

## BOOK REVIEW

### Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)

Fiala OC. *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)*. MacDill Air Force Base, FL: The Joint Special Operations University Press; April 2020. 283 pages, softback. ISBN 978-1-941715-43-7.

Review by COL (Ret) Warner "Rocky" D. Farr, MD, MPH

This document, which I shall call "the ROC," started its life as an academic treatise at Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) in 2014. SOCEUR was at this time commanded by Major General (MG) Mike Repass, an US Army Special Forces officer who began it while later SOCEUR commanders and staffs aided by other members of the wider European special operations community (not just NATO members) continued the effort forward.

After a series of meetings, the doctrine for possible unconventional warfare in Eastern Europe was codified. Actions of a resurgently aggressive Russia began to make this effort more of a priority inside the European Special Operations community, including some non-NATO, nonmember nations. The ROC started becoming a concept that would aid Northern and Eastern European countries in their efforts to deter and resist any Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

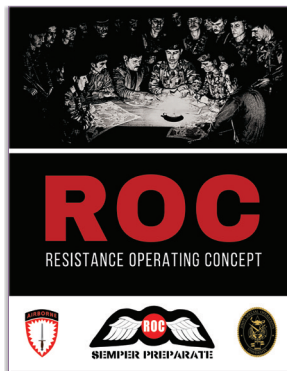
This led to the first book, titled *Resistance Operating Concept*.<sup>1</sup> The chief editor was Otto C. Fiala of SOCEUR, and the book was printed and distributed in limited copies in late 2019. December of 2019 saw the Swedish Defense University and SOCEUR jointly announce the finished product. It received acclaim in the open source SOF press.<sup>2</sup> A new printing of *Resistance Operating Concept* has just been done by the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Press at MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida. This printing is a collaborative work between SOCEUR and JSOU. A digital version of the newest book (PDF) is available free online (see reference 1).

Not only is this product a compendium of Unconventional Warfare tactics and techniques, but there also is a large amount of historical and contemporary unconventional warfare topics. Major General Kirk Smith supplied the foreword – a former commander of SOCEUR and BG Anders Lofberg, the commander of the Swedish Special Operations Command also supplied a foreword. The four main chapters are (1) Introduction, (2) Resilience as a Foundation for Resistance, (3) Resistance, and (4) Interagency Planning and Preparation. Those chapters by themselves would make a great how to book on GUERRILLA WARFARE, but there is more.

There are an additional 10 appendices on topics such as legal considerations, methods of nonviolent resistance, Russian hybrid warfare tactics, Second World War case studies, Cold War resistance case studies, case studies lessons learned, assessing resilience, population interaction with a foreign occupier, government interagency planning, and more. The glossary supplies terms, definitions, abbreviation, and acronyms. The book is very well documented with 624 endnotes. I was particularly pleased to find discussions of post-World War II unconventional war plans by NATO in occupied Western Europe, an area and a plan not well documented in the literature. Also covered are the plans in Poland and eastern Europe to include Russia. Also mentioned is the elusive CIA plan called "Operation Gladio."

The only area of guerilla warfare activity not covered in the book is the American Special Forces plans for Berlin, featuring "Detachment A." This book is one of the rare texts on unconventional warfare that covers medicine, to include an underground hospital diagram.

The Resistance Operating Concept is being used by European SOF in both academic and field training environs. In collaboration with SOCEUR and Latvian special operations forces, the Joint Special Operations University conducted a National Resistance Course in Riga, Latvia, during December 2019.



The *Resistance Operating Concept* is the capstone publication to be used by European SOF and US SOF for many years to come. It will certainly be integrated into the curriculum of SOF centric courses and schools. It is also a powerful addition to any military professional's library.

Available electronically by free download: *Resistance Operating Concept*, JSOU Press, 2020, [https://jsou.libguides.com/ld.php?content\\_id=54216464](https://jsou.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=54216464)

#### References

1. Fiala, Otto, Ed. *Resistance Operating Concept*, SOCEUR and Swedish Defense University, 2019, 251 pages. PDF Document Online at Digitala Vetenskapliga Arkivet. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1392106/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
2. "SOCEUR and Resistance Operating Concept", by John Friberg, *SOF News*, July 19, 2019. <https://sof.news/uw/resistance-operating-concept/>

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