

Use of Special Operations Forces in United Nations Missions: a Method to Resolve Complexity

A Monograph

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Abstract

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The United Nations (UN) uses Special Operations Forces (SOF) in peace operations. This monograph seeks to explain the paradox of employing highly lethal forces in the pursuit of global peace. The research uses the frameworks of complexity and systems theories. Additionally, this paper considers three case studies: the UN intervention in Somalia, the UN intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the UN intervention in Mali. The paper concludes that peace operations have reached a degree of complexity in which SOF prove more effective than conventional peacekeeping forces. However, SOF cannot resolve peace operations alone. Successful use of SOF in peace operations requires that UN policy makers and planners integrate SOF into the policies and strategies of UN peace operations. Additionally, the UN must create and adjust the internal concepts, doctrine, and force structure for employing SOF in UN missions.

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Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	iv
Acronyms	vii
Introduction	1
Literature Review	4
Systems Theory and Special Operations.....	4
The Evolution of Peace Operations	7
Special Operations and Special Operations Forces.....	12
Methodology	21
Analysis.....	24
Special Operations Forces in the United Nations Intervention in Somalia.....	24
Special Operations Forces in the UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.....	33
Special Operations Forces Activities during the United Nations Intervention in Mali.....	41
Conclusion.....	50
Bibliography	53

Acronyms

EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FARDC	Congolese Armed Forces
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SEAL	Sea, Earth, Air, Land
SOCAFRICA	Special Operations Command Africa
SOF	Special Operations Forces
UN	United Nations
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to introduce the reader in the context of this research, define the research questions and the hypothesis. Additionally, it explains what the significance of the research is and how it links to the concept of operational art. Finally, this section describes the structure of the study and identifies the limitations and delimitations that framed the research.

The use of Special Operations Forces (SOF) in the United Nations (UN) peace operations became a frequent occurrence especially after the end of the Cold War. SOF supported UN missions in one way or another during the majority of UN interventions after 1990. However, it looks and sounds unusual that an organization that champions peace initiatives around the world makes use of highly lethal forces to achieve its ends. Considering this dilemma, several important questions come to mind.

The first and most important question is why does the United Nations use Special Operations Forces in the pursuit of global peace? This is the primary research question of the monograph. After a preliminary review of literature about current peace operations and recent Special Operations, I considered that the questions that would help answer the primary research question are the following: What are the characteristics of current UN peace operations? What are the characteristics of Special Operations and Special Operations Forces? Finally, what is a potential framework or theory that explains the usefulness of Special Operations Forces for peace operations?

The working hypothesis for this research directly addresses the research questions. The United Nations uses SOF in peace operations because current operations involving UN peacekeepers reached a degree of complexity in which SOF are more effective than the conventional peacekeeping forces. Overall, the research from this study validated the hypothesis with several caveats that I discuss in the conclusion section of the monograph.

So what is the significance of this research? Why should a military planner in a UN, SOF, or Joint Headquarters care? Moreover, why should a UN civilian or state policy-maker care? The contemporary significance of this research question lays in identifying and explaining the causes of the importance of SOF for current and future peace operations. The research is aimed at expanding the theoretical and conceptual foundations to better understand how SOF can contribute to the success of UN peace operations and how to improve this amalgamation in the future.

Additionally, the research is important because in the end, it is all about understanding and applying operational art. Hypothetically speaking, the military planner, the UN Force Commander in a theater of operations, and the UN policy-maker ultimately has to array the tactical actions in time, space, and purpose to achieve the strategic objectives.¹ So knowing how SOF, which usually conducts tactical actions, could contribute to the achievement of the strategic ends of a peace operation presumably would be beneficial for all three parties mentioned above.

A little bit on the structure of the monograph is appropriate here. The paper has five sections that mirror the classic framework of a thesis: introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis, and conclusion. The literature review describes the fundamentals of systems theory, the characteristics of peace operations, the characteristics of Special Operations and examples of SOF contribution to UN peace operations. The methodology defines how the paper uses systems theory as a theoretical model to explain how SOF contributes to peace operations. The analysis portion of the monograph examines three case studies that illustrate how the United Nations used SOF in three UN missions: the UN Mission in Somalia (United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM), Unified Task Force (UNITAF), and UNOSOM II, 1992 to

¹ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 2011), 1-2.

1995), the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO, 1999 to present), and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA, 2013 to present). Finally, the last section summarizes the findings of the paper, provides conclusions, analyzes the implications, and offers recommendations for further research.

The primary sources for conducting the research constituted relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, reports of SOF operations in UNOSOM, MONUSCO and MINUSMA, SOF and UN doctrinal manuals. The secondary sources included books and publications on systems theory, evolution of peace and Special Operations, and relevant literature on the three case studies. Finally, the tertiary sources comprised magazines, journals, and publications for the general public on the subject of UN and SOF operations.

Several limitations and delimitations framed the monograph. First, the monograph did not make use of any classified sources. The analysis considered three case studies oriented on a single geographical area, the African continent. One could ask why the African continent? The majority of UN interventions in the last two decades occurred in Africa. Moreover, Africa remains a hot spot on the planet for sources of instability and crisis. Finally, the research focused on analyzing three sets of SOF activities while engaged in UN peace operations: direct actions, special reconnaissance, and military assistance. This contributed to finishing the research in the indicated period and did not allow the research to exceed the expected length.

This section described the context and important specificities of this paper. It identified the research questions, the hypothesis, and the significance of it. Additionally, it established the link between the topic of the study and the concept of operational art, described the structure, limitations and delimitations of the study. The next section reviews the relevant literature on systems thinking, peace operations, SOF and their contribution to peace operations.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of the relevant literature that describes the systems theory, peace operations, and Special Operations. The section has three parts. The first part gives an overview of systems theory. Additionally, it emphasizes that Special Operations and Special Operations Forces are complex systems. The second part provides the definition, specifics, and the evolution of peace operations. Finally, the third part defines Special Operations, describes the SOF, their strengths, and weaknesses. It also emphasizes the characteristics that make SOF suitable for peace operations.

Systems Theory and Special Operations

The Hungarian scientist Ludwig von Bertalanffy was the person who first formulated the concept of the system. His main contribution was the establishment of the interdisciplinary approach to systems. According to Bertalanffy, a system is a “complex of interacting elements” and represents “an interrelation of a great number of variables,” which occur in the fields of politics, economics, military, commerce, etc.² Neil E. Harrison in his book *Complexity in World Politics*, asserted that “a system is a portion of universe within a defined boundary outside of which lies an environment.”³ Additionally, Neil emphasized that there are two types of systems: simple and complex.

The simple systems are static, have centralized decision-making, and are closed systems. A good example of a closed system is an automobile. Its parts work for the same goal under a

² Simon Naveh, *In the Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000), 3-4.

³ Neil E. Harrison, ed., “*Complexity in World Politics: Concepts and Methods of a New Paradigm*” (New York: New York Press, 2006), 2.

centralized control.⁴ According to John Boyd, simple systems are also linear systems, which display two mathematical characteristics. The first is proportionality. The second is that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. As such, simple systems have reasonably predictable outcomes.⁵ Jamshid Gharajedaghi, in his book *Systems Thinking*, calls them “mindless systems.” These systems function reactively and operate effectively only if the environment does not change.⁶

On the other hand, complex systems are dynamic, dissipative, and open. Complex systems have decentralized decision-making, many feedback loops, and surprising outcomes. The units in a complex system have the ability to choose how to behave, thus they are called “agents.” Additionally, a common characteristic of complex systems is that the whole does not equal the sum of the parts. That is, their properties are emergent, the interaction of the individual units creates complex systems. Examples of complex systems are living organisms, immune systems, societies, states, markets, etc.⁷

A particular characteristic of a complex system is openness. That is, one can understand complex systems only in the context of their environment.⁸ Boyd asserted that the environment feeds complex systems with energy. When a complex system receives a significant amount of energy it becomes unstable and moves from the state of equilibrium closer to the edge of chaos. Boyd refers to it as “the crisis point of the system.” At this point, the system bifurcates. It moves to a greater complexity and starts displaying a greater system’s order. Thus, the system finds a

⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵ France P. B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 65-66.

⁶ Jamshid Garajedaghi, *Systems Thinking, Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture*, 2nd ed. (San Diego, CA: Elsevier, 2006), 10-11.

⁷ Harrison, *Complexity in World Politics*, 3-7.

⁸ Garajedaghi, *Systems Thinking, Managing Chaos and Complexity*, 30.

new area of stability and has a higher degree of adaptability. Systems theory refers to them as Complex Adaptive Systems. One must keep in mind however, that sometimes a significant perturbation may lead to too much bifurcation and disintegration of the system.⁹

According to Stuart Kauffman, one of the main characteristics of Complex Adaptive Systems is fitness. That is, the capacity of the system to cope with challenges both internal and external.¹⁰ Boyd asserted that Complex Adaptive Systems are proactive and can anticipate the future. They are able to constantly revise and rearrange their building blocks, thus building flexibility. However, the most important aspect Complex Adaptive Systems exhibit is they resist perturbation or invasion by other systems.¹¹

As Bertalanffy mentioned in 1954, systems thinking is an interdisciplinary theory. As such, it is perfectly applicable to the military domain. In fact, systems' thinking is an important tool that military organizations use to solve wicked problems. The Soviet theorists Tuchacevskii and Svechin in 1920 to 1930 used systems theory to develop the Soviet operational art and the concept of deep operation.¹² Boyd used it to analyze operations at the tactical and strategic levels.¹³ Finally, Harrison used systems thinking to tackle the issue of conflict resolution.¹⁴ Therefore, it is appropriate for this research to use systems theory as a framework to study the interaction between peace operations and SOF.

