

COMMAND AND CONTROL OF JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES  
DURING CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

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  
General Studies

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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This thesis uses a combination of historical research and analytical application to answer the question: What are the important considerations for successful command and control of a Commander In Chief's In-extremis Force when employed as part of a joint special operations contingency force. The thesis first determines current doctrine for joint special operations command and control, then evaluates how the application of that doctrine affected the outcome of four recent Special Operations Force (SOF) missions. This study focuses on the U.S. European Command Theater of Operations and the Special Operations Command Europe. The results, however, are relevant to SOF worldwide. The analysis of current doctrine reveals that there are six distinct elements which are important to command and control of joint SOF. The historical research shows that all six elements played a part in the ability of SOF to accomplish assigned missions. The thesis then analyzes the trends throughout these employments and makes the determination that all six elements need to be considered by staff planners and commanders. It then identifies four elements that are

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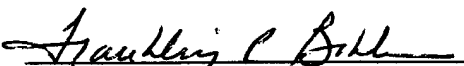
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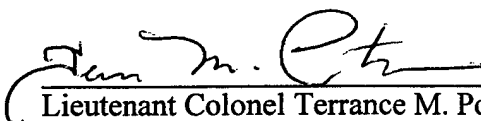
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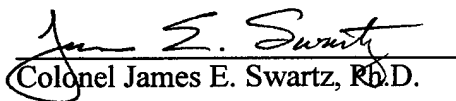
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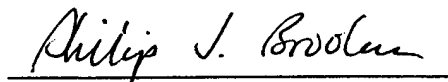
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the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

## ABSTRACT

COMMAND AND CONTROL OF JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES  
DURING CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS by Major John Scott Eaddy, USA, 75 pages.

This thesis uses a combination of historical research and analytical application to answer the question: What are the important considerations for successful command and control of a Commander In Chief's In-extremis Force when employed as part of a joint special operations contingency force. The thesis first determines current doctrine for joint special operations command and control, then evaluates how the application of that doctrine affected the outcome of four recent Special Operations Force (SOF) missions. This study focuses on the U.S. European Command Theater of Operations and the Special Operations Command Europe. The results, however, are relevant to SOF worldwide.

The analysis of current doctrine reveals that there are six distinct elements which are important to command and control of joint SOF. The historical research shows that all six elements played a part in the ability of SOF to accomplish assigned missions. The thesis then analyzes the trends throughout these employments and makes the determination that all six elements need to be considered by staff planners and commanders. It then identifies four elements that are critical to increase the chance for success

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                                    |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|
| AOR    | Area of Responsibility                             |
| ARRC   | Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps         |
| CIF    | CINC's In-Extremis Force                           |
| CINC   | Commander in Chief                                 |
| CJSOTF | Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force       |
| COCOM  | Combatant Command                                  |
| COMSOC | Commander Special Operations Command               |
| CONUS  | Continental United States                          |
| DOS    | Department of State                                |
| ECC    | Evacuation Control Center                          |
| ESAT   | European Survey and Assessment Team                |
| EUCOM  | European Command                                   |
| FM     | Field Manual                                       |
| FOB    | Forward Operating Base                             |
| ISB    | Intermediate Staging Base                          |
| JP     | Joint Publication                                  |
| JFACC  | Joint Force Air Component Commander                |
| JFSOCC | Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander |
| JSOTF  | Joint Special Operations Task Force                |
| JTF    | Joint task Force                                   |
| LCE    | Liaison Coordination Element                       |

|         |                                                      |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------|
| MND     | Multinational Division                               |
| METT TC | Mission, Enemy, Terrain, Time, Troops, and Civilians |
| NATO    | North Atlantic Treaty Organization                   |
| NEO     | Noncombatant Evacuation Operation                    |
| NSWTG   | Naval Special Warfare Task Group                     |
| QRF     | Quick Reaction Force                                 |
| SEAL    | Naval Special Warfare Soldier (Sea Air Land)         |
| SETAF   | Southern European Task Force                         |
| SFG     | Special Forces Group                                 |
| SOC     | Special Operations Command                           |
| SOCCE   | Special Operations Command and Control Element       |
| SOCEUR  | Special Operations Command Europe                    |
| SOCIFOR | Special Operations Command Implementation Force      |
| SOF     | Special Operations Forces                            |
| TACON   | Tactical Control                                     |
| USSOCOM | United States Special Operations Command             |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The primary emphasis in command relations should be to keep the chain of command short and simple so that it is clear who is in charge of what. (JP 1 1995, III-9)

Special Operations Forces (SOF) have been historically employed as part of a joint team to resolve crises around the world. Joint Special Operations Forces have operated over great distances to carry out the will of the United States like the Son Tay Raid into North Viet Nam to rescue American Prisoners of War, the rescue mission into Iran to rescue American hostages, and the evacuation of American citizens from the United States Embassy in civil war torn Liberia. Successes and failures of historic special operations have shaped current doctrine, as well as national law. Following the failure of Operation EAGLE CLAW at Desert One, Senators Sam Nunn (Democrat, Georgia) and William Cohen (Republican, Maine) began work which resulted in legislation enacted in 1986 that has profoundly improved the interoperability of joint Special Operations Forces. These historical lessons form the groundwork upon which future employments can be built. This thesis will examine current command and control doctrine and determine critical aspects required for Special Operations Forces employed to resolve crises.

