landings and to allow them to support such landings by fighting as guerrillas.⁴³⁷ France, then, was represented in Vietnam by the collaborationist Vichy French regime, which coexisted with the Japanese occupiers, and a Free French resistance in the more remote areas of the country.

Coexistence with the Vichy Indochina colonial government was a convenient arrangement for the Japanese because it gave them a base from which to launch operations against the Allies, while leaving the administration of

the country to the French. But the Japanese reacted to the resistance buildup in rural Vietnam with alarm, especially since Allied gains in the Philippines beginning in the fall of 1944 exposed the entire Indochinese coast to an Allied invasion. As a precaution, Japan replaced the garrison army in Indochina with the tactical 38th Imperial Army.⁴³⁸

Japanese forces in Indochina carried out a *coup* against the Vichy French command there on 9 March 1945, thus ending Vichy-Japanese cooperation and placing the entire country under direct Japanese rule.⁴³⁹ All French officials were stripped of their authority and confined to their quarters. The Japanese now fully functioned as an occupation force and disarmed all French forces in Indochina, except for those that had retreated into the mountains. Mordant's forces now truly existed as a resistance force.

In a 16 March 1945 memorandum to the president, Secretary of State Edward Stettinius reported that the French government was asking the United States for assistance to its resistance groups fighting the Japanese occupiers in Indochina. Stettinius went on to describe how General de Gaulle, in a 14 March speech, implied that the USG was "responsible for the weakness of the resistance to Japan in Indo-China."⁴⁴⁰ The French also applied pressure through the office of President Roosevelt's military aide, Admiral William D. Leahy.

Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, commander of U.S. Forces in China and chief of staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, arrived in Chungking at the end of October 1944. From the time of his arrival in theater, General Wedemeyer was skeptical of the French resistance element in Indochina. With the prospect of launching offensive operations against the Japanese in China in the not too distant future, he preferred that the French resistance concentrate on cutting Japanese lines of communication and tying down Japanese forces rather than pursuing the reconstruction of French colonial control, which he judged to be their primary interest.⁴⁴¹

The Japanese *coup* and subsequent troop buildup in Indochina was becoming a concern to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the Allied theater commander in China. To him, these actions might suggest preparations for a Japanese assault northward toward Kunming. By early 1945, General Wedemeyer was signaling to Washington that he wanted the OSS to commence operations in Indochina. On 20 March, his chief of staff, General Melvin Gross, directed OSS to begin supporting any anti-Japanese resistance group in Indochina to interdict such a northward drive by the Japanese.⁴⁴²

One possibility, of course, was to use the French resistance in Indochina for this interdiction mission, but the most recent guidance from Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall was that the president “was in favor of anything that was against the Japs provided that we do not align ourselves with the French.”⁴⁴³

Throughout the war, most unofficial U.S. policy on former colonial territories was based on President Roosevelt’s strong feelings on the subject. He believed these territories should be granted their independence following the war and he used the planned post-war independence of the Philippines as an example for European colonial powers to follow. But the United States knew that its Allies would resist this idea and would strive instead to reclaim their colonial territories. Wishing to maintain friendly relations with these countries, especially in the formation of the United Nations following the war, the Americans understood that there was little they could do to stop the resumption of European colonialism. But President Roosevelt did make one thing clear: the United States would not stand in the way of France in recovering its colony in Indochina, but if the people of Indochina resisted and the French resorted to force to reoccupy the territory, America would do nothing to help them in such an effort.

By 1945, Ho Chi Minh’s Viet Minh organization was clearly emerging as the most important and most effective group fighting for Vietnamese independence from French colonial rule, although their political orientation was not entirely clear at the time.⁴⁴⁴ It was also increasingly viewed by OSS as the best candidate for U.S. support in operations against the Japanese in Indochina.⁴⁴⁵ When an OSS officer in China sent a message asking General Donovan about using the indigenous Indochinese irregulars, Donovan responded, “Use anyone who will work with us against the Japanese, but do not become involved in French-Indochinese politics.”⁴⁴⁶

Officials at the American Embassy in China opposed using Ho’s Viet Minh, arguing that they were suspected of being communists. Officers at General Wedemeyer’s headquarters, and within OSS, however, had been cleared to use them by General Donovan and took the position that “If they are any good we ought to use them.”⁴⁴⁷ In fact, barring the French, there really was no other alternative. Theater headquarters pressed OSS to begin operations aimed at harassing and interdicting Japanese movement along the Hanoi-Nanning-Canton corridor. A more definitive Theater directive issued to OSS on 10 May stated that the objective was to “disrupt traffic

and destroy the road and railroad from Chen Nan Kuan to Hanoi.⁴⁴⁸ The directive included instructions to destroy or remove stretches of rail and to destroy bridges and tunnels.

When Ho's emissary in Kunming, Vuong Minh Phuong, was contacted and asked about the Viet Minh performing such a role, he readily agreed. An OSS officer asked him what they needed and Phuong replied, "Weapons, ammunition, advisors, instructors, and communications with Allied headquarters."⁴⁴⁹ In May 1945, an OSS lieutenant infiltrated Vietnam and met with Ho Chi Minh. Based on the lieutenant's report, the OSS command in China prepared to dispatch two SO teams to conduct UW against Japanese occupation forces with the help of Ho's Viet Minh guerrillas.⁴⁵⁰

That summer, General Wedemeyer returned from Washington with plans for the first major Allied offensive in China, to be launched that fall. It would entail a drive toward the coast to secure the Canton-Hong Kong area and open its seaports to Allied ships. This, of course, made interdiction of Japanese road and rail traffic from Indochina all the more critical to preclude a Japanese attack into the flank of the Allied drive or to interfere in any other way. By June 1945, the Viet Minh had gained control of six provinces in northern Tonkin. In addition to their active political movement, they had formed a guerrilla force called the Army of Liberation, an effective propaganda capability employing both radio and print media, and had gained the support of the Vietnamese people.⁴⁵¹

OSS plans called for inserting two teams into Indochina to work with Ho's guerrillas—SO Team No. 13, code-named DEER, a seven-man team under Army Major Allison K. Thomas; and a smaller team, code-named CAT, under Major Charles M. Holland. Both teams were under the overall command of Major Gerald W. Davis.⁴⁵² According to their letter of instructions, the teams' primary mission was to interdict Japanese lines of communication, specifically the railroad and French colonial highways in the Hanoi-Ningming area. Additional missions included arming and training a guerrilla force, designating targets for airstrikes, and providing weather reports for air operations. Ho contacted OSS on 30 June 1945 and informed them that he was ready to receive the American teams. Major Thomas parachuted in with a small advanced party on the afternoon of 16 July. The men

Theater headquarters pressed OSS to begin operations aimed at harassing and interdicting Japanese movement along the Hanoi-Nanning-Canton corridor.

were warmly welcomed by the Viet Minh. The remainder of the DEER team, along with the CAT team, parachuted into Vietnam on 30 July.⁴⁵³

Ho Chi Minh and his military deputy, Vo Nguyen Giap, provided 200 of their most able fighters to be armed and trained by the OSS teams, who supplied the guerrillas with rifles, machine guns, grenades, and mortars. The DEER team trained the Viet Minh guerrillas and remained with them to begin planning for their first attack on Japanese forces. The Vietnamese trainees and their American trainers were somewhat disappointed to hear on 15 August 1945 of the Japanese surrender. All joined in a celebratory party throughout the night. Ordered to report to Hanoi, the DEER team departed the following day.⁴⁵⁴

In spite of the surrender, fighting broke out between the DEER-trained Viet Minh and an outpost of Japanese troops who apparently were not prepared to lay down their arms. Only after several days of fighting did the Japanese agree to a cease-fire.⁴⁵⁵ When the war ended, the Viet Minh guerrillas and their OSS mentors had not yet had time to conduct operations to interdict the rail lines and highways in the Hanoi-Ningming area in accordance with their orders.

Laos, 1960–1973	
Duration of U.S. Support	146 months (December 1960 to February 1973)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Vietnam War)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Vietnam War Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

The Geneva Accords of July 1954 ended French colonial rule in Indochina, created the states of Laos and Cambodia, divided Vietnam into two administrative zones at the 17th parallel, and recognized Viet Minh control of North Vietnam. Considering the accords to be too accommodating to the communists, the United States refused to sign the agreement but pledged to observe its terms.⁴⁵⁶ Laos was neutral by the terms of the Accords, but North Vietnam chose to ignore the settlement and backed a communist insurgent group in Laos known as the Pathet Lao. North Vietnamese Army (NVA)

troops also entered the country and, due to the weakness of the Royal Lao Army, the Pathet Lao and NVA soon controlled much of northeastern and southeastern Laos.

In response to a request for assistance from the Laotian government, the United States began providing security assistance in the late 1950s. Open warfare between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao had begun by 1959. In a classic FID mission, U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers began entering Laos in July 1959 as mobile training teams (MTTs), to train Royal Laotian Army troops. Initially called HOTFOOT, the operation was renamed WHITE STAR in April 1961. By January 1960, the Special Forces teams were also training Kau hill tribesmen in COIN operations.⁴⁵⁷ Another ethnic hill people, the Hmong, began receiving training from Special Forces teams in an attempt to prepare a stay-behind force in the southeastern corner of the Plain of Jars area of Laos. If the communists overran and occupied the Plain, the leader of the Hmong, Vang Pao, planned to withdraw his people into the mountains surrounding the Plain to continue the fight.

Wishing to avoid the commitment of U.S. ground forces in Laos, President Eisenhower chose to fight the communists through a proxy.⁴⁵⁸ In late December 1959, a CIA paramilitary officer met with Hmong leader Vang Pao, who was also an officer in the Royal Lao Army in command of the 10th Infantry Battalion in the Plain of Jars. As a major, he was the highest ranking of the few ethnic minority army officers and was an important leader among the tribal communities in the northern mountains of Laos. Vang Pao informed the CIA man that he could provide a Hmong force of 10,000 men if the United States armed and trained them. President Eisenhower agreed to arming a group of one thousand Hmong's to test the concept.

U.S. support to the Hmong, to help them fight the Pathet Lao insurgency and North Vietnamese troops, got underway in the opening weeks of 1960. Meanwhile, the NVA, which had occupied most of northeastern and southeastern Laos, began building an extensive network of trails through eastern Laos into South Vietnam. Now the Hmong were used to help interdict the flow of arms transiting Laos from North Vietnam to Vietcong insurgents in South Vietnam. In trying to stabilize the situation in neighboring South Vietnam, Washington had begun to see the importance of stopping the flow of men and supplies along the trail network through Laos that came to be called the "Ho Chi Minh Trail."

The communists occupied the Plain of Jars, displacing the Hmong population; some 70,000 people fled to the mountains in the closing days of 1960 and January 1961. The CIA's proprietary airline, Air America, began making arms drops to a mountaintop base in January 1961. With an ineffective Royal Lao Army presence in eastern Laos, and now President Kennedy's reluctance to commit U.S. ground forces, the Hmong became America's sole means on the ground of interdicting or at least slowing what was becoming an increasing flow of materiel to South Vietnam. By the summer of 1961 the CIA was supporting a Hmong guerrilla force of 9,000 men, with another estimated 4,000 available for recruitment.⁴⁵⁹ By November, in addition to CIA paramilitary officers, Special Forces soldiers of the WHITE STAR mission were becoming more and more involved in training Hmong and Kha fighters.⁴⁶⁰ Many of the Agency's paramilitary officers were U.S. Army Special Forces veterans who had served in Vietnam.⁴⁶¹

In December 1961, the NVA completed work to upgrade the Ho Chi Minh Trail to accommodate truck traffic. Still Washington chose to avoid overt military intervention, and by June 1962 communist forces controlled most of Laos. An agreement signed in Geneva on 23 July 1962 brought forth a coalition government in the Laotian capital of Vientiane and called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Laos by 7 October 1962. American Special Forces MTTs ended that month. The only foreign troops not to withdraw in accordance with the agreement were those of North Vietnam, who was determined to continue and expand its use of Laotian territory bordering North and South Vietnam.⁴⁶² They would now control the Ho Chi Minh Trail for the remainder of the war.

President Kennedy gave the CIA authority to expand the Hmong force, which grew to around 20,000 by the end of 1963. The Hmongs continued to sabotage North Vietnamese supply dumps, plant mines, and carry out ambushes on communist convoys. Their armed force grew to 23,000 by the middle of 1964, but an estimated 55,000 to 85,000 North Vietnamese troops were still able to make their way to South Vietnam on the trail. Even U.S. airstrikes that began in 1964 with Operation BARREL ROLL saw only modest success in slowing the traffic southward.⁴⁶³

By late 1966, according to a later internal CIA history, as the U.S. military presence in South Vietnam escalated dramatically under the Johnson administration, "the Hmong were already taxed to the limit, with the tribe's manpower fully committed and suffering a debilitating level of casualties."⁴⁶⁴

As the U.S. war in Vietnam wound down, morale among the exhausted Hmong plummeted. Although U.S. support to the Hmong ended in February 1973, the guerrilla force fought on into 1975. By the time South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos had all fallen to the communists, around 17,000 Hmong tribesmen had been killed.⁴⁶⁵

F. Political Disruption

States sometimes provide limited support to a belligerent in an internal conflict for primarily political purposes, such as when the United Kingdom provided weapons to Chiang Kai-shek’s forces in 1948, during the Chinese Civil War, simply as a means of “keeping a foot in the door” or buying “a stake in the conflict outcome for the benefactor.”⁴⁶⁶ The United States, in one particular instance, conducted a low-intensity UW campaign for almost entirely political purposes. This experience, too, involved the United Kingdom, this time in competition with the United States to determine Thailand’s postwar status.

Thailand, 1942–1945	
Duration of U.S. Support	36 months (August 1942 to August 1945)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Main effort UW (South-East Asian Theater of Operations)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Success

Allied UW operations in Thailand during World War II provide an unusual example of competing benefactors, otherwise the closest of allies, working with the same UW client, at the same time, but at cross purposes with each other.

At the time of the mostly uncontested arrival of Japanese forces in Thailand on 8 December 1941, Thailand officially became an ally of Japan under an agreement entered into by the occupiers and Thailand’s Prime Minister Phibum Songkhram. In keeping with that alliance, the Thai government declared war on the United States and Britain. Meanwhile, as many as a

dozen Japanese divisions, each with around 12,000 men, moved in to occupy the land of their “ally.”⁴⁶⁷ Britain responded by declaring war on Thailand, but Washington took a different approach. The USG chose to consider Thailand a friendly occupied state rather than an adversary.⁴⁶⁸

Many members of the Thai government, as it turned out, quietly opposed any cooperation with the Japanese. At that time, the Thai minister in Washington renounced the action of his government and supported an OSS program to recruit and train Thai students who were then studying in the United States. This group would become a nucleus of agents to be trained and infiltrated back into their homeland as the vanguard of an American UW operation. These agents, with the advice and assistance of OSS operatives, would carry on in armed opposition to the Japanese as part of the Free Thai movement, led by Prince Regent Pridi Phanomyong in Bangkok.

American support to Thai resistance came largely at the urging of the U.S. State Department. With Britain officially at war with Thailand, and the British eager to restore and if possible expand their empire, Thailand’s position was precarious. It would be in the interests of the United States, the State Department believed, to lay the groundwork for friendly post-war relations with the Thais, especially since it could be “the only market in Southeast Asia not complicated by colonial relationships.”⁴⁶⁹ More important would be its survival as perhaps the sole independent source of rubber and tin in the Far East. Whereas the United States saw a UW operation in Thailand as an “opening wedge for post-war American economic and political influence in Southeast Asia,”⁴⁷⁰ the British would likely view a strong and independent Thailand as “a challenge to the colonial system in Asia.”⁴⁷¹

Both OSS and the Thais harbored concerns regarding Britain’s postwar intentions. In an effort to allay some suspicions, State Department officials suggested to London that they issue a statement in support of an independent postwar Thailand and an official denial that Britain harbored any territorial ambitions regarding that country. Washington was outraged by the response they received from London. The British position was that such a postwar condition for Thailand was not justified, and that the Asian country should instead be subjected to a period of “some sort of tutelage.”⁴⁷² In other words, London was proclaiming its intention to subject Thailand to British imperialism. In fact, John Davies, a U.S. Foreign Service officer at General Stillwell’s headquarters, reported that it was being discussed openly, that

“British officials in India were talking about incorporating Thailand into the British Empire.”⁴⁷³

Because of this diversion of views, SOE and OSS would both run UW operations in Thailand during the war, but they would become “almost disastrously at odds with one another.”⁴⁷⁴ Officers of OSS Detachment 404, at Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten’s South-East Asia Command (SEAC) headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon, believed that the British were attempting to squeeze the OSS out of Thailand. Back in Washington, Assistant Secretary of State Adolf A. Berle believed a strong and independent postwar Thailand was in America’s best interest and stated that Detachment 404 officers “should not be hesitant or diffident in such a way as to let the British take the lead.”⁴⁷⁵

OSS began training young Thai volunteers in weapons, demolitions, radio communications, and guerrilla warfare at Chungking, China, as early as the summer of 1943. Later that year, moderate opposition members in the Thai government overthrew the country’s leaders who had supported the Japanese by declaring war on the Allies after Pearl Harbor.

“By April 1944,” according to historian David Hogan, “OSS leaders were frantic to reach the Thai resistance ahead of the British, suspecting that the British would attempt to establish a protectorate in Thailand after the war.”⁴⁷⁶ When General Stillwell, senior U.S. commander in the theater, visited Kandy, Detachment 404 commander Colonel Richard P. Heppner “seized the opportunity” to propose a bold initiative with regard to the Thailand issue. He succeeded in getting General Stillwell’s approval to parachute two native Free Thai agents, trained and selected by OSS, into Thailand to establish contact with Prince Regent Pridi and sell him on the idea of accepting an OSS representative to help the Thais prepare for intelligence, sabotage, and guerrilla warfare operations against the Japanese occupiers. Such an operation would be contrary to existing U.S.-British agreements concerning the British dominated theater.⁴⁷⁷ OSS and SOE were in a race to reach Bangkok and Thai resistance leaders.

Operation HOTFOOT (not to be confused with the operation of the same name conducted in Laos during the Cold War) began when the two OSS-trained Thai agents parachuted into northern Thailand on the night of 8 September 1944. The two were separated on the jump, and one was subsequently arrested by the Thai police. The other agent succeeded in evading capture and eventually reached Bangkok and met with Prince Regent Pridi.