⁹ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 91-92.

¹⁰ Stuart Kauffman, *At Home of the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 224-225.

¹¹ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 97.

¹² Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence*, 6-10.

¹³ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 100-101.

¹⁴ Harrison, *Complexity in World Politics*. 55-57.

Consequently, if one approaches peace operations and SOF from the perspective of systems theory one can identify that both of them have the characteristics of complex systems. They are dynamic, non-linear, and open systems, which interact on a large scale with the external environment. Therefore, in theory, if one would fuse these two systems, this could create an emergent Complex Adaptive System. At the same time, this fusion could also lead to a “disintegration”¹⁵ of both, that is the failure of SOF to make a positive impact on peace operations. A detailed discussion of this approach will follow in the next chapter of the research, which discusses the methodology. The next two sections describe peace operations and SOF. They also make clear why peace operations and SOF deserve to be treated as complex systems.

The Evolution of Peace Operations

The definition of peace operations is broad. According to US doctrine, the peace operations refer to crisis actions, or limited contingency operations that aim to redress the peace and create conditions for successful reconciliation, and rebuild transition to a legitimate government. Normally, the United Nations would mandate peace operations, however, countries can also conduct them in coalitions or unilaterally. Additionally, peace operations may consist either of civilian or military personnel. However, most peace operations involve both.¹⁶

The Henry L. Stimson Center, which is a non-profit think tank focusing on global security challenges, concluded that peace operations comprise two elements: peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The center asserted that the conduct of peacekeeping operations is the prerogative of military forces and the focus is on the separation of belligerent forces. At the same time, the

¹⁵ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 92.

¹⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.3, *Peace Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 2012), viii-xi.

general concept of peace operations is more generic and requires a variety of professional experts including police forces, relief workers, development advisers, election monitors, etc.¹⁷

In 2000, the Brahimi report outlined three principal elements of UN peace operations. The first element is conflict prevention and peacemaking, which uses diplomacy and mediation to address conflicts. The second element is peacekeeping, which evolved and includes not just the military component but also a mix of civilian personnel working together to keep the peace. The third element is peacebuilding, which focus on reconciliation, reintegration, and rule of law.¹⁸

The UN Capstone Doctrine 2008 *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* identifies peace activities consisting of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding. However, the document does not mention these activities specifically as peace operations.¹⁹ Instead, an earlier document, the *Handbook on UN Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations* published in 2003, uses the term Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations interchangeably with the term peace operations.²⁰

Peace operations have several common elements. An internationally brokered agreement serves as the basis for conducting peace operations. Normally, the UN Security Council mandates

¹⁷ Nigel D. White “Towards Integrated Peace Operations: The Evolution of Peacekeeping and Coalitions of the Willing,” in *International Military Missions and Military Law*, ed. Marco Odello and Ryszard Piotrowicz (Boston, MA: Martinus Nijhoff, 2011), 11.

¹⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹⁹ United Nations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York: United Nations, 2008), 17-18, accessed September 27, 2014, http://pbpu.unlb.org/pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf.

²⁰ United Nations, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: United Nations, 2003), 1, accessed September 27, 2014, <http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/library/Handbook%20on%20UN%20PKOs.pdf>.

the operations. Peace operations do not only observe the status quo, but also manage the transitions. They develop themselves around three functions: peacekeeping, development, and humanitarian assistance. Finally, there is no set template for such operations, and the rule of thumb is that “form must follow function.”²¹

The evolution of UN peace operations is a continuous process, which started as early as the creation of UN organization. Since then, the operations evolved from traditional peacekeeping operations, to multidimensional peacekeeping operations, to contemporary integrated peace operations. This evolution represents the convergence of two different concepts: peacekeeping, based on principles of consent, non-intervention and non-aggression; and peace enforcement, based on military and political coercion.²²

During the Cold War, the United Nations conducted mainly traditional peacekeeping operations. The three virtues of peacekeeping are consent, impartiality, and restrictions on the use of force. Traditional peacekeeping focused mainly on monitoring cease-fire agreements, and separation of belligerents based on consent, and cooperation. The United Nations used traditional peacekeeping to solve inter-state disputes.²³

By the end of the Cold War, military conflicts became inherently intra-state conflicts. This rendered traditional peacekeeping methods ineffective. The conflicts occurred mainly in weak or failed states, which required more than just a military force to reconstitute and function. As such, the United Nations adopted the term multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Besides

²¹ White, *Towards Integrated Peace Operations*, 17.

²² Ibid., 1-2.

²³ Ibid., 7.

the military forces, the operations included also civilian personnel and agencies to facilitate the peacebuilding process.²⁴

The results of ineffective peacekeeping in Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia (1995), which resulted in genocide constituted the basis for the revision of the peacekeeping methods. The Panel of UN Peace Operations expressed concerns about the effectiveness of peacekeeping.

Multidimensional peacekeeping needed to implement peace enforcement methods to coerce the “spoilers,” factions that saw UN peacekeeping operations as a threat to their existence. As a result, multidimensional peacekeeping evolved into integrated peace operations that include elements of peacemaking, peacebuilding, peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peace building.²⁵

The characteristics of peace operations are very diverse. They depend on the origins of the conflict, geographical area, ethnical composition of the population, cultural background, history and the dynamics of the conflict itself. These factors often determine the level of complexity of peace operations in progress.

Peter Andreas discusses the 1992 to 1995 siege of Sarajevo, the longest siege in modern history. The author emphasized not only the siege from a military standpoint, but also the unintended consequences of the siege, which created a huge black market activity in the area. Moreover, the criminal activities involved civilian and peacekeeping personnel operating in Bosnia under the UN mandate. This conglomeration of peace activities, smuggling, sex trafficking, ethnical cleansing, political corruption, and the activities of the hostile factions made

²⁴ Ibid., 8.

²⁵ Ibid., 11.

the mission of the United Nations Protection Force extremely complex. It became completely different from a traditional peacekeeping mission.²⁶

Ethnic cleansing and genocide were the main characteristics of the conflict in Rwanda. The political struggle for power between Tutsi and Hutu tribes resulted in a genocide between April and July of 1994. The conflict left approximately 800,000 Tutsis killed in a period of one hundred days. Additionally the country had two million refugees, an empty treasury and a completely destroyed infrastructure. This made Rwanda the poorest country in the world. Military personnel of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda were not capable of preventing the genocide due to the lack of personnel, equipment, and training. However, the biggest problem for the peacekeepers was the mandate of the mission, which forbade them to take any action to prevent the genocide.²⁷

Humanitarian crisis because of prolonged conflicts between factions, inefficient governance, or natural disasters is another factor that is common to peace operations. In 1992, Somalia became a failed state. Deficient governance led to a humanitarian crisis that left hundreds of thousands dead, and 1.5 million people were on the verge of starvation. In December 1992, the United States volunteered to lead the UN mandated UNITAF to provide humanitarian relief to Somalia. The mission ultimately transitioned into UN Operation in Somalia II, designed to deal with human rights violations.²⁸

²⁶ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Second siege of Sarajevo* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), ix-xi.

²⁷ Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 522-523.

²⁸ Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire: The US Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008), xv-xvi.

One can assert that complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty are the primary characteristics of peace operations. Peace operations occur in a highly volatile environment and are politically sensitive.²⁹ The characteristics of peace operations often conceal the political end state, thus making military operations extremely difficult. Factors that condition these characteristics are predominantly internal conflicts, non-functional borders, the lack of defined front lines, non-state actors, organized crime, failed governance, insufficient consent and partial ceasefire agreements, mass atrocities, and human rights violations.³⁰

Looking at the description of peace operations, it is evident that they meet all the criteria to constitute complex systems. The factors enumerated in the previous paragraph constitute the agents of the system. Each of the agents can influence and throw off balance the system. At the same time, the influence of one agent from outside may cause significant modifications to the whole system.

This section discussed the evolution and characteristics of the peace operations. It also emphasized that peace operations constitute complex systems. The next section defines the Special Operations, discusses their characteristics, and describes the nature of the Special Operations Forces.

Special Operations and Special Operations Forces

This section has its emphasis on Special Operations and SOF. First, the section defines the term Special Operations and looks at their characteristics using several existing theories and doctrinal definitions. Subsequently, it provides an overview of SOF describing their strengths and

²⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-07.3, I-10.

³⁰ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *Civil Affairs Handbook* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 13-19, accessed October 8, 2014, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/civilhandbook/Civil_Affairs_Handbook.pdf.

weaknesses. Finally, the section emphasizes the historical and existing interrelation between SOF and peace operations.

In order to discuss SOF one must first have a good understanding of the nature of Special Operations. Very often Special Operations are mired in mystery either due to their spectacular success, or due to spectacular failure. According to James D. Kiras the primary reason why people were not able to understand special operations is definitional in nature.³¹ So what is so important about the definition of Special Operations? Further, what makes Special Operations Forces—special?

Admiral William H. McRaven the former commander of the US Special Operations Command in his book *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* asserted that “a Special Operation is conducted by forces specially trained, equipped and supported for a specific target whose destruction, elimination or rescue, is a political or military imperative.” McRaven also considered that Special Operations are unique in the sense that they represent offensive actions against prepared defenses (the enemy is expecting the hostage rescue, or a raid). However, due to the relative superiority at the decisive point achieved with the aid of the six principles of special operations, simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, speed and purpose, SOF overcomes the defenses despite unfavorable odds.³²

In his book *Special Operations and strategy: From World War II to the War on Terrorism*, James D. Kiras argues that McRaven’s definition of special operations does not reflect the strategic context and defines only the direct action activity, which is just one of many SOF tasks. Kiras considers that Special Operations alone do not have a wider strategic meaning. They

³¹ James D. Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 4.

