

NEOM City: Integrated Campaigning and Competition with China

Author (Maj, Daniel Hall, USMC, USA)
Author (MAJ, Jonathan Lovelace, USA, USA)
Author (Maj, Brett McCormick, USMC, USA)
Author (Maj, Michael Redding, USAF, USA)

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the J5 Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate, the NESACenter, or any other governmental agency.

Abstract: NEOM City is a planned futuristic metroplex that serves as a \$500 billion cornerstone of the Vision 2030 strategic framework that reduces Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil and diversifies its economy. Currently, USCENCOM does not have a plan to capitalize on what will become a regional and global hub that vies for investment and development across the world inviting competition with PRC. The paper uses a gap analysis methodology that prescribes a ten-year campaigning concept to align military activities to the DIME by identifying key future events for competition beyond the five-year planning horizon, such as NEOM City. The PRC is heavily invested in the development of NEOM using a long game of means and methods that solidify and intertwine Beijing with potential partners of the U.S. USCENCOM can offer options and create conditions that nest U.S. goals into NEOM City through campaign activities such as maritime security, irregular warfare, and intelligence sharing. If USCENCOM does not employ an integrated campaign concept to recognize the emerging opportunity of NEOM, it will have squandered key terrain to compete strategically amongst great powers in the Middle East.

Keywords: NEOM City, Integrated Campaigning, Strategic Competition, Irregular Warfare, Maritime Security, Intelligence Sharing, Combatant Command, PRC, KSA

Team Biographies

Major Daniel Hall, USMC, dmhall9465@gmail.com. Maj Hall is currently serving as Intelligence Operations Requirements Section Leader in the Intelligence Directorate USCENTCOM. He was commissioned through the United States Naval Academy in 2009. He earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering from the United States Naval Academy and an MS in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School in 2016. Prior to his current assignment, Maj Hall was the Battalion Executive Officer, 2d Intelligence Battalion, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Major Jonathan Lovelace, USA, jmattlovelace@gmail.com. MAJ Lovelace is currently serving as Deputy Chief for Trans-Regional and Irregular Warfare Analysis in the Intelligence Directorate USCENTCOM. He was commissioned through NROTC at the University of Memphis in 1997. MAJ Lovelace earned a BS in Education from the University of Memphis 1997; a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2004; and a MS in Strategic Intelligence from National Intelligence University in 2016. Prior to his current assignment, MAJ Lovelace served as Chief of Intelligence Plans with Joint Task Force North, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Major Brett McCormick, USMC, brettmccormick@gmail.com. Maj McCormick is slated to serve as an analyst on the Commander's Action Group in USCENTCOM. He was commissioned through NROTC at The Pennsylvania State University in 2008. Maj McCormick earned a BS in Supply Chain and Information Systems from Penn State with a minor in Military Studies in 2008; a MA in Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School in 2016; and is currently pursuing a MS in Strategic Intelligence from National Intelligence University. Prior to his current assignment, Maj McCormick served as a Security Cooperation Planner at Marine Forces Central Command, MacDill AFB, Florida.

Major Michael Redding, USAF, reddimp@gmail.com. Maj Redding serves as a strategic planner in the Strategy, Plans, and Policy Directorate at USCENTCOM. He was commissioned through AFROTC at Auburn University and earned a BA in Criminology in 2009; a MS in International Relations from Troy University in 2014; a Master of Military Operational Art and Science at the Air Command and Staff College in 2021; and a Master of Philosophy in Military Strategy at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies in 2022. Prior to his current assignment, Maj Redding was a student at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

NEOM City: Integrated Campaigning and Competition with China

Vision 2030 is about a lot of big opportunities. NEOM's duty is to be a hub for everyone in the whole world. — Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman¹

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is engineering a megaproject on the shores of the Red Sea occupying the global economic artery at the intersection of the Suez Canal and Gulf of Aqaba. The city's namesake combines the word "neo" with the first letter of the Arabic word "mustaqbal" to form the word NEOM or "new future." The futuristic metroplex is the cornerstone of KSA Vision 2030.² The megacity is the key to KSA's future providing access to waterways critical to global trade and attracting world-class talent to spearhead technological innovation in the Middle East.³ The city will be funded by over \$500B in investments, 14 economic development sectors, and 100% clean energy making it an attractive opportunity to pursue United States (U.S.) interests.⁴ However, due to the temporal limitations of campaign planning, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) has yet to identify or consider the potential strategic opportunity NEOM City presents beyond the five-year campaign plan.⁵ The joint force suffers a gap in identifying strategic opportunities beyond the five-year planning horizon to align combatant command (CCMD) activities that campaign across the diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) instruments of power to compete strategically.⁶



Figure 1: NEOM City located on the Red Sea, Gulf of Aqaba, and Gulf of Suez. Source: “Saudi Arabia’s NEOM Project: Case Study,” MDPI, 2022, Accessed on May 18, 2023, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/1/608>.

