



**The Nature of the “Long
War”
RMA II verses RMA I & RMA
IV
OLLI Lecture #6**

April 20, 2022

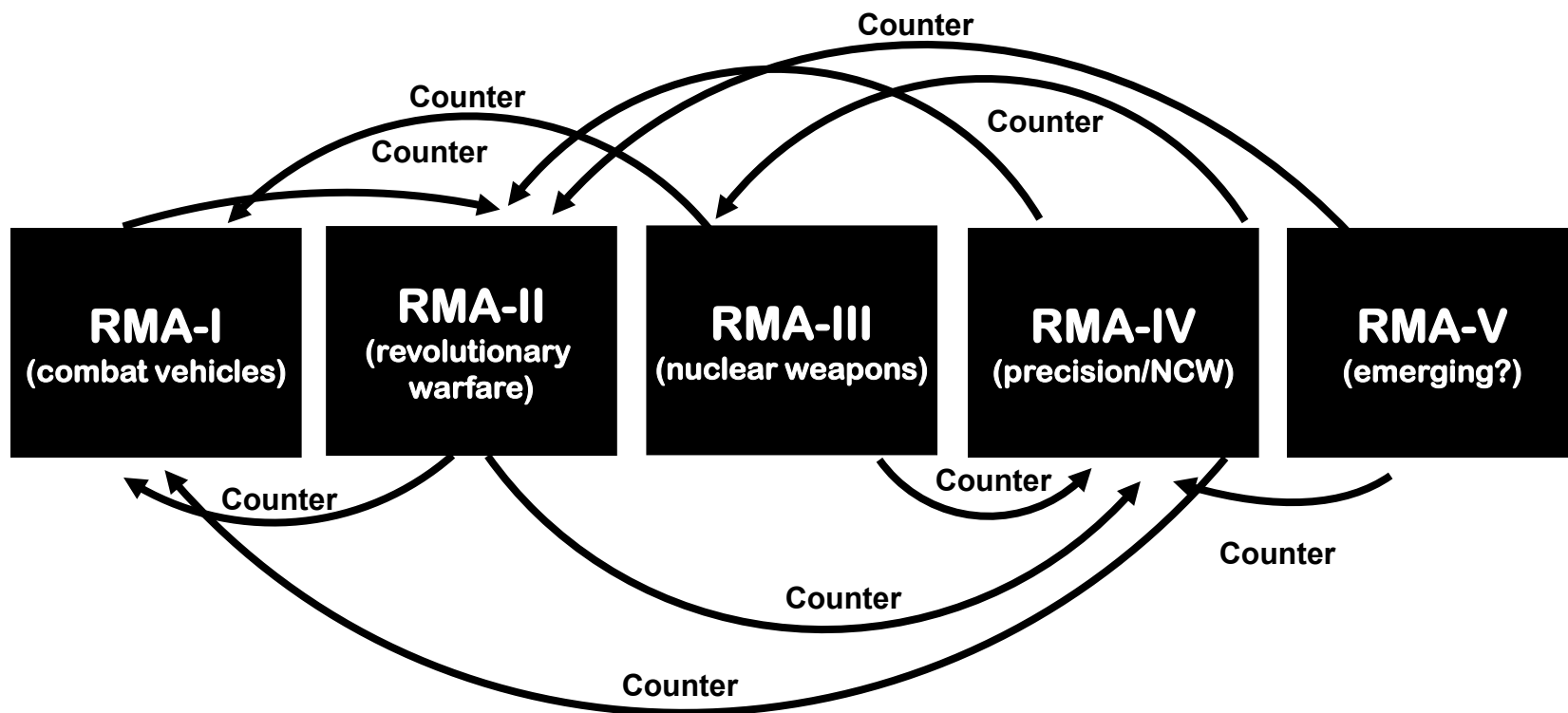
Peter A. Wilson

The Four RMAs of the 20th Century

Four 20th-Century Revolutions in Military Affairs (all continuing)

RMA	Nominal Period of Change (all with older roots)	Characteristic Developments	Label for Resulting Strategy
I	1917–	Mechanization: self-propelled combat vehicles (air, sea, and land)	Industrial warfare
II	1930–	Insurgency; revolutionary, partisan, and guerilla warfare; terrorism	Insurgency
III	1945–	Nuclear weapons; long-range missile delivery	Mass-destruction weapons and strategic bombardment
IV	1980s–	Precision weapons; unmanned combat vehicles; persistent ISR; networked forces; computer-network operations (CNO)	Information technology

The RMA Measure-Countermeasure Interaction

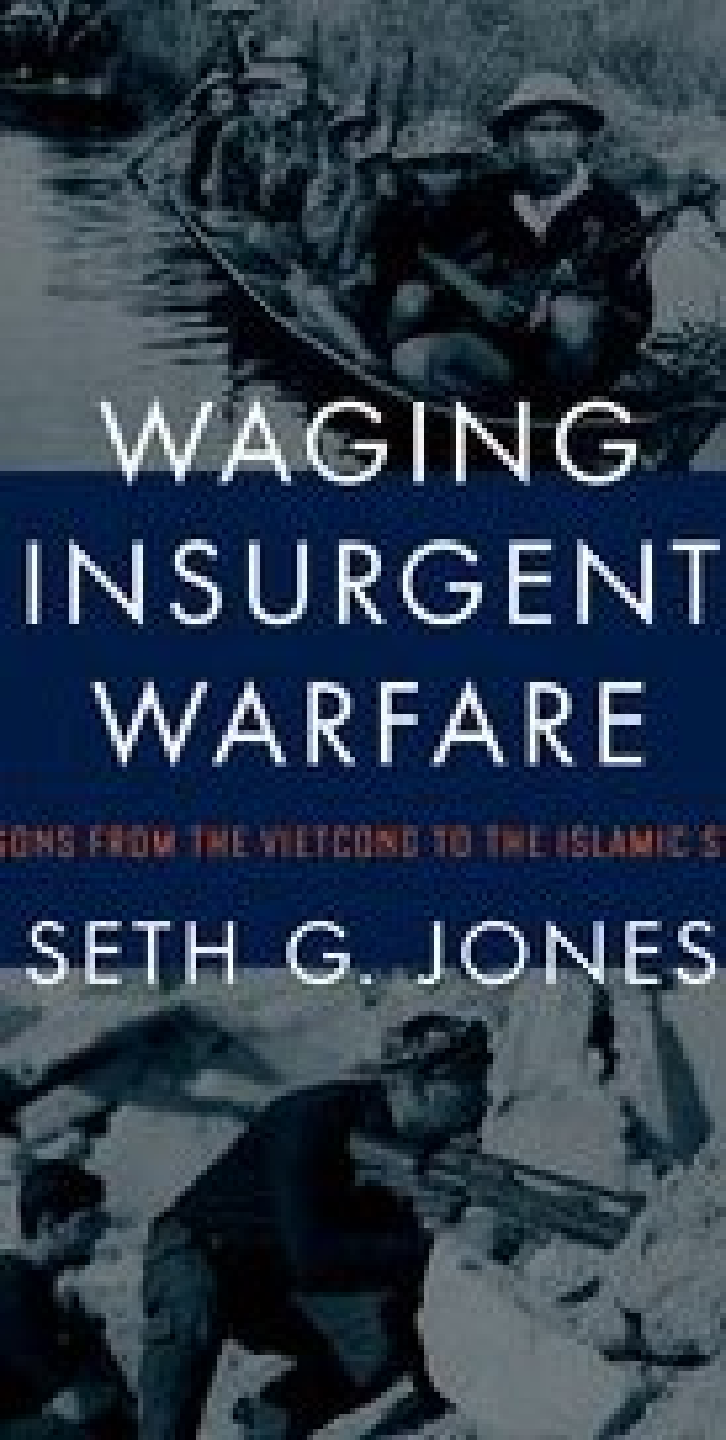


The different RMAs can be viewed as different domains or "ways of war." Not unlike the game of "rock, paper, and scissors" the various RMAs interact with each other in dynamic process of thesis and antithesis. Should RMA-V be defined by its ability to counter prior RMAs, specifically RMA-II, RMA-III, and RMA-IV? Is RMA-V simply a "hybrid" of all four prior RMAs?

Cold War 1955 – 1980

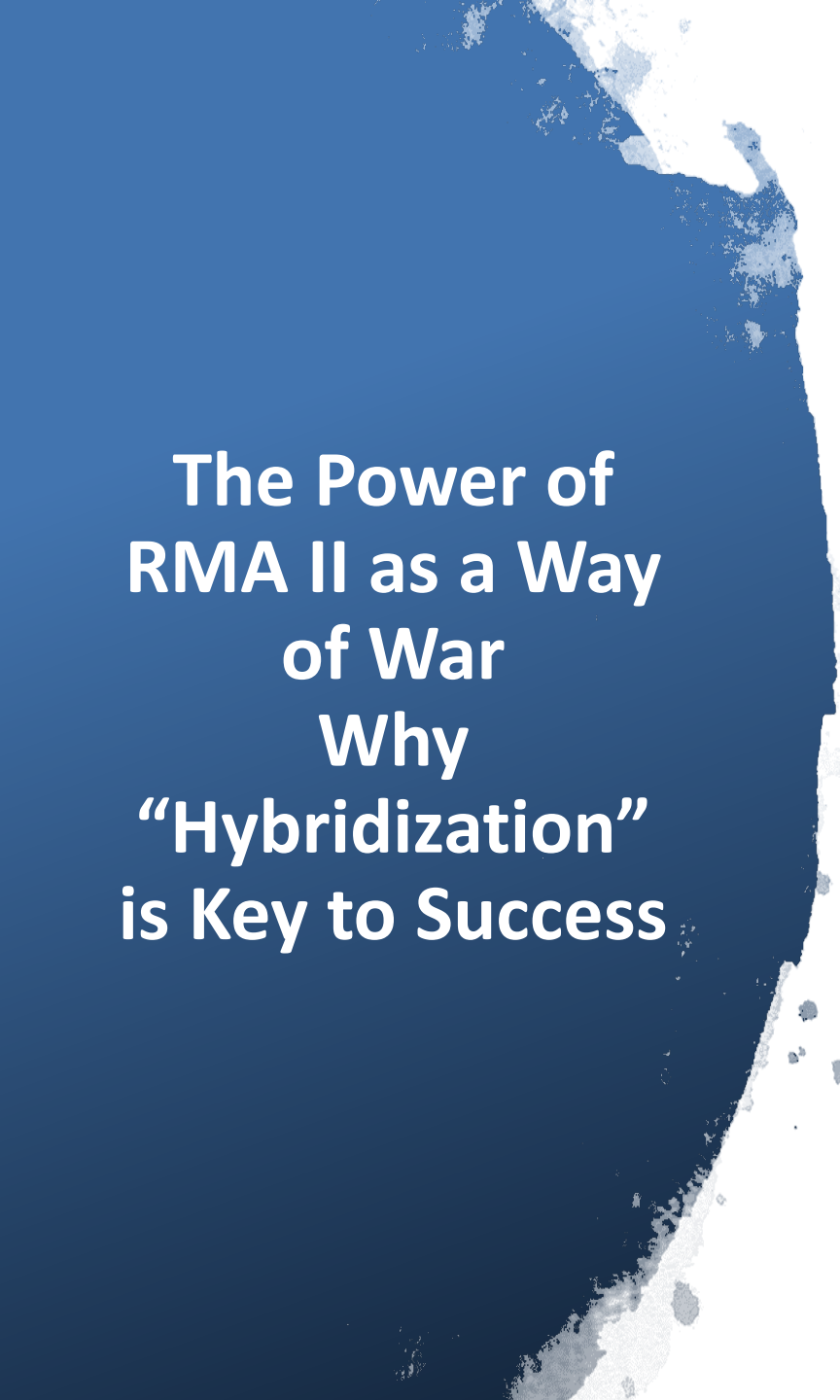
Emerging “Wars of National Liberation” or RMA – II