³² William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Random House, 1996), 2-10.

are rather a complement to the conventional operations. Thus, he defines special operations as “unconventional actions in a sustained campaign, undertaken by specially designated units, to enable conventional operations, and/or resolve politico-military problems at the operational or strategic level that are difficult to accomplish with conventional forces alone.”³³

It is interesting to look at the definitions of the Special Operations from doctrinal perspectives. For this purpose, the research looked at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), US, and UN definition of Special Operations. It is important to mention that the UN Special Forces manual is still a draft manual that is pending approval.

The NATO and UN definitions of Special Operations are very similar to McRaven’s definition. In addition, the UN manual emphasizes that Special Operations must comply entirely with UN peacekeeping principles and ethos.³⁴ Both NATO and the United Nations stress that Special Operations must achieve results of operational and strategic value.³⁵ On the other hand, the US definition of Special Operations is more broad and comprehensive. It stresses the ability of SOF to achieve not only military, but also diplomatic, economic, and informational objectives. In addition, the US definition provides the notion of the direct and indirect approach to problems. The direct approach pertains mostly to the direct action related missions, while the indirect

³³ Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy*, 5.

³⁴ United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Special Forces Manual* (New York: United Nations, January 2015), 9-10.

³⁵ NATO, Allied Joint Publication (AJP) 3.5, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*, Edition A, version 1 (Belgium: NATO Standardization Agency, December 2013), 1-1.

approach is achieved through the execution of unconventional warfare and-or foreign internal defense missions.³⁶

All three doctrinal manuals in one form or another identify the same set of tasks that SOF executes. The United Nations identifies three main tasks for SOF: special reconnaissance, military assistance, and special tasks. The special tasks include a variety of activities that NATO and the United States put under direct action activities. They include raids, ambushes, terminal guidance operations, hostage rescue, personnel recovery, opposed boarding operations, etc. Special reconnaissance tasks are the same for all three organizations, and refer to the conduct of environmental reconnaissance, threat assessment, target assessment and post-strike reconnaissance. Military assistance is the third and last of the main tasks for the UN and NATO SOF.³⁷ US doctrine refers to Military Assistance as Foreign Internal Defense and Security Forces Assistance. This main task includes activities such as assessing, advising, training, and mentoring military and paramilitary forces and security institutions of a country in its attempts to overcome internal and external threats. In addition to the three main tasks listed in the UN and NATO manuals, US doctrine mentions eight additional core activities for SOF, which one can find under secondary tasks, and activities in the UN, and NATO manuals.³⁸

Although the majority of SOF activities and tasks are the same in the UN, NATO, and US doctrinal manuals, some of them differ. For example, US doctrine lists Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare under SOF core activities.³⁹ On the other hand, the United Nations

³⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 2011), I-1.

³⁷ NATO. AJP-3.5, 2.1; United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Special Forces Manual*, 19-20.

³⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05, II-6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, II-9 – II-13.

does not include Unconventional Warfare and Counterinsurgency in their tasks at all. The NATO SOF manual sees Counterinsurgency only as a SOF activity, but not one of its main tasks. In addition to the main tasks and the core activities, the UN, NATO, and US SOF manuals list the same characteristics and the same mission criteria for Special Operations. They must be permissible, appropriate, feasible, sustainable, and justifiable.⁴⁰

These facts point to the conclusion that Special Operations doctrines of the two most important international organizations in the world, the UN and NATO, and the current hegemon, the United States, remain aligned with main theories and principles of conducting Special Operations. The fact that the United Nations came up with its own Special Forces manual illustrates that Special Operations represent a solution to facilitate the conduct of peace operations. However, who provides the link between peace operations and Special Operations? In addition, who has the ability to integrate the two in order to achieve the desired end state? The answer is simple, the Special Operations Forces. This assertion leads to the next part of this section, which discusses the characteristics of SOF and what is their role in peace operations.

According to Admiral McRaven, SOF are forces specially trained, equipped, and supported to conduct special operations.⁴¹ Kiras considers that a special selection process, the focus of which is physical stamina and psychological stability, followed by a rigorous training program are the imperatives to create SOF soldiers.⁴² Mark Bowden in his book *Black Hawk Down* asserted that the SOF forces in Somalia executed operations with such speed and authority

⁴⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05, 2-4; NATO, AJP-3.5, 1-6; United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Special Forces Manual*, 14-15.

⁴¹ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare*, 2.

⁴² Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy*, 6.

that it was hard to believe that anyone would have the ability to resist.⁴³ Additionally, according to Linda Robinson in *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare* another aspect of SOF expertise is the cultural awareness of the soldiers that can pay significant dividends while operating in countries where cultural aspects are more important than the “transactional nature” of western countries.⁴⁴ At the same time, it is important to understand, that conventional forces can also execute Special Operations. However, the price to pay for the conduct of a special operation by a conventional unit is time.⁴⁵

Despite the strengths that SOF brings to the table, there are significant weaknesses that are inherent to SOF. First, SOF operate in small teams and their lack of firepower is significant.⁴⁶ Additionally, SOF skills are highly perishable and require permanent training, and education to maintain the peak of performance. This implies a large expenditure of resources and energy. That is why conventional leadership of militaries around the world see SOF units as a threat to their budget and prestige.⁴⁷ Finally, while conducting operations SOF depends completely on conventional forces support. Logistic support, indirect fire support, close air support, infiltration platforms, and technological support represent several of the requirements SOF is seeking from conventional forces.⁴⁸ So with all the strengths and weaknesses listed above what is the contribution of SOF to the conduct of peace operations?

⁴³ Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), 9-14.

⁴⁴ Linda Robinson, *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013), 50.

⁴⁵ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare*, 5-10.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁷ Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy*, 6.

⁴⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3-05, IV-1 – IV-18.

According to the research of David S. Maxwell, participation of SOF in peace operations is neither new, or represents a novelty.⁴⁹ In one form or another, SOF was part of the effort to maintain peace in many places such as Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Haiti, Iraq, and Congo. However, SOF involvement was more evident after the end of the Cold War.

The growing complexity of peace operations proved that conventional forces conducting traditional peacekeeping missions were highly ineffective. Dana Priest illustrated this in her book *The Mission*. She asserted that in the conflict in Kosovo (1995) the “Big Army” was very slow to adjust from large-scale conventional operations to peace operations. The regular soldiers considered peace operations “one step away from the utter chaos.”⁵⁰ The sophisticated weapon systems or advanced kinetic operations could not help settle local political disputes, coordinating delivery of the foreign aid, repairing phone lines, or water systems. As such, after the air war ended, US Special Forces teams acted as eyes and ears on the ground to understand the dynamics of criminal forces that dominated the post war society. Additionally, Special Forces and US Navy Sea, Earth, Air, Land (SEAL) teams were operating to identify threats to the overall peacekeeping mission.⁵¹ Very often, the operators understood the civilian leaders on the ground much better than the political leadership that sent the operators to the theater.⁵²

Another example of SOF contribution to the peacekeeping effort was the training of the Nigerian soldiers by US Special Forces teams in 2001. Nigerian battalions ultimately constituted the nucleus of peacekeeping forces in Liberia and Sierra Leone. With an overall strength of

⁴⁹ David S. Maxwell, “Support to United Nations Operations: Is there a Role for United States Special Operations Forces” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1996), 5.

⁵⁰ Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America’s Military* (New York, W. W. Norton and Company, 2004), 279.

⁵¹ Ibid., 125.

⁵² Ibid.

17,500 soldiers in Sierra Leone, the Nigerians succeeded to disarm 46,000 combatants and successfully maintained peace until the end of the UN mission in 2008.⁵³

A particularly important characteristic of SOF is that they usually live close to the local population, thus ensuring close contact with people and the building of relationships. According to Linda Robinson in the United Nations mandated mission in Afghanistan, the operators had built mutual trust with local leaders in a very short period, and this helped in pacifying entire tribes.⁵⁴ A particular program initiated by SOF in Afghanistan that proved to be very effective was Village Support Operations. The operators combined development projects in villages with providing security by keeping the insurgents away from populated rural areas. The SOF medics and the engineers were very useful in the process of building relationships with the locals. The medics treated people and livestock. The engineers helped develop the local infrastructure and improved the living conditions. Parallel to these activities SOF recruited local personnel to enroll into local militia and build Afghanistan National Police, Army, and other security institutions.⁵⁵

Carl von Clausewitz in his trilogy *On War* refers to friction in war as to countless minor incidents that when combined, lowers the general level of performance and keeps the fighting force short of the “intended goal.”⁵⁶ According to Clausewitz, chance, uncertainty and the will of the enemy are the sources of friction. At the same time, taking into consideration that the characteristics of peace operations are ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity generated by small incidents such as lack of a clear enemy, fighting factions (spoilers), criminal activities,

⁵³ Priest, *The Mission*, 192-194.

⁵⁴ Robinson, *One Hundred Victories*, 50.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed., and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 119.

humanitarian disasters, ethnical cleansing, and potential natural calamities. From this, one can deduce that in peace operations the level of friction is extremely high.

According to McRaven's theory of Special Operations, SOF are able to reduce the friction of war to a manageable level by applying the principles of Special Operations in conjunction with moral factors⁵⁷ such as boldness, courage, intellect, perseverance,⁵⁸ and cultural awareness. In such a case, one can conclude that SOF becomes an extremely valuable asset for the conduct of peace operations. The question becomes how to combine peace operations and SOF, and how to use systems theory to create a theoretical framework to demonstrate the usefulness of SOF in peace operations. The next section provides the answer for this question.