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) aggressively expands its outreach in the Middle East playing a long game synchronized across the DIME.⁷ The PRC has made great gains in the Middle East through recent diplomatic wins, like the KSA-Iran rapprochement, pronouncing Beijing’s growing global influence over Washington.⁸ Despite the PRC’s rising momentum, the U.S. seeks to layer the military instrument behind diplomatic efforts to reinforce its Middle East strategy focused on preserving freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, deterring threats to regional stability such as Iran, and building security connections that integrate regional partners.⁹ NEOM City presents an opportunity for the U.S. to counter PRC goals to expand its influence in the Middle East by aligning USCENTCOM activities as ways to employ an integrated campaigning concept to achieve U.S. strategy. How can USCENTCOM identify opportunities to campaign in NEOM City which enhance future U.S.-KSA relations and supplement U.S. efforts to compete strategically with the PRC? Findings indicate a ten-year campaigning concept can fill a gap in campaign planning by aligning CCMD military activities with the DIME. The paper proposes a concept to identify unseen strategic opportunities, pinpoint competitive interactions with adversaries, assess adversary vulnerabilities, exploit vulnerabilities with U.S. asymmetry, and align activities to campaign in the ten-year horizon.¹⁰

The paper uses a gap analysis methodology that prescribes a ten-year campaigning concept to align military activities to the DIME by identifying key future events for competition beyond the five-year planning horizon, such as NEOM City. Once USCENTCOM identifies an opportunity, integrated campaigning can exploit PRC vulnerabilities by leveraging U.S. asymmetric strengths against the known PRC tools of statecraft: inducements, coercion, and legitimacy.¹¹ Campaigning aligns military activities employed in the space between peace and war as strategic levers to gain influence, shaping activities to maintain strategic advantages, and a strategic narrative to grow attraction.¹² To rekindle U.S.-KSA diplomacy, USCENTCOM should utilize maritime security constructs as economic ties to limit PRC inducements, irregular warfare as shaping to maintain military advantages and counter PRC coercion, and intelligence-sharing as an attractive information narrative to contest PRC legitimacy.¹³ By identifying NEOM City as a strategic opportunity in 2030 using a strategic opportunities board (SOB), USCENTCOM can supplement U.S. efforts to regain diplomatic influence with KSA by developing a 10-year concept for integrated campaigning employing maritime security, irregular warfare, and intelligence-sharing to compete strategically with the PRC.

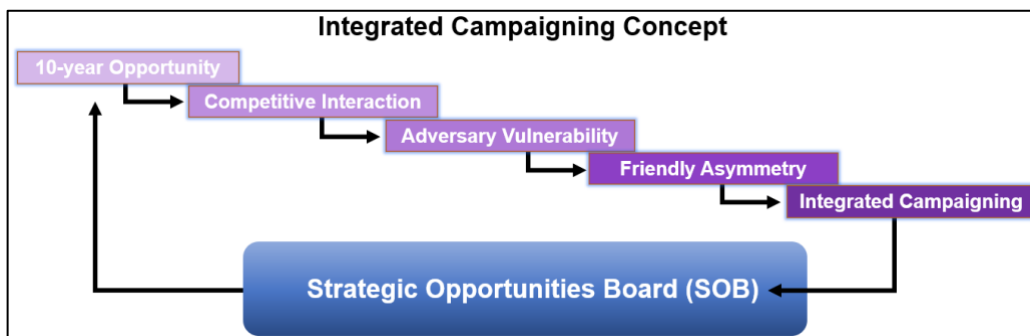


Figure 2: Integrated Campaigning Concept to Fill the Campaign Planning Gap.
Source: Authors.

