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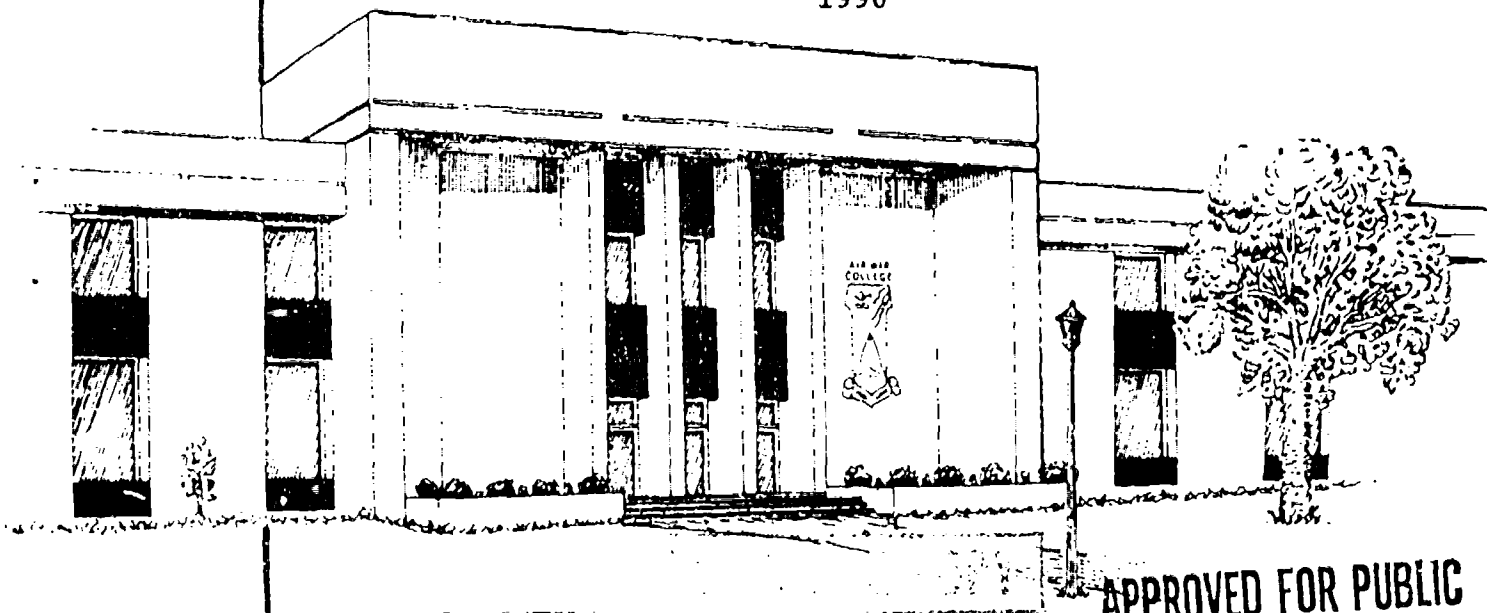
RESEARCH REPORT

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES--RESPONSIVE,
CAPABLE, AND READY

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AIR UNIVERSITY
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES--RESPONSIVE,
CAPABLE, AND READY

by

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and

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Gary E. Thiry, USMC

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

May 1990

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Special Operations Forces--Responsive, Capable, and Ready

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In April 1980, the failed Iranian rescue mission prompted renewed attention to US special operation capabilities. Specifically, the lack of focus and inability to coordinate forces in response to crisis in the lower spectrum of warfare prompted formation of the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in April 1987. USSOCOM is now three years old. Do we have more Special Operations Forces (SOF) capability with a unified focus? Recent actions during Operation "Just Cause" in Panama at decade's end demonstrated that our special forces have come a long way. Having a firm commitment to SOF and a ready military to respond, the policymakers and SOF leaders must also continue to provide a mission for SOF employment.

This analysis shows how at times our vision has been blurred with respect to SOF employment. However, congressionally prompted renewed emphasis in SOF and low-intensity conflict has demonstrated dividends. As defense budgets shrink and military forces are trimmed, SOF units united with highly skilled conventional forces will likely be the option of choice in response to future conflicts.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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Lieutenant Colonel John W. Schmidt, USMC, is a 1990 graduate of the Air War College. He has a MA from the University of Wisconsin. Colonel Schmidt is an infantry officer with recent experience in implementing the Marine Corps Training Program for special operations capabilities for Mediterranean deployments. He has commanded at the battalion level and served in both operations and planning billets. In these capacities, he has worked with other Armed Forces throughout the world ranging from Kenya to Norway. Prior to his Air War College attendance, he was a member of the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable (SOC).

INTRODUCTION

Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their unique capabilities have meant many things to many people. Historians and the general public readily recall daring raids, rescues, and reconnaissance actions conducted by these forces during conflicts. Examples include Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" of colonial times and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II. In essence, these highly skilled and trained forces are usually associated with successful operations. At least, such were the impressions up until recent times.

In the aftermath of Vietnam, American retrenchment from most things military sent all the wrong signals to our adversaries. We were seen as a hollow force, a giant unwilling to exercise its will and influence in areas where we had vested interests. Soviet adventurism and actions by Soviet surrogates began filling the vacuum. Coupled with Soviet action was the renewal of an old form of warfare called terrorism designed to change national will through shock effect. Cumulatively, these actions were short of all out war and required new approaches and tailored responses that blended conventional and unconventional force application. As a nation, we were unprepared for such responses. Unfortunately, a catalytic

action witnessed by the entire world prompted us to change our national approach to warfare, especially in the unconventional arena.

When President Carter ordered his military forces to execute a daring raid in Iran to rescue American hostages, our unconventional response was left in flames and ashes in a remote region of Iran called "Desert One." Our earlier abilities to execute bold and daring strikes were left wanting. The American public wanted to know why and the Congress forced a response. A reemphasis and rebirth of special operations forces began.

This paper focuses on where we came from in developing a special operations capability (Chapter I), how the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) evolved (Chapter II), and finally, where we are headed in the future (Chapter III). Chapters I and III are introduced by a generalized analysis and followed by reviews of articles or books amplifying the specific topics. This study will show that the USSOCOM, as a unified command, is adequately structured to perform its various missions ranging from unconventional warfare to nation building.

We assert that in the aftermath of "Desert One," our special operations capabilities can now range the entire spectrum of conflict with likely emphasis on the low-intensity scale. Moreover, that although national policy may prefer a nation-building role for special operations, we must maintain a

force projection capability. This capability merges special operations capabilities with conventional forces as was recently demonstrated in Panama, December 1989. Also, actions in Panama by Special Operations Forces show, once more, that we have a capable, responsive, and ready special operations capability.

CHAPTER I

SPECIAL OPERATIONS--WHERE WE HAVE BEEN; A FOOTBALL IN THE GAME OF NATIONAL STRATEGY

The history of special operations forces in the United States reflects a recognized requirement for highly skilled units to conduct high-risk, high-gain missions. It also shows how policymakers, military leaders, and the public--elements of that "remarkable trinity" referred to by Clausewitz--have often ignored the value of such forces in overall strategy formulation responding to threats against the United States. The history of special operations forces serves as a prologue to its current structure and a gradual recognition by the United States of the need for such forces.

Hitting enemy forces with small bands of elite, highly trained soldiers where they are most vulnerable has always been a trump card played by successful military leaders. Evidence abounds from our colonial wars through the Civil War where elite bands of soldiers executed select raids on supply depots and key lines of communications. However, World War II is officially recognized as the precursor of today's special operations forces. (1:2)

During World War II, special units such as the Army's 1st Special Services Force, US Marine Corps' Raider Battalion, Navy Underwater Demolition Teams, Army Air Corps units, and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were formed to perform an array of specialized tasks. These highly skilled units conducted some of the following missions: operations behind enemy lines; deep penetration raids; intelligence gathering; and amphibious reconnaissance. From the history and legacy of these World War II units headed by General "Wild Bill" Donovan, the current United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) traces its roots. (2:48-50)

Donovan's concept for special operations forces was to use them to "wear down the enemy psychologically, keep him off balance, zap his energy, and divert his resources from major engagements." (1:2) He also envisioned using these forces in concert with conventional operations to affect an overall campaign plan.

In the post-World War II environment, the use of Donovan's tactics, techniques, and the experience of special operations forces declined. Such decline appears rooted in two causes--reevaluation of the enemy threat facing the United States and budget reductions.

As the United States and the Soviet Union settled into an era of cold war diplomacy, policies of nuclear deterrence and containment of Communism became key elements of our national

strategy. President Harry Truman best expressed his focus in a letter to the Secretary of State that included the following statements:

Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language, another war is in the making. Only one language do they (Russia) understand, how many divisions have you? (3:71-80)

Truman's preference for conventional forces coupled with America's new-found strength in nuclear arms resulted in a dismantlement of special operations capabilities. Thus, Truman's policy along with defense budget cuts sounded the death knell for small, unique bands of elite forces so well employed during World War II.

Special operations capabilities of our nation were then caught in an ebb and flow situation, so typical over the next 40 years. Donovan's strategy would be tossed aside in brief periods of tenuous world peace only to be rediscovered in times of tension and conflict. Soon, resident skills of special forces would be needed as the Korean War erupted.

During the Korea War, the United States had a limited special operations capability. Unlike Donovan's centralized OSS effort, most special operations activities in Korea were service-oriented and very limited due to earlier budget cutbacks. Psychological operations units, working with Air Force support, distributed leaflets along the Pusan Perimeter and encouraged North Korean surrender. (4:11) Also, Army Ranger units were reactivated to lead long-range patrols while Navy

underwater demolition team efforts were directed at harbor defenses. Once US forces withdrew, however, what little emphasis was placed in special operations generally disappeared except for a fledgling US Army effort. (4:12-13)

After Korea, attitudes of the US public were keyed to the cold war with its attendant threat of nuclear exchange. In short, the "remarkable trinity" was unconcerned about special operations. Spurred by our key adversaries--USSR and China--and prompted by a new administration, national strategy soon shifted whereby operations forces and capabilities were reemphasized.

On the eve of President John F. Kennedy's inauguration (January 1961), Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev announced a less confrontational approach in countering US nuclear superiority. Khrushchev called his strategy "wars of national liberation," wars designed to avoid direct confrontation with the United States by using surrogate forces. This strategy was also reinforced by Mao's "people's war" in China. Collectively viewing these events, President Kennedy directed implementation of a new strategy to counter these "wars of liberation." (5:45)

First, to enhance military response in likely contingency areas of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, Kennedy designated the US Strike Command to prepare for rapid intervention into these regions. Next, he formed a cabinet-level office titled the Special Group (Counter-insurgency). This office was charged with coordinating overall

US response within third world regions. Kennedy's final measure was creation of a new type of soldiering to counter these new threats. Former Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell Taylor was assigned as the president's special military advisor to implement the counterinsurgency program. (6:6) Besides new impetus, Kennedy also added something else to his fight against third world revolutions. He interjected funds into this new program oriented toward counterinsurgency and special operations. Although exact amounts for special operations budgets are difficult to pinpoint in the early periods, one estimate puts the special operations budget at \$1 billion by the late 1960s. (4:15)

Under Kennedy, the United States formulated a strategy and doctrine for countering small wars on the low-intensity scale. The new type of soldiering envisioned by Kennedy began at the Special Warfare Training Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Here, soldiers trained as special operations advisors schooled in counterinsurgency warfare, language skills, and how to assist in stabilizing popular support for a government in power. (6:7)

Kennedy's push also spurred the Army to update its training manuals relative to counterinsurgencies and unconventional warfare operations. Many manuals produced by the Special Warfare Training Center reflected the insurgent and guerrilla nature of warfare applicable in the early phases of

Vietnam. Field Manuals titled Special Warfare Operations and US Army Counterinsurgency Forces produced around 1964 serve as examples of new impetus being placed on the type of soldiering required in combatting insurgencies. Unfortunately, as one critic notes, this type of forward thinking remained isolated within Special Forces and not introduced to the Army as a whole. (7:40) Perhaps this lack of Army-wide unconventional warfare understanding led to improper employment of Special Forces advisors in the early phases of US involvement in Vietnam. In any event, by early 1965, the Special Forces counterinsurgency emphasis had shifted to a more conventional role. Manning static defensive positions and border surveillance far from populated areas became routine missions replacing earlier village pacification programs. (7:75) This paper is not intended to assess the success or failure of counterinsurgency programs during the Vietnam War. However, how the Special Forces troops and their capabilities were employed in Vietnam also raises questions for how such forces will be employed in future contingencies. A topic addressed later in our analysis.

Aside from insurgency and unconventional warfare operations, one special operations mission stands out as a precursor for skills and training later needed in coping with new threats. In hindsight, the Son Tay Raid of 1970 can best be described as a bittersweet success story. Certainly from the

standpoint of achieving the mission of freeing American POWs, Son Tay was a failure. In a broader context, the raid demonstrated what special operations forces could do given proper leadership and training. Successfully penetrating a North Vietnamese prison camp only 23 miles from Hanoi, a small, carefully assembled force of 56 men conducted a near flawless raid to free some 60 POWs. Unfortunately, their heroic effort was in vain. The North Vietnamese had moved the POWs months before. Despite failed intelligence, something that would plague operations of this type in the future, Son Tay showed how the United States could clandestinely travel long distances, achieve tactical surprise, and execute a complex special operations raid mission.

