



## THE IRREGULAR WARFARE CENTER

# Spotlight



Vol 2 • 9

Amplify | Illuminate | Address

October 2024

### The IWC & Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security Host Inaugural Intelligence Support to IW Symposium

The Department of Defense (DoD)'s Irregular Warfare Center (IWC), in partnership with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)), recently hosted the first Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium. Held from October 29-31, 2024 at the U.S. Naval Institute Jack C. Taylor Conference Center in Annapolis, Md., the symposium marked the beginning of an initiative to examine the U.S. Intelligence Community's capability to address emerging global threats with a particular focus on adversarial activities in the gray zone.

The inaugural symposium provided a platform for government, industry, and academic leaders to engage on the role of intelligence in supporting irregular warfare activities, with a focus on collaboration across the Defense Intelligence Enterprise. The IWC and OUSD (I&S) drew participants from outside of the U.S., including South Korea, Australia, the United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Italy, Romania and Canada.

Erik Herr, IWC's Chief of Operations, highlighted the advantage of an intelligence-specialized event, stating, "As our adversaries continue to push into the gray zone, our intelligence capabilities not only keep pace but are specifically aligned with the needs of our operators in the field. This symposium enabled us to focus on enhancing intelligence that supports irregular warfare directly, ensuring operators have access to the information and tools needed to gain advantage in contested environments."

Day 1 examined China as a global competitor and featured prominent speakers well-versed in both irregular warfare and intelligence. Ms. Theresa Whelan, Director for Defense Intelligence Collections and Special Programs, delivered an address on the integral role of intelligence in support of irregular warfare, emphasizing that the intelligence community needs to be able to detect and deter ahead of a crisis. The Honorable Christopher Maier, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, addressed irregular warfare as a strategic deterrent, explaining how irregular warfare is not exclusively a special operations problem, but needs all aspects of DoD and the interagency.

"For over twenty years, we have trained and deployed intelligence professionals to work against a non-technical adversary in a semi-permissive environment. We have developed an entire generation of professionals who are accustomed to the U.S. exercising domain dominance in every facet of the battlefield. This new operating environment will be global in nature and categorized as contested and even denied territory," said Anthony Gilgis, CEO Gray Zone Consulting, LLC, Principal Consultant to OUSD(I&S), Sensitive Activities & Special Programs, HUMINT & Sensitive Activities. "In this competition we no longer enjoy domain dominance, and many of the tools and capabilities we have come to rely on are either obsolete or vulnerable in this current environment. We must evolve."

The second day of the event focused on examining China as a global challenge and featured keynote addresses and speakers from various backgrounds and disciplines. The Honorable Dr. Kevin Rudd, Australian Ambassador to the U.S., spoke on Chinese ideology and policy from an international perspective. Participants also heard from General (Ret.) Hibat Alizai, former Afghan



Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director, provided opening remarks at the first Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium hosted by the Department of Defense's Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) and The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)). The event took place Oct. 29-31, 2024, at the U.S. Naval Institute Jack C. Taylor Conference Center in Annapolis, Md.

Army Chief of Staff, on China's influence in Central Asia. Dr. Zenel Garcia, an Associate Professor at the U.S. Army War College, gave a keynote address on day two, centered on China's political shaping. He stressed the significance of the symposium, "Value comes from multiple perspectives. You are bringing in people with expertise and interest, so you are able to share your findings. No matter how deep in the weeds you are in your research areas, you will always be able to learn something new from someone else."

Along with keynote addresses, the range of panel speakers and topics proved to be beneficial in highlighting multiple perspectives. "Moderated sessions are especially helpful and provide a diversity of thought," explained panelist Herm Hasken, Founder and CEO at High Ground Advisors. "There are experts in HUMINT, OSINT, and Cyber that are leveraging the diplomatic and military channels of DIME. From a high-level perspective, this approach allows for collecting information from various sources to advise senior policymakers on critical issues, such as those related to China."

The final day of the symposium highlighted strategies to counter adversarial activities in the gray zone, emphasizing intelligence tools and capabilities that can support and shape the global operating environment. Participants from organizations within the intelligence community attended to exchange knowledge on the implications of industry support, intelligence gaps and opportunities, and vulnerabilities and access vectors. Panelist Frank Miller, Vice President of EXOVERA, underscored the significance of collaboration. "We do best when we do it together. Too often, we try to do things in stove pipes, but the value of what we're bringing together here is to look at a problem set, this one happens to be China Gray Zone, and look at it with a whole-of-society approach."

