

THE JOINT UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE TASK FORCE EXECUTE ORDER (AKA THE JUNC WTF?)

On September 30, 2009—[according to a big new story from Mark Mazzetti](#)—David Petraeus signed a directive approving the deployment of small special operations teams to go into friendly (Saudi Arabia and Yemen) and unfriendly (Iran and Somalia) countries to collect intelligence.

Interestingly, Mazzetti makes it clear that he's not covering this because CIA's pissed about it (which sometimes appears to be the case for his reporting).

While the C.I.A. and the Pentagon have often been at odds over expansion of clandestine military activity, most recently over intelligence gathering by Pentagon contractors in Pakistan and Afghanistan, there does not appear to have been a significant dispute over the September order.

In fact, it appears DOD issued the directive because CIA wouldn't do whatever JSOC is now doing: the directive...

calls for clandestine activities that "cannot or will not be accomplished" by conventional military operations or "interagency activities," a reference to American spy agencies.

One would hope that Congress gets pissed about this, though. Mazzetti quotes the document using the code—"prepare the environment"—that Cheney used for JSOC activities that he claimed did not need to be briefed to the Intelligence Committees, which (Mazzetti lays out implicitly)

is being claimed here, too.

Unlike covert actions undertaken by the C.I.A., such clandestine activity does not require the president's approval or regular reports to Congress, although Pentagon officials have said that any significant ventures are cleared through the National Security Council.

[Read the whole thing.](#)

In probably unrelated news, [Esquire is previewing a story](#) that Eric Massa claims Dick Cheney and Petraeus have met several times about the latter running for President—what Massa rather ludicrously (at least given the details thus far) calls “treason” or a “coup.”

But frankly, I believe Obama would embrace that “preparing the environment” all by himself if it meant further consolidation of power in the White House.

And in other probably unrelated news, Ray McGovern [says](#) one big reason Dennis Blair got fired is because he wasn't amenable to a getting tough on Iran (Iran does feature prominently in Mazzetti's story).