Son Tay, like the Vietnam War itself, became a footnote in history. As the United States withdrew its forces in 1973, America closed a chapter on war written with an ending of "no more Vietnams." Our exit from Vietnam also left the "remarkable trinity" reluctant to pursue future wars where national interests were not more clearly defined. Similar to previous postwar periods, special operations units and their requisite skills, which had reached their pinnacle under Kennedy, were either deactivated or assimilated into conventional forces. As with earlier periods, funds were also cut back. By the mid-1970s, the special operations budget only totalled \$100 million.^(4:17) Overall, the United States was pulling back its

talons in the Vietnam aftermath. Soon, however, new challenges emerged which challenged the United States in her post-Vietnam paralysis.

Despite Kennedy's farsightedness in recognizing both the threat and types of forces necessary for response in an evolving world picture, the United States in the seventies and eighties had to be reintroduced to what today is called "low-intensity conflict." A type of warfare that centers around the following:

Those who wish the United States harm have reacted not by renouncing the use of force, but by ratcheting it down to levels where the United States finds it difficult to respond and where they believe they have a better chance of success. (8:23)

This "ratcheting down" occurred as the Soviets and their proxies began a concerted campaign of adventurism characterized by terrorism, subversion, and renewed insurgencies. Moreover, these challenges showed an America reluctant to act in an atmosphere of "no more Vietnams" and incapable of response on the low-intensity scale. Several examples highlight this point.

In May 1975, President Gerald Ford faced a major international crisis when Cambodian gunboats seized an unarmed US container ship, the S.S. Mayaguez, in international waters. Ford, wanting to demonstrate US resolve sent a joint force composed of Air Force helicopters, Navy ships, and US Marines to rescue the ship and its 40-men crew. The ship was recovered intact by the assault force and the crew released unharmed. However, US forces suffered high losses in hitting a heavily fortified island where the Mayaguez crew was thought to be held.

Instead of a quick surgical strike, the United States ultimately relied on a concentrated application of firepower to withdraw its forces from the island. It was later discovered that the hostages had never been held on the island. (9:223) What the Mayaguez episode demonstrated was a faulty system for executing joint, low-intensity raid missions and poor intelligence and information flow among the forces executing the mission. In stark contrast to the Mayaguez mission stood the Israeli Entebbe rescue mission conducted a year later. (9:237-240)

Emboldened by earlier successes such as the Munich Games in 1972, international terrorists struck again in June 1976. This time, terrorists seized an Israeli jetliner with 257 passengers on board that was in flight from Tel Aviv to Paris. The aircraft was forced to land in Entebbe, Uganda. Almost as shocking as the aircraft hijacking itself was the swift, almost flawless, Israeli commando response. The mission successfully extracted the hostages with a minimum loss of life to those being held and only two KIAs among the Israeli raid force. (9:214) However, as terrorism attracted worldwide attention, America remained passive to special operations capabilities. Two events in 1979 shook the United States to her senses. Both occurred in Southwest Asia.

When the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979, President Jimmy Carter established a Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) to protect US access to Persian Gulf oil fields. This

task force was similar to the defunct US Strike Command established by Kennedy in the 1960s. While the RDJTF was conventionally-oriented, another event in Iran illustrated a need for special operations.

Soon after the Shah's ouster, Iranian radicals seized the US Embassy in Teheran along with 53 American hostages. Carter authorized a hastily assembled force of 180 US servicemen to attempt a hostage rescue. The mission failed before it ever began due to a faulty command and control system, misdirected communications, and compartmentation of information. It culminated with tragic results in a remote region of Iran called "Desert One." This episode finally demonstrated to all that the American giant had grown weak. In the words of a popular network news program reporting the hostage crisis, America herself was being held hostage. (10:1-2)

"Desert One" served as a catalyst that renewed interest in special operations forces. It served as an analytical departure point to examine what went wrong and why. An independent investigation to answer these questions found flaws in mission planning and execution similar to those noted in the 1975 Mayaguez operation. Over the years, both civilian leadership and the military itself had permitted its crisis action planning system and its a mechanism for joint, detailed planning, and oversight to diminish. Moreover, faulty and excessive compartmentation of intelligence and the lack of a

clearly defined command and control mechanism also contributed to failure. Perhaps most surprising of all findings was that in preparation for such a complex mission, no single rehearsal of all forces involved was ever conducted. (10:120)

Out of the failure of "Desert One," came a rebirth of emphasis on unconventional methods to respond to the broad spectrum of threats facing US interests at home and abroad. This renewal also signaled an upgrade of US forces skilled in special operations. After 40 years of being aimlessly tossed about like a football on the field of national strategy, special operations finally earned its rightful place on the playing field as Ronald Reagan assumed office.

In summary, this chapter has shown where we came from in developing a special operations capabilities from World War II to the present. For the past 40 years, civilian policymakers, the military, and the public have cyclicly recognized and ignored special operations as a part of US national strategy. Only recently, with a diminished threat of nuclear war, has the "remarkable trinity" come to appreciate that the United States has entered a new form of warfare on the low-intensity scale. With it comes a requirement for a new form of response. This response has led to the establishment of the USSOCOM discussed in Chapter II.

The Raid by Benjamin F. Schemmer. New York: Avon Books.
1986.

In November 1970, a US joint forces surprise raid into a small North Vietnamese prison camp, 23 miles northwest of Hanoi, rescued no prisoners. Yet, the raid ultimately achieved the national strategic objective--to display national resolve to effect release of the prisoners of war. Just how this apparent dichotomy of failure and success exists becomes evident through Benjamin Schemmer's Clancyesque and objective analysis of the Son Tay raid. The demonstration of superiority of a trained and coordinated strike team, drawing strength from interservice expertise, unfolds through his retelling of the events comprising the rescue attempt.

Schemmer recounts the heightening tension in the American public over the Vietnam War situation reaching mammoth proportions in the spring of 1970. President Nixon was under enormous public pressure for his perceived escalation of fighting into Cambodia. The growing student demonstrations and the Kent State fiasco, leaving four students dead, added to the pressure. As disenchanted as the American people had become with the war, they were equally united in their sentiment and concern for the prisoners of war (POW) and for the missing in action (MIA). At this time in the war there were some 4,705 American families who had fathers, sons, or husbands listed in the

POW/MIA ranks. The Paris Peace Talks were getting no closer to obtaining relief to this worsening situation. For every 12 American lives lost, the POW/MIA list increased by one more person. The North Vietnamese were using the prisoners as hostages against the United States. The 1,463 American POW/MIAs had become a main political and social issue haunting President Nixon. Dr Kissinger's aggressive negotiations were stalemated; the North Vietnamese knew they had a weapon and were steadfast in their aim to use it.

In May 1970, Air Force intelligence photo interpreters noted the presence of 60 POWs at Son Tay prison. This discovery, channeled up to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), began the long 6-1/2 month path to the raid. The military planners were confident that a small, highly trained, and uniquely equipped joint special operations team could successfully penetrate the prison compound area. From the extensive intelligence gathered on the enemy's positions and capabilities, the planners specifically tailored the team's size and capabilities to enable it to enter the prison, negate the resistance, retrieve the prisoners, and egress in a quick (30 minutes ground time) surprise raid.

In July 1970, under JCS direction, Brig Gen Leroy Manor, Commander, Air Force Special Operations Force, and Col Bull Simons, USA, were selected to command, equip, and train the joint special operations team. After they personally selected the team members, an intensive 3-1/2

month training program was conducted at Eglin AFB, Florida, under the strictest of security measures. Fifty-six soldiers, in six helicopters (five HH-53 and one HH-3), would be led by special Combat Talon C-130 aircraft, equipped with experimental forward-looking radar on the 330 mile journey from Udorn RTAFB to Son Tay. Sensitive in-flight maneuvers required for nighttime, low level, aerial refueling of the helicopters were rehearsed repeatedly. To maximize the advantage of surprise, the raid would be conducted at night with only the restrictive limits of available moonlight to enable the intricate navigational requirements. Planned as a quick-hitting raid, the rescue team's movements within the limited 30-minute ground time were coordinated precisely. The plan, exercised to perfection, would be concluded quickly enough to preclude any enemy reinforcement response.

A massive diversionary feint flown by Task Force 77 Navy crews over the eastern Haiphong Harbor coincided with the raiding team's entrance to the Son Tay area. For the duration of the raid, the attention of the North Vietnamese defensive forces was successfully diverted towards the chaos created by the naval air attack's formidable ordnance load of 190 flares.

Schemmer, as would many other analysts, concludes intelligence to have been the Achilles' heel of this operation. Not only had the existence of more than 100

North Vietnamese soldiers at a supposed vacant school yard adjacent to the prison gone undetected, but also the removal of all prisoners some four months prior had been unconfirmed. Although superior firepower and surprise negated the undetected additional defensive force, the absence of all POWs proved to be a crushing blow to an otherwise flawless military operation. Photographic intelligence from satellite, SR-71, and drone platforms provided confusing information as to the actual status of the POWs. While weather obstructions and mechanical failures plagued many of the reconnaissance opportunities, the planning team persisted in their erroneous belief that there were, in fact, POWs at Son Tay. When, on the eve of mission launch, it became apparent to the national leadership from the highest intelligence sources that Son Tay was dry, the primary objective of displaying national resolve overrode the possibility of immediately rescuing POWs.

Schemmer's research recounted that when Adm Thomas H. Moorer (Chairman, JCS) had briefed President Nixon and the National Security Council on the operation in October 1970, the president had grasped the political potential of the mission. The possibility of rescuing 60 POWs had become a secondary objective. More importantly, a successful raid would demonstrate the US resolve to go to any extremes to effect the release of our people. To communicate this

threat to the enemy (and to the US public), it was necessary to display intent as well as capability. A rescue mission literally into the backyard of Hanoi could provide us with exactly that punch needed to bring international weight to bear on the North Vietnamese in Paris. Schemmer proposes the primary objective of the Son Tay raid had become a political one, to display American resolve; the use of military force was the means to this end.

The rescue of POWs proved to be an elusive objective. Schemmer contends we have never had a successful rescue in our military history since the Civil War, and there would prove to be almost a hundred other attempts in Vietnam itself before the war ended. The Son Tay rescue was the most extensive and rehearsed raid, and the only one conducted in Hanoi's backyard. The lengthy time it took to plan, train for, and execute this raid (6-1/2 months) does not reflect well upon the timely reaction from the bureaucracy in our government. However, the majority of the other 97 raids in Vietnam, more swiftly planned and conducted within the local theater, came away with the same results.

The uniqueness of the Son Tay rescue raid as the first major American military operation conducted under direct JCS control reflects the sensitivity surrounding the specific use of force to secure a national objective. Schemmer points out that in light of President Johnson's 1968

restrictions on bombing in North Vietnam and the controversy surrounding President Nixon's expansion into Cambodia, the approval to conduct a military operation into the North became an executive and National Security Council exercise between the president, Secretary Rogers, Secretary Laird, Dr Kissinger, CIA Director Helms, and Admiral Moorer.

Clausewitz's perception on intelligence in war--"this difficulty of accurate recognition constitutes one of the most serious sources of friction in war"--had stood the test of time for over 150 years. The shroud of secrecy designed into this mission in many ways created the "fog of war" in the intelligence arena that accounted for raiding a dry hole. While extensive security precautions ensured the surprise factor, similar precautions on other programs precluded the raiding teams' being aware that the prisoners had been relocated.

The Son Tay raid was a strategic success, however, in terms of its positive effect upon the POW situation. From other after-war reports, Schemmer concludes that the POWs themselves rated the raid as a major morale booster. The ability of the United States to conduct such an operation startled the North Vietnamese and their Chinese allies. For the remaining two years, our POWs were consolidated. On the homefront, and internationally, our resolve to not forget and our intention to try any possible means to gain freedom for our countrymen rang clear.

Although the creation of a ready, special operations force will go a long way to increasing our reaction capabilities (this team took 3-1/2 months to assemble, equip, and train), we need to criticize the authorization process that launched this mission. As a comparison, the Israelis conducted the Entebbe rescue raid with only five days notice!

The advantage in instances such as the Son Tay raid must go with the offensive force. With effective mission security providing the attribute of surprise, the raiders were able to select the time and place of engagement. Technological superiority in the form of new radars in the C-130 Combat Talon aircraft enabled the raiders to precisely navigate the intricate flight paths critical to circumventing ground radar detection and arrive at the target undetected. State-of-the-art night vision rifle scopes provided the 56 soldiers with the force multiplier essential to overcome the defenses without sustaining any losses themselves. The advantages of a special operations force were clearly evident in this operation. Superior mission-specific training and equipage, combined with advance knowledge of the resistance established the force ratio for success. The existence of the undetected North Vietnamese troops at the reportedly vacant schoolhouse only reinforced the advantages of surprise and thorough planning

for contingency operations. The astonishment so overwhelmed the defenders that it enabled the dozen US commandos at that facility to entirely negate their resistance in less than ten minutes. The raiding team's exhaustive planning and rehearsals to accommodate deviations provided a coordinated alternative plan for the remaining team's simultaneous attack upon the primary objective, the Son Tay prison. This flawless and instantaneous change in tactics was made possible primarily due to the synergistic effects of a totally coordinated team effort.

