



# Irregular Warfare Center

# SPOTLIGHT



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## Global Leader at Three; Irregular Warfare Center Achieves Three Years of Growth and Strategic Influence

ARLINGTON, Va. — October 2025 marks the third anniversary of the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC), and the organization is celebrating by recognizing a year of unprecedented growth, strategic engagement, and successful execution of our mission. As the congressionally mandated center of excellence for irregular warfare (IW), the IWC has solidified its role as the central mechanism for developing IW knowledge and advancing concepts and doctrine for the Department of War (DOW) and its partners.

In the past year, the IWC’s efforts have shown substantial progress across all five of its mandated authorities - education and curriculum alignment, facilitating critical research, engagement and global partnership, training and development and to be the central repository and resource development.



Particularly in the intelligence community and in the homeland, the IWC highlighted its pivotal role in preparing the United States and its allies for strategic competition and complex global threats.

In the education and curriculum alignment, the IWC made significant strides in coordinating and aligning IW education curricula, standards, and objectives across the DOW. The IWC collaborated with major defense educational institutions, including the Naval Postgraduate School, Air War College, and Joint Special Operations University.

The Transformational Irregular Warfare Leaders Thought Course (TILT-C), was a cornerstone of the IWC’s educational delivery. It was conducted multiple times across different commands, with notable deliveries including participants from the European Command (EUCOM J9 Interagency) in Stuttgart, Germany, training for U.S. Special Operations Command Central in Tampa, Fla. and sessions tailored for Task Force 40-25 at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Online, the IWC significantly expanded its digital learning portfolio, dramatically increasing its reach to both U.S. and international audiences. Four new courses were launched providing IW education and expanding interest to over 3000 participants amongst the Department of War, other federal agencies, and partners.

The Center assumed the publication of PRISM: The Journal of Complex Operations, which boasts a readership of over 4,000 global subscribers. Furthermore, the IWC hosted the third annual University Research Colloquium, featuring junior scholars presenting research to senior practitioners, strengthening the connection between academia and the operational community. It provided analysis and case studies at the “China: Hybrid Warfare” Workshop in Ottawa, Canada, and participated in a Naval Postgraduate School workshop analyzing China’s maritime gray zone operations.

The IWC firmly established itself as a facilitator of critical research on IW, strategic competition, and the DOW’s role in interagency activities. Research efforts directly supported operational planning, with the IWC providing subject matter expertise on converging TRIAD (Space, Cyber, and SOF) capabilities for the United States Army Special Operations Command’s “Silent Quest” exercise series and contributing to the Cuning Shadow Wargame.



The IWC continues to engage with stakeholders, with the IWC conducting activities that formed part of broader engagement with 51 allied and partner nations.

The Center successfully bridged interagency divides, coordinating with the Department of

State and the intelligence community.

The IWC co-hosted the Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Symposiums with the U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security, bringing together more than 140 attendees from across the intelligence community. The Defense of the Homeland: Aviation and Transportation in IW Workshop convened top-tier stakeholders from defense, interagency, and the private sector, surfacing actionable recommendations to mitigate infrastructure vulnerabilities.

The IWC’s engagement focused heavily on strengthening allied IW capabilities against evolving hybrid threats. The IWC coordinated and planned various workshops, which built upon earlier FY24 activities and emphasized comprehensive defense planning. The IWC conducted site visits with partner nation’s planning teams to develop education pipelines. This past year the IWC delivered a specialized course on Comprehensive Defense and resistance planning to 65 SOF participants.



The IWC’s educational mandate saw significant achievement through the delivery of 46 major events including 17 courses, 23 workshops, 4 symposiums, and specialized seminars and colloquia training over 1,064 international participants and 300+ U.S. personnel.

A core focus was on developing the Whole-of-Nation Defense posture, preparing local communities for comprehensive defense strategies. The Center led initial planning for Shadow Runner 26-1, the first tailored denied-area, resistance to occupation exercise for U.S., Allied, and partner Whole of Government participants. They engaged with non-governmental organizations focused on medical and societal resilience in Eastern Europe,

recognizing the critical role of civil society in conflict resilience and bringing expertise on contested and denied area medical and logistics sustainment to the IW community.



Looking ahead, the IWC will continue to advance its congressional mandate, driving innovation in irregular warfare education, deepening international partnerships, and developing the adaptive, forward-thinking leaders needed to address tomorrow’s irregular challenges. The IWC’s dramatic

expansion in FY25, coupled with its commitment to a whole-of-society approach, ensures it remains at the forefront of preparing the United States and its allies for the evolving irregular warfare landscape.

As a global leader, the IWC is poised to leverage its growing influence to integrate irregular warfare insights into scenario development, as demonstrated by its collaboration with over 20 nations at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies including participating in the Integrated Deterrence Research workshop. The IWC has a close and growing relationship with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, collaborating on workshops and supporting the development of the Nigerian Irregular Warfare Centre. Additionally, the Center participated in the first ever joint event supported by the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Studies, and the Irregular Warfare Center with 15 partner nations. In this event, the IWC presented case studies on PRC Economic Coercion during a workshop on China: Hybrid Threats. These activities are a sample of the IWC’s work and collaboration across the Department.

