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PROSPECTS FOR SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

MATTHEW P. MCGUINESS, MAJ, USA
B.S., University of Massachusetts, North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, 1977

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1993

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	4 June 1993	Master's Thesis, 1 Aug 92 - 4 Jun 93

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Prospects for Special Forces Operations in the Middle East

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S)

MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, USA

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD
Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Approved for Public Release, distribution is unlimited.

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 words)*

This study assesses the prospects for Special Forces operations in the Middle East. It is intended to provide insight into how US Army Special Forces units should be used in the Middle East until the year 2000. The study's research strategy is twofold. First, the study examines the historical use of US, British, and French Special Forces in the region. History indicates that Special Forces units have periodically developed new capabilities and roles in the face of evolving threats. Secondly, this study analyzes instability in the Middle East, with an eye towards identifying future threat developments. Among the destabilizing factors examined are; continued regional conflicts, arms races and weapons programs, evolving nature of terrorism, inherent potential for natural disasters From this analysis, an estimate is made of how future regional developments will impact on Special Forces operations. The study concludes by outlining three scenarios for future employment of Special Forces units; a major regional conflict, a corps contingency force, and operations other than war. Notable trends identified by the study are the emerging importance of coalition warfare support missions, the increasing importance of language proficiency and cross cultural communications, and the increasing lethality of the battlefield.

14. SUBJECT TERMS	15. NUMBER OF PAGES
Special operations, Special forces, Middle East.	92
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	

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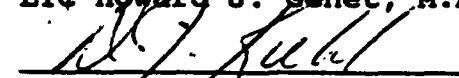
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of candidate: MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, USA

Thesis Title: Prospects for Special Forces Operations In the Middle East

Approved by:

LTC Howard J. Genet, M.A., Thesis Committee Chairman



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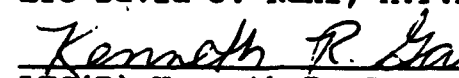

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

PROSPECTS FOR SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST by MAJ Matthew P. McGuiness, USA, 88 pages.

This study assesses the prospects for Special Forces operations in the Middle East. It is intended to provide insight into how US Army Special Forces units should be used in the Middle East until the year 2000.

The study's research strategy is twofold. First, the study examines the historical use of US, British, and French Special Forces in the region. History indicates that Special Forces units have periodically developed new capabilities and roles in the face of evolving threats. Secondly, this study analyzes instability in the Middle East, with an eye towards identifying future threat developments. Among the destabilizing factors examined are:

Continued regional conflicts
Arms races and weapons programs
Evolving nature of terrorism
Inherent potential for natural disasters

From this analysis, an estimate is made of how future regional developments will impact on Special Forces operations.

The study concludes by outlining three scenarios for future employment of Special Forces units; a major regional conflict, a corps contingency force, and operations other than war. Notable trends identified by the study are the emerging importance of coalition warfare support missions, the increasing importance of language proficiency and cross cultural communications, and the increasing lethality of the battlefield.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This paper is a comprehensive analysis of the rapidly changing environment for US Special Forces operations in the Middle East. Additionally, it articulates the options for using US Army Special Forces units in support of our national interests in the Middle East over the next seven years. In this paper, I discuss primarily US Army Special Forces units, with appropriate references to other US forces which commonly operate with them. The Special Forces of many nations have operated in the Middle East. However, the Special Forces of countries around the world vary significantly in organization and doctrine which makes comparisons difficult. Accordingly, I have contrasted the historical employment of US, British, and French Special Forces units to develop a historical perspective.

Importance

The fast-breaking changes in the strategic environment in the Middle East and the ambiguous nature of

threats to US interests call for updated and dynamic regional analysis.

Primary Question

How should US Army Special Forces be employed in the Middle East to the year 2000?

Secondary Questions

1. What regional security concerns or threats to US interests are likely to arise over the next ten years?

2. What demands will be placed on Special Forces units as US military strategy (Strategic Deterrence, Forward Presence and Crisis Response) is carried out in the Middle East?

3. How can Special Forces units be effectively employed in support of U.S. interests in the Middle East?

Assumptions

1. A long-term military effort will not divert Special Forces units which are currently oriented to the Middle East.

2. The US military's level of engagement abroad will remain fairly constant over the next seven years.

3. Operating as part of a coalition or combined military force will continue to be the preferred strategy for US forces.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many current and historical writings which support my thesis. In this chapter, I highlight a few of the most useful sources that I have found. I discuss four major categories of literature; government publications, books, articles, and unpublished works such as dissertations, theses and papers. Thoroughly researching these four categories of literature identified many works which were relevant to the thesis.

Government Publications

The first of two government publications of major significance is the Department of Defense (DoD) Report On the Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict. This report provides authoritative material on employment of Special Forces units during Desert Storm. According to the DoD report, Desert Storm witnessed the employment of Special Forces units in a wide variety of missions including Coalition Warfare Support, Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, and Psychological Operations. To quote the Gulf after-action report, " Many of the missions performed during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm were

identified in pre-war plans, while others were not anticipated before the crisis."[1] In my opinion, this admission confirms the relevancy of my topic. It also identifies the need for more thought on future Special Forces missions.

The second major government publication which I encountered was FM 100-25, Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces, which was published in 1991. According to FM 100-25, ARSOF doctrine found within the publication is compatible with the Army's current doctrine for AirLand Battle found in FM 100-5, Operations. Additionally, FM 100-25 is intended to project the capabilities of SF out six years and provide the vision of where senior Army leadership thinks Special Forces should be in the near term.[2] I believe existing doctrine provides a good point of departure for my thesis. However, doctrine is not tailored to a specific geographic region. It can only be a general guide for employment of Special Forces. I will incorporate other factors into my thesis such as regional threats, political factors, and cultural considerations. The end result will be a thesis which presents a more focused picture of future SF operations in the Middle East.

The net contribution of government publications to my thesis will be substantial. The DoD study on the Gulf War allowed me to incorporate a thorough understanding of DoD's position on recent Special Forces operations during

the war. Finally, Army doctrine provided the foundation to build a comprehensive study tailored to one geographic region.

Books

The books that I read provided a very important element--historical perspective. I briefly looked at past US Special Forces operations in the Middle East. I also looked at British and French Special Forces operations in the Middle East. I believe that Delta Force, by COL Charles A. Beckwith, USA (Retired) was a key source for any discussion of Operation Eagle Claw--the attempt to free US hostages in Iran. I also compared US Special Forces to British SF by using books, such as Tony Garahty's This Is the SAS and Who Dares Wins.

I found several books on security affairs in the Middle East. However, most of them were outdated by the 1991 Gulf War. Additionally, I did not find any books focusing entirely on a narrow subject like US Special Forces in the Middle East. In summary, books made a major contribution to my thesis by providing historical perspective and limited comparisons to foreign Special Forces.

Articles

In the course of my research, I found several recently published articles which are of value to my

thesis. Among these is an article published in 1991 by General Carl W. Stiner USA. Entitled "Strategic Employment of Special Operations Forces," this article is thought provoking--particularly concerning future requirements for Special Forces. He concludes his article with the idea "In the past we have succeeded in deterring a 'Big War' in Europe, but we failed to deter low intensity conflicts . . . the most likely form of conflict for the rest of the century."[3]

I encountered other articles of the same quality as General Stiner's piece. Lt. Gen. Earl Flanagan USA (Retired) published one of the most detailed descriptions I have seen on Special Forces operations during Desert Storm. I used articles like General Flanagan's to add detail to my discussions of recent US Special Forces operations during Desert Storm.

Dissertations, Theses, and Papers:

These sources have proven very valuable to my work. The Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) was the means I used to procure these papers. Through DTIC, I was able to obtain papers on both Special Forces operations and Middle Eastern security affairs.

Although I have not found a single recent paper that dealt specifically with SF in the Middle East, there are many papers written on the future of Special Forces. Of

particular importance are three papers; (1) "Special Operations Forces in Direct Action, Peacetime Contingency Operations" by LTC J. J. Maher; (2) "Concept for the Strategic Use of Special Operations In the 1990s and Beyond" by LTC W. J. Flavin; and (3) "SOF - From a Decade of Development to a Sustained Future" by LTC C. L. Hilton. All three papers address to some extent the need for a revised operational concept for Special Forces. Of special interest to me is LTC Flavin's thoughts about the increased use of Special Forces in combination with Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units. Combined together, they would form a Security Action Force (SAF) (not a new idea). What is new is the potential use of SAFs as the "economy force" of the future.[4] Papers such as those mentioned above provided valuable insight into current military thinking.

I also encountered some key papers on Middle Eastern security affairs. J. R. King wrote an excellent paper at the US Army War College on the Middle Eastern arms race titled "Proliferation of Chemical Weapons and Ballistic Missiles: Risks to NATO's Southern Region." Additionally, W. J. Dees wrote a significant paper at the Naval War College on Middle Eastern military capabilities titled "Gulf Security and the Gulf Countries' Contribution." Papers on Middle Eastern security affairs made a critical

contribution by giving me background information on the operational environment and regional threats.

Summary

Government publications allowed me to develop a thorough understanding of SF operations during the Gulf War and current doctrine for Special Forces. Books made a major contribution to my thesis by providing historical perspective and comparisons to foreign Special Forces. Additionally, articles provided additional viewpoints and background information. Finally, unpublished papers proved to be lucrative sources of information, providing insight into recent thinking on Special Forces and Middle Eastern security affairs. An in-depth review of the four literature sources discussed above brought to light a host of literature which was relevant to my thesis.

Endnotes

[1]US Department of Defense. Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 5-1 - 5-7.

[2]US Army. FM 100-25, Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1991) vii - viii.

[3]Stiner, Carl W. GEN, "Strategic Employment of Special Operations Forces." Military Review 71 no 6 (Jun '91): 14-21.