In conclusion, the literature review provided an overview of the systems theory and suggested that peace operations meet the standards to be called a complex system. Additionally, the section looked at the definitions and characteristics of peace operations by examining the relevant literature and doctrine. Subsequently, it described the characteristics of Special Operations, and the strengths and weaknesses of SOF. Finally, it emphasized what relationship exists between peace operations and SOF using Clausewitz's definition of friction and McRaven's Special Operations theory. The next section seeks to clarify the methodology the research is using to investigate the relationship between SOF and peace operations.

⁵⁷ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare*, 6-8.

⁵⁸ von Clausewitz, *On War*, 136-139.

Methodology

This section discusses the approach used to answer the primary research question. Initially the section emphasizes how this research uses the systems thinking to create a theoretical model that would represent the interaction between peace operations and SOF. Subsequently, this section explains how the theoretical model applies to several case studies with the goal of explaining the relationship between SOF and peace operations. Finally, this section describes the primary, secondary, and tertiary sources the research used to answer the primary research question.

The methodology of the research is simple. The research comprises two parts. The first part includes the description and analysis of two complex systems:⁵⁹ SOF and peace operations (already accomplished in the second section). Additionally it examines the fusion of the two systems and the potential emergence of a new Complex Adaptive System.⁶⁰ The second part emphasizes the result of the fusion using the case study method.⁶¹

The previous section of the research initiated the discussion about the fusion of two complex systems, peace operations and SOF. The methodology of this research follows Boyd's Systems thinking approach. Accordingly, if one considers Boyd's theory to be true, then by employing SOF in a peace operation the peace operation receives a significant amount of energy, which initially destabilizes the system and moves it to the "crisis point of the system."⁶² SOF does this by bringing to a peace operation the capability to execute three sets of tasks: direct

⁵⁹ Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War*, 73.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 96-97.

⁶¹ John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For," *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (May 2004): 342.

⁶² Osinga, *Science Strategy and War*, 91-92.

action, special reconnaissance, and military assistance.⁶³ At this point, the research considers the three sets of tasks as interdependent variables that SOF system uses to affect other systems. Consequently, after reaching the critical point, the peace operation could behave in two different ways. It could emerge as a Complex Adaptive System and have more flexibility, and greater fitness to resist perturbations. Conversely, it could collapse under the stress of the new influx of variables that SOF adds to the existing ones. The research looks at this theoretical model through several case studies.

The second part of the research consists of three case studies. The research analyzes them through the application of the theoretical model discussed in the previous paragraph. The paper considers the following cases: the UN Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM I, UNITAF and UNOSOM II, 1992 to 1995), the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO, 1999 to present) and the UN Mission in Mali (MINUSMA, 2013 to present). As the case studies show, SOF had a positive contribution in both MONUSCO and MINUSMA. Meanwhile the UN efforts in Somalia collapsed mainly due to the incoherent actions of SOF. The UNOSOM II system behaved exactly the way Boyd explained in his theory. For each peace operation, the analysis focuses on the effects direct action, special reconnaissance, and military assistance had on the mission. Speaking in the systems theory terminology, the case studies focus on the effects that the three SOF system variables had on the agents of each peace operation system.⁶⁴

The primary sources for conducting this research constituted relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, reports of SOF operations in UNOSOM, MONUSCO, and MINUSMA, SOF and UN doctrinal manuals. The secondary sources included books and publications on

⁶³ Osinga, *Science Strategy and War*, 91.

⁶⁴ Robert Axelrod and Michael D. Cohen, *Harnessing Complexity: Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 4.

systems theory, evolution of peace and Special Operations, and relevant literature on the case studies. Finally, the tertiary sources included magazines, journals, and publications for the general public on the subject of UN and SOF operations.

This section discussed the methodology of the research. It explained how systems thinking facilitate creation of a theoretical model designed to answer the primary research question. Additionally it listed the specific case studies that constitute the second part of the research. Finally, it enumerated the sources that the research used to achieve its purpose. The next section analyzes the case studies using the systems thinking approach.

Analysis

This section analyses three case studies. The first case study represents the UN intervention in Somalia in 1992 to 1995, covering UNOSOM I, UNITAF, and UNOSOM II. The second case study refers to the UN MONUSCO, which started in 1999 and continues today. Finally, the third case study refers to the UN MINUSMA. The United Nations initiated MINUSMA in 2013, and the mission is ongoing. Each case study provides a historical background of their respective UN missions. Additionally, the case studies describe three specific SOF activities: direct action, special reconnaissance, and military assistance.

Special Operations Forces in the United Nations Intervention in Somalia

Special Operations Forces was one of the main causes the UN intervention in Somalia achieved only limited success, before collapsing under the pressures of Somali clan leaders and global public opinion.⁶⁵ The United Nations intervention in Somalia was one of the most controversial UN engagements of the last century. It started on April 24, 1992 and ended on March 31, 1995. The intervention had three prominent operations, conducted under different United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandates: UNOSOM I (April 24, 1992),⁶⁶ UNITAF (December 3, 1992),⁶⁷ and UNOSOM II (March 26, 1993).⁶⁸ However, because of a divided Somali society, UN forces' inability to understand the cultural specificities of the local population, and a faulty UN policy, the intervention failed to achieve all its objectives. Although

⁶⁵ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 162.

⁶⁶ Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 472.

⁶⁷ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 80.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

SOF played a very important role throughout the intervention, it ultimately accelerated the breakdown of the UN mission.⁶⁹ This section provides an analysis of SOF activities within the context of UN operations in Somalia.

Somalia is an East-African country that in 1992 became a failed state. Before its independence in 1960, colonial powers divided the country into five separate territories: French Somaliland, British Somaliland, Italian Somalia, Ogaden, and the territories incorporated into the Northern district of Kenya. At independence, British Somaliland and Italian Somalia formed the Somali Republic. However, the Republic was not able to unify all of the colonial-era territories and form its goal of a greater Somalia. Although never attained, this goal nevertheless kept the Somali clans united until 1978. Bitter military defeats by Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1978 and the failure to unite the three remaining regions of Somalia led to the Republic's implosion.⁷⁰

Beginning in 1978, internal armed conflicts between different factions and clans engulfed the Republic. By 1991, Somalia disintegrated as the country's leader, General Siyad Barre fled the capital Mogadishu. Lacking effective government institutions and foreign assistance, the country now faced humanitarian disaster. By 1992, 300,000 Somalis had died from famine. The humanitarian crisis and global public outcry triggered the United Nations to intervene.⁷¹

United Nations Security Council Resolution 751 authorized UNOSOM I.⁷² On April 24, 1992, the United Nations sent to Somalia 50 unarmed military observers and 500 Pakistani soldiers to protect the observers and their humanitarian relief supplies. The organization soon

⁶⁹ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 180.

⁷⁰ Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 465-469.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 470-474.

⁷² Dr. Richard W. Stewart, *United States Army in Somalia 1992-1994* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History), accessed December 5, 2014, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Somalia/Somalia.htm#p8>.

realized that the looting of convoys by Somali warlords prevented the delivery of supplies to the population. Consequently, on December 3, 1992 the UNSC approved Resolution 794, which authorized the use of all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian operations in Somalia. Thus began the first UN mission conducted under Chapter VII (Peace Enforcement) of the UN charter. UNITAF commenced on December 8, 1992.⁷³ The US military led the operation, commonly referred to as Operation Restore Hope. The operation succeeded in stopping looting of the convoys and ensured that the relief supplies reached their destinations. Nevertheless, the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali applied pressure on the United States to extend the mandate of the mission and force the disarmament of the belligerent groups. Boutros-Ghali envisioned the UNITAF transitioning to a state building mission.⁷⁴ Consequently, on March 26, 1993 the UNSC passed Resolution 814, which authorized UNOSOM II to take over from UNITAF. The UNOSOM II mandate was a compromise between the United States, who wanted out of Somalia, and the United Nations, who wanted to remain but did not want to carry more of the operation's weight.⁷⁵ UNOSOM II ended on March 31, 1995, failing to achieve its goals due to a number of factors. Among them was the failure to integrate Special Operations into the overall UNOSOM II strategy.⁷⁶

Special Operations Forces were present in Somalia from the very beginning of the UN intervention in 1992. The operators conducted three main activities: special reconnaissance, military assistance, and direct action. The first SOF elements on the ground were operators accompanying Central Intelligence Agency Special Activities Division Officers. Later, the

⁷³ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 80-81.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

elements of the US 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Campbell, Kentucky joined the relief efforts in the summer of 1992. In January 1993, the US military established the Joint Special Operations Forces–Somalia Headquarters, commonly referred to as JSOFOR, in support of the entire UN effort. Finally, in August 1993, the United States authorized the deployment to Somalia of the Joint Special Operations Task Force, otherwise known as Task Force Ranger.⁷⁷

The first activities that SOF conducted with the UN humanitarian relief operation were special reconnaissance missions. During UNOSOM I, elements of the US 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) escorted cargo airplanes. However, the focus of SOF centered on reconnoitering different regions of the country in order to gain overall situational awareness. Special Forces soldiers continuously assessed and evaluated Somali airfields and infrastructure and gathered any information that may be useful in a larger military operation.⁷⁸

With the initiation of UNITAF in December of 1992, the US Navy SEAL elements conducted clandestine hydrographic reconnaissance missions to assess the harbors and identify landing sites in vicinity of Mogadishu and other major Somali ports.⁷⁹ Once the UNITAF forces landed in Somalia and took control of the large population centers SOF moved deeper into the country, continuously collecting valuable information about hostile groups, initiating contacts with local clan leaders, conducting Civil Affairs, and Psychological operations. By February 1993, Joint Special Operations Forces had five Special Forces Operational Detachment Alfa in

⁷⁷ Ibid., 151.