With its third year complete, the IWC’s foundation is solid, and its direction is set: to be the indispensable hub for IW knowledge and application globally.

### Media Highlights

U.S. and UAE Conduct 9th Joint Military Dialogue  
by U.S. Department of War

Trump is Hosting Syria’s al-Sharaa for a first-of-its-kind meeting at the White House  
by Seung Min Kim Associated Press

Netanyahu and Kushner Meet as Gaza Ceasefire’s First Phase Winds Down  
by: Wafaa Shurafa and Julia Frankel, Associated Press

Army Stands Up Unit to Combat Disinformation, ‘malign influence’ in Indo-Pacific  
by Wyatt Olson, Stars and Stripes





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## Director's Corner



Dr. Dennis Walters, IWC Director



### Three Years of Building the Irregular Warfare Enterprise

Three years ago, the Irregular Warfare Center stood up with a clear mandate: serve as the Department's central repository for irregular warfare knowledge and build the intellectual and operational infrastructure needed to compete effectively against sophisticated adversaries. This anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come—and the critical work ahead.

### Operational Integration Across Combatant Commands

From NORTHCOM to CENTCOM to INDOPACOM, we've embedded ourselves as partners to the operational force. Whether supporting SOCCENT's irregular warfare strategy development, enabling SOCEUR's resistance education programs in Eastern Europe, or helping NORTHCOM integrate irregular warfare considerations into homeland defense, the IWC has become a trusted advisor across theaters. Our engagement with UAE partners demonstrates how we're building partner capacity globally, positioning allied nations to address irregular challenges in their own regions.

### A Global Community of Practice

Our Functional Area Networks have evolved into something remarkable—a worldwide community of practitioners, scholars, and partners united in advancing irregular warfare understanding. These networks don't just share information; they generate new insights, connect disparate communities, and ensure that lessons learned in one theater inform operations in another. This intellectual connective tissue represents exactly the kind of persistent collaboration irregular warfare demands.

### Institutionalizing Irregular Warfare

The publication of DoD Instruction 3000.07 marks a watershed moment. For the first time, irregular warfare has comprehensive policy framework that clarifies responsibilities, establishes governance, and ensures institutional commitment. This instruction doesn't just validate the IWC's mission—it provides the foundation for sustained irregular warfare excellence across the joint force.

### Looking Forward

As we enter our fourth year, our mission remains urgent. The strategic environment continues to demand irregular approaches, and adversaries continue to exploit seams in our capabilities. But with operational partnerships across combatant commands, a vibrant global community of practice, and now clear policy guidance, the IWC and the broader Department are better positioned than ever to meet these challenges. The work continues.

## Highlights of the Year



TILT-C



Intel Support Symposium  
July 2025



2025 IW Symposium March



Indo-Pacific IW Symposium Aug. 2025

Defense of the Homeland Aug. 2025



Student Colloquium Sept 2025



## Current Initiatives, Upcoming Events & IW Educational Offerings

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<https://irregularwarfarecenter.org/PRISM/subscribe/>

The Department of Defense's Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) is extremely proud to announce the Center will assume publishing duties and responsibilities of *PRISM: The Journal of Complex Operations*.

Since July 2011, *PRISM* has been a premiere journal offering provocative articles relating to national and international security affairs. By reaching out to thought leaders from the national and international security policy-maker, practitioner, and academic communities the quarterly publication has established a reputation for offering keen insight into the evolving global threat environment.

For authors interested in publishing in *PRISM*, the Center encourages submissions of original manuscripts that are informative, insightful, and provocative while addressing the full range of factors contributing to global security. Manuscripts should be sent to [PRISM@irregularwarfarecenter.org](mailto:PRISM@irregularwarfarecenter.org) with a subject line of "Manuscript!"

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### This Month in the History of Irregular Warfare

- October 1, 2022: The Department of War's Irregular Warfare Center (IWC) officially commenced operations. The IWC is the entity that functions as the central mechanism for developing irregular warfare knowledge.
- October 3-4, 1993: The Battle of Mogadishu A two-day battle in Somalia where U.S. forces (Task Force Ranger) engaged in an intense urban firefight with the Somali National Alliance (SNA) militia. The goal was to capture key SNA targets, but the operation resulted in significant U.S. casualties and the downing of two Black Hawk helicopters, influencing future irregular warfare tactics and foreign policy.
- October 6, 1973: Yom Kippur War Begins Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a surprise attack on Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. While largely a conventional war between states, the surprise nature of the attack and the subsequent oil embargo by Arab nations demonstrated forms of asymmetric pressure and the interconnectedness of conflict with economic warfare.
- October 7, 2023: Hamas and allied Palestinian militant groups launched a large-scale, coordinated surprise attack on Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip. This event is a prominent recent example of irregular warfare tactics, including rocket barrages, ground incursions by an elite commando force, and the taking of hostages. The attack, which resulted in the deaths of approximately 1,200 people in Israel, initiated the ongoing Gaza war and expanded into a broader regional conflict involving other non-state actors like Hezbollah and the Houthis, who are supported by Iran, a state known for its use of irregular warfare.

### Spotlight Team

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