[4]Flavin, W.J. "Concept for the Strategic Use of Special Operations Forces in the 1990's and Beyond." (Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, May 91), 65-74.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter I discuss the three major parts of my research design: (1) General Concept of Research, (2) Criteria for Selecting Information, and (3) The Specific Research Plan. This thesis is developed in accordance with the research model contained in ST 20-10, Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) Research and Thesis.

General Concept of Research

My thesis incorporates elements of both the historical and comparative research approaches. I summarize the historical use of US Special Forces in the Middle East to develop a baseline of past SF activity. From there, I show how changing regional threats are on a collision course with US interests. Finally, I describe how US Special Forces can be actively employed to help protect US interests.

I relied primarily on the resources of the Center for Army Research Library in Bell Hall at Fort Leavenworth to secure the information for this thesis. I used references already on hand and ordered additional references to complete my research. The Defense Technical

Information Center proved to be invaluable in obtaining relevant sources not available in the library. I also conducted telephonic and personal interviews to obtain unpublished views and information.

Criteria for Selecting Data

There are some very definite criteria which I used to screen the information which I selected.

1. The information must pass the common sense test.

2. It cannot contradict what I already know to be the truth.

3. The information must come from a reliable source --one who is either experienced in the topic area or is authoritative by virtue of background and experience.

4. The information cannot be outdated because of recent changes on the international political scene.

5. Information developed for purposes of some agenda (political, economic, etc) will be carefully examined for bias. Careful screening using the criteria above eliminated information which was outdated, biased, or inaccurate.

Specific Research Plan

The purpose of my plan was to develop a means of obtaining, organizing, analyzing and interpreting the information I need for my thesis. I worked in three broad phases, each phase requiring a priority effort at various points in time:

1. Phase 1-General Research

2. Phase 2-Analysis and Interpretation

3. Phase 3-Research Completion

My three phased approach was developed along the lines of ST 20-10, which provides a research model for an academically sound thesis.

Phase 1. General Research

This phase included four research steps; Problem Definition, Literature Review, Development of Research Approach, and Collecting Evidence. During this phase, I completed the following:

1. Step 1: Summarize previous employment of US, French, and British Special Forces in the Middle East.

2. Step 2: Determine how Special Forces capabilities will be influenced by the trends in the Middle East.

Phase 2 - Analyzing and Interpreting Evidence

During Phase 2, I completed the following steps:

1. Step 1: Analyze the changing nature of the threat in the Middle East and interpret how Special Forces operations will be affected.

2. Step 2: Outline three scenarios where the changing strategic environment in the Middle East and regional tensions could lead to conflict with US objectives and interests. These scenarios envision SF employed as

part of our military strategy of Forward Presence, Strategic Deterrence and Defense, and Crisis Response;

1. Scenario 1: SF role in a major regional conflict.

2. Scenario 2: SF role in a corps contingency force.

3. Scenario 3: SF Operations (other than war).

Phase 3 - Research Completion

During this phase I developed conclusions and identified likely trends in SF operations. I also made recommendations for application and further research.

1. Step 1: Identify likely trends or changes in the nature of mission taskings to Special Forces units until the year 2000.

2. Step 2: Draw conclusions and articulate the implications which these developments will hold for Army Special Forces.

3. Step 3: Report research results and submission of final thesis.

Summary

The research design which I described in this chapter consists of three major parts. First, a general concept of research which is oriented to the historical and comparative approaches. Second, a set of definitive criteria designed to screen out unsuitable data such as biased or outdated information. Third, a specific research

plan designed to meet the suspenses and the research model in ST 20-10. In summary, this thesis was developed according to the research model outlined in ST 20-10 for an academically sound thesis.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONS

Regional Overview

The Middle East will continue to be a priority interest to the United States well into the 21st Century. Strategically located, the Middle East land mass is the bridge between Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia. Additionally, its sea lines of communications (SLOCs) are crucial to US trade and naval operations. Constricted by choke points, such as the Suez Canal, the Straits of Hormuz, and the Straits of Bab Al Mandeb, the Middle East's waterways are of great significance to the United States. The US and many industrialized nations also consider the Middle East to be strategically important because it is the site of approximately one third of the world's oil reserves. Consequently, the influence of the Middle East's oil supplies on the economies of industrialized nations will keep political interest focused on the Middle East.[1]

The Middle East will continue to foster instability well beyond the turn of the century. Confrontations are likely to arise because of deep-rooted political, social and economic problems in the region. Regional rivalries

and world competition for Arab arms purchasers compel regional nations to enhance their military capabilities with modernized conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. As a result, the combat environment in the Middle East is becoming increasingly lethal.

The Middle East has significant cultural and religious importance as well. Three of the worlds major religions--Christianity, Islam, and Judaism--trace their origins to the Middle East. The world's religious ties to the Middle East ensure that there will be a strong and continuing focus on the region. With the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, there will continue to be unrest in one of the world's greatest religious centers.

In summary, it is clear that both the Middle East's strategic importance and its instability will continue well into the 21st century. Accordingly, the Middle East's importance to US interests and the region's volatility make it a key area for future employment of US Special Forces.

The following sections of this chapter illustrate how US, British, and French Special Forces units operating in desert climates have evolved as the nature of the threat facing them changed. A historical perspective of the evolutional process of Special Forces Operations in desert environments clearly establishes that Special Forces must maintain a forward-looking approach towards developing

organizations, tactics, and equipment to meet future threats in the Middle East.

Overview of US SF Operations in the Middle East

The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) [SFG(A)] was the first US Army SF unit to gain a broad base of experience in operating in the Middle East. It was also the first US Special Forces Group--activated on 19 June, 1952. Although the 10th SFG(A)'s mission was unconventional warfare in Eastern Europe, it also trained in desert and mountainous regions, such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, and Jordan. One battalion of the 10th SFG(A) focused on the Middle East, and men from this unit studied regional languages including Arabic and Farsi.

Aaron Bank was the first commander of the 10th SFG(A), and he helped develop the unit's organization. The 10th SFG(A) was initially based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and was created to conduct unconventional warfare to exploit anti-communist resistance potential in the Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe. Aaron Bank was one of the foremost experts in unconventional warfare because of his experience during World War II in the Operational Groups (OGs) of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Operational Groups were infiltrated into European countries including France. The OGs were intended

to infiltrate a country and then link up with guerrilla forces. OGs trained and equipped guerrillas, then fought beside them against the Nazis. When Aaron Bank helped develop the organization of the 10th SFG(A), it resembled in many ways the OGs of the OSS.[2]

The 10th SFG(A) carried out a number of operational missions during the 1960s in the Middle East including the establishment of an airborne school in Jordan, training Iranian Special Forces, and training Saudi Arabian forces in counter-insurgency operations.[3]

Responsibility for the Middle East passed to the 6th SFG(A) in 1963 and then to the 5th SFG(A) in the 1970s. The post-Vietnam period of the 1970s was a period of reduction in force for the whole US Army--SF included. Special Forces were reduced in the post-Vietnam period from 7 to 3 groups. This left only 3,600 men in SF units by 1974. When state-sponsored terrorism rose up in the 1970s, the Army turned to Special Forces even though it had been badly neglected. Special Forces units suddenly had to develop tactics and techniques to counter the terrorist threat. Initially, an ad hoc unit with a counter-terrorist mission was established with personnel primarily from the 5th SFG(A). Known as "Blue Light," this unit filled the gap until newly formed units assumed the counter-terrorist mission full time.[4]

It was Delta Force which conducted Operation Eagle Claw--the attempt to rescue Americans held hostage in Iran after the fall of the Shah. Conducted in April 1980, Operation Eagle Claw ultimately failed because of a host of systemic problems, bad luck, and severe aircraft failures.[5] However, the mission heralded in a new era for Special Forces. Operation Eagle Claw exposed the need for technological, doctrinal, and organizational improvements throughout the Special Operations community and in the joint community as well. Without a doubt, the painful lessons learned during Operation Eagle Claw paved the way for the resounding success of Special Forces during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

After 1980, there was renewed emphasis on Special Forces, and deployments to the Middle East increased. US Army Special Forces routinely deployed to many Middle Eastern countries to conduct mobile training teams and combined exercises. Some SF deployments during the 80s were a direct result of US security assistance programs to countries which needed training on US-origin equipment. Other SF deployments resulted from aggressive attempts by the Department of Defense to improve US abilities to operate in harsh Middle Eastern climates, promote goodwill in the region, and improve interoperability of US and Mid-East forces.

The 5th SFG(A) participated periodically in Bright Star--the largest United States Central Command joint and combined training exercise. Bright Star gave the 5th SFG(A) an opportunity to deploy large portions of the group and operate in Egypt and other regional locations. Other highlights of the period include a large 80-man Mobile Training Team (MTT) which conducted training for Lebanese Special Forces. Finally, the 5th SFG(A) trained with the Jordanian 101st Special Forces in a variety of SF skills including navigation, weapons firing, and patrolling.[6]

More recently, the Persian Gulf War of 1991 witnessed the widespread use of US Special Forces in a wide variety of roles. The experience gained from operating in the region served Special Forces well after Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. Special Forces units from the 5th, 3rd, and 10th SFG(A) deployed to the region. Most of these forces were under the command of SOCCENT, the Special Operations component of the United States Central Command. The 5th SFG(A), which was the largest SF unit deployed during Desert Storm, arrived at King Khalid Military City (KKMC) in September 1990.[7]

Coalition warfare support, a mission not clearly articulated for SF prior to the conflict, became a major focus for SF. Coalition warfare support was critical for two reasons. First, the US Central Command needed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of coalition forces

being committed to the conflict. Second, the coalition forces had greatly dissimilar communications, equipment, and command and control procedures. Consequently, they had to be integrated with US forces. In addition to assessing and integrating coalition forces, Special Forces detachments provided Arab forces with training in individual and small unit skills. This training included patrolling; reconnaissance; nuclear, cnemical, and biological (NBC) skills; joint and combined planning; land navigation; and close air support operations.