The Center, in alignment with our key partners, continues to hold engagements across a range of issues and environments. "The Symposium has been instrumental in bringing together military, industry, and academia to build cross-functional solutions to irregular warfare in our strategic environment," said participant Jason Heeg, Command Chief Warrant Officer, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne). "Along with other IWC engagements like the University Colloquium, this event is helping to build a network of irregular warfare scholars and practitioners."

The inaugural Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium successfully laid the groundwork for ongoing collaboration and innovation in addressing strategic competition. "We are proud to have partnered with OUSD(I&S) for the inaugural Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium," said Lori Lefler, IWC Deputy Director and Chief of Staff. "This event marks a significant milestone in advancing our understanding of the intelligence capabilities necessary to counter our adversaries."

The IWC serves as the central mechanism for developing the Department of Defense's (DoD) irregular warfare knowledge and advancing the Department's understanding of irregular warfare concepts and doctrine in collaboration with key allies and partners.



### Director's Corner



Dr. Dennis Walters  
IWC Director



Greeting from the IWC,

October 2024 marks the official two-year anniversary of the IWC since standing up officially by the DoD in October 2022. This month's newsletter features an article showcasing the Center's growth, outreach, impact and importance to the IW mission on a global scale. Whether you're new to the Center or have followed us since Day 1, I encourage you to give the article an indepth read to learn more about the IWC.

There was a lot happening around the Center in October on a variety of levels. We're excited to share all of the latest from our recent Intel Symposium where I had the opportunity to engage and speak with intelligence professionals from all across the world to explore how we can come together to raise awareness on the importance the intelligence community plays in irregular warfare. The Symposium was held in partnership with the Department of Defense's Office of the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)) and together we look forward to many more impactful events! For more information on the IWC's recent and upcoming engagements, please check out our website!

If you haven't engaged with one of our IWC FANs yet, we encourage you to do so! The IWC FANs were established to address global irregular challenges and act as a low/no-cost force multiplier by creating a comprehensive whole-of-society approach. These networks foster cooperation across various sectors, including the DoD, interagency, private sector, and global partners. FANs aim to make irregular challenges more manageable by identifying, predicting, and addressing these issues. Stay tuned for more information regarding our latest FAN, Counterterrorism and Finance, coming soon.

We continue to identify a number of action items our FANs will be tackling in the coming months and I'm excited for the future of this critical initiative. If you'd like to be a part of this great network, please let us know at fan@irregularwarfarecenter.org. The problems we are working to solve will make the world a safer place.

Stay tuned for more great things!

Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director

### IWC Key Engagements

On October 7, 2024, Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) organized and led a panel discussion at the National Defense Transportation Association-United States Transportation Command (NDTA-TRANSCOM) Fall Meeting Transportation Academy in St. Louis. The panel included IWC and other experts from industry and government, which focused on the topic "Logistics as a Force Multiplier in Irregular Warfare: Building Resilience, Resistance, and Industry Collaboration for Success in Competition, Crisis, and Conflict." Other panel members included the Director of Trailerbridge; and Logistics Planner, Supply Chain Management, Transportation, Military Surface Deployment Distribution Command (SDDC). More than 200 attendees provided insightful questions that the panel addressed. The IWC has supported this event for the second year and is seeing increased interest in the topic, understanding roles, and solutions around this critical issue.

On October 17, 2024, the Irregular Warfare Center along with the Joint Staff, J7's Office of Irregular Warfare and Competition held a working group to discuss the irregular warfare (IW) and weapons of mass destruction nexus to determine professional military education requirements for military leaders to better prepare for irregular activities involving nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.



Day 2 keynote Speaker Dr. Zenel Garcia, Army War College, answered attendee questions at the first Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium hosted by the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) and The Department of Defense's Office of the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)). The event took place Oct. 29-31, 2024, at the U.S. Naval Institute Jack C. Taylor Conference Center in Annapolis, Md.

### Photo Of The Month



Irregular Warfare Center at the FBI National Academy: On October 16, 2024, the Irregular Warfare Center delivered a Hybrid Threat Awareness lecture to students at the FBI's National Academy. Over 90 local, state, federal and international law enforcement officers were presented with vignettes of current hybrid threats to increase awareness and understanding of irregular activities in the U.S. International participants from Burkina Faso, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Panama, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and Ukraine also in attendance received an understanding of how a whole-of-government approach to integrated deterrence can enhance national security.