It would take another two long years and Linebacker II's eleven solid days of bombing to bring the North Vietnamese to settle at Paris. However, the companionship and strength in unity brought about by the Son Tay raid would make these years bearable for the POWs. The ability and intent displayed by the Son Tay raiders successfully communicated to the North Vietnamese, and the world, our determination and resolve to bring our soldiers home. This, in its simplicity, was the strategic objective of the mission.

Lt Col Michael Cuddihee, USAF
Doris Sartor, ed.

Hostage Rescue In a Hostile Environment: Lessons Learned From the Son Tay, Mayaguez, and Entebbe Missions by James E. Winkates, in Political Terrorism and Business, ed. Yonah Alexander and Robert Kilmarx (New York, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), pp. 212-241.

- Thesis: Three military responses---Son Tay, Mayaguez, and Entebbe---yield common threads and distinct differences.
- Background
 - Although Son Tay, Mayaguez, and Entebbe were diverse missions, their mutual purpose was to rescue prisoners-of-war (POW).
 - International terrorism emerges in various guises.
 - The responses are usually high risk ventures with little margin for error.
 - Six common factors are measures of success or failure in studying these rescue situations:
 - Diplomatic efforts
 - Intelligence
 - Force structure and execution
 - Logistics
 - Command, control, and communications
 - Public opinion
- Son Tay (November 1970)
 - A small US joint service helicopter force penetrated a North Vietnam-held POW camp to free 61 prisoners.
 - Although the raid rescued no prisoners, it was considered a success.

- The raid demonstrated US resolve to effect release of the POW.
- The North Vietnamese used US POW as hostages to pressure Washington.
- Force planners had first-rate military intelligence troop dispositions, camp defenses, but no hard information on POW location. Planners never passed on to the rescue force that the POW had been moved.
- Fifty-six hand-picked men, tough rehearsals, and reliance on proven aircraft (C-130s and helicopters) led to successful entry and withdrawal at Son Tay.
- Compartmentation of vital information and communication difficulties hampered overall mission success.
- Mayaguez (May 1975)
 - Cambodian gunboats seized a US container ship on the high seas. The 40-men crew was taken to Koh Tang island.
 - US Marines boarded and seized the ship. Joint Air Force, Navy, and Marine troops assaulted the island. The ship's crew was released unharmed. US forces had 18 KIAs and 50 WIAs.
 - Diplomatic moves in Mayaguez were few and limited and it was hard for the US to determine the intent of Cambodian actions.

- The exact location of Mayaguez crew was never confirmed.
US withdrawal from the Southeast Asia region weeks earlier limited intelligence efforts.
- Faulty enemy strength reports were given to Marine forces.
 - Our initial briefings said there were 20-30 irregulars on Koh Tang island. A more realistic DIA estimate of 150 to 200 enemy troops never reached the Marines.
- The entire mission lacked quick, precise strike, and efficient coordination of force.
- Entebbe (June 1976)
 - Terrorists seized Air France jet with 257 passengers aboard and forced the pilot to land the plane at Entebbe, Uganda.
 - Israeli commandoes used a C-130 to fly into Entebbe airport and free the hostages. Israelis suffered two KIAs, and four WIAs.
 - The Entebbe raid was cited as a model operation.
 - Israel bought time by negotiating while preparing rescue plans.
 - The raid's success was due to coordinated, all-source intelligence information placed in the user's hands.

--- Israelis commandoes used surprise, boldness, and accurate firepower. The element of luck was also present (e.g. all hostages remained together).

- Summary

-- Although each rescue operation was unique, overall success required responsive, trained special forces and good intelligence information.

Lt Col John W. Schmidt, USMC
Doris Sartor, ed.

The Iranian Rescue Mission by Paul Ryan. Annapolis, MD:

Naval Institute Press. 1985.

The Iranian Rescue Mission describes events surrounding the abortive rescue attempt of 53 Americans held hostage by Iranian radicals in Tehran. Concisely written, Paul Ryan's book describes the decisions and actions whereby 180 US servicemen attempted the ill-fated raid to free their fellow Americans in April 1980. Ryan analyzes why the mission failed and cites faulty military decision making as the causative factor of the fatal mission.

Scenario For Rescue

In early 1979, Iran moved into American consciousness. A fanatical fundamentalist mullah, the Ayatollah Khomeini, replaced ousted pro-Western Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Khomeini adroitly manipulated and maneuvered pent-up frustrations against the West into public demonstrations. The US was the primary target of these protests. Khomeini and the crowds labeled the US as the "Great Satan" and chants of "death to Americans" were frequently heard from the crowds. The closest and nearest target for their protests was the US embassy in Tehran.

In the ensuing months, Khomeini rebuffed President Jimmy Carter's attempts at rapprochement. These attempts seemed only to heighten Iranian resentment against the US.

Within this scenario, administration officials urged US citizens to vacate Iran. On 4 November 1979, events peaked. A group of Iranian fanatics stormed the US embassy compound, seized the embassy facilities and held 53 American citizens hostage. Washington decision makers were divided about what to do next.

Political Discontent and Secrecy Shroud

Debate over the safe return of US hostages split the Carter White House. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance urged caution. He stressed that once Khomeini used the Americans for propaganda efforts Khomeini would relent and release the Americans. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski strongly disagreed with Vance's position. He advocated a military rescue mission to demonstrate US resolve and decisiveness. Carter approved Brzezinski's plan and gave him the lead in developing a rescue mission.

Concurrently, strict emphasis was placed on secrecy and small group planning to prevent leaks of the intended rescue effort. Brzezinski and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen David Jones, with a small working group, hammered out courses of action for the task force commander to consider.

Concept of Operations

Army Gen James B. Vaught headed a joint service task force charged with hostage recovery. Vaught selected a

course of action reliant on air asset employment.

Conceptually, His plan called for using a combination of AC-130 aircraft, C-141 Starlifters, and RH-53D helicopters in four distinct phases:

Phase One--Fly in/Reconfigure Raid Force at Desert One

Phase Two--Secure Airstrip/Prestage at Desert Two

Phase Three--Embassy Rescue by Helicopter of Evacuees

Phase Four--Flyaway of Evacuees and Raid Force

Within these phases, the plan called for specific actions. Six C-130 aircraft, lifting men, equipment, and helicopter fuel, would fly from an Egyptian air base, refuel on an island air base off Oman, and rendezvous at a landing strip 265 nm from Tehran at Desert One. Here, the C-130s would linkup with the 8 RH-53D helicopters flying from the aircraft carrier, USS Nimitz.

Once the Desert One site was secured, two C-130s would depart for Desert Two, leaving four C-130s for rendezvous. When the helicopters arrived at Desert One, they would refuel from bladders flown in by the other four C-130s. The assault team, rangers, and their related equipment would be transferred from the transport onto helicopters.

After transfer, the helicopters, men, and equipment would fly to Desert Two, a remote site some 50 miles from Tehran. At nightfall, the raid force would be moved by vans and trucks into Tehran. About 2300 that night, they would

storm the embassy compound, immobilize the guards, and rescue the hostages. Concurrent with this action, a smaller force was to break into the Foreign Affairs Ministry and rescue the US charge d'affaires and two other Americans. During the assault phase, two AC-130 gunships would circle overhead to provide air support. About 40 minutes after the initial assaults, the helicopters would pickup the evacuees and rescue teams from either the embassy compound or at a nearby soccer field, if the embassy site was untenable.

Meanwhile, another airstrip some 35 miles south of Tehran would prepare for the arrival of C-141s. Upon arrival of the helicopters from Tehran, all passengers would transfer onto the waiting C-141s. Before departing, the helicopters would be destroyed.

Events in this well-laid, ambitious plan never unfolded much beyond Phase One. Helicopters, the crucial thread running throughout the fabric of the operation, caused cancellation of the mission.

Three Helicopters Short

General Vaught selected Army Col Charlie A. Beckwith as head of the ground force element tasked with the embassy assault and hostage rescue. The line of authority was not so clearly defined for overall aviation planning, the element that much of the raid's rescue was based upon. For example, when the issue arose of how many helicopters were

needed for mission execution, the discussion moved to Brzezinski's level vice remaining inside military planning circles. As events were later sorted out, Marine Col Charles H. Pitman appeared to head the helicopter detachment.

In completing mission criteria, Pitman and Beckwith agreed that without six functioning helicopters at Desert One, the mission would be aborted. As events unfolded, the six helicopter requirement assumed greater significance.

Executing a successful carrier launch and penetration of Iranian airspace, the eight RH-53D helicopters hit trouble about two hours into their flight plan. Over the desert, one helicopter developed faulty rotor blade trouble and landed. The pilot decided not to chance flying the aircraft and abandoned it. Another helicopter pilot had witnessed the emergency landing, provided assistance by picking up the downed crew and continued its mission. Bad luck also struck the remaining seven helicopters.

Encountering an unexpected desert sand storm, another aircraft's engine overheated. The pilot aborted and returned to the carrier. Relying on instrument navigation, pilots of the remaining six helicopters concentrated on moving through the talcumlike, blowing sand and on to the Desert One.

The existing helicopters finally arrived at their destination, some 85 minutes behind schedule. Concerned by

the unexpected delay and relying on darkness to complete Phase One, another dilemma soon confronted Beckwith. He was told that another helicopter was out of action due to an unrepairable hydraulic pump. Now down to five helicopters, below the previously established minimum of six, Beckwith aborted the mission. However, bad luck continued to haunt helicopter operations.

Desert One Tragedy

Tragedy struck during refueling operations. Before the helicopter's return trip to the carrier, they required topping-off their tanks from the fuel-laden C-130s. The churning RH-53 rotor blades, combined with the turning C-130 propeller blades, created an atmosphere of blowing sand and intense noise. One of the helicopters in repositioning itself for its return trip, tilted right and didn't allow enough clearance from the parked C-130. The helicopters rotor blades smashed into the C-130 and erupted into a fireball. Engulfed by the flames, eight men died immediately and numerous others were injured.

During the ensuing turmoil, Beckwith's men abandoned their raid staging site. Within 30 minutes after the tragedy, the dead, injured, and remaining forces were airborne aboard the C-130s. To facilitate withdrawal, the remaining four helicopters--not pre-rigged for destruction--were left intact on the desert floor. As the

raid force departed, a nation's ambitious plans for securing the safety of its citizens lay wasted in the sands of Desert One. In this disastrous aftermath, what went wrong became the operative question.

Seven Fatal Flaws

To determine why the raid attempt failed, President Carter appointed former Chief of Naval Operations Adm James L. Holloway III as head of a review group. Holloway's charter was to determine lessons learned from the aborted effort so that the services could apply them in future planning.

The author of this book, Paul Ryan, used the Holloway evidence, plus his own research, to determine what went wrong. With the benefit of hindsight, Ryan concluded that faulty military decision making led to the ultimate disaster. Specifically, seven fatal flaws contributed to Ryan's conclusions:

1. Compartmentation of information with emphasis on secrecy;
2. Failed flow of intelligence;
3. Faulty force requirements to execute mission;
4. Poor communications planning;
5. Unclear command chain;
6. No full-scale dress rehearsal; and
7. No ready special operations force.

Compartmentation

The intense emphasis placed on operational security from the president down through the chain of command led to excessive compartmentation of secrecy. For example, Holloway's panel discovered that the sandstorm disturbances the helicopter pilots encountered over the Iranian desert had been documented in the weather annex to the operation plan. In testimony before Holloway, the C-130 and RH-53 pilots said that they never saw the document.

Failed flow of intelligence

Among military planners, it is axiomatic that intelligence on the enemy is never perfect and often incomplete. For Vaught's task force, valid information to base a plan seemed to dribble in. Partially because of Carter's cutbacks of the CIA. When the Iranians seized the embassy, the CIA had no agents operating in Iran. Lack of solid information also hampered planning and training. Beckwith did not know the exact location of the hostages inside the compound until the pilots were enroute to Desert One. Also, like the weather information, vital intelligence often went unshared or uninterpreted.

Faulty force requirements to execute mission

Vaught altered his task force size several times in response to various threat estimates. From an initial force

of 80 men, Vaught's force grew to over 250 men. Such changes affected everything from training to logistics support. Whether the force took enough helicopters was another issue the Holloway panel addressed. The panel recommended that 11 to 12 helicopters should have been employed to prevent risk of termination.

Poor communication planning

Criticisms of poor communications that hampered mission success ranged from radio inoperability among raid force elements to strict enforcement of radio silence. Emphasis on strict radio silence cut off timely and vital information flow among aircraft and to Vaught and Beckwith regarding helicopter status.

Unclear command chain

An ad hoc command arrangement led to confusion, especially among task force components. When the aircraft exploded at Desert One, followed by hasty extraction of the force, helicopter pilots were unsure of the officer's authority to order them to abandon their aircraft. Also, part of the confusion was because many of the men had not worked together before.

No full-scale dress rehearsal

During the entire workup phase (November to April

1980), a full-scale dress rehearsal, integrating all components, was never conducted. Operational security was the reason given by Holloway investigators for not conducting such a vital rehearsal. The initial meeting for several of the raid force elements was in the darkness of Desert One.

No ready special operations force

The Iranian hostage crisis underscored US military deficiencies in assembling a specialized force with mission specific equipment to execute short notice rescue operations. Haste prevailed in training men and assembling equipment to execute a complex and bold rescue. Results of this effort are now a sad chapter in US military history.