When Arab forces including Egyptian, Saudi Arabian, and Kuwaiti units breached Iraqi obstacles and drove toward Kuwait City, Special Forces soldiers accompanied them. SF units were placed down to the battalion level in Arab units and performed a wide variety of missions including communications support, calling for close air support, and coordinating with adjacent forces.[8]

Immediately after arriving in Saudi Arabia, Special Forces units became responsible for reconnaissance along a section of the Iraqi border which was 300 miles wide and 200 miles deep. Soon afterward, SF personnel were infiltrated behind Iraqi lines. SF recon missions included searching for SCUD missiles, watching enemy avenues of approach, and testing soil trafficability for armor operations. In addition to reconnaissance, SF troops planted beacons to provide friendly aircraft with

navigational aids. Direct action missions were conducted by Special Forces personnel inside Iraq. SF personnel beamed lasers at missile launchers and other high value targets to guide fighter-bombers to the target locations. Finally, SF personnel are credited with a key role in the rescue of downed pilots in the Kuwaiti theater of operations. SF security teams accompanied rescue aircraft to the sight of downed aviators, then jumped out to recover the downed pilots.[9]

With the onset of the ground war, most Iraqi forces fled in front of coalition forces. However, when SF teams entered Kuwait city, remnants of Iraqi forces were still fleeing. After entering the city, SF teams surveyed the damage wrought by Iraqi forces and then provided the first comprehensive reporting of conditions in the city. Special Forces personnel were also selected to undertake a hazardous helicopter assault to re-occupy the US embassy. Following the liberation of Kuwait City, Special Forces personnel became increasingly involved in emergency reconstruction and civic action efforts. Today, Special Forces units are engaged in mutually beneficial exercise programs with Middle Eastern armed forces.

Although US Special Forces were very successful during the Gulf War, several areas were noted for upgrade and modernization. The 5th SFG(A) had developed a program for advanced desert mobility in the 1980s. The desert

mobility program envisioned each operational detachment equipped with wheeled vehicles and weapons appropriate for Special Forces missions in support of mechanized warfare in the desert. Because the program was not complete when the Gulf War began, some detachments initially had little more for mobility assets other than their own feet. 5th SFG(A) compensated for its lack of vehicles by using indigenous military vehicles, commercial vehicles, and US military vehicles on temporary loan. At the present time, most detachments in 5th SFG(A) are being fielded desert mobility vehicles which are based on specially modified HUMMVWs armed with .50-caliber machine guns and 40-millimeter Mark 19 grenade launchers.

Language capabilities also proved to be an area of concern for Special Forces. Language skills in difficult Middle Eastern languages, such as Arabic, are both time consuming to acquire and are perishable. SF found that wartime linguist requirements exceeded its pre-war capabilities, a situation felt by many army units with linguists. Today, 5th SFG(A) has a permanent language training facility with accredited instructors and a modern language lab. Accordingly, all 5th SFG(A) soldiers will participate to some degree in Arabic language training.[10]

Finally, communications at all levels of the group were identified as an area to be modernized. The requirement for real time intelligence flow back to the

theater level quickly showed that some communications systems in use were time consuming, out dated, and easily detectable. Consequently, SF teams were reliant to a great degree on scarce single channel satellite communications assets.[11]

In conclusion, US Special Forces capability to operate in the desert began with the activation of the 10th SFG(A) in the 1950s. The 10th SFG(A) and later the 6th SFG(A) developed extensive experience in the Middle East during the 1960s. The reduction in size of Special Forces in the 1970s left SF with little expertise in desert operations. In part, the painful lessons learned during Operation Eagle Claw resulted in renewed emphasis on Special Forces, and increased deployments to the Middle East. The experience gained from operating in the region served Special Forces well after Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. Special Forces made a critical contribution to operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. For the first time, US SF teams performed a wide variety of roles during a mid-intensity conflict in a desert environment. Special Forces units had to deploy rapidly into the theater and then conduct both combined and unilateral operations. Among the highest priority missions were special reconnaissance, direct action, combat search and rescue, foreign internal defense, and coalition warfare support. Significantly, foreign internal defense and coalition

warfare support missions emerged as key missions in the sense that they helped keep the Coalition together, and they may represent SF's greatest contribution to the war. Additionally, SF special reconnaissance teams provided real time intelligence from Iraqi controlled areas which allowed the US Central Command to extend its surveillance far beyond the capabilities of its organic sensors.[12] Future operations of this magnitude will probably require that SF enhance its capabilities in several areas, including mobility, language proficiency, and communications.

Overview of British and French Special Forces Operations in the Middle East

The Special Forces of allied nations such as Great Britain and France have also conducted operations in the Middle East for many years. While the scope of this study is limited, a few highlights of British and French operations are noted below.

Overview of British Special Air Service Operations In the Desert

Great Britain's Special Air Service (SAS) regiments have operated in the Middle East since World War II. In 1942, soon after the formation of the SAS, David Stirling led the First SAS Regiment on missions in the deserts of North Africa to strike Germany's air bases and extended supply lines. One SAS raid featured an 800 mile cross desert trek from Cairo, Egypt, to Kufra Oasis in Libya,

then another 800 miles to conduct raids in the Benghazi area. Although this particular operation ended in high casualties for the new unit, the SAS was very effective in North Africa. By the end of the war, the SAS was credited with the destruction of over 400 German aircraft on the ground, along with large amounts of other war material. In order to achieve success against the Germans in the harsh North African desert, the SAS developed special tactics which approximated those of the British Long Range Desert Group. Landrovers, jeeps and trucks were specially modified and armed to prepare them for long treks across the desert behind enemy lines. The innovation displayed by David Stirling in developing the organization, tactics and equipment tailored for special missions stands as a hallmark of Special Forces operations in the desert.[13]

Following WWII there were no major SAS operations in the Middle East until around 1958. Then the SAS became involved in countering a Saudi Arabian-backed rebellion in Oman. SAS units were ultimately able to destroy most of the guerrilla forces and insurgent infrastructure by combining careful intelligence preparation with well planned assaults on guerrilla held areas in Oman.

However, the SAS found itself back in Oman in 1970 to fight a Yemeni-backed communist insurgency in southern Oman. Additionally, the SAS had to counter an Iraqi-trained guerrilla group which had started operating on the

strategic Musandam peninsula which thrusts out into the Straits of Hormuz. The SAS fought in Oman until 1976 when the Omani government signed a cease fire with South Yemen. By that time, guerrilla supply lines had been cut and the communist guerillas had been forced back into South Yemen. Oman's final victory was achieved only after six years of SAS effort. Thousands of Iranian and Jordanian troops also fought on Oman's side. During the second Oman campaign, the nature of the threat forced SAS units to become adept at a number of different missions including unilateral counter-guerrilla operations and combined infantry operations with Omani government forces.[14]

Following the Oman campaign, SAS units operated in the former British colony of Aden (subsequently known as South Yemen). In the 1960s, Britain, which was planning to withdraw from Aden, had to face a number of insurgencies which had sprung up, some with Egyptian backing. While the SAS and other British Army units fought guerrillas in desolate parts of Aden, a new phenomenon also appeared in Aden--the urban guerrilla. The deadly tactics employed by the urban guerrillas required the SAS to develop clandestine tactics suitable for use in cities. As the insurgency continued, the guerrillas became irrepressible when Britain announced it was withdrawing from the colony. This situation placed British forces in a no-win situation. SAS and British Army units were forced to carry out

defensive operations until the very end. After the British withdrawal, Aden became a Soviet satellite country.[15]

In the 1970s, as the low intensity conflict threat to British interests evolved from insurgencies to international terrorism, the SAS again adapted successfully. The SAS formed special counter-terrorist units, equipped them with the latest equipment, and trained them constantly. One of the most notable highlights to SAS operations during that time was the 1977 counter-terrorist operation in Somalia. In October 1977, four Palestinian terrorists hijacked a Lufthansa aircraft and forced it to fly to Mogadishu. Among the demands of the terrorists was the release of the Baader-Meinhof gang from a West German prison. The situation deteriorated when the pilot was murdered by the terrorists after being accused of communicating with government officials. After the pilot's body was dumped out of the aircraft, SAS personnel assaulted the aircraft, killed three terrorists, and captured the fourth.[16]

In looking back on over fifty years of SAS operations in the Middle East, it is apparent that the SAS pioneered many specialized desert warfare tactics and techniques. Evolving as the threat changed, the SAS also innovated new approaches to complex problems. First, the SAS developed and used long-range raiding tactics on over-extended Nazi forces in the North African deserts

during World War II. Following the war, the SAS was tasked in the 1950s with counter-insurgency operations against guerrilla forces operating in rural and desolate areas of the Arabian Peninsula. In the 1960s, a new phenomenon appeared in Aden--the urban guerrilla which required the SAS to develop clandestine tactics suitable for use in cities. In the 1970s, as the low intensity conflict threat evolved from insurgencies to international terrorism, the SAS again adapted, enabling it to end successfully a terrorist hijacking at Mogadishu. Granted, the SAS has been involved in major efforts outside the Middle East--specifically northern Ireland, the Falklands, and the counter-terrorist operation against the Iranian embassy in London. However, the Middle East has been a major force in shaping SAS training, tactics, and organization. In effect, the SAS not only evolved as the threat evolved, it was on the forefront of bringing change to the Special Forces community.

