



UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
7701 TAMPA POINT BOULEVARD
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5323

30 September 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: U.S. Special Operations Command Commander's Reading List for 2014

1. The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Commander's Reading List provides for a common learning experience. It is one way for Special Operations Forces (SOF) to understand contemporary issues, develop a strong appreciation of our history and heritage, and stimulate creative thinking to confront complex challenges. Besides formal education, reading and serious reflection on the experience and ideas of others are essential parts of the process to gain wisdom. The books provide readers with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the profession we have chosen; Special Operations, its mission, core activities, and operations as well as the complex environment in which SOF operates.

2. My intent is to motivate members of the SOF community to grow professionally and personally. The USSOCOM Reading List represents important works for all SOF—officers, enlisted and civilians as well as those supporting the USSOCOM mission. These books supplement the 2012 USSOCOM Reading List and lists from SOF Components and Theater Special Operations Commands. They supplement materials currently used in the Services' education system and can help bridge the intervals between periods of formal professional military education and life-long learning. Also, they do not replace the fundamental reading requirements expected of SOF professionals (e.g. doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures).

3. I encourage the Headquarters USSOCOM, Components, Theater Special Operations Commands, and Joint Special Operations University to consider the authors for inclusion in speaker programs and courses in order to extend the richness and reach of analysis, critical thinking, and conversations stimulated by these books. This Reading List will be posted on the USSOCOM Portal, the public webpage, and in a special section in the USSOCOM Library.

4. I recommend these books to you to enhance your professional growth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. H. McRaven", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

WILLIAM H. McRAVEN
Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander

Encl
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SUBJECT: U.S. Special Operations Command, Commander's Reading List

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USSOCOM Commander's Reading List for 2014

1 October 2013

Strategic Context:

- *Asymmetrical Warfare: Today's Challenge to U.S. Military Power Issues in Twenty-First Century Warfare*, by Roger W. Barnett (2003)
- *Afghanistan the Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Superpower*, by Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin (2001)
- *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, by Malcolm Gladwell (2005)
- *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise to Western Power*, by Victor Hanson (2002)
- *Children of Jihad: A Young American's Travels Among the Youth of the Middle East*, by Jared Cohen (2008)
- *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers*, by Earnest May and Richard Neustadt (1988)
- *The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, by Thomas Friedman (2007)

Leadership:

- *Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success*, by Phil Jackson (2013)
- *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, by Jonathan Shay (1994)
- *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, by Chip and Dan Heath (2007)
- *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*, by General Stanley McChrystal (2013)

Military Science:

- *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare*, by Linda Robinson (2013)
- *Getting More: How You Can Negotiate to Succeed in Work and Life*, by Stuart Diamond (2010)

Intel and Security Affairs:

- *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: The CIA's Secret Campaign to Destroy the Viet Cong*, by Mark Moyar (2007)
- *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri*, by Lia's Brynjar (2008)

Suggestions for USSOCOM Commander's Reading List for 2014

Strategic Context:

- Asymmetrical Warfare: Today's Challenge to U.S. Military Power Issues in Twenty-First Century Warfare by Roger W. Barnett (2003)
Roger Barnett illuminates the effect of operational, organizational, legal, and moral constraints on the ability of the U.S. to use military force. Barnett concludes that the U.S. must create a formal system of selectively eliminating the constraints that dictate our response to certain situations or scenarios. Failure to make such changes will only increase paralysis and, when the use of force is required, increase the already heightened risks.
- Afghanistan the Bear Trap: The Defeat of a Superpower by Mohammad Yousaf and Mark Adkin (2001)
This is the story of the defeat of Soviet Russia's forces by guerrilla forces known as the Mujahideen, heavily backed by Pakistan and the U.S. The author, Brigadier Mohammad Yousaf, was head of the Afghan Bureau of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence and as such was effectively the Mujahideens' commander-in-chief. He controlled the flow of thousands of tons of arms across Pakistan and into its occupied neighbor, arms that were bought with U.S. and Saudi Arabian funds.
- Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell (2005)
Malcolm Gladwell in *Blink* revolutionizes the way we understand the world within. *Blink* is a book about how we think without thinking, about choices that seem to be made in an instant, in the blink of an eye, that actually aren't as simple as they seem. Why are some people brilliant decision makers, while others are consistently inept? Why do some people follow their instincts and win, while others end up stumbling into error? *Blink* reveals that great decision makers aren't those who process the most information or spend the most time deliberating, but those who have perfected the art of "thin-slice" filtering the very few factors that matter from an overwhelming number of variables.
- Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise to Western Power by Victor Hanson (2002)
Examining nine landmark battles from ancient to modern times, from Salamis, where outnumbered Greeks devastated the slave army of Xerxes, to Cortes's conquest of Mexico to the Tet offensive, Victor Davis Hanson explains why the armies of the West have been the most lethal and effective of any fighting forces in the world. Looking beyond popular explanations such as geography or superior technology, Hanson argues that it is in fact Western culture and values, the tradition of dissent, the value placed on inventiveness and adaptation, the concept of citizenship, which have consistently produced superior arms and soldiers.

