

## SOF and Influence Activities

### Description

Episode 116 of the Irregular Warfare Podcast explores the role of Special Operations Forces (SOF) in influence activities, featuring insights from Professor Martijn Kitson and Major General Ron Smits. The guests discuss the value proposition of SOF in influence operations, emphasizing their ability to integrate various capabilities for maximum effect. They delve into the importance of understanding local environments, the challenges of conducting influence campaigns across different cultural and legal contexts, and the evolving role of European SOF in global operations. The conversation highlights the need for specialized training, diverse skill sets within SOF units, and the importance of adapting to new forms of warfare, including resistance operations in highly urbanized and cyber environments. The episode provides valuable perspectives on the future of SOF and their critical role in addressing complex security challenges in the 21st century.

[Martijn Kitzen](#) is a Professor and the Chair of Irregular Warfare and Special Operations, Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) in the Netherlands, and formerly served in the Royal Netherlands Army and Air Force. He Co-Edited *The Conduct of War in the 21st Century* (Routledge, 2021), and has written dozens of articles on coalition operations, counterinsurgency, and asymmetric conflict, to include serving as academic advisor for the revision of NATO's AJP 3.4.4 (Counterinsurgency).

Major General Ron Smits was the Commander of Netherlands Special Operations Command. Notable positions include Head of the Manoeuvre Division within the Directorate of Operational Policy, Requirements and Plans; Chief of Staff with 43rd Mechanised Brigade; Commander of Training Command in Ahmersoort; Commander of 11th Air Mobile Brigade; and Special Operations Commander from 2021 to 2024.

[Adam Darnley-Stuart](#) and [Don Edwards](#) are the hosts for this episode. Please reach out to [Ben](#) and [Matt](#) with any questions about this episode or the Irregular Warfare Podcast.

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