Overview of French Foreign Legion Operations in the Desert

The French have employed specialized forces in the desert for many years. The French Foreign Legion, formed in 1831, considers its traditional home to be North Africa. Foreign Legion regiments were originally organized more as conventional infantry, parachute infantry, and light cavalry units than Special Forces in the US sense of

the word. However, over time, the Foreign Legion has evolved into a crisis action force, capable of deploying anywhere France feels its interests are at stake. Additionally, selected Legion units have acquired specialized skills and tactics normally found in some US Special Forces units. Infiltration techniques, such as military free fall, static line parachuting, and combat swimming are now found in special Foreign Legion units. The Foreign Legion also has a counter-terrorist unit.

The French Foreign Legion has also maintained many aspects of its original organization and capability to perform conventional infantry, engineer, artillery and cavalry missions. Notably, the French Foreign Legion has the capability to deploy forces equipped with armored vehicles for light cavalry-type missions which require greater firepower and maneuverability than light forces normally have. Clearly, the unique capabilities and achievements of the French Foreign Legion must be considered when studying the historical aspect of Special Forces operations in the Middle East.

The French Foreign Legion fought in Algeria as early as 1831. However, it is the World War II period to the present day which holds the most valuable lessons. In 1940, when Germany invaded France, the Legion had three regiments in North Africa and one in Syria. Additional regiments were formed to help defend France, but only

elements of one eluded the fall of France. Fighting on with the Allies, a battalion-size force of Legionnaires fought with the Free French through the second battle of El Alamein and the Allied drive into Tunisia.[17]

At that time, elements of other Legion units which had fought on the Vichy French side joined the Allied cause and fought in Syria and helped liberate France. Soon after the war, Legion regiments were embroiled in a bitter struggle against communist insurgents in Indochina. From 1947 to 1954, the Legion was a major participant in this conflict. In Algeria, at Sidi-bel Abbes, the Legion developed its first parachute capability, eventually raising three battalions for service in Indochina.[18]

Special skills were also developed during the 1940s and 1950s, when counter-insurgency operations became more important. Airborne operations as well as the use of amphibious tracked vehicles in riverine operations were used for the first time.[19]

Following the Indochina war, Legion units were involved in fighting in Algeria--a campaign that was generally successful from a military standpoint, although France ultimately withdrew for political reasons in 1962. The Legion fought against a nationalist insurgency, the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN). The FLN, backed by Egypt and Tunisia, gained enough support to wage a struggle requiring the involvement, at the height of fighting, of

over 20,000 Legion troops and 450,000 French army troops. During the Algerian campaign, Legion units pioneered the use of the helicopter for air-mobile operations and also became adept at countering a virulent urban insurgency in Algiers.[20]

Legion units also participated in the Anglo-French landings at Suez during the 1956 Middle East war. Soon after France withdrew from Algeria, the Legion became involved in a series of operational deployments to countries with arid or partially desert climates. From 1969 to 1984, the Legion intervened in Chad three times to restore order and counter Libyan aggression in the former French colony. In 1970, the Foreign Legion's 2nd Parachute Regiment began training for specialized missions to protect vital French installations and other strategic points from a Spetsnatz-type threat. Additionally, it conducted a hostage rescue operation in Djibouti in 1976 and provided peacekeeping forces to Beirut, Lebanon from 1982 to 83.[21]

In summary, the French have acquired an extensive capability to operate in the desert. Formed in 1831 as a colonial security force, the legion today has considerable capability to fight anywhere and to fight across the spectrum of conflict. Foreign Legion units have acquired specialized skills enabling them to deploy, and fight in a uniquely French manner.[22] United States Special Forces units will be able to benefit from the Legion's orientation

to fighting in the desert by maintaining a close relationship with Foreign Legion units in the future.

Summary of US, British, and French Special Forces Operations in the Desert

US Special Forces units developed an impressive desert warfare capability, partially in response to the debacle at Operation Eagle Claw's desert staging base in Iran named Desert One. Successful adaptation in the 1980s led to great success in the 1991 Gulf War. To build upon the successes of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, capabilities are being enhanced in several areas; mobility, language proficiency, and communications.

In respect to the British, the SAS evolved as the threat evolved, accumulating an impressive record of operations in North Africa and on the Arabian Peninsula. Between World War II and the 1980s, the threat which the SAS encountered changed from a conventional military force (Germany) to a primarily rural insurgency, then to urban guerrillas and international terrorists. With each change of threat, the SAS was on the forefront of developing desert tactics, techniques, and procedures.

French Foreign Legion units have acquired a unique mix of conventional and special capabilities to operate in the desert. While the Legion maintained its essentially conventional force orientation until the Indo-China War, it began to acquire the equipment, expertise, and

organizations of Special Forces units. Just as the British SAS evolved to meet the terrorist threat, so too did the Legion assume specialized missions for countering Spetznatz forces and terrorists. Today, the French Foreign Legion has the quick deployment capabilities and specialized skills enabling them to conduct Special Forces missions to protect France's national interests.

By placing the operations of US, British, and French Special Forces units into a historical perspective, several deductions can be made about future SF operations;

First, in order to maintain its advantage, US Special Forces must aggressively modernize its forces to keep in step with US Army modernization and to stay ahead of potential enemies. Special Forces detachments will have to operate in an increasingly lethal environment. The armed forces of both potential enemies and potential allies will be composed of a complex array of weapons systems. Special Forces units will encounter modern weapons from many origins including Europe, the US, Russia, North Korea, and China. Additionally, the armed forces of the Middle East possess older weapons systems from almost every arms manufacturer in the world. Therefore it is important that Special Forces proactively analyze potential threats and develop appropriate tactics, equipment, and organizations.

Second, the historical perspective of Middle East operations indicates that Special Forces missions changed

over time. In the 1950s, the primary SF mission was unconventional warfare. In the 1960s and 1970s, foreign internal defense became prevalent. Terrorism in the late 1970s and 1980s brought about a large shift of priority to the counter-terrorist mission.

Third, it is interesting to note that SAS desert operations during WW II possessed some similarities to US SF reconnaissance and direct action missions during Desert Storm. This suggests that while threats and missions evolve, there is also historical continuity in some respects.

Fourth, Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm highlighted the increasing importance of support to coalition warfare and combat search and rescue operations. Therefore, it is critical that Special Forces frequently reassess SF roles and missions in a dynamic region like the Middle East.

Finally, the lessons of Operation Eagle Claw taught us that Army Special Forces must be part of a joint special operations team which is trained to operate in the harsh and rapidly changing climatic conditions found in the Middle East. US Special Forces teams must maintain all of the perishable skills necessary for the Middle East--desert navigation, survival, tactics, linguistic skills, area orientation and cultural awareness. These skills are especially at risk in an era of declining Army force

structure. A reduction in the active duty SF force structure would lead to a reduction in area expertise. This reduction, in turn, would begin to retrace the steps back to 1980 and the debacle of Operation Eagle Claw.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY

This chapter examines the major destabilizing factors in the Middle East so as to better identify their impact on Special Forces operations until the year 2000. In testimony to the volatility of the Middle East, six of fifteen United Nations peace keeping operations are located in the Middle East.[1] Political instability and armed conflict in the Middle East stem from many sources:

1. The Arab-Israeli conflict
2. Regional competition and the arms race
3. External power competition
4. Resistance to western influences
5. Tribal and ethnic violence
6. Terrorism
7. Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic radicalism
8. Economic strife and natural disaster

Each factor listed above is discussed to analyze its role in the region and its impact on Special Forces operations. As regional threats develop and change, they directly affect the nature and scope of operations conducted by US Special Forces. This chapter results in a better

articulation of trends in the regional threat picture and provides some insight into future SF missions.

Arab-Israeli Conflict

At present, it appears that the progress achieved in getting Israeli and Arab factions to talk has abated the prospects of a widespread conflagration. Yet, even if peace is achieved, it will likely be the "cold" variety, serving only to keep all players at arms length. As an example, the Camp David accords produced a lasting peace between Egypt and Israel. Furthermore, relations between Egypt and Israel have been relatively stable despite differences over the Palestinian issue and the uprisings in the West Bank and Gaza strip (the Intifa). However, there has been little mutual trust or economic cooperation.

There appears to be a low probability that US Army SF units would be deployed to the Middle East because of a major Arab-Israeli confrontation. At balance, the Arab-Israeli conflict represents a significant indirect threat to US forces. The resultant regional tension and instability creates a complicated and potentially dangerous operational environment for US Special Forces.

The Arab-Israeli conflict can potentially result in direct threats to US interests and forces as well. Terrorism directed at US forces as a result of support for Israel is one effect which this threat could cause.

Additionally, there remains a very real probability that a terrorist incident indirectly inspired by the Arab-Israeli conflict could require the employment of US counter-terrorist forces.

Regional Competitors and the Arms Race

Competition among Arab countries for dominance in the Middle East will continue to be a key factor contributing to armed conflict. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Libya are the region's six most powerful Arab competitors. All six countries desire a greater degree of control over regional affairs such as political leadership or oil markets. Although none have gained a decisive edge in the region, an arms race including weapons of mass destruction has been the result.[2]

Clearly, the Arab-Israeli conflict also contributes to the arms race. Israel feels it must maintain a decisive edge over its Arab neighbors to insure its survival. Israel no doubt pointed to large Arab conventional armed forces when it set out to acquire technologically advanced weapons. Some Arab nations of the Middle East have responded in kind. The concept of "strategic parity" has become fashionable whereby one country's options to use weapons of mass destruction are limited by the prospects of a retaliatory strike in kind.

