

**Duke**  
SANFORD

**COUNTERTERRORISM *and***  
**PUBLIC POLICY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

**Research Presentation**  
**Wednesday, April 22, 2020**  
**COL Ed Croot**  
*Green Beret Identity Crisis*



# Thesis

There is an identity crisis in SF, and it is negatively influencing the culture and behavior of Green Berets. The result of multiple changes in the expectations of SF post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the identity crisis has manifested over two decades due in part to misaligned recruiting, education, and assignment practices.





# Defining the Problem

# Defining the Problem: What is Expected of USASF?

## Long-Duration Partnerships—Language—Regional Alignment—Culturally Attuned

Security Force Assistance (SFA)

Foreign Internal Defense (FID)

Counterinsurgency (COIN)

Counterterrorism (CT)

Unconventional Warfare (UW)



Ukraine (2014-Present)



Syria & Iraq (2014-Present)



Afghanistan (2001)

Cooperation

Competition

Conflict

# Defining the Problem: What is *Not* Expected of USASF?

## *Surgical Strike—Technical—Unilateral— Short-Duration— Strategic Impact*

**Surgical Strike**

Hostage Rescue (HR)

Kill / Capture Terrorists (KC)

C-WPNs Mass Destruction (CWMD)

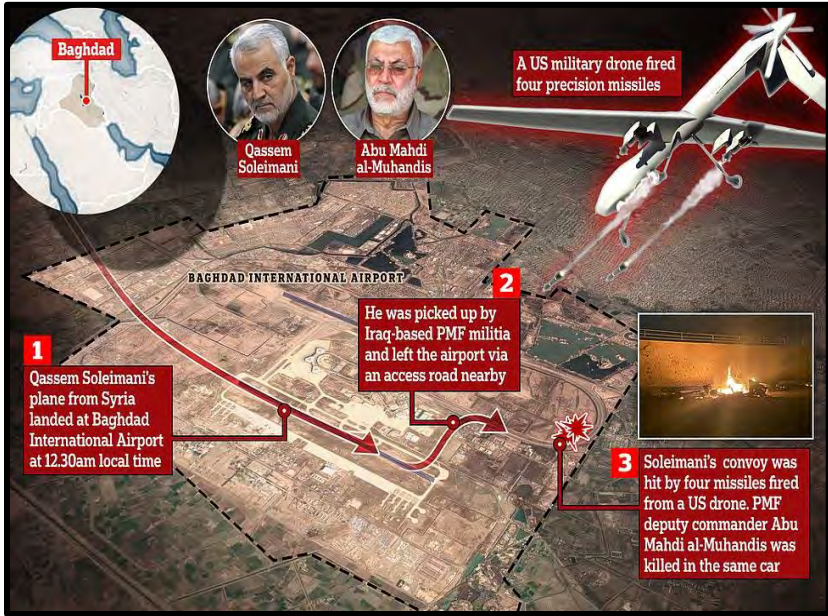
C-Proliferation (CP)