Economic Competition: Maritime Security Constructs

The NEOM initiative is part of KSA Vision 2030, which seeks to reduce the dependence of Saudi Arabia's economy on oil and move towards a highly technological economy that opens the door for an economic partnership beyond the traditional energy ties that have fostered U.S.-KSA relations since 1945.¹⁴ Doing so requires the U.S. to approach KSA with a unique value proposition over the PRC to weave economic interdependence into the Red Sea region via maritime security constructs. To align military activities to U.S. economic competition with the PRC, USCENTCOM can leverage the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) established the CMF in 2001 with 12 like-minded countries to counter international threats. The organization later expanded to include counter-piracy operations and added a 34th member in 2021 to participate and lead four Combined Task Forces (CTF) across the region.¹⁵ Of interest to KSA, CTF 153 focuses on international maritime security and capacity-building efforts in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb, and the Gulf of Aden. CTF 153 can compete strategically near a revolutionary city and directly reinforce Commander USCENTCOM General Michael Kurilla's guiding principles of people, partners, and innovation by expanding operations into NEOM.¹⁶

The CMF is a proven regional construct shown to advance combined cooperation in the area of responsibility (AOR) by providing access and opportunities for 34 nations that invest personnel, time, and resources to enhance military skills, interoperability, and maritime security alongside the U.S. The decision to create CTF 153 provides a comprehensive method for the U.S. to focus combined efforts on the Red Sea, reinforce U.S. economic ties to the region through solidarity, and limit PRC inducements that have bankrupted 12 countries across the globe putting them on the brink of collapse.¹⁷ Doing so disperses U.S. forces across the AOR,

broadens access, and allows dynamic responses to adversarial actions from multiple locations.¹⁸

Reoccurring key leader engagements (KLE) between USCENTCOM and KSA Ministry of Defense (MoD) center on KSA's desire for more military interaction with the U.S., and a U.S. desire to employ strategic levers like CTF 153 with interested, like-minded multinational partners.¹⁹ Fulfilling a CMF request for workspaces by staging CTF 153 in NEOM provides mutual benefit to both the CMF and KSA while reducing the amount of forces aboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain. CMF's sustained presence near NEOM, requested through the KSA MoD, provides the CMF a more conducive location to rapidly respond to any regional issues that may threaten or affect NEOM.

KSA previously commanded CTFs on five separate occasions and would be a prime candidate for periodic command opportunities with CTF 153. VADM Kevin Donegan, U.S. Navy (Retired), who commanded NAVCENT from 2015-2017, stated the following: "The Saudi military would benefit by working with USCENTCOM to develop an aggressive plan to train on operations focused on maritime security and air and missile defense. Riyadh should not only support these missions but start to drive them as Saudi capabilities evolve."²⁰ CTF 153 could work adjacent to the Royal Saudi Navy Western Fleet, concentrated in the Red Sea, to cooperate and exchange ideas that increase maritime security near NEOM, without overshadowing NEOM with a large military presence. The regional construct would support CTF 153's location near NEOM and aid USCENTCOM efforts to nest with U.S. economic initiatives which reinvigorate U.S.-KSA relations. The time to compete strategically and shape U.S. involvement in the centerpiece of Mohamed bin Salman's Vision 2030 plan is now: NEOM is not a distant mirage.



Figure 3: NEOM City is the centerpiece of KSA Vision 2030. Source: “The Line NEOM 2030,” IPGEgypt, 2021, Accessed on May 18, 2023, <https://ipgegypt.com/en/blog/191-the-line-neom-2030-go-where-the-future-is-you-will-be-amazed>.

Gen Kurilla’s 2023 Senate Armed Services Committee testimony stated: “Beijing’s willingness to take on higher-risk projects threatens American preferential ties and unfettered access...[and] serves as a growing strategic challenge to U.S. partnerships, access, force presence, and security in the region.”²¹ Despite utopic visions for the city, security and presence are needed to protect economic capital and mitigate threats to NEOM when adversaries, such as Iran and its proxies, pose a risk to NEOM’s security and investments. USCENTCOM continues to provide a regional presence that benefits KSA and brings a level of U.S. security guarantee that must be reiterated in future KLEs. By eyeing the opportunity to expand maritime constructs in NEOM City, limiting PRC inducements known for their coercive nature, and leveraging the collective strength of partnerships, maritime security serves as a strategic lever USCENTCOM can use to fill the campaign planning gap. To protect investments and mitigate regional threats to NEOM, USCENTCOM can campaign to deepen military relations with KSA through the close relationships forged in irregular warfare.