Turning to weapons of mass destruction, many nations in the Middle East have procured surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, and the Republic of Yemen all have some variant of the SCUD missile. The SCUD-B, with a range of 300 kilometers, has been popular in the Middle East. The Egyptians are credited with firing several at Israeli forces at the end of the 1973 War. Iraq and Iran fired SCUDs and modified SCUDS at each other's capitols during the Iran/Iraq war. The most recent firings took place during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when Iraq fired a number of SCUDs and modified SCUDs at Saudi Arabia and Israel. The SCUD is a desirable missile to many nations because it has the potential to be fitted with nuclear, chemical, and biological warheads. However, the SCUD does not have sufficient accuracy to be considered anything other than an area weapon, making it useful only against military bases, cities, and similar targets.[3]

The Republic of Yemen and Syria have the shorter range but more accurate SS-21 SSM. Because of its greater accuracy, the SS-21 is considered by many to be more useful than the SCUD against military targets. The SS-21 is accurate to within 100 meters, making it a viable weapon for attack of point targets and targets inside urban areas.[4]

Other types of SSMs are operational in Middle Eastern arsenals as well. On the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia also has approximately 50 Chinese CSS-2 SSMs. Several Middle Eastern countries including Iran and Iraq have been developing their own surface-to-surface missiles, mainly versions of the SCUD.

Finally, several Middle Eastern countries--notably Iran and Syria--have expressed interest in obtaining the Chinese M-9 missile, which is capable of a 600 KM flight.[5]

Nuclear weapons programs are a worsening problem as well. Israel is by far the most capable in this regard. The Dimona nuclear power plant is estimated by some sources to produce enough plutonium 239 to produce ten weapons per year. Additionally, Israel is believed to have deployed some sort of nuclear device on two occasions--during the Yom Kippur War on 8 October 1973 and during the super power tensions between the US and USSR after the war on 24 October 1973.[6]

Other nations in the Middle East have nuclear programs with varying potential for weapons development. Iraq was foremost among them until the 1991 Gulf War. UN inspections in the wake of the war have clearly established the existence of a nuclear weapons program which used a combination of modern and 1940s technology, and was about one year from developing a nuclear device.

Egypt is one of the most technologically advanced countries in the Middle East. Among Egypt's advanced technology programs are nuclear research and nuclear energy programs. Although little is known of any military applications of Egypt's nuclear programs, most observers contend that the program is geared towards electrical power needs.

Finally, the nuclear-related activities of Libya, Iran, and Syria have the potential to be turned towards weapons acquisition. Without a doubt, other countries will attempt to develop nuclear weapons potential.[7]

Most observers agree that chemical weapons are a growing threat in the Middle East. While Israel is not known to have ever used chemical weapons in combat, it is believed to have the capability to produce both mustard and nerve gas. Before the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq had at least five chemical plants involved in the production of blister, blood, choking, and nerve agents.[8] Iraq's use of chemical weapons against both troops and civilians during the Iran-Iraq war is well documented. Iraq was also condemned by the United Nations for its use of chemical weapons to kill an estimated 5,000 defenseless Kurdish villagers at Halabja in 1988.[9]

Syria has acquired chemical weapons, likely viewing them as a deterrence to Israeli conventional and nuclear capabilities as well as a deterrence to Iraqi aggression.[10]

Syria is believed to be capable of delivering mustard and nerve agents via aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles. However, the Syrians are not believed to have ever used chemical weapons.

Iran is a classic example of how conflict has escalated the search for advanced weapons. In response to Iraq's chemical capabilities, Iran developed the capability to produce and employ blood and nerve agents during its war with Iraq.[11]

Egypt is believed to have used chemical strikes during the North Yemen Civil War in the 1960s. However, it is not known whether Egypt is aggressively pursuing a chemical weapons program today.[12]

Libya is probably the least capable of the regional powers, but it, too, is actively pursuing a chemical weapons program. Qaddafhi's motivation for moving into the non-conventional weapons arena is based on his perceived need to compensate for the weapons of regional neighbors. Qaddafhi also hopes that his chemical weapons may deter US strikes. Libya is believed to have used chemical weapons in Chad in 1987, although the effectiveness of those strikes are unknown. The chemicals used may have come from Soviet-supplied stocks. Libya is still pursuing an indigenous capability to produce blister and nerve agent.[13]

Past instances of arms transfers in the Middle East indicate that many nations will not hesitate to transfer

weapons of mass destruction to another nation. When the implications of the unconventional arms race and the proliferation of ballistic missiles are viewed from a regional perspective, two things stand out. Future conflict in the Middle East is potentially a catastrophic affair in which the arms holdings of non-belligerent nations will likely augment those of warring nations.[14] Secondly, the collapse of the Soviet Union has created a weapons bazaar and enormous control problems with stocks of strategic weapons. The result is increased potential of strategic weapons ending up in the Middle East.[15]

Regional Competitors

After Iraq's defeat in the Persian Gulf War of 1991, Egypt moved up as a political force in the Middle East. Egypt, led by President Hosni Mubarak, has been a moderating force in the region for the past decade and has supported the US on many issues. Egypt is also a traditional center for Arab culture and is an educational center as well. Since the Camp David Accords, the Egyptian armed forces have depended heavily on US security assistance. Although the Egyptian Army consists primarily of mechanized infantry and a4rmor forces, Egypt has always maintained sizable Special Forces and commando units.[16] Egypt's close relations with the United States, its inventory of US-origin equipment, and its interest in Special Forces

units creates favorable conditions for combined exercises and mobile training teams by US Special Forces. Egyptian forces and US Special Forces coordinated closely during operation Desert Storm, creating yet another avenue for future cooperation.

Saudi Arabia exerts tremendous economic and political influence around the globe because of its huge oil reserves. Saudi Arabia, home of Islam's holiest cities, Mecca and Medina, also has great cultural and religious importance in the Middle East.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have many goals in common. Both countries seek to deter aggression against Saudi Arabia, just as both nations seek to insure an uninterrupted flow of Persian Gulf oil to the industrialized nations of the world.

The US came to Saudi Arabia's aid after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and both nations fought side by side to free Kuwait. During the Gulf War period, US Special Forces units operated with Saudi units and provided valuable training as well as communications links for close air support and long range fires. In the post-Desert Storm period, Saudi Arabia is modernizing its armed forces. Saudi plans call for a doubling in the size of the Saudi armed forces, and the divisional organization will be introduced. Saudi Arabia has already accepted delivery of 200 M60-A3 main battle tanks, 200 Bradley fighting

vehicles, 46 Astros multiple rocket launchers, 8 Tornado jet aircraft, and 18 F-15C jet fighters. Additional equipment slated for Saudi Arabia include 150 M1-A1 main battle tanks, 200 Bradley fighting vehicles, 9 MLRS rocket launchers, 150 TOW anti-tank systems and 6 Patriot fire units.[17]

As Saudi Arabia modernizes and reorganizes its armed forces in the post-war period, US Special Forces should play a key role. For the near term, mobile training teams and combined exercises with Saudi units appear to be the most likely SF roles. Should the security situation between Saudi Arabia and Iraq deteriorate again, Special Forces units will likely be called upon to perform a wide range of special operations. Likely wartime missions for Special Forces in Saudi Arabia include special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, direct action, and coalition warfare support.

President Assad and Syria emerged together as two of the less probable victors of the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Syria's relatively hard line on Arab-Israeli issues did not appear to enhance its prospects of supporting the Coalition. However, Syria's long-standing rivalry with Iraq may have prompted its surprising contribution of an armored division to the Coalition. This move resulted in several positive developments from the Syrian perspective. Because Syria supported the Coalition, the United States

did not block Syria's move to increase its presence and role in Lebanon after the war. Furthermore, Syria has recently made sizeable additions to its arms inventories, possibly with cash from reimbursements for war expenses. In the past two years, Syria has acquired over 300 T-72 tanks, plus 20 North Korean SCUD surface-to-surface missile launchers, and 4 OSA class patrol boats.17 However, the Syrian economy has little capability to provide hard cash for arms purchases. Over the next eight to ten years, Syria will attempt to maintain a strong security posture vis-a-vis Israel and unrest in Lebanon. Unfortunately, from the Syrian point of view, this will become increasingly difficult because of Syria's poor economy and the loss of large scale Soviet military aid. Barring an incident with Israel or renewed interest in terrorism, Syria's resources over the next several years may be largely directed towards internal affairs and its economy. Unless a new creditor is found, new arms purchases will have to be scaled back.

Libya under Muamar Qaddafhi has been involved in a long list of misadventures ranging from terrorism to persistent armed intervention in Chad. The 1986 raid on Tripoli by US aircraft prompted a marked increase in caution on Qaddafi's part, but his stripes probably have not changed. Currently Libya is suffering a degree of political isolation as a result of its support of Saddam

Hussein during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Over the next several years, the most likely threats to emanate from Libya are meddling with weaker regional countries plus a penchant for terrorism.

The Iran-Iraq War is proof that Iran can be a violent competitor for dominance of the Persian Gulf. Although Iran was severely weakened by the war with Iraq, it still has enough military capability to intimidate smaller countries.

Iran is rebuilding its military capabilities, with a priority effort going to the air force and surface-to-surface missile force. Iran is also making slower progress in reconstituting its ground and naval forces. No doubt Iran has likely found the change in world order beneficial because it can pay cash for arms. Accordingly, it has become a prime target for former Soviet-block countries and Asian countries attempting to sell modern fighters, surface-to-surface missiles and other military hardware.[18] In 1991, Iran is reported to have acquired an array of modern weapons systems from Russia and China. Included in the deal were 72 F-7 fighters, 25 Su-24 bombers, 50 Mig-29s, an unknown number of Mig-31s and Su-27s, and 200 T-72 tanks. Additionally, in March 1992, a North Korean freighter known to be carrying sophisticated SCUD-C surface-to-surface missiles docked at the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas.[19]

Iran's domestic arms industry has not been idle either. Under development are two new types of deadly multiple rocket launchers: the 333-millimeter Shahin and the 355-millimeter Nazeat.[20]

Iran has not given up its intent to wield power and protect its interests. Towards the final days of the twentieth century, its renewed military capabilities will have greatly increased its influence in the Gulf. The administration of President Rafsanjani has been moderating Iran's stance on regional affairs. However, Iran's recent history of violence and its desire for dominance place it on a potential collision course with U.S. interests.