Summary

Collectively, the seven fatal flaws highlighted how the US was unprepared to execute an Iran rescue attempt. Vaught's task force was composed of brave, competent, and daring men. However, many factors worked against them. Hastily assembled elite forces, failure to think through command, control, and communications problems, and lack of a full-scale rehearsal added to the confusion surrounding the Desert One disaster.

The failed Iran rescue had a catalytic effect on US rethinking and realignment of its special forces. Today, a

new unified command--US Special Operations Command--exists to coordinate all aspects of special operations' training and employment. With the benefit of hindsight and with the creation of a new command, a lingering question remains. Does the US today have a more capable and responsive special operations force?

Lt Col J. W. Schmidt, USMC
Doris Sartor, ed.

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL-MILITARY EVOLUTION OF USSOCOM

The evolutionary process that led to the 1987 establishment of USSOCOM has not been the smoothest military transition, nor has it been void of political turbulence. (11:298-299, 158-159)

Rising from the shambles of the "Desert One" Iranian hostage rescue mission, the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) was organized in 1981. Comprised of Delta Force, SEAL Team 6, and air elements from the 160th Aviation Group and 23rd Air Force, this command was under direct JCS control. (12:21) Further, in 1983, the Secretary of Defense created an advisory group under the JCS to assist in the development of policy issues concerning special operations matters. This Special Operations Policy Advisory Group (SOPAG) consisted of retired general officers with expertise and experience in the special operations field. (4:23) To provide the organization with the required command and control of our special operations forces, in 1984, the Joint Special Operations Agency (JSOA) was created,

also under the JCS. Over a year in the making, the delays and confusion surrounding the establishment of the JSOA reflected the divergent attitudes between the Secretary of Defense and the military components over the apparent turf battle surrounding special operations. (13:58-60)

Congressional criticism aimed at the defense community over the management of the special operations situation was increasing during the mid-1980s. (14:4, 13:66) Congressman Dan Daniel (D-Virginia) called for the creation of a 6th service in lieu of a joint command for special operations. (13:67) Senators Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona) and Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) assailed the Department of Defense, or more specifically, the military services' bureaucracy and inability to appropriately manage the SOF situation. Armed with the analysis of the Grenada Operation portraying similar multi-service coordination deficiencies as with Desert One, the criticisms were not without foundation. Senator William S. Cohen (R-Maine), in early 1986, argued for the radical transition of the SOF mission into a new defense agency under the National Security Council in lieu of DOD. (13:70-71) As a result of joint congressional conference action (the Nunn/Cohen Amendment to the 1986 Goldwater/Nichols Act) a unified command was established. Also a new assistant secretary of defense for special operations, a separate funding line, and a dedicated member of the National Security Council Staff for special operations were established. With the creation of the United States Special Operations Command

(USSOCOM), the JSOA folded into the J3 Staff, JCS, as the Special Operations Division, (JCS:J3-SOD).

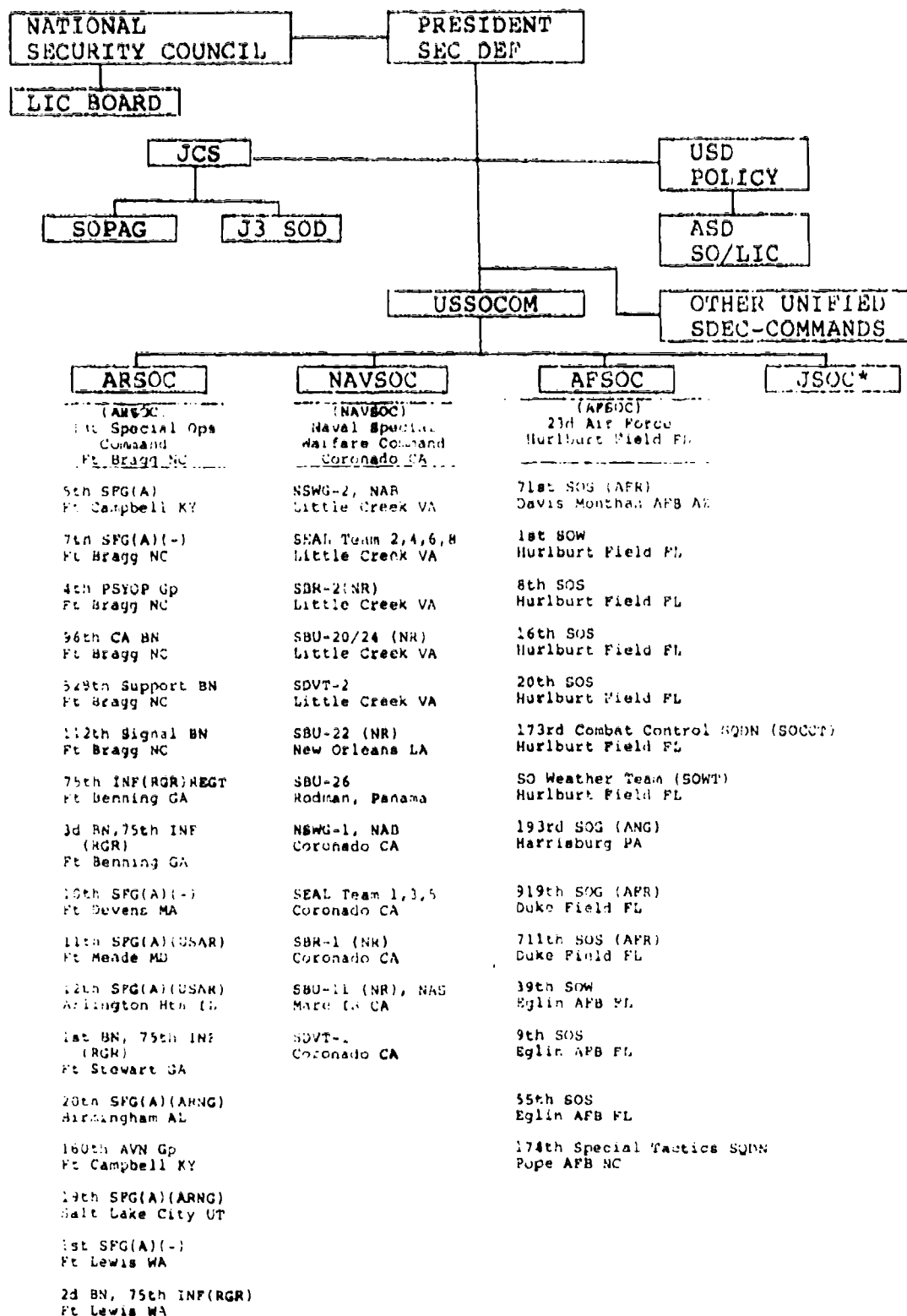
The six years between the "Desert One" disaster and the formation of USSOCOM were marked with scars from the bureaucratic infighting over the ultimate command and control structure for our special operations forcers. Internal defense disagreements ranging from the basic acceptance of a specialized force to the design of the command system were transcended by a surging congressional tide.

United States Special Operations Command Chair of
Command Relationships

United States Special Operations Command, headquartered at MacDill AFB FL, brings all CONUS-based (active and reserve) special operations, psychological operations, and civil affairs forces from the Army, Navy, and Air Force under single-manager control. The restructuring of SOF responsibilities within DOD brought on by the Nunn/Cohen Amendment has established special operations advocates within JCS, the unified command level, the Secretary of Defense as well as the National Security Council staff. The responsibilities of and interrelationships between these levels of organization are critical to USSOCOM's ability to contribute to our national security policies.^(11:301-302) A brief review of the national command authority chain down through USSOCOM and each agency's SOF responsibilities highlights the complexities in coordination (Figure 1).

NATIONAL COMMAND AUTHORITY

Figure 1



* JSOC is a joint headquarters designed to study the SO requirements and techniques of all services to ensure standardization.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 1987 directed the creation of a board for LIC within the National Security Council staff. Mr Robert Gates, Deputy National Security Advisor, chairs this board, but it has never met since its inception. (15:43) Advice on special operations and LIC appears to be coming to the National Command Authority through Mr Gates and a special assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Ambassador David Miller) in addition to the established DOD-channels. (15:43)

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD/SO-LIC) position was established under the 1987 Defense Authorization Bill. Mr James Locher III has been the third official to have held this position since its inception. As the SEC DEF's principal advisor on special operations and low-intensity conflict, ASD/ SO-LIC's responsibilities include: the formulation of SOF policies and objectives; supervision and oversight of budget issues; and liaison duties with other governmental agencies. Of particular importance to the employment of SOF within the politically sensitive LIC environment are the responsibilities for policy definition and the representational role with other governmental agencies. Our current national policy and strategy for LIC involve the coordinated use of political, economic, informational, and military forces. (15:3) This multi-federal agency effort requires the top level coordination capabilities available with an assistant secretary's authority. The responsibility to define

defense policy from national security policy is essential for the definition of requirements and missions for USSOCOM. Along these lines, USSOCOM and ASD SO/LIC are attempting to define these roles and missions within the fluid political environment. Targeted for a 1990 release from JCS review is the Special Operations Warfighting Doctrine document which will establish the responsibilities of the various federal agencies involved. (16:10)

The relationship between JCS and USSOCOM is parallel to the communications chain with the five overseas unified commands. As the unified commander for special operations, USCINCSOC is responsible for developing and submitting to the Chairman, JCS, the Special Operations input to the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS). Combined with the critical budgetary preparation process of the planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS), these inputs are pivotal to the proper allocation of resources within DOD under the increased authority vested with the Chairman by the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act.

To improve coordination and communications, USSOCOM maintains a liaison office in Washington D.C. This Washington office maintains a collocated relationship with the J3 Special Operations Division, JCS (formerly the Joint Special Operations Agency prior to USSOCOM activation).

As discussed earlier, the Special Operations Policy Advisory Group (SOPAG) consists of retired general officers with expertise in special operations. Although not directly in the formal chain of command, this group's responsibility for advising

the Chairman, JCS and the Secretary of Defense necessitate an informal relationship between them and USCINCSOC.

The relationship between USSOCOM and the involved non-DOD agencies is one of coordination and information exchange.

USCINCSOC, through the JCS and DOD, provides advice, information, and liaison as requested to other departments. (17:3-19)

ASD/SO-LIC is the primary office responsible for joint agency coordination effort. However, because of the magnitude of coordination effort, USSOCOM maintains liaison with State Department, FBI, CIA, DEA, and USIA. (17:1-5)

USSOCOM has a global supporting mission of providing the overseas unified commands with trained, equipped, and combat ready special operations forces for operational requirements. In addition, USCINCSOC provides advice and assistance on SOF employment techniques and equipment and monitors the readiness of SOF units assigned under the other unified commanders. This provider and user relationship between USSOCOM and the five unified overseas CINCs enables the essential unity of command element for conducting effectively coordinated operations. Except in unique instances so directed by the National Command Authority, USCINCSOC will pass the operational command authority for the designated CONUS special operations forces to the particular theater CINC. To integrate and control the employment of these SOF assets within the applicable theater, as either independent teams or in concert with other theater forces, each theater CINC has established his own special operations command/control element.

Mission

"Commander in Chief, United States Special Operations Command (USCINCSOC) is responsible for preparing assigned forces to conduct and support special operations (SO), psychological operations (PSYOP), and civil affairs (CA) operations in support of US national security interests in peace and across the spectrum of conflict. USCINCSOC has no specific geographic area of responsibility for normal operations. His primary contribution to the attainment of US national security objectives is to support the other unified commanders' SO, PSYOP, and CA requirements through well-planned, proactive, and coherent efforts. USCINCSOC is responsible to plan, program, and budget for Major Force Program II (MFP-11), and to develop and acquire SO-unique equipment. Additionally, he is responsible for development of SO, PSYOP, and CA strategies, doctrine, tactics, and techniques. USCINCSOC also has the responsibility to plan and conduct selected special operations anywhere in the world, when so directed by the National Command Authority."(17:1-3)

USSOCOM has divided its three main mission areas (SO, PSYOP, and CA) into primary and collateral operations or activities.(17:Intro 6-7) The utility of SOF capabilities applies across the entire spectrum of conflict and provides unique abilities within the political- military sensitivities confronting the LIC environment.

Special operations missions are divided into the following activities:

- Primary Activities
 - Unconventional Warfare
 - Direct Action
 - Special Reconnaissance
 - Foreign Internal Defense
 - Counter Terrorism
- Collateral Activities
 - Humanitarian Assistance
 - Security Assistance
 - Search and Rescue
 - Counter Narcotics
 - Antiterrorism
 - Special Activities
- Psychological Operations Mission Activities
 - Strategic Operations
 - Battlefield Operations
 - Consolidated Operations
 - Special Operations
- Civil Affairs Mission Activities
 - Civil-Military Operations
 - Civil Affairs Administration

Personnel

To conduct these three mission areas (SO, PSYOP, CA) USSOCOM has assigned some 34,000 CONUS-based active and reserve component personnel. (See Fig 1 for unit designations). The overall growth in unit strength of the special operations forces (see Table 1) reflects DoDs increased attention to the LIC environment. (18:179

Major SOF Expansion
(FY 1981-92)

Table 1 (18:178)

	<u>FY 1981</u>	<u>FY 1988</u>	<u>FY 1992</u>
Special Forces Groups ^a	7	8	9
Ranger Battalions	2	3	3
Psychological Operations Battalions ^b	3	4	4
Civil Affairs Battalions ^b	1	1 ^c	1 ^c
SEAL Teams	3	6 ^c	7 ^c
SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) Teams	0	2 ^c	2 ^c
Special Boat Units	6	7 ^d	7 ^d
Special Operations Wing	1	2	3
Special Operations Aviation Group	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	23	33	37

^a Includes four Reserve Component groups.

