



## **Dr. Thomas Searle**

### ***Deputy Regional Advisor for CENTCOM and SOUTHCOM, Irregular Warfare Center, Ctr.***

Dr. Thomas Searle serves as the Deputy Regional Advisor for CENTCOM and SOUTHCOM for the Irregular Warfare Center (IWC). In this capacity, he provides strategic advice, operational assistance, and advanced education to United States and partner forces conducting irregular warfare across the CENTCOM and SOUTHCOM areas of operations. A premier subject matter expert in special operations history, counterterrorism, and irregular warfare strategy, Dr. Searle shapes the analytical and instructional

frameworks that prepare joint forces for complex global security environments. He brings nearly three decades of elite military, research, and academic excellence to the Center, bridging global combat experience with high-level joint staff planning.

Dr. Searle's expertise is rooted in a distinguished 30-year military career as a U.S. Army Special Forces officer. Throughout his operational service, he deployed to combat environments alongside an unprecedented array of elite units, including every U.S. Army Special Forces Group, every Ranger Battalion, and every Squadron within the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), as well as most Naval Special Warfare, Air Force Special Operations, and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) elements. Inside the continental United States, Dr. Searle applied his operational insights to vital staff positions at three- and four-star level Joint Headquarters. His strategic assignments include serving within the JSOC J7, where he focused on counterterrorism history and lessons learned; the CENTCOM J2, addressing critical Afghanistan and Pakistan security issues; and the SOCOM J5, where he contributed to the Global Campaign Plan to counter Violent Extremist Organizations.

Following his extensive military career, Dr. Searle transitioned his strategic and operational acumen into prominent defense research and instructional roles. He served in key research positions at the Air Force Research Institute and the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). An accomplished educator, he spent six years as an instructor in the JSOU Graduate Program in Advanced Special Operations, in addition to designing and teaching advanced courses at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Dr. Searle is a widely published author and scholar whose research continues to deeply influence the contemporary national security community. He has authored numerous classified studies on special operations, including the official history of the origins and development of the Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze, Disseminate (F3EAD) targeting cycle. His most influential unclassified book is *Outside the Box: A New General Theory of Special Operations*. He frequently contributes cutting-edge commentary to peer-reviewed and professional platforms, with recent publications in *Military Review*, *Small Wars Journal*, *Inter Populum*, and the *Irregular Warfare Center*, tackling critical topics such as the future of irregular warfare strategy, counterterrorism within strategic competition, and special operations lessons from the conflict in Ukraine and Israel's October 7 war.

Dr. Searle holds a Ph.D. in History from Duke University. He earned a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College and anchored his technical background with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering (B.S.E.) in Civil Engineering from Princeton University.