Military Competition: Irregular Warfare

Iran seeks to wrestle control of the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb Strait from KSA as strategic chokepoints for the Middle East's main maritime oil and gas routes to Europe and Asia.²² Additionally, the Red Sea serves as the conduit between Tehran and its proxies abroad in Hezbollah, the Houthis, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad threatening KSA's investments in NEOM. Irregular warfare provides opportunities for the U.S. to strengthen military ties to KSA to secure strategic terrain and sustain its military advantages in the Red Sea region.²³ Strengthening KSA relations by offering unique value to counter Iran is one way the U.S. can compete with the PRC for influence. Irregular warfare provides a conduit between wider military efforts to compete with the PRC and the capabilities and authorities gained when integrating shaping activities with U.S. interagency.²⁴ In developing operational campaign plans and strategies, doctrine emphasizes the importance of unified effort and planning in parallel with interagency stakeholders with unique authorities and capabilities.²⁵ Outside of the Department of Defense (DoD), the interagency typically does not have the means or expertise to conduct operational planning.²⁶ By leveraging integrated campaign planning with the interagency, there are opportunities to nest irregular warfare with cyber and information capabilities to mutually support shaping activities employed to maintain U.S. strategic advantages. The interagency have capabilities and authorities uniquely suited to build U.S. advantages and curb PRC coercion in the Middle East. The linkages between IW and the interagency molded in campaigning are key to partner assurance and influence building in key terrain like NEOM City.²⁷

Irregular warfare wields the strength of U.S. military combat experience as a unique value proposition over the PRC to shape the AOR for strategic effect. Irregular warfare can be used to compete in places and spaces between peace and war not conventionally thought of or

considered as battlespace.²⁸ State and non-state adversaries use irregular or gray zone warfare to influence, coerce, and conduct a broad range of activities to achieve their ends.²⁹ Therefore, epicenters of trade and innovation, such as NEOM City, are key terrain for the exchange of ideas, goods, and currency where partnerships may be fostered or squandered. To protect key terrain and secure economic investments in NEOM, U.S.-KSA military partnership should focus on bilateral shaping activities by offering the unique value of U.S. combat experience to impart knowledge, training, and expertise with the goal of countering Iranian gray zone activity in the Red Sea. NEOM City lies in strategic terrain near economic chokepoints and provides a strategic opportunity to align U.S.-KSA interests to maintain advantages in the region. Through the “ways” of irregular warfare, key commerce hubs of future technology and innovation provide opportunities for bridging partner relationships to counter malign regional actors like Iran.

Irregular Warfare in Competition	
"Ways"	"Means"
Assure Allies	Influence Attitudes with Security Force Assistance
Shape Advantages	Expose Covert Networks with Special Reconnaissance
Counter Coercion	Disrupt Clandestine Activity with Direct Action

Table 1. Irregular Warfare in Competition. Source: Aaron Bazin, “On Competition: Adapting to the Contemporary Strategic Environment,” JSOU, 2021, Accessed on May 18, 2023, <https://jsouapplicationstorage.blob.core.windows.net/press/8/21-5.pdf>.

U.S. technology, capacity, and expertise remain competitive advantages to wield in the strategic competition space to assure allies through integrated shaping activities. However, the U.S. has struggled to achieve effective results when campaigns integrate irregular warfare because special operations forces (SOF), cyber, and information operations are not decisive on their own.³⁰ In strategic competition, achieving strategic goals requires authorities outside of what the military is afforded requiring a holistic approach.³¹ Countering economic and

informational coercion and influence is a strategy of long versus short-term investment to achieve one's national interests. Such an approach requires the U.S. to pursue an integrated partnership with KSA beyond military-to-military exchanges. To effectively counter Iranian activities in the Red Sea, U.S.-KSA relations must grow to include shaping activities with the interagency like countering hybrid threats, exposing covert networks, and influencing partner attitudes.³² Doing so requires leveraging the combat experience of U.S. SOF to conduct shaping activities like security force assistance or special reconnaissance. Pairing the unparalleled experience of U.S. SOF with interagency partners by putting an ear to the ground, building local networks, and countering proxy forces gives the U.S. distinct value over the PRC as KSA's partner of choice. Where irregular warfare provides assurance to KSA in its regional competition with Iran, it can also provide U.S. advantage by revealing PRC coercive activities.