Pridi (OSS code name RUTH) would become the man the OSS would deal closely with in arranging support for the Thais. Once a Thai cabinet minister and now regent to the child king of Thailand, he was serving as the de facto head of state and was judged to be a strong leader of the Thai people. Many, though not all, senior Thai political and military officials secretly supported Pridi's resistance movement. Those who actively participated in the resistance included the minister of the interior, the minister of foreign affairs, and the chief of police. Being government led, this gave the Thai resistance an unusual structure and character. Much of the armed forces, too, were active members, including senior officers. It was estimated that 60 percent of the Thai army was prepared to serve the resistance.⁴⁷⁸

Before long, OSS-trained Free Thai radio operators in China received the first transmission from the Thai capital. As it turned out, the Free Thai agent who had been taken into custody by the Thai police after parachuting into Thailand, was now being allowed to transmit intelligence reports, under Thai protection, from his jail cell.⁴⁷⁹

SOE, meanwhile, had trained their own Thai agents and parachuted them into northern Thailand or put them ashore by submarine. No SOE agents, however, were able to immediately make radio contact after arriving in the country. OSS had won the race to Bangkok. Despite angering the British, who considered Thailand to be in their area of influence, General Donovan was determined to proceed with plans to provide aid to the Thai resistance.⁴⁸⁰

Pridi, in a letter to General Donovan on 14 December 1944, agreed to receive an OSS representative. He also offered to provide the Americans with military intelligence. Having gained Pridi's confidence and begun building rapport with the Thai resistance leader, OSS had gained an important edge over their British counterparts. Two OSS officers dispatched by General Donovan, Major Richard Greenlee and Major John Wester, arrived in the Gulf of Siam from Kandy by Catalina floating plane on 28 January 1945. They were the first Americans to enter Japanese-occupied Thailand and were to serve as OSS liaison to the Thai government. Wester had lived in Thailand for 18 years before the war. The two men were met and taken ashore in a motor launch and then driven to a mansion in central Bangkok. Greenlee later returned to Washington and thoroughly brief the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the status and plans of the Thai resistance, including their strength and arms situation. He also presented them with a full briefing on the Japanese

order of battle in Thailand. The Greenlee-Wester mission proved to be a great success.⁴⁸¹

When Greenlee and Wester arrived in Bangkok, the Thais hid them in plain sight, housing them in a lavish palace, complete with domestic staff, right next door to that of Prince Regent Pridi. The spacious and elaborate Suan Kulap Palace, one-time residence of ousted Premier Pibul Songgram, now served as the OSS mission headquarters, right in the heart of Bangkok and in the midst of some 7,000 Japanese soldiers occupying the city.⁴⁸² The former premier's office now housed six powerful radio transmitters that were seldom off the air. A half-dozen men stayed busy encoding and decoding a steady flow of incoming and outgoing message traffic. The Thais told the Japanese that the Thai Criminal Investigation Division occupied the building. Included in the OSS headquarters group was former Jedburgh Howard Palmer. Eventually, Jedburgh veteran John Gildee would arrive to help with the training of a Thai guerrilla force. The headquarters group would include nearly 30 Americans by September 1945.⁴⁸³

The OSS men learned from Pridi that the underground was preparing to rise up and revolt against the Japanese occupiers, but that they badly needed arms and training. OSS began a program aimed at stockpiling tens of thousands of weapons for use by the Thai underground at the proper time. In addition to preparing the resistance for future sabotage and guerrilla operations against the Japanese, OSS also hoped "to win the friendship of the Thai people, as a possible island of American goodwill in a future uncertain Orient."⁴⁸⁴

RUTH began recruiting men and organizing guerrilla groups and wanted the Allies to airdrop arms to them as quickly as possible. Plans called for a trained force of 10,000 guerrilla fighters organized in 12 areas of operation.⁴⁸⁵ The Thais estimated that 20,000–30,000 personnel could be mobilized for the underground and that some 1,000 were currently undergoing training to prepare them for leadership positions. Plans also included the formation of guerrilla units, with American officers leading groups of 1,200 to 2,500 each.⁴⁸⁶

In June 1945, the JCS approved the commencement of large-scale supply drops to the Thai resistance. General Raymond Wheeler, the new American theater commander in chief, provided OSS with a dozen C-47s for inserting organizers and for airdropping tons of weapons, explosives, and other material to help build the guerrilla army. As of early July, OSS had dropped 74 tons

of arms to the Thai resistance at six different locations,⁴⁸⁷ and an additional 76 tons was prepared for delivery. Four OSS teams were operating inside Thailand and another eight teams were ready for infiltration.⁴⁸⁸ Arms and supplies continued to flow into the country. One OSS camp received a drop every night for six straight nights.⁴⁸⁹ The resistance even began receiving parachute supply drops on beaches along the coast. The JCS also approved the infiltration of an American guerrilla warfare trainer along with a radio operator. These men parachuted west of Bangkok on the night of 25 June.

OSS drew up plans for the construction of airfields and training camps throughout Thailand. At a meeting between OSS and SOE Force 136 on 4 June 1945, OSS representatives declared that integration of OSS operations in Thailand with those of the British was out of the question. Operations of the two services would be conducted independently of one another.⁴⁹⁰ On 15 August, OSS and Force 136 agreed on a division of areas of responsibility for guerrilla training within the country.⁴⁹¹

According to OSS plans, a cadre of 214 Americans and 56 Free Thai would be able to train 12 guerrilla battalions, each with a strength of 500 men, even though they suspected that the British were contemplating an even larger effort. During the full moon period in late July, OSS continued to drop American and Thai operatives. By the end of the month there were 23 Americans on the ground.⁴⁹² By mid-August, OSS had six training teams operating throughout Thailand.⁴⁹³

As of 21 August 1945, OSS had in operation eight training centers in different locations throughout Thailand, with three to six Americans and

As of 21 August 1945, OSS had in operation eight training centers in different locations throughout Thailand, with three to six Americans and one or two Thai trainers at each center.

one or two Thai trainers at each center. The efforts of OSS to build a nationwide radio-equipped intelligence network were also well underway, with 19 intelligence posts in operation throughout the country. These were each manned by one Thai operative, with the exception of two sites that included two or three Americans each.⁴⁹⁴ One constant challenge the trainers had was security; one training camp was located only 12 miles from a camp of thousands of Japanese.⁴⁹⁵

In time, the Thais crafted an ingenious way of recruiting and training their guerrilla force, for which their goal was 10,000 men. With the full

knowledge and concurrence of the Japanese, the Thais passed a Home Guard Law, with 31 provincial governors calling up men aged 20 to 30 to begin training. Once mobilized for basic training, the men were then secretly diverted to the American guerrilla training camps. Thousands were trained in this manner.⁴⁹⁶ The total strength of the active Free Thai resistance movement probably reached around 8,000, but historian E. Bruce Reynolds wrote that the credible “assumption that the police, the navy, and most of the Thai army would have joined a fight against the Japanese” would raise that total to 50,000–90,000.⁴⁹⁷

One OSS officer, U.S. Army Lieutenant Nicol Smith, later wrote of the balancing act required of Prince Regent Pridi (RUTH), who had to appear to be cooperating with the Japanese, while actually “knifing them in the back in one of the most daring deceptions in the history of the intrigue-filled Orient.”⁴⁹⁸ The regent described to Smith the challenges of his double life:

By day I sit in my palace and pretend to busy myself with the affairs of His Majesty. In reality the entire time is taken up with problems of the underground—how we are going to get more guerrillas; how we are going to feed the ones we already have; how we can, without causing suspicion, replace governors from provinces where we are putting in American camps so that we may always have one of our men of the underground in the key position.⁴⁹⁹

The Japanese eventually became aware of Allied operatives and trained Thai agents entering the country and the fact that they had radio transmitters. A few agents had been captured when crossing the border into Thailand and were shot by the Japanese when their radios were discovered. Because of this, the Japanese had reinforced their border guard force. The Thai underground, however, had members flanking every Japanese soldier on the border to help the infiltrators in any way they could. In late summer, Lieutenant Nicol Smith asked the Minister of Public Health how much of the resistance activity the Japanese were aware of. The Minister estimated that they probably knew about 60 percent of what was going on, but they had not yet learned who the leaders were or the size of the resistance. Having captured five Thai OSS operators, they were also aware of Allied support to the underground; they even knew that supplies were being airdropped. Both sides were aware of the *coup d'état* the Japanese had conducted in Indochina on 9 March 1945, taking over the government from the Vichy French administration.

The growing danger was clear to all, and many felt a similar seizure of the government in Bangkok was imminent.⁵⁰⁰

The growing influence of the Americans and the close relationship developing between the Thais and the Americans convinced the British to retreat from their earlier plans for political control over Thailand following the war. OSS continuously kept the State Department apprised of British efforts to get the Thais to agree to a settlement that favored British interests. In the end, such efforts were successfully thwarted. Three months after the Japanese surrender, on Christmas Eve of 1945, senior American officers in Bangkok were treated to a private dinner, where the King, Pridi, and others “repeatedly expressed gratitude for action of the U.S. in ameliorating British terms.”⁵⁰¹

While no guerrilla warfare or sabotage operations had been executed, and the intelligence coming from Thai networks was of little value to the USG, “there is little question that the OSS Thailand operation made its real mark in the political realm.”⁵⁰² For several months following the war, State Department officials making official visits to Bangkok were given the royal treatment as a sign of gratitude from the Thai government and from the Thai people. Clearly, through a strategy of unconventional statecraft, “the OSS goal of increased American influence in Thailand was achieved.”⁵⁰³ The United States later granted Thailand ‘favored nation’ status. The benefits to the United States were many, not the least being the establishment of several U.S. armed forces bases throughout the country during the Vietnam War.

With the “Eisenhower administration’s highly symbolic dispatch of General Donovan to Bangkok as Ambassador in 1953,” wrote historian E. Bruce Reynolds, “it is accurate to say that the OSS Thailand operation did indeed serve as the opening wedge in the development of the Cold War alliance between the two nations.”⁵⁰⁴ OSS historian Kermit Roosevelt wrote, “As a comprehensive strategic program, the OSS operational plan [for Southeast Asia] did not attain its objectives. The largest single operation, however, the penetration of Siam, was highly successful.”⁵⁰⁵ The ultimate goal of the Thai resistance and that of the U.S. support effort were precisely the same—the country’s emergence from the war with its independence and sovereignty intact. As author John Haseman wrote in his 2002 book on the movement, that goal was achieved.⁵⁰⁶

G. Retaliatory Disruption

Support to resistance can be used as a retaliatory response, or as a component of a retaliatory package, in response to an attack by a state or non-state actor.

Afghanistan, 1999–2000	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 24 months (1998 to 2000)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Disruption
Outcome	Failure

Bill Clinton was elected to the presidency in 1992 after campaigning largely on domestic issues. Foreign affairs were of lesser interest to him and were outside his comfort zone; the Pentagon and the intelligence community were especially unfamiliar turf.

Soviet forces completed their withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and President Najibullah’s communist regime collapsed in 1992. Former mujahideen competed for power in Kabul as warlords reigned over much of the countryside. “Afghanistan was left,” a RAND report concluded, “without a legitimate government or functioning state apparatus.”⁵⁰⁷ By 1994, the Pakistani-backed Taliban defeated rival mujahideen groups and took power in Kabul and began implementing harshly repressive measures. United States interest in the country diminished considerably throughout much of the decade.

Osama bin Laden, leader of the al-Qaeda terrorist group, issued a fatwa on 23 February 1998, calling for an all-out war against America and its allies. On 7 August of that year, al-Qaeda terrorists bombed two American Embassies—in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya—in attacks that killed more than 200 people. The U.S. intelligence community soon established that al-Qaeda was behind the attacks. Bin Laden and his terrorist group were hiding in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban.

Many in Washington urged President Clinton to respond in some manner to these attacks. Diplomatic and economic sanctions had thus far

had limited results in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The president considered several options—continued traditional diplomatic approaches, economic sanctions, a limited bombing action, a large-scale UW operation, and conventional military operations—that ranged from no risk to extreme risk. He chose to combine continued political and economic sanctions with bombing strikes and a limited STR operation.⁵⁰⁸ Retaliatory strikes began with cruise missile attacks on al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. The White House also demanded that the Taliban hand bin Laden over to the United States.⁵⁰⁹ As for the limited STR operation, President Clinton signed a finding calling for “special activities” that included support to three proxy forces—a group of Pakistani commandos, an Uzbek unit, and an organized resistance known as the Northern Alliance.⁵¹⁰ At the time that they seized Kabul and much of the countryside in the mid-1990s, the Taliban had failed to consolidate its power in the northern part of the country, where it continued to battle a powerful militia coalition known as the United Front, or the Northern Alliance.

The United States had been covertly providing nonlethal aid to anti-Taliban guerrillas in Afghanistan since 1998, but under the new finding the CIA could begin providing arms. It also gave agency officers the opportunity to become reacquainted with resistance leaders they had supported during the mujahideen war against the Soviets during the 1980s. The operation would be challenging, however, with a lack of U.S. military bases in the region. President Clinton reportedly asked Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Hugh Shelton about committing a SOF contingent to the operation, but the general dissuaded the president, citing too many obstacles to such an approach.⁵¹¹

In the end, execution of the STR effort was half-hearted and disjointed. There was little commitment on the part of the White House. Selection of the STR approach had been little more than a choice of the least bad option—a sort of political half-way house. The conclusion drawn from a 2004 study of the operation was that “the United States ineffectively utilized UW as a strategic foreign policy tool.”⁵¹²

Chapter 2. Support to Resistance as a Tool of Coercion

Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. – Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

Coercion has been defined in several ways but is generally understood to mean “the use of threats of force, or some form of force itself to either deter or compel another state actor to comply with the coercing state’s preferences.”⁵¹³ It is “forcing someone or some entity to do something it would rather not do.”⁵¹⁴

Support to resistance can be very effective as a means of coercing a foreign government to change a policy that is contrary to U.S. national interests. Economic sanctions are often the preferred option, but when applied against a ruthless regime which shows little concern for its people, it is typically the common people who bear the brunt of the consequences of these sanctions. As an alternative, the United States might decide to provide material support to an armed resistance group or nonviolent civil resistance movement as a means of coercion. Many countries have used support to armed resistance groups for such purposes. Support to nonviolent civil resistance movements, though, can potentially be even more effective. Although some risks are inevitable, civil resistance or prodemocracy opposition groups pose a grave threat to authoritarian states that can be leveraged in a way that benefits an oppressed population while also serving U.S. interests. Exposure of the regime’s actions to the global media and censure by the international community can strengthen external support to domestic movements. Success in such support efforts, according to Gompert and Binnendijk, “depends on how capable the coercer is and how vulnerable its target is.”⁵¹⁵

External support to a civil resistance movement for the purpose of coercive leverage can be very troubling to authoritarian regimes. At a time when the world is experiencing a trend toward increasingly authoritarian forms of governance in many regions, movements such as these are “appearing with increasing suddenness, frequency, and intensity, owing in large part to new means of social networking and political organization.”⁵¹⁶ An effective strategy in such support efforts, as will be seen in some cases in this chapter,

includes actions designed to undermine a targeted regime's power base. As explained by Byman and Waxman: "If a coercer can threaten a regime's grip on power, the leadership may concede to avoid losing control. ... Thus, a regime's relationship with its power base is often a key adversary pressure point."⁵¹⁷ Gompert and Binnendijk, in their study on *The Power to Coerce*, also recognized that the "greatest coercive leverage may come from posing a threat to the political authority or even the survival of a regime that is challenging U.S. interests."⁵¹⁸

Coercive STR shares one aspect of concern with similar operations conducted for their disruptive effects. That is that the U.S. objective—coercion or disruption—seldom aligns perfectly with the objective of the movement being supported, which may be anything from policy reform to a change in leadership or form of government. A strategy with the objective of coercion

A strategy with the objective of coercion can be the most effective application of STR, but it must stop short of overthrowing the adversary government.

can be the most effective application of STR, but it must stop short of overthrowing the adversary government. As Byman and Waxman explain, "coercion succeeds when the adversary gives in while it still has the power to resist."⁵¹⁹ Supporting a resistance movement or insurgency in such a way as to be beneficial to the movement but not sufficient to enable regime change requires careful

planning and execution. Unintentional regime change is a real danger, especially if intelligence has overestimated the regime's resilience.

Some authors believe that resistance or opposition support activities must be conducted overtly to be truly coercive.⁵²⁰ They are often carried out as part of larger, diversified coercive diplomacy engagements. They sometimes begin as covert operations but, through protracted and revelatory media coverage, become so well-known as to be effectively overt. This was true with support to the Nicaraguan Resistance (the Contras) and to the Afghan mujahideen, both conducted during the 1980s.

A. Reciprocal Coercion

When a Congressman once asked CIA Director William Colby why the United States was backing the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) insurgency in Angola, Colby responded, "Because the Soviets are

Chapter 2 Sections	
A. Reciprocal Coercion	North Vietnam (1961–1972), Angola (1975–1976)
B. FID-Supporting Coercion	Nicaragua (1980–1990)
C. Withdrawal Coercion	Corsica and Sardinia (1942–1943), Cambodia (1981–1990), Afghanistan: Second Phase (1985–1989), Angola (1985–1993)
D. Humanitarian Intervention Coercion	Kosovo (1999)

backing the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] is the simple answer.”⁵²¹ This category includes those cases where STR has been employed in a tit-for-tat or return-to-sender application; in other words, the United States supports an insurgency or resistance movement as a way of pressuring the target state to stop supporting another insurgency or resistance movement. This is, in some ways, similar to the diplomatic relations principle of reciprocity, which stipulates “that if one state acts in a certain way towards a second, the latter is very likely (provided it is practical for it to do so) to claim the right to reply in kind.”⁵²²

North Vietnam, 1961–1972	
Duration of U.S. Support	Approximately 135 months (January 1961 to 1972)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Vietnam War)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Vietnam Advisory, Vietnam Defense, Vietnam Counteroffensive, Tet Counteroffensive, Summer–Fall 1969, and Winter–Spring 1970 Campaigns)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Failure

In accordance with the provisions of the 1954 Geneva Convention, Vietnam was “temporarily” divided, with elections to be held in 1956. With Ho Chi Minh’s Democratic Republic of Vietnam confined to the North, Ho began a campaign to overthrow the government of South Vietnam, beginning by leaving 10,000 Viet Minh guerrilla fighters in the South.⁵²³ By the

following year, the U.S. CIA was encouraging the South Vietnamese Diem regime to begin carrying out clandestine operations in North Vietnam. The agency even helped the regime establish and train a secret military unit for that purpose, but President Diem chose instead to use it for COIN operations in the South in response to the growing number of sabotage attacks and assassinations by Viet Minh troops.⁵²⁴

In 1958, the North Vietnamese began construction of a network of trails through eastern and southern Laos and Cambodia to enable a steady flow of supplies for operations in the South. Hanoi also established the “Liberation Army of South Vietnam,” a movement that would become better known as the Viet Cong.⁵²⁵ The North began to aggressively and steadily recruit and build its guerrilla force in the South.

In a 28 January 1961 NSC meeting, Council members discussed what might be done “to convince Hanoi that supporting the Viet Cong was not in its interest?”⁵²⁶ President John F. Kennedy, in office for only a week, asked if the United States could conduct UW with guerrilla operations inside North Vietnam. CIA Director Dulles, who had been held on from the Eisenhower administration, informed the president that some limited efforts were already being made using South Vietnamese agents.⁵²⁷

Air Force Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale supported the idea of an American-run UW campaign in the North, declaring that if Hanoi could carry on such operations in South Vietnam, “that we paid them [back] in the same coin.”⁵²⁸ The general proposed that the United States attempt to establish an anti-communist resistance movement within the denied territory of North Vietnam. He recognized how difficult that would be but felt that if the United States could foment dissidence to the point of an uprising similar to that in Hungary in 1956, Washington could be prepared to support it and exploit it. The CIA and the State Department, however, were leery of such action.