*Osama bin Laden Raid (2011)*

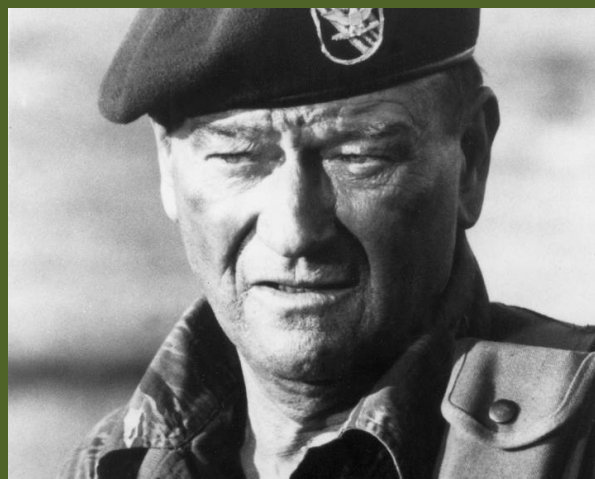


*Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi Raid (2019)*

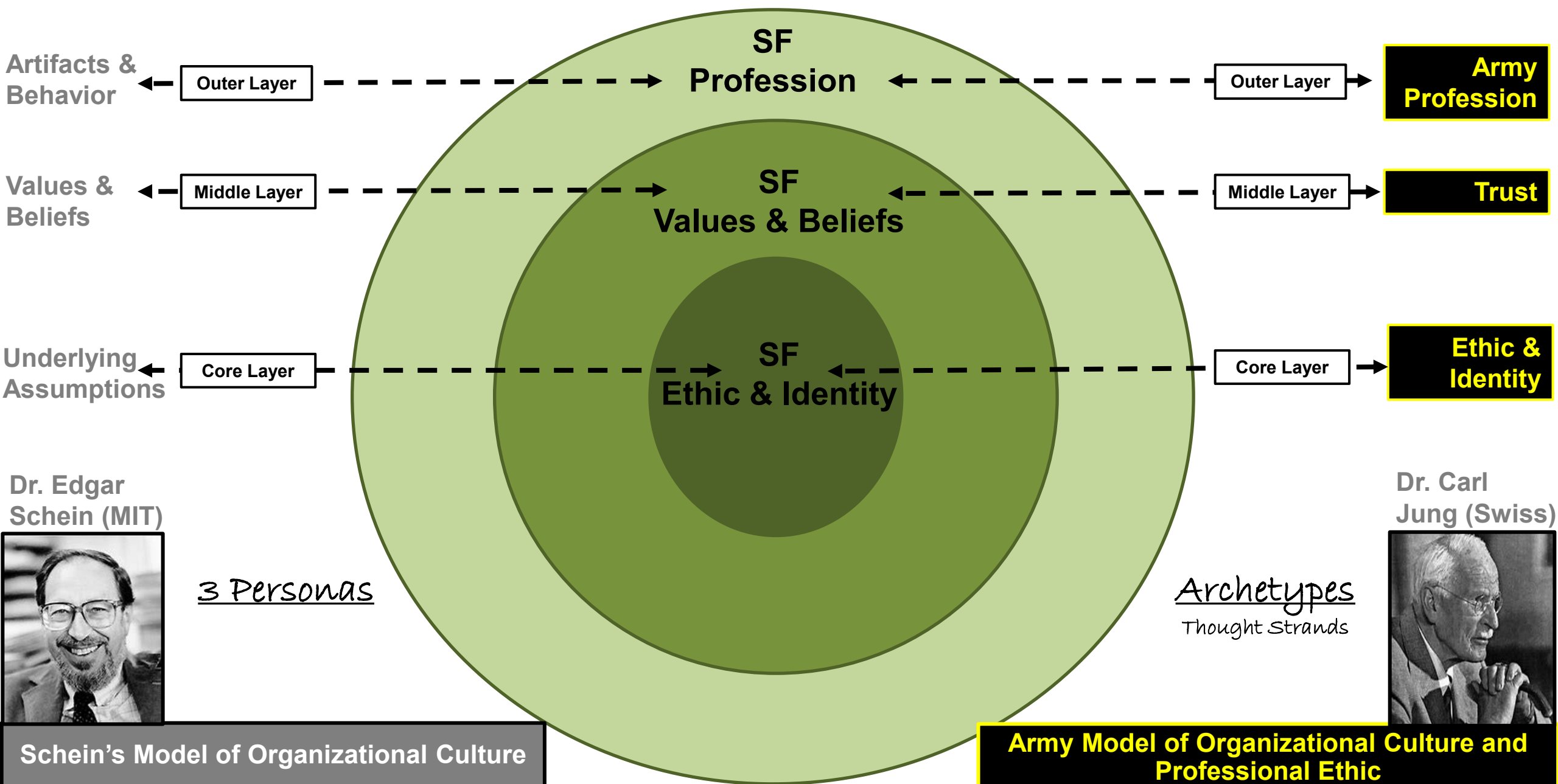


*General Soleimani Strike (2020)*

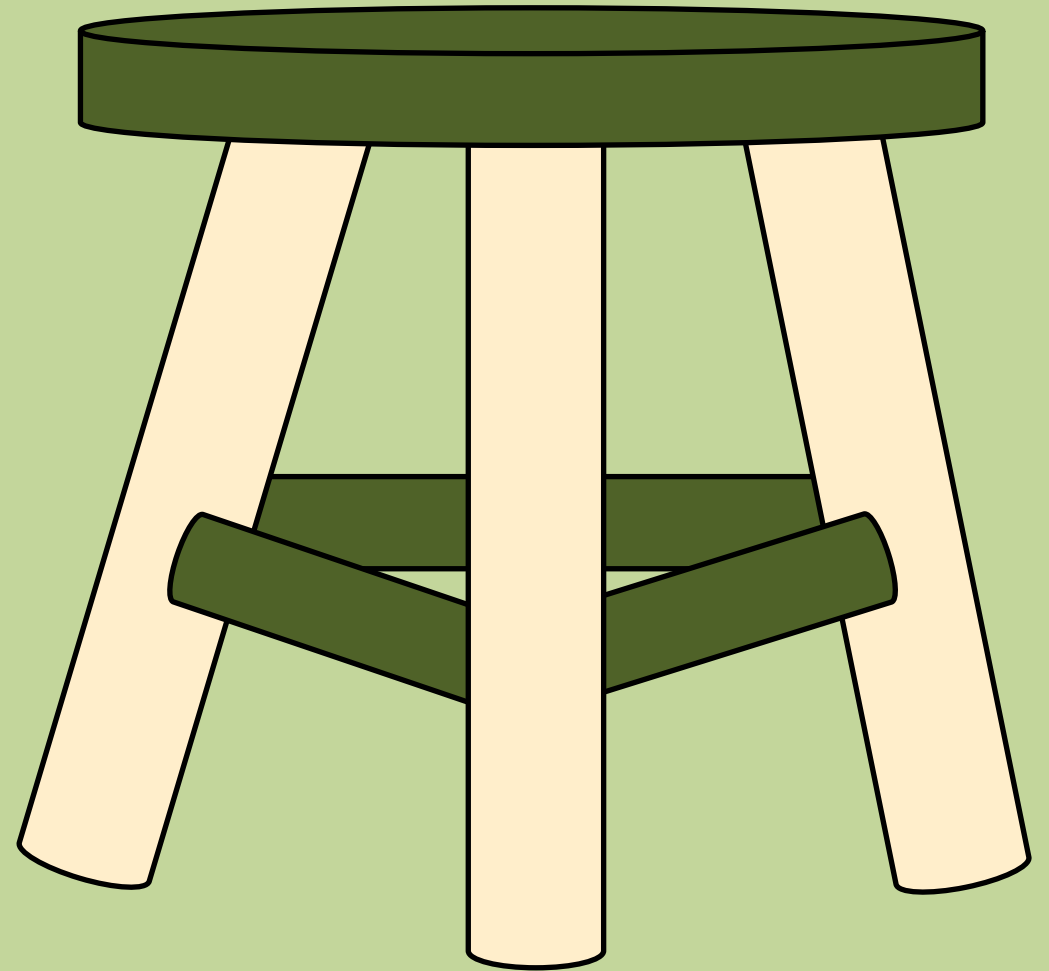
# Modeling Culture— Identity



# SF Organizational Culture Model



# Research Design

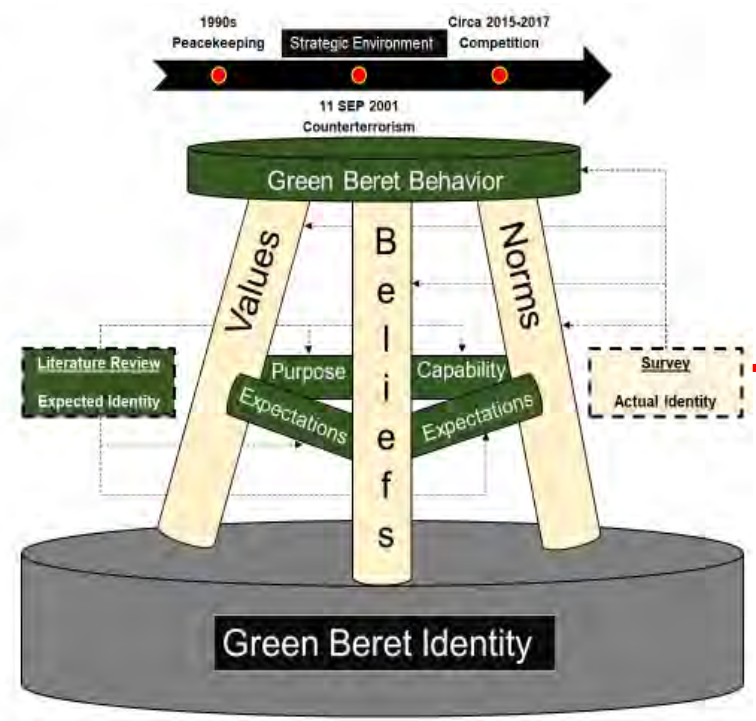


**Identity Crisis:** period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's [or group's] sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in society.



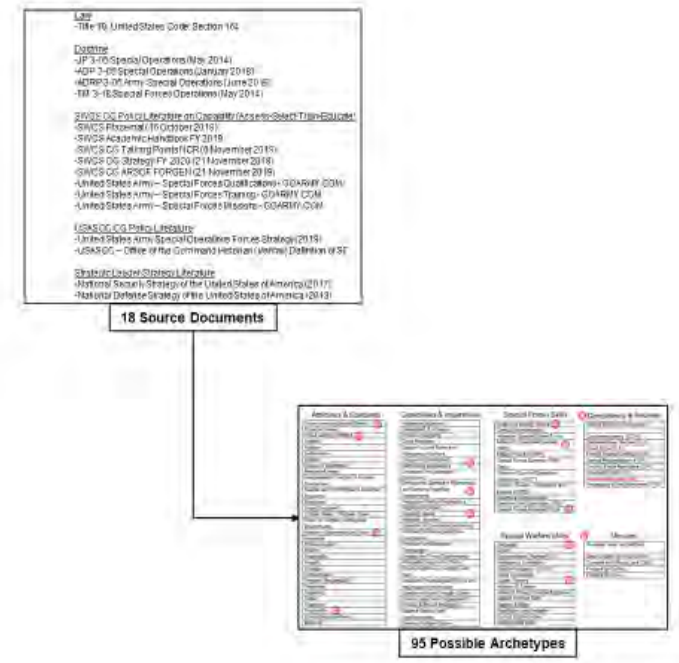
