

South America in Competition Conference

Description

Carahsoft HQ, Falls Church, VA â?? July 16 & 17 2025

The **Irregular Warfare Initiative (IWI)** and the **Special Operations Association of America (SOAA)** are proud to present the **South America in Competition Conference on July 16th and July 17th, 2025**. Bringing together ~200 leaders from government, academia, private industry, and media, the event will feature keynote speakers and expert panels exploring the regionâ??s role in strategic competition. Topics will include the influence of alliances and non-state actors, threats to the U.S. homeland and emerging technologies, the SOFâ??Spaceâ??Cyber triad, critical minerals and supply chain resilience, economic statecraft and democratic backsliding, and the evolving landscape of information operations and open-source intelligence.

This conference aims to foster interagency collaboration across the Departments of Defense, State, Treasury, Commerce, Congress, and private sector leaders. Government and industry participants will have dedicated networking opportunities, and attendees will experience live demonstrations of cutting-edge technologies by sponsors.

The event will culminate in an invitation-only South America-focused crisis simulation, offering select participants a unique opportunity to model integrated responses to adversarial escalation and build cross-sector relationships critical to advancing U.S. objectives in the Western Hemisphere.

Who Should Attend:

- Journalists and media professionals covering defense, geopolitics, and economic statecraft
- U.S. government officials and interagency professionals involved in national security and policy
- Senior military and defense leaders
- Industry stakeholders across defense, finance, and critical infrastructure sectors
- Academic researchers and scholars focused on security, strategy, and international affairs

[Register Here](#)

ABOUT US

The **Irregular Warfare Initiative (IWI)** is a non-profit organization working to bridge the gap between scholars, practitioners, and policymakers engaged in the study and practice of irregular warfare. Through a mix of publications, podcasts, and events, IWI fosters dialogue on gray zone conflict, information warfare, proxy competition, and other forms of conflict that fall below the threshold of conventional war. By connecting academic research with operational insights, IWI helps prepare today's thought leaders for the complex challenges of the modern national security environment and strategic competition.

The **Special Operations Association of America (SOAA)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for the interests of the U.S. special operations community. SOAA works to ensure that current and former special operations personnel receive the support, resources, and recognition they have earned. The organization also engages directly with Congress, the Department of Defense, and other stakeholders on national security issues that affect the special operations enterprise. SOAA promotes public understanding of special operations through strategic communications, veteran engagement, and partnerships with industry and academia.

SPEAKERS

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REAR ADMIRAL MARK A. SCHAFER

Commander, Special Operations Command â?? South

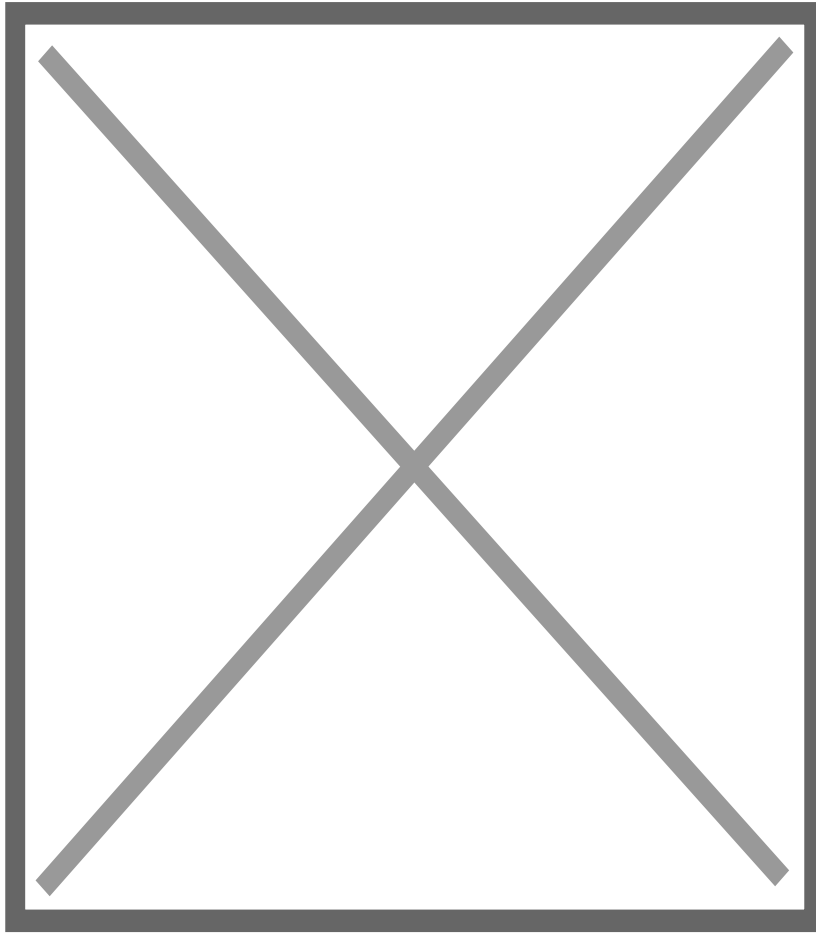
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MAJ. GEN. (RET) LINDER