As a strategic competitor, the PRC projects much more than military capability in seeking its strategic ends. Without a robust military and security presence, the PRC pursues the role of unifier and lead innovation partner with KSA and invests in long-term projects as part of their One Belt, One Road Initiative.³³ The PRC's "influence operations are primarily [focused] at the strategic level, [while] the military's activities span both the strategic and operational levels."³⁴ State adversaries, like the PRC, mitigate U.S. military strength and execute gray zone coercive activities to meet state objectives without the use of military force. China's gray zone methods exploit legal and regulation gaps, manipulate all facets of its government systems, employ shadow military, paramilitary, and police personnel, and develop its military on the back of rapid economic growth.³⁵ The PRC's global web of international monitoring and coercion were exposed in mid-April 2023 when a "secret policing station" in New York City and its activities were exposed.³⁶ To counter PRC coercive techniques, the U.S. must employ a whole-of-

government approach that matches the best agency or component of national power with the authorities to expose covert networks and disrupt clandestine activity.³⁷

To counter the PRC's coercive gray zone techniques, USCENTCOM should consider integrating interagency capabilities across irregular campaign activities. A comprehensive approach to irregular warfare in the gray zone requires information warfare, economic influence, plausible deniability, the use of ambiguous forces, and threat response.³⁸ Security, port infrastructure, construction, digital communication, artificial intelligence innovation, agricultural, and climate initiatives are key areas of interaction for competition. NEOM's global location affords it immense potential for expanded U.S. security presence to protect international investments. Additionally, irregular warfare is often termed a "population-centric" approach to seek control and influence making human terrain analysis vital.³⁹ Human analysis shapes the employment of SOF and security cooperation activities to expand security presence through exchanges including cyber and information activities, toward the objective of maintaining U.S. advantages in the region. By identifying opportunities to influence key terrain in NEOM, utilizing human terrain analysis and interagency integration, exploiting the PRC's known coercive techniques, and leveraging U.S. expertise to maintain an advantage with KSA in the counter-Iran space, irregular warfare can shape the USCENTCOM AOR to fill the 10-year campaign planning gap. While irregular warfare focuses on the human element, intelligence sharing leverages technology to build an attractive narrative for competition in NEOM.

Information Competition: Intelligence Sharing

The current cultural narrative in the USCENTCOM AOR is that PRC is the more attractive partner for developing innovative technologies and building capacities due to "China's economic interests, transactional approaches, and perceived lack of Chinese bias in internal and

regional affairs.”⁴⁰ This is a strength that will be hard to counter given historic U.S. tendencies to pass judgment on KSA's internal affairs. Additionally, partner nations in the AOR fear that the U.S. will abandon the region once near-sighted political interests change. After completing significant military actions and force drawdowns, new security threats have forced the U.S. to reorient its strategy to address strategic competitors like the PRC. The PRC is aggressively taking the initiative to secure a foothold in the creation of NEOM. Huawei Vice President Safder Nazir revealed his delight that Huawei is going to play a leading role in driving the development of KSA’s new sustainable city NEOM.⁴¹ USCENTCOM, in coordination with the interagency, must consider ways to counter PRC digitization of NEOM with commercial integration initiatives that build an attractive narrative of U.S. alternatives to PRC data practices. Integrated campaigning in the preliminary stages of NEOM City development is an opportunity for USCENTCOM to shift that narrative in a direction that makes the U.S. a more attractive partner by opening intelligence and information-sharing agreements.⁴²

The U.S. has a distinct advantage over the PRC in collecting and producing intelligence. One technique to increase national attractiveness is intelligence sharing, primarily through expanding existing agreements with the KSA MoD. Intelligence-sharing agreements build interdependency among partners through investment in their national security, increase credibility by displaying deepening interest in the region, and legitimacy through assurances. “The regional combatant commanders can work through Phase 0 shaping operations to implement intelligence-sharing agreements, supported by national policy, which will help build national attractiveness through ongoing intelligence-sharing agreements between states and international organizations.”⁴³ Often, sharing agreements are not fully developed until a crisis highlights the necessity. Establishing sharing agreements early and conducting regular

touchpoints can build a shared awareness of situations before the crisis.⁴⁴ USCENTCOM already achieves a degree of shared awareness in separate portions of the AOR through Coalition Partner Integration Enterprise. However, creating a similar element for cooperation with KSA shows a commitment to countering threats to NEOM and gives USCENTCOM the necessary foothold to leverage NEOM in competition with the PRC.