# 1. Methodology

- Compare espoused with actual Green Beret values, beliefs, and behaviors.
- *Stretchers* = Independent Variables
- *Legs* = Dependent Variables
- Literature Review defines variables = Archetypes (Jung)



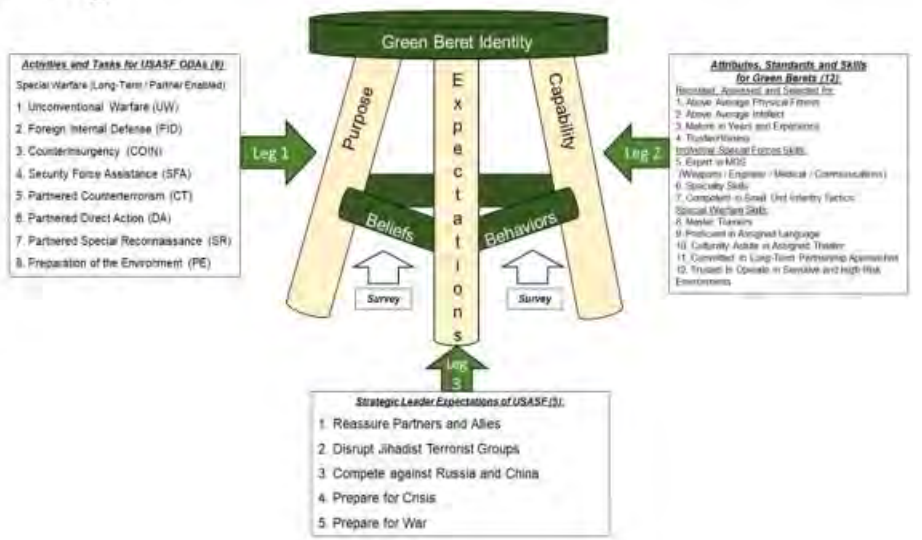
# 2. Literature Review

- Review Legal, Doctrinal, Policy, and Strategy
- Determine which archetypes form established Green Beret identity
- 6-weeks to review 18-sources that generate 95-archetypes
- *Not one document that defines the Green Beret identity?*