President Kennedy was inclined to initiate such an action, and in this he was eagerly supported by several of his closest advisors—Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, Deputy National Security Advisor Walt Rostow, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. The administration developed a strategy of graduated response, which included a UW component. President Kennedy directed the CIA to begin conducting UW in North Vietnam as a means of turning North Vietnam’s own weapon against them. He thus hoped to use such operations as a way

to put the same pressure on Hanoi's government as they were putting on Saigon's government.⁵²⁹ The president also took action to bolster Saigon's internal security and COIN capacity by ordering 400 U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers to South Vietnam, in addition to 100 other military advisors. He also directed that U.S.-trained South Vietnamese agents should begin a campaign of clandestine "sabotage and light harassment" in North Vietnam.⁵³⁰

After little progress had been made by early March in response to Kennedy's earlier verbal directive for the Agency to begin guerrilla operations in the North, the White House issued National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 28, which formally directed DOD and the CIA to report back on what actions they proposed with regard to guerrilla operations in North Vietnam.⁵³¹ On 29 March 1961, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric responded to the president that, "Defense is offering to assist CIA develop upon a priority basis all possible assets and operational actions appropriate for the task you indicated."⁵³²

President Kennedy's next step was a direct result of the CIA's failed attempt at overthrowing the Castro regime in Cuba in April 1961. Two months after that disaster, on 28 June, the White House issued three National Security Action Memoranda that implemented a new approach for determining which government department or agency would lead covert operations. In NSAM 55, President Kennedy explained what he expected from the Joint Chiefs of Staff with regard to unconventional and paramilitary operations: "They should know the military and paramilitary forces and resources available to the Department of Defense, verify their readiness, report on their adequacy, and make appropriate recommendations for their expansion and improvement."⁵³³ NSAM 56 directed DOD, the State Department, and the CIA to complete an estimate of "possible future requirements in the field of unconventional warfare and paramilitary operations" and recommendations for "ways and means to meet those requirements."⁵³⁴ NSAM 57 directed that "Any large paramilitary operation wholly or partly covert which requires significant numbers of militarily trained personnel, amounts of military equipment which exceed normal CIA-controlled stocks and/or military experience of a kind and level peculiar to the Armed Services is properly the primary responsibility of the Department of Defense with the CIA in a supporting role."⁵³⁵

The CIA attempted to expand their agent operations in North Vietnam to a larger and broader UW operation. “In all, sixteen teams, totaling ninety-five men, parachuted into North Vietnam during 1963.”⁵³⁶ All were South Vietnamese agents. But even this was not providing the results the president was looking for. Frustrated with the agency’s ineffectiveness and lack of progress, President Kennedy turned the effort over to the Pentagon, effectively invoking the policy contained in NSAM 57.

At a Vietnam Policy Conference in Honolulu in November 1963, Secretary of Defense McNamara led a discussion on how the military could improve and expand UW efforts in North Vietnam. At one point, CIA’s Saigon station chief, OSS Jedburgh and OG veteran William Colby, stood up and explained that such a program was never going to work. He explained that the agency had looked back and reviewed similar operations that it had attempted to run in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and again in Korea and China during the Korean War. Colby pointed out that these operations had all failed due to the robust internal security apparatus present in a “disciplined communist totalitarian system.”⁵³⁷ Secretary McNamara dismissed the advice and directed the military to put a program into effect.

Headquarters, Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) issued General Order no. 6 on 24 January 1964, establishing the Studies and Observation Group (SOG).⁵³⁸ This was to be the organization to take over as lead agency of the North Vietnam UW mission from the CIA, although the agency would remain part of the program. The concept of the DOD approach to the mission set was laid out in Operation Plan 34A, which assigned four missions to SOG: the covert insertion and development of agent networks within North Vietnam, the establishment of a fictitious resistance movement in North Vietnam, maritime interdiction operations along the North Vietnamese coast, and cross-border operations into Laos oriented on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.⁵³⁹

Military operations in North Vietnam under Operation Plan 34A began in February 1964.⁵⁴⁰ American-trained Vietnamese agents, individually or in teams, were sea-landed or parachuted into North Vietnam to gather intelligence and organize resistance to the communist government. An incredible range of psychological warfare operations were conducted in an attempt to convince the North Vietnamese government of the presence of a substantial resistance movement in the north. Operation BORDEN, for example,

involved dropping parachutes with the harness holding blocks of ice rather than agents. After reaching the ground, the ice would melt. North Vietnamese patrols searching the area would then discover the parachutes but would find no sign of the agents who presumably used them. This, it was expected, would foster the belief among North Vietnamese officials that the missing agents had gone about their business of organizing resistance and sabotage activities.⁵⁴¹ Other operations were conducted based on a notional resistance organization called the Secret Sword of the Patriots League, a SOG creation intended to “create the impression in North Vietnam that there was an organized resistance movement.”⁵⁴²

An incredible range of psychological warfare operations were conducted in an attempt to convince the North Vietnamese government of the presence of a substantial resistance movement in the north.

DOD’s original concept called for agents to be parachuted into North Vietnam to organize resistance groups, but teams and agents dropped into the North were ordered to avoid contact with the local people; their mission was limited to psychological operations and intelligence collection. As the war in Vietnam continued through the remainder of the decade, the covert operations in the North became increasingly irrelevant.⁵⁴³ All such operations failed, with the loss of virtually all agents employed. SOG did, however, successfully conduct cross-border special reconnaissance missions into Laos for several years, gathering valuable intelligence for MACV and effectively directing air strikes on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

The UW operation in North Vietnam “continued until after the last American combat troops left Vietnam in 1972, making this one of the longest-running covert paramilitary operations in U.S. history.”⁵⁴⁴ But it was another costly and resounding failure. According to historian Richard Shultz, “not one of more than 500 long-term agents inserted into North Vietnam by CIA and SOG was ever successfully exfiltrated back to South Vietnam.”⁵⁴⁵ “A principal reason for the failure,” analysts Tucker and Lamb concluded, “was that the infiltrators were supplied by South Vietnamese organizations the Viet Cong had penetrated.”⁵⁴⁶ Although some aspects of the operations had some positive effect, in the long run the UW efforts in North Vietnam in no way hindered Hanoi in the pursuit of its goal.

Angola, 1975–1976	
Duration of U.S. Support	7 months (July 1975 to February 1976)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Failure

A *coup d'état* in Portugal in 1974 brought a leftist military regime to power that chose to end colonial rule in Africa. A successful countercoup the following year did not alter this decision, and 11 November 1975 was set to be Angola's day of independence. Peace, however, did not come easily to this former colony, as both the Soviet Union and the United States intervened in support of rival insurgency groups for nearly two decades.

The United States showed minimal interest in southwestern Africa until the Soviet Union took advantage of the unrest in Angola following the 1974 Portuguese *coup*. Soviet backing of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), one of three competing leftist insurgent groups, was viewed by Washington as blatant communist expansionism that called for a U.S. response. The USSR had begun overtly supplying the MPLA on a large scale in October 1974 and by the end of the year had expanded the program to include training. The United States, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger determined, could not idly stand by as Moscow gained control of the area.⁵⁴⁷

To counter the Soviet-backed MPLA, at Kissinger's urging, the United States began supporting a rival group, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), with a \$14–\$17 million military assistance program approved by President Ford in early July 1975.⁵⁴⁸ Shortly thereafter, the United States broadened its support program to include another group, Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Both groups also initially received support from China, and UNITA was also backed by South Africa. In response to a question by Representative Les Aspin (D-Wisconsin) as to why the United States was intervening in support of the two groups, CIA Director William Colby candidly responded that it was only "because the Soviets are backing the MPLA."⁵⁴⁹ Funding in support of the FNLA and UNITA was increased in September and again in

November 1975.⁵⁵⁰ American advisors and trainers, however, were forbidden to enter the country.⁵⁵¹

A clearer expression of U.S. objectives for supporting the FNLA and UNITA was provided by Secretary Kissinger. The objectives were threefold—to blunt Soviet expansionist tendencies, to support anti-communist leaders in neighboring Zaire and Zambia who feared what a Soviet-backed MPLA victory might mean for their countries, and to protect Namibia, Rhodesia, and the other countries of southern Africa from the influence of “Soviet- and MPLA-assisted black extremists.”⁵⁵²

In addition to the logistical support provided by the United States and China, FNLA and UNITA also gained the support of two regional actors who played pivotal roles. Zaire’s dictator, President Mobutu Sese Seko, allowed his country to serve as a staging base for U.S. arms shipments to the FNLA, an arrangement that later brought General Colin Powell to quip, “Cold War politics sometimes made for creepy bedfellows.”⁵⁵³ Zambia’s President Kenneth Kaunda agreed to the transshipment of arms destined for UNITA through his country. Planeloads full of arms began leaving the United States at the end of July 1975. South Africa not only contributed logistical support, but sent armored units and several thousand troops. All of this allowed the U.S.-backed groups to launch an offensive toward the capital city of Luanda that summer.⁵⁵⁴

The MPLA then, in the summer of 1975, requested an increase in support from the USSR. The Soviets responded by providing equipment and getting Cuba to provide troops, some 4,000 by November and 36,000 by the end of 1976.⁵⁵⁵

America’s growing role in the conflict began to test the tolerance of members of Congress who were wary of proxy warfare commitments in the years immediately following Vietnam. They acted by passing the Clark Amendment in January 1976, which prohibited any further covert action in Angola.⁵⁵⁶ The legislation was signed by “a bitterly resentful President”⁵⁵⁷ on 9 February 1976. According to future CIA Director and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Arkady Shevchenko, a senior Soviet official who had defected to the United States, later wrote that “Soviet leaders were overjoyed by this ignominious end to U.S. involvement in Angola.”⁵⁵⁸ Over the next ten years, Soviet economic and military aid to Angola rose to nearly \$2 billion annually.⁵⁵⁹

With the end of U.S. assistance, the FNLA collapsed, UNITA was driven back to remote southeastern Angola, the South Africans withdrew, and Soviet arms and Cuban troops streamed into Angola.⁵⁶⁰ The Soviet-backed MPLA was now fully in power.

B. FID-Supporting Coercion

This section describes one case in which support to resistance in one country was conducted for the purpose of positively affecting a U.S. foreign internal defense (FID) mission in a neighboring country.

Nicaragua, 1980–1990	
Duration of U.S. Support	121 months (March 1980 to April 1990)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Success

The ten-year U.S. effort to support the Nicaraguan Resistance during the 1980s provides a good example of an operation that succeeded in meeting the stated and documented objectives, but is viewed by many as a failure due to the mostly negative media coverage and because of political damage caused by the illegal acts of NSA staff members attempting to circumvent laws limiting U.S. involvement in the conflict.

The regime of Nicaragua’s pro-American dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, was overthrown by the leftist Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) insurgency on 17 July 1979, ending a 42-year authoritarian dynasty. At the time, most Nicaraguans welcomed the end of Somoza’s corrupt and repressive dictatorship. To the Organization of American States (OAS) and to the people of Nicaragua, the Sandinistas promised a democratic form of government, free elections, a market economy, a free press, an independent judiciary, and implementation of social welfare programs to help alleviate the country’s rampant poverty. However, the new regime soon revealed its true Marxist leanings by proclaiming solidarity with Cuba and the Soviet

Union and welcoming advisors from the communist states into the country. Almost immediately Soviet military equipment began arriving in Nicaragua.

While the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff viewed such Soviet encroachment in Central America with alarm, they continued the post-Vietnam aversion to large-scale military involvement in Third World conflicts. President Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, on the other hand, advocated a strong response to communist adventurism so close to the U.S. homeland. Before long, even the president began to reassess his earlier inclination toward accommodating the Sandinistas.⁵⁶¹

On 9 March 1980, President Carter signed a presidential finding authorizing the initiation of covert action against the new Marxist government. Avoiding, for the moment, the question of paramilitary activities, the finding authorized only support for democratic opposition elements within Nicaragua and a propaganda campaign to expose to the international community and the Nicaraguan people the true nature of the Sandinista regime. An even broader finding signed in late 1980 aimed at stemming Soviet and Cuban influence throughout Latin America and interdicting Sandinista arms shipments to the communist rebels in neighboring El Salvador. The new finding also authorized the recruitment and training of a Nicaraguan resistance force.⁵⁶²

This Nicaraguan Resistance, a counterrevolutionary movement that soon came to be known as the Contras, was formed from loosely organized opposition groups that had begun forming along Nicaragua's border with Honduras in the north and on the border with Costa Rica in the south. The resistance included many members who had earlier fought on the side of the Sandinistas during their 1978–79 revolution, as well as former members of Somoza's National Guard. By 1987, the Nicaraguan Resistance numbered 15,000 to 20,000 fighters, most of them peasants who joined because of the failing economy and harsh Sandinista government policies.⁵⁶³

The overriding purpose behind U.S. support to the Contras was always primarily one of coercion. President Ronald Reagan, having taken office in January 1981, signed his first presidential finding on Nicaragua on 9 March of that year, authorizing the CIA to conduct paramilitary operations in Nicaragua. The primary objective of the operations was "to persuade the Sandinistas to halt the weapons deliveries [to El Salvador] by escalating the political and economic costs to Nicaragua."⁵⁶⁴ CIA Director William Casey,

in briefing members of Congress, expanded that to include containing Nicaraguan and Cuban aggression in Central America.⁵⁶⁵

According to former National Security Advisor, Chairman of the JCS, and Secretary of State General Colin Powell, although some members of the Reagan administration viewed the Contras and the purpose behind supporting them differently, it always came back to coercion. Regardless of the political mess and embarrassment caused by the Iran-Contra scandal, to General Powell it “did not detract from the justice of the Contra cause.”⁵⁶⁶ And when he learned from a CIA contact that the best intelligence indicated the Contras would never grow strong enough to defeat the Sandinistas that settled the matter for him. “The contras,” the general believed, “were a card to play in pressing for a negotiated solution; but not a solution themselves.”⁵⁶⁷ Secretary of State George Shultz, too, “saw the contras as useful for keeping pressure on the Sandinistas to come to the bargaining table, where we hoped to persuade them to democratize their country and stop exporting communism.”⁵⁶⁸

Two major Contra groups based in Honduras merged in August 1981 to form the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, which was augmented by a group of Miskito people from the Atlantic coast of northeastern Nicaragua. Operating in southern Nicaragua, from sanctuary areas in Costa Rica, was the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance.

Discussion at a 1 December 1981 NSC meeting led to the decision to increase aid to the Nicaraguan Resistance “to shut off supplies to the Guerrillas in El Salvador.”⁵⁶⁹ That same day, President Reagan signed a new finding authorizing expanded paramilitary operations through the recruitment, arming, and training of a force of 500 resistance fighters. Congress approved \$19 million for the operations for fiscal year 1982. Delivery of arms and training by the CIA began in early 1982,⁵⁷⁰ and shortly thereafter the Contras began combat operations within Nicaragua.

By the fall of 1982, several members of Congress had grown skeptical of the administration’s reason for pursuing paramilitary operations in Nicaragua, believing the true purpose to be regime change, which they would not support. In December, Congress passed the first of three legislative acts that together became known as the Boland Amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act of 1983. The amendment, intended to limit USG support for the Nicaraguan resistance, still allowed humanitarian assistance to the Contras,

but it prohibited the CIA and DOD from spending money in support of any activities whose purpose was the overthrow of the Sandinista regime.

In the hope of providing more clarity of purpose, a new presidential finding in September 1983 placed more emphasis on the political objectives, which it defined as impeding the export of arms and revolutionary activities and pressuring the Sandinista government to enter into negotiations with its neighbors. Meanwhile, existing funding was proving barely adequate for a Contra force that was drawing volunteers at an “alarming rate,” with the training program producing a new 100-man company every two weeks.⁵⁷¹ Major efforts by the White House to garner support proved to be in vain as Congress passed the third Boland amendment on 10 October 1984, this time cutting off all U.S. funding for the Contra program, as well as prohibiting the solicitation of funds from other countries.⁵⁷²

The White House published a new policy document on Nicaragua on 10 April 1985. Among the objectives listed, the most important were the “termination of all forms of Nicaraguan support for insurgencies or subversion in neighboring countries;” the “reduction of Nicaragua’s expanded military/security apparatus to restore military balance in the region;” the “resumption of aid to the Nicaraguan armed resistance at levels sufficient to create real pressure on the Government of Nicaragua;” and the “active encouragement of a negotiated political solution to regional problems.”⁵⁷³

During a state visit to Moscow in April 1985, the Soviet Union signed new support agreements with Nicaragua, agreeing to continue the buildup of what, at that point, was already the largest military force in Central American history.⁵⁷⁴ As a result, Congress voted \$27 million in nonmilitary aid to the Contras that summer, while President Reagan imposed economic sanctions, banning all trade with Nicaragua, in May. In December of that year, passage of the Intelligence Authorization Act authorized the CIA to provide intelligence and communications equipment to the Nicaraguan Resistance.

By January 1986, the Nicaraguan Resistance had grown to a strength of 18,000 and the administration believed that, with adequate funding, it could grow to as much as 35,000 fighters. The Contras were conducting combat operations deep inside Nicaragua. But the Sandinistas, too, were expanding their capabilities, with newly organized counterinsurgency battalions equipped with sophisticated Soviet-bloc weapons and MI-8 helicopters piloted by Cubans.⁵⁷⁵

General John R. Galvin, commander of United States Southern Command, called for comprehensive support for the Contras while testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 1986. Asked to explain what he meant by “comprehensive,” General Galvin explained that the resistance fighters needed improved tactics and logistics operations, and he argued that training provided by military professionals would help the Contras improve much more rapidly.⁵⁷⁶ Approving a plan for training by U.S. Army Special Forces, administration officials viewed this as a counterbalance to training provided to the Sandinista army by an estimated 3,500 Cuban military advisors. The U.S. soldiers would be barred from accompanying the rebels on operations in Nicaragua.⁵⁷⁷ Pending the approval of \$100 million in military and “nonlethal” aid for the Nicaraguan Resistance, the SF training program was an administration priority. Contra training had been conducted by the CIA from 1982 until aid was cut off in mid-1984. On 20 March 1986, the House voted to deny new military aid for the Contras, but the White House planned to submit a revised proposal after the Easter recess. The Senate approved a bill for \$100 million on 27 March. The training, which included civic action instruction, was eventually provided by members of the U.S. Army’s 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne).⁵⁷⁸

Congress cut funding for the Contras once again in February 1988, after which the Sandinistas launched a major assault on the Contra camps along the Honduran border. The Honduran government immediately requested assistance from the United States, and President Reagan ordered the deployment of a brigade from the 82nd Airborne Division for a “readiness exercise.” The show of force caused the Nicaraguan forces to halt their offensive. A cease-fire was declared on 23 March.⁵⁷⁹

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega finally agreed to peace talks and elections were scheduled for February 1990. The Sandinistas and Ortega were soundly defeated in the heavily-monitored national election and the new president, U.S.-backed Violetta Chamorro, assumed office in April. In accordance with the election agreement, the Contras were then demobilized.

