

***Project on Special
Operations and Special
Operations Forces
(POSOF)***

March 14, 2006

Why CSIS established a Project on Special Operations and Special Operations Forces

- **On 1 December 2005, the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) launched the Project on Special Operations and Special Operations Forces (POSOF) to focus future debate on critical issues in the Special Operations Community.**
 - Special Operations Forces (SOF) have become an increasingly stressed force and debate will continue as to the proper use of this valuable national asset.
- **CSIS believes that the demand for SOF and special operations capabilities is not likely to ease, given the trend toward irregular warfare taken by our adversaries.**
 - CSIS hopes to facilitate and contribute to debates on Special Operations and SOF at the strategic level, involving both policy substance and policy process, and the interplay between operational-level concerns and policy.
 - CSIS intends to focus on the organizational components by addressing roles and missions issues, both within the SOF community and between it, the rest of DoD and the USG.

POSOF Funding

- **Tom O’Gara, President and COE of the O’Gara Company, which includes several companies that provides equipments to SOFs, provided a donation of \$150-\$200K annually for the next 4 years as seed money for building a small component for analyzing and facilitating a debate on issues involving SOF.**
 - Intend to establish a small cell (3-5 personnel) to address SOF issues at the strategic and national policy level, with a special emphasis on roles and missions and organizational reform.
 - Seeking additional private donations to fund the hiring of necessary staff analysts (preferably former O-5/O-6 level SOF).
- **Current staff involvement:**
 - Co-directors are: Kurt M. Campbell, senior vice president of CSIS and director of the International Security Program; Clark A. Murdock and Michele Flournoy, both senior advisers at CSIS. Marsha Lewis will serve as the project coordinator.
 - Initial funding permits:
 - hiring of a part-time O’Gara fellow, and
 - hosting of the first annual CSIS conference on Special Operations issues (including commissioned papers).

POSOF Study Agenda on Special Operations and Special Operations Forces

- **POSOF's near-term substantive agenda:**

- ***Beyond Cohen-Nunn: A New Era in Special Operations (BC-N)***. In a fashion similar to the on-going BG-N study effort, BC-N will address fundamental organizational issues (including Title 10 roles and missions issues) on how DoD and USG meet the growing demand for special operations capabilities.
- ***Roles and Missions for SOF***. Recent experience in how SOF were used in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the near certainty that the continuing demand for special operations capabilities will exceed the supply of SOF capabilities raise important roles and missions at three levels – within the SOF community, between SOF and conventional forces (within DoD) and between DoD/SOF and the rest of the USG.
- ***Special Operations & Implementation of the 2006 QDR***. The QDR detailed specific goals for future Special Operations Forces including further increasing capability and capacity to conduct low-visibility, persistent presence missions and a global unconventional warfare campaign. Assessing the implications of these recommendations on the special operations community and monitoring implementation will be a near-term focus.
- ***Intelligence and Special Operations***. The recent debate over how the USG should organize for 21st intelligence collection, analysis and distribution did address the interaction between CIA and DoD in planning and conducting covert and clandestine operations (respectively) and organizational “seams” at the department level. Given informal and impressionistic reports from the field in Iraq that SOF units have generated eighty percent of the actionable intelligence in Iraq, the role of SOF, particularly its fusion of intelligence collection and operations, needs far more attention.

POSOF Activities in 2006

CSIS will host an annual conference on timely SO/SOF issues and convening a regular series of events, from policy breakfasts to high-level working group sessions.

– *During FY2006, POSOF will:*

- host its first annual conference in September/October 2006
- convene bi-monthly policy breakfasts in the DC area;
- establish a Board of Advisors consisting of POSOF sponsors, prominent government and non-government officials, and other SOF experts; as well as
- start analyzing roles and missions issues both within and beyond the SOF community.

POSOF Conference

- **Conference Concept:**

- Full-day conference (80-100 participants) with keynote and luncheon speakers, in addition to morning and afternoon panels.
 - Speakers at highest level of SOF community (USSOCOM Combatant Commander, Assistant Secretary for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, etc); or senior DoD officials including the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Staff.
 - Panels consisting of SOF experts, commissioned presentations by leading subject matter experts, and papers by CSIS analysts.
- Preceded by a private dinner hosted by CSIS consisting of POSOF supporters and members of the POSOF Board of Advisors (government and non-government members).
- Proceedings will be published as a monograph.

Why partner with CSIS?

- **CSIS, a non-partisan, independent public policy center with extensive national and international connections, brings several distinct competencies to this POSOF initiative:**
 - A world-class ability to conduct pragmatic analysis to address national and international security problems. Most of the work on SOF issues is at the tactical and operational level; much more is needed at the strategic and national policy level.
 - An exceptional capacity for identifying problems in how DoD and the U.S. Government (USG) are organized and in finding actionable, practical solutions.
 - CSIS provided much of the analytic foundation for the path-breaking Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, and
 - CSIS recently drafted *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: USG and DoD Reform for a New Strategic Era* Phase 1 (March 2004) and Phase 2 (July 2005); these reports have been widely praised and circulated at the most senior levels of government.
 - A superior ability to build networks across institutional “stovepipes” and to convene relevant senior-level government officials, military officers and subject-matter experts in policy-relevant forums.
 - For example, CSIS launched the Project on New Alternatives to Russian Security (PONARS) and the Project on Nuclear Issues (PONI) to create networked communities of young professionals to stimulate debate and generate new ideas in their respective fields.

Points of Contact

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