# 3. Design & Survey

- 25 Archetypes from 95 Possible Archetypes
- 42 Quantitative–2 Qualitative
- Surveyed all 6,906 active duty Green Berets





# Survey Results



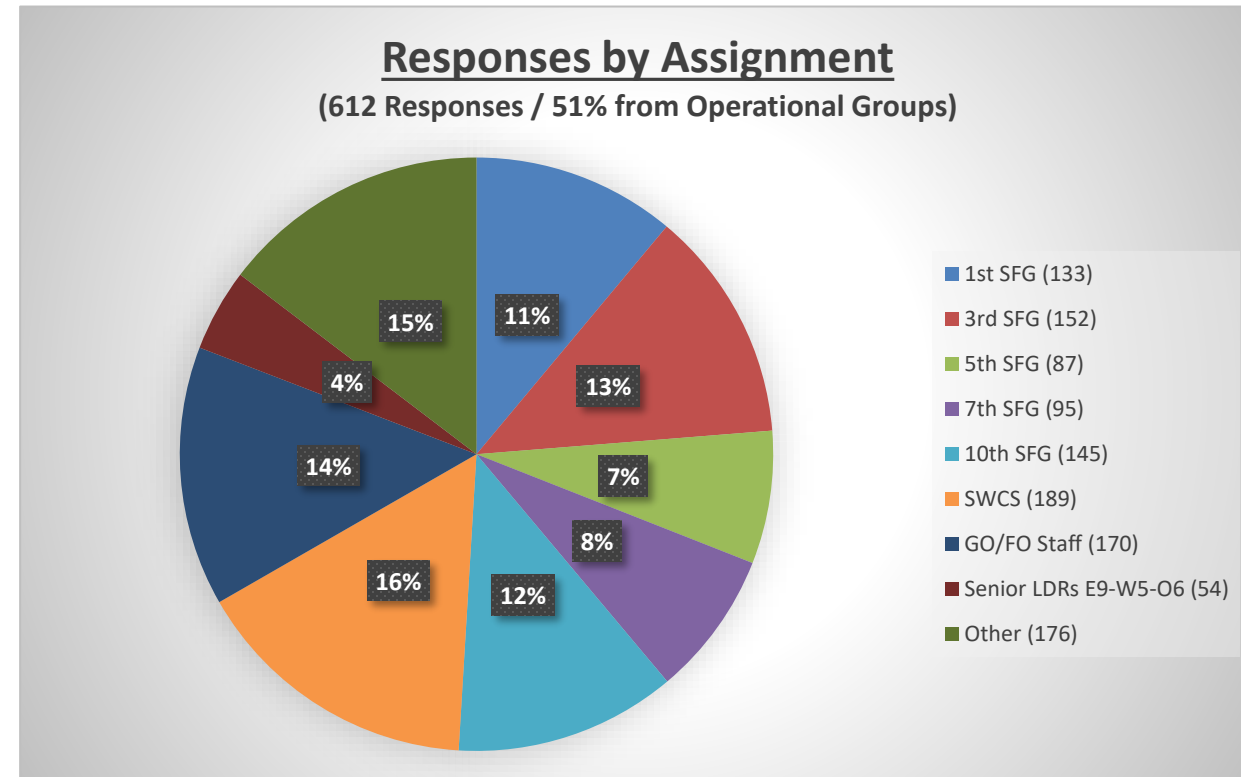
# Demographics

1,201 responses– 100 pages qualitative data– 5% segment minimum– statistically significant

**Table 3. Survey Demographic Data by Rank (R) and MOS (M)**

	SF Population	Survey Responses Received	% of Rank-MOS Population	% of Total Response Population
<b>NCO (R)</b>	<b>4,922</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>46%</b>
SGT		34	6%	3%
SSG		94	17%	8%
SFC		291	53%	24%
MSG		105	19%	9%
SGM		29	5%	2%
<b>NCO (M)</b>	<b>4,922</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>46%</b>
18B	1,053	79	8% / 14%	7%
18C	900	80	9% / 14%	7%
18D	775	101	13% / 18%	8%
18E	833	91	10% / 16%	7%
18F	452	68	15% / 12%	6%
18Z	909	134	15% / 24%	11%
<b>180A</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>9%</b>
W1		11	10%	<1%
CW2		36	33%	3%
CW3		29	27%	2%
CW4		21	19%	2%
CW5		12	11%	<1%
<b>18A</b>	<b>1,461</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>45%</b>
CPT	470	146	31% / 27%	12%
MAJ	547	188	34% / 35%	16%
LTC	294	148	50% / 27%	12%
COL	150	57	38% / 11%	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,906</b>	<b>1,201</b>		<b>17%</b>