- **Collapse of European imperialism**
 - **India’s independence in 1947**
 - **Indonesia’s independence in 1949**
 - **Kenya and Nigeria gain independence**
 - **Congo gains independence from Belgium in 1960**
- **France’s defeat in Indochina – 1950-1955**
 - **Military Disaster in Dien Ben Phu – May 1954**
- **France’s defeat in Algeria – 1955-1963**
 - **Emerging concept of “revolutionary war”**
 - **Political/security crisis between 5th Republic and Secret Army Organization**
- **Cuban communist revolution – 1958 – 1959**
- **Cuba’s failure as revolutionary leader – getting bogged down in Angola 1975 - 1985**
- **Emerging war between North Vietnam and the United States – 1958 – 1975**
- **The battle for Laos – 1960 – 1972**



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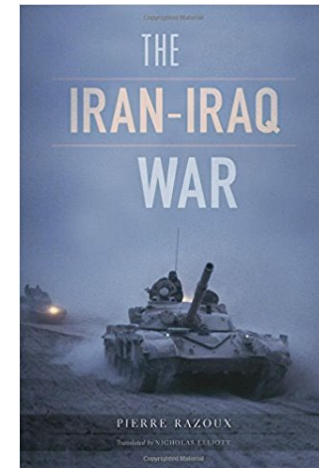
The Power of RMA II as a Way of War Why “Hybridization” is Key to Success

A string of victories since World War II

- **CCP victory during China’s civil war – 1949**
- **NVN victory during the first Vietnam civil war – 1956**
- **FLN victory in Algeria -1963**
- **NVN victory during the second Vietnam civil war – 1975**
- **The limited strategic result in Iraq and the U.S. withdrawal – 2011**
- **The uncertain fate of the Afghanistan civil war after 2018 and role of Pakistan**
- **The destruction of ISIS as quasi-state by 2018 as case in point**

Note: “Hybridization” means outside assistance and geo-graphic sanctuary – see Frank Hoffman, National Defense University

Oh, By the Way: Several Major Wars in the Middle East 1967 → 1988

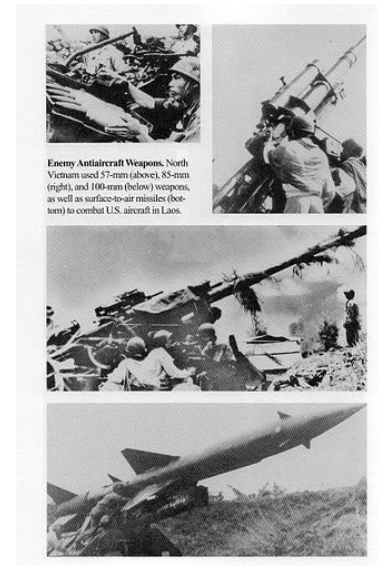
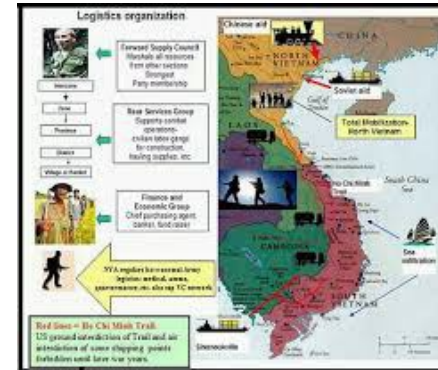


- The 1967 “Six Day War” between, Israel, Egypt, and Syria – Only AAMs used
- The Yom Kippur War of 1973 – extensive use of PGMs
- The Iran-Iraq War 1980 → 1988 – extensive use of PGMs
- Conflicts were largely demonstrations of RMA I and IV tools and techniques
- RMA II tools and techniques used extensively by PLO, Hamas, and Hezbollah in their long-wars with Israel
- These wars dramatically heighten the importance of the GME as the dominant support of oil to the global economy
- OPEC emerges out of the Yom Kippur War
- Saudi oil price war with IRI during Iran-Iraq War helps trigger the collapse of the Soviet Union

Internet Enabled 21st Century Multi-media

- Using the Internet to self-organize
 - The rise of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Snapchat
 - Neo-Victorian assumption that this technology was only benign proven false
 - A communications and self-organizing breakthrough for extremist organizations of all types
- The “Dark side” of the Internet
 - Salafist-jihadi use of the Internet
 - Propaganda
 - Training
 - Intelligence Collection
 - Recruiting for an ideologically inspired form of strategic warfare
 - See “Lone Wolf” and complex terrorist attacks in Europe and the U.S.
 - State Sponsored IO campaigns
 - Cyber operations to cause disruption and damage to critical infrastructures
 - Sustaining a cadre of “Trolls”
 - The creation and dissemination of news with “false facts”
 - Become a feature of U.S. political campaigns
 - Likely to major feature of upcoming European political campaigns

Soviet and Chinese Assistance to DRV aka “Hybrid” Warfare



- **SU and PRC provide massive assistance to DRV**
 - SU provide an IAD with SA-2 SAMs and advanced jet fighters – MiG-21
 - SU provided AFVs and heavy artillery
 - PRC provided air defense troops, massive AAA, ammunition, AFVs, artillery
- **That assistance proves decisive in prolonging war and raising cost of U.S. intervention**
- **U.S. does not cut off flow of Soviet aid by sea until 1972 – Mining of Haiphong Harbor**
- **Old animosity between DRV and PRC re-emerges in 1978**

Some Innovations out of the Vietnam War



- The AK47 and M16 assault rifles
- M79 and M19 grenade launcher
- The RPG and light machine gun
- The attack and assault helicopter
- Forward air controllers and fast jets
- Mass use of SAMs by the RVN and first use of SA-7 MANPADS
- Task Force Alfa – First attempt at a ground orient recce-strike system – to interdict the NVN lines of supply
- Extensive helicopter casualty evacuation
- The end of the use of napalm
- Strategic IO and the use of television

U.S. Casualties in Vietnam War by Cause

Reason Reported:	Other Causes
Casualties	754
Guns; Small Arms	Air Loss; Crash at Sea
18,518	577
Multiple Fragmentary Wounds	Burns
8,456	530
Air Loss; Crash on Land	Illness; Disease
7,992	482
Other Explosive Devices	Suicide
7,450	382
Artillery, Rocket or Mortar	Heart Attack
4,914	273
Other Accident	Intentional Homicide
1,371	234
Misadventure	Malaria
1,326	118
Drowned; Suffocated	Bomb Explosion
1,207	52
Vehicle Loss; Crash	Stroke
1,187	42
Accidental Homicide	Hepatitis
944	22
Accidental Self-Destruction	Unknown; Not Reported
842	520
	TOTAL:
	58,193

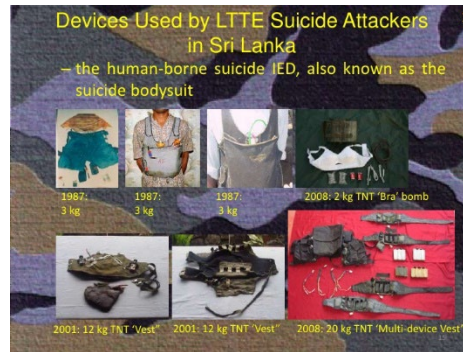
- **U.S. casualties shifted from small arms to IEDs and indirect fires over time**
- **Given number of close engagements small arms still major source of casualties**

U.S. Assistance to Mujahedeen In Afghanistan aka “Hybrid” Warfare



- U.S. provides Mujahedeen with extensive material assistance included MANPADs, ATGMs, unguided rockets and training to employ IEDs
- Blow back for this assistance in the form of Al Qaeda and 9/11 strategic terrorist attack

Rise and Fall of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization 1984 -2009

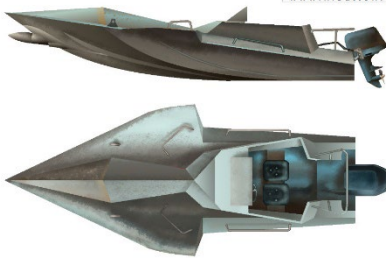


Air Tigers: The LTTE Air Force



LTTE Explosive Boat

COVERT SHORES
www.hisutton.com

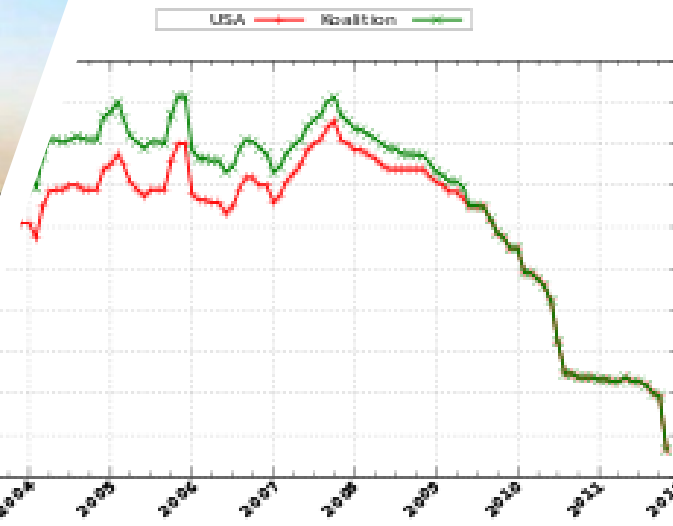


- **TELO reliance on Tamil global diaspora for financial and material support**
- **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) success with suicide attacks**
- **The key to the defeat of Tamil Eelam was the successful naval blockade by Sri Lankan government forces with cooperation of India and Malaysia governments**
- **Sri Lankan government provided with substantial Chinese military assistance**
- **U.S. naval intelligence critical to providing Sri Lankan navy's targeting of LTTE "mother ships"**

