

US Special Forces Command Issues New Guide for Overthrowing Foreign Governments

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

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No kidding - this is not our headline, but [Newsweek's](#): "US Special Forces School Publishes New Guide For Overthrowing Foreign Governments" - and as far as we can tell they are the only major mainstream outlet to have picked up on the fact that the US military is now essentially openly bragging on past and future capabilities to foster covert regime change operations.

The 250-page study entitled "[Support to Resistance: Strategic Purpose and Effectiveness](#)" was put out by the Joint Special Operations University under US Special Operations Command, which is the Army's official unified command center which oversees all joint covert and clandestine missions out of MacDill AFB, Florida.

"This work will serve as a benchmark reference on resistance movements for the benefit of the special operations community and its civilian leadership," the [report introduces](#).

The study examines 47 instances of US special forces trying to intervene in various countries from 1941-2003, thus special attention is given to the Cold War, but it doesn't include coups which lacked "legitimate resistance movements" — such as the case of 'Operation AJAX' in 1953 which overthrew Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh.

Though infamous disasters such as the abortive CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba are highlighted, the US military report (perhaps predictably) finds that among those nearly fifty covert interventions surveyed, most interventions were "successful".

"One thing common to all 47 cases reviewed in this study is the fact that the targeted state was ruled either by an unfriendly occupying force or by a repressive authoritarian regime," the author, Army Special Forces veteran Will Irwin wrote. The study focuses on historical regime change operations but in parts hints at the future, saying, "Russia and China have boldly demonstrated expansionist tendencies."

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Success vs. Failure data from the new US military study published earlier this week entitled [Support to Resistance: Strategic Purpose and Effectiveness](#)

Appendix

Table 2. The Cases

#	Locale	Inclusive Dates	Wartime	Peacetime	Main Effort	Supporting	Disrupt	Coerce	Overthrow	Success	Partial Success	Failure	Inconclusive	Duration (in months)
1	Philippines	Dec 1941–Aug 1945	X			X	X			X				44
2	North Africa	Jan 1942–May 1943	X			X	X			X				16
3	Burma	Apr 1942–Jun 1945	X			X	X			X				38
4	France & Belgium	Jun 1942–Oct 1944	X			X	X			X				28
5	Thailand	Aug 1942–Aug 1945	X		X		X			X				36
6	Corsica & Sardinia	Dec 1942–Oct 1943	X		X			X			X			10
7	Greece	Feb 1943–Dec 1944	X		X		X			X				22
8	Norway	Apr 1943–May 1945	X			X	X			X				25
9	Albania	May 1943–Sep 1945	X		X		X			X				28
10	Yugoslavia	Aug 1943–Dec 1944	X		X		X			X				16
11	Denmark	Aug 1943–May 1945	X			X	X			X				21
12	Netherlands	Aug 1943–May 1945	X			X	X					X		21
13	Italy	Apr 1943–Apr 1945	X			X	X			X				24
14	Malaya	Summer 1944–Sep 1945	X		X		X					X		14
15	Poland	Sep 1944–Apr 1945	X		X		X					X		7
16	Czechoslovakia	Sep 1944–May 1945	X			X	X					X		8
17	Germany & Austria	Sep 1944–May 1945	X			X	X						X	8
18	China	Dec 1944–Aug 1945	X			X	X			X				8
19	Indochina (Vietnam)	May 1945–Sep 1945	X			X	X						X	4
20	Romania	Jul 1946–Aug 1946		X	X		X					X		1
21	USSR	Fall 1948–Sep 1954		X	X		X					X		71
22	Yugoslavia	Late 1948–Jan 1949		X	X		X					X		3
23	Albania	Mar 1949–Apr 1954		X	X				X			X		61
24	Romania	Spring 1949–Jun 1953		X	X		X					X		50

It also asserts that unrest across the Middle East since the fall of the Soviet Union should ultimately be blamed on the legacy of past Soviet policy and failures, rather than on the United States.

Newsweek summarizes of [the study's conclusions](#):

Of the 47 cases analyzed, 23 were deemed “successful,” 20 were designated “failures,” two were classified as “partially successful” and two more—both during World War II—were called “inconclusive” as the broader conflict led to an Allied victory anyway. Coercion was the most successful method at a three-quarters rate of success or partial success, while disruption worked just over half the time and regime change only yielded the desired result in 29 percent of the cases reviewed.

And further another interesting element involved the failure of operations which intervened

in countries “under peacetime conditions”:

Other major findings included observations that most operations “were carried out under wartime conditions, with those being nearly twice as successful as cases conducted under peacetime conditions” and “support to nonviolent civil resistance seems to be more likely to succeed than support to armed resistance.” At the same time, they were also “most effective when conducted in direct support of a military campaign rather than as an independent or main effort operation.”

The report identifies about half a dozen governments from Indonesia to Afghanistan to Serbia to Iraq that were “successfully” overthrown by US operations, but in many more cases identifies covert “disrupt” operations for a desired outcome.

#	Locale	Inclusive Dates	Wartime	Peacetime	Main Effort	Supporting	Disrupt	Coerce	Overthrow	Success	Partial Success	Failure	Inconclusive	Duration (in months)
25	Poland	Nov 1950–Dec 1952		X	X		X					X		25
26	North Korea	Dec 1950–1955	X			X	X					X		60
27	China	Feb 1951–Nov 1953	X		X		X					X		33
28	Indonesia	May 1955–May 1958		X	X				X			X		36
29	Tibet	Summer 1956–Early 1969		X	X		X			X				150
30	Cuba	Jan 1960–May 1965		X	X				X			X		64
31	Laos	Dec 1960–Feb 1973	X			X	X					X		146
32	North Vietnam	Jan 1961–1972	X			X		X				X		135
33	Angola	Jul 1975–Feb 1976		X	X			X				X		7
34	Afghanistan (1st Phase)	Jul 1979–Dec 1984		X	X		X			X				65
35	Nicaragua	Mar 1980–Apr 1990		X	X			X		X				121
36	Cambodia	May 1981–Jul 1990		X	X			X		X				110
37	Poland	Dec 1981–Jun 1989		X	X		X			X				90
38	Afghanistan (2nd Phase)	Jan 1985–Feb 1989		X	X			X		X				49
39	Angola	Dec 1985–May 1993		X	X			X			X			89
40	Afghanistan (3rd Phase)	Feb 1989–Sep 1991		X	X				X			X		31
41	Kuwait	Sep 1990–Jan 1991	X			X	X			X				4
42	Iraq	May 1991–Jul 2002		X	X				X			X		134
43	Afghanistan	1998–2000		X	X		X					X		24
44	Kosovo	Mar 1999–Jun 1999	X		X			X		X				2.5
45	Serbia	Mar 1999–Oct 2000		X	X				X	X				19
46	Afghanistan	Sep 2001–Dec 2001	X		X				X	X				3
47	Iraq	Feb 2002–Apr 2003	X			X	X			X				14

The study did not include within its scope current US involved proxy wars which have unfolded in the past decade, such in Syria or Libya or Ukraine, but only mentions these in passing.

In concluding remarks the author acknowledges that the study could help “explore ways the timely application of SOF capabilities” can influence “resistance movements” which are becoming increasingly violent, “thereby possibly helping to prevent the next Syria”.

Whether this means swifter action would have resulted in quick regime change in Syria or if

the study author believes US support to the “rebels” was doomed from the beginning remains unexplored.

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