Common barriers to intelligence-sharing are bargaining and enforcement. Bargaining involves deciding what level of information to share based on the risk of compromise. Enforcement means determining how to deliver the intelligence and ensuring the partner does not defect.⁴⁵ Highlighting common interests and a shared understanding of the cost-benefit analysis can counter any doubts about the utility of intelligence-sharing.⁴⁶ Secure communications infrastructure is vital when delivering secure intelligence information to a sharing partner and simultaneously reduces the counterintelligence threat of compromise.⁴⁷ The intelligence community does not trust communication technologies provided by the PRC to pass classified information because of state policies that force Chinese companies to share data with the PRC. The U.S. can leverage this weakness in PRC policies to show the importance of establishing a communications architecture that supports U.S. security policy and allows for the expansion of intelligence-sharing. USCENTCOM should engage with industry to achieve a competitive commercial integration environment where vendors provide communication framework solutions that can easily plug into current U.S. systems and security constructs in anticipation of the dynamic commercial technology landscape NEOM will offer. Like Dubai's

rapid evolution since 1990, NEOM will become a commercial hub of the Middle East ripe for U.S. alternatives to PRC technology if the opportunity is realized.



Figure 4: Dubai 2015 as a Frame of Reference for NEOM 2030. Source: @MarkTomasovic. "Dubai was a Complete Desert in 1990," Twitter, 2021, Accessed on May 18, 2023, <https://twitter.com/MarkTomasovic/status/1429450323387629580>.

Gen Kurilla calls USCENTCOM to innovate in thought, procedure, process, and technology.⁴⁸ Building capacity for intelligence-sharing with non-traditional partners is an innovative approach to building national attraction and competing with the PRC in Phase 0. USCENTCOM's approaches must be focused on creating an attractive narrative to maintain the U.S. as the partner of choice by seeking to make an intelligence-sharing agreement to appeal to KSA's pre-dispositions.⁴⁹ USCENTCOM must commit to a persistent partnership in the planning and development of NEOM information systems to convey the message that a rapid flow of information is desirable for interoperability in security, protection, and maritime initiatives.⁵⁰ U.S. assurances, regional constructs, and agreements make it a more attractive partner for national security which is distinct from the illegitimate means of the PRC and its use of coercion, subversion, and intimidation.⁵¹ By seizing the opportunity to redefine U.S.-KSA intelligence-sharing in NEOM City, exploiting PRC legitimacy due to its data practices, and

leveraging the strength of U.S. technologies, intelligence-sharing can serve as a unique narrative tool USCENTCOM uses to fill the campaign planning gap.

Conclusion

To compete with the PRC's long game strategy, USCENTCOM should adopt an integrated approach to the strategic opportunity of NEOM City by combining the efforts of maritime security constructs, irregular warfare, and intelligence-sharing activities in the ten-year horizon. To rectify the campaign planning gap, USCENTCOM can adopt a mechanism for identifying key future opportunities for competition beyond the five-year planning horizon, such as NEOM City. Developing a ten-year concept for integrated campaigning requires CCMDs to develop new mechanisms to identify strategic opportunities using the resources they have in different ways.⁵² A strategic opportunity is a key event that intersects with adversary actions to allow a strategic advantage to be gained or maintained by shaping the strategic environment.⁵³ Once USCENTCOM identifies a strategic opportunity within a competitive interaction with an adversary, integrated campaigning exploits competitor vulnerabilities by leveraging U.S. asymmetric strengths for strategic effect. The integrated campaigning concept focuses military activities to support U.S. diplomatic efforts as strategic levers to gain economic influence, shaping activities to maintain military advantages, and a strategic narrative to grow attraction in the information space.⁵⁴ To capture the utility of the campaigning concept, the authors offer a firm recommendation to implement a SOB at each CCMD as the mechanism for filling the campaign planning gap. The SOB produces planning guidance, in unison with interagency representation, to seize the strategic opportunity identified within the competitive interaction for a ten-year integrated campaign across the DIME. The SOB answers the question of how

USCENTCOM campaigns beyond the five-year limitation of the campaign plan to recognize opportunities, like NEOM City, for strategic competition with the PRC or other rivals.

