



# Zarqawi's Sfumato: Operational Art in Irregular Warfare (Defense)

*U.S. Army Command and General Staff College*

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U.S. military doctrine defines operational art within the domain of conventional warfare. This book evolves the conventional understanding of operational art into the domain of irregular warfare. Al Qaeda in Iraq, as led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, orchestrated seemingly disjointed attacks against random targets from 2004 to 2006. This book determines that Zarqawi employed a unique form of operational art through deliberately planned and synchronized attacks to achieve a specific aim. The book derives the irregular warfare operational art definition and appropriate characteristics from analysis of authoritative authors' works and published military doctrine on conventional operational art. The derived characteristics are used to evaluate the strategic, operational, and tactical influences of Zarqawi's organization, plans, and tactics. This examination illustrates how the leader of a terrorist organization sought to synchronize operations in time, space, and purpose to combat a superior force and achieve a strategic aim. The book concludes Zarqawi did employ a form of operational art against U.S., Coalition, Iraqi Security Forces, and the Iraqi population from 2004 to 2006.

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