About two thirds of Iraq's offensive military capabilities were destroyed by coalition forces during Desert Storm. However, Iraq still has sufficient military forces to pose a threat to the region, particularly the smaller Gulf countries.

After Iraqi forces were defeated in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO), the Kurdish and Shia uprisings demanded attention. Iraqi commanders were forced to fight insurgents and at the same time reorganize the remnants of forces which had escaped the KTO. After bitter fighting, the insurgencies have been controlled, although UN forces are now providing a degree of protection to Kurdish and Shia areas. Since the end of widespread unrest, Iraq has been reconstituting its battered forces with personnel and

reorganizing its residual inventories of tanks, aircraft, and surface-to-air missiles.

Specifically, Iraq is estimated to have reorganized its army into seven corps headquarters, with 28 armor, mechanized, and infantry divisions. Although most of Iraq's ground forces are infantry units with little offensive capability, there are still enough heavy forces left to field up to 2,300 tanks, 900 armored infantry fighting vehicles (mostly BMP-1s), and about 2,000 armored personnel carriers. The best combat equipment is concentrated in Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard Forces Command.[21]

The persistent border incursions by Iraqi personnel searching for war material in the United Nations .one between Iraq and Kuwait point to the casual regard that Iraq holds for international law. Additional evidence of Iraq's intents are provided by recent US strikes against Iraqi surface-to- air missile sites and Iraqi combat aircraft over northern and southern Iraq. It appears that the belligerent nature of Iraq's regime ensures Iraq will remain a potential antagonist to U.S. interests for some time.

Although Iraq's ambitions were curtailed by Desert Storm, smaller states still consider Iraq to be a long-term threat to Gulf security. Although the sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN) have checked any Iraqi intent to rebuild its armed forces, Iraq's remaining military

capabilities are sufficient to keep a weakened Iran at bay or to intimidate its neighbors to the south.

Smaller regional states such as Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, are overshadowed by the military power of their larger neighbors. For a variety of economic, political, and demographic reasons, smaller regional countries have difficulty establishing viable defensive armed forces. Similarly, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has not yet matured. Consequently, the GCC also cannot provide for collective security. Even if the GCC resolves the disagreements among member nations, it will face incredibly complex and difficult problems inherent in fielding a military force of diverse origins.

Continued US interest in Gulf security, and the importance of Persian Gulf oil and ports, will ensure the Gulf retains its importance to the US. Additionally, US weapons systems and US military doctrine are becoming increasingly common in some of the smaller countries as a result of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Accordingly, a greater potential for Special Forces foreign internal defense missions and combined exercises now exists in the Gulf countries.

External Power Competition

The disintegration of the former USSR has significantly lowered political tensions from external power

competition. The flow of Soviet produced weapons systems to client states, such as Syria and Libya, will likely change from a credit arrangement to that of "cash on delivery"--a situation which is bound to keep the volume of traffic at lower levels. Unfortunately, the cash-poor status of Eastern-bloc countries may prompt them to sell more sophisticated weapons systems in order to attract buyers.

In addition to the former Soviet Union, France and Great Britain have sold great quantities of arms to the Middle East. Economics are also driving France and Great Britain to continue seeking out clients in the region. At balance, where international competition was once a factor contributing to the arms race, economic necessity is now driving former Soviet-block countries, Great Britain, and France to seek arms purchasers. Unfortunately, the destabilizing effects of competition will last for decades because the arms race has produced weapons inventories which are far out of proportion to defensive requirements. Finally, cash-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia (threatened by a Soviet-equipped Iraq) have come to believe that a large inventory of modern weapons is necessary for survival.

Tribal and Ethnic Violence

Ethnic and tribal violence is a growing trend in the

Middle East. Iraq's chronic trouble with Kurdish and Shia factions is one example of a growing phenomenon. Likewise the conflict in the Sudan and recent Morocco-Polisario confrontation in the Western Sahara all are rooted in tribal and ethnic issues. A certain similarity can be seen between the Middle East's tribal and ethnic violence and other world events, such as ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and the feudal warlords of Somalia. One thing is clear: in areas of the Middle East where law and order has broken down due to a variety of disasters, violence with tribal and ethnic overtones has reared its head.[22]

Terrorism

There are indications today that the use of terrorism is evolving. It is well known that many of the sources and sponsors of the terrorism spree of the 1970s and 1980s have been rendered ineffective. No longer are the headlines constantly captured by international skyjackings and hostage situations. Yet, the recent bombing of the World Trade Center in New York pays testimony to the fact that terrorism is alive and well. In the same week as the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, there were explosions in Moscow, Cairo, and London. Similarly, Palestinian unrest (the Intifada), and the Israeli government both contributed to the international attention focused on Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist

organization. Additionally, terrorism associated with narcotics trafficking may become prevalent in the Middle East. Finally, the persistent ethnic terrorism found in the Balkans and Kurdish areas of Iraq and Turkey seems to be on the rise.

In the Middle East, terrorism has been considered a legitimate extension of foreign policy by many regional countries. Iran, Syria, and the Palestinians have all paid to a degree for their involvement in terrorist acts in the past. Libya has paid dearly for its acts of terrorism as evidenced by the 1986 strike by US aircraft on Libya. Furthermore, Libya finally arrested two men wanted by the US and UK in connection with the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing. Iraq threatened to use terrorism world wide during the invasion of Kuwait. Although no effective campaign ever developed, a number of terrorist-related acts were foiled during the Gulf War of 1991.

Later in the year, as US hostages Joseph Cicippio, Alan Steen and Terry Anderson were being released on 1 December 1991, a car bomb killed 30 in Beirut. On 8 December 1991, as UK hostage Terry Waite was being freed, a bomb blasted a US university in Beirut.[23]

It appears likely that terrorism will continue to be an attractive option well beyond the year 2000, in spite of the high cost of terrorism brought on by security measures

and police/counterterrorist forces. The US and other leading nations have developed effective but costly countermeasures to terrorists. However, these counter-measures will likely be challenged by the changing nature of terrorism. While state-sponsored terrorism may wane, the rise of ethnic and religious conflicts worldwide may actually create a net increase in the use of terrorist tactics. Terrorist acts directed against the US may be perceived as a way to provoke US involvement in resolving a conflict. Furthermore, there is a real probability that a terrorist incident indirectly caused by a chronic problem such as the Arab-Israeli conflict could require the employment of US counter-terrorist forces.

Resistance to the Western Influences

Resistance to western influence in the Middle East is due to a combination of historical, political, cultural, and religious factors. It results in a complicated operating environment for Special Forces, one in which sensitivities can be easily offended. Resistance to Western influence is partly rooted in the post-colonial period of the Middle East. The Sikes-Picot Agreement of 1916 established political boundaries for some Middle Eastern countries which had little relation to tribal and ethnic territories. This agreement contributed to a long period of political unrest and the rise of Pan-Arabism.

The culture and tradition of the Islamic way of life are also threatened by the influx of western culture, technology and goods into the Middle East. Arab desire for unity has resulted in a series of attempts at Pan-Arab alliances of all kinds. Some Arabs also believe Western support of Israel is a prime example of Western meddling. Accordingly, Israel has become a target of those who are militant in their resistance to the West. The most recent Gulf War demonstrated the ineffectiveness of yet another Arab alliance: the Gulf Cooperation Council. Additionally, the Coalition, which included Arab nations arrayed with western nations against Iraq, may have severely crippled Pan-Arabism for some time.

Islamic Fundamentalism and Radicalism

Discontent with government, society, and the economy is leading more and more Middle Easterners to Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic radicalism. Many Moslems believe that western influences are causing traditional values to be abandoned. In their eyes, the traditions and beliefs of Islam have been eroded, and traditional role models have been robbed of dignity and stature. Unfortunately, Arab countries have found it difficult to incorporate the positive aspects of western modernism, technology, and economic growth, while at the same time holding fast to Islamic values.[24] Consequently, the

reaction has been a rise in Islamic fundamentalism and conservatism. The trend is especially notable in Saudi Arabia, the conservative Gulf states, and North Africa. Egypt is also experiencing chronic unrest, even though the more traditional forms of Islam are tolerated and partially integrated into Egyptian society. Farther to the west, recent elections in Algeria indicate that Algerians--and probably many other North Africans as well--would vote for a conservative Islamic state. Fundamentalism has political tendencies in two main directions. Radical Sunni fundamentalists are in favor of severing ties with the West; they view western vices, corruption, materialism, and social reform as destructive to Islamic way of life. Secondly, Shi'ite fundamentalists usually operate as minorities with no stake in the status quo, and they look to Iran for spiritual and operative direction. Indeed, Iran acknowledges its export of fundamentalism to the Sudan, Algeria, and Egypt.

The rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism, with its attendant social and political upheaval, is a destabilizing force in the region. It could also become a direct threat to US forces under some circumstances. Special Forces units operating in the vicinity of fundamentalist-leaning populations must be aware of the religious-cultural complexities of the situation. Islamic fundamentalists may perceive US forces as a symbol of the influences which they

seek to eliminate. Finally, states such as Iran may use terrorism as a political instrument to strike back at the US.

Economic Strife and Natural Disaster

The Middle East will also continue to have the potential for wide-spread disaster and human misery resulting from droughts, poverty, and poor health care. Many Middle Eastern nations, particularly those with little oil, have underdeveloped economies. The Horn of Africa has been affected by chronic drought and famine. The Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia are vulnerable to these disasters because farmers and herders depend on unreliable seasonal rains. With natural disasters come the discontent and displacement which weakens governments and leads to unrest.