Former Chief of Staff at U.S. Special Operations Command

[READ BIO](#)



THERESA WHELAN

Director for Defense Intelligence Collections and Special Programs

[**READ BIO**](#)

AGENDA

July 16th

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| 0730-0830 | Registration and Coffee |
| 0830-0840 | Welcome and Overview |
| 0840-0900 | â?? Umar Ahmed Badami, Conference Director
Opening Remarks |
| 0840-0900 | â?? Craig Abod, CEO, Carahsoft |
| 0900-0920 | â?? Senior Leadership, Irregular Warfare Initiative
â?? Senior Leadership, Special Operations Association of America |
| 0900-0920 | Keynote Address: RADM Mark Schafer on the Importance of South America in Competition |
| 0930-1020 | Panel Discussion: Emerging Technologies and Threats to the Homeland
Moderator: TBA
Panelists:
â?? Dr. Evan Ellis, Research Professor, U.S. Army War College
â?? Lino Miani, Managing Director, Aero-Eye |
| 1030-1120 | Panel Discussion: Economic Warfare and Supply Chains
Moderator: Dr. Erin McFee, President, Corioli Institute
Panelists:
â?? Leland Lazarus, Term Member, Council on Foreign Relations
â?? Catherine Woods, Associate Managing Director, Institute for Financial Integrity
â?? Hunter Stires, Maritime Strategist to the Secretary of the Navy |
| 1130-1230 | Fireside Chat with Maj Gen James Linder and Doug Livermore |
| 1230-1320 | Catered Lunch |
| 1320-1420 | Roundtable Discussion: Operations-Intel Fusion |

- 1430-1520 Panel Discussion: SOF-Space-Cyber Triad
Moderator: Guido Torres, Executive Director, Irregular Warfare Initiative
Panelists:
â?? Rear Adm. (ret.) Robert Wright, United States Space Command
â?? Dr. Doug Kraft, National Security Agency
- 1530-1620 Panel Discussion: Adversary Networks and Open-Source Intelligence
Moderator: David Cook, Executive Director, Special Operations Association of America
Panelists:
â?? Dr. Ryan Berg, Director of the Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies
- 1620-1640 Reflections and Look Ahead
â?? Umar Ahmed Badami, Conference Director
- 1700-1800 Technology Demos and Social Hour

July 17th

- 0730-0800 Registration and Coffee
Welcome
- 0800-0820 â?? Umar Ahmed Badami, Head of Wargaming, Irregular Warfare Initiative
â?? Guido Torres, Executive Director, Irregular Warfare Initiative
- 0830-0900 Keynote (DOD)
- 0900-0930 Crisis Simulation Briefing
-Umar Ahmed Badami, Head of Wargaming, Irregular Warfare Initiative
- 0930-1200 Crisis Simulation
- 1200-1300 Working Lunch
- 1300-1600 Crisis Simulation
Debriefing and Closing Remarks
- 1600-1700 â?? Umar Ahmed Badami, Head of Wargaming, Irregular Warfare Initiative
â?? Guido Torres, Executive Director, Irregular Warfare Initiative
- 1700-1800 Social Hour

SPONSORS

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DIRECTIONS

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Date Created
2025/06/07