^b Includes Active Components only.

^c Includes two underwater demolition teams redesignated in 1983.

^d Includes four Reserve Component units.

Equipment

Commensurate with this increase in personnel has been an increase in aircraft and naval assets (Table 2). To overcome a mobility deficiency, the MC-130H Combat Talon II modernization program is scheduled to provide 24 dedicated SOF aircraft with specialized night, adverse weather, low-level, and long-range transport capability. The AC-130U gunship modernization program will replace 10 aging A models with 12 upgraded, modernized

aircraft. The H-53 helicopter upgrade program will provide 41 H-53C modernized with the Pave Low III enhanced configuration^(19:35-36) The status of the CV-22 program is not clear at this time. Although deleted from the president's initial FY91 RDP submission, congressional comments indicate the potential for retaining the Osprey in the development and test phases.

In addition to the improved air capabilities for infiltration and exfiltration, the SEAL tactical insertion craft, advanced delivery system, and submarine programs will increase our sea-based capabilities as well. (18:180)

SOF Primary Aircraft Mix
(FY 1981-92)

Table 2^(18:178)

	<u>FY 1981</u>	<u>FY 1988</u>	<u>FY 1992</u>
Air Force			
MC-130E/H Combat Talons	14	14	32
AC-130A/H/U Gunships ^a	20	20	20
MH-53H/J Pave Low Helicopters	9	19	41
CV-22 Ospreys ^b	0	0	0
EC-130 Volant Solos	4	4	4
HC-130 Tankers (SOF-dedicated)	0	8	31
C-130s SOLL-II	0	0	11
C-141s Special Ops Low Level II	0	0	13
Total	47	65	152

SOF Primary Aircraft Mix
(FY 1981-92)

Table 2-Continuation

	<u>FY 1981</u>	<u>FY 1988</u>	<u>FY 1992</u>
Army			
MH-60K Helicopters	0	0	20
MH-47E Helicopters	0	0	36
MH-60A Helicopters	0	45	40
CH/MH-47D Helicopters	0	16	12
UH-1 Helicopters	0	23	0
AH/MH-6 Helicopters	<u>29</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>36</u>
Total	29	138	144
Primary Naval Equipment			
Seafox (Spec. Warfare Craft, Light)	12	36	36
Sea Viking (Spec. Warfare Craft, Med)	0	0	19
High Speed Boat	0	0	7
Dry Deck Shelters	0	2	6
Modified Sub for Dry Deck Shelters	0	5	7
SEAL Delivery Vehicle	18	19	19
Advanced SEAL Delivery Vehicle	0	0	1
Total	30	62	95

^a Includes ten AC-130A Air Force Reserve gunships in FY 1981-87. FY 1992 number reflects decommissioning of AC-130As and addition of 12 AC-130U aircraft.

^b First deliveries will not begin until FY 1995. Total to be procured for SOF will be 55.

Budget

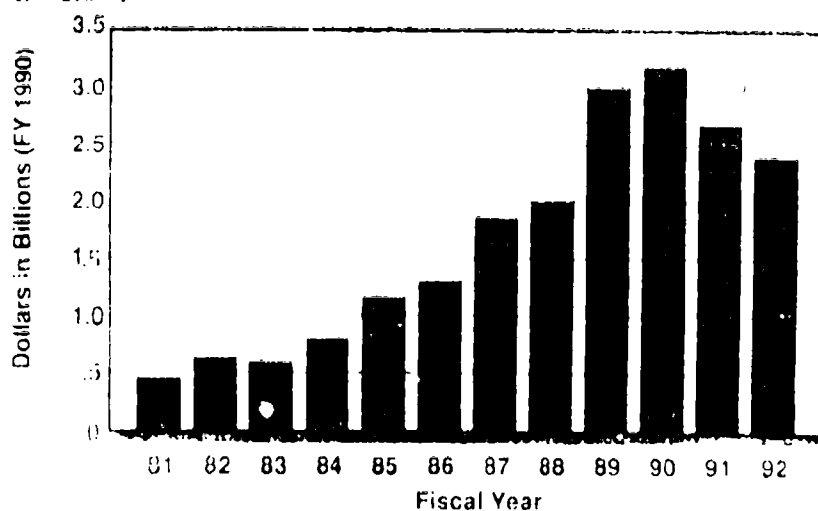
There has been a marked increase in overall fiscal support that reflects the bipartisan national leadership support for SOF's capabilities. (Table 3). Close to \$12 billion has been invested

over the past 9 years to revitalize our SOF capabilities. As shown in the FY 1990-92 projections, an additional \$8 billion is programmed for sustainment and continued modernization. This rate of funding reflects a 500 percent increase in yearly funding for the SOF program from the earlier 1981 funding level. This rate also doubles the funding level from the 1987 USSOCOM initiation.

One of the unique features of USSOCOM is its control of its own budget. To provide insight and trackability to the funding for SOF, Major Force Program II was instituted per congressional direction. USSOCOM is now the only unified command with responsibility to prepare, justify, and oversee execution of

SOF Funding
(FY 1981-92)

Table 3



its own budget program to include the development and acquisition of peculiar equipment, supplies, and services. Although not currently established to accomplish such a task, USSOCOM is scheduled to assume total MFP II control no later than FY92 from the component services. (20:35)

Training

USSOCOM has a specified function to ensure assigned forces are trained to not only accomplish a given field mission, but also to ensure interoperability (equipment, procedures) in a joint mission arena. This training for integration of component service capability is conducted through formal school programs as well as joint exercises. USSOCOM oversees the training programs at the three component centers (John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Ft Bragg NC; Naval Special Warfare Center, Coronado CA; Air Force Special Operations School, Hurlburt Field FL). In addition to the cultural and language skills required for regional orientation, specialty military and services interoperability skills are included in the curricula. This joint training and exercise program is intended to provide theater familiarity as well as the inter-service operational and equipment compatibility essential for effective joint task accomplishment.

CHAPTER III

SPECIAL OPERATIONS--WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

With USSOCOM formed as a unified command to forge special operations capabilities and talent into an effective force, several questions exist. After reorganization, does the US have a more capable special operations force (SOF)? If so, where do we go from here in defining threats and strategies which might employ special operations capabilities?

Some insight into current SOF capabilities can be gleaned from review of Operation "Just Cause" conducted in Panama. After months of contingency planning, to include a political war of nerves between the US and Panama's leader, General Manuel Noreiga US troops were sent to Panama in December 1989. US troops were to capture Noreiga and bring him to trial. They were also to restore peace and order to the legitimately elected government of President Guillermo Endara which Noreiga refused to recognize.

"Just Cause" represented the largest commitment of SOF capabilities in recent times and the first time deployment and employment of its forces under its current command structure. Over 4,000 troops, 71 aircraft, and 103 supporting aircraft were involved in the execution of SOF missions. (20:10) Aside from a

last minute change in plans which altered Navy SEAL team execution at the Punta Paitilla Airport, special operations personnel appear to have been well-integrated into the overall scheme of events. It seems the old nemesis of faulty intelligence--an underestimation of the threat which faced the SEALs at the airport--plus a flawed communications plan for getting helicopter support to the SEALs once again reared its ugly head. Such occurrences were part of lessons learned from sorting through Desert One Operations. Aside from these valid criticisms and general assessment of SOF activities in Panama, the currency and continued classification of certain aspects of "Just Cause" make it difficult to obtain a more indepth look. Generally, "Just Cause" was a successful operation. It fit the American public perception of how wars should be fought--quick, decisive, and with minimal bloodshed. Within this overall aura of success, we can only generalize that SOF capabilities added to Noreiga's defeat. In summary, using Panama as one example of SOF employment makes it difficult to tell how capable our SOF assets really are. Perhaps another question should be raised--what does that future hold for SOF employment?

Within the next ten years, SOF must be able to execute its five-fundamental mission areas across the spectrum of warfare. This includes warfare ranging from most likely contingencies on the low-intensity scale (read small wars) to the most challenging conflict at the high end of the violence continuum. Envisioned are major trends which may affect US

interests together with areas of potential conflict. Given recent changes in the world scene, predictions are made at one's own peril. However that may be, we offer the following for consideration.

- Major trends expected to influence the United States:

-- Soviet influence continues with regional/ethnic strife affecting world order.

-- Less stable nations join the "nuclear weapons club," (Brazil, Iraq).

-- Dramatic advances in science and technology relative to military use of space.

-- Soviet Union extends its reach into the third world, primarily by military assistance programs.

-- Diffusion of powers in a multi-polar world as China, Japan, and other nations emerge in international importance.

- Conflicts threatening US interests include (not in order of priority):

-- Soviet attack into Iran as a move on Persian Gulf oil installations.

-- Conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

-- Soviet or surrogate-supported terrorism with the intent of eroding public support of fledgling democratic governments.

-- Terrorism, insurgency, and drug trafficking poses a threat to the US and entire governments.

-- Conflicts between two third world nations having chemical or nuclear capability. (21:18-24)

Some analysts have put the above predictions into perspective saying the world of 2000 will be much like the world of 1914 with its tensions and interconnecting alliances. Many emerging nations will face overpopulation and lack basic necessities. Militarism will be on the rise and conditions will be ripe for conflict.

One could pick any or all of the SOF missions and apply them to any of the above trends or conflicts--nation building to assist friendly governments, direct action to take out a laser site threatening US space assets, or country teams helping to combat the drug trade. All of the above scenarios call for a coordinated government and military response centered on well-thought out policy. It is in the policy development area with a centralized strategic focus that requires emphasis.

As we have continually stressed, while special operations forces provide capabilities applicable across the entire spectrum of conflict, they are uniquely suited for employment in the low-intensity environment.(6:5, 1:5) The politically preponderant nature of LIC, however, creates a dependent relationship between the application of SOF capabilities, public commitment, and political resolve, a return to our "holy trinity" once more.

In these "heady days" of global change with anticipated "peace dividends," defining the threat and fostering support for use of US forces in any contingency may be difficult. Whereas the public and Congress view the quick-hitting application of

force as the American ideal for fighting war, the more likely scenarios for force employment will likely involve SOF capabilities and the employment areas being shades of gray vice distinct colors of black and white.

The shades of gray scenarios will include counterterrorism and insurgency efforts and will require long-term commitments. Thus, we will see SOF capabilities used in long-term, nation-building efforts either in unconventional warfare roles or in foreign internal defense (FID) efforts. (20:112-113)

As government policymakers wrestle with appropriate directions for SOF employment, military leaders must strive to keep SOF skills sharpened, and analyze potential scenarios for using those skills. With military forces being scaled down, and as we gain a clearer vision of America's responsibilities in a changing world, conflicts in the future, especially on the LIC scale, will require integrated capabilities of both conventional and unconventional forces. General Lindsay and others have stressed the need to rethink our warfighting efforts in an unconventional setting. Accordingly, the following concept is offered.

Consider the marriage of special operations units--capable of highly specialized aspects of direct action--with a Marine Expeditionary Unit whose skills have been sharpened through an intense special operations capable training syllabus. The scenario for such marriage would be the execution

of an amphibious raid in a third world intervention action.

To give credence to this marriage, one must realize that even with the walls of communism falling down, some 32 insurgencies are still ongoing, such conflicts centered on ethnic, civil, or religious strife. Moreover, 24 of these uprisings were accessible by sea. (22:34)

Using a coup-de-main approach from the sea, amphibious raids could be used to secure the seat of political power in a nation's capitol, strike purely military targets, or retrieve US citizens. In our amphibious raid scenario, the special operations forces, armed with key elements of intelligence information, would execute the assault on the leadership or seat of power "to cutoff the head." Concurrently, the Marine forces trained in urban combat would provide the power and sustainability for the operation. Such staying power and strength are needed to maintain momentum and strike at other areas to keep the enemy off balance. Once the raid's objective was achieved, the force would exit as rapidly as they had entered.

The coup-de-main amphibious raid just described may not always be possible or feasible. However, as one analyst asserts:

To offer such an option when prolonged military involvement abroad is anathema to the American people, is no more than the President has a right to expect of his military leadership. Little... reorganization is required, and the equipment to carry out the operation is already in the inventory. (23:21)

Obviously other scenarios could be outlined using US Army and Marines. The point is that SOF should look to future scenarios where highly trained conventional forces and SOF units could be utilized together in unconventional scenarios. Another implication for such scenarios is that training programs should incorporate both forces in joint drills and exercises.

The earlier action to streamline and unify SOF functions is now beginning to pay dividends. Actions by SOF units in Panama demonstrated how far the US has come in resurrecting these highly skilled and capable forces. Potential future trends and conflict scenarios only reinforce the need for SOF capabilities as the US streamlines her defense structure. Although the military portion of Clausewitz's "holy trinity" is prepared, work remains in integrating proper political and military strategy to respond to future conflicts. While government policymakers view foreign internal defense actions as the most likely area for SOF employment, the US must also retain force projection capabilities employing SOF and conventional forces together. Military planners should look to a combination of SOF and conventional forces to execute coup-de-main attacks as a military intervention option. This will require appropriate training among SOF and conventional forces.

