

Connecting the Special Forces community

Soldier Modernisation speaks to Stu Bradin, Founder - CEO, Global SOF Foundation

Q: Could we look at main problems facing special forces at the moment in the field?

A: No one can accurately predict where special operations forces (SOF) will fight in the future, but some trends give us great insight into what SOF will be asked to do. The major adversaries like Russia, China and Iran all have doctrine focused on avoiding major theater conflicts. They seek to fight in the area between conflict and competition, often referred to as Irregular Warfare, and they will use surrogates, cyber, electromagnetic, information, economic and political warfare capabilities. These countries have moved into Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America in order to influence weak governments with large quantities of natural resources. As Irregular Warfare becomes more important and prevalent, SOF will be required to operate in smaller numbers with partnered forces, for longer durations, in large urban areas, and often in nations with a lot of political uncertainty. Capabilities that can mitigate the challenges associated with these environments are needed now.

Q: Is there a technological solution to those?

A: Each nation will have different requirements. There is no single material solution that can solve the challenges inherent in Irregular Warfare, especially because it requires constant and rapid innovation in order to outpace adversaries. We must avoid playing catch up in defense innovation because once you lose the decisive edge it is extremely hard to recover. SOF will require capabilities that challenge science and technology and that push capabilities to the edge where the operators can make better and faster decisions. The cycle of developing and fielding a capability

will have to be reduced to months and not years. The constant change in technology will also require constant change in formations. The culture of defense procurement will have to change.

Q: Why GSOFF, how are you looking to help Special Forces personnel?

A: The people that make up the special operations community are its most important asset. And although Irregular Warfare is not solely about SOF, SOF is a huge contributor. The mission of the Global SOF Foundation is to be the professional association that convenes the SOF community to ensure the good guy network is active and connected. Our industry partners provide capabilities that support interoperability and ensure a decisive edge over our adversaries. Our symposiums bring together current and future SOF leaders, policymakers, academia and industry partners to address some extremely complicated challenges. Our events convene the SOF community and allow for relationships based on trust to grow.

Q: What can people look forward to at GSOFF in Poland?

A: The Global SOF Symposium - Europe in Warsaw, Poland, 26 - 28 October 2021, will have approximately 500 attendees from 25-30 nations. The agenda addresses the challenges of Irregular Warfare in Central Europe, and the expo will allow special operations leaders to see some of the most innovative capabilities that will provide their forces with a tactical advantage. The event will be educational but also a great opportunity to build relationships and network. It will also be a lot of fun. ■