Operation Enduring Freedom



- U.S. intervenes to destroy Taliban government and al Qaeda after 9/11
- Shifts attention toward Iraq intervention in 2012
- U.S. invades Iraq in 2013
- Obama administration's military surge in 2009
- Large scale RMA I-style intervention ends in 2015
- Focus on sustaining a "hybrid" response with an additional 4,000 U.S. reinforcements during 2017



Operation Iraqi Freedom

- Bush administration preventive war against Saddam Hussein – to thwart hidden WMD programs and possible collaboration with AQ
- When WMD threat proves a null case, rationale shifts to Big COIN strategy of forcible nation building
- Controversial “Surge” led by General David Petraeus during 2007 buys U.S. more time to negotiate an exit strategy
- Large RMA I style intervention ends in 2011 with zero residual U.S. military presence
- Stage set for the emergence of ISIS in 2014



Some Innovation Out the “Long-Wars”



- The JFAC
- Individual night vision and vehicle night vision
- Laser range finders
- Body armor and MRAP - latter a \$20 billion crash program
- A wide array of PGMs
- The development of the recce-strike complex
- The “Golden Hour” and rapid air lift of casualties
- Attack helicopters and convertiplanes



Shifting Source of Combat Casualties

HISTORICAL MECHANISMS OF COMBAT

WOUNDS

Conflict

GSW (%)

Explosion (%)

Civil War

91

9

World War I

65

35

World War II

27

73

Korean War

31

69

Vietnam War

35

65

OIF/OEF

19

81

GSW: gunshot wound

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom

OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom

Secular trend is away from death by small arms to explosive ordnance

Data sources: (1) Bellamy RF, Zajtchuk R. Assessing the effectiveness of conventional weapons. In Zajtchuk R, ed.

Textbook of Military Medicine, Part I: Warfare, Weaponry, and the Casualty, Vol. 5, Conventional Warfare: Ballistic, Blast, and Burn Injuries.

Washington, DC: Office

of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army; 1991: 53–82. (2)

Beebe GW, DeBakey ME.

Death from wounding. In:

Battle Casualties Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas; 1952: 74–147. (3) Reister FA. Battle

Casualties and Medical Statistics: U.S. Army Experience in the Korean War

. Washington, DC: The Surgeon General, Department of the

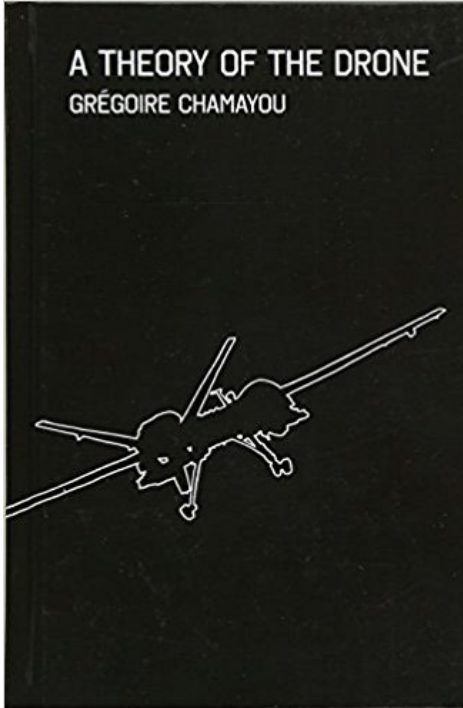
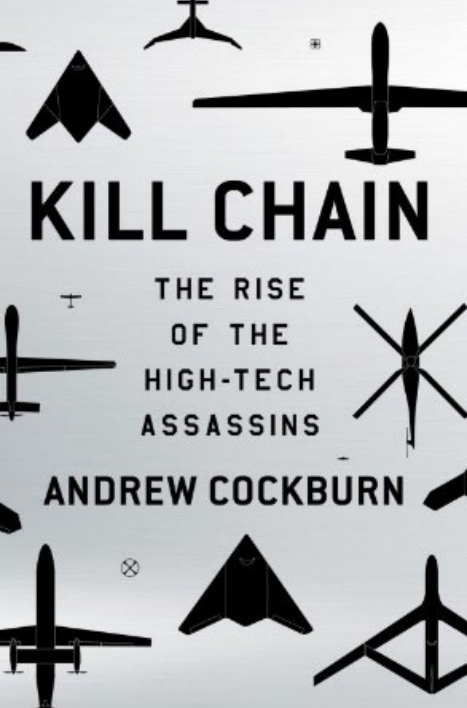
Army; 1973. (4) Hardaway RM. Viet Nam wound analysis.

J Trauma 1978;18:635–643. (5) Owens BD, Kragh JF Jr, Wenke JC, Macaitis J, Wade CE, Holcomb JB.

Combat wounds in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

J Trauma

. 2008;64:295–299.



UCAS Emerges as The Long Endurance Hunter Killer

- RQ-1 has been largely replaced by the more capable RQ-9
- USAF phased out the RQ-1 in 2018
- Army uses upgraded RQ-1 as MQ-1C Gray Eagle UCAS



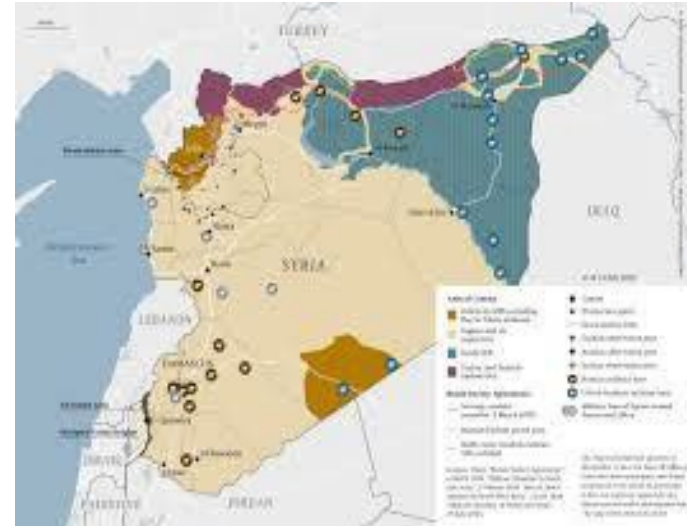
**A Contemporary “ Recce-Strike
Complex”
Task Force Observe, Detect,
Identify, Neutralize (ODIN)
Also USAF’s Task Force Liberty* –
Counter to Global Insurgency**

Task ODIN and Liberty: a mix of manned R-12-class reconnaissance aircraft and Warrior UAS

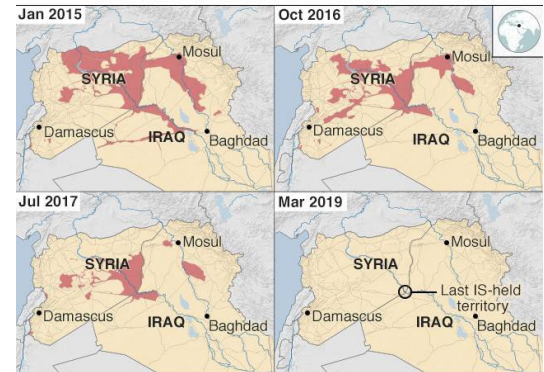
- Mix of EO, Radar, other sensors
- Tied to Fusion Centers
- Joint operations with Iraq Security Forces (ISF) and NATO/ANA forces in Afghanistan and Iraq
- Multiple means of neutralizing the identified targets
- Persistent ISR supported by aerostats and long endurance UAVs and UCAVs

** USAF Liberty assets absorbed by U.S. Army 2015*

The Rise and Fall of ISIS aka “The Caliphate” aka DAESH



How the area under IS control has shrunk



Source: Conflict Monitor by IHS Markit



Operation Inherent Resolve: Hybrid Response to ISIS as Quasi-State



- Large strategic air campaign against ISIS: *Operation Tidal Wave II*
- “Hybrid” mix of large-scale use of air power, SOF, UCAVs, ISR, Marine and Army Artillery, Army and USMC aviation and indigenous forces
- Kurds have been some of the most effective fighters
- Iraqi Special Forces have been a success
- Avoidance of use of large U.S. ground force elements
- After the fall of Mosul and al Raqqa – What next?
- President Trump’s decision to “Throw the Kurds under the Turkish bus” seriously undermines this concept of operation with current and future local anti-ISIS allies



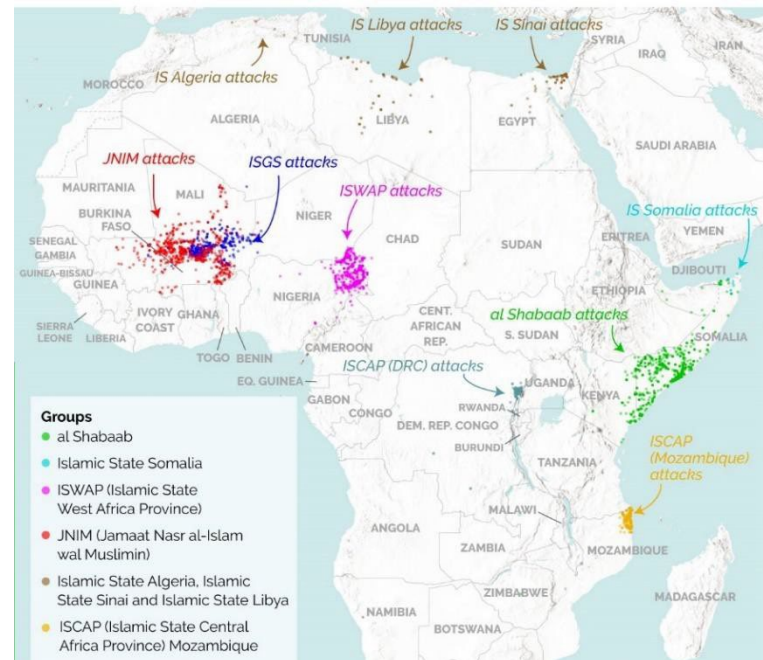
Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Theater of Operations – SOF Priority

- MENA is the primary theater of war for ISIS aka DAESH and AQ franchises
- Focus of much of USSOCOM's Activity including "Targeted Killing" operations
- Noteworthy features are vast distances and primarily arid climate and desert terrain conditions – major mountain ranges in far west and far east MENA
- Although Nigeria is not technically apart of MENA it is critically linked through the Boko Haram insurgency
- Most of these states align along the 10 degree latitude line – a cultural and religious fault line - Eliza Griswold, *The Tenth Parallel*, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2010

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Islamic State Provinces and Rival al Qaeda Affiliates' Areas of Operations in Africa, March 2017 to May 2020



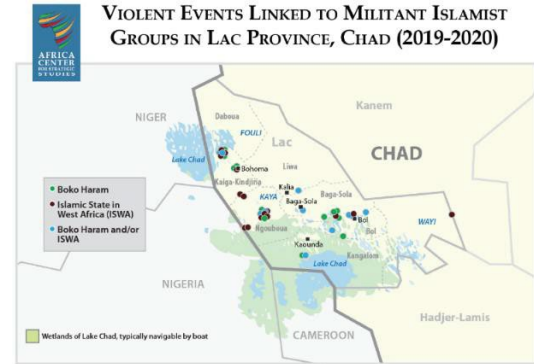
MALI and Region

- **Sustaining French and UN organized stabilization forces likely to be multi-year mission**
- **EU and U.S. providing ISR and aerial logistics support**



Nigeria and Region Rise of Boko Haram

- Nigerian theater of operation represents the spill over effect of radical jihadism aka militant Salafism from MENA region into sub-Saharan eastern Africa
- By 2018 Boko Haram has been pushed back into the northeastern zone of Nigeria
- Center of BH and ISIS affiliate activity has shifted to Chad





SOF's Global Theater of Operation

Key to the Map of US Special Operations Forces around the world, 2012-2013

Red markers: US Special Operations Forces deployment in 2013.