Special Operations in US Strategy, ed. by Frank B. Barnett, B. Hugh Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz, Washington DC, National Defense University Press, 1984.

In March 1983, a symposium of government, public policy center, media, and academic representatives debated the role of special operations in US strategy for the 1980s and beyond.

"Special Operations in US Strategy" is a collection of major presentations from this symposium that addresses eight issues germane to the low-intensity-conflict environment and the use of special operations forces (SOF). This review highlights presentations that addressed the following issues:

1. SOF defined in a broad sense encompassing military and nonmilitary resources;
2. The complexity of American moral, legal, political, and cultural constraints on the employment of SOF;
3. Superior Soviet capabilities within the special operations area;
4. An examination of the US military special operations capabilities and limitations;
5. The critical connection between intelligence and SOF;
6. The use of economic and security assistance to combat insurgencies;
7. An examination of the US psychological operations (PSYOP) capabilities and limitations; and
8. An organizational analysis supporting agency integration.

Dr Maurice Tugwell and Dr David Charters, University of New Brunswick's Center for Conflict Studies, presented a broad

definition of the objectives appropriate for SOF capabilities. Tugwell and Charters stated that "SOF are small-scale, clandestine, covert or overt operations of an unorthodox and frequently high-risk nature, undertaken to achieve significant political or military objectives in support of foreign policy. Special operations are characterized by either simplicity or complexity, by subtlety and imagination, by discriminate use of violence, and by oversight at the highest level. Military and nonmilitary resources, including intelligence assets, may be used in concert." Tugwell and Charters recommended that non-Department-of-Defense capabilities, such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of State, and Agency for International Development be included under the umbrella of special operations to define an active, versus reactive, capability to achieve political goals.

Also, Dr Tugwell and Dr Charters contended the most likely threat to our national interests lies in maintaining the regional or local stability of our allies. Maintaining stability they reasoned, will require a viable parapolitical US counterinsurgency capability. This capability needs to be proactive in its deterrent role by assuming positive actions to preclude threats from developing.

Gen Richard Stilwell, USA (Ret), Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, stated that the American public does not recognize Soviet intervention, the predominant threat, as a "clear and present danger" to our national security interests.

This lack of political and national motivation, the critical piece to the SOF parapolitical capability, will preclude timely US involvement. Primarily due to this constraint, General Stilwell supported our SOF capability remaining as a reactive option.

Brig Gen Joseph Lutz (USA), Commanding General, First Special Operations Command, echoed General Stilwell's concern for the lack of understanding within the US for the real and active Soviet threat. During the two-and-a-half decades since Cuba (1959-1983), there have been 17 successful Soviet insurgencies. General Lutz contended that a more active SOF involvement in the lower end of the conflict spectrum should be encouraged to counter Soviet threat.

Dr William V. O'Brien, Professor of Government, Georgetown University, provided a synopsis on the complexity of American moral, legal, political, and cultural constraints on the employment of SOF. The traditional moral and cultural values of American society and the legal limitations on involvement have been reviewed under the just war and the international law doctrines. The sensitivities surrounding our military involvement in a foreign situation will provoke scrutiny from the public sector and varying reactions from international governments.

The just war decision process for intervention assumes that our involvement would be authorized or requested from a legitimate, recognized government. The acid test analysis rests

then upon the determination of just cause (right intention), reasonable cost for gain, and the exhaustion of reasonable peaceful alternatives. The just war and international law doctrines (presuming nonintervention in foreign affairs as the acceptable norm), in consensus with American cultural values, dictate the justification for involvement be based on the acid test analysis. Dr O'Brien maintained that the determination of just cause is the most sensitive requirement in American cultural values. The nature of our critical society is to question not only the actions of our government but also the character and nature of the foreign parties involved.

Dr O'Brien also pointed out four distinct exceptions to the principles of nonintervention: counterintervention, intervention by treaty rights, intervention to protect lives and property of nations and allies, and humanitarian intervention. These four situations do not relieve us from the moralistic constraints presented by the just war doctrine.

William Kucewicz, editorial writer for the Wall Street Journal, commented on the role of the American press in criticizing intervention. Although Kucewicz argued the advantages of a typically critical society, he considered it the responsibility of the government to educate the American public to the existence of a real and present danger. Failure of appreciation (or awareness) to the threat situation could cause waning public support for long-run foreign involvements.

RAdm John Jenkins, USN (Ret), assistance Dean,

Georgetown University School of Law, reinforced Dr O'Brien's concern for the moral and cultural constraints on US SOF employment. Admiral Jenkins proposed that the primacy of obtaining political concurrence for SOF employment will be the determination of legality.

Dr John J. Dziak's, senior Soviet specialist for the Defense Intelligence Agency, provided a historical account of the evolution within the Russian Communist system of their "spetsnaz" or special operations forces. Initiated during the Bolshevik revolution, politically reliable troops (checka) were developed for sensitive missions of state internal security control. In the 1920s, SOF groups emerged to provide counter guerrilla operations and international security control within the Moslem Soviet Central Asia area. In the late 1930s, the Spanish Civil War provided fertile training and development for the subversive capability of spetsnaz forces.

World War II saw the development of the central staff of the partisan movement. This military arm of the party successfully conducted guerrilla action, espionage, sabotage, and assassination behind the German lines. SOF successes in Hungary in 1956; Czechoslovakia in 1968; Angola, Ethiopia and the assassination of Afghanistan president Amin in the 1970s continued to display the capabilities and activity of the Soviet spetsnaz forces.

Trained to operate independently or in support of a combined arms conventional-or nuclear-warfare environment, the

Soviets developed separate special operations forces within the KGB, the GRU (chief of military intelligence), and the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs). Historically, when used in combination outside of the USSR, control of these forces has been passed to the KGB authorities.

Arthur A. Zuehlke Jr., Deputy Chief of the Political Military Affairs Branch of DIA, identified the GRU forces as the main threat to global strategic targets. Although the KGB, GRU, and MVD special operations forces are all elite, highly trained, and politically reliable, they are also assigned various areas of speciality. The KGB is responsible for small external highly sensitive political and strategic targets; the GRU deals with more traditional military targets; and the MVD focuses on internal state security.

Col Roger M. Pezzelle (Ret), former chief Special Operation Division, JCS, addressed military capabilities and the need to establish a joint special operations organization. He stated that, historically, our fluctuating capability has suffered from a cultural and political disinterest and a predominant internal military lack of appreciation for special forces. Colonel Pezzelle highlighted two basic shortfalls the US must correct before we can be successful in special operations: define our mission and establish a joint organization at the national level. Although our collective security activities in advisory operations and military mobile training teams have proven influential, maximum success will not

be attained under a fluctuating degree of national commitment. The interservice cooperation so critical to the SOF mission will not exist until we support a joint special operations organization. This organization will enable the interdepartmental and interagency coordination vital to long-range planning for achieving national security objectives.

Dr Edward N. Luttwak, senior fellow Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, commented on the necessity for not fragmenting the planning, training, and leading aspects of special operations missions. Dr Luttwak keyed in on the successful models presented within the British SAS and the Israeli commando units. He recommended establishing a separate career field to retain the skills and trained abilities within the SOF arena.

Maj Gen Michael D. Healy (Ret), former Commanding General of the US Army, John F. Kennedy Center for Military Assistance, supported the requirement for unique training and skills within our SOF units. Major General Healy pointed out that the personality and skills of the soldier needed to perform the counterrevolutionary, guerrilla, and diversionary penetration roles are different from the conventional infantryman roles. An acceptance of these unique requirements as well as an appreciation for the capabilities of the special operations mission is necessary within the US military leadership structure. Our SOF units need to be an elite team--not one viewed as unwelcomed competition within the military structure.

B. Hugh Tovar, Research Associate, National Strategy Information Center, addressed the critical connection between the intelligence and special operations communities. Historically, dating back to the 1940s with the OSS and subsequently the CIA, a single agency (usually civilian controlled) conducted the special operations mission. Even through the Korean War, special operations (both military and CIA) were controlled by G-2, Far East Command. Cooperation between agencies was not always prevalent. Separation of control since Vietnam has only lessened the vital cooperation between CIA and DOD intelligence assets to the detriment of our SOF capability. Tovar foresaw the continued separation of responsibilities but believed the combined DOD and CIA capabilities to be sufficient, if properly coordinated, to provide a viable force for meeting national security objective.

Douglas S. Blaufarb, former chief of station, CIA, presented a brief review and discussion on economic and security assistance and special operations. Blaufarb argued that the nonmilitary assistance offered through economic aid must coincide and be coordinated with security or military assistance to conduct a successful counterinsurgency operation. The key, he contended, is to bolster common support for foreign national governments and to improve the same governments' internal ability through improved and increased resources. He offered the failure of the \$3 billion assistance program to Vietnam as an example of uncoordinated efforts. The government never

established overwhelming Vietnamese public support and proper counterinsurgency military training was never totally accomplished. In contrast, Blaufarb presented the success obtained in Thailand in the 1960s. Aggressive, preventive economic programs to develop roads and portable water systems, and to improve education and agricultural techniques successfully convinced the Thai population of their government's sincerity and ability to provide for their well-being. Concurrent with the accelerated rural development program, a sizable military assistance program was conducted to counter the rural communist insurgency.

Although Blaufarb recognized that economic and security assistance offer no quick fix to combat insurgencies, he contended that preventive or early applications are the best medicine. Above all, centralized control of the involved agencies' activities is critical to ensuring consistency and appropriate vigor.

Col Alfred H. Paddock, former chairman, Department of National and International Security Studies of the US Army War College, addressed the issue of psychological operations (PSYOP), special operations, and US strategy. Colonel Paddock lamented the lack of understanding and acceptance of PSYOP capabilities within the military. He argued that the subjugation of PSYOP within special operations detracts from its total warfare spectrum mission. The vast majority of military capability rests within the reserve forces and is not constantly

available for the continuous low-intensity global confrontation. Colonel Paddock foresaw little opportunity for improvement to this situation as long as the two unconventional activities, PSYOP and special operations, are combined.

George Bailey, Director of Radio Liberty, commented that the misunderstanding of the importance of PSYOP is not restricted to the military. The American public's perception of PSYOP as purely propaganda has inhibited the advancements capable through the media fields to counter an active Russian program. Bailey did not agree with the American presses' self-proclaimed role of government critic. He encouraged the media systems' reevaluation of their role away from what he termed sensationalism.

Dr Sam C. Sarkesian, Professor of Political Science, Loyola University, reviewed several organizational modifications necessary to integrate fully the various agencies' capabilities to compete successfully in the low-intensity conflict spectrum. Among the most important, Dr Sarkesian focused on the command system's (military and civilian) historical inability to integrate the conceptual relationships between the political, social, and military issues for low-intensity warfare. He repeated that low-intensity conflict involves an integrated mix of military and civilian agency capabilities. Dr Sarkesian believed an innovative command structure dedicated to low-intensity operations was needed. He did not believe an organizational restructuring within the JCS and unified system would be effective.

Kenneth P. Bergquist, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Reserve Affairs and Mobilization), did not agree with Dr Sarkesian's recommendations for such broad organizational changes to deal with low-intensity conflict. Bergquist's opinion was that the existing regional CINC command-and-control structure is adequate and appropriate for the mission. Reactive task force structures could accommodate the necessary coordination of civilian and military activities.

The symposium covered a variety of topics on the employment of special operations forces. Two requirements for the effective application of SOF commonly resurfaced throughout: the need for public awareness and acceptance of the threat; and the need to develop a national strategy consistently integrating the entire spectrum of assets available for countering these threats throughout the low-intensity-conflict environment. Our military SOF capabilities are just one piece of this overarching strategic puzzle, which the presenters unanimously believed should properly be used with various non-DOD resources. Public support for this integrated national security strategy is paramount to overcoming a cultural noninterventionist presumption--an American societal attitude predating, but reinforced by, the Vietnam experience.

Lt Col Michael Cuddihoe, USAF
Doris Sartor, ed.

Unconventional Warfare by Lt Gen Bernard E. Trainor, USMC
(Ret), Marine Corps Gazette, 73 (October 1989): 16-21.

- Thesis: The US military must rethink its warfighting methods, shifting from traditional attrition warfare to unconventional methods which merge special operations and conventional force capabilities.
- Background
 - United States military strategies relied on overwhelming mass--in men and equipment--to defeat its enemies (conventional warfare).
 - Smaller third world nations used guile to avoid an opponent's strength and exploit weakness (unconventional warfare).
 - Guerilla warfare and terrorism are forms of unconventional warfare.
 - A nation's ability to win small wars does not guarantee its ability to win large ones as seen in the unconventional warfare in Vietnam and Afghanistan.
- Special Operations and Unconventional Warfare
 - Concern over the weakness of the nation's unconventional warfare capabilities spurred Congress to establish a special operations command.
 - DOD and Congress cannot agree on what special operations should do so the services do not know how unconventional warfare fits into the spectrum of warfare.
 - Congress views unconventional operation in isolation

from conventional strategies.

-- In third world conflicts, nation's prefer defeat of the enemy's leadership to destruction of its army.