It is difficult to speculate on how effective the Nicaraguan Resistance might have been had it received the same support that Congress provided to the Afghan Resistance at the same time. Still, although considerably weakened by the time the fighting ended, the Contras had been just effective enough to achieve the documented objectives the Reagan administration had set out to achieve—a halt to the arms flowing into El Salvador and getting

the Sandinistas to the negotiating table. Byman and Waxman observed that “U.S. training, funding, and equipping of the contras during the 1980s were primarily intended as coercion: to force Managua to stop supporting revolutionaries in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America.” The strategy proved effective as:

the human, monetary, and diplomatic costs of war—eventually forced the Sandinista leadership to make major concessions. The simultaneous decline in Soviet support also increased incentives to come to the bargaining table. In August 1987, the Sandinistas agreed to a peace plan: in exchange for an end to U.S. support for the contras, Managua would cut ties to the Soviets and hold elections (in which they were ultimately defeated).⁵⁸⁰

Despite the inconsistent nature of the U.S. support, it played an important role in the conflict’s favorable outcome. A 2010 study by the RAND Corporation attributed the Contra victory to “better training and organization,” along with years of relentless pressure from the USG. “The overarching factor in the success of the Contra insurgency,” according to the RAND report, “was the tangible support—training, weapons, and money—provided by the U.S. government and the CIA throughout the conflict.”⁵⁸¹

In his history of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, author Steven L. Rearden observed that: “Even though the Joint Chiefs had not played a large or conspicuous role, their insistence that aid and training to the contras be placed on a more systematic and professional basis had gone far toward rescuing a faltering program and turning it around.”⁵⁸²

The program of support to the Contras, of course, carried with it substantial political costs. The most politically damaging development of the effort came in the form of illegal activities by member of the NSC Staff that came to be known as the Iran-Contra affair. Daniel Ortega, it should be noted, returned as the democratically elected president of Nicaragua in January 2007 and was still serving in that capacity at the time of this writing.

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C. Withdrawal Coercion

Support to resistance has been used on some occasions to pressure an aggressor or occupier into withdrawing its forces from a country. This is accomplished in a way that penalizes or punishes aggression, thereby compelling retreat.⁵⁸³ Today, near-peer competitor states hostile to U.S. interests are steadily improving their military capacities and increasingly demonstrating an intent to expand their reach and influence, both regionally and beyond, making this category of coercion a useful foreign policy option in future cases.

Corsica and Sardinia, 1942–1943	
Duration of U.S. Support	10 months (December 1942 to October 1943)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (World War II)
Type of Operation	Main effort UW (Mediterranean Theater of Operations)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Partial success

The French Mediterranean island of Corsica was occupied by Italian and German forces in November 1942 in response to the Allied invasion of northwest Africa. Within a month, OSS teams were inserted on the island to collect intelligence and to organize, arm, and train indigenous resistance elements. French sailors set out in a dinghy from the French submarine *Casabianca* in December 1942 to extract two sailors who had landed with an OSS Secret Intelligence (SI) team earlier that month. The dinghy also delivered the first U.S. materiel support to the French Corsican resistance, thus marking the first provision of U.S. arms and ammunition to a resistance movement in occupied Europe. In July 1943, as the communist-dominated Corsican underground made plans for an uprising against the occupiers, OSS and SOE headquarters in Algiers sent them another large shipment of arms.⁵⁸⁴

General Eisenhower had begun to consider an operation to seize the Italian offshore island of Sardinia, as well as Corsica, in August 1943. In a cable to the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff on 22 August, he reported that OSS was expanding its presence on Sardinia, but because the German strength

on that island was estimated at 22,000 combat troops and 6,400 anti-aircraft troops, there seemed to be “little chance of fifth column activities on such a scale as to permit an unopposed landing.”⁵⁸⁵

Corsica, on the other hand, although it still held an occupation force of 80,000 Italians, had only a minimal German presence. This consisted primarily of a small garrison contingent, mainly *Luftwaffe* (Air Force) technical personnel manning a radar observation facility,⁵⁸⁶ making UW operations “an easier proposition. Organization by the French of strong resistance groups is well advanced and SOE are building up stocks of arms and material. Our prime concern there is to prevent a premature rising.”⁵⁸⁷

Meanwhile, leaders of the Western Allied nations met for the First Quebec Conference, code-named QUADRANT, from 17 to 24 August 1943. Conference attendees discussed ways to entice Italy to abandon the Axis and surrender to the Allies. They further agreed on 3 September, just 10 days away, as the date to commence the invasion of Italy. Brigadier General Donovan of OSS returned to Washington from Quebec on Wednesday, 1 September, with plans for a “fifth column effort to get Sardinia and Corsica.”⁵⁸⁸ He departed for Algiers three days later.

In early September, U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Serge Obolensky, a White Russian immigrant serving OSS as head of the OG training program outside Washington, received orders summoning him to Algiers. He was to be accompanied by a captain and a lieutenant radio operator. At OSS headquarters in Algiers, Obolensky was shown to a room where he was met by General Donovan, OSS Algiers commander Marine Colonel Eddy, and two other officers. General Donovan and Colonel Eddy explained the nature of a mission they had in mind for Colonel Obolensky.

General Mark Clark, commander of the U.S. Fifth Army, they explained, was launching an amphibious landing at Salerno on the west coast of Italy. Two islands just offshore—Sardinia and Corsica—were occupied by the Germans. On 3 September, a representative of Italian Prime Minister Marshal Pietro Badoglio had secretly signed an unconditional surrender with a representative of General Eisenhower’s headquarters. The surrender was publicly announced on 8 September, the day before General Clark’s scheduled landing at Salerno, and the news had immediate effects on the offshore islands. On Corsica, word of the surrender triggered a popular uprising, and the underground appealed to OSS and SOE in Algiers for additional support. On Sardinia, news of the Italian surrender generated action on the part of

the Germans, who decided to evacuate the island, first moving their forces northward across the narrow (6.8 miles) Strait of Bonifacio to Corsica, and then on to the Italian mainland.⁵⁸⁹

General Donovan needed someone to deliver three letters to General Antonio Basso, the senior commander of Italian forces on Sardinia. One letter was from General Eisenhower; the other two were from Marshal Badoglio and General Castellano, military deputies to the King of Italy. The letters contained a proposal to General Basso—that the Italians should switch allegiance to the side of the Allies and help push the Germans out of Sardinia. Obolensky was to encourage the Italians to attack the Germans—ambush and sabotage their columns and otherwise disrupt their movement—as they attempted to move to Corsica and then on to the Italian mainland. He was to offer the services of the OG personnel in providing instruction to Italian forces in demolition and sabotage.⁵⁹⁰

Colonel Obolensky immediately volunteered to deliver the letters and was told he would leave the next morning with two radio operators and an interpreter. Obolensky then asked if he could take an officer or two from the Italian OG that he had trained and that had just arrived in Algiers. General Donovan gave his approval.⁵⁹¹

The OSS colonel was told that the main German force on Sardinia at the time consisted of a light division. The Italian force included several divisions and a corps headquarters. The current relationship between the Germans and Italians on the island was unknown. Obolensky's party would parachute in uniform by blind drop, meaning there would be no one on the ground to meet them. When daylight arrived, Obolensky was to approach Italian forces and ask to be taken to General Basso.⁵⁹²

Lieutenant Colonel Obolensky's small team parachuted into Sardinia on the night of 12 September 1943.⁵⁹³ After skirting German occupied towns through the night, the men arrived at a town that the Germans were vacating. Here they approached a group of Italian *carabinieri*—a *gendarmarie*-type military and civil police force—and asked to be taken to their commander, who arranged for them to be driven with an armed escort to General Basso's headquarters, 80 miles away. The general assured the Americans that the Italians on Sardinia would obey the orders of their king, although a battalion of Italian paratroopers outside the headquarters defected and headed out to join the Germans. Colonel Obolensky radioed Algiers with the news that the mission had been successfully concluded after only 36 hours.⁵⁹⁴ The OSS

men then made arrangements for the reception of a U.S. Army force under General Theodore Roosevelt, sent by General Eisenhower to serve as the Allied presence on the island.⁵⁹⁵ Upon his arrival, General Roosevelt personally thanked all the OSS men for courageously infiltrating into Sardinia in such hazardous circumstances.⁵⁹⁶

Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ) in Algiers, meanwhile, was responding to the radio appeal for assistance from the Corsican resistance. The underground was now reporting that German forces from Sardinia were entering Corsica in force. In response to the request for help, the senior French commander in North Africa formed an expeditionary task force consisting of a *Bataillon de Choc* (or Shock Battalion, an elite commando unit) and some Moroccan and Algerian colonial units. AFHQ asked OSS to send troops to accompany the French force. General Donovan chose for the job a French-speaking OG of two officers and thirty men, along with a demolitions instructor and a small SI Branch team. Joining them would be a 44-man British Special Air Service (SAS) unit.⁵⁹⁷ The task force and OSS contingent departed aboard French warships and arrived in the Corsican capital of Ajaccio on 17 September.⁵⁹⁸

According to OSS Major Carleton Coon, who accompanied the OSS group to Corsica, Commandant Clipet, commander of the French task force, did not work well with the Americans during the operation on Corsica and seemed determined to interfere with and stifle all OSS and resistance operations. "Far from the great victory which the occupation of Corsica had been painted in the papers," Major Coon later wrote, "it was largely an act of occupying territory which the Germans did not want. The Germans could have taken Ajaccio at any time had they so pleased."⁵⁹⁹ In the final assessment, the Allied operation on Corsica in no way altered the German movement schedule, and therefore cannot be judged a complete success. If the Germans had no intention of remaining on Corsica, but were only passing through, then this case could not properly be considered coercion, but could be viewed as more of a harassing disruption. There is no way of knowing if, in the absence of resistance on the island, the Germans would have chosen to maintain a presence there. Because the Sardinia phase of the operation clearly was successful, the entire case is assessed as a partial success.

The last of the German forces left Corsica on the morning of 4 October. The OSS OGs then used the island as a base from which to conduct raids along the coast of the Italian mainland, just 35 miles away. These maritime

operations ceased when the OSS units moved to the mainland in the summer of 1944.⁶⁰⁰

Cambodia, 1981–1990	
Duration of U.S. Support	110 months (May 1981 to July 1990)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert and overt nonlethal support
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Success

From 1981 to 1990, the United States supported a resistance coalition to pressure Vietnam to withdraw its occupation troops from Cambodia in what one writer described as “perhaps the most bizarre and intricate conflict in recent history.”⁶⁰¹

Upon the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam in 1973, Cambodia essentially disappeared in terms of American strategic interest. On 17 April 1975, the U.S.-backed Lon Nol regime fell to the communist Khmer Rouge, which was supported by China and Vietnam. Then began a four-year period of savage genocide and relocation programs under the Khmer Rouge that resulted in the deaths of an estimated two million people, roughly one-fifth to one-third of the country’s population.⁶⁰² Leading the Khmer Rouge was Saloth Sar, better known as Pol Pot.

Within a few years, the Khmer Rouge had a falling out with Vietnam and refused to continue heeding its dictums. Cambodia began attacks on Vietnam in 1977 and Vietnam responded in kind while also clashing with China. In time, Vietnam decided that they needed a more acquiescent leader to replace Pol Pot’s regime. Finally, Vietnam invaded Cambodia with a heavily armed force of 200,000 troops in late December 1978, expanding its domination of the former Indochina by occupying the country. The USSR backed the Vietnamese aggression and occupation as a way of countering Communist China’s dominating influence in mainland Southeast Asia.⁶⁰³

Vietnam installed a puppet regime in Phnom Penh, the so-called Khmer People’s Revolutionary Party, led by Heng Samrin, a former Khmer Rouge leader who had split with the regime. The new communist country was now called the People’s Republic of Kampuchea. Few in the international

community bemoaned the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, but both China and the United States were unhappy with Vietnam's action.⁶⁰⁴ Dominance of Southeast Asia by any one country upset the balance of power and threatened American security and economic interests in the region.

As a result, the United States faced a situation where it was in the national interest to take action to coerce or compel Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia, but Vietnam's occupation of that country did not represent an immediate threat to the United States great enough to warrant armed intervention. The same was not true, of course, for some very important friends in that part of the world, such as Thailand. When resistance to the puppet regime in Phnom Penh began to organize, member nations of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a collaborative international organization formed in 1967, decided to support that resistance. And since the United States had been engaging ASEAN as a dialogue partner since 1977, U.S. support to the Cambodian resistance was begun as a means of showing political support for the organization. The United States, China, and the five ASEAN member states successfully blocked UN recognition of the puppet Phnom Penh regime. In fact, the United Nations recognized the three-member resistance coalition then taking shape as the legitimate Cambodian government.⁶⁰⁵

Meanwhile, many thousands of Khmer refugees fled to camps along the Thai border, and several small resistance groups began to emerge. The Khmer Rouge, too, reverted to its former role as an insurgency. Thailand, concerned with the westward expansion of communist Vietnam's influence to its border with Cambodia, which it preferred to remain a buffer state, provided sanctuary to the Khmer resistance groups. In working to stem communist expansion in Southeast Asia, Thailand was backed by its ASEAN allies.⁶⁰⁶

China, committed to aiding any Khmer resistance group willing to fight the Vietnamese occupation forces, was the major provider of arms and equipment to the resistance.⁶⁰⁷ Thailand provided logistical support bases and controlled the vital supply routes into Cambodia. Because Thailand lacked the military strength to counter Vietnam directly, it and its ASEAN allies welcomed Chinese support to the resistance. This marriage of convenience served the interests of both ASEAN and China in their shared objective of limiting Soviet and Vietnamese influence in the region.

In the United States, the White House condemned the aggression by Vietnam against its neighbor. The State Department and the CIA agreed

that the invasion, no doubt backed if not encouraged by the Soviets, should not go unanswered. CIA Director William Casey, in March 1981, proposed that the United States provide weapons and other aid to the noncommunist elements of the resistance.⁶⁰⁸ This would require much more deliberation among U.S. policy makers.

The Front's president, Son Sann, a former prime minister in the government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, met with State Department officials in Washington, D.C., during the last week of April 1981. Prior to his visit, representatives of his group had preceded him to Washington for talks with Reagan administration officials and members of Congress. They had requested political and military support from the USG in their resistance to the Vietnamese puppet government. On 2 May 1981, Reagan administration officials announced that the United States would be joining China and other Asian nations in supporting what was becoming a unified resistance movement in Cambodia, although U.S. support at this stage was sympathetic and political rather than material. China was already providing military support, although most of the arms went to the estimated 30,000 resistance fighters supporting Pol Pot in his mountain stronghold.⁶⁰⁹

That same month, Secretary of State Alexander Haig met with Thailand's foreign minister, Siddhi Savetsila, who represented ASEAN. The United States wished to demonstrate support to the ASEAN countries in their desire to see a noncommunist leader come to power in Cambodia. Secretary Haig agreed to attend a meeting of ASEAN

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member foreign ministers in Manila in June, by which time administration officials could develop a better appreciation of the resistance leadership.⁶¹⁰

Three major resistance groups came together in June 1982 to establish the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK)—essentially a government-in-exile—with each of the three member political factions maintaining an armed military wing. So determined were the noncommunist Khmer groups to drive the Vietnamese out that they joined forces with the despised, communist-dominated Khmer Rouge, in spite of its record of horrible atrocities against the people of Cambodia.⁶¹¹ Among the armed Khmer groups were many former officers and men of the republican Cambodian army.

Included in the resistance coalition was the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), a right-wing, anti-communist group formed in southwestern Cambodia in October 1979 and led by former Prime Minister Son Sann. The KPNLF intended to liberate Cambodia from Vietnamese military occupation while preventing the return to power of the genocidal Khmer Rouge. Its objective was a new independent, free, and sovereign Cambodia, not tainted by corruption. A second faction was a nonaligned group, the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Cooperative Cambodia (French acronym FUNCINPEC), led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, a former king and head of state of Cambodia. According to the agreement forming the CGDK, Sihanouk was named president of the democratic coalition government, with Son Sann serving as prime minister.⁶¹² Third was the communist Khmer Rouge, which had fled to the countryside following its ouster but continued to receive financial and material support from the People's Republic of China. While in power, the internationally condemned Khmer Rouge had become a pariah regime.⁶¹³ By joining the resistance coalition, the Khmer Rouge provided the coalition with its most effective fighting force and, in return, the group hoped to not only survive but hopefully gain some degree of public legitimacy.

While these disparate groups remained wary and distrustful of each other, they also recognized the need to cooperate with one another to the extent possible. The Khmer Rouge, which enjoyed the bulk of the support provided by China, was militarily the strongest member of the resistance coalition, followed by Son Sann's faction.⁶¹⁴

CIA Director William Casey remained the strongest proponent for aid to the resistance and, after much debate, a bureaucratic compromise was reached with the State Department, which feared that U.S. aid might fall into the hands of the communists. Officials agreed to a support package of around \$5 million in nonlethal assistance to Son Sann's and Prince Sihanouk's noncommunist factions. Meanwhile, Washington would back ASEAN in its efforts to get the belligerent parties to reach a negotiated solution. The U.S. nonlethal assistance program began in the fall and included funding, medicine and humanitarian aid, food, uniforms, and some vehicles, but the assistance was provided covertly, funneled through Thailand.⁶¹⁵ The White House and others in the USG agreed that, if nothing else, it was important to show support for ASEAN, although "no one expected much from the investment."⁶¹⁶ CIA officers on the ground in Thailand, in cooperation with

Thai officials, ensured that all U.S.-provided funds and material went only to the noncommunist factions.⁶¹⁷

National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 158, published in January 1985, defined the U.S. policy objective for Cambodia to be “to restore a neutral Kampuchea as a buffer between Thailand and Vietnam; to minimize Soviet influence and presence in the area; and to enhance cooperation with ASEAN in ways that also enhance or does not significantly harm our China relationship.”⁶¹⁸ The United States would continue to back ASEAN in its efforts to negotiate a settlement that included a Vietnamese withdrawal, but the USG would remain in the background, leaving all negotiations to ASEAN. Washington also strongly supported the ASEAN view that the Khmer Rouge should not be returned to power in Cambodia.

In December 1985, a motion by New York Democratic congressman Stephen Solarz to provide \$5 million in overt military aid to the Cambodian resistance passed both houses of Congress. The White House, perhaps uncomfortable with the Legislative Branch seemingly taking the lead in applying the Reagan Doctrine, which called for providing U.S. support to anticommunist resistance movements around the world, initially gave the action only lukewarm approval. Eventually, however, the administration provided its official endorsement. Nonlethal aid to the resistance, which had until 1985 been provided by the United States covertly, was stepped up and was henceforth provided overtly.⁶¹⁹

Progress was slow in coming. As of June 1986 there were still 160,000 Vietnamese troops occupying Cambodia and as many as 700,000 Vietnamese settlers had moved in and taken over much of the best farm land. The Soviet Union continued to provide substantial military and economic support to the puppet regime.⁶²⁰ The White House reinforced its application of the Reagan Doctrine in Cambodia with publication of a decision directive in September 1986. A priority peacetime objective of the Reagan administration’s “Grand Strategy,” according to the document, was to “assist democratic and nationalist movements where possible in the struggle against totalitarian regimes,” and to “seek the cooperation of allies and others in providing material support to such movements.”⁶²¹ In other words, support to resistance was explicitly stated as U.S. policy.