⁷⁸ Stewart, *United States Army in Somalia 1992-1994*, 8.

⁷⁹ Robert F. Baumann, and Lawrence A. Yates with Versalle F. Washington, “*My Clan Against the World: US and Coalition Forces in Somalia 1992-1994* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 38, accessed December 5, 2014, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/clan.pdf>.

Mogadishu, three Operational Detachment Alfa in Kissymaao, and one Operational Detachment Alfa in Baidoo.⁸⁰

The transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II brought more challenges for SOF elements conducting special reconnaissance. The focus of special reconnaissance missions switched to identifying key Somali leaders who were hostile to UNOSOM. However, because of the hostile attitude of the local population towards UN personnel, the ability to collect information was more complicated.⁸¹ Additionally, the nature of Somali society combined with the country's low-tech communication infrastructure rendering SOF assets for electronic surveillance ineffective, made it extremely difficult to gather information.⁸² Moreover, the command and control structure of UNOSOM II inhibited information sharing.⁸³ Lack of valuable intelligence on several occasions led to subsequent direct action mission failures. One example is the failed attempt to capture several lieutenants of the most prominent enemy of the coalition forces, Mohamed Farrah Aidid, which I discuss later in this section. Only during the later stages of UNOSOM II did the Joint Special Operations Forces establish procedures with various interagency organizations to allow the synchronization of Human Intelligence collection. Finally, in 1994, during operation Show Care, the special reconnaissance missions combined with sniper teams achieved a high degree of synchronization while providing security for the redeployment of UN forces.⁸⁴

Special reconnaissance activities proved extremely valuable throughout the entire UN intervention in Somalia. Despite the lack of synchronization, on many occasions SOF served as

⁸⁰ Stewart, *United States Army in Somalia 1992-1994*, 11-12.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 180.

⁸³ Ibid., 141.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 181.

the eyes and ears of the UN forces in many places that conventional forces could not access. Unfortunately, the lack of synchronization led to several SOF failures while conducting direct action missions.

In addition to special reconnaissance, SOF also conducted military assistance activities. However, it is worth mentioning that military assistance was initially not a priority for SOF in Somalia. The UN intervention started in 1992 with the goal to deliver humanitarian aid to the population and maintain the cease-fire agreement between the warlords. Thus, military assistance activities during UNOSOM I and UNITAF were almost nonexistent.⁸⁵

With the transition to UNOSOM II, the relevance of military assistance activities increased because the primary objective of UNOSOM II was to initiate the process of state building.⁸⁶ The conditions on the ground, however, did not allow for conducting military assistance effectively and comprehensively. Therefore, these activities were limited to several projects and did not have a positive impact on the overall UN mission. Despite the limited number of military assistance missions, several activities deserve attention.

Opportunities to start the disarmament of armed groups presented themselves in the city of Bossaso, in Northern Somalia. The Somali Salvation Democratic Front agreed to disarm under UNOSOM II supervision. Seizing this opportunity, US military leadership sent a team of Special Forces soldiers to Bossaso in July 1993. The Special Forces element undertook several projects there. With the assistance of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable, the operators reestablished a local police force and facilitated reestablishment of the

⁸⁵ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 151.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

judicial system. Additionally, they surveyed the port of Bossasso for further use, built the roof of the police station, and opened several sports facilities and a school for 400 children.⁸⁷

Along with Somalian police, SOF also trained UN conventional units. For instance, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable conducted riot control training with coalition forces. It also conducted MEDCAP—DENCAP in the city of Marca. Despite these efforts, the UN leadership recognized that it could not sustain these projects for any significant time due to lack of resources.⁸⁸

Even though SOF conducted several military assistance activities during UNOSOM II, they did not have a significant impact on the overall situation in Somalia. The main reason was that the UN mandate for UNOSOM I and UNITAF did not include state building. With the beginning of UNOSOM II, SOF initiated several programs, but because of the conditions on the ground and lack of resources, the activities had a negligible effect.

Unlike SOF military assistance and special reconnaissance activities, which overall benefitted UN efforts, direct action missions had a negative impact on UN intervention efforts in Somalia. The next part of this section describes SOF direct action activities During UNOSOM II. The focus is on Task Force Ranger and their seven attempts to capture the most powerful warlord in Somalia, Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

During UNOSOM I and UNITAF, SOF only conducted one direct action mission. On December 8, 1992, the US Navy SEALs assaulted the beach of Somalia in vicinity of Mogadishu. To their surprise, instead of armed resistance from Somali fighters, they met the bright lights of reporters' cameras. Instead of fighters, they ran into the media broadcasting the beginning of

⁸⁷ *US Forces, Somalia After Action Report, and Historical Overview, The United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History), 100-103, accessed December 5, 2014, <http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/c/downloads/314322.pdf>.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

UNITAF.⁸⁹ With the initiation of UNOSOM II in March 1993, direct action activities became inevitable. During the months of June and July in 1993, Somalis increased their attacks on peacekeepers as a response to the UN initiative to disarm belligerent factions. Under the leadership of Aidid and influenced by his anti-Western propaganda, Somalis killed a number of Pakistani, Moroccan, and US soldiers.⁹⁰ The response of the US administration was a focus on capturing or killing Aidid.

The United States deployed a Joint Special Operations Task Force called Task Force Ranger to accomplish this mission. Task Force Ranger deployed to Somalia on August 28, 1993. It numbered more than 400 personnel including US Army Rangers and operators from Special Task Unit (Delta), Navy SEALs, and Air Force Pararescue Jumpers. Additionally, helicopters from 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment provided lift and fire support for the task force.⁹¹

With the aim to capture Aidid, Task Force Ranger conducted seven direct action missions. Six of them were tactical successes; however, the raid on the Ligato house on August 30, 1993 resulted in the arrest of nine UN employees. Additionally, the raid on September 14 resulted in the capture of General Ahmen Jilao, an ally of the United Nations. The organization was grooming Jilao to lead the new Somali police. In both cases, the US administration had to apologize to the UN and to local officials. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell was outraged. On September 17, Task Force Ranger raided and destroyed

⁸⁹ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 84.

⁹⁰ Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 479-480.

⁹¹ Baumann and Yates with Washington, *My Clan Against the World*, 17-18.

Radio Mogadishu. Finally, on September 21 the Task Force captured Osman Atto, the personal banker and one of Aidid's inner circle.⁹²

The Somali population was hostile towards the Rangers. The carelessness towards the local population and several unintended killings of civilians during the raids were the main reasons of Somali animosity towards the Rangers. Additionally, the members of the Habr Gidr clan opposed the capture of their leader. Very soon, the Task Force's raids lost the element of surprise because everyone understood that once the helicopters with the Rangers were in the air, operators were looking for Aidid.⁹³

The seventh attempt to capture Aidid ended up in a tactical failure and a strategic nightmare for the United States and the United Nations. On October 3, 1993, Task Force Ranger mounted one more mission to capture some of Aidid's lieutenants, an episode now commonly referred to as Black Hawk Down. The official code name of the operation was Gothic Serpent. Although the mission initially unfolded well, the Somalis shot down two US helicopters, forcing the operators to engage in a firefight with the entire city. The operation ended with 18 US soldiers killed and 75 wounded.⁹⁴ The impact of the operation's failure on US policymakers was immense. On October 7, the President of the United States declared that the country would withdraw from Somalia before March 31, 1994. Soon after President Clinton's declaration, many members of the coalition declared their withdrawal as well.⁹⁵ Without the backing of the United

⁹² Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, 26-28.

⁹³ Ibid., 72-76.

⁹⁴ Baumann and Yates with Washington, *My Clan Against the World*, 19-21.

⁹⁵ Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire*, 165.

States, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali acknowledged the failure of his Somali state-building mission and by March 1995 withdrew from Somalia all remaining UN peacekeepers.⁹⁶

This case study described the activities and the effects of SOF missions on the UN intervention in Somalia. One can conclude that while special reconnaissance and military assistance activities had positive, or no impact on the UN mission, the direct action operations to capture Aidid had a negative effect. More broadly, a failure to integrate SOF operations into the overall UN strategy in Somalia contributed to the UN intervention's failure.

Special Operations Forces in the UN Multidimensional
Stabilization Mission in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo is another country where the UN used SOF to accomplish a peacekeeping mission. However, in the Congo the United Nations took a different approach to the problem. This section provides a short description of the historical roots and the contemporary Congolese conflict. Additionally, the section discusses the same set of variables that SOF uses to influence the outcome of UN missions, direct action, special reconnaissance, and military assistance.

The Democratic Republic of Congo currently is a failing state. In 1878 the Belgian King Leopold II, hired the Welsh explorer Henry Morton Stanley to “scramble for him a piece of the African pie.” As a result, in 1885 Congo became the personal country of Leopold.⁹⁷ Congo proclaimed independence in 1960, after decades of Belgian colonialism. However, along with independence came popular unrest that led to the cessation of the Catanga province, mass killings, and human rights abuses. The unrest ended in a military coup. On September 14, 1960,

⁹⁶ Ibid., 167.

⁹⁷ Meredith, *The Fate of Africa*, 94-95.

the 29-year-old Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Joseph Mobutu outlawed all the politicians and in 1965 assumed the presidency of the country.⁹⁸ The Rwandan genocide in 1994 directly affected Mobutu's regime. In 1997, Laurent Desire Kabila marched with his army on Kinshasa and ousted Mobutu. This new crisis led to the second Congo War that lasted until 2001, when one of Kabila's bodyguards assassinated him. As a result, the son of the president, Joseph Kabila took power, initiated peace talks, and set in place a transitional government, which remained in power until the 2006 elections. Currently, the Democratic Republic of Congo is mired in local disputes, armed violence, and mass atrocities. The conflict that began in 1994 and continues today has already claimed the lives of more than six million people.