Notes

¹ “HRH Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Announces Designs for the LINE, the City of the Future in NEOM,” Newsroom, Neom, July 25, 2022, <https://www.neom.com/en-us/newsroom/hrh-announces-theline-designs>.

² “About Us: A Vision of What a New Future Might Look Like,” About us, Neom, accessed May 16, 2023. <https://www.neom.com/en-us/about>.

³ Nadia Yusuf, and Dareen Abdulmohsen, “Saudi Arabia’s NEOM Project as a Testing Ground for Economically Feasible Planned Cities: Case Study.” *Sustainability* 15, no. 1 (May 2023): 608, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15010608>.

⁴ “Neom,” Vision 2030, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accessed May 16, 2023. <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/v2030/v2030-projects/neom/>.

⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Planning*, JP 5-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2020), V-1, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp5_0.pdf.

⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), 12-13, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joint_concept_integrated_campaign.pdf?ver=2018-03-28-102833-257.

⁷ *Posture of U.S. Central Command: testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 117th Cong. (2023) (statement of General Michael ‘Erik’ Kurilla Commander, U.S. Central Command) https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Kurilla_SASC_Posture_Final_141200March2023.pdf, 4.

⁸ Maria Fantappie and Vali Nasr, “A New Order in the Middle East?,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 22, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/iran-saudi-arabia-middle-east-relations>.

⁹ The White House, “National Security Strategy,” October 12, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>. 42.

¹⁰ Deployable Training Division, Joint Staff J7, *Second Edition of the Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper on “Mission Command”* (Suffolk, VA: J7 Deputy Director for Joint Training, 2020), 4, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/fp/missioncommand_fp_2nd_ed.pdf.

¹¹ Rush Doshi, *LONG GAME : China’s Grand Strategy and the Displacement of American Power*. (Oxford University Press, 2021), 19-20.

¹² Earl J. Catagnus and Jonatan P. Klug, “Integrated Campaigning in the Pacific, 1918–1948,” *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 50, no. 2 (May 15, 2020): 95-96 <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.1024>.

¹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, JP 3-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2022), V-1.

¹⁴ Shaul Shay, *The Red Sea Region between War and Reconciliation*. (Brighton: Liverpool University Press, 2019), 112.

¹⁵ “Combined Maritime Forces,” U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, accessed April 12, 2023, <https://www.cusnc.navy.mil/Combined-Maritime-Forces/>.

¹⁶ Kurilla, *Posture of U.S. Central Command*, 15.

¹⁷ Bernard Condon, “China’s loans pushing world’s poorest countries to brink of collapse,” AP News, May 18, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/china-debt-banking-loans-financial-developing-countries-collapse-8df6f9fac3e1e758d0e6d8d5dfbd3ed6>.

¹⁸ “New International Naval Task Force to Enhance Red Sea Security,” U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, April 17, 2022, <https://www.cusnc.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3001660/new-international-naval-task-force-to-enhance-red-sea-security/>.

¹⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, VI-33.

²⁰ Kevin Donegan and Bilal Saab, “How to Advance US-Saudi Defense Cooperation,” *Defense One*, April 6, 2023, <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2023/04/how-advance-us-saudi-defense-cooperation/384873/>.

²¹ Kurilla, *Posture of U.S. Central Command*, 18.

²² Shay, *The Red Sea Region*, 5.

²³ Department of Defense, *Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2020), <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Oct/02/2002510472/-1/-1/0/Irregular-Warfare-Annex-to-the-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.PDF>, 7.

²⁴ Charles T. Cleveland and Daniel Egel, “The American Way of Irregular War: An Analytical Memoir,” *www.rand.org* (July 29, 2020), <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA301-1.html>, 212.