Many regional countries do not have the infrastructure or monetary reserves to deal with natural disasters. In these cases, international assistance is the only hope. Special Forces units have medical, engineering, and language skills which make them uniquely suited to participate in humanitarian relief operations and nation assistance. US forces will likely continue to assist disaster-struck nations around the world and may even become more actively involved in these missions. Special Forces are prime candidates for long-term engagement in these operations as the century draws to a close.

Summary

After examining the major destabilizing factors on the Middle East, some conclusions can be drawn. There appears to be a low probability that US Army SF units would be deployed to the Middle East because of a major Arab-Israeli confrontation. However, the Arab-Israeli conflict and its resultant regional tension and instability represents a significant indirect threat by creating a complicated and potentially dangerous operational environment for US Special Forces. Additionally, the Arab-Israeli conflict can result in direct terrorist threats to US interests and forces as well.

It appears likely that competition stands a fairly good chance of leading the Middle East and related areas of North Africa into another conflict by the end of the century. Various credible scenarios have been put forth. Iraq and Iran, by virtue of their aspirations seem to be likely belligerents. Additionally, either Iraq or Iran could come to blows with one or more Gulf States. Further to the west, Syria, despite its weakening position, could clash with Israel over security matters in Lebanon or along the Golan heights.

The implications of the unconventional arms race and the proliferation of ballistic missiles are disturbing as well. Future conflict in the Middle East has the potential to feature surface to surface missiles and chemical

weapons. There appears to be a lower probability that nuclear weapons or biological weapons would be used, although their use cannot be ruled out. Given the tendency among nations to transfer technology and even complete weapons systems, US Special Forces must be prepared accordingly. The US may find itself facing a belligerent who has been augmented with weapons from a non-belligerent nation.

Events in Middle Eastern countries with close ties to the US hold implications for US SF as well. As countries such as Saudi Arabia and smaller Gulf states attempt to improve their defense posture in the post-war period, US Special Forces should play a key role. Mobile training teams and combined exercises with friendly countries will likely be conducted on a frequent basis. Should the security situation deteriorate because of competition, Special Forces units could be called upon to perform a wide range of missions, including special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, direct action, and coalition warfare support.

In addition to regional competition, ethnic, tribal, and religious conflict have created a persistent low-intensity conflict environment in Iraq, the Sudan, and Lebanon. The Middle East bears witness to a global rise in ethnic and tribal violence.

Islamic fundamentalism with its growing social and political unrest will, at a minimum, make the operating

environment for Special Force more complicated. Although US relations in the Middle East are relatively good, the perception that the US is a representative of Western influences will probably increase.

The Middle East will also continue to have a high potential for wide-spread disaster and human misery resulting from droughts, poverty, and poor health care. Special Forces units have a variety of skills needed by humanitarian assistance operations, so they are prime candidates for frequent participation.

Finally, it appears likely that terrorism will continue well beyond the year 2000. Despite the high cost of terrorism brought on by counterterrorist measures, it will be an attractive option under certain circumstances. Accordingly, those organizations conducting counter-terrorist missions will likely be challenged by the changing nature of terrorism. While state-sponsored terrorism may wane, the rise of ethnic and religious conflicts worldwide may actually create a net increase in the use of terrorist tactics.

It appears certain that without significant progress towards peace, US interests, or those of an ally, will at some point be threatened. The influx of modern weapons systems, and the rearmament of Iran indicate that the situation in the region will worsen as the decade draws to a close.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses the implications of regional developments on Special Forces operations in the Middle East. It provides an updated look at the future problems SF will face in the Middle East. This chapter also presents a view of how Special Forces units should be employed through the end of the century.

Chapter 4, the historical perspective of Special Forces operations in the Middle East, made a strong case that SF missions for US, British, and French forces are evolving on a dynamic basis. Chapter 5, the analysis of the changing threat situation, identified some far reaching implications for SF operations through the turn of the century. The following pages highlight the key findings of chapters 4 and 5. Additionally, the chapter presents conclusions for future SF operations in four categories:

1. General conclusions
2. Conclusions for a major regional conflict
3. Conclusions for a US corps contingency operation
4. Conclusions for operations other than war

By developing these four areas with emphasis on identifying

operational considerations and implications, a more definitive understanding of future operational problems is gained, as well as some insights into how best to utilize Special Forces units in the region.

General Conclusions

Special Forces can best be utilized by staying active in the region so that the little wars are deterred from becoming larger ones.

In order to maintain its advantage, US Special Forces must aggressively modernize its forces to keep in step with US Army modernization and to keep ahead of potential enemies.

Special Forces detachments will have to operate in an increasingly lethal environment. The armed forces of both potential enemies and potential allies will be composed of a complex array of weapons systems. Special Forces units will encounter modern weapons from many origins, including Europe, the US, Russia, North Korea, and China. Additionally, the armed forces of the Middle East possess older weapons systems from almost every arms manufacturer in the world.

Historically, SF operations in the Middle East changed. In the 1950s, the primary SF mission was unconventional warfare. In the 1960s and 1970s, the foreign internal defense mission became prevalent.

Terrorism in the late 1970s and 1980s brought about a large shift of priority to the counter-terrorist mission. Finally, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm highlighted the increasing importance of support to coalition warfare and combat search and rescue operations. Therefore, in light of the changing regional situation, Special Forces must proactively analyze potential threats and develop appropriate tactics, equipment, and organizations. It is critical that Special Forces frequently reassess SF roles and missions in a dynamic region such as the Middle East.

It is just as important to note that some things do not seem to change very much. Because SAS desert operations during WW II possessed some marked similarities to US SF missions during Desert Storm, it appears that long range reconnaissance and patrolling are classic SF missions which will continue for some time.

US Special Forces teams must maintain all of the perishable skills necessary for the Middle East--desert navigation, survival, tactics, linguistic skills and area studies. These skills are especially at risk in an era of broadening missions and declining force structure. A reduction in the active duty SF force structure would lead to a reduction in area expertise. This, in turn, would begin to retrace the steps back to 1980 and the debacle of Operation Eagle Claw.

The Arab-Israeli conflict and its resultant regional tension, instability and terrorism is a significant indirect threat for US Special Forces.

It appears likely that regional competition will lead the Middle East or related areas of North Africa into another conflict by the end of the century. Should the security situation deteriorate again because of competition, Special Forces units could be called upon to perform a wide range of missions, including special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, direct action, and support to coalition warfare.

Future conflict in the Middle East has the potential to feature the use of surface-to-surface missiles and chemical weapons. There appears to be a lower probability that nuclear weapons or biological weapons would be used, although their use cannot be dismissed. US Special Forces must be prepared to operate in this environment and be prepared to conduct operations directed at weapons of mass destruction.

Events in countries with close ties to the US hold implications for SF as well. As countries such as Saudi Arabia and smaller Gulf states attempt to improve their defense posture in the post-war period, US Special Forces should play a key role. Mobile training teams and combined exercises with these countries will likely be conducted on a frequent basis.

In addition to regional competition, ethnic, tribal, and religious conflict has resulted in chronic low intensity conflict in Iraq, the Sudan, and Lebanon. The Middle East bears witness to a global rise in ethnic and tribal violence.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism will make the operating environment for SF more complicated. Although US relations in the Middle East are relatively good, the perception that the US is a representative of Western influences will probably increase. The rise of fundamentalism will make SF missions increasingly difficult in some parts of the Middle East, and tax cross-cultural skills to the maximum.

The Middle East will also continue to have a high potential for wide-spread disaster and human misery resulting from droughts, poverty, and poor health care. Special Forces units have a variety of skills needed by humanitarian assistance operations, so they are prime candidates for frequent participation.

Terrorism will likely continue well beyond the year 2000. Despite the high cost of terrorism brought on by counter-terrorist measures, it will still appear to be an attractive option under certain circumstances. Accordingly, those organizations conducting counter-terrorist missions will likely be challenged by the changing nature of terrorism. While state sponsored

terrorism may wane temporarily, the rise of ethnic and religious conflicts worldwide may actually create a net increase in the use of terrorist tactics.

It appears certain that without significant progress towards peace, US interests will at some point be threatened. Events including the influx of modern weapons systems and the rearmament of Iran, indicate a worsening of the situation in the region as the decade draws to a close.

Finally, Operation Eagle Claw taught us an important lesson: Army Special Forces must be part of a joint special operations team which is trained for the harsh climatic conditions found in the Middle East.

Conclusions for a Major Regional Conflict

A major regional conflict envisions operations similar in scale to Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Iran or a rearmed Iraq are two of the more likely antagonists, with the United States operating as part of a coalition of forces under United Nations auspices to deter or turn back aggression from one or several hostile nations. An operation of this nature could last from six months to eighteen months, depending on the particular circumstances. SF missions will likely extend well beyond the end of conventional force participation. Considering the importance of oil to the world, the concentration of oil-producing sites in the Persian Gulf, and continued arms

races in the Gulf, the Gulf emerges as a likely location for the next war. Not to be discounted is a regional conflict arising out of the spread of fundamentalism. North Africa, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and Azerbaijan have all witnessed the rise of fundamentalism. As always, Israel and Syria could again clash over Lebanon or some facet of the Arab-Israeli issue. However, because it is not likely that either side could sustain a high level of combat, such a conflict would be intense for a relatively short period. Accordingly, it appears that the next regional conflict will encompass primarily desert regions with some prospects for mountain fighting and urban fighting as well. A major regional conflict would likely involve the complete assets of at least one Special Forces Group with robust combat service support, civil affairs, and psychological operations augmentation. Just as in Desert Storm, the Group would have to deploy and establish forward operating bases (FOBs). One FOB might be located close to the main Coalition headquarters, one might be best located to service more remote portions of the theater of operations, and one may be best located relatively far forward to service operations in the corps areas of interest.