The United Nations deployed to Congo for the first time on July 14, 1960. UNSC Resolution 146 provided UN forces with the mandate to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian forces and provide technical assistance to the new Congolese government. The UN Mission in the Congo ended in June 1964.⁹⁹ The second United Nations intervention started in July 1999. The UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo initially had the mandate to observe the cease-fire agreement between the conflicting parties. Subsequently the mandate expanded to the implementation of the cease-fire agreement and included many more additional tasks. Finally, on July 1, 2010 the United Nations renamed the Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo into the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Congo (MONUSCO).¹⁰⁰ As of 2010, MONUSCO is the largest UN peacekeeping mission.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 110-115.

⁹⁹ United Nations, "Helping bring Peace and Stability in the DRC," accessed December 16, 2014, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/monus.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

The United Nations used SOF in Congo in many different ways. During the UN Mission in the Congo in 1964, the mission used SOF to conduct an anti-terror operation.¹⁰¹ The United Nations mandated the European Union to assist the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in restoring order in Bunia province in 2003¹⁰² and provide security for the first elections in 2006.¹⁰³ In both cases, the European Forces used SOF operators to carry out the mandate. Finally, in 2013 the United Nations deployed a UN intervention brigade to Eastern Congo that includes a Special Forces company.¹⁰⁴

Similar to the United Nations intervention in Somalia, special reconnaissance preceded large UN military actions in Congo. As such, SOF conducted special reconnaissance before the UN mandated European Union forces deployed to Congo for Operation Artemis in 2003. Additionally, SOF led the way for the deployment of the UN-mandated European Union Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006. Finally, special reconnaissance remains a daily endeavor for the Special Forces Company attached to the UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) currently under the control of MONUSCO.

On May 20, 2003, almost two months before the beginning of the UN-mandated Operation Artemis in Congo, France sent a small SOF team to the country to assess the airfields

¹⁰¹ Major Thomas P. Odom, Leavenworth papers, No 14, *Dragon Operations: Hostage Rescues in the Congo 1964-1965* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1998), 1, accessed December 16, 2014, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/odomLP14.pdf>.

¹⁰² James Dobbins et al., *Europe's Role in Nation Building: From the Balkans to the Congo*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG722.pdf.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Stale Ulriksen, Catriona Gourlay, and Catriona Mace, "Operation Artemis: The Shape of the Things to Come," *The EU Crisis Management and Peace Support Operations* 11, no. 3 (2004): 517-519.

in the Eastern Congo, the nature of the threat, and find possible locations for staging troops. Additionally, the French team worked intensively with the local population, gathering information about the rebel movement. They succeeded in establishing contact with several of the warlords and started setting the conditions for the arrival of the main body of forces. The French Special Operations did not hesitate to use deadly force for neutralizing local warlords as part of attaining necessary information. Finally, as the SOF team passed the information to Europe, the European Union brought into Congo the necessary assets to enlarge the runway of the Bunia airfield and set up other conditions necessary to receive the bulk of European Union forces. The early deployment of the SOF team to conduct special reconnaissance contributed substantially to the success of the Operation Artemis.¹⁰⁵

The special reconnaissance activities during 2006 deployment of UN-mandated European Union Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo included similar tasks to that of Operation Artemis. However, in 2006 the assessment of the area was easier to accomplish because the staging area for the entire force was in Gabon. Only the forward element, including SOF personnel and the Quick Reaction Force, deployed to Kinshasa, Congo.

Finally, after the deployment of the UN FIB to Kivu province in June 2013, special reconnaissance activities became vital for FIB and for the entire UN mission. The aggressive approach the unit adopted for clearing the city of Goma and the surrounding areas from rebels required accurate intelligence about the position of rebel groups and their leadership. The ability to penetrate deeper into the jungle than conventional forces, while searching for potential targets allowed SOF elements to coordinate air strikes and ground attacks conducted by the conventional battalions of the brigade. As a result, in less than two months after its deployment, the UN FIB

¹⁰⁵Dobbins et al., *Europe's Role in Nation-Building*, 118.

together with Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) cleared the area from the “March 23” rebel group and forced them to seek peace negotiations.¹⁰⁶

Special reconnaissance activities had an important impact on the UN operations in Congo. The result of gathering valuable information from areas that the conventional UN units could not access affected in a positive way the outcome of numerous operations. At the same time, the UN leadership understood that SOF and UN forces alone could not cover the immense area of the Congo. The regular FARDC and the Congolese police had to step up and conduct operations. As such, creating strong police forces and robust armed forces that would be able to defend Congo from external aggression and internal turmoil became critical. The obvious solution was to conduct military assistance activities and build these forces.

Despite the fact that state building, including the training of FARDC and police units, was always a priority of the UN intervention in Congo, two main factors limited the organization’s ability to build the Congolese state. First, the mandate of the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo initially was just to observe the cease-fire agreement.¹⁰⁷ Second, with the change of the mandate from peace keeping to peace enforcement, UN resources did not increase with the scope of the mission and were so scarce that the UN could not afford to train Congolese police and armed forces. As such, the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo mandated that the European Union mission to Congo conduct training missions.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, the UN and Congolese authorities attempted to

¹⁰⁶ Lansana Gberie, “Intervention Brigade: End Game in the Congo,” *Africa Renewal*, August 2013, 10, accessed December 18, 2014, <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2013/intervention-brigade-end-game-congo>.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations, “MINUSMA United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali,” accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/monuc/background.shtml>.

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Willis, “Warlords Undermine EU Security Mission in Congo,” *EU Observer*, November 14, 2011, accessed December 18, 2014, <https://euobserver.com/congo/114174>.

find partner nations who would train the FARDC based on bilateral agreements between the countries. A good example here is the United States involvement in conducting training missions in Congo.¹⁰⁹

The United States Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA) conducts numerous military assistance activities in the region.¹¹⁰ Two of them link directly to Congo. First, SOCAFRICA helped train FARDC units in Congo.¹¹¹ Second, US SOF contributed to the attempts of capturing and bringing to justice of Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army.¹¹²

Special Operations Command Africa initiated Operation Olympic Chase in December 2009. SOCAFRICA designed this operation to be a long-term train and equip mission that would promote the security sector Reform in the Congo. The program officially ended in September 2010 with the activation of the 391st Commando Battalion of the FARDC.¹¹³ It is worth mentioning that besides small unit tactics, medical, and signal training, SOF operators also

¹⁰⁹ The White House, "Fact Sheet: US Support for Peacekeeping in Africa," White House, Office of the Press Secretary, August 6, 2014, accessed December 19, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-us-support-peacekeeping-africa>.

¹¹⁰ United States Africa Command, "What We Do," accessed December 18, 2014, <http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do>.

¹¹¹ Eric Elliot, "750 Congolese Soldiers Graduate From US-led Military Training, Form Light Infantry Battalion," US AFRICOM Public Affairs, September 20, 2010, accessed December 18, 2014, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/7727/750-congolese-soldiers-graduate-from-us-led-milita>.

¹¹² United States Africa Command, US Africa Command Fact Sheet: US Military Support to African Efforts to Counter Lord's Resistance Army, last updated April 2013, accessed December 18, 2014, <http://www.africom.mil/search?term=Effort+in+Congo>.

¹¹³ Elliot, "750 Congolese Soldiers Graduate From US-led Military Training, Form Light Infantry Battalion."

trained the FARDC unit in agriculture and aquaculture. The aim was to make the unit food self-sufficient. The soldiers learned how to plant corn, build fishponds, and grow livestock.¹¹⁴

Additionally, in the process of capturing Joseph Kony, SOCAFRICA committed to train specialized military units from several African countries, including Congo. Congolese authorities embraced the US offer to build a multinational task force consisting of soldiers from Congo, Uganda, Central African Republic, and South Sudan. US SOF operators not only trained the Congolese soldiers but also accompanied them on raids.¹¹⁵

By bringing on board other intergovernmental organizations and countries, the United Nations succeeded in keeping viable a state building strategy in Congo while experiencing a shortage of desired resources. The two examples above are a clear illustration of this. Both of them involve SOF. The United Nations welcomed on board other organizations and countries to keep viable the state building strategy in Congo and leverage the shortage of resources. The military assistance activities enabled FARDC to prevent numerous insurrections in the eastern part of the country.

In addition to special reconnaissance and military assistance activities, SOF conducted numerous direct action missions in Congo. In 2003, during the UN-mandated Operation Artemis, French and Swedish Special Forces conducted numerous direct action operations. On June 6, 2003, after the first SOF elements were on the ground, they immediately occupied a key intersection in the city of Bunia and conducted aggressive patrols. The first clashes occurred on

¹¹⁴ GlobalSecurity.org, “Operation Olympic Chase,” accessed December 18, 2014, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/olympic-chase.htm>.

¹¹⁵ Rajiv Shandrasekaran, “Kony 2013: U.S. Quietly Intensifies effort to Help African troops Capture Infamous Warlord,” *Washington Post*, October 2, 2013, accessed December 18, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kony-2013-us-quietly-intensifies-effort-to-help-african-troops-capture-infamous-warlord/2013/10/28/74db9720-3cb3-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html.