### Media Highlights

Insights: Reframing the Term "Irregular Warfare" in Times of Peace into the Contemporary Idea of "Defense Support to Strategic Competition" by authors LTC Timothy J. Murphy (Special Operations Center of Excellence - U.S. Army Irregular Warfare Proponent Director, USAJFKSWCS), Dr. Jeffrey V. Gardner, Chief of Faculty and Curriculum - IWC, and Brittany Carroll, Senior Military Analyst - IWC, Valens Global CTR

Article & JFKSWCS Video link

<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/publications/insights/reframing-the-term-irregular-warfare-i-n-times-of-peace-into-the-contemporary-idea-of-defense-support-to-strategic-competition/>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v1POPvHvM&t=1127s&ab\\_channel=ArmyUniversityPress](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v1POPvHvM&t=1127s&ab_channel=ArmyUniversityPress)

Insights: "Stealth Surgery: Mitigating Signature Detection Risks for Special Operations Surgical Teams," by authors Dr. Aaron Epstein - IWC Medical Subject Matter Expert, Valens Global CTR and Laura Wolff - Medical Assistant, DO Candidate

<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/publications/insights/stealth-surgery-mitigating-signature-detection-risks-for-special-operations-surgical-teams/>



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### The IWC Celebrates 2nd Anniversary Showcasing Growth & Continuous Commitment to Excellence

October marked the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC)'s second anniversary since establishing full operating capacity in October 2022. Over the past 730 days, the IWC has generated significant accomplishments and partnerships that are in line with the Center's overall mission and supporting lines of effort. The IWC was established to serve as the central mechanism for developing the Department of Defense's (DoD) irregular warfare (IW) knowledge and advancing the Department's understanding of concepts and doctrine in collaboration with key allies and partners. The initiatives developed by the Center follow three lines of effort: Amplify, Illuminate, and Address.

The Center has strived to amplify and collaborate to build an innovative and adaptable global networked IW community of interest, holding successful events with key partners. "The IWC has leveraged conferences and in-person engagements as a way to bolster our community of interest," said Lori Leffler, IWC Chief of Staff and Deputy Director. This month, the Center partnered with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security to host the inaugural Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium.

In September, the IWC and the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) held the Irregular Warfare Lessons Learned Since 9/11 at the U.S. Naval Institute. The conference engaged a community of experts, military professionals, scholars, and policymakers to explore lessons learned from IW operations conducted by the U.S., allied nations, and non-state actors over the past two decades. Another significant event from 2024 was IWC's Community of Interest Symposium that brought together IW practitioners, industry leaders, and experts from across sectors to strengthen the global network. This three-day event in March featured a keynote by Ms. Maren Brooks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Irregular Warfare and Counterterrorism, along with expert speakers to discuss IW challenges and opportunities.

The IWC convenes Irregular Warfare Forums in collaboration with institutions such as the National Defense University's College of International Security Affairs (CISA) and the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS). In May 2024, the IWC co-hosted the Spring IW Forum at Ft. Liberty, NC, highlighting advancements in education, research, and practice. The forum also showcased research presentations from CISA students, connecting academic research with practice. This joint event followed the December 2023 IW Forum in Arlington, VA, which was focused on policy, doctrine, training, and education in the context of strategic competition.

In addition to the Center's events, the IW Global Network serves as a mechanism for collaboration and knowledge exchange among stakeholders in irregular warfare. The IW Global Network, strategically aligned with ASD SO/LIC priorities and integrated with global partners, leverages its Functional Area Networks (FANs) to address a dynamic range of irregular warfare challenges, enabling an adaptive response that evolves with emerging threats. Since 2022, the IWC has launched seven FANs, each with a cohesive framework to enhance capabilities across the DoD, interagency, private sector, and international stakeholders, fostering a unified, whole-of-government approach. Through focused efforts in knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, awareness and education, and collective problem-solving, FANs are focused on Contested Logistics, Mission Assurance, Medical Resilience, Intelligence, Operations in the Information Environment (OIE), Emerging Technology, and the Student Working Group (SWG). This structure not only ensures strategic alignment and capability optimization but also underscores the IWC's commitment to fostering expertise, resilience, and readiness in confronting complex, unconventional threats.