Blue markers: US Special Operations Forces working with/training/advising/conducting operations with indigenous troops in the U.S. or a third country during 2013.

Purple markers: US Special Operations Forces deployment in 2012.

Yellow markers: US Special Operations Forces working with/training/advising/conducting operations with indigenous troops in the US or a third country during 2012.

Source: Nick Turse, "Why Are US Special Operations Forces Deployed in Over 100 Countries?", *The Nation*, January 4, 2014

The Rapid Collapse of the NATO presence in Afghanistan

- President Biden decided to pull out US “combat forces” by September 2021
- Biden administration underestimates the speed of the collapse of the Afghan government and armed forces
- Taliban rapidly seize Kabul
- Massive airlift of over 100,000 Afghans out of country
- Airlift tarnished by successful suicide bombing that kills 13 US military personnel and over a hundred Afghans
- Continued finger pointing between the US military and civilian leadership about the execution of the NEO
- May have influenced Putin’s decision to take a hard line with the Atlantic Alliance about the fate of Ukraine



Overview of USSOCOM Global Capacity

- **USSOCOM as unified command as of 1987**
 - 2,500 military and DoD personnel primarily at MacDill Air Force Base Tampa
 - Total of 66,000 active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel from all four services and DoD
 - U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)
 - Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM)
 - Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)
 - Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC)
- **Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) are supported by Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs)**
- **As of 2013 USSOCOM has combat command of the TSOCs**
- **Combatant Command Service Agency (CCSA) provides manpower, non-SOF peculiar equipment and logistic support to the TSOCs**
- **USSOCOM give global responsibility for global campaign against “terrorist networks” as well as acting as DOD proponent for Security Force Assistance (SFA)**

Sources: Andrew Feickel, “U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): “Background and Issues for Congress”, CRS, November 19, 2015; “Statement of General Joseph L. Votel, U.S. Army, Commander United States Special Operations Command, HASC, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, March 18, 2015”; “Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN Commander, USSOCOM, before 113th Congress, HASC, 2014”

USSOCOM Global Footprint

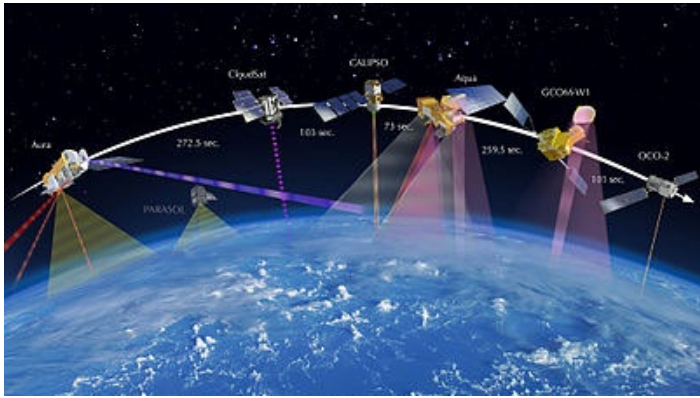
- **Deployed in more than 80 countries while filling GCC requirements and supporting 10 named operations**
- **3,500 stationed forward with an additional 7,000 deployed in support of GCC requirements**
- **High Stress with High Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO)**
 - **Over last 14 years, average SOF member deployed 4 to 10 times – many have less than 12 months home station between deployments**
 - **50% of the force is married with children**
 - **SOF has sustained over 2,500 KIA/WIA**
 - **7,500 are in the SOF Wounded Warrior program**
 - **Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO) – Lack of predictability from demanding OPTEMPO exacerbated by significant time spent from home for training**

Long-War SOF Requirements in MENA Theater of Operations

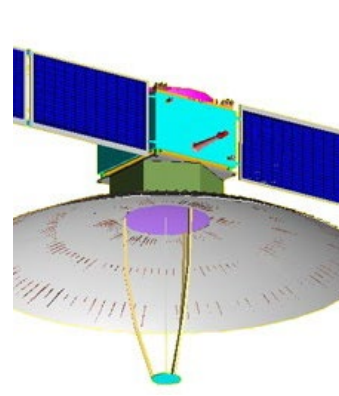
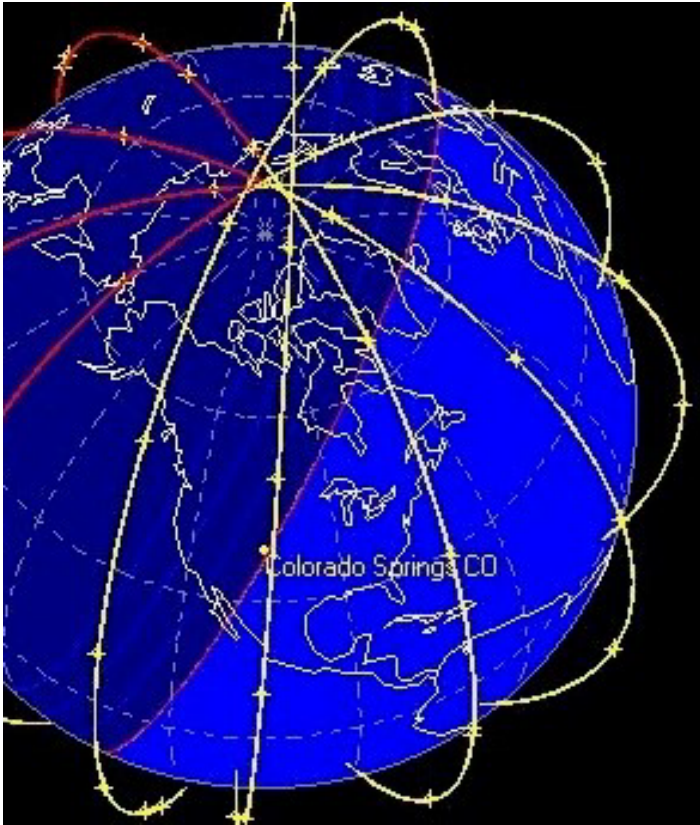
- **Ongoing operations in support of non-DAESH resistance forces in Syria**
- **Ongoing operations in support of Iraq/KRG governments to defeat DAESH in Iraq**
- **Ongoing operations to enhance Lebanon's counter-terrorism (CT) capacity?**
- **Ongoing operations to support Jordan's CT capacity**
- **Ongoing operations to support Egypt's CT capacity**
- **Ongoing operations in Yemen and Somalia to contain AQ franchises**
- **Ongoing operations to contain ISIS and AQ in Libya**
- **Ongoing support to Tunisian and Moroccan CT efforts**
- **Support for Algerian CT efforts?**
- **Ongoing support to France and UN efforts to stabilize Mali and CAR**
- **Ongoing support for Nigeria government and neighboring governments (Chad, Niger, and Cameroon) in war against Boko Haram**

Critical Role of Non-SOF Supporting Joint Forces Element/DOD/IC

- **USAF provision of:**
 - Specialized and long-range airlift
 - Medium and high altitude ISR
 - Low and slow ISR
 - Aerial fire support
- **USN provision of:**
 - Specialized coastal naval forces
 - Combat vessels
 - Sustained logistic support ships e.g., ELP
 - VTOL lift and fire support
- **US Army provision of:**
 - Low and slow ISR with fusion support, e.g., Task Force ODIN and its variants
 - Regionally oriented BCTs
 - Aerial fire support and logistics
 - Combat engineering
- **DOD/IC provision of:**
 - Global ISR support
 - Regional ISR support
 - Tactical ISR support
 - Global, regional and tactical IC analytical support
 - Global, regional, and tactical C4 support



The National Security Space Architecture



Specialized Aviation Assets



Emergence of the Light Attack Aircraft?

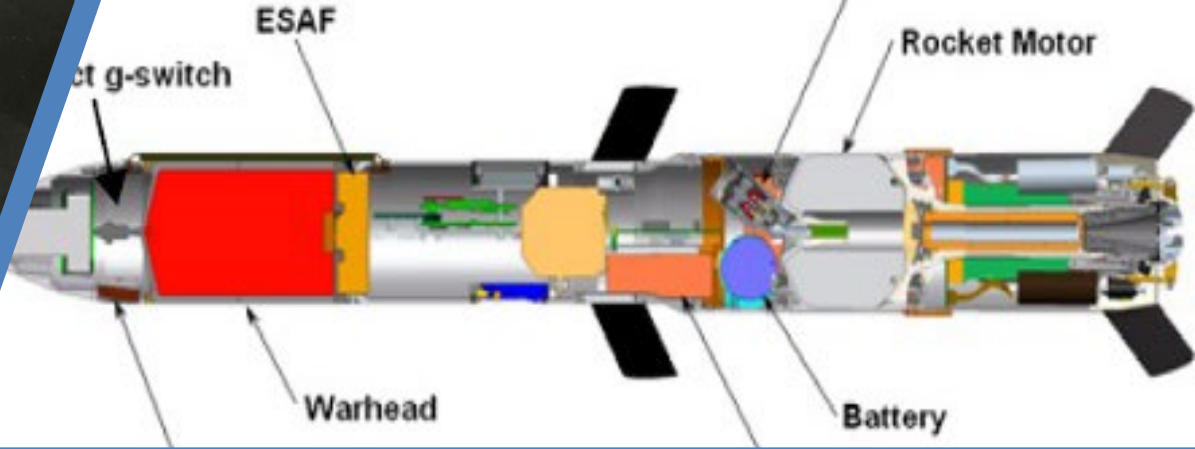
- USAF has been very reluctant to buy subsonic light attack aircraft
- USSOCOM want to buy light attack aircraft for its “armed overwatch” requirement
 - Procurement of meaningful numbers of this aircraft stalled
- USAF may hope to buy the light attack variant of the T-7A Red Hawk that has higher performance, e.g., supersonic capability
- Much lower procurement and operating costs than supersonic fighter jets or sophisticated attack helicopters
- Provides recce-strike capabilities throughout much of the Northern 10th Parallel zone of conflict