**Figure 7. Responses by Assignment**

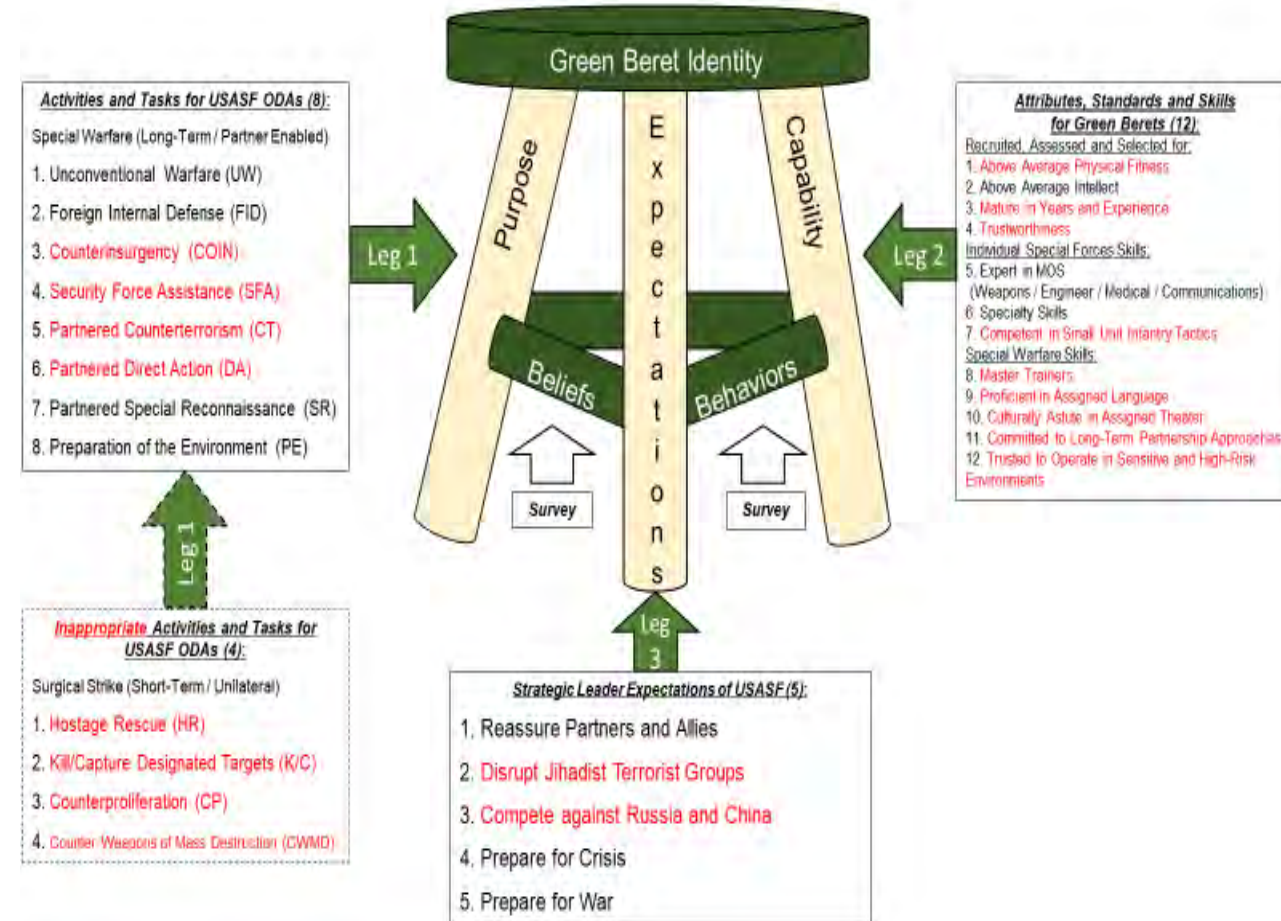


# Data Results: 15% Maximum = 19 x Archetype Misalignments

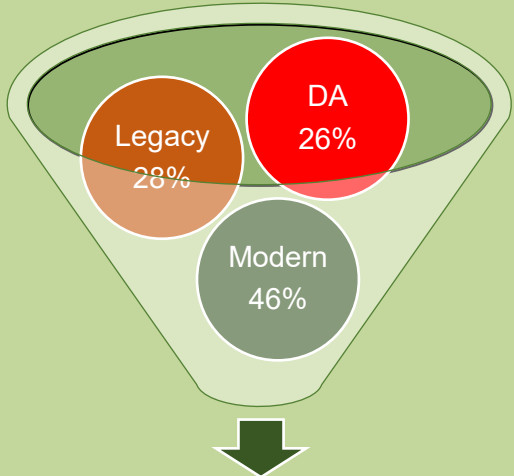
Table 7. Survey Results by 25 Archetypes

SF Criterion	Belief	Behavior	Description
<b>Individual: (Attributes-Standards-Skills)</b>			
Above Average Physical Fitness	+	-43%	Fitness lower post SFQC
Above Average Intellect	+	+	
Mature in Years & Experience	+	-27% -72%	Peers immature 5-12 Teammates immature
Trustworthiness	+	-	Qualitative responses
<b>Trained &amp; Educated in Special Forces Skills</b>			
Expert in MOS	+	+	
Competent in Specialty Skills	+	+	
Competent in SUIT	+	-50%	5-12 Teammates not competent
<b>Trained &amp; Educated in Special Warfare Skills</b>			
Master Trainer	+	-24% -53%	Not a Master Trainer Never taught or assessed
Proficient in Assigned Language	-29%	-62% -52%	Practice Try to use
Culturally Astute in Assigned Theater	+	-17% -45%	Do not maintain Assignment not aligned
Committed to Long-Term Partnership Approaches	-34%	-28%	Not committed
Trusted in Sensitive & High-Risk Environments	+	-	Qualitative responses
<b>Collective: (Competencies-Activities-Tasks)</b>			
<b>Core Competency: Special Warfare (SF)</b>			
Unconventional Warfare (UW)	-11%		Believe inappropriate: DA Identity
Foreign Internal Defense (FID)	-12%		Believe inappropriate: DA Identity
Counterinsurgency (COIN)	-23%		Believe inappropriate: DA Identity
Security Force Assistance (SFA)	-43%		Believe inappropriate: DA Identity
Partnered Counterterrorism (CT)	-36%		Believe inappropriate: Legacy Identity
Partnered Direct Action (DA)	-32%		Believe inappropriate: Legacy Identity
Partnered Special Reconnaissance (SR)	+		
Preparation of the Environment (PE)	-12%		Believe inappropriate: DA Identity
<b>Core Competency: Surgical Strike (Other ARSOF)</b>			
Hostage Rescue and Recovery (HR)	+24%		Believe appropriate: DA Identity
Kill/Capture Designated Targets (K/C)	+47%		Believe appropriate: DA Identity
Counterproliferation (CP)	+30%		Believe appropriate: DA Identity
Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD)	+28%		Believe appropriate: DA Identity
<b>Strategic Leader Missions by Priority</b>			
Reassure Allies & Partners	+		
Disrupt Jihadist Terrorist Group Threats	-16%		Believe inappropriate: Legacy Identity
Compete Against Russia & China	-67%		Believe inappropriate: Do not feel prepared
Prepare for Conflict	+		
Prepare for Crisis Response	+		