By July 1987, an estimated 60,000 resistance fighters were facing some 30,000 Semrin-regime forces and 150,000 to 180,000 Vietnamese occupation troops.⁶²² It was a tough time for the resistance. Earlier in the year, Son Sann’s

KPNLF included around 20,000 guerrilla fighters, but by mid-year it was down to about 5,000.⁶²³ Organizational disarray and inter-factional conflict caused much of the strife. Disunity came easily; it was a shaky coalition at best. The most troublesome partner, the Khmer Rouge, often attacked the noncommunist factions and balked at accepting direction from any noncommunist leaders.

In a November 1988 U.S. policy issuance, the White House began speaking of tailoring “positive gestures towards Vietnam” in an effort to maintain pressure on that country to withdraw its forces from Cambodia while also seeking “progress on POW/MIAs and other humanitarian issues.” The United States would also continue “to emphasize publicly that we are prepared to consider normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam in the context of a Cambodian settlement.”⁶²⁴

The Bush administration, assuming office in January 1989, pushed for an increase in assistance to the noncommunist Cambodian resistance and even proposed adding lethal aid to the U.S. assistance program. In March, the White House increased the overt aid program by 40 percent over the 1988 allocation and announced its desire to add military aid. While the lethal aid initiative found some support in Congress, in the end the proposal was blocked by Senator Robert Byrd (Democrat, West Virginia), chairman of the Appropriations Committee.⁶²⁵

The Vietnamese, at last, announced in early 1989 that they would withdraw all their forces from Cambodia, and the withdrawal was completed by September. The puppet regime in Phnom Penh remained, with its beefed-up security force of 45,000 regulars and 50,000 to 100,000 militia troops. These forces lacked motivation, however, and a guerrilla offensive that began immediately following the Vietnamese withdrawal made impressive progress.⁶²⁶

Continued U.S. support of the noncommunist resistance groups in Cambodia had become a contentious issue by the summer of 1990. In June, the House of Representatives voted to continue such aid, but a week later the Senate Intelligence Committee voted against it. In mid-July 1990, following talks in Paris by United Nations Security Council members, U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III announced that the United States was ending its support of the Cambodian resistance.⁶²⁷

The Cambodian conflict came to an end with the signing of a peace accord in Paris in October 1991. All three resistance factions and the former regime were represented in a Supreme National Council—a transitional

government administered by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia and supported by a 15,000-man peacekeeping force. Elections, held in May 1993, were narrowly won by Sihanouk’s FUNCINPEC, which then formed a coalition government. The Khmer Rouge refused to participate in the elections, just as they had refused to take part in the peace talks. Before long, conflict resumed in the northwestern provinces between the Khmer Rouge and the new government.

In a successful proxy warfare campaign, the USG saw its objectives reached without ever having to play more than a backseat role in supporting the resistance. The Clinton administration began providing nonlethal assistance and implemented a modest International Military Education and Training program. A combination of the support provided by the United States and regional partners and a fair amnesty program for remaining rebels began generating a flurry of Khmer Rouge defections by early 1995.⁶²⁸

Afghanistan (Second Phase), 1985–1989	
Duration of U.S. Support	49 months (January 1985 to February 1989)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Success

In the second phase of U.S. support to the mujahideen Afghan resistance, from January 1985 to February 1989, the United States sought to roll back the occupation by pressuring the Soviets into withdrawing all forces from Afghanistan.⁶²⁹

The Reagan administration had inherited the covert action program in Afghanistan from the previous administration. It was still based on the intent spelled out in the initial finding signed by President Carter. No one at the time of that signing envisioned actually driving the Soviet forces out of Afghanistan; that was an objective “few considered possible at the time.”⁶³⁰ Congressman Charlie Wilson, indefatigable proponent of expanding aid to the mujahideen, did not agree with the strategy of being “a burr under the

saddle, an extreme nuisance,” to the Soviet occupiers. He failed to understand why the USG or the CIA “never envisioned killing the beast.”⁶³¹

The United States had been supporting the mujahideen resistance since the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. In January 1985, intelligence reports indicated that the Soviets feared becoming bogged down any further in Afghanistan. Accordingly, they planned to increase troop strength in Afghanistan and improve the quality of equipment used to locate and defeat the rebels. Following an in-depth interagency review of the U.S. strategy toward Afghanistan, CIA Director William Casey recommended a significant expansion of the program of covert support to the resistance. He saw before them “a prime opportunity to strike at an overextended, potentially vulnerable Soviet empire.”⁶³² Senior officials at both the State Department and DOD concurred. President Reagan agreed and directed that they do everything necessary “to help the mujahideen not only to survive, but win.”⁶³³

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After five years of following a strategy of increasing the cost of occupation to the Soviet Union, President Reagan officially confirmed a change in purpose of that operation when he signed NSDD 166 on 27 March 1985. “The ultimate goal of our policy,” according to the new directive, “is the removal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan and the restoration of its independent status.”⁶³⁴ The White House had committed to a policy that shifted from “make Moscow pay a price” to “make Moscow get out.”⁶³⁵

The document went on to define interim objectives to be achieved over the next four years. Among others, these included demonstrating to the Soviets the futility of their strategy in Afghanistan; denying the use of the country as a Soviet base for expanding its power and influence throughout the region, especially exploiting possible turmoil in Iran; standing firmly against Soviet aggression in the Third World; improving political cooperation among the Afghan resistance factions; and bringing “news of the war home to the Soviet people to reduce their confidence in the Soviet military and Soviet external policies.”⁶³⁶

In the same month that the Reagan administration published NSDD 166, Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the USSR upon the death of Konstantin

Chernenko and, unlike his three predecessors, he saw nothing to be gained by continuing the war in Afghanistan. He as much as admitted this in a letter to President Reagan that year.⁶³⁷ By now, the costs of the war had become the topic of open discussions among Soviet leaders. During an October 1985 visit to Moscow by Babrak Karmal, whom the Soviets had installed as president of Afghanistan immediately following their 1979 invasion, Gorbachev informed the Afghan leader that he was considering pulling all Soviet forces out of Afghanistan. The communist PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) government, Gorbachev said, would have to fend for itself.⁶³⁸ In May 1986, at Moscow's urging, Karmal retired. He was replaced by Mohammad Najibullah.

In response to the Soviet Union's strengthening of its occupation force in Afghanistan in hopes of ending the conflict with a victory, the U.S. military ramped up its support to the rebels with improved secure communications, satellite reconnaissance data, and "increased, specialized guerrilla training."⁶³⁹ Then, after careful debate, the administration decided in April 1986 to increase mujahideen capacity by providing Stinger shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles to the Afghan guerrilla fighters. The first shipment of 400 missiles would soon be sent. By overruling those at the CIA and DOD who argued for maintaining plausible deniability and preventing a possible loss of the technology to the Soviets, the administration was adding a weapon that not only vastly improved the odds for the mujahideen but put a clear U.S. imprint on the war.⁶⁴⁰

Training of Afghan resistance fighters was also stepped up. During June 1986, Pakistan, with the help of CIA officers and U.S. Army Special Forces, built camps at which they trained the Afghan rebels on the use of the new weapons and communications gear.⁶⁴¹ By 1987, there was what Pakistani General Mohammed Yousaf described as a "ceaseless stream of CIA and Pentagon specialists" visiting Pakistan's ISI headquarters.⁶⁴² NSDD 270, issued by the Reagan administration on 1 May 1987, made it clear that continuing to increase the cost of Soviet occupation was "a means of pressuring them into a comprehensive political settlement that results in the prompt, complete, and irrevocable withdrawal of Soviet troops," along with increasing international support and public awareness.⁶⁴³

Meanwhile, the administration continued efforts on the diplomatic front to maintain condemnation of the Soviet regime in the international community. The administration also worked with Congress to establish a

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-administered humanitarian aid program that provided \$90 million in food and medicine, as well as educational and agricultural assistance for the people of Afghanistan for the three-year period from 1986 through 1988.⁶⁴⁴ By 1989, fully a quarter of the population of Afghanistan was living outside the country in refugee camps, most of them in Pakistan.⁶⁴⁵

In stark contrast to Nicaragua, Afghanistan had become a perfect storm for U.S. STR operations. The White House, the State Department, the Defense Department, and Congress were all in agreement that more needed to be done to support the mujahideen. Capitol Hill, as Bruce Riedel so aptly put it, “was pushing on an open door at the White House, especially after the Pakistanis decided to turn up the heat.”⁶⁴⁶ President Zia, who by now was convinced that the Soviets were too fully engaged with the mujahideen to pose a threat to Pakistan, had finally agreed to let the pot boil over. In fact, he had grown bold enough to authorize the ISI to carry out sabotage raids into Soviet Central Asia.⁶⁴⁷ President Reagan authorized a fivefold increase in funds for the Afghan resistance. From a total of \$122 million in 1984, financial aid to the resistance would rise to \$630 million by 1987.⁶⁴⁸

The Geneva Accords, signed on 14 April 1988, included a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet combat forces from Afghanistan. The pullout was to begin on 15 May and conclude by 15 February 1989.⁶⁴⁹ In keeping with that agreement, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan ended when the final Soviet forces, the last of an estimated 115,000 troops, crossed the bridge over the Amu Darya River on 15 February 1989.⁶⁵⁰ Soviet combat forces, at least, were now gone. Remaining behind would be some specialists and advisors to assist Kabul’s communist regime.

When the last of the Soviets pulled out of the country, the CIA station chief in Pakistan sent a cryptic message to CIA headquarters: “WE WON.”⁶⁵¹ The victory came at a cost of over \$3 billion to the American taxpayer.⁶⁵² John Nutter is only one of several analysts who have characterized this phase of the campaign in Afghanistan as perhaps the greatest covert paramilitary operation success ever. “Through the CIA and SOF,” Nutter writes, “the U.S. was able to wage an unconventional war with the mujahedin to effectively ‘coerce’ the Soviet occupying power to abandon its policy in Afghanistan.”⁶⁵³ The war between the Afghan resistance and the Soviet occupiers was over; now began an internal struggle for control of the country.

Angola, 1985–1993	
Duration of U.S. Support	89 months (December 1985 to May 1993)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Partial success

United States STR in Angola in 1975 to 1976 had failed due to passage of the Clark Amendment prohibiting any further interventionist involvement in the country. The new Carter administration showed little interest in Angola. Meanwhile, CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner instituted massive personnel cuts, gutting the Clandestine Service, and the United States entered the 1980s with a terribly weakened covert paramilitary operations capability.⁶⁵⁴

Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency in January 1981. In a 6 February NSC meeting, new CIA Director William Casey told the president, “The most effective way to put pressure on Cuba would be through Angola. We should seek a repeal of the Clark Amendment and consider aid to Savimbi.”⁶⁵⁵ In March, at a meeting of the National Security Planning Group (NSPG), Casey proposed covert programs in support of insurgencies in several countries, Angola included. Secretary of State Alexander Haig agreed, declaring on 18 March that, “Our actions should be governed by our overall strategic objectives: to resist and reduce Soviet, Cuban, and local Marxist influence; to strengthen our relations with all states, ensuring our access to critical minerals and markets; [and] to pursue policies in cooperation with our allies.”⁶⁵⁶

A new U.S. policy was expressed in an NSDD signed on 17 January 1983. Regarding Cuba’s presence in Angola, the document stated that the United States “will seek to reduce the Cuban presence and influence in southern Africa by energetic leadership of the diplomatic effort to achieve a Cuban withdrawal from Angola, or failing that, by increasing the costs of Cuba’s role in southern Africa.”⁶⁵⁷ In April, Secretary of State George Shultz, in a speech in Dallas, declared that Cuba’s army had tripled in size since 1962 and that it now had 40,000 troops in Angola.⁶⁵⁸

Following President Reagan's overwhelming reelection in 1984, several hardline supporters in Congress began calling for repeal of the Clark Amendment to allow the Reagan Doctrine of support to anti-communist insurgent movements to be applied in Angola. These efforts resulted in repeal of the amendment in the summer of 1985. By December the administration was preparing to resume aid to Savimbi's UNITA. In time, support to UNITA became a pillar of the Reagan Doctrine. A new NSDD published in February 1986 included, as a U.S. foreign policy objective, to "Reduce and possibly eliminate Soviet and Soviet-proxy influence and opportunities in Angola and southern Africa." The United States would work toward this goal by "applying pressure on the MPLA to negotiate seriously and to accept a negotiated settlement" and by pursuing "discussions with the Soviet Union in an attempt to diminish and eventually eliminate Soviet Bloc military assistance to Angola, and to promote national reconciliation between UNITA and the MPLA."⁶⁵⁹ A new support program for UNITA, begun in 1986, included Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, which the NSPG had approved at the same time as it did for the Afghan mujahideen.⁶⁶⁰

In September 1986, a top secret "Basic National Security Strategy" document included as U.S. global objectives: "To contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world; to neutralize the efforts of the USSR to increase its influence; weaken the links between the Soviet Union and its client states in the Third World;" and "discourage Soviet adventurism."⁶⁶¹ Accordingly, the White House increased covert assistance to UNITA to \$18 million in 1987 and to \$40 million in 1988.⁶⁶²

A new "National Policy and Strategy for Low Intensity Conflict," published by the Reagan administration on 15 June 1987, expressly stated STR as a pillar of U.S. policy. "In accordance with international law," the strategy read, the United States would "support selected resistance movements seeking freedom or self-determination that are acting in opposition to regimes working against U.S. interests" and take "advantage of selected resistance movements to gain leverage against hostile regimes."⁶⁶³ This was the Reagan Doctrine.

In a battle that lasted from 13 January to 23 March 1988, UNITA and South African forces repelled an MPLA advance into UNITA-held territory in Southern Angola. UNITA and South Africa then called for negotiations.

In the first year of the Reagan administration, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker began diplomatic initiatives that finally resulted, in 1988, in negotiations between the United States, Angola, and Cuba. These talks led to a ceasefire on 8 August 1988 and an agreement that became known as the Brazzaville Protocol, or Brazzaville Accords (officially the “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the Government of the People’s Republic of Angola for the Conclusions of the Internationalist Mission of the Cuban Military Contingent”). The agreement mandated the scheduled withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and cleared the way for Namibia’s independence by mandating the withdrawal of South African troops from that country. A protocol to that agreement further initiated national reconciliation talks between MPLA and UNITA. The negotiations and agreement came about at least partly because of the stalemate and pressure the Angolan and Cuban governments experienced by the resumption and increase in U.S. support for UNITA.⁶⁶⁴

United States support to UNITA did not end there, however. The George H. W. Bush administration pledged to continue aid until the Angolan regime agreed to national reconciliation.⁶⁶⁵

Cuba completed the withdrawal of its forces from Angola in May 1991, five weeks ahead of schedule.⁶⁶⁶ Unfortunately, this did not end Angola’s civil war. In an October 1992 election that all observers declared to be free and fair, MPLA candidate José Eduardo Dos Santos won by 49 percent over Savimbi’s 40 percent. Savimbi then declared the elections invalid, and he proceeded to renew his war with the regime. In April 1993, Savimbi rejected a Clinton administration call for a runoff election between Dos Santos and Savimbi. As a result, the United States formally recognized Angola’s MPLA government on 19 May 1993 and ceased support to UNITA. While U.S. support to UNITA had brought about the withdrawal of all Cuban forces from Angola, it did not succeed in rolling back Soviet control of Angola.

D. Humanitarian Intervention Coercion

The term humanitarian intervention refers to “the interference in the internal affairs of a state by another state, coalition of states, regional or intergovernmental organization on humanitarian grounds.”⁶⁶⁷ On rare occasions, a state or coalition of states might intervene in an internal conflict for humanitarian reasons, with the purpose of coercing an oppressor state into ceasing an

ethnic cleansing campaign or other humanitarian crisis. In some cases this can include support to a resistance group fighting the oppressor.

Kosovo, 1999	
Duration of U.S. Support	2.5 months (March to June 1999)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Kosovo War)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting covert paramilitary operation (Operation ALLIED FORCE)
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Coercion
Outcome	Success

The United States took part in a NATO intervention in Kosovo, an autonomous region within the state of Yugoslavia, in the spring of 1999. The objective of the NATO campaign was to coerce the Yugoslav government of Slobodan Milošević’s to cease an ongoing ethnic cleansing campaign against the Albanian Serb population in Kosovo and to accept peace terms. The principal force employed by participating NATO nations was an intensive aerial bombing campaign in support of a Kosovar Albanian resistance group fighting to protect the region’s population. But the intervention also included covert direct support to the resistance group, which was known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Some writers have characterized this as “the most controversial of all cases of humanitarian intervention” and claim that it serves as “the test case for the legitimacy of humanitarian action.”⁶⁶⁸

In 1989, Yugoslav dictator Slobodan Milošević began eliminating the autonomy that Kosovo had been granted by Tito in 1974. Milošević’s stated justification for doing so was to defend Serbs in Kosovo against oppression by the Kosovar Albanians. By 1993, in response to Milošević’s increasingly harsh policies against the Kosovar Albanians, the KLA was formed. Although the group had no more than around 150 insurgents by 1996, it began a series of attacks on Serbian police stations and other military and government facilities, while striving to avoid civilian casualties. Within two years, by 1998, the group grew to a strength of 500 fighters. The group then began a more extensive campaign against the Serbs, which in turn provoked reprisals and atrocities. Intense fighting ensued between the KLA and troops of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which had embarked on a ruthless COIN campaign.