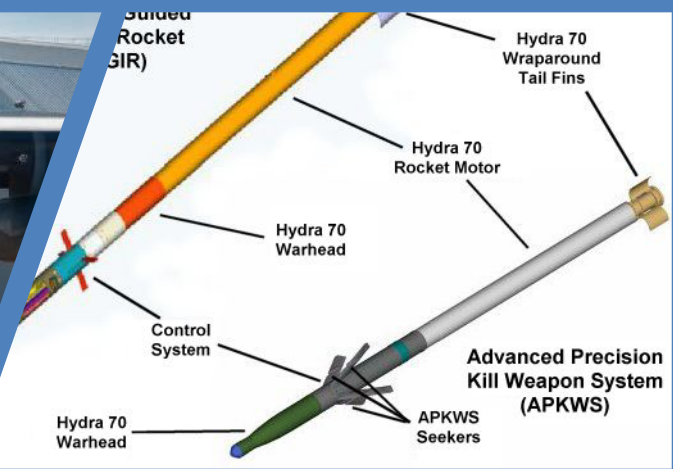


AC-130J & MC-130J

Major procurement program of the AC-130J-30 gunship and the MC-130J long-range transport



2018: Wide Range of Small PGMs for Small UCAS
Question: How Much Smaller and Lighter by 2030?





Diverse Array of UAVs and Loitering munitions

Specialized Naval Assets



DEATH AT 1,500 METERS

U.S. Special Operations Command has awarded a contract to Remington Defense for the Precision Sniper Rifle, a slightly modified version of the Modular Sniper Rifle, pictured here, which can hit targets at about 1,500 meters and beyond. The specs:



1. Remington Arms Chassis System.
2. Foldable stock.
3. Quick-change barrels in 7.62mm NATO, .300 Winchester Magnum and .338 Lapua Magnum.
4. X-treme Shooting Products trigger.
5. Suppressor. Remington Defense AAC Titan QD.

6. Reinforced Advanced Armament Company muzzle brake.
7. Modified Schmidt & Bender 5-25x56 PMII rifle scope.
8. Full-length, modular rail system.

Note: PSR accessories may vary slightly from those pictured.
SOURCE: STAFF RESEARCH, REMINGTON DEFENSE



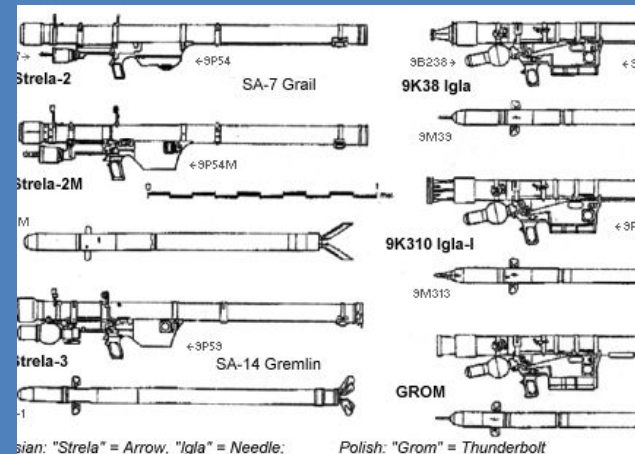
Specialized Ground Equipment





Diffusion of MANPADS and Tactical SAMS

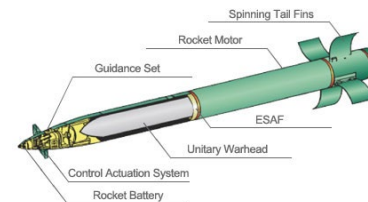
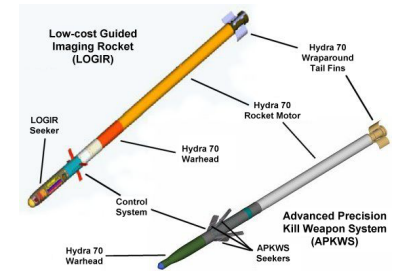
- Guidance from single color IR to multi-spectral EO to laser beam riding to active radar
- Potential challenge to U.S. and allied low altitude use of ISR, combat, and logistics aviation
- Weapons acquired through civil war aka DAESH's success versus weapon provision to insurgents by outside powers



Russian: "Strela" = Arrow, "Igla" = Needle; Polish: "Grom" = Thunderbolt

With Diffusion of MANPADS and SHORADS, Diffusion of Precision Strike Weapon Underway

- Precision Stand-off Weapons may fall into hands of DAESH and AQ Franchises or be provided by outside powers



Making Ukraine More Resilient aka Harder to Eat



- Current NATO consensus: Help Ukraine's military become more militarily resilient
- Airlift of advanced infantry anti-tank and anti-air PGMs
- UK initiated airlift of thousands of NLAWs anti-tank missiles – France may provide *Eryx* anti-tank missiles
- Wide range of light and man portable Surface to Air Missiles available for rapid deployment such as *Starstreak*
- U.S. and Europe flooding Ukraine with this class of weapon – future insurgents will get this form of assistance

USSOCOM's Independent Development Capacity

- **An array of small arms innovations**
- **Light Attack and Reconnaissance Aircraft**
- **Enhanced sensors for fleet of MQ-9 UAVs**
- **Up-arming fleet of CV-22**
- **Development of the Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit (TALOS)**

Next Generation Manned VTOL Aircraft

- **250+ knot cruise speed
vice 150 knot
traditional helicopter**
- **Operational altitude up
to 25,000 feet vice 10-
15,000 feet**



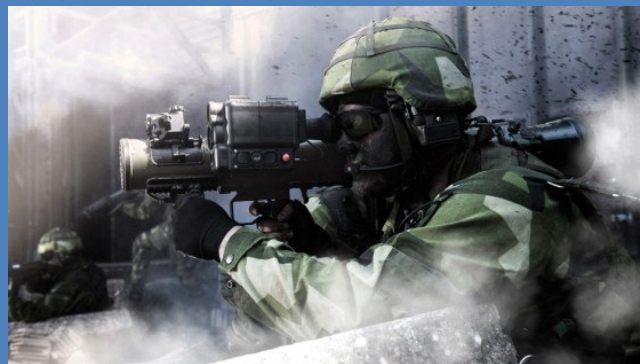
Active Defense Systems for AFVs



- Active armor may protect light AFV against low velocity RPGs and ATGMS – not from high velocity main tank guns and rapid fire medium caliber auto cannon

Major Increases In Infantry Firepower and Situation Awareness?

Question: How will these trends and new capabilities affect squad-level tactics, training, and doctrine?





Rise of the "Super" Soldier?

Will the armored/enhanced soldier supported by robots be the wave of the future to land warfare?



EXISTING GEAR

HELMET

Basic helmets provide modest protection from bullets, shrapnel and explosions. Troops often attach night-vision goggles for better visibility on missions.

BODY ARMOR

U.S. troops wear limited amounts of body armor designed to protect vital organs and allow them to move with speed and agility.

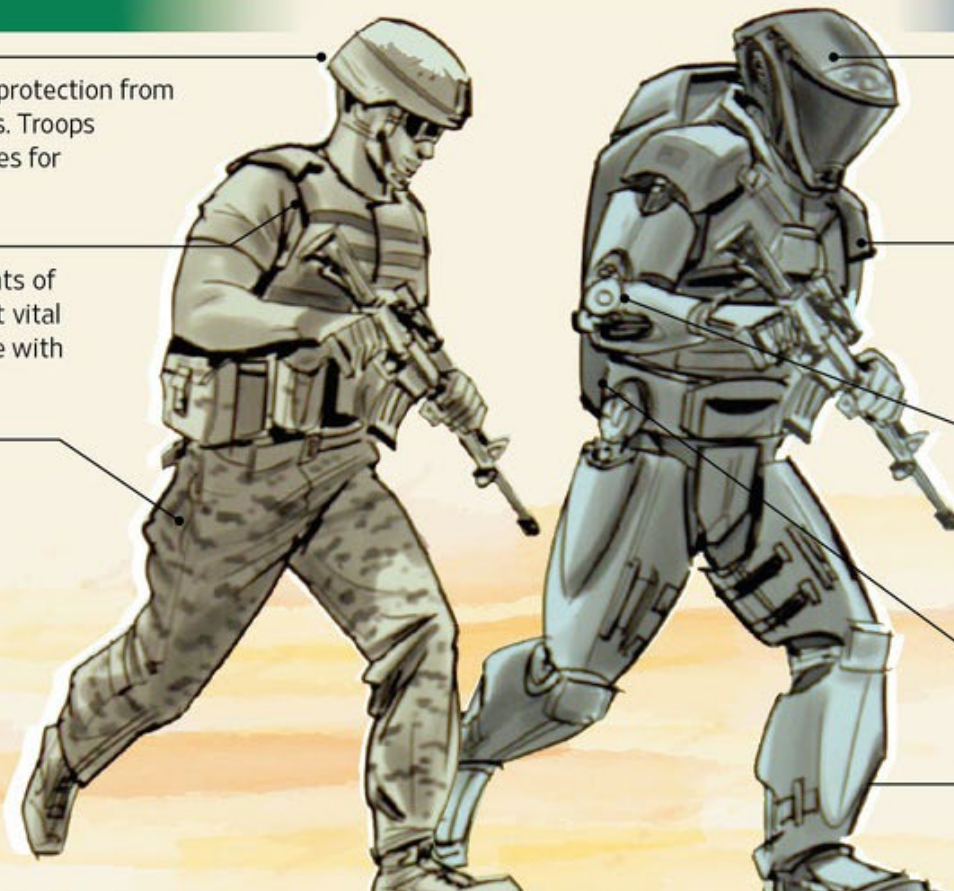
LOWER BODY

Current uniforms provide limited lower-body protection.

GEAR

U.S. forces can carry more than 125 pounds of gear, including grenades, knives, radios, ammunition magazines and flashlights.

Resource:- www.goo.gl/2EdsTv
<http://www.911gear.ca>



FUTURE IRON MAN SUIT

HELMET

Future helmets may include visors, sensors and Google Glass-type interfaces to help U.S. forces spot hidden threats.

COOLING SYSTEM

Suits could include a cooling system to help regulate the body temperatures of U.S. troops encased in the the body armor.