14 June, when a peacekeeping patrol came under fire from Lenda militiamen. SOF succeeded in driving back the attackers, causing them to flee the area. On June 16, Special Forces on a reconnaissance mission killed two Hema militiamen. Several Special Forces raids followed in the period between August and November 2003, neutralizing a number of rebel bases and capturing weapons caches. Swedish SOF in one of the operations killed as many as 20 militiamen. The Commander in Chief of the Swedish Armed Forces stated that this intervention was the largest Swedish fight since the first UN intervention to Congo in 1960.¹¹⁶

In 2006, during the UN-mandated Operation European Union Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, SOF was crucial to the success of conducting democratic elections in Congo.¹¹⁷ On August 20, 2006, Congolese Armed Forces loyal to President Joseph Kabila attacked the rival presidential candidate Jean-Pierre Memba. The FARDC trapped Jean-Pierre Memba along with a number of foreign ambassadors and UN officials inside his residence in Kinshasa. Swedish operators flew in, repelled the Congolese attack, and evacuated the officials.¹¹⁸

Finally, in 2013, the United Nations deployed a FIB to the Eastern province of Kivu, where it remains operational. The Brigade includes a Special Forces company and a Reconnaissance Company equipped with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. The unit has an unprecedented offensive mandate. Within several months of its deployment, the unit with the help

¹¹⁶ Ulriksen, Gourlay, and Mace, "Operation Artemis," 517-519.

¹¹⁷ Helmut Fritsch, *EUFOR RD Congo: A Misunderstood Operation?* (Centre for International Relations, Queens University, 2008), 48, 54, 60.

¹¹⁸ Council of the European Union, Council Joint Action 2006/319/CFSP of 27 April 2006 on the European Union military operation in support of the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) during the election process, Journal of the European Union, accessed December 18, 2014, <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:116:0098:0101:EN:PDF>.

of SOF soldiers conducted several successful assault operations and drew back the M23 rebels from the city of Goma. The ability of soldiers from the Special Forces Company to access remote areas, coordinate aviation attacks, and conduct surgical strikes, enables the brigade to increase its success in bringing peace to the Kivu province.¹¹⁹

Overall, SOF always managed to contribute positively to the accomplishment of UN objectives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. SOF direct action activities always improved the situation. Their mobility, aggressiveness, and ability to access remote areas to conduct surgical strikes have been a valuable asset, assisting UN forces in Congo in carrying their mandate. As a result, two additional UN brigades received Special Forces Companies as augmentation.¹²⁰ Special reconnaissance and direct action activities had positive effects as well, regardless of the fact that SOF were coming from a wide range of countries and organizations.

Special Operations Forces Activities during the United Nations Intervention in Mali

This section provides an analysis of employment of Special Operations Forces by the United Nations in the conflict in Mali. Similar, to the two previous case studies, this case begins with a short historical background about the Malian conflict. It then discusses direct action, special reconnaissance, and military assistance activities in Mali. Finally, the case study concludes with an analysis of how these three SOF activities affected the UN MINUSMA.

Mali is a state situated in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa. The country gained its independence on June 20, 1960, after being a French colony for 68 years. In 1992, Mali became a

¹¹⁹ Gberie, “Intervention Brigade.”

¹²⁰ United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Special Forces Manual*, 10.

democratic country with a multiparty parliament. However, due to poor economic and security conditions, the Malian democracy remained inherently weak and faced many challenges.¹²¹

One of the most important challenges that Mali faces is to preserve its sovereignty. The main threat is the Tuareg people, a nomadic tribe near Kidal in northern Mali. Since Mali's independence, the Tuaregs have conducted three uprisings against the country's Government. Their aim was the creation of an independent Azawad region, which comprises the entire northern part of Mali. The first uprising occurred in 1963 and the Malian Army ruthlessly defeated it. The second uprising took place in 1990 and it took five years to put down the unrest.¹²² The most recent uprising occurred in 2012. The last uprising led to the establishment of MINUSMA in 2013.

Another security challenge for Mali is Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, a terrorist organization based in Algeria and Northern Mali. In 2012, taking advantage of the political unrest in Mali, Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb consolidated its positions and currently works together with the Azawad National Liberation Movement to win the independence of the Kidal, Goa, and Timbuktu regions for the Tuaregs.

In 2012, Mali experienced a military coup, which immersed the country into chaos and provided the opportunity for the Tuaregs to take control of large cities in Northern Mali. The Tuaregs advanced south and in January 2013 posed a direct threat to the Malian capital, Bamako. This triggered the international community to intervene. France, along with the Malian Army, took the lead to conduct military operations in Mali with the purpose of restoring territorial integrity and stability. The UN-mandated African-led International Support Mission in Mali

¹²¹ Robert Pringle, *Democratization in Mali: Putting History to Work* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006), 15.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 31-32.

deployed to Mali in February 2013. Subsequently, in July 2013 the United Nations established its current mission in Mali, MINUSMA.¹²³ Additionally the organization mandated that the European Union provide military forces for training Malian security forces.

The use of SOF in peacekeeping operations in Mali was unprecedented. SOF conducted operations in the country from the very beginning of the French offensive in January of 2013. Currently, the UN military forces, European Union forces, and French contingents in Mali make use of SOF to conduct all three SOF activities: direct action, special reconnaissance, and military assistance. However, this particular peacekeeping mission has certain characteristics that were not common for the way the United Nations was traditionally operating. It mostly concerns special reconnaissance activities.

The use of UN SOF for gathering information and intelligence is a novelty for the UN. Some media reports used the term “spying” to describe these SOF efforts. Until recently, the United Nations tried to avoid conducting such missions, attempting to conform to the principles of peacekeeping operations as much as possible. The first step in trying to act proactively and gather intelligence was the use of the UN Special Forces Company as part of the FIB in Congo, equipped with unmanned aerial vehicles.

After the start of MINUSMA, the United Nations reinforced the SOF special reconnaissance mission set. The organization decided to augment the military forces of MINUSMA with a UN SOF contingent of 450 soldiers supported by aviation assets from the Netherlands. The Dutch contingent consists of special operators and intelligence specialists deployed to Mali to collect and analyze information. They are specifically equipped to conduct

¹²³ United Nations, “MINUSMA United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali.”

special reconnaissance missions and serve as the eyes and the ears of MINUSMA. The commander of the UN mission maintains direct control over the SOF element from Bamako.¹²⁴

Dutch SOF capabilities combined with the support of rotary wing assets help MINUSMA gather information from places distant from the capital, Bamako. Many of these missions, besides gathering security related information, aim at understanding the operational environment. Talking to the elders of local communities, assessing the economic, military, political, and social situation in remote areas of the country is the centerpiece of special reconnaissance activities in Mali. The operating concept of the UN SOF in Mali conducting special reconnaissance activities is very simple. Operators and aerial platforms collect data and provide it to intelligence analysts. In turn, intelligence analysts hand over the processed information to the UN headquarters to support decision makers.¹²⁵

Along with special reconnaissance activities, SOF also conducts training missions and trains the Armed Forces of Mali. Here the United Nations takes a similar approach with the one in Congo. The organization uses European Union and partner nations to reduce the cost of the peacekeeping mission overall.

Special Operations Forces provided military assistance to Mali long before the current UN mission started. US SOCAFRICA played a central role in this. The aim was to train the Malian Army, enable it to preserve the democratic course of the country, and deny safe haven for terrorist organizations such as Al Qa'ida. However, the United States effort stopped after the military coup in 2012 without reaching a significant degree of success.

¹²⁴ Ministry of Defence, "Dutch Contribution in Mali." accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/mali/contents/dutch-contributions-in-mali>.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

After the military coup of 2012, as the crisis in Mali was unfolding, the UNSC in its Resolution 2085 welcomed a European Union initiative to start the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) Mali.¹²⁶ The European Union officially launched the mission on February 18, 2013 and it has a mandate until May 18, 2016.¹²⁷ EUTM Mali currently numbers 580 personnel from twenty-eight European countries. The mission includes military instructors, logistics, and force protection elements. Each participating country provides instructors to train Malian soldiers for a particular capability.

The purpose of the entire mission is to rebuild the Malian armed forces. The instructors and advisers provide their expertise regarding command and control, logistic support, human resources and intelligence. Additionally, EUTM Mali is responsible for training battalion size elements at the Koulikoro training site. It is worth mentioning that the instructors spend a significant amount of time teaching Malian soldiers about humanitarian law, human rights, and protection of civilian populations.¹²⁸

The majority of the instructors are SOF personnel. For instance, Hungary provided six sniper instructors and a three-man medical team.¹²⁹ Spain provided fifteen members of the Spanish Special Operations Command to be in charge of commando training and heavy arms

¹²⁶ United Nations, Resolution 2085, *Stresses Need to Further Refine Military Planning*. Security Council 6898th Meeting, accessed January 24, 2015, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sc10870.doc.htm>.

¹²⁷ European Union, "New Mission Commander for EUTM Mali," October 9, 2014, accessed January 24, 2015, http://eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15554_en.htm.

¹²⁸ European Union, "EU Training Mission in Mali," updated April 14, accessed January 27, 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-mali/pdf/factsheet_eutm_mali_en.pdf.

¹²⁹ Col János Besenyő, PhD, "Hungarian Soldiers in EUTM Mali," *Periodical of the Military National Security Service* (2014): 6, accessed January 27, 2015, http://www.kfh.hu/hu/letoltes/szsz/2014_2_spec.pdf.

training, while the rest of the Spanish contingent is responsible for force protection.¹³⁰ Besides conducting the training mission, EUTM Mali “serves also as an umbrella for engaging SOF for specific tasks under national command authority.”¹³¹

The effectiveness of the EUTM is easy to spot. The mission planned to train four Malian battalion-size tactical battle groups. As of May 2014, 2800 Malian soldiers, the equivalent of four tactical battle groups, joined Malian security forces in operations throughout the country. The EUTM Mali goal is now to train eight tactical battle groups by the end of 2015.¹³²

Just like in the case of military assistance, the MINUSMA counts on other partners to conduct direct action activities rather than tasking this to the UN SOF contingent. This time French SOF that belonged to the operation SERVAL, and currently belongs to its successor, the operation BARKHANE assumed responsibility for direct action activities. According to the Dutch authorities, the SOF personnel of MINUSMA (mainly coming from Netherlands) do not have an offensive mandate,¹³³ thus so far there is no evidence that MINUSMA special operators conduct direct action activities.