It was near sunset in the summer of 2016, and I was on the rooftop of a Kurdish Peshmerga fort in the front-line town of Gwer, just south of Mosul, Iraq. I stood behind a sandbag berm beside Kurdish General Omar Hama Ali Farag, and we watched through binoculars as ISIS fighters scurried between their positions a mile away across a dry riverbed.

On the other side of no man's land, there they were. The foot soldiers of the terrorist army responsible for so much death and destruction. Disciples of the twisted cause that had brutally killed the journalist James Foley, who was my friend.

Small in stature with a trimmed salt-and-pepper mustache, Farag wore a black-and-white turban and the traditional Kurdish sal u sepik uniform. The general paced back and forth among his men with his hands clasped behind his back. At times he had a fatherly air. In other moments, Farag's eyes narrowed, and his face transformed into a remorseless expression I have only seen among soldiers at war.

Then jet noise snarled overhead. I looked up and saw the arrowhead shape of two F-16s scorching across the clear blue sky.

Farag, like many older Peshmerga soldiers, had survived Saddam Hussein's al-Anfal genocide in the late 1980s. More than 180,000 Kurds died in those attacks—many due to chemical weapons dropped from Saddam's fighter planes. The sounds of jet engines had thereafter stirred terror among the Kurds who remembered al-Anfal. Years later, however, during the war against ISIS, the growl of American warplanes inspired an altogether different feeling.

"That's the sound of God," Farag told me.

As the U.S. fighter jets roared above, the Kurds pointed to the sky, laughing and smiling. Empowered, a few soldiers fired potshots toward the enemy lines.

"Now the sound of the planes makes me happy," Farag said. "I can't explain how important the U.S. planes are for us. If we can't hear the sound of the planes, we can't stay here and fight."

The sun was low, and the sky was clear. The jets were clearly visible. Then, the thunder of bombs. Puffs of tan dust and smoke rose where the enemy had once been but no longer was.

A flock of startled birds took flight. I felt satisfied. I thought back to my previous profession—when



Dr. Dennis Walters (left), IWC Director, speaks with Dr. Wladimir Klischko (center), Ukrainian Olympic Boxing Gold Medalist, author and the brother of the mayor of Kiev, and Nolan Peterson (right), IWC SME and panel moderator (contractor), at the Center's recent Irregular Warfare Center Community of Interest Symposium (IWCCOIS) March 13 in Tyson's Corner, Va.

The IWC illuminates current and future irregular threats, crises, and obstacles through publications and academic initiatives. Over the past two years, the IWC has released insights and perspectives on a range of security topics associated with irregular warfare: military, diplomatic, economic, social, cultural, and more. In conjunction with our original articles, the Center has also published book reviews, research reports, and translations.

The Center has made strides in fostering research and academic development of IW through PRISM and the release of its book. The IWC assumed publishing of PRISM: The Journal of Complex Operations in September 2024. This peer-reviewed journal has been a key platform for discussing irregular warfare and complex operations since its inception in 2011. Under the IWC's stewardship, PRISM will continue to provide critical insights into IW and threats in the modern security environment. In July 2024, the Center published its inaugural book, *The Future Faces of Irregular Warfare: Great Power Competition in the 21st Century*. This edited volume features essays from prominent scholars and practitioners, exploring key trends in irregular warfare, including lawfare and economic warfare, and addressing the challenges posed by climate change. With contributions from key figures in the field of IW like LTC (R) Michael Nagata and Dr. Sean McFate, the book enhances understanding of IW and inspires future scholars in the field.

Tab D was created to support the Center's Operational Information Environment (OIE) efforts and empower the U.S. with information advantage. Tab D is named after the PSYOP tab traditionally required in joint DoD plans. This newsletter employs expert analytic research techniques, bolstered by machine learning and original-language, open-source information, to identify vulnerabilities in global competitors' narratives. Serving as a potent force multiplier, the OIE FAN facilitates education and problem-solving within the realm of information operations. There have been 18 editions of Tab D released to the OIE fan since its inception in January 2024.