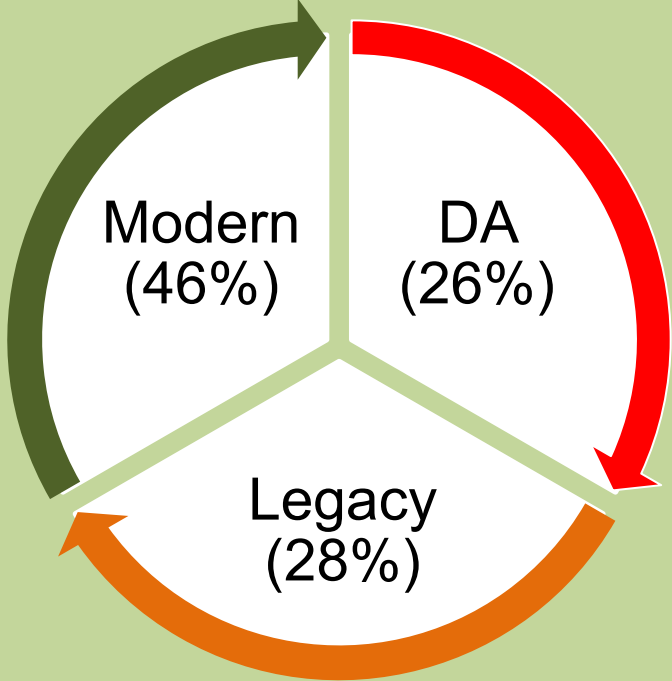
Figure 8. Archetype Misalignments



# Research Findings



19 Misalignments = Identity Crisis



# 3 x Sub-Identities

## 26% Direct Action Identity (7 of 10)

Q14-Q15-Q16 (Language)

Q23-Q35-Q38 (Unilateral)

Q24-Q36 (-Special Warfare)

Q24-Q36 (+Surgical Strike)

## 28% Legacy Identity (5 of 7)

Q24-Q36 (-Special Warfare)

Q37-Q38-Q39-Q40-Q41 (-Deter & Compete)

## 46% Modern Identity

Table 8. Survey Results by Sub-Identity (+ Aligned)

SF Criterion	Identity		
Individual: (Attributes-Standards-Skills)	DA	Legacy	Modern
<i>Recruited-Assessed-Selected For</i>			
Above Average Physical Fitness	+	+	+
Above Average Intellect	+	+	+
Mature in Years & Experience	+	+	+
Trustworthiness	+	+	+
<i>Trained &amp; Educated in Special Forces Skills</i>			
Expert in MOS	+	+	+
Competent in Specialty Skills	+	+	+
Competent in SUIT	+	+	+
<i>Trained &amp; Educated in Special Warfare Skills</i>			
Master Trainer	+	+	+
Proficient in Assigned Language	-29%	+	+
Culturally Astute in Assigned Theater	+	+	+
Committed to Long-Term Partnership Approaches	-34%	+	+
Trusted in Sensitive & High-Risk Environments	+	+	+
Collective: (Competencies-Activities-Tasks)	DA	Legacy	Modern
<i>Core Competency: Special Warfare (SF)</i>			
Unconventional Warfare (UW)	-11%	+	+
Foreign Internal Defense (FID)	-12%	+	+
Counterinsurgency (COIN)	-23%	+	+
Security Force Assistance (SFA)	-43%	+	+
Partnered Counterterrorism (CT)	+	-36%	+
Partnered Direct Action (DA)	+	-32%	+
Partnered Special Reconnaissance (SR)	+	+	+
Preparation of the Environment (PE)	-12%	+	+
<i>Core Competency: Surgical Strike (Other ARSOF)</i>			
Hostage Rescue and Recovery (HR)	+24%	+	+
Kill/Capture Designated Targets (K/C)	+47%	+	+
Counterproliferation (CP)	+30%	+	+
Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD)	+28%	+	+
Strategic Leader Missions by Priority	DA	Legacy	Modern
Reassure Allies & Partners	+	+	+
Deter Jihadist Terrorist Group Threats	+16%	-16%	+
Compete Against Russia & China	+18%	-16%	+
Prepare for Conflict	+	+	+
Prepare for Crisis Response	+	+	+

# Sub-Identity Distribution

Table 9. Sub-Identity Characteristics (Rank & Unit)