The KLA suffered devastating losses while battling a Yugoslav force of 40,000 troops supported by air power, tanks, and artillery. Meanwhile, Serbian forces conducted ethnic cleansing operations, spreading terror throughout the Kosovar Albanian population and destroying its villages. KLA prisoners were reportedly executed.⁶⁶⁹

Eventually, a massacre attributed to Yugoslav forces triggered a NATO intervention in support of the insurgents. United States forces joined those of 13 other nations in the NATO effort, an unrelenting bombing campaign against the Serbian army and infrastructure called Operation ALLIED FORCE, which began on 23 March 1999. The NATO campaign was aimed at degrading the combat power of the Yugoslav 3rd Army and stopping the ethnic cleansing. Meanwhile, the KLA carried on with fighting Yugoslav forces on the ground. No NATO member wished to accept the risks associated with a commitment of ground forces. The CIA reportedly provided

The NATO campaign was aimed at degrading the combat power of the Yugoslav 3rd Army and stopping the ethnic cleansing.

funds, training, and supplies to the KLA during the conflict.⁶⁷⁰

The United Nations, through Security Council Resolution 1244, ended the Kosovo conflict on 10 June 1999. Milošević had conceded after less than three months to NATO's overwhelming air superiority and capitulated. Some writers have cited the threat of

a resurgent KLA as one of several factors that influenced Milošević's decision to quit.⁶⁷¹ Milošević's capitulation was followed by the creation of a UN peacekeeping force. The campaign against Milošević was a clear victory for NATO and the KLA.⁶⁷² Intelligence historians quipped that the CIA "emerged from the Kosovo War not only on the winning side, but also on the right side."⁶⁷³

Chapter 3. Support to Resistance to Enable Regime Change

Many more princes have lost their lives and their states through conspiracies than through open warfare. – Niccolò Machiavelli

The USG might choose to support a resistance movement or insurgency whose objective is the overthrow of the established regime if that regime is hostile in its relations with the United States or in other ways is acting in a manner that threatens U.S. security interests. The United States might also support an oppressed population whose country is under occupation. In either case, it is usually understood that the resistance, if successful, will provide the new governing authority, at least until elections can be properly held. United States forces may be required, upon a successful overthrow, to help stabilize the country, possibly even initiating long-term FID operations.⁶⁷⁴

Former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith has made the point that regimes that support terrorism tend to be “oppressive domestically as well as aggressive internationally,”⁶⁷⁵ which makes the presence of opposition groups, even armed groups, a possibility. Such groups might be supported for coercive purposes or to effect regime change. In the days following 9/11, as policy makers debated various response options, Feith proposed a strategic theme based on “aiding local peoples to rid themselves of terrorists and to free themselves of regimes that support terrorism.”⁶⁷⁶

The decision to conduct an overthrow operation, however, is a serious and high-risk choice. Once the operation begins, it is rarely possible to completely control the trajectory of the movement the USG chooses to support

Chapter 3 Sections	
A. Rollback Regime Change	Albania (1949–1954), Cuba (1960–1965)
B. Preemptive Intervention Regime Change	Indonesia (1955–1958)
C. Retributive or Defensive Regime Change	Afghanistan (2001)
D. Democracy Promotion Regime Change	Afghanistan: Third Phase (1989–1991), Iraq (1991–2002), Serbia (1999–2000)

or influence what the final outcome will be. As former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director Robert Gates has written, examples from history where overthrown regimes are in fact replaced by moderate reformers are rare.⁶⁷⁷

A. Rollback Regime Change

“Rollback” was a term used during the Cold War to describe engagements intended to liberate a country that had fallen to communist aggression. It was a step beyond the concept of containment, which was aimed at halting communist expansion.

Albania, 1949–1954	
Duration of U.S. Support	61 months (March 1949 to April 1954)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Failure

From 1949 through early 1954, the CIA’s OPC collaborated with the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in an operation designed to overthrow the government of Albanian leader Enver Hoxha. What began as a British operation approved by Prime Minister Clement Attlee became an Anglo-American collaboration when OPC helped SIS create a counterfeit government-in-exile known as the Committee for Free Albania. Planners hoped this would serve as a beacon for the various feuding factions of Albanian refugees and as a cover to provide plausible deniability.⁶⁷⁸

The SIS landed the first Albanian agents in two groups on the coast by boat on the night of 3–4 October 1949. One group was ambushed within days of landing, resulting in three members being killed and the fourth missing. The remaining group of five agents learned from locals that Albanian troops had recently arrived in the area and the people were instructed to report any strangers. The agents contacted friends and family and asked if they were willing to help organize resistance groups. Locals, while indicating some interest in fighting the government, were skeptical of the prospects of such

activity with only five operatives and no supply of arms. They expressed a desire to see some indication of a commitment on the part of the Americans and British.⁶⁷⁹

Before proceeding further, the British sought U.S. assistance in the operation, describing the covert action to the Americans as “a clinical experiment to see whether larger Rollback operations would be feasible elsewhere,”⁶⁸⁰ in other words, freeing a country that had fallen under Soviet control.⁶⁸¹ The operation was also meant as a probe to determine the current status of resistance within Albania and whether it might be strong enough, with some outside support, to overthrow the Hoxha regime. With Operation BGFIEND, the American OPC provided funding and logistical support, and joined in the training and infiltration of the Albanians.

During the winter of 1949–1950, hundreds of Albanian refugees underwent training in the Mediterranean. Another group landed by boat on the Albanian coast in December, only to find that the Albanian

The operation was also meant as a probe to determine the current status of resistance within Albania and whether it might be strong enough, with some outside support, to overthrow the Hoxha regime.

government knew of the operation and was waiting for them. Virtually all agents were captured and executed. Two additional groups landed by boat in 1950 and other teams infiltrated Albania on foot from Greece. These teams fared even worse than those put ashore in October.⁶⁸²

OPC recruited its first group of 49 Albanian displaced persons in the spring of 1950 and began their training program near Munich, West Germany, on 8 June 1950. The agency planned to drop these men into Albania by parachute from black C-54 aircraft, using former RAF Polish pilots provided by the SIS. The first group of OPC-trained agents, after a first attempt was aborted, took off from an airfield outside Athens on the night of 19–20 November 1950 and jumped northeast of Tirana. A second group was dropped about 12 miles farther. This group was surrounded and attacked the next morning, after Albanian troops who seemed to know of the team’s plans and even knew the agents’ names, had been alerted and posted in the area.⁶⁸³

Operations continued through early 1954, with team after team being inserted and then going missing. There were occasional signs of encouragement. Surviving members of the group dropped in November reported

having found many villagers eager to participate, but this eagerness dissipated over the ensuing weeks when they saw no airdrops of men, arms, and equipment. Again, they were particularly disappointed in seeing no British or American personnel, indicating a serious lack of commitment by those countries. The group engaged in some skirmishes with Albanian troops but eventually surrendered to authorities. By April 1954, after the executions of thousands of Albanians, the United States at last called an end to the operations.⁶⁸⁴

Over a span of many months, small teams landed by boat or dropped by parachute into Albania and they “landed in the arms of the secret police. With each failed mission, the plans became more frantic, the training more slipshod, the Albanians more desperate, their capture more certain.”⁶⁸⁵ Unknown to British and American intelligence officials, the security leak was Harold “Kim” Philby, a senior SIS officer who had secretly been working for the Soviets since the 1930s and since mid-1949 was serving as SIS liaison to the OPC, effectively giving the USSR a mole in Washington’s Clandestine Service.⁶⁸⁶ He had been fully aware of details of SIS and OPC operations into the USSR and Eastern Europe from the beginning and had been feeding information to the Soviets, who in turn shared it with Tirana. Philby defected to the Soviet Union in 1963 when authorities began to trace espionage activity to him.

In addition to the damage caused by Philby, the Soviets had infiltrated the OPC recruiting and training pipeline. It would be several years before the agency learned that “the Soviets had known every aspect of the operations from the start. The training camps in Germany were infiltrated. The Albanian exile communities in Rome, Athens, and London were shot through with traitors.”⁶⁸⁷ The problem involved more than a security breach, however. The Anglo-Americans were also, as Roy Godson has written, “woefully ignorant of the degree to which Hoxha had fastened his grip on Albania.”⁶⁸⁸ Author Tim Weiner’s scathing assessment of the Albania operation was that “failure followed failure ... the flights went on for four years. Roughly two hundred of the CIA’s foreign agents died.”⁶⁸⁹ Historian Richard Shultz offers a similar appraisal: “Many agents were trained, given false papers, and inserted into these denied areas to develop resistance networks and carry out paramilitary operations. Few were heard from again.”⁶⁹⁰

Cuba, 1960–1965	
Duration of U.S. Support	64 months (January 1960 to May 1965)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Failure

Probably the most publicized failure of a USG program to support resistance in a regime change role was the attempted overthrow of Cuban leader Fidel Castro during the early 1960s. Castro and his 26th of July Movement culminated their revolution by ousting the regime of dictator Fulgencio Batista in the first week of January 1959. What is not well known is that, as in the case of China during the Korean War, the CIA tried three different approaches in three successive and equally unsuccessful operations.

Operation JMARC. The first operation was the well-known Bay of Pigs invasion. By the end of 1959, Castro's commitment to communism and his friendship with the Soviets was no longer in question. On 13 January 1960, the Special Group of the NSC, President Eisenhower's covert action clearing house, approved a CIA proposal to initiate planning for a covert action against Castro.⁶⁹¹ The plan prepared by the CIA was ready by 16 March. The mission objective was stated as: "to bring about the replacement of the Castro regime with one more devoted to the true interests of the Cuban people and more acceptable to the U.S. in such a manner as to avoid any appearance of U.S. intervention."⁶⁹² The plan called for a propaganda campaign utilizing mass communications aimed at the people of Cuba and the creation of a moderate Cuban opposition group and paramilitary force located outside the country coupled with a covert network, including a paramilitary element, operating on the island.⁶⁹³ President Eisenhower approved the plan during an Oval Office meeting on 17 March.⁶⁹⁴ The operation described in the plan was code-named JMARC.

Indigenous anti-Castro dissidents and resistance groups existed inside Cuba, such as the Movement of Revolutionary Recovery (MRR) and the 30th of November Movement, although their numbers were steadily decreasing as Castro's security machinery became increasingly more efficient at identifying and arresting members of the groups.⁶⁹⁵

Recruiting for the external paramilitary force, to be composed of anti-communist Cuban exiles, began in the Miami area immediately. According to the plan as it existed in the spring and summer of 1960, a total of around 100 to 150 men were to be organized into small teams. These teams would separately and clandestinely infiltrate Cuba, where they would link up with dissident elements on the ground and serve as a cadre to slowly build up a trained underground and guerrilla force in areas such as the Escambray Mountains. This classic underground would eventually grow strong enough to overthrow the government.⁶⁹⁶ Training at Useppa Island, off the west coast of Florida, began in mid-May.⁶⁹⁷ This was followed by specialized training at a secret base in Guatemala beginning in July.⁶⁹⁸ For the propaganda campaign, a mass communication broadcast facility was built on the tiny Swan Islands in the Caribbean and went on the air on 17 May 1960.⁶⁹⁹

In approving the CIA plan, President Eisenhower had stipulated that one condition of the approval was that there be a government-in-exile, or political wing, outside of Cuba.⁷⁰⁰ The reason for this was that if the operation were successful, the government-in-exile could move in and take over and the United States would immediately recognize it as the legitimate government. In July 1960, the agency assembled a group of leaders of various Cuban exile political factions in Miami and formed the *Frente Revolucionario Democrático* (Democratic Revolutionary Front), or FRD. The purpose of the FRD was to serve as the government of a liberated Cuba until free elections could be held.

Early on in the project, the agency's task force found itself critically short of instructors to train the guerrilla force in Guatemala. The CIA formally

By the time the training in Guatemala was complete, the CIA and Special Forces had organized, armed, and trained a 1,500-man counterrevolutionary force of exiles.

requested 38 U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers to serve as trainers and President Eisenhower approved the request.⁷⁰¹ The SF instructors arrived at the training camp in Guatemala in the late fall of 1960 and immediately took charge of the tactical training. By the time the training in Guatemala was complete, the CIA and Special Forces had organized, armed, and trained a 1,500-man counterrevolutionary force of

exiles. The force, known as Brigade 2506, was organized in six battalions. The agency also trained Cuban pilots and crews in aerial resupply operations

using C-54 aircraft. A fleet of boats was maintained in the Florida Keys for landing infiltration teams and extracting people, as needed.

Cuba and the United States terminated diplomatic relations during the first week of January 1961 and on the twentieth of the month John F. Kennedy was sworn in as president of the United States. The CIA's initial plan, estimated to cost \$4 million, was based on the clandestine infiltration of a trained cadre of guerrilla warfare leaders into the Escambray Mountains to arm, train, and lead the Cuban resistance groups. Over time, as more and more members of the Kennedy administration cabinet tinkered with the plan, it grew into an overt amphibious assault costing \$46 million. The State Department, for example, demanded that the landings be made at night, something even the U.S. armed forces had never attempted.⁷⁰²

Security was a farce. Senior FRD leaders visited the training camp in Guatemala and spoke freely about it upon their return to the United States, resulting in widespread newspaper coverage. On 17 March 1961, exactly one month before D-Day for the Bay of Pigs landing, *The New York Times* carried a story reporting that a U.S.-backed invasion of Cuba was imminent.⁷⁰³

The operation began with the force sailing from Nicaragua on 14 April, landing at 0100 hours on 17 April at a place called the Bay of Pigs. By the afternoon of the nineteenth, the battle was over. Two American paramilitary officers had gone ashore with the brigade. One, Grayston Lynch, was a retired Army Special Forces officer who had been wounded in fighting both in Normandy and at the Battle of the Bulge during World War II. He later reported on his perspective of the fighting by the Cuban rebels. The brigade's men "were not defeated in battle, nor did they surrender. They simply ran out of ammunition, and the fighting slowly died away." In Lynch's opinion, "the brigade had fought magnificently." The men, continued Lynch, "seized a beachhead forty-two miles long and twenty miles deep. It had killed fifty of Castro's troops and captured two hundred more."⁷⁰⁴ The ship carrying the ammunition that was so badly needed on the beach sat offshore, disabled by planes from Castro's tiny air force, planes that might have been destroyed on the ground, as planned, by the second air strike that the president canceled at the last minute.

Clearly the invasion was an embarrassing failure for the new administration. The Cuban people failed to rally to the aid of the invasion force as the CIA had predicted and Castro's forces responded much more effectively than had been expected. There is little doubt that poor security during the months

of preparation of Brigade 2506 resulted in the Cuban government having advance knowledge of the operation. Some 200 of the CIA-trained troops were killed and another 1,197 were captured.⁷⁰⁵ They were later released after payment of a sizable ransom by the USG.

Operation MONGOOSE. The CIA's second operation, authorized by President Kennedy on 3 November 1961 and aimed at overthrowing Castro, was code-named MONGOOSE. The operation's objective was "to help the people of Cuba overthrow the communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace."⁷⁰⁶ It was an aggressive mix of paramilitary activity—industrial sabotage and psychological operations intended to foment insurrection. Heading the operation was Air Force Brigadier General Edward Lansdale. The president's brother, Attorney General Bobby Kennedy, provided oversight of the \$10 million program.⁷⁰⁷

Operating from a large base in Miami code-named JMWAVE, several teams of operatives were formed and manned by Cuban exiles. Some groups were devoted to propaganda work using media such as newsletters and radio broadcasts, others interviewed refugees for intelligence purposes, and others prepared for paramilitary guerrilla and industrial sabotage operations. Beginning in the fall of 1961 and continuing into early 1963, dozens of teams were infiltrated into Cuba by boat to execute operations and were then extracted. Attempts were also made to rebuild the resistance in Cuba, which was by this time a mere shadow of its former organization because of the effectiveness of security measures put in place by Castro following the Bay of Pigs operation. Cuban security forces were ruthless in arresting and confining thousands of suspected resistance members.⁷⁰⁸ But the resistance movement did still exist and continued to find new recruits—there were groups such as the MRR, Alpha 66, the Second National Front, and Omega 7. Having experienced betrayals and penetrations by security forces, however, leaders became much more cautious in bringing in new people.

Operation MONGOOSE succeeded in delivering arms and supplies to the resistance in Cuba and kept the hope of freedom alive, but accomplished little else. The program was shut down in early 1963.⁷⁰⁹ Historian and White House advisor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., could only describe MONGOOSE as "silly and stupid."⁷¹⁰

The Third Operation. President Kennedy authorized the third and final operation in the CIA's campaign to overthrow Castro on 19 June 1963.

According to General Alexander Haig, the president turned to Secretary of the Army Cyrus Vance to oversee the program. Secretary Vance, according to General Haig, was uncomfortable with the task of serving as executive agent for all federal government actions involving Cuba. This included the responsibility for managing a covert operation that included industrial sabotage, commando raids, and propaganda.⁷¹¹ According to paramilitary officer Grayston Lynch, getting rid of Castro had by this time become a presidential obsession.⁷¹²

This operation followed a policy of funding operations that would be conceived, planned, and carried out completely by Cuban exiles. Future NATO military commander, National Security Advisor, and Secretary of State General Alexander Haig provides interesting insight into these operations. As a lieutenant colonel working on Secretary Vance's staff in the Pentagon, he served as action officer for the program. In his memoir, General Haig described how the CIA would bring proposals for sabotage or raids on Cuba to Secretary Vance's office for consideration. Any special equipment required for each mission was acquired and U.S. military personnel provided the necessary training. Targets were always of an economic nature, such as sugar refining facilities, crucial to a single-industry economy. "The approval process" for each mission, the general wrote, "was excruciating," with final approval authority resting with a committee headed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy. "Typically," explained General Haig, "there were three or four major operations a month, and this pace was maintained to the end. Thirteen raids into Cuba, including the sabotage of an electric generating plant, an oil refinery, and a sugar mill, were approved for the three-month period beginning in November 1963, the last month of the Kennedy presidency."⁷¹³ From reports he received, General Haig judged the success rate on these missions as "reasonably high despite the inherent inefficiency of clandestine work and the growing size and efficiency of Castro's police and military forces."⁷¹⁴ The operations continued until May 1965.⁷¹⁵

In General Haig's final assessment of the operation, he wrote: "Above all, its secrecy was corrupting. Although small in scale and negligible in its final results, this clandestine operation against Cuba was, in fact, indistinguishable from a war except that all knowledge that it was being fought was kept from those who were paying for it and who were liable for its consequences, the American people."⁷¹⁶ In the opinion of award-winning Miami journalist Don Bohning, who has done an in-depth study of the campaign against

Castro, “Instead of ridding the hemisphere of Castro, the covert campaign undoubtedly contributed to maintaining and consolidating his control over Cuba.”⁷¹⁷

B. Preemptive Intervention Regime Change

This single-case section describes an operation in support of a resistance force in an attempt to overthrow a regime that was believed to be on the brink of joining the communist world.

Indonesia, 1955–1958	
Duration of U.S. Support	36 months (May 1955 to May 1958)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Failure

In February 1952, U.S. policy regarding the containment of communist aggression in Southeast Asia, drafted even as UN forces were fighting communist aggression on the Korean peninsula, explained how important countries such as Indonesia were to the United States as sources of natural rubber, tin, petroleum, and other natural resources. Moreover, Indonesia lay astride major sea lanes of strategic importance connecting the Indian subcontinent and northeast Asia. Communist domination of this region, the NSC believed, would “seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the longer term, United States security interests.”⁷¹⁸

By 1954, concerns of communist encroachment in the region had only increased. China had fallen to the communists in 1949 and soon thereafter the PLA invaded Tibet, communist forces had fought the west to a stalemate in Korea by 1953, and a leftist insurgency was flaring in Indochina. Now some minor insurgencies had broken out in some of the outer islands of the Indonesian archipelago, as the central government remained strong only in Java. Eisenhower wished to avoid, as President Harry S. Truman before him had not, appearing ineffective in containing communism.