MOTORIZED EXOSKELETON

The suit would likely include a motorized exoskeleton to help carry the hundreds of pounds of added weight from the body armor and high-tech components.

POWER

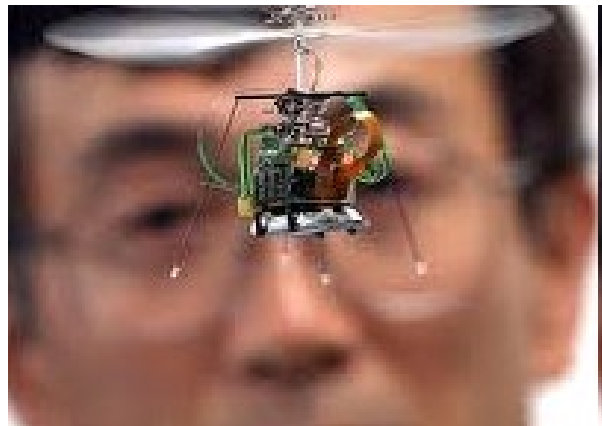
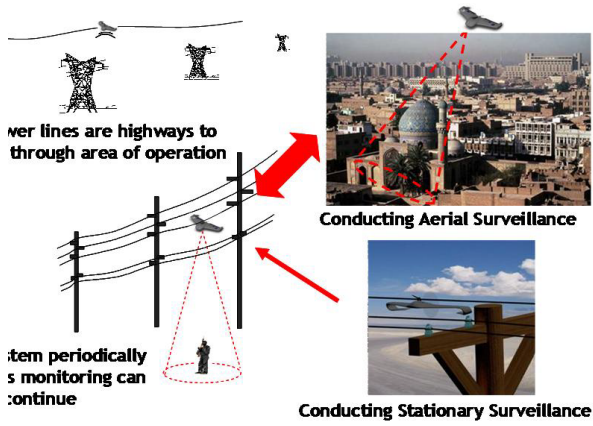
Future suits might be powered by a small engine.

BODY ARMOR

The full-body suit would provide dramatically increased body-armor protection extending to

Rise of Super Soldier (2)

Debate about M-4 carbine follow-on may be rendered null by advances in body armor



**Post 2020:
Micro UAS Living off the Land with Swarming Features?**

Russian Military Escalation to Save Assad Regime



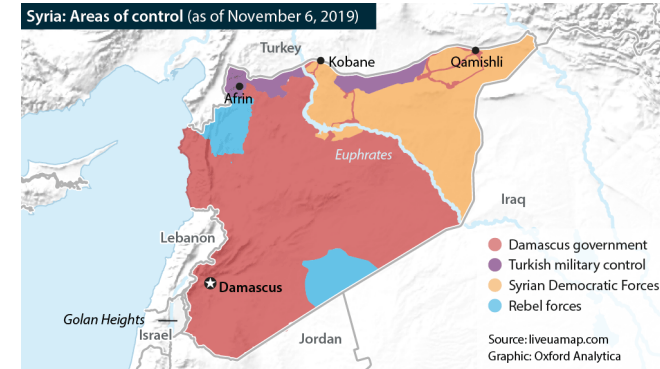
Strategic Attractiveness of Area Bombing



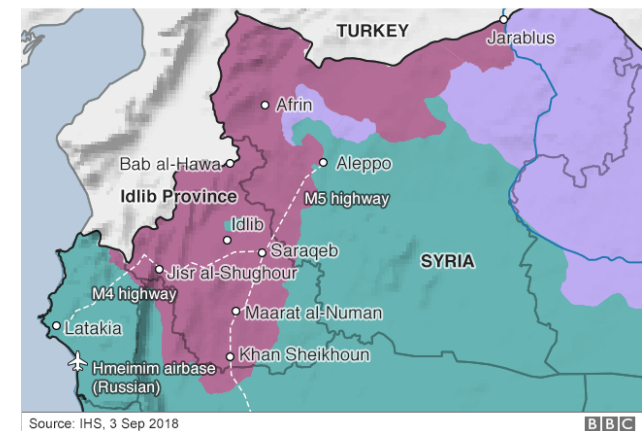
- Mass area bombing of Aleppo drives out opponents of the Assad regime – form of ethnic cleansing – East Aleppo falls in December 2017
- Prompts mass migration into Europe with major destabilizing effects – Rise of European extreme nationalism
- Who needs PGMs?
- Assad’s “Stupid Pet Trick”: the use of Sarin war gas against insurgents in Idlib Province

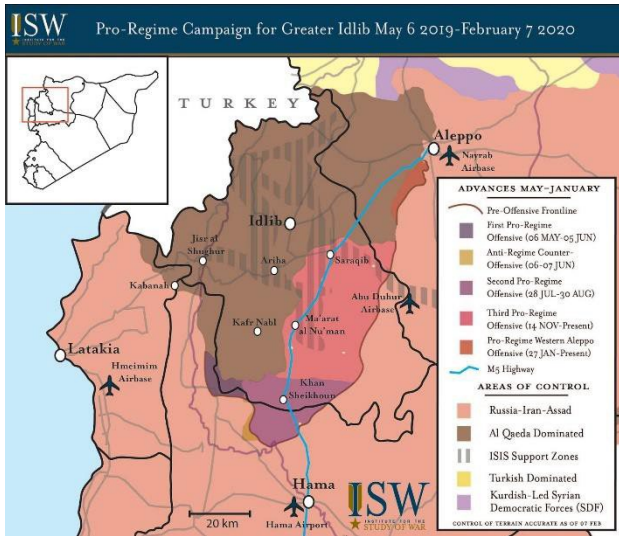
Assad Regime on Verge of “Victory”?

- President Trump was talked out of pulling out all U.S. forces from eastern Syria
- Trilateral force of American, French and British forces still support the Syrian Kurdish forces and their Syrian allies - protecting them from both Turkey and the Assad regime
- Turkey has had major military success in Idlib Province in protecting local insurgent allies including major elements of a Syrian AQ



Idlib province





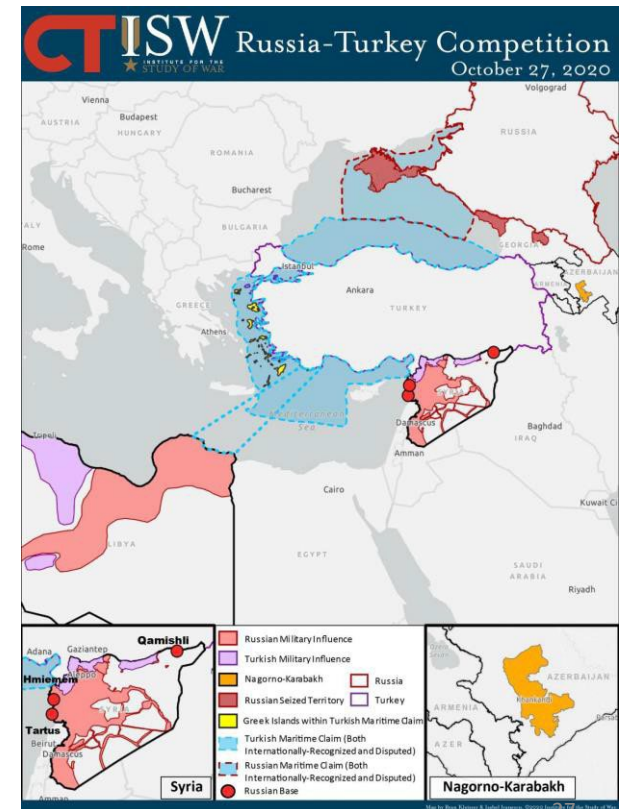
Turkish Military Intervention into the Syrian Civil War

- Trump-Erdogan deal allowed Turkey to occupy buffer zone at expense of Syrian Kurds
- U.S. and Kurds still control key eastern Syrian geography – major agricultural and hydrocarbon zone
- Ankara shocked the Assad regime and its Russian Iranian allies by militarily intervening in Idlib Province northwest Syria – to save the anti-Assad insurgents – principally Salafist-jihadis
- Turkey uses UCAVs, UAVs, and long-range artillery to cripple Assad regime's ground offensive



Turkey and Russia as Regional Rivals

- **Putin-Erdogan entente under strain**
- **Emergence of significant Ukrainian and Turkish military industrial cooperation**
- **Regional containment strategy of Russia in Black Sea region?**



Libyan Civil War



- **Government of National Accord (GNA) and Misrata Faction control western zone of Libya – has U.N. recognition – key ally is Turkey and Italy**
- **Libyan National Army (LNA) and allies control much of the oil and gas rich western part of Libya – allies include Egypt, UAE, France and Russia**
- **Turkish military intervention during summer of 2020 reversed General Hiftar’s offensive – Russian Wagner Group suffered losses**
- **Extensive use of Un-crewed Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs) by Turkish forces and allies**
- **Currently a cease fire that may break down in the near future**
- **ISIS and AQ elements lurk in the southern region**

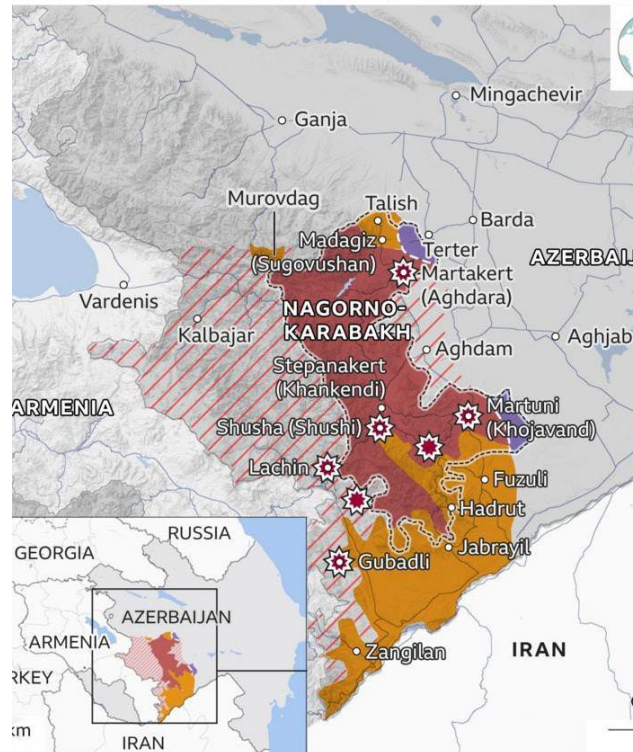


Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh: Azerbaijan's Decisive Victory over Armenia



Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh

- Areas regained by Azerbaijan since 27 September
- Azerbaijan-controlled territories
- Armenian-controlled territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh
- ✳ Approximate areas of ongoing fighting



Source: BBC Research, 9 November 2020

- Azerbaijan initiates conflict with Armenia
- Turkey and Israel provide decisive military assistance to Azerbaijan
- Armenian ground forces overwhelmed by Azerbaijan precision munition attacks
- Russia has mutual defense pact with Armenia
- Moscow imposes Munich style cease-fire on Armenia
- Russian force will sustain single road to sustain Armenian enclave

Unlikely Collapse of the U.S.-Turkey Alliance



Mixed signals sent by President Trump on the U.S. withdrawal from eastern Syria both enrages and encourages President Erdogan

The destruction of the Wagner Group during February 7, 2018 was a Trump Administration warning to both Ankara, Tehran and Moscow

Incirlik AFB is a very important air base for U.S. operations in the Greater Middle East

- Nuclear weapon storage has been a feature of this base since the Cold War
- Alternatives like Souda Bay, Crete have been found

President Erdogan has defied Trump Administration by buying Russian S-400 surface to air missiles (SAM) systems

U.S. cancelled Turkey's industrial participation in the F-35 program – should an alternative be offered?