## No single rank or unit dominates a sub-identity

2% tolerance value used to measure variance between:

*Survey Population & Sub-Identity Group Size*

## Direct Action Identity

11% Higher for NCOs

5% Higher for 7<sup>th</sup> SFG (South America)

3% Lower for 3<sup>rd</sup> SFG (Afghanistan & Africa)

## Legacy Identity

21% Higher for NCOs

20% Lower for Officers

7% Higher 7<sup>th</sup> SFG (South America)

8% Lower 10<sup>th</sup> SFG (Europe)

7% Lower for 1st SFG (Asia)

Identity by Rank and Unit	Identity (2%>X>2% Tolerance)		
	Rank	DA	Legacy
<i>Total</i>	312 Total	336 Total	553 Total
<i>Non-Commissioned Officer</i>	<b>57%</b> <b>(46%)</b>	<b>67%</b> <b>(46%)</b>	
SGT / E5	6%	4%	
SSG / E6	7%	<b>14%</b> <b>(8%)</b>	
SFC / E7	<b>31%</b> <b>(24%)</b>	<b>38%</b> <b>(24%)</b>	
MSG / E8	9%	10%	
SGM / E9	4%	1%	
<i>Warrant Officer</i>	9%	8%	
W1	2%	1%	
CW2	3%	4%	
CW3	1%	2%	
CW4	1%	1%	
CW5	2%	0%	
<i>Commissioned Officer</i>	34%	<b>25%</b> <b>(45%)</b>	
CPT / O3	6%	<b>6%</b> <b>(12%)</b>	
MAJ / O4	9%	<b>10%</b> <b>(16%)</b>	
LTC / O5	15%	<b>7%</b> <b>(12%)</b>	
COL / O6	4%	<b>2%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	
	<i>Unit</i>	DA	Legacy
	1 <sup>st</sup> SFG(A)	9%	<b>4%</b> <b>(11%)</b>
	3 <sup>rd</sup> SFG(A)	<b>10%</b> <b>(13%)</b>	15%
	5 <sup>th</sup> SFG(A)	6%	9%
	7 <sup>th</sup> SFG(A)	<b>13%</b> <b>(8%)</b>	<b>12%</b> <b>(8%)</b>
	10 <sup>th</sup> SFG(A)	10%	<b>4%</b> <b>(12%)</b>
	SWCS	18%	15%
	GO / FO Staff	15%	13%
	Other	19%	<b>28%</b> <b>(15%)</b>