President Ahmed Sukarno had led the four-year insurgency that ended Dutch colonial rule of Indonesia in 1949, and since Indonesian independence had been established he had at first demonstrated an unwillingness to show subservience to either Washington or Moscow. He was not a popular figure in Washington. In mid-May 1955 the White House issued NSC 5518, which directed the CIA to use all covert means necessary, to include paramilitary force, to prevent the loss of Indonesia to communism.⁷¹⁹

During 1956, Sukarno began developing closer relations with Moscow and Beijing, which concerned not only Washington, but several of Sukarno's own army leaders as well. In February 1957 he returned from a visit to Moscow to declare that he no longer viewed parliamentary democracy as the best form of government for his country. The Soviet leader reciprocated with a visit to Indonesia in May 1957. Supported by the Indonesian Communist Party, Sukarno implemented what he termed "guided democracy," dissolving Parliament and assuming almost dictatorial powers.⁷²⁰ Leftist representation in the government increased and Indonesia's Communist Party grew to become the nation's largest party by 1957,⁷²¹ and in late February 1957 the communists launched strong anti-Western propaganda campaigns, especially in the capital city of Djakarta.⁷²²

Beginning in December 1956, Washington became increasingly concerned about mutinous elements within the Indonesian army. Rebel Indonesian colonels who opposed Sukarno's flirtations with Moscow and Beijing had broken ranks and consolidated their followers on the large islands of Sumatra and Sulawesi. The rebel colonels, who, ironically, still held active commissions in the Indonesian army at this point, decided to play the anti-communist card in order to attract support from Washington. In the summer of 1957, Sumatran rebel leader Colonel Maluddin Simbolon sent officers to the Jakarta home of a CIA officer, with the message that Simbolon wanted to talk. Smith passed this on to the station chief who sought and quickly received permission from Washington to initiate talks. Smith flew to Sumatra and met with the rebel leaders, who requested financial support from the United States. Again, Washington quickly agreed and \$50,000 was provided to Simbolon.⁷²³

In August, an interagency committee formed under the chairmanship of State Department intelligence director and former U.S. Ambassador to Jakarta Hugh Cumming, recommended that the United States provide covert support to anti-communist forces in Indonesia, while continuing economic

aid to the country. Faced with a policy dilemma, the Eisenhower administration briefly considered an armed invasion of Indonesia to prevent its loss to communism, but there was no pretext for such an attack and it would likely result in resentment by the Indonesian people toward the United States. President Eisenhower personally rejected an armed invasion as an option and on 23 September 1957, covert support to the anti-communist rebels became presidential policy.⁷²⁴

The dissident Indonesian colonels at the head of the mutinous rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi, while recognizing a need for external military assistance, had not sought such aid from the United States, having only requested financial support. Their goals were limited to gaining greater economic, political, and military autonomy for their respective islands.⁷²⁵ Soon, however, as full-blown civil war began and the Revolutionary Council requested arms from the United States.⁷²⁶

By offering external support to the rebels, Washington decision makers believed they could use the rebel factions to counter the growing communist influence in the country. The CIA's code name for paramilitary support to the Indonesian rebels was HAIK. Military aid to the Sumatran group began with a shipment of small arms and equipment for 8,000 troops, delivered by the submarine USS Bluegill and an LSD (landing ship, dock) from the Philippines in January 1958.⁷²⁷ The following month U.S. support began arriving for the rebel contingent on Sulawesi, which also received arms shipments from the government of the Republic of China in Taipei. Sukarno, in the meantime, began receiving arms from the Soviet Union.

The CIA, through its proprietary Civil Air Transport, began flying combat air missions for the rebels with a fleet of B-26 bombers. Indonesian guerrillas were trained on Taiwan and then infiltrated back into Indonesia by U.S. Navy submarine. After an American pilot was shot down in May 1958, however, the United States withdrew its support and the rebellion collapsed. In the end, after the deaths of many thousands of Indonesian citizens, the civil war failed to unseat Sukarno, who only became more dictatorial.⁷²⁸ Former intelligence officials, analysts, and historians have been in general agreement that the CIA's clumsy failure to effectively support the Indonesian rebellion to unseat Sukarno was a low point in the history of the U.S. intelligence community.⁷²⁹

C. Retributive or Defensive Regime Change

This represents another section that includes only one case, a case in which a resistance movement was supported as a way of punishing a regime that harbored a terrorist group that attacked the United States and was intended to prevent the country from once again becoming a terrorist sanctuary. This is a section that likely could include additional cases in the future.

Afghanistan, 2001	
Duration of U.S. Support	3 months (September to December 2001)
Political Environment or Condition	Wartime (Global War on Terror)
Type of Operation	Campaign supporting UW (Operation ENDURING FREEDOM); could also be classified as a main effort UW operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Success

One of the more successful UW operations in U.S. history came as a result of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. It was unlike traditional UW in many ways, but perhaps was more representative of future UW applications. Within nine days of the attacks, intelligence determined that terrorist leader Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda group were responsible.⁷³⁰ Al-Qaeda had been hiding and training in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban regime, and the USG had been pressuring the Taliban to expel bin Laden.

The only remaining anti-Taliban insurgency constituting any kind of threat to the Taliban government was a militia coalition in the north known as the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan. It was more commonly known as the Northern Alliance, and it had a fighting force estimated at 10,000 to 20,000.⁷³¹ By September 2001, after five years of fighting, Taliban forces with twice the manpower and armor had pushed the Northern Alliance back until it only occupied around 10 percent of the country, in the mountainous extreme northeast.⁷³² The Alliance was in turmoil following the assassination of its leader, Ahmad Shah Massoud, shortly before the 9/11 attacks.⁷³³

Soon after the terrorists struck, President Bush confirmed to his NSC members that he viewed the assault as an act of war rather than a criminal act.⁷³⁴ The U.S. Congress soon responded by passing a joint resolution authorizing the president to use whatever force necessary, including military, against those responsible. Secretary of State Colin Powell invoked Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the inherent right all member states have to act in self-defense.⁷³⁵

In the words of Vice President Dick Cheney, the U.S. objective “was to take out al Qaeda, take down the Taliban, and prevent Afghanistan from being used as a base for further operations.”⁷³⁶ The president rejected all proposed response options that either called for a large American ground force or that took a lengthy time to prepare for and execute. What he finally approved was a UW operation conducted jointly by the CIA and SOF, using the manpower provided by the Northern Alliance to bring down the Taliban regime and destroy its forces. The operational concept called for answers to command and control questions to help mitigate “some uncertainty about who was in charge.”⁷³⁷ CIA Director George Tenet and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld agreed on an arrangement where the agency exercised operational control initially, but as SOF arrived on the ground and the nature of the operation became more military, control migrated to DOD.⁷³⁸

When the Taliban refused a U.S. demand to turn Osama bin Laden over, the president directed USCENTCOM to “eliminate Afghanistan as a sponsor and safe haven for international terrorists.”⁷³⁹ In late September, USCENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks approved the UW campaign plan prepared by SOCCENT.

The CIA began deploying Northern Alliance Liaison Teams, or NALTs, with the first team landing in Afghanistan on 26 September, just two weeks after the terrorist attacks. Paramilitary officers reestablished contact with Afghans they had worked with in the past as they prepared the way for SOF teams that would follow. Six more NALTs would arrive in Afghanistan over the following two months.⁷⁴⁰

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM–AFGHANISTAN began with air strikes on 7 October 2001, hitting known al-Qaeda training camps and Taliban military installations. U.S. Army Special Forces teams and U.S. Air Force special operations combat controllers began arriving in Afghanistan, after days of weather delays, on 17 October. More precise air strikes were now possible with the laser designator-equipped SOF elements on the ground

with the ability to designate targets. The SOF personnel rode horseback to accompany Northern Alliance fighters as they carried out ground attacks against al-Qaeda and Taliban positions. The first major city to fall to the U.S.-supported Northern Alliance was Mazar-e-Sharif, which was taken on 9 November. The Afghan capital city, Kabul, fell on 13 November, and Kandahar, the Taliban stronghold in the south, was taken on 7 December.⁷⁴¹

“With the capture of Kabul and Kandahar and the destruction of organized resistance in Tora Bora,” records the official USSOCOM history, “Afghanistan was now in effect liberated. It had taken fewer than 60 days of concentrated military operations and only a few hundred soldiers to seize the country from the Taliban and its terrorist allies.”⁷⁴² Hamid Karzai became the head of a provisional Afghan government on 22 December 2001.

The operation was a stunning success and was accomplished with a small U.S. presence on the ground. “The routing of the Taliban and al-Qa’ida from Afghanistan in a matter of weeks was accomplished by 110 CIA officers, 316 Special Forces” and other SOF in an operation, CIA Director George Tenet later wrote, “that has to rank as one of the great successes in Agency history.”⁷⁴³ The total U.S. force reaching Afghanistan during this period never numbered more than 4,000 troops.⁷⁴⁴

Then began the long struggle to rebuild Afghanistan and, with the eventual emergence of an insurgency by the ousted Taliban, U.S. forces transitioned to FID, COIN, and CT tasks.

D. Democracy Promotion Regime Change

This section describes a purpose for supporting resistance that is very likely to find more examples in the future, as it involves providing support to either armed resistance or nonviolent civil resistance movements representing populations seeking self-determination.

Afghanistan (Third Phase), 1989–1991	
Duration of U.S. Support	31 months (February 1989 to September 1991)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime (Cold War)
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Failure

In accordance with the Geneva Accords of 14 April 1988, the Soviet Union withdrew the last of its occupation forces from Afghanistan in February 1989. But while the Soviets were gone, the communist regime in Kabul remained. The Accords did not prohibit the continuance of military and economic aid either by the Soviets to the communist PDPA government of Afghanistan or by the Americans to the mujahideen Afghan resistance.⁷⁴⁵

Upon the commencement of his administration, President George H. W. Bush chose to continue the Reagan policy of providing aid to the mujahideen in an effort to unseat the communist PDPA regime in Kabul. Congress approved funding of the covert action until September 1991. Because funds continued to be passed through Pakistan’s ISI, more moderate mujahideen commanders such as Abdul Haq and Ahmad Shah Massoud continued to receive minimal support. Most support went to groups favored by Pakistan. “The application of the Reagan Doctrine,” wrote historian James M. Scott, “changed from a policy to drive out Soviet occupation troops to a policy to depose the regime of a Soviet client.”⁷⁴⁶

Support by the two superpowers continued for nearly three years after the Soviet withdrawal, but both the Soviets and Americans eventually lost interest in Afghanistan. The two countries agreed to suspend further aid in September 1991 and civil war ensued, as rival factions competed for power.⁷⁴⁷ The communist PDPA government in Kabul finally fell in April 1992.⁷⁴⁸ As Abigail Linnington concluded in her study, “the top two U.S. objectives—to increase the costs of war for the Soviet Union and to force the withdrawal of Soviet forces—had been achieved. The secondary goal to replace the communist-backed Afghan government with a stable, moderate regime was not realized as Afghanistan devolved into civil war in spring 1992.”⁷⁴⁹ Historian James M. Scott, too, saw the application of the Reagan Doctrine in Afghanistan as a success up to the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989. The final phase, however—continuing support to the rebels in hopes of replacing the PDPA government with a democracy—was unsuccessful.⁷⁵⁰

Iraq, 1991–2002	
Duration of U.S. Support	134 months (May 1991 to July 2002)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime
Type of Operation	Independent covert paramilitary operation
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Failure

At the close of the Gulf War in early 1991, President George H. W. Bush called upon the people of Iraq to take matters into their own hands with regard to regime change. He believed that, in the wake of their humiliating defeat, Iraqi military leaders would overthrow Saddam Hussein.⁷⁵¹ But it was other elements of the population that followed the president's suggestion and began an open revolt that quickly spread throughout 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces. Kurds, Shi'ites, and even Sunnis rose up in rebellion and soon Saddam had lost control of roughly 70 percent of Iraq's population.⁷⁵²

Suddenly, the White House had a change of heart and decided to assist Saddam's regime in crushing the revolt. The USG took steps such as lifting restrictions on Iraq's helicopter force, put in place at the time of the ceasefire, to allow Saddam to deal with the uprising. The administration feared the revolt would result in the breakup of Iraq and an uncontrollable increase in instability that might invite Iranian intervention. The White House's new preferred course of action was to encourage a coup by Saddam's top military leaders, an approach that would, hopefully, limit the level of instability and make for a smoother transfer of power. The Bush administration's steps to enable Saddam's military to crush the revolt were successful, albeit at the cost of tens of thousands of Shi'ite deaths after three weeks of fighting. Not only did no coup materialize, but the United States was left having to deal with a massive Kurdish refugee problem that was only brought under control by the launching of a large humanitarian mission, Operation PROVIDE COMFORT, and the imposition of no-fly zones to provide a safe haven for the Kurds in Northern Iraq.

Several of the largest anti-Saddam opposition groups, including Shi'ites from Southern Iraq, banded together to form the Iraqi National Congress (INC), a pro-American resistance coalition. President Bush signed a finding on 28 May 1991, directing the CIA to conduct covert action to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The CIA was soon providing support to both the INC and another group, the Iraqi National Accord. It was also nurturing a closer relationship with the PUK and the KDP, the two main Kurdish groups.⁷⁵³

President Bill Clinton took office in January 1993. He continued a policy of supporting the INC, although the CIA was increasingly advocating supporting a Sunni-based *coup*.⁷⁵⁴ A new challenge to the Clinton administration surfaced in April 1993, when intelligence indicated that Iraqi intelligence had planned to assassinate former President George H.W. Bush as he visited Kuwait that month. In retaliation, in June President Clinton ordered

an attack on Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad with more than 20 cruise missiles.⁷⁵⁵

Meanwhile, INC had grown strong enough by 1995, having built a sizable force in Northern Iraq, that it felt prepared to initiate guerrilla warfare against the Saddam regime. Washington provided encouragement. The INC attacked Iraqi army elements in early March 1995, knowing that morale within the army had plummeted. As expected, army troops and even commanders quickly gave in, defecting rather than fighting. Many joined the anti-Saddam resistance. Just as victory appeared to be in sight for the INC, however, Washington once again withdrew its support, fearing widespread instability and anarchy. The administration had only intended that the INC serve as an irritant to the regime, not that it be capable of overthrowing Saddam.⁷⁵⁶

As the Clinton administration feared being drawn into a quagmire, it chose to disengage entirely from INC and the Kurds and pull out of Northern Iraq. As a result, civil war erupted. Having been betrayed by the White House, one insurgency faction leader now threw in with Saddam, who launched a punishing attack on the INC. Remaining CIA officers in the north fled as U.S. influence dissipated.⁷⁵⁷

Encouraged by this success, Saddam became more defiant in resisting inspections by UN weapons of mass destruction inspection teams. In September 1997 he banned Americans from taking part in inspections and then ordered them to leave Iraq altogether. Taking this as a direct challenge, the White House began preparations for air strikes. Conservatives urged the president to hit Iraq hard. But President Clinton hoped to avoid a military campaign. Military options continued to be discussed, threatened, and subsequently dismissed. White House officials finally announced that “removing Saddam from power was a goal that went much further than the Clinton administration was willing to commit to.” Republican leaders such as Newt Gingrich accused the White House of exhibiting “incremental timidity.”⁷⁵⁸

“It was increasingly apparent,” wrote a Clinton biographer, “that the administration had no strategy for dealing with Saddam; it was rebounding from crisis to crisis, settling for one compromise after another.”⁷⁵⁹ Republican politicians, meanwhile, took a new approach, preferring to recognize an Iraqi government-in-exile and support an anti-Saddam insurgency. Debate during the summer of 1998 resulted in legislation calling for U.S. support to Iraqi democratic opposition groups. The Iraq Liberation Act of

1998 declared bluntly: “It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.”⁷⁶⁰ Regime change in Iraq had become the law of the land.

President Clinton issued Presidential Determination No. 99-13 in February 1999, in which he designated seven Iraqi democratic opposition groups that satisfied the criteria set forth in the legislation and were therefore eligible for U.S. military support. These were the Iraqi National Accord, the Iraqi National Congress, the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Movement for Constitutional Monarchy, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.⁷⁶¹

The president authorized a renewed STR campaign to oust Saddam, but it was no more effective than previous half-hearted attempts. “America’s promise to topple Saddam,” CIA Director George Tenet later wrote, “remained the law of this land from halfway through Bill Clinton’s second term right up until U.S. troops invaded in March 2003.”⁷⁶²

Foreign policy specialist David Wurmser has provided the most detailed account of President Clinton’s performance against Saddam. “The U.S. administration’s efforts to overthrow Saddam,” he wrote, “specifically those focused on fomenting a coup or an assassination, had all failed.”⁷⁶³ According to another study, “the decision to implement a limited, disjointed UW campaign outside a greater national strategy contributed to mission ineptitude.”⁷⁶⁴ Clinton biographer Hyland adds, “Clinton’s obvious wariness gave Saddam a freedom to choose when and how he would challenge the UN and United States.”⁷⁶⁵ The USG had yielded the initiative to Saddam.

Serbia, 1999–2000	
Duration of U.S. Support	19 months (March 1999 to October 2000)
Political Environment or Condition	Peacetime
Type of Operation	Independent overt nonlethal support
Purpose or Objective of U.S. Support	Overthrow
Outcome	Success

The United States played an active role in the overthrow of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milošević in the fall of 2000. This included support for a NATO campaign aimed at encouraging regime change in Serbia and a U.S. State Department-led program designed to promote democracy in that country.

The United States participated in NATO's Operation ALLIED FORCE, an intense bombing campaign against Serbia during the Kosovo War beginning in March 1999 (see the "Kosovo, 1999" case in the Coercion section of this report). As a result of this campaign, Milošević withdrew Serbian forces from Kosovo, although he remained defiant to the international community and oppressive to the people of Serbia.

A NATO campaign plan to support regime change in Serbia included a little-known psychological operations (PSYOP) initiative known as "Ring around Serbia." The operation employed a ring of strong FM transmitters positioned in countries bordering Serbia. Aimed at "weaning public support away from Milošević," the operation's purpose was to counter state-controlled media by providing the truth to educate the people of Serbia and the broader Yugoslavia of the atrocities committed by Milošević's forces in Kosovo. The stations began transmitting into Serbia from Bosnia on 7 April 1999, enhancing the penetration of broadcasts by Worldnet, Voice of America, and RFE/Radio Liberty's Serbian service. The project was fully operational by October 1999, and would play "a major role in the eventual downfall of the Serbian dictator."⁷⁶⁶

The United States also effectively employed subversive actions against the Milošević regime. On 30 April 1999, the USG initiated its MATRIX project, aimed at influencing Milošević's closest supporters and advisors. Reports soon reflected divisions within Milošević's inner circle, and many of the leader's cronies fled the country within a month.⁷⁶⁷ By late September, the United States was providing nearly 12 million dollars in assistance to Serbian democratic opposition parties, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, student groups, civic groups, and independent media. Strong sanctions against Milošević remained in place and the "Ring around Serbia" radio programming was intensified to encourage the political opposition to unite in its struggle for democratic transformation.⁷⁶⁸

At the conclusion of the NATO air campaign, James Dobbins, special advisor to the president and the secretary of state, approached Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with a recommendation to lift some of the sanctions against Serbia. Secretary Albright, however, firmly believed that

stability in the Balkans was not possible as long as Milošević remained in power. She now considered the Serbian leader to be “weakened and vulnerable, and rather than relaxing our pressures we should redouble them with a view to precipitating his early ouster.”⁷⁶⁹

Secretary Albright had gained White House support for a policy calling for the removal of Milošević two years earlier, before the Kosovo War. By the spring of 2000, the State Department was spearheading a USG effort to bring about regime change in the former Yugoslavia, and specifically Serbia, by encouraging Serb opposition leaders to join in building an effective political coalition aimed at forcing Milošević out. The goal was his removal from power and his placement in the custody of the war crimes tribunal.⁷⁷⁰

The United States also provided support to an energetic youth movement. Begun in 1998 by a small group of college students, the group was called *Otpor*, the Serbian word for resistance. By the summer and fall of 2000, *Otpor* had evolved into a nationwide grassroots civil resistance movement whose influence and popularity were growing by leaps and bounds. In fact, according to Ambassador James Dobbins, it became “the most effective element of the Serbian opposition.”⁷⁷¹ The group came under increasingly violent repression by Serbian police, but it showed remarkable resilience. Its secret to survival lay in its dispersed leadership, its strict adherence to a nonviolent resistance strategy, and the momentum it gained through a series of actions. The group’s nonviolent approach deprived Serbian authorities of a legitimate reason for response with force and ensured both domestic and international support for the opposition.