Irregular Warfare 101 (IW101) was launched in February 2024 through Defense Security Cooperation University. This 90-minute course provides a comprehensive introduction to the fundamentals of Irregular Warfare, covering strategic competition, the nature of IW, operational activities, and global practitioners. It was designed by IWC experts for

### A Beacon of Hope by Nolan Peterson, IWC SME and Valens Global contractor

I was a U.S. Air Force special operations pilot in Iraq and Afghanistan. I knew what war looked like from up there. Now, I knew what it looked like from ground level, among those brave fighters who depend on American airpower to survive.

"Allahu akhbar," Farag said.  
"Allahu akhbar," I agreed.

As the sun dipped below the distant, ancient hills, we stood together, listened to the sound of God, and watched our enemies die.

I spent a good chunk of my life in the military, and I paid my dues in Iraq and Afghanistan like the rest of my generation in the U.S. armed forces. But it wasn't until I'd left the military and become a journalist that I truly understood what I'd spent my youth fighting for.

Sure, I knew that my service was one tiny part of the bigger effort of keeping the homeland safe. But maintaining a dominant military with a global presence is not just about America's national defense, or even international stability. Our military is also the torchbearer for our country's values. And our nation's flag remains a beacon of hope for people fighting for their freedom around the world.

In February 2015, I joined a U.S. Army Stryker convoy as it traveled 1,100 miles from Estonia, down through Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and into the Czech Republic. The convoy was called Operation Dragon Ride; it was meant to show the United States' resolve to defend NATO's eastern members in the wake of Russia's first invasion of Ukraine. Along the way, thousands of people lined the roadside waving U.S. flags. Fathers had children on their shoulders. Young women blew kisses to the U.S. troops. At each stop, no matter how small the village, people gathered to meet the soldiers and get selfies with them. I wish you could have seen it; you would have been proud to be an American. I certainly was.

Under Russian artillery fire in eastern Ukraine's trenches over the past decade, I've seen many Ukrainian soldiers proudly wearing American flags on their uniforms. They told me those colors symbolize the dream they're fighting for. In the trenches in the front-line town of Pisky, I met one Ukrainian soldier who wore a Ronald Reagan Presidential Library T-shirt. When asked why, he said: "Because Reagan won the Cold War, and it would piss Putin off."

On Thanksgiving 2016, I visited the Ukrainian army's 92nd Mechanized Brigade, which was dug in just outside the front-line town of Marinka. I went to the Ukrainian war zone that time with my

military personnel and civilians across all ranks, as well as international partners and allies. IW 101 marked the beginning of a series of IW courses aimed at enhancing DoD knowledge.

The Center successfully facilitated two Irregular Warfare Colloquiums designed to foster collaboration between junior and senior scholars with expertise in IW topics. These events, both held in Arlington, VA, provided a platform for emerging researchers to present their projects and engage in discussions with other scholars and practitioners. The IWC hosted students from U.S. and international academic institutions, expanding the community of interest through collaboration.

The IWC addresses current and future irregular threats to the U.S., Allies, and partners by providing optionality. A significant accomplishment that addresses IW threats is the Transformational Irregular Warfare Leaders Thought Course (TILT-C), aimed at enhancing the strategic thinking of interagency leaders and practitioners. This initiative includes sessions tailored to various U.S. government departments and international partners, fostering collaborative learning on irregular warfare challenges. TILT-C emphasizes innovative strategies and interdisciplinary approaches to address contemporary security issues. The Center has conducted TILT-C for stakeholders in the DoD, U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the intelligence community, and other interagency partners.

In collaboration with the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG), the IWC has held irregular warfare exercises Ridge Runner and Ridge Healer at Camp Dawson, Kingwood, West Virginia. In April 2024, the Center signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WVNG, marking a significant step in enhancing joint efforts to counter irregular warfare threats. This year, the partners conducted three Ridge Runner and Ridge Healer events, reinforcing the National Defense Strategy to work together with Allies and partners to increase interoperability and improve resilience.

The IWC's second anniversary marks a critical period of advancement for U.S. understanding and capabilities in irregular warfare. Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director, said, "The IWC's second anniversary is not just a recognition of our achievements over the past two years; it reflects our dedication to advancing the understanding, policy, and doctrine of irregular warfare."