¹³⁰ Jose Naranjo, “Spain’s Malian Mission,” May 12, 2013, accessed January 27, 2015, http://elpais.com/m/elpais/2013/05/12/inenglish/1368357995_209252.html?rel=rosEP.

¹³¹ Sieglinde Gstohl and Erwan Lennon, ed., *The Neighbors of the European Union’s Neighbors: Diplomatic and Geopolitical Dimensions beyond the European Neighborhood Policy* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 58.

¹³² Olivier Mirguet, “In Mali, European Union Trains Local Soldiers,” *Europolitics*, May 20, 2013, accessed January 27, 2015, <http://europolitics.info/external-affairs/mali-european-union-trains-local-soldiers>.

¹³³ David Lewis, “Dutch Special Forces in Mali Tackle Changing Threat: Minister,” *Reuters*, July 9, 2014, accessed January 27, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/09/us-mali-security-dutch-idUSKBN0FE1YF20140709>.

On the other hand, French SOF conducted direct actions missions in Mali once France initiated Operation SERVAL on January 11, 2013.¹³⁴ The direct action activities continued after Operation SERVAL was over and the Operation BARKHANE took over in August 2014.¹³⁵ It is worth mentioning that French forces are not operating in Mali under a UN mandate. This enables the UN troops to avoid direct action-related tensions with conflicting factions and maintain their neutrality and impartiality status.

With the beginning of Operation Serval, French Special Forces mounted on light armored vehicles conducted numerous raids in Northern Mali, serving as the spearhead for the rest of the military forces. A particular characteristic of French direct action activities was that the operators allowed Malian forces to conduct final assaults on objectives. Additionally, the French operators used extensive Close Air Support assets to destroy targets on the ground. Direct action activities led to the scattering of rebels and reestablishment of control of Northern Mali by March 2013, less than two months from the beginning of the offensive.¹³⁶

After the end of Operation SERVAL, SOF reoriented the direct action activities towards neutralizing the resurgent Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa militants in Mali. An example is the special operations raid on December 11, 2014. SOF conducted the raid in the city of Gao, with the purpose of neutralizing

¹³⁴ Murrielle Delaporte, "French Lessons from Mali: Fight Alone, Supply Together," *Breaking Defense*, June 17, 2013, accessed January 27, 2015, <http://breakingdefense.com/2013/06/french-lessons-from-mali-fight-alone-supply-together/>.

¹³⁵ Amandine Gnanguenon, "Operation Barkhane: A Show of Force and Political Games in the Sahel-Sahara," *Global Observatory*, September 4, 2014, accessed January 27, 2015, <http://theglobalobservatory.org/2014/09/operation-barkhane-force-political-games-sahel-sahara/>.

¹³⁶ Delaporte, *French Lessons from Mali*.

the co-founder of Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Ahmed el Tilemsi. Along with Tilemsi, a dozen other rebels were killed in the raid.¹³⁷

On January 20, 2015, UN attack helicopters launched air strikes on Tuareg rebel forces in support of Dutch special operators. This was the first such attack carried by Dutch forces in Mali. The Dutch forces launched the attack in response to an attack from the Azawad National Liberation Movement rebels. The attack left five rebels dead and provoked a strong negative reaction from the Tuareg leaders. This incident immediately turned the Azawad National Liberation Movement against the United Nations. As a result, on January 21, 2015, the Tuareg residents of Kidal protested at the local airfield. The protesters destroyed UN property and forced UN personnel to seek refuge in their compound. Additionally, Azawad National Liberation Movement carried attacks against militias in the city of Gao, resulting in 26 casualties.¹³⁸

Overall, UN SOF did not conduct direct action except the air strike on January 20, 2015, leaving French Special Forces to compensate by carrying the burden of direct action activities in Mali. It is clear that the United Nations in Mali tries to avoid as much as possible to involve UN SOF in offensive operations.

Special Operations Forces contribution to the UN effort in Mali is significant. Even though not all elements operating in Mali belong to the MINUSMA, they operate to achieve the same goal: set the conditions for the United Nations to maximize nation-building efforts. There is a clear distribution of SOF missions and activities between SOF elements operating in Mali. SOF

¹³⁷ Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, “French Troops Kill MUJAO Founder during Raid in Mali,” *The Long War Journal*, December 2014, accessed January 28, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/us_wanted_malian_jih.php.

¹³⁸ IHS Jane’s Intelligence Weekly, “Malian Tuareg Groups’ Suspension of Security Co-operation with UN Forces Raises Risks to Personnel, Ground Assets,” accessed January 29, 2015, <http://www.janes.com/article/48220/malian-tuareg-groups-suspension-of-security-co-operation-with-un-forces-raises-risks-to-personnel-ground-assets>.

elements that are part of the French-led Operation SERVAL conduct direct action activities. EUTM Mali, which has a UN mandate, is in charge of military assistance activities. Finally, the Dutch SOF element that belongs to MINUSMA conducts special reconnaissance activities.

This section offered an analysis of the way the UN organization uses SOF to conduct peacekeeping missions. First, the section discussed the utilization of SOF in the peacekeeping efforts in Somalia in the period 1992 to 1995. Subsequently, it analyzed the participation of SOF in the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, the section presented the contributions of SOF to the Multidimensional UN Mission in Mali. The next section summarizes the analysis and looks at the contributions of SOF to the UN missions from the perspective of Systems Theory.

Conclusion

The three case studies provide an answer to the research question and provide evidence in support of the hypothesis of this research. This section offers an interpretation of how SOF contributes to the UN peacekeeping missions through the lenses of Systems Theory. Additionally, it provides recommendations regarding the future employment of SOF in UN peace operations. Finally, this section provides a recommendation for further research.

From the Systems Theory perspective, one can observe that in the UN Peace Operations in Mali and Congo, SOF was the system that contributed to the improvement of both UN missions. Both, MONUSCO and MINUSMA became complex adaptive systems that developed characteristics and capabilities to resist the perturbations coming from outside of the system. The perturbations usually manifested themselves in forms of hostile acts towards UN activities. SOF's ability to penetrate the jungle and access remote areas combined with SOF capabilities to execute surgical strikes and give training to enable FARDC to conduct operations significantly improved MONUSCO. In Mali, due to SOF's extreme mobility, ability to cover significant distances, intelligence-gathering capabilities, and effectiveness training Malian Armed Forces radical extremist groups were denied safe havens, helping to ensure the integrity of the country. In both cases, SOF played the role of a regulator who opposed positive feedback loops, preventing both UN missions from moving in undesired directions and towards collapse.

The situation was different in Somalia. Even though the peace operation system responded positively to SOF military assistance and special reconnaissance activities, the system responded in a negative way to SOF direct action activities. SOF was one of the agents that, through the conduct of direct action activities, brought the UN system in Somalia out of balance and moved it to a bifurcation point. At that point, the system was expected to acquire the characteristics of a complex adaptive system and become stronger. Instead, the system collapsed. It was unable to absorb the energy flux coming from SOF activities because the policy makers

leading the peace efforts in Somalia failed to integrate SOF into their political plan. As such, Task Force Ranger's operation Gothic Serpent (Black Hawk Down) became the final impulse that caused the UNOSOM II mission to break down. The failure of this operation initiated a positive feedback loop that ultimately resulted in system's collapse and failure of the entire UN effort in Somalia.

The United Nations uses SOF to achieve global peace because current operations involving UN peacekeepers have reached a degree of complexity in which SOF are more effective than conventional peacekeeping forces. Systems Theory enforces this hypothesis. The UN officials characterized the decision to augment the FIB in Congo with a Special Forces company as a natural evolution of the way the United Nations conducts operations. The Dutch officials expressed the same idea when Netherlands deployed its SOF contingent in support of MINUSMA. However, there are some important caveats to this interpretation that lead to several recommendations.

The first recommendation is that no matter what capabilities SOF brings in support of a peace operation, policy makers and planners must integrate SOF into overall policy and strategy. Planners must not separate SOF activities from the overall peacekeeping strategy and effort. The outcome of the UN Peace Operations in Somalia is a clear indicator of this.

The second recommendation is that the United Nations should establish a Special Operations planning cell within the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As of now, the cell is nonexistent. This cell should be able to facilitate the integration of SOF into the overall peace operations concept.

Finally, the UN organization should elaborate a concept that would set up the framework for SOF employment in peace operations. A very important aspect here is to elaborate the necessary doctrine that would guide SOF in peace operations. The United Nations has already made the first step by publishing the UN Special Forces manual in February 2015.

Without any doubt, utilization in peace operations of United Nations SOF is a sensitive issue. Many classic SOF approaches, which include clandestine and covert operations, run counter to the UN operating philosophy. As such, a SOF peacekeeper wearing a UN blue beret may compromise the entire UN force by conducting lethal and clandestine operations, drawing animosity from the local population, just as was the case of the Task Force Ranger in Somalia. The United Nations needs to establish the left and right limits of SOF action in peace operations. This constitutes a topic for further research. It would identify to what extent and for what set of activities the United Nations should employ SOF to achieve optimal results.

This section summarized the findings of the research by interpreting them through Systems Theory. Additionally, it provided several recommendations on what should be the necessary steps to ensure the proper integration of SOF into UN peace operations. Finally, the section offered a recommendation for further research that would enlarge the understanding of the implications and consequences of the employment of UN SOF in peace operations.

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