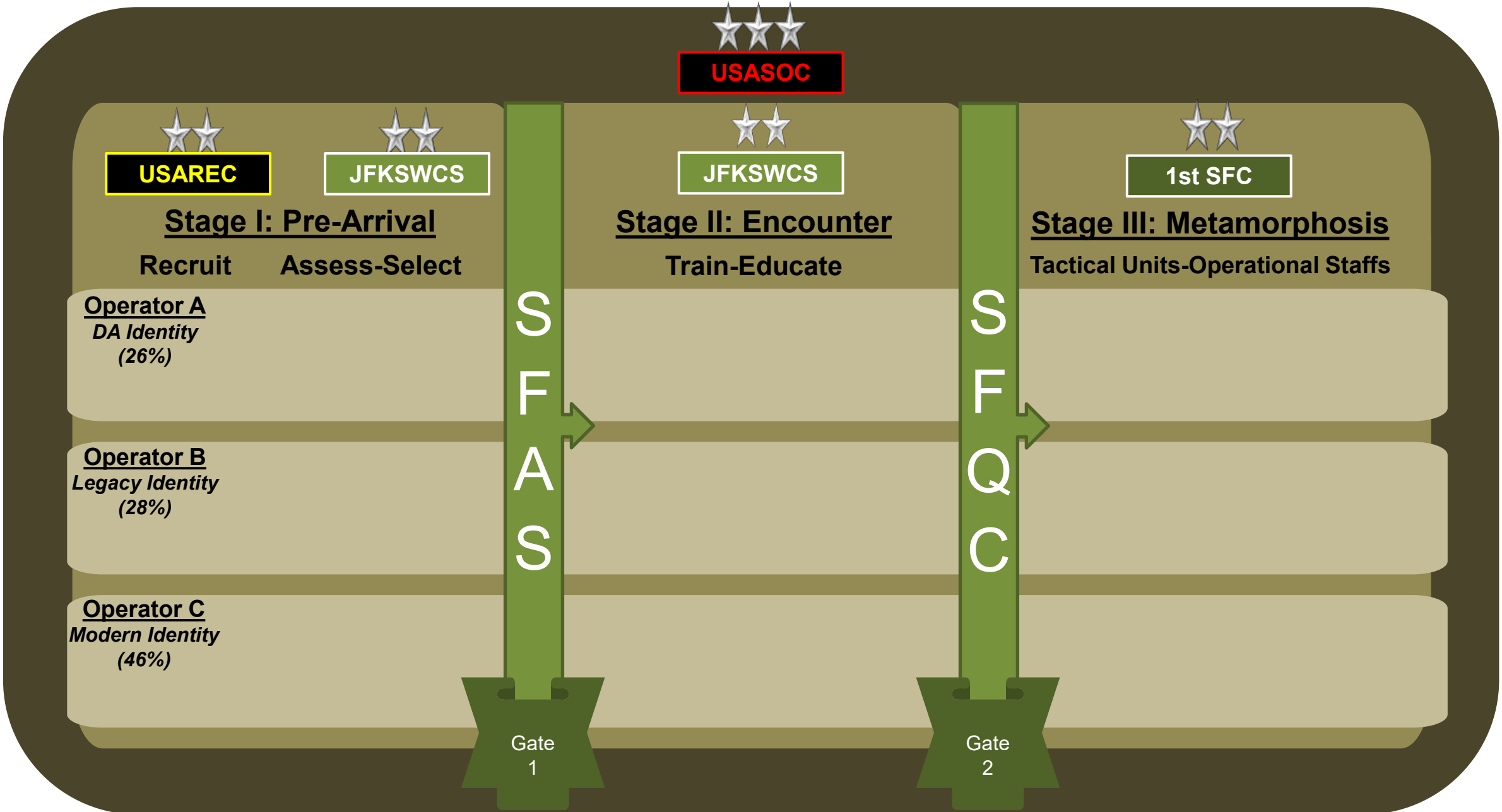
# Analysis

*I was recruited to SF with the promise of killing or capturing terrorists; my NCO assessor at selection described our purpose as partnership; I participated in the ROBIN SAGE UW Exercise; upon arrival at my SFODA, my Team Sergeant focused on DA, Team Leader on UW, Company Commander on competition with China and Russia (whatever that means), and my Battalion Commander seemed most concerned with language currency. “Who am I supposed to be?”*

—Notes from Interview with Departing Green Beret

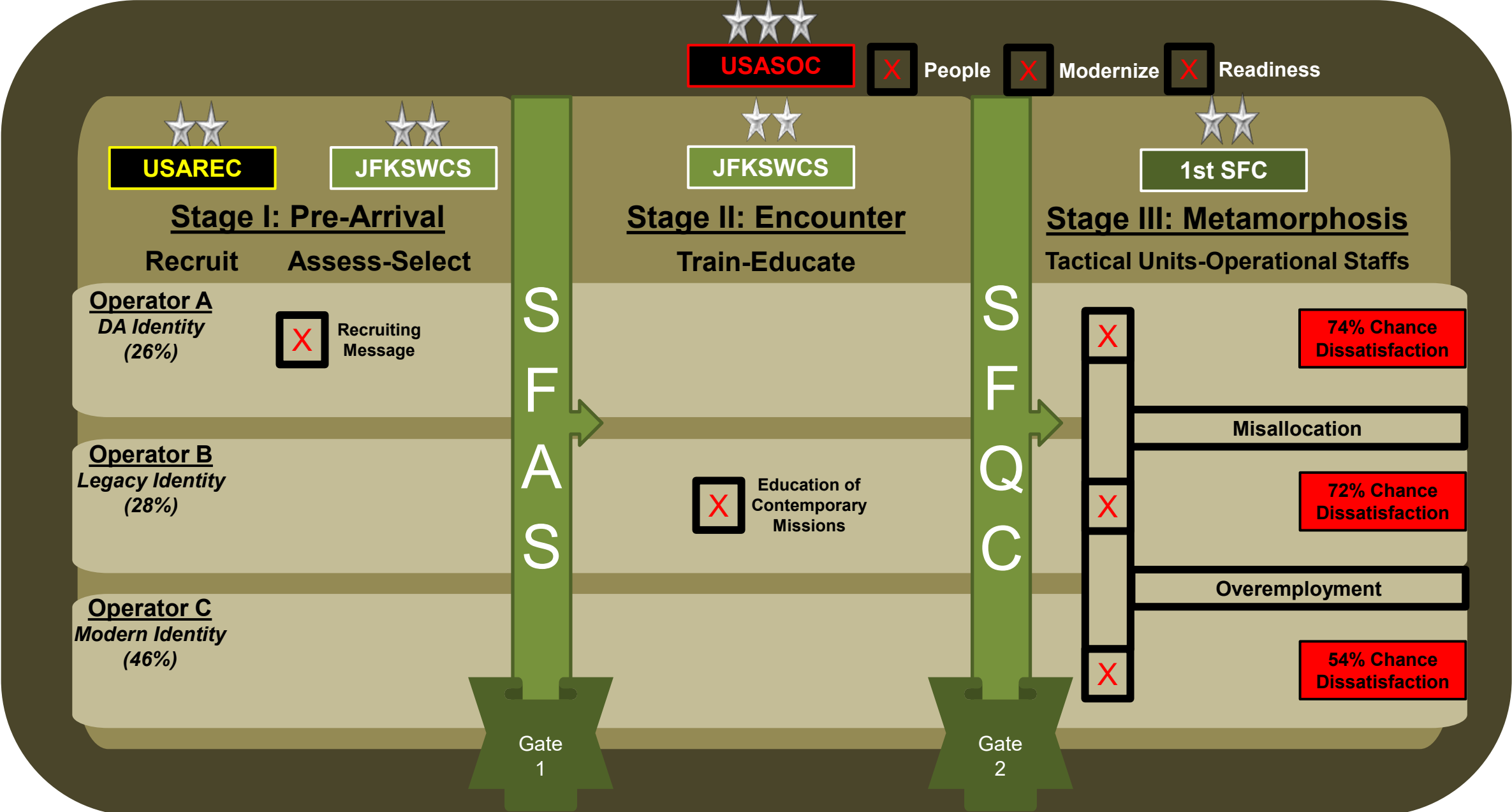


# SF Socialization Model





# SF Socialization Model



# Recommendations



**Define the Profession in a new Doctrinal Document as a centering mechanism for all USASF components:**

***ADP 1-18: Special Forces Profession***



**Likely similar identity crisis issues exist within other cohorts of USSOCOM and impacts their cultures and organizations' ethics:**

**Navy SEALs & MARSOC Raiders**