Should Trump's decision to throw "the Kurds under the Turkish bus" be reversed? What should be the U.S. stance toward the Turkish-Ukrainian geostrategic entente?

Does Ankara's support of Kyiv during Russo-Ukraine crisis give Erdogan a "free pass"?

Clash of the Titans: KSA verses the IRI

- **Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) under pressure**
- **Khashoggi assassination “worse than a crime, a massive blunder”**
- KSA relations with Biden administration and US Congress remains complex and tense
- **Needs to end Yemen civil war on satisfactory terms**
- Recent oil price surge has helped Saudi budget circumstance
- **“Blockade” of Qatar has ended**
- **Increased fears about the U.S. military recession in the PG region**
- Fear in the region may increase if US carries out major military reinforcement of East Europe during Russo-Ukrainian war
- Shock of the US abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan
- **MBS believes in the theory of “Peak Oil Demand”**
- **De Facto alliance between KSA and Israel over an assertive IRI**



Continued IRI Military Innovation and Modernization – Failure of U.S. “Maximum Pressure” campaign



IRAN'S DRONE CAPABILITIES

Shahed 129

Specifications

Crew	none	Height	3.1 m	Endurance	24h
Capacity (payload)	400kg	Cruise speed	150kph	Bombs	4xSadid-345 PGM
Length	8m	Combat range	1,700km	Service ceiling	7,300m
Wingspan	16m	Ferry range	3,400km		

Mohajer-2

Specifications

Crew	none	Empty weight	70kg	Endurance	15hr
Capacity (payload)	15kg	Propellers	2-bladed	Max speed	200kph
Length	2.91m	Range	50km	Service ceiling	3,350m
Wingspan	3.8m				

The Mohajer-6 has two hardpoints which can each carry one Qaem guided missiles

Ababil-1

Specifications

Crew	none	Height	0.91m	Endurance	125-2hr
Capacity (payload)	40kg	Wing area	3.25m	Propellers	2-bladed
Length	2.88m	Fuel capacity	16L	Cruise speed	250-350kph
Wingspan	3.25m	Combat range	120km		

Shahed 171 Simorgh

Based on the Sentinel stealth unmanned vehicle which the Iranians say they shot down over Iran

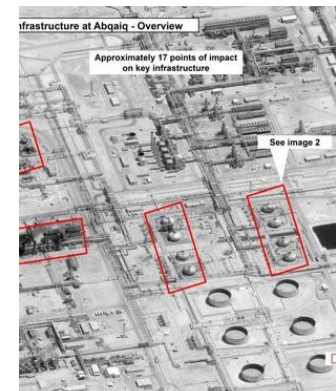
Jet-powered flying wing reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicle



- Iranian hard liners dominate the current government
- Continued investment in wide range of long-range PGMS, loitering munitions and UCAVs
- IRI and Turkey had demonstrated military effectiveness of “robotic” air and missile power
- Possible emergence of a “Eurasian Entente” with China and Russia
- Outcome of the negotiations to re-instate the JCPOA aka multi-party nuclear deal very uncertain – limits on IRI missile developments unlikely
- Gulf states and KSA looking for a negotiated deal with IRI

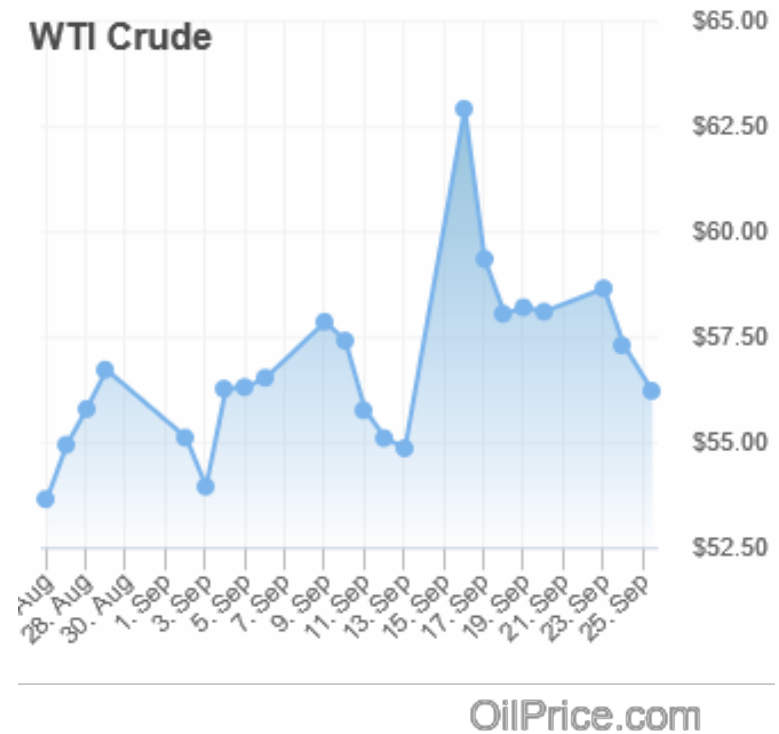
Manifestation of IRI Regional Precision Strike Capabilities

- IRI drone/cruise missile attacks on two key KSA petroleum infrastructure sites a wake-up call?
- Attack conducted by small drones and small land attack cruise missile (LACM) that overflow Kuwait and Iraq
- Very likely launched from SE Iran and overflow southern Iraq and western Kuwait
- IRI responding to U.S. strategic of economic and financial coercion after Washington's withdrawal from JCPOA
- See Japan's response to the U.S. oil and financial embargos during the fall of 1941



Increased Global Oil Supply Resilience

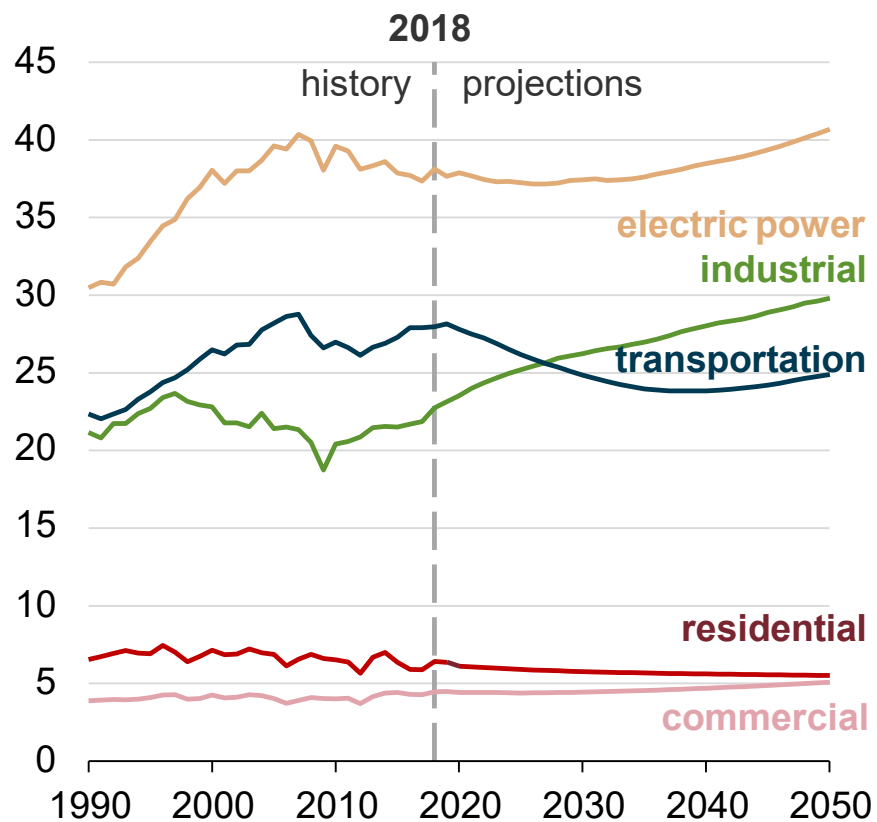
- **IRI drone/missile attack on KSA cause a temporary spike in oil prices**
- **Brent prices followed similar pattern**



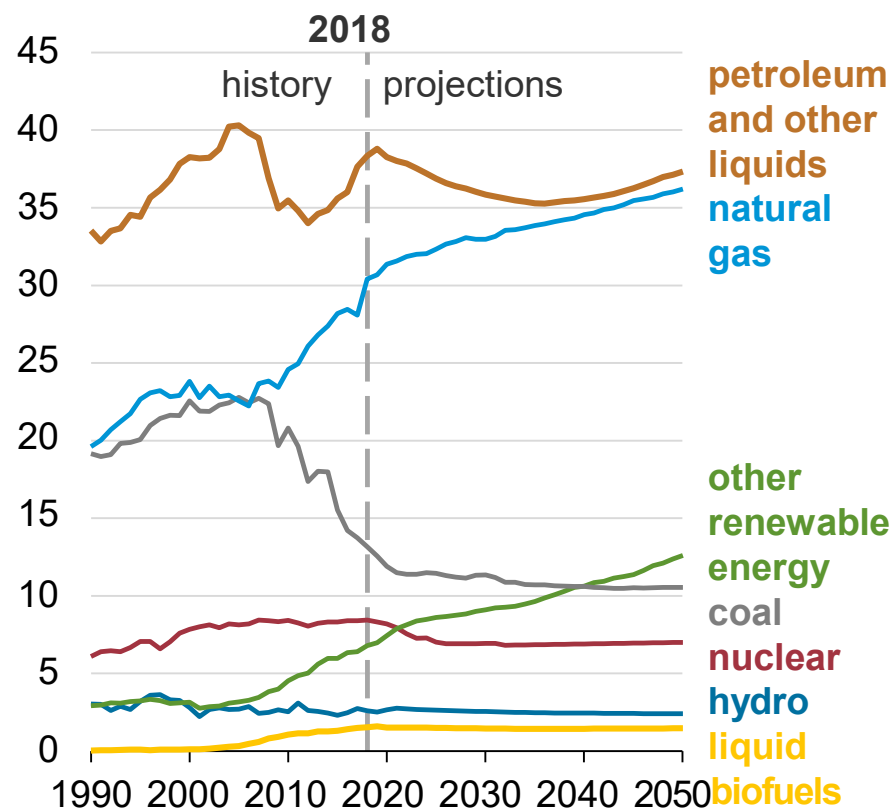


Policy, technology, and economics affect the mix of U.S. fuel consumption—

Energy consumption by sector (Reference case)
quadrillion British thermal units



Energy consumption by fuel (Reference case)
quadrillion British thermal units



Might KSA Acquire Nuclear Weapons?