- Intervention and Public Attitudes

-- Americans want their wars like their sports--with quick, decisive wins, and with little bloodshed. The Grenada invasion, Achille Lauro intercept, and the Libya bombing are recent examples.

-- third world situations threatening US interests will continue in the future (witness the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103).

-- To counter third world threats, we need responsive, well-trained forces and early success to capitalize on initial public support.

- Requirements and Targets for Intervention

-- third world crises will erupt early, often without warning (the Falklands crises and Grenada invasion).

-- Weapons technology enables many poor nations to possess lethal and sophisticated weapons so intervention could be bloody.

-- third world control is usually vested in a totalitarian ruler with centralized power. Control is exercised through an internal security network.

-- Decapitation of the enemy's leadership will force the control system to unravel.

- The COUP DE MAIN

-- Direct action teams supported by conventional forces can forcibly behead the enemy's leadership by unorthodox surprise attack or coup de main.

-- The coup de main has heavy requirements for good intelligence. A command and control network must include a good data base including daily routines and habits of the leader.

-- Operational security and deception are vital to a successful mission.

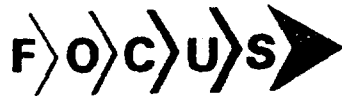
- Marriage of Conventional and Special Operations Forces

-- Conventional forces--rangers, Marines, and the airborne--provide power and staying power for the operation. These forces augment the special operation forces who hit directly at the leadership.

-- Assault forces require urban combat training and air transportation.

-- The Grenada operation had all the elements of a coup de main and should be examined as a test bed for special operations and conventional forces alike.

Lt Col John W. Schmidt, USMC
Doris Sartor, ed.



Focus on Future War

Preparing for the next war is a principal task of any military organization. The two articles that follow help with this task by looking to the future, forecasting the threats that may emerge, and suggesting how today's forces may have to change if they are to be useful and effective in meeting tomorrow's challenges.

Unconventional Warfare

by LtGen Bernard E. Trainor, USMC(Ret)

Unconventional warfare is less a way of fighting than a nontraditional way of thinking about how to fight There is a need to inject within the mainstream of America military thought recognition that military success can be achieved in ways other than by the defeat of an opponent's army in conventional battle.

Total war, in the modern sense, began almost two centuries ago with the French Revolution. It may well have come to an end when nuclear weapons were introduced at the conclusion of World War II. To be sure there have been ghastly regional wars since that time, which were viewed as total by their participants, but none have threatened civilization itself. However, given the size of their nuclear arsenals, a war between the two superpowers would do just that. Because of its mutually suicidal characteristics, such a war seems remote as we approach the 21st century.

But in the four decades since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which hopefully wrote the last chapter to total war, a form of limited warfare has emerged to bedevil advanced societies. We choose to call it "unconventional," but to a weak power who takes on a more powerful adversary, it is conventional. It is a form of warfare that avoids an opponent's strength and exploits his weakness and usually tries to convert an enemy's superior strength into vulnerability.

Guerrilla warfare and terrorism are classical forms of this warfare. In the post-war years, unconventional warfare in China, Cuba, Vietnam, Central America, and Afghanistan have led to political victories, which have reordered the world.

Superpower Preoccupation

In their preoccupation with one another, both superpowers, by default, have left development of unconventional warfare to others. The mindset of the superpowers remains preoccupied with firepower, not guile, which is the hallmark of the unconventional fighter.

The superpowers have checkmated one another with an array of sophisticated nuclear and nonnuclear weapons, but they have both been challenged successfully in the Third World by primitive adversaries who practice unconventional warfare. In the process, the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the United States in Vietnam learned that a nation's ability to win a small war is not automatically subsumed by the ability to fight a large one.

Because they do not constitute a threat to national survival, neither superpower gives these lesser conflicts the attention they deserve. Americans and Soviets alike still focus on the central region of NATO and not on the backwaters of the world. This is not to suggest superpower indifference to the requirements for these lesser wars, but rather attention to a hierarchy of concerns.

Military literature on both sides is replete with writings on small wars and unconventional conflict.



particularly as they relate to their own painful experiences with them. However, most of the literature is historical, and principles derived to combat this form of warfare frequently apply to the past, even though a feature of unconventional warfare is uniqueness and avoidance of repetition.

To illustrate the point, one has only to look at what occurred in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. Navy, organized, trained, and equipped to fight the blue water navy of the Soviet Union was sent into a uniquely hostile environment in the Gulf. The Navy had unconventional warfare experience from its brown water days in the delta during the Vietnam War. But Iran's brand of maritime guerrilla war rendered this past experience largely irrelevant, and the Navy was caught unprepared when it initially entered the Gulf. It is to the Navy's credit, however, that it quickly improvised to meet the unconventional threat and, following some initial embarrassment, did quite well in handling it.

Conventional and Unconventional Distinctions

In training for war, the United States continues to place its priorities on preparing for a nuclear battlefield or a large-scale conventional one. The logic is

summed up in the national policy of deterrence, i.e., peace through strength.

For all the talk of low-intensity conflict, unconventional warfare is really given a relatively low priority. Selected Army and Marine Corps units do train for direct action missions, but for the most part it is centered on airfield seizure for the Army and amphibious raids for the Marines.

Congress expressed its concern over the weakness of the Nation's unconventional warfare capabilities three years ago when it passed legislation, over Pentagon objections, that established a "special operations command." Despite a great deal of rhetoric attending the passage of the legislation, Congress never made clear what it had in mind for this command. Since then it has done nothing to clarify the matter. The dispute between Capitol Hill and Defense over special operations reflects the uncertain status of the unconventional warfare community in the Armed Forces and some confusion as to where such operations fit into the spectrum of warfare.

For the most part unconventional operations are viewed by senior military officers as semi-independent operations or as a supportive adjunct of a larger endeavor. Seldom are they viewed as equal partners

" . . . field training in the Army and Marines is in the Napoleonic tradition aimed at destruction of an opposing force through a combination of combined arms and fire and maneuver."



to conventional operations, and rarely are they seen as the cutting edge of those undertakings.

Orthodoxy dominates American operational thinking. Weapons and equipment have changed since World War II, but field training in the Army and Marines is in the Napoleonic tradition aimed at destruction of an opposing force through a combination of combined arms and fire and maneuver. This approach is largely due to a cultural propensity and the understandable assumption that if the Armed Forces are called upon to fight, the goal will be the defeat of the enemy's field forces.

A corollary assumption is that, given full rein, the power of American arms ~~will eventually~~ decide the issue favorably. When U.S. military officers say "no more Vietnams" they usually mean no more fighting a war with one arm tied behind their back, rather than no more involvement in the unorthodox wars of the Third World.

These assumptions should be modified to conform to the conditions that will probably govern any use of American ground forces in future interventions. In Third World military operations, the defeat of the enemy's leadership is probably a better goal than the destruction of his army. To accomplish this requires some nontraditional thought and some unconventional planning.

The Six Commandments

In November 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger reflected his post-Vietnam sentiments

when he outlined six restrictive criteria governing the future commitment of American military forces abroad. These criteria he set forth were that the action involve vital national interests, an intention to win, clear-cut political-military objectives, continual reassessment of objectives, support of the American people, and the determination that all other means short of force had failed. (Whether Mr. Weinberger violated any or all of his six commandments in the Persian Gulf is another matter.)

Taken literally, the Secretary's rules could mean the United States would never employ force abroad short of World War III. In a practical sense they simply assert that the United States will not allow itself to become involved in a protracted war of attrition or one without direction and support. It does not imply that Americans have forsaken force as an instrument of national policy. Rather, it recognizes that they want their wars, like their sports, to have a game limit with a definitive outcome. Americans want every military engagement to be speedy and to end with the big win and a minimum of American casualties.

Public support of the Grenada invasion, the intercept of the *Achille Lauro* highjackers, and the punitive bombing raids on Libya clearly illustrate the point. Conversely, the erosion of American support for involvement in Vietnam and Lebanon also serves to underscore the philosophy contained in the Defense Secretary's six commandments. It is interesting to note that American resistance to military intervention in Nicaragua also appeared to be based

on fear of another Vietnam rather than any widespread opposition to toppling the Sandinista regime. Public apprehension over American involvement in the Persian Gulf had similar roots.

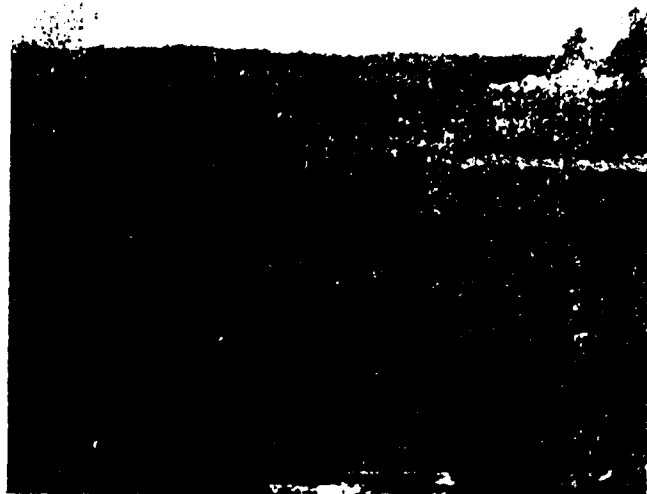
The Weinberger rules recognize that no military solution has been found to an unconventional war that threatens to suck the Nation into entanglements of indefinite uncertainty. As the Bush administration has not repudiated the former Defense Secretary's six commandments, it must be assumed that they still reflect administration's views.

Neither has the Nation successfully come to grips with terrorism. The proactive solution to this knotty problem, so heartily endorsed by many after the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, lost some of its attraction when legal and moral considerations were taken into account.

Notwithstanding Iranian collusion in the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 and their command over those who murdered Marine Col William R. Higgins, the United States finds it difficult to act against an elusive enemy. It has sidestepped this problem in hopes that the problem will not become acute.

Intervention and Public Sentiment

Despite American public reluctance to become militarily involved in all but clear-cut cases of aggression, there will be situations within the Third World in the coming years where direct threats to American interests will require intervention to protect those interests. If the earlier assessment of American temperament toward involvement in a non-NATO conflict is reasonably accurate, the conclusion is inescapable that military leaders must plan for quick and decisive action if they hope to have public support. Experience shows that whenever U.S. military forces are committed to combat there is an initial and uncritical surge of popular support for the move. Military planners must capitalize on this; for when the crest has passed, time becomes the enemy



Machinegunner prepares to follow up artillery burst.

of success. This fact of contemporary political life must be taken into account not only in operational planning, but also in the organization, training, and equipping of U.S. intervention forces.

It is impossible to foresee with any clarity situations that will require direct intervention. The interrelationship of nations and sensitivity to superpower involvement are such today that the machinery of international diplomacy is set in motion to forestall a crisis at the hint of one developing, particularly if it involves one of the superpowers. This minimizes the odds that a sensitive situation will escalate to the point where a powerful nation, such as the United States, has no choice but to resort to force to resolve it. And while diplomacy is at work to defuse a crisis, it is predictable that the United States will concurrently move forces to the troubled region to back up on-going diplomatic efforts with a deterring military gesture. It is not likely, therefore, that a Third World



Marines embark helicopters aboard USS DuBuque (LPD 8) in the Persian Gulf.

nation will openly and directly challenge the United States during any future international crisis.

The Requirement To Intervene

More likely there will be little forewarning of crisis. It will develop quickly and peak before the international community can step in to prevent it or a show of force to deter it. The intolerable act that triggers intervention will probably be the result of miscalculation, irrationality, or an uncontrolled chain of events rather than any calculated challenge to the United States. Given the restraining influence of American military power around the world, it is also likely to occur where there is no American military presence nearby. And if Murphy's law holds true, it will come as a surprise at the least propitious time, in the most unexpected place, and under the worst possible circumstances. The Falklands crisis and, to a lesser degree, Grenada, serve to illustrate this point.

When faced with such a situation, on-the-shelf contingency plans will either not exist or be inappropriate. Crisis planning will be the order of the day because if the situation is sufficiently critical to warrant intervention, response time will also be critical. In days gone by it may have been sufficient to dispatch a corporal's guard to overawe Third World miscreants. But that is no longer possible. Even the poorest of Third World nations can field a formidable army. By American standards that army may not be well disciplined or trained, but it will be heavily armed with tanks, artillery, and missiles. The technological revolution of the past century also permits the most untutored soldier to employ a lethal and sophisticated weapon he scarcely understands by executing a few simple functions. Intervention in the Third World could be a bloody affair.

Dealing With an Intervention Crisis

Faced with this prospect, the United States may face the unenviable choice of rushing light and inadequate forces to the scene and risking heavy losses or losing critical time in mustering sufficient strength to ensure victory. Even in the latter instance a tactical victory or a series of such victories may not guarantee the quick and decisive defeat of the enemy who might then revert to guerrilla warfare and prolong American involvement.

If, on the other hand, planners extend their thinking beyond the conventional goal of defeating the enemy in the field to include decapitation of the enemy's leadership by an unorthodox surprise attack, new options open up that could at the same time also solve the strength versus time dilemma. There is no prescription to accomplish this and a *coup de main* may not always be appropriate or feasible, but it should be routinely considered as an option.