As the Center celebrates its second anniversary, it looks forward to expanding its strategy to strengthen U.S. and allied capabilities in addressing irregular warfare challenges. The IWC's dedication to hosting regular forums, symposia, and events will drive its mission to enable a cohesive and adaptable community of interest, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and doctrines across the DoD and partner organizations. In line with its mission, the Center will focus on amplifying its network through the 2025 Irregular Warfare forums and symposia. Building on the success of its foundational course, IW 101, the IWC will launch IW 201, an intermediate course that examines strategic irregular warfare concepts, methodologies, and case studies, further illuminating modern threats. With close collaboration from our key partners, the Center anticipates the continuation of irregular warfare exercises, Ridge Runner and Ridge Healer, addressing irregular threats to the U.S., our Allies, and our partners. Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, the IWC will advance its lines of effort—Amplify, Illuminate, and Address—through continued partner engagements, exercises, and educational programs.

younger brother, Drew, who is also an Air Force veteran and served in Afghanistan.

That night, Drew and I stood atop the Ukrainian fort and watched as rockets and tracers cut across the blackened sky. The sounds of explosions rolled in seconds later, out of sync with the far-off flashes of light. This storm of steel was the nightly rhythm of Europe's only ongoing land war. It was a "regular night," the Ukrainian soldiers told us.

Later, Drew and I shared a meal and a succession of toasts with our Ukrainian hosts. At first, the Ukrainians looked on us with suspicion. After all, we were foreigners in a war that wasn't our own. Yet, as the night went on and the language barriers came down, the Ukrainians had a lot of questions about Afghanistan for my brother and me. Most of their fathers had fought in Afghanistan as Red Army soldiers in the 1980s, and the fact that Drew and I had both served there earned us instant credibility.

Soon, we were as comfortable together as if we were all soldiers from the same country. And even though we served under different flags, we'd all chosen to fight for similar reasons. The words "freedom" and "democracy" came up a lot that night—and so did the word "friend."

"More than ammunition, we need to know we're not alone," a Ukrainian soldier named Andriy told us that night.

Yes, it's true that freedom isn't free. And the price of freedom is usually set by those who wish to destroy it. Yet, I've met so many people who believe freedom is worth fighting for. No matter its cost. And, from what I've seen, there are plenty of dark forces in this world held at bay by the simple fact that the American flag still symbolizes a dream worth fighting for.

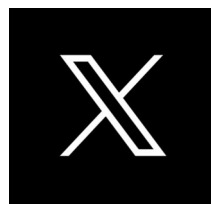


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Ms. Maren Brooks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Irregular Warfare and Countering Terrorism during and Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director, provided opening remarks during the IWC's and FPRI's Center for the Study of Intelligence and Nontraditional Warfare two-day IW Global War on Terrorism lessons learned since 9/11 conference, Sept. 17-18, 2024, at the U.S. Naval Institute's Jack C. Taylor Conference Center in Annapolis, Md.



Event participants discussed exercise strategy in breakout groups during the Center's IW Medical Resiliency and Sustainment Working Group event from Jan. 30 - Feb. 2, 2024, at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine in Bethesda, Md.



Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, Christopher P. Maier provided the keynote address on Day 1 of the IW Forum in Arlington, Va., on Dec. 5. The Center, National Defense University, College of International Security Affairs, and the U.S. Army John. F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School partnered to host the 3-day event.



Mohamed Mirghahari, IWC SME and Valens Global contractor, moderates a panel on Human Terrain Operations at the Irregular Warfare Lessons Learned Since 9/11 Conference in Annapolis, Maryland in September 2024.



Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director, provided opening remarks at the first Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposium hosted by the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) and The Department of Defense's Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)). The event took place Oct. 29-31, 2024, at the U.S. Naval Institute Jack C. Taylor Conference Center in Annapolis, Md.



Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director, recognized Sam Paulson from The Johns Hopkins University SAIS, the winner of IWC's first IW Student Working Group (SWG) essay contest at the Second Irregular Warfare Colloquium.



(From left to right) The Irregular Warfare Center (IWC)'s Senior Advisor and Valens Global contractor, BC (R) Chris Burns, Deputy Director & Chief of Staff Lori Leffler, U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) Commander Gen. Jacqueline Van Orost and IWC Event Coordinator, Morgan 6 contractor, Michelle Powers engage at the Center's booth during The National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA) and the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) 2023 Fall Meeting Oct. 31- Nov. 3 in Orlando, Florida.



The Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) team at our Irregular Warfare Center Community of Interest Symposium (IWCCOIS) on March 11-13 in Tyson's Corner, Va.