- Children of Jihad: A Young American's Travels Among the Youth of the Middle East by Jared Cohen (2008)
In 2004, Jared Cohen embarked on the first of a series of incredible journeys to the Middle East in an effort to understand the spread of radical Islamist violence among Muslim youth. Cohen's account begins in Lebanon, where he interviews Hezbollah members. In Iran, he defies government threats and sneaks into underground parties, where bootleg liquor, Western music, and the Internet are all easy to access. His risky itinerary also takes him to a Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon, borderlands in Syria, the insurgency hotbed of Mosul, and other front-line locales. At each turn, he observes a culture at an uncanny crossroads. *Children of Jihad* shows us the future through the eyes of those who are shaping it.
- Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers by Earnest May and Richard Neustadt (1988)
May and Neustadt do us a great service in providing a process and framework, not only for governmental decision-makers, but for anyone struggling with complex decision making. The authors, Harvard professors both, use comparative case study methodology to develop their thesis. To overcome the temptation of using history incorrectly, the authors put forward a specific process for decision makers in crisis situations, and they use case studies to highlight successes and failures in the use of history as guide to decision making. The case studies are all drawn from domestic and foreign policy scenarios, but the lessons are applicable to any organization.
- The World Is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century by Thomas Friedman (2007)
"One mark of a great book is that it makes you see things in a new way, and Mr. Friedman certainly succeeds in that goal," the Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz wrote in *The New York Times* reviewing *The World Is Flat* in 2005. In this new edition, Thomas L. Friedman includes fresh stories and insights to help us understand the flattening of the world. *The World Is Flat 3.0* is an essential update on globalization, its opportunities for individual empowerment, its achievements at lifting millions out of poverty, and its drawbacks--environmental, social, and political.

Leadership:

- Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success by Phil Jackson (2013)
The Soul of Success is Phil Jackson's newest book and an interesting look inside the mind of one of the greatest American professional sports coaches in history. The entire book is filled with interesting quotes, historical and personal examples, and relevant analogies concerning his theories on coaching, leadership, and teamwork.
- Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character by Jonathan Shay (1994)

In this strikingly original and groundbreaking book, Dr. Shay examines the psychological devastation of war by comparing the soldiers of Homer's *Iliad* with Vietnam veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Although the *Iliad* was written twenty-seven centuries ago, it has much to teach about combat trauma, as do the more recent voices and experiences of Vietnam vets.

- *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* by Chip and Dan Heath (2007)
Mark Twain once observed, "A lie can get halfway around the world before the truth can even get its boots on." His observation rings true: Urban legends, conspiracy theories, and bogus public-health scares circulate effortlessly; meanwhile, people with important ideas—business people, teachers, politicians, journalists, and others—struggle to make their ideas "stick." Why do some ideas thrive while others die? And how do we improve the chances of worthy ideas? Provocative, an eye-opening, *Made to Stick* shows us the vital principles of winning ideas—and tells us how we can apply these rules to making our own messages stick.
- *My Share of the Task: A Memoir* by General Stanley McChrystal (2013)
The author frankly explores the major episodes and controversies of his eventful career. He delves candidly into the intersection of history, leadership, and his own experience to produce a book of enduring value. He writes of a fight waged in the shadows from 2003 to 2008 when helped SOF to become one of our most effective counterterrorism weapons, facing off against Al Qaeda in Iraq. Over time, they gathered staggering amounts of intelligence in order to find and remove the most influential and dangerous terrorists, including the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Military Science:

- *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare* by Linda Robinson (2013)
One Hundred Victories is a portrait of how special operations forces have become the force of choice for U.S. military endeavors worldwide. Ms. Robinson follows the evolution of special operations in Afghanistan, the longest deployment since Vietnam. The book describes what a small band of warriors could do and could not do, out on the wild frontiers of the next-generation wars. The book also describes the murky world of armed factions operating along a disputed border, and the chaos and casualties that result when commanders with competing agendas cannot resolve their differences.
- *Getting More: How You Can Negotiate to Succeed in Work and Life* by Stuart Diamond (2010)
This new model of human interaction has been chosen by Google to train the entire company worldwide (30,000 employees), is the #1 book for your career chosen by The Wall Street Journal's website, and is labeled "phenomenal" by Lawyers' Weekly. Based on more than 20 years of research and practice among 30,000 people in 45 countries, *Getting More* concludes that finding and valuing the other party's emotions and

perceptions creates far more value than the conventional wisdom of power and logic. It is intended to provide better agreements for everyone no matter what they negotiate.

Intel and Security Affairs:

- Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: The CIA's Secret Campaign to Destroy the Viet Cong by Mark Moyar (2007)

This study corrects prevailing myths about the Phoenix Program, the CIA's top-secret effort to destroy the Viet Cong by neutralizing its "civilian" leaders. Drawing on recently declassified documents and interviews with American, South Vietnamese, and North Vietnamese sources, Mark Moyar examines the attempts to eradicate the Viet Cong infrastructure and analyzes their effectiveness. He addresses misconceptions about these efforts and provides an accurate, complete picture of the allies' decapitation of the Viet Cong shadow government. Filled with new information, Moyar's study sets the record straight about one of the last secrets of the Vietnam War and offers poignant lessons for dealing with future Third World insurgencies.

- Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri by Lia's Brynjar (2008)

Abu Mus'ab al-Suri remains the foremost theoretician in the global jihadist movement today, despite his capture in Pakistan in late 2005. After having participated in the founding of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1988, al-Suri, whose real name is Mustafa Sethmariam Nasar, trained a whole generation of young Jihadis at his camps in Afghanistan. Building on his extensive military experience from the Syrian Islamist insurgency in the early 1980s, he contributed decisively to formulating Al-Qaeda's global warfare strategy. Throughout his writings there is a desire to learn from past mistakes and rectify the course of the Jihadi movement. His 1,600 page work, "The Global Islamic Resistance Call", outlines a broad strategy for the coming generation of Al-Qaeda, with a keen eye for the practical implementation of Jihadi guerrilla warfare theories.