-
- ²⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, III-27.
- ²⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interorganizational Cooperation*, JP 3-08 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2016), II-3,
https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_08.pdf?ver=CqudGqyJFga9GaACVxgaDQ%3D%3D#:~:text=It%20provides%20military%20guidance%20for,executing%20their%20plans%20and%20orders.
- ²⁷ Aaron Bazin, “On Competition: Adapting to the Contemporary Strategic Environment,” *Joint Special Operations University*, Report 21-5 (2021), 184.
- ²⁸ Department of Defense, *Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy*, 5-6.
- ²⁹ Jonathan Schroden, “Competition Campaigning: What It Looks like and Implications for U.S. Special Operations Command,” *Modern War Institute*, last modified January 20, 2023,
<https://mwi.usma.edu/competition-campaigning-what-it-looks-like-and-implications-for-us-special-operations-command/>.
- ³⁰ Charles T. Cleveland and Daniel Egel, “The American Way of Irregular War: An Analytical Memoir,” 2.
- ³¹ David Ucko and Thomas Marks, *Crafting Strategy for Irregular Warfare a Framework for Analysis and Action Second Edition Second Edition*, September 2022, accessed April 13, 2023,
https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/strat-monograph/Crafting-Strategy-for-Irregular-Warfare_2ndEd.pdf?ver=mFY-dJC9aRGKfjz0E0KK5Q%3d%3d, 11, 50.
- ³² Aaron Bazin, “On Competition: Adapting to the Contemporary Strategic Environment,” 120-121.
- ³³ Tom Porter, “The Saudi Crown Prince Wants to Build a Trillion-Dollar Utopia in the Desert. His Deals with China Reveal a Darker Vision.,” *Business Insider*, last modified April 23, 2023,
<https://www.businessinsider.com/saudi-crown-princes-china-deals-hint-city-darker-neom-mbs-2023-3>.
- ³⁴ Yamaguchi Shinji, Yatsuzuka Masaaki, and Momma Rira, NIDS China Security Report 2023: China’s Quest for Control of the Cognitive Domain and Gray Zone Situations, *The National Institute for Defense Studies*, accessed April 13, 2023,
http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/chinareport/pdf/china_report_EN_web_2023_A01.pdf, 29-30.

³⁵ Bonny Lin et al., “A New Framework for Understanding and Countering China’s Gray Zone Tactics,” *www.rand.org*, last modified March 30, 2022, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RBA594-1.html.

³⁶ Holly Honderich, “FBI Makes Arrests over Alleged Secret Chinese ‘police Stations’ in New York,” *BBC News*, April 17, 2023, accessed May 13, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-65305415>.

³⁷ Bazin, “On Competition,” 123.

³⁸ Center for Strategic and International Studies, “COMPETING in the GRAY ZONE : Countering Competition in the Space between War and Peace,” *www.csis.org* (December 7, 2018), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/competing-gray-zone-countering-competition-space-between-war-and-peace>.

³⁹ Charles T. Cleveland and Daniel Egel, “The American Way of Irregular War: An Analytical Memoir,” 7.

⁴⁰ Kurilla, *Posture of U.S. Central Command*, 13.

⁴¹ Teletimes Report, “Huawei Take A ‘Leap’ Of Faith With Cloud Commitment In KSA,” *Teletimesinternational.com*, accessed May 2, 2023, <https://teletimesinternational.com/2022/huawei-cloud-commitment-in-ksa/>.

⁴² Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-0*, V-2.

⁴³ Kenneth W. Carel, “Creating National Attraction: Military Intelligence Sharing Building Foreign Military Interdependence” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2015), 41.

⁴⁴ Robert T. Flickinger, “Integrating Intelligence and Information Sharing in Theater Security Cooperation,” (Thesis, Naval War College, 2009), 9.

⁴⁵ Kenneth W. Carel, “Creating National Attraction,” 6-7.

⁴⁶ Martin J. Ara, Thomas Brand, and Brage A. Larssen, “Help a Brother Out: A Case Study in Multinational Intelligence Sharing, NATO SOF” (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011), 21.

⁴⁷ Robert T. Flickinger, “Integrating Intelligence and Information Sharing in Theater Security Cooperation,” 11.

⁴⁸ Kurilla, *Posture of U.S. Central Command*, 18.

⁴⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning*, 51.

⁵⁰ Robert S. Ehlers and Patrick Blannin, “Integrated Planning and Campaigning for Complex Problems,” *The U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 51, no. 2 (May 18, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.3071>, 107.

⁵¹ Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-0*, V-2.

⁵² Rober Ehlers and Patrick Blannin, “Integrated Campaigning and Planning for Complex Problems,” *Parameters*, U.S. Army War College, v. 51, 2021: 97.

⁵³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Strategic Planning System CJCSI 3100.01E* (Washington, DC: CJCS, 21 May 2021), G-4.

⁵⁴ Catagnus and Klug, *Integrated Campaigning in the Pacific 1918-1948*, iii.