### Emphasizing The Center

#### HON Christopher Maier, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

*"The Irregular Warfare Center's dedication to fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of irregular warfare has been instrumental in shaping the Department's strategic approach to our priority global challenges. By fostering collaboration among military leaders, scholars, and international partners, IWC enhances our strategic capabilities and ensures that we remain adaptable and responsive to the evolving challenges of the modern security landscape. Its work is truly essential in sharpening our competitive edge and strengthening our partnerships worldwide."*

#### Maren Brooks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Irregular Warfare and Counterterrorism

*"I think the Irregular Warfare Center made tremendous strides in just two years, driving the Department's discussions around irregular warfare (IW). The Center, at the nexus of our professional military education institutions, the Department's Regional Centers, and Policy, is advancing how the Department thinks about IW through research, analysis, and various engagements with the broader defense enterprise, our interagency colleagues, and our allies and partners."*

#### Maj. Gen. Bill Crane, Adjutant General of the West Virginia National Guard

*"Building U.S. and partner capacities and skillsets to compete in nonconventional arenas against state, non-state, and near-peer competitors is fundamental. Our partnership with the IWC helps strengthen existing and developing ties between defense industry, educational institutions, and governmental and private sector partners both here and abroad. And it drives the authorities that gives us the ability to aggressively pursue opportunities here in West Virginia that will help to train and prepare our own U.S. troops as well as our allies and partners to face the future fight."*

#### Mick Crnkovich, Director for Irregular Warfare, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

*"I thoroughly enjoyed watching the Irregular Warfare Center grow and mature over the last two years. The Center's ability to convene senior leaders, academics, and practitioners to discuss and debate how the Department can most effectively engage in irregular warfare will continue to advance in the coming years. Engagements with allies and partners is more critical than ever as the U.S. has much to learn in this space, and the IW Center is helping us to do just that."*

#### Erik Herr, IWC Chief of Operations

*"The Irregular Warfare Center has experienced significant growth over the past two years, expanding our reach and delivering value globally to over 70 nations. Our comprehensive IW education and training programs have evolved tremendously over time and through a scaffolded training model has strengthened the capabilities of US, Ally and partner nations to counter irregular threats effectively, further enhancing resiliency and deterrence posture. The impact from these collaborative engagements fosters interoperability across international defense communities and reinforces US security partnerships around the world."*

#### BC (Ret.) Christopher M. Burns, IWC Senior Advisor, Valens Global CTR

*"The IWC was established during a pivotal moment in our nation's history. Initially, the concept was purely academic, but the invasion of Ukraine by Russia prompted us to rethink our design and approach as we worked to define our vision. The rapid developments on the global stage also influenced our strategy."*

*"I take great pride in what we have accomplished in such a short period, starting from just an idea on a piece of paper. Each team member has integrated well and recognized the importance of our mission, helping to elevate us to the next level. We have passionate and driven men and women in the IWC that others wish they had."*

#### Derek Jones, IWC Senior Special Projects Officer, Valens Global CTR

*"Under Dr. Walters's guidance we didn't set out to admire IW and related problems, but instead we set out to do our best to help our community of interest solve them. On this second anniversary I can say we have achieved or are close to achieving Dr. Walters's vision. We support the policy makers and policy doers, including the warfighters—both those best positioned to conduct IW against our adversaries, but also those impacted by our adversaries' use of IW and in the need of resilience and ways to counter. It was this type of impact and return on investment that set us apart from other organizations. We brought world class subject matter experts who are not only experienced and educated in these topics, but who are also passionate about them. It is the team's collective passion for this topic, regardless of being a government employee or a contractor, that inspires our partners."*

#### Mark Grzegorzewski, PhD, IWC CENTCOM/SOUTHCOM Deputy Regional Adviser, Morgan 6 CTR

*"As the regional deputy adviser to USCENTCOM and USSOUTHCOM, my role bridges the gap between operations and strategic understanding of irregular warfare. The work I find most meaningful is engaging directly with Commands to clarify and define what irregular warfare truly entails. There's frequently a misunderstanding across government agencies about its scope and application, which creates disconnects in addressing complex, hybrid threats. By providing education and encouraging collaboration, I aim to build a more unified, whole-of-government approach to irregular warfare. This effort ensures that our national strategies are both effective and adaptable to irregular competition."*