Likely Targets for Intervention

Most Third World nations likely to violate international law and the laws of human decency, thus provoking intervention, share common characteristics that make them vulnerable to this form of



Antiaircraft guns are now used almost universally in much of the Third World.

unconventional attack. These governments tend to be highly centralized with authoritarian power vested in a person or a small group of people at the top of the tightly controlled hierarchy. Control is exercised through an all-pervasive internal security apparatus. The army and police, as well as the public, are kept in check by this apparatus.

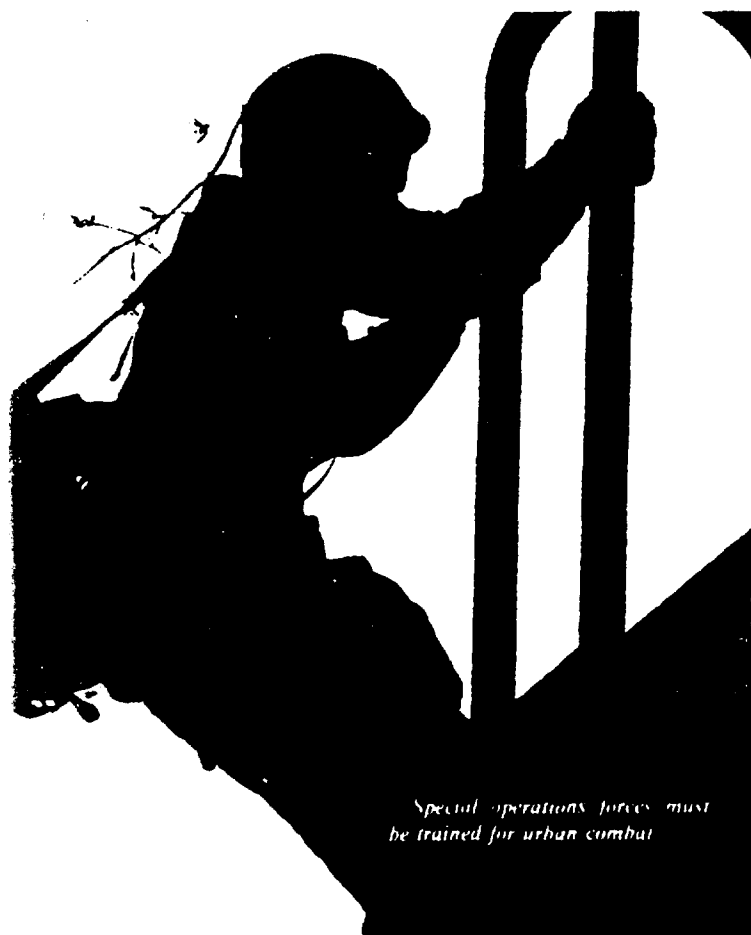
There are other common characteristics of such governments. Normally the head of state is located in the principal city of the nation. The capital itself constitutes the central nervous system of the country and has the attributes of a city-state. It represents power and authority, and much of the daily life of the country is determined by the doings in the capital. Communications, commerce, finance, and the flow of information are concentrated there. Other cities within the nation are simply its satellites.

Within the capital, the supreme authority usually is located in a fortress-like compound, which serves as both workplace and primary residence. This "palace" is physically surrounded by a well-armed and trusted guard force to provide close-in protection from internal and external foes. Separate communications, an armory, and a means of rapid escape are also normally part of the complex.

The concentration that serves to protect the leader and allow him to exercise his power is, however, the very factor that makes him vulnerable to decapitation. A direct action team of sufficient size and skill, backed up by conventional forces, stands a good chance of intervening quickly and decisively to unseat the leader. Once the leadership is removed and his capital paralyzed, his system of rule is likely to collapse and leave the forces of the state in disarray. In the process, the effectiveness of his army will be greatly diminished if not destroyed for lack of accustomed central direction and probable defections.

The Unconventional Option

A fundamental requirement for operations of this sort is intelligence. As a matter of routine, the intelligence community should build and maintain a data base on essential elements of information that will facilitate a *coup de main* even in out of the way and unlikely places. Among other things this data base must include the identity, location, and layout of the "palace." Files must also reflect the habits and rou-



Special operations forces must be trained for urban combat

tine of the leadership, their psychological profiles, and the organization and characteristics of the palace guard. The critical nodes for command and control and movement should also be known so they can be quickly destroyed or seized and turned to our advantage. This means detailed knowledge of critical communications centers, radio, television, telephone centrals, electrical grids, key routes, entrances, bridges, tunnels, utilities, and the like. Accuracy, comprehensiveness, and currency are essential.

Armed with this sort of up-to-date information, preparation for a strike at the center of power is thereafter a matter of detailed planning. Operational security is critical to success, for the attack must be unexpected. Deception should be an integral part of planning, and the attack, when carried out, must be swift, powerful, and decisive.

The Need for Regular Forces

For such missions, there must be a marriage between special operations units, trained in the highly specialized aspects of direct action, and supporting conventional forces. Special operations forces should be used in the assault on the leadership, but conventional forces, such as rangers, airborne, or Marines, must provide the power and sustainability for the operation. Without sufficient strength and staying power, the attackers may find that after initial success they become beleaguered when the enemy recovers from his initial shock.

Troops for operations of this type must be trained and equipped for urban combat, both offensively

and defensively. Initiative and aggressiveness are keys to success, as are resourcefulness and flexibility, because rehearsals may not be practical, and no operation ever goes exactly as planned anyway.

Heavier follow-on forces must be provided to reinforce or relieve the effort and to complete the mission. Movement of these forces will not require the same level of operational security as the assault force, however, and may even play a role in deception planning.

Transportation for the assault forces will almost certainly be by air if, as expected, time is a critical factor. Ten years ago technical and logistic problems associated with such an operation would probably have been insurmountable. In the interim, however, techniques and equipment, most of which are currently classified, have been developed, making clandestine attacks at great distances entirely feasible. Additionally, new airframes, such as the V-22 Osprey will probably make their appearance in a few years to improve the capability.

The Need

Needless to say, an unconventional attack, such as a *coup de main* as outlined above, will not always be practical or feasible. But if the opportunity presents itself, U.S. forces should be capable of carrying one out as an alternative to a main force engagement that could lead to protracted involvement.

To be able to offer such an option to the National Command Authority, during this period when prolonged military involvement abroad is anathema to the American people, is no more than the President has the right to expect of his senior military leadership. Little, if any, in the way of reorganization is required, and the equipment necessary to carry out such operations is already in the inventory.

Despite the criticism leveled at it, the 1983 Grenada operation had all of the elements of a *coup de main*, including the use of direct action teams, initial assault forces, and heavier backup forces. Even some of the advanced clandestine delivery techniques were used. It wasn't the polished sort of operation that some would have liked because of its hurried and ad hoc nature. Rather than holding the operation up to ridicule, though, it should be seen as a test bed and model for new and unconventional techniques, for special operating forces and orthodox units alike. The concept of operations for Grenada, driven by circumstance, could be profitably studied, broadened, and perfected for the future.

Unconventional warfare is less a way of fighting than a nontraditional way of thinking about how to fight. Past American wars have been drawnout wars of attrition, which ultimately left the enemy army overwhelmed. Generations of officers have been educated in this tradition and still are despite Service protestations to the contrary. There is a need to inject within the mainstream of American military thought recognition that military success can be achieved in ways other than by the defeat of an opponent's army in conventional battle.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The volatility of the third world situation, marked by the Soviet entanglements in Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Afghanistan in the late 1970s, accounted for a reawakening of US political-military interests in international involvement and specifically in special operations. (11:26,155)

Our national strategic interests of survival, territorial integrity, economic well-being, and favorable international order had not changed during the years of our inactivity following Vietnam. The Soviet actions precipitated a national realization of the threat to our interests. While our major security objectives remained to safeguard our US and allies' interests by deterring aggression and coercion across the entire spectrum, there had evolved a shift in attention away from the catastrophic upper bounds towards the globally susceptible lower end of the conflict scale. Although the severe implications of conventional or even nuclear devastation remained, the focus of attention was shifting to the third world "small war" environment. (8:45)

Deterring the growing Marxist attack upon the favorable international order and securing our geopolitical strategic interests in maintaining unthreatened sea lanes and

energy/mineral sources became heightened concerns in the early 1980s. (11:29, 32, 224)

Our national reactions for these concerns are tempered however, and in some instances stagnated, by the American cultural nature for self-criticism and moralistic adherence to non-intervention principles. These cultural traits will continue to play a critical role in defining the limits of future US involvements. (24:55) It is the national commitment which will enforce the political resolve necessary to counter future security threats. (11:173) The nation's understanding of the degree to the clear and present danger will define this commitment. Another reminder that all elements of Clausewitz's "holy trinity" must be oriented toward a common objective.

But gaining the national appreciation for the extent of danger is not the only hurdle to overcome in creating the support for armed involvement. Overcoming the American entrenched idea of how Armed Forces should be employed may prove equally as difficult. The quick-hitting application of force such as displayed in Grenada, Libya, and recently Panama, seem to fit the mold of the American ideal for fighting war. (25:43) Although these instances in no way negate or counter the requirement for SOF capabilities, they do not typify the long-term commitment which may be required in the counter revolution/insurgency situations. (11:112, 113) This foreign internal defense (FID) mission, a part of an overarching political-military strategy will necessitate an American resolve

uncommonly seen since Vietnam. This nationalistic assimilation of the severity of danger becomes essential to the political purpose, at least as it applies to a lengthy involvement. From our experiences with special operations in the 1970s, the US learned some tough lessons.

The decade between "Desert One" to "Just Cause" has seen a concerted revitalization of our nation's special operations' capabilities. A marked growth in the SOF budget additionally reflects the overall support for achieving the secondary goals of force sustainment and modernization in times when the trend for DOD budgets has been declining. The 1980s have seen the congressionally mandated creation of the Unified Special Operations Command, an assistant secretarial position for special operations and LIC, and the establishment of special operations subcommand elements within each of the regional theaters' staffs. Our special operations forces have honed their joint capabilities for employment across the entire spectrum of conflict, acting independently in peace and as force multipliers in concert with conventional forces. The US Army has expanded its "light army" capabilities for improved mobility, and the US Marines have developed special operations capable expeditionary units. These combat force adjustments reflect a shift in the perceived threat towards the LIC environment.

Although the probability of a massive Soviet confrontation diminishes, the likelihood of them perpetuating

their influence and support to third party initiatives continues. Faced with a growing need for exchange currency, the Soviets will rely on their most exportable commodity, arms, to sell to developing markets. Combining the anticipated sales with an equally threatening military-aid program to secure their regional political influence presents a volatile Third World armed with increasingly sophisticated weapon systems.

Mr James Locher envisions a proactive SOF employment strategy principally in the noncombatant FID role. Aimed at bolstering friendly governments' abilities to counter insurgent movements, these political-military programs will require our integrated national support. This integration of Third World policy into national security policy (a primary task currently facing Mr Locher) is a prerequisite to this proactive policy however. Faced with a shrinking security assistance financial program, Mr Locher is further restricted from exercising discretionary peacetime management by Congress directing distribution of the predominant share of the funds. Almost \$4 billion of the total 1990 \$4.7 billion security assistance program was directed to Israel, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece. Although almost 20 percent of the Soviet weapons exported to the Third World have gone to Latin America and sub-saharan Africa, less than 3 percent has been earmarked for these areas from our security assistance program. (16:3)

These deficiencies (policy, funding prerogatives) combined with the political realities of American cultural

constraint, will for the near future orient our employment of forces to a reactive mode--a tasking for contingency operations for which our forces are suitably geared. Our increasingly capable special operations forces are providing significant dividends from the continuing investment in funds and US policymakers interest. While still facing some internal defense reluctance to accept a specialized unified force, the overall improved capabilities to significantly contribute as force multipliers in concert with conventional forces is appreciated. personal conversations with SouthCom and USSOCOM staff members after "Just Cause" revealed an overwhelming concurrence of the attributes displayed by the SOF forces as well as high marks for the successful integration of efforts. Our SOF teams performed key roles in the "Just Cause" operation and did so in a successfully coordinated effort. Realizing the dangers of drawing conclusions from a single operation, it is the overall position of the SouthCom and SOCOM staffs, however that the command and control structure and technical capabilities of the SOF have dramatically improved from the dismal failure of Desert One and the confusion from the lack of coordination in Grenada.

The ability to contribute to our national security is not a sole issue of military capabilities, however, rather a basic issue of national strategy (or lack thereof) for the application of these capabilities. In 1986, an Army-Air Force joint LIC project report concluded:

A comprehensive civil-military strategy must be developed to defend our interests threatened by the series of low-intensity conflicts around the globe. It must be crafted in comprehensive terms, not focused on a single conflict or on a single department. It must integrate all the national resources at our disposal, military and nonmilitary, lethal and nonlethal.(9:21)

What was missing in 1986 is still missing today; the national policy from which this strategy must evolve.(15:190) Mr Locher, ASD/SOLIC, foresees the FID mission as the primary SOF role in LIC. While not ruling out the possibility for direct combat involvement, he clearly prefers the indirect security assistance and training functions as a part to an integrated nation-building program.(16 :10) If combat is intended to achieve some given political objective, in Clausewitzian logic, then the goals of our national security policy for the third world must be much more clearly defined. Ambassador David Miller, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, agrees with Mr Locher's assessment of the deficiency in policy, "We have the armed services ready, but we do not have the ability to bring the rest of the government in."(15:43)

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