In a major regional conflict, support to coalition warfare is likely to be a major requirement early in the operation, as well as special reconnaissance. As soon as friendly air operations begin, combat search and rescue

will be a priority mission. Prior to the start of ground operations, special reconnaissance activities may peak. Ground operations will bring about a renewed emphasis on direct action and support to coalition warfare. Following cessation of ground combat, it appears likely that civil military operations and the reorganization and reconstitution of coalition military forces will be priority activities. Throughout a major regional conflict, SF skills will be invaluable, particularly language skills, which provide an inherent capability to interface with coalition forces.

Another key SF skill will be expertise in the tactical and technical aspects of mechanized, mountain, and urban warfare. Special Forces detachments will potentially be tasked with reconnaissance and direct action missions against command and control nodes, lines of communication, surface-to-surface missile and surface-to-air missile sites, non-conventional weapons storage sites, key road intersections, bridges, and dams. The chances of successful reconnaissance and direct action missions would be improved dramatically by light weight secure radios, enhanced demolitions, and stand-off weapons.

There are several implications of a major regional conflict for Special Forces. First and foremost, the magnitude of Desert Storm quickly identified the need for more than one regionally-oriented Special Forces Group (5th

SFG(A). Therefore, units will have to train intensively on their most important mission essential tasks. Other implications for SF arise out of the post-conflict phase. Operation Provide Comfort in Turkey indicates that there is an expanding mission for SF when ethnic and religious strife erupts in the post-war period. Other uncertainties have arisen concerning the role of SF in the reconstitution of armed forces, police, and security forces in the post-conflict phase.

Conclusions for a Corps Contingency Operation

In addition to the major regional conflict, a US corps contingency operation in the region is another likely scenario for Special Forces operations. Given the unique legitimacy that the UN can impart on such an operation, it will likely play an increasing role in establishing the political goals of military operations. Similarly, the reduction in size of US military forces increases the need for military coalitions.

There are many similarities between SF roles during a major regional conflict and SF roles during a corps contingency operation. In fact, a contingency corps may be deployed in the building phase of what becomes a major conflict. Many of the SF missions, skills, and modernization issues discussed earlier hold true for the corps contingency mission as well. However, the term

contingency corps implies a narrower scope of operations than a major regional conflict. Just as regional competition between Iraq, Iran and other Gulf countries could lead to a wider conflict, so too could one of a more limited nature develop. Ideally, a corps contingency operation would be used to deter a regional conflict from developing. Successful resolution of the problem could take from two to six months, although SF missions in the wake of the conflict could continue indefinitely. There are some far reaching implications that a corps contingency operation raises for Special Forces. In today's world, regional demand for SF deployments places a premium on their use. Therefore, it is entirely possible that one or more regionally oriented SF battalions would already be employed elsewhere when a contingency situation arose. Clearly, what scarce regionally oriented SF units are available at the time of the contingency operation could form the foundation of Army special operations forces in theater.

The SF units participating in the contingency operation will be tasked to perform critical, short-fused missions. Almost certainly, special reconnaissance missions will become critical as the corps tries to assess a confusing and fast-changing threat picture. As conventional forces deploy to remote areas or areas where local security is questionable, short-fused reconnaissance

missions will be tasked to Special Forces. As the situation is developed, direct action and support to the coalition and local populace are sure to strain SF capabilities. In the final decisive phase of the corps contingency operation, special reconnaissance, direct action, coalition warfare and combat search and rescue requirements will exceed by a wide margin what one battalion could accomplish. Any SF unit tasked with the corps contingency mission will need additional combat, combat support, and combat service support augmentation.

Conclusions for Operations Other Than War

In the absence of a regional conflict, such as Desert Storm or a corps contingency mission, the majority of SF mission requirements over the next few years will likely include combined training exercises, mobile training teams, and foreign internal defense missions. The potential for increased SF operations in the region will likely continue as friendly Persian Gulf states work to improve their defensive capabilities. As friendly regional nations phase in new weapons systems and tactics, SF mobile training teams should be in demand. US and friendly regional forces must also preserve the capability to act as a coalition. Consequently, joint and combined exercise plans should include SF detachments operating in support of coalition warfare.

Humanitarian assistance will probably become a growth business for Special Forces because of the inherent flexibility of SF units and their regional orientation. Somalia is a classic example of the type operation which could feature widespread SF involvement. Given the fragile condition of regional economies, there is considerable potential for similar operations. The reconnaissance, medical, and engineer skills organic to operational detachments are critical to humanitarian assistance operations. Additionally, the linguistic and cross-cultural communications skills of SF detachments make them particularly valuable in situations where religious and ethnic tensions abound. The evolving nature of doctrine and tactics for humanitarian assistance operations also holds the potential for previously unidentified roles for SF detachments.

Just as the prospects for foreign internal defense and humanitarian operations remain high, so do the opportunities for US counter-terrorist operations. Although state sponsored terrorism appears to have temporarily dissipated, the region may witness future surges in the use of terrorism in religious and ethnic violence. Because the US has a high profile in the region, groups which seek to punish the US for its support of Israel or wish to involve the US in some regional dispute may resort to terrorism. State-sponsored terrorism may

reappear if countries such as Iran amass what they perceive to be an adequate deterrent to US capabilities to strike back. Therefore, US counter-terrorist actions will probably continue to be one of the most demanding missions of the 1990s.

The US will continue to have a priority interest in the strategic arms race in the Middle East. Unconventional weapons in the wrong hands could create a dangerously destabilizing situation. Iraq is an example of how a country can quietly acquire surprisingly sophisticated weapons programs. Consequently, unilateral Special Forces operations will remain a military option for the US under certain conditions. Unilateral direct action missions conducted to destroy or recover strategic weapons from an irresponsible country may emerge as the most demanding missions of the 1990s.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided insight into how SF units should be used in the Middle East until the year 2000. History indicates that Special Forces units have periodically developed new capabilities and roles in the face of evolving threats. Regional instability from a number of sources will continue to present challenges for Special Forces; regional conflicts, arms proliferation, terrorism, and natural disasters.

The chapter outlined three scenarios for future employment of Special Forces units; a major regional conflict, a corps contingency force, and operations other than war. Notable trends identified within (also see Figures pp 86-87), are the emerging importance of coalition warfare support missions, the increasing importance of language proficiency and cross cultural communications, and the increasing lethality of the battlefield.

GLOSSARY

Civil Military Operations (CMO). Actions in support of military actions which interface between the military force and civilian authorities to foster the development of favorable emotions, attitudes, and behavior in neutral, friendly or hostile groups (FM 41-10).

Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR). A specific task performed by rescue forces to affect the recovery of distressed personnel during wartime or contingency conditions (Joint Pub 1-02).

Direct Action Operations (DA). Short duration strikes and other offensive actions by special operations forces to seize destroy, capture, or recover designated personnel or material (FM 100-25).

Foreign Internal Defense (FID). Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency (Joint Pub 1-02).

Psychological Operations. Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective

reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals (Joint Pub 1-02).

Special Forces (SF). U.S. Army Special Forces units, operating unilaterally, under a joint command or as part of a combined force conducting Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, Counter Terrorism, and Humanitarian Operations (Multiple Sources).

Special Operations (SO). Operations conducted by specially trained, equipped and organized DOD forces against strategic or tactical targets in pursuit of national military, political, economic or psychological objectives (FM 100-25).

Special Reconnaissance (SR). Actions conducted to obtain information concerning the capabilities, intentions, and activities of an actual or potential enemy or to secure data concerning the terrain and weather characteristics of a particular area. It includes target acquisition, area assessment, and post strike reconnaissance (FM 100-25).

Terrorism. The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious or ideological objectives (AR 190-52).

Unconventional Warfare (UW). A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations normally of long duration mainly conducted by indigenous forces who are trained organized and equipped to varying degrees by an external source. Includes, but is not limited to, the interrelated fields of guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, subversion, and sabotage (Joint Pub 3-02).

	REGIONAL CONFLICT/ CORPS CONTINGENCY	OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR
PLAYERS	-IRAQ, IRAN VS GCC COUNTRY(S)	-IRANIAN OR LIBYAN TERRORISM
	-IRAQ VERSUS IRAN	-ALL COUNTRIES NATURAL DISASTERS
		-ETHNIC STRIFE TURKEY, IRAQ, IRAN SYRIA
OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	-ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM	-ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM
	-REGIONAL COMPETITION	-ETHNIC, TRIBAL VIOLENCE
	-ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT	-ANTI-ISRAELI TERRORISM
THREAT DETAILS	-WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION	-WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION
	-DIVERSE MODERN WEAPONS	-ETHNIC TERRORISTS
	-MANEUVER WARFARE	-RADICAL FUNDAMENTALISTS

FIGURE 1. SELECTED REGIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING FUTURE SF OPERATIONS

	REGIONAL CONFLICT/ CORPS CONTINGENCY	OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR
MODERNIZATION ISSUES	DESERT MOBILITY CSS FOR SF DEMOLITIONS+WEAPONS CA AND PSYOPS SPT LIGHT WEIGHT RADIOS	DESERT MOBILITY CSS FOR SF DEMOLITIONS+WEAPONS CA AND PSYOPS SPT LIGHT WEIGHT RADIOS
SF SKILLS EMPHASIS	MANEUVER WARFARE ARABIC LANGUAGE FARSI LANGUAGE JOINT OPERATIONS AREA EXPERTISE	GUERRILLA WARFARE ARABIC LANGUAGE JOINT OPERATIONS AREA EXPERTISE MEDICAL CIVIC ACTION CLOSE COMBAT COUNTER-INSURGENCY
DOCTRINAL MISSIONS	SPECIAL RECON DIRECT ACTION	COUNTER-TERRORISM NON-COMBATANT EVAC SPECIAL RECON FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
EMERGING MISSIONS	SPT TO COALITION COMBAT SRCH/RESCUE SF POST WAR ROLES	HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS PEACE KEEPING PEACE MAKING

FIGURE 2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE SF OPERATIONS

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