By the summer and fall of 2000, Otpor had evolved into a nationwide grassroots civil resistance movement whose influence and popularity were growing by leaps and bounds.

Actions carried out by *Otpor* included the organization of “increasingly massive rallies, often in the guise of rock concerts, and possessed a clear strategy to force regime change.”⁷⁷² As elections approached in 2000, the group campaigned to get voters out to the polls, encouraged the merger of several small opposition parties, and, when election fraud eventually emerged, called for a general strike in protest. The USG decided to support the movement and provided funding and computers. According to Ambassador Dobbins, “We brought one of *Otpor*’s young leaders to Washington,

arranged meetings throughout the administration, and sent him back with enough funding to train and deploy 30,000 election monitors.”⁷⁷³

NGOs also supported the movement, sometimes in unusual ways. Working for one NGO, retired U.S. Army Colonel Robert L. Helvey ran a weekend workshop for *Otpor* leaders in Budapest, where he stressed nonviolent discipline and the importance of applying the principles of war to their nonviolent campaign.⁷⁷⁴

Support to *Otpor*, as it was carried out, was possible because of the political conditions in the country. Rather than a truly authoritarian regime ruling over a closed society, it was what Ambassador Dobbins described as “an illiberal democracy,” where “representative institutions were more than mere trappings but not yet sufficient to operate as an effective check on those in power.” People could travel freely and opposition parties “were harassed but not banned.”⁷⁷⁵

Anti-communist candidate Vojislav Koštunica defeated Milošević in a 24 September 2000 election. The Serb leader had attempted to rig the election, as he had in the past, but election officials effectively guarded against this with the use of polling station monitors, trained with U.S. funding, to certify vote counts. Having failed to manipulate the election results, Milošević disputed the opposition victory and called for a runoff.⁷⁷⁶ Organized and encouraged by *Otpor* and the political opposition, tens of thousands of anti-Milošević demonstrators swarmed into Belgrade from throughout the country. Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department, along with the governments of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, continued to apply diplomatic pressure on Milošević to acknowledge defeat.⁷⁷⁷

Demonstrators in Belgrade seized the parliament building and state-controlled media facilities on 5 October 2000. Police and other security forces refused orders to use force to disperse the protestors, having informed opposition leaders of their intent to do so through back-channel communications. Without the backing of his security forces, Milošević’s authority crumbled. He was soon in custody at The Hague, awaiting trial for war crimes.⁷⁷⁸

Having led the successful U.S. effort to support the overthrow of Milošević and enable a transition to democracy in Serbia, Secretary Albright now recognized the importance of remaining in the background. “After Koštunica’s victory,” she later wrote, “the United States was careful to assign full credit to the Serb opposition, while giving the new president the space he needed and Zoran Djindjić, the new prime minister, time to consolidate his government and ensure the backing of Yugoslav security forces.”⁷⁷⁹

Chapter 4. Conclusion

The history of liberty is a history of resistance. – Woodrow Wilson

History shows that STR can be a powerful foreign policy tool if properly planned and resourced and when carried out with commitment, perseverance, and competence. It provides a way for the USG to address threats to national interests by leveraging indigenous opposition elements rather than through direct and costly large-scale armed confrontation. It does so by leveraging local resources and popular discontent to engage a hostile government where it is most vulnerable. It is neither as ineffectual as often portrayed nor is it a substitute for well-conceived strategy and policy.

Review of Findings

The following table provides a summary of analysis results grouped according to the strategic purpose of operations.

Foremost among the conclusions drawn from the data represented in Table 1 are the following.

Overall, from 1940 to the present, most STR operations (nearly 70 percent) were conducted for disruptive purposes. The non-disruptive cases were about equally divided between coercion and overthrow. Of the 47 cases reviewed, 23 were judged to be successful in accomplishing the documented objectives. Another 2 were determined to have been partially successful. Of the 47, 20 were judged to be failures. The final 2 cases—both from World War II—were designated inconclusive as the war ended before they had proceeded far enough to assess their effectiveness. Since the end of the Cold War, 3 of 7 total STR operations were conducted for disruptive purposes (43 percent) and 2 of the 3 were successful.

Most STR operations were carried out under wartime conditions, with those being nearly twice as successful as cases conducted under peacetime conditions. Wartime STR has succeeded around 60 percent of the time. Just over a third of STR operations carried out under peacetime conditions have been successful.

Table 1. Analysis Results

Purpose Category	Operation Type and Condition	Number of Cases	Success or Partial Success	Failure
Disruption	Overall	32	17	13
	Wartime	23	14	7
	Peacetime	9	3	6
	Main Effort	16	7	9
	Supporting	16	10	2
Coercion	Overall	8	6	2
	Wartime	3	2	1
	Peacetime	5	4	1
	Main Effort	7	6	1
	Supporting	1	0	1
Overthrow	Overall	7	2	5
	Wartime	1	1	0
	Peacetime	6	1	5
	Main Effort	7	2	5
	Supporting	0	0	0

Inconclusive	Success rate	Comments
2	53%	Ethical considerations often exist. Places the resistance at severe risk, for example, when the U.S. decides to end an operation and the now unsupported resistance is left to deal with often stepped-up counter-insurgency operations by the government.
2	61%	Most wartime UW is carried out for disruptive purposes.
0	33%	U.S. objectives rarely coincide with those of the resistance, which can hamper unity of effort.
0	44%	In wartime, this typically represents “economy of force” applications; i.e., no conventional ground campaign was conducted in the area.
2	63%	Operations carried out in support of military campaigns in wartime twice as likely to succeed as those conducted in peacetime.
0	75%	Most effective use of STR.
0	67%	The 2 successes were only partial successes.
0	80%	Noticeably more successful in peacetime than in wartime.
0	86%	Nearly always conducted as independent rather than supporting operations.
0	0%	Operations for coercive purposes are almost never conducted as supporting operations.
0	29%	Lowest success rate of the three doctrinal purposes.
0	100%	The 2001 operation to overthrow the Taliban government in Afghanistan was the only case.
0	17%	The lowest success rate of all categories. Roughly half of peacetime failures were at least partially the result of security leaks.
0	29%	Rarely successful.
0	0%	No cases recorded.

Support to resistance is most effective when conducted in direct support of a military campaign rather than as an independent or main effort operation. In just over a third of the cases, STR was conducted in support of a military campaign, and around 2 out of 3 of these cases were successful. The remaining two-thirds of cases were conducted as independent, or main effort operations; roughly half of these were successful.

Overall, from 1940 to the present, STR has been least effective when used for the purpose of overthrowing a regime and most effective when used for coercive purposes. Support to resistance operations for overthrow purposes over that period were successful only 29 percent of the time, and only 17 percent of those conducted during peacetime succeeded. Most were conducted under peacetime conditions; the only overthrow operation conducted during wartime (Afghanistan in 2001) was successful. Operations conducted for disruptive purposes have a 53-percent success rate. Seventy-five percent of STR operations carried out for coercive purposes have succeeded (including 2 partial successes), and 80 percent of those conducted during peacetime were successful, making coercion clearly the most effective use of STR. In the Post-Cold War years, 3 of the total 7 operations were conducted for overthrow purposes (43 percent) and two of the three were successful. The numbers are identical for cases involving disruptive STR cases.

Mission compromises caused by breeches of security have accounted for nearly half of all failed STR operations. In no less than 8 of the 20 failed operations, the target country leadership and security forces knew of the impending operation before it ever started.

Support to nonviolent civil resistance seems to be more likely to succeed than support to armed resistance. This study appears to corroborate the assertion by others that “external support for nonviolent opposition movements is more likely to have favorable results than external support for violent ones.”⁷⁸⁰

STR most often addresses immediate issues and short-term, rather than longer-term, interests. While considering long-term effects and second- or third-order consequences of a contemplated STR operation is a laudable aspiration, it is not always achievable in the real world. Policy decisions for actions involving STR are usually made in response to pressing issues that require immediate attention.

Implications for the United States Government

STR is a foreign policy tool that should be used sparingly, but when it is considered the best option, it is essential that interagency participants be cognizant of best practices and that actions be accomplished with competence and persistence. Improving interagency understanding could be achieved by: encouraging interagency discussion forums or other activities designed to raise awareness of the potential and limitations of STR; developing or improving and expanding interagency wargaming and simulation methods focused on STR, with the goal of maximizing USG skills and abilities in STR planning, decision making, and government-resistance mediation; and exploring ways and means of supporting foreign nonviolent civil resistance movements without compromising the movements' local ownership and legitimacy. The Department of State, DOD, and the intelligence community must improve the ability to foresee when civil resistance occurrences are likely to turn violent and to prepare for possible timely intervention in cases where U.S. interests are threatened.

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As stated in the introduction, all 47 cases reviewed in this study had one thing in common—the targeted state was ruled either by an unfriendly occupying force or by a repressive authoritarian regime. Recent studies and articles indicate a global decline of democracy and a corresponding rise in more authoritarian forms of government, where single party regimes, strongmen, or autocratic military juntas have survived or have taken control of countries whose inhabitants have had at least some exposure to democracy or who have seen limits placed on freedoms they once enjoyed. One *Foreign Affairs* writer has concluded that “the world is experiencing the most severe democratic setback since the rise of fascism in the 1930s.”⁷⁸¹ Another writer cites research that characterizes “personalist authoritarians” as aggressive adventurists, unpredictable internationally and often pursuing risky foreign affairs, and “capable of carrying out volatile policies with little notice.”⁷⁸²

This trend toward authoritarianism could lead, as it has in the past, to significant levels of popular discontent that, in turn, could spawn some form of resistance. This will likely include both nonviolent and violent forms of resistance, and some of this unrest is likely to impact U.S. interests. The U.S. diplomatic, intelligence, and defense communities would benefit from a much improved ability to forecast resistance activity and, where U.S. interests are at risk, to rapidly develop comprehensive interagency responses and possible intervention scenarios. A study of past STR efforts can contribute to an enhanced understanding of what conditions are most or least favorable for an STR intervention and what approaches have been particularly effective and which approaches should be avoided.

Implications for SOF

Recent experience indicates that SOF must maintain traditional wartime UW skills, but also needs to explore the dynamics of modern resistance and what adjustments are needed in training and education, doctrine, and force development. Approaches to accomplishing this might include: identifying—through studies, wargaming, simulation, workshops, and exercises—the full range of SOF capability gaps in providing STR; studying the possibility, in some cases, of exploiting advanced technologies to conduct the first two phases of a U.S.-sponsored UW campaign—Preparation and Initial Contact—remotely; and exploring ways in which the timely application of SOF capabilities can influence government-resistance confrontations that appear to be transitioning from nonviolent to violent resistance, thereby possibly helping to prevent the next Syria.

Areas for Further Study

Researchers with a serious interest in proxy or UW should have little difficulty in identifying unexplored yet important research topics. Research might provide a similar analysis of external STR as provided by countries other than the United States. A comparison of the resilience and vulnerabilities to resistance of various political systems, including today's forms of authoritarian government, could be the subject of a study, as could considerations and methods of providing external support to nonviolent civil resistance movements. The relationship between STR objectives and a national strategic end state could be the basis for a study. The history of U.S. STR

illustrates the wide range of specific purposes for conducting such operations and the many different methods used to back resistance movements or insurgencies. Additional suggested research topics can be found in the JSOU publication *Special Operations Research Topics 2018 (Revised Edition for Academic Year 2019)*.[↑]

Appendix

Table 2. The Cases

#	Locale	Inclusive Dates	Wartime	Peacetime	Main Effort	Supporting	Disrupt	Coerce	Overthrow	Success	Partial Success	Failure	Inconclusive	Duration (in months)
1	Philippines	Dec 1941–Aug 1945	X			X	X			X				44
2	North Africa	Jan 1942–May 1943	X			X	X			X				16
3	Burma	Apr 1942–Jun 1945	X			X	X			X				38
4	France & Belgium	Jun 1942–Oct 1944	X			X	X			X				28
5	Thailand	Aug 1942–Aug 1945	X		X		X			X				36
6	Corsica & Sardinia	Dec 1942–Oct 1943	X		X			X			X			10
7	Greece	Feb 1943–Dec 1944	X		X		X			X				22
8	Norway	Apr 1943–May 1945	X			X	X			X				25
9	Albania	May 1943–Sep 1945	X		X		X			X				28
10	Yugoslavia	Aug 1943–Dec 1944	X		X		X			X				16
11	Denmark	Aug 1943–May 1945	X			X	X			X				21
12	Netherlands	Aug 1943–May 1945	X			X	X					X		21
13	Italy	Apr 1943–Apr 1945	X			X	X			X				24
14	Malaya	Summer 1944–Sep 1945	X		X		X					X		14
15	Poland	Sep 1944–Apr 1945	X		X		X					X		7
16	Czechoslovakia	Sep 1944–May 1945	X			X	X					X		8
17	Germany & Austria	Sep 1944–May 1945	X			X	X						X	8
18	China	Dec 1944–Aug 1945	X			X	X			X				8
19	Indochina (Vietnam)	May 1945–Sep 1945	X			X	X						X	4
20	Romania	Jul 1946–Aug 1946		X	X		X					X		1
21	USSR	Fall 1948–Sep 1954		X	X		X					X		71
22	Yugoslavia	Late 1948–Jan 1949		X	X		X					X		3
23	Albania	Mar 1949–Apr 1954		X	X				X			X		61
24	Romania	Spring 1949–Jun 1953		X	X		X					X		50

#	Locale	Inclusive Dates	Wartime	Peacetime	Main Effort	Supporting	Disrupt	Coerce	Overthrow	Success	Partial Success	Failure	Inconclusive	Duration (in months)
25	Poland	Nov 1950–Dec 1952		X	X		X					X		25
26	North Korea	Dec 1950–1955	X			X	X					X		60
27	China	Feb 1951–Nov 1953	X		X		X					X		33
28	Indonesia	May 1955–May 1958		X	X				X			X		36
29	Tibet	Summer 1956–Early 1969		X	X		X			X				150
30	Cuba	Jan 1960–May 1965		X	X				X			X		64
31	Laos	Dec 1960–Feb 1973	X			X	X					X		146
32	North Vietnam	Jan 1961–1972	X			X		X				X		135
33	Angola	Jul 1975–Feb 1976		X	X			X				X		7
34	Afghanistan (1st Phase)	Jul 1979–Dec 1984		X	X		X			X				65
35	Nicaragua	Mar 1980–Apr 1990		X	X			X		X				121
36	Cambodia	May 1981–Jul 1990		X	X			X		X				110
37	Poland	Dec 1981–Jun 1989		X	X		X			X				90
38	Afghanistan (2nd Phase)	Jan 1985–Feb 1989		X	X			X		X				49
39	Angola	Dec 1985–May 1993		X	X			X			X			89
40	Afghanistan (3rd Phase)	Feb 1989–Sep 1991		X	X				X			X		31
41	Kuwait	Sep 1990–Jan 1991	X			X	X			X				4
42	Iraq	May 1991–Jul 2002		X	X				X			X		134
43	Afghanistan	1998–2000		X	X		X					X		24
44	Kosovo	Mar 1999–Jun 1999	X		X			X		X				2.5
45	Serbia	Mar 1999–Oct 2000		X	X				X	X				19
46	Afghanistan	Sep 2001–Dec 2001	X		X				X	X				3
47	Iraq	Feb 2002–Apr 2003	X			X	X			X				14

Acronyms

AFHQ	Allied Force Headquarters
AIB	Allied Intelligence Bureau
AJUF	Anti-Japanese Union Forces (Malaya)
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BK	Balli Kombëtar (National Front)
CAT	Civil Air Transport
CBI	China-Burma-India Theater
CCRAK	Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CGDK	Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIG	Central Intelligence Group
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CLNAI	Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale per l'Alta Italia (Committee for National Liberation in North Italy)
COI	Coordinator of Information
COIN	counterinsurgency
CT	counterterrorism
CWMD	countering weapons of mass destruction
EAM	Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo (National Liberation Front) (Greece)

EDES	Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos (National Republican Greek League)
ELAS	Ellinikós Laïkós Apeleftherotikós Stratós (Greek People’s Liberation Army)
EUSA	Eighth United States Army
FECOM	Far East Command
FFI	Forces Françaises de l’Intérieur (French Forces of the Interior)
FID	foreign internal defense
FMD	Force Management Directorate (within USSOCOM)
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
FRD	Frente Revolucionario Democrático (Democratic Revolutionary Front)
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front)
FUNCIPEC	National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Cooperative Cambodia
INA	Iraqi National Accord
INC	Iraqi National Congress
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
JACK	Joint Activities Commission Korea
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KMT	Nationalist Kuomintang army (Nationalist China)
KPNLF	Khmer People’s National Liberation Front

KPRP	Khmer People's Revolutionary Party
LOC	lines of communication
LNC	Lëvizja Nacional-Çlirimtare (National Liberation Movement) (Albania)
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MGB	Ministerstvo gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Ministry of State Security) (USSR)
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MRR	Movement of Revolutionary Recovery (Cuba)
MTT	mobile training team
MU	Maritime Unit (of OSS)
NALT	Northern Alliance Liaison Team (CIA)
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	noncommissioned officer
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NILE	Northern Iraq Liaison Element
NORSO	Norwegian Special Operations (operational group)
NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum
NSC	National Security Council
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
NSPG	National Security Planning Group (of the NSC)
NVA	North Vietnamese Army

OAS	Organization of American States
OG	Operational Group (of OSS)
OPC	Office of Policy Coordination (within CIA)
OSO	Office of Special Operations (within CIA)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OUN	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PLA	People's Liberation Army (Communist China)
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
PRS	Philippine Regional Section (of AIB)
PSYOP	psychological operations
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RAF	Royal Air Force
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RG	Record Group
RL	Radio Liberty
SAS	Special Air Service (United Kingdom)
SEAC	South-East Asia Command
SF	Special Forces (United States Army)
SFHQ	Special Force Headquarters
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SI	Secret Intelligence Branch (of OSS)
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (United Kingdom)
SO	Special Operations Branch (of OSS)

SOCENT	Special Operations Command, Central
SOE	Special Operations Executive (United Kingdom)
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOG	Special Operations Group (USAF) Studies and Observation Group (MACV)
SPOC	Special Projects Operations Center
STR	support to resistance
SWPA	Southwest Pacific Area
UN	United Nations
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNPFK	United Nations Partisan Forces Korea
UNPIK	United Nations Partisan Infantry Korea
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAFFE	United States Armed Forces in the Far East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
USG	United States Government
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UW	unconventional warfare
WIN	Freedom and Independence movement (Poland)

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