- **Gray Swan Scenario: Future events of high consequence, low probability but forecastable:**
 - MSB and his “Young Saudis” aka “Young Turks” conclude that the correlation of forces with IRI has seriously deteriorated
 - Efforts by the KSA to enlist Israel and/or the US to put “maximum” military and financial pressure on the IRI has been disappointing – See Biden administrations attempt to revive the JCPOA with the IRI
 - U.S. and KSA relations take a serious down-turn
 - KSA signs a new security treaty with Pakistan
 - Pakistan to deploy 20,000 “elite” CT force in the Eastern province
 - Qatar fearful this will be used as an invasion force
 - Secret protocol: Provide KSA with 20 nuclear warheads (100 KT boosted weapons) to be made operation with 24 hours after airlift to operation IRBM sites (Shaheen III variants) for \$20 billion cash

Note: This scenario appears to have been rendered moot at this time by the rapprochement between Israel and the GCC states and the KSG with the latter shifting its strategic orientation toward India at the expense of Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan is tilting toward Turkey with increasing security ties.



On Disentangling from the GME

- **On acknowledging the multi-ring geo-strategic circus**
 - Should the U.S. play the role of an off-shore balancer to the ongoing struggle for influence between Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel?
- **What to do about Turkey?**
 - Should NATO prepare for a separation or divorce
 - Should the U.S. abandon Incirlik Air Force Base?
 - When to pull out the nuclear bombs?
 - Should the U.S. encourage or discourage the Erdogan “neo-Ottoman” national security strategy?
- **What to do about the Syrian Civil War endgame?**
- **What to do about the Iraqi Civil War endgame?**
- **What to do about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?**
 - Pressure KSG to end Yemeni civil war intervention – under what terms?
 - How to convince the KSG leadership there is no attractive nuclear weapon option?
- **Should the U.S. attempt a new détente with the IRI?**
 - What price should the U.S. pay to see Iran to return to full compliance with the JCPOA?
 - How should the U.S. take advantage of the emergence entente between Israel and GCC?
 - How should the U.S. react increasing strategic ties between China, Russia and the IRI? Increasing financial and economic ties between the IRI and India?
- **What should be the peacetime configuration of U.S. Joint Force in the GME?**
 - How will the assets to conduct the long-war with Salafist-jihadis be sustained?

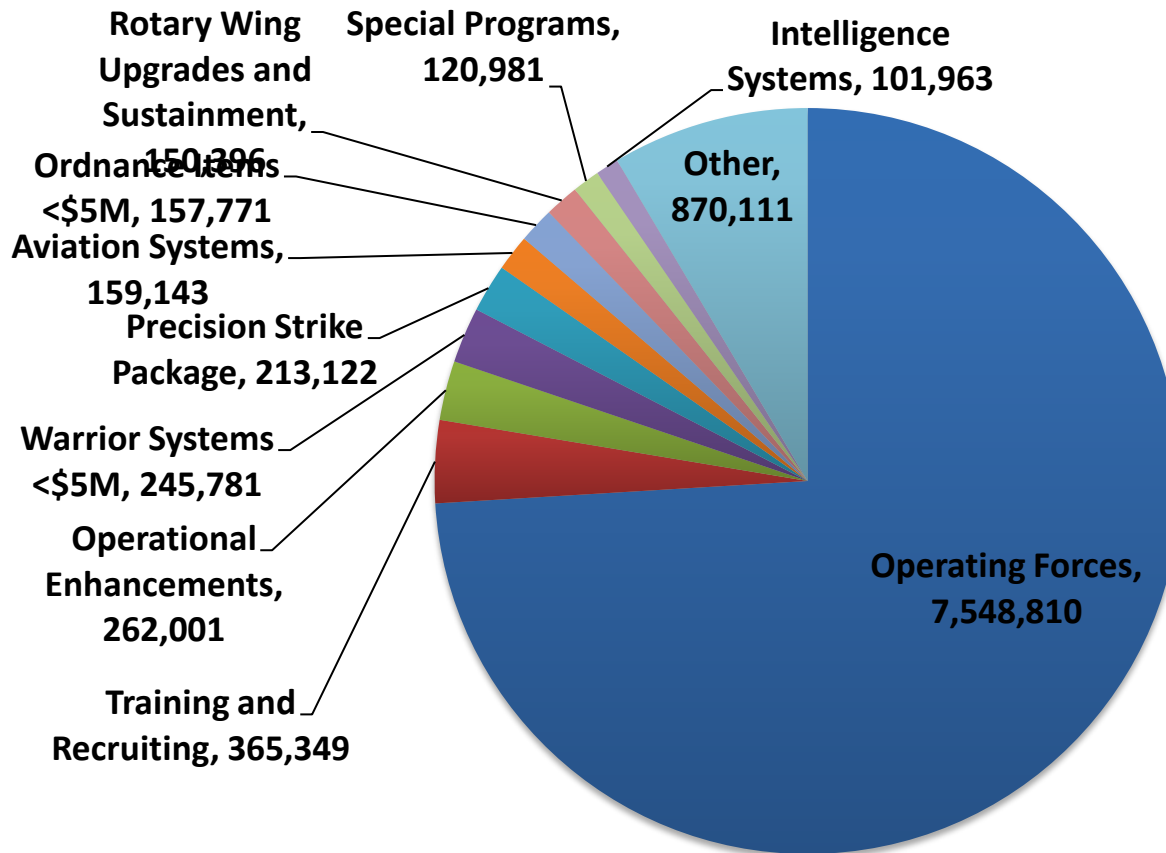
A blue graphic consisting of two overlapping rectangular shapes. The front shape is a horizontal rectangle on the right, and the back shape is a vertical rectangle on the left. The back shape is slightly offset to the left and top, creating a 3D effect. The text 'BACK UP' is centered on the front rectangle in white, bold, sans-serif font.

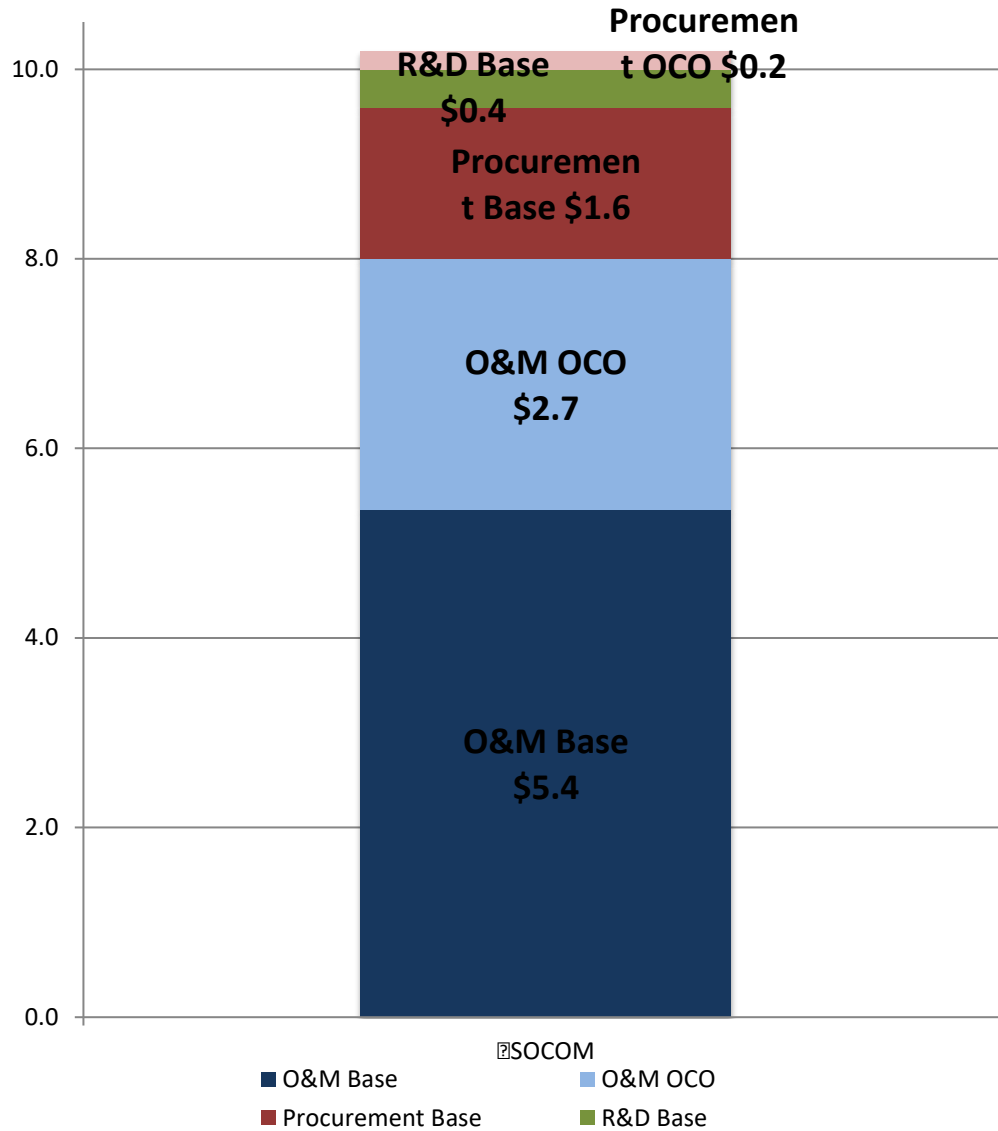
BACK UP

Impact of Climate Change

- Severe droughts beyond historic norms prompting mass migrations from rural to urban areas in MENA region
- Higher urbanization puts stress on local and national governments
- Droughts lead to food shortages and inflation
- Economic stress causes political instability
- Unemployed young men and women source of recruits to various jihadi causes
- Protracted drought important cause of Syrian domestic unrest and civil war triggered by the regional Arab Spring upheavals

SOCOM Line-Item FY 2017





SOCOM Budget for FY 2017