#### Background

The theater Commander in Chief (CINC) often holds the key to successful resolution when a crisis occurs outside the United States and an immediate response is required to protect American lives, property, or vital interests. One asset the theater

commander has available is the theater Special Operations Command (SOC). The theater SOC is a subunified command, typically commanded by a brigadier general, which oversees the performance of SOF missions that are of strategic and operational importance to the geographic combatant commander (JP3-05 1998, III-2). When a time sensitive crisis situation develops, the SOC often calls upon the forward deployed SOF to execute tactical missions in support of operational or strategic objectives. These elements, which are assigned in theater and under the Combatant Command of the CINC, can be considered the CINC's In-extremis Force (CIF). The forces available to the Commander Special Operations Command (COMSOC) include Navy Special Warfare Units, Air Force Special Operations Squadrons, and Army Special Forces units. United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) forces deployed from the continental United States into a theater for a specific short-duration mission are normally attached to the theater combatant commander and placed under the operational control of the COMSOC (JP 3-05.3 1993, III-6). These elements can also be incorporated into the CIF. SOF elements temporarily in theater which are not under the operational control of the COMSOC may prove of value to the mission, and appropriate command relationships must be determined. While the CIF normally is comprised primarily of Special Operations Forces, it can include conventional forces to enhance mission accomplishment. The CIF may be employed across the operational continuum to conduct one of the Special Operations Principal Missions (primarily Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, or Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction), or one of

SOF's collateral activities (primarily Combat Search and Rescue, Support of Multinational Operations, or Humanitarian Assistance) (FM 31-20 1998, 2-1 - 2-9).

There are several reasons why SOF may be the right choice to resolve a crisis that is politically sensitive and time critical. These operations are often conducted at great distances from supporting operational bases and Special Operations Forces have organic capabilities to infiltrate, operate in, and exfiltrate from denied areas undetected. Selected Special Operations Forces are regionally oriented and trained in cross-cultural communications skills which enable them to operate effectively in remote or isolated areas. SOF personnel maintain a high level of competency in a variety of military specialties, which allows small force packages to accomplish a wide array of tasks. SOF maintain a high level of readiness and can be employed rapidly in response to a crisis. SOF, down to the operator level, possess a level of maturity and an experience base that allow them to make appropriate decisions consistent with the mission requirements (Cubic Applications, Inc., 1998, 1-4). Because Special Operations Forces are very often the force of choice to resolve crises, it is important that commanders and their staffs understand the command and control principles that govern their employment.

#### Joint SOF Command and Control Doctrine

Command and control doctrine for joint special operations has recently been the subject of much discussion and the principal publications all have been updated since 1993. The overriding principal of joint command and control is that commanders of the unified and specified commands exercise combatant command over their assigned forces. Service component commanders are subject to the orders of the combatant commander

and are subject to that commander's direction. They are also responsible to the military departments and services in the exercise of their administrative and support responsibilities (JP 3-05 1998, iii). Command and control of special operations forces is normally exercised by SOF. Special operations command and control procedures are clearly defined in Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. This publication specifically addresses Command and Control of SOF in theater, which can be applied directly to CIF operations. SOF assigned to a theater are under the Combatant Command (COCOM) of the geographic commander. All of the CINCs have established a subunified command to serve as the functional special operations component, the Theater Special Operations Command. The theater SOC normally exercises operational control of all assigned and attached SOF in theater. This includes all permanently based elements, as well as elements deployed into the theater to conduct training or other missions. The command and control structure for specific special operations missions must be determined based on specific objectives, security requirements, and the operational environment.

When the National Command Authority directs the theater combatant commander to conduct contingency operations or sustained military operations, the Department of Defense is normally the lead agency and the theater combatant commander is normally the supported CINC. The COMSOC may establish a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) to conduct special operations under the operational control of a Joint Task Force (JTF), allowing him to continue to orchestrate all theater special operations. During major contingency operations the COMSOC normally serves as the Joint Force

Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC). Joint Publication 3-05.3, *Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures*, outlines his responsibilities during the different phases of the operation. During the initial phase the COMSOC must smooth the transition into action by controlling the flow of SOF to the crisis site and establishing communications. He must configure the force to support the operation, which may entail diverting forces from other missions and changing their command and support relationships. Time Sensitive Planning is conducted in accordance with Joint Publication 3-05.5. The COMSOC is an integral part of theater course of action development and ensures special operations are properly integrated into the theater engagement strategy. Execution planning normally requires at least ninety six hours but may have to be condensed to meet crisis response requirements. While conventional force plans are normally prepared by staff officers who are separate from the force that will ultimately execute the plan, SOF planners and operators are the same people. This procedure enables participating SOF elements to learn the plan to the degree that they can execute the mission without needing detailed guidance during execution.

The Special Operations Command must be made fully operational and be prepared not only to execute the contingency mission, but also to continue the control of other ongoing commitments. When a Joint Operational Center is deployed, the COMSOC must insure the seamless transition from operations at homestation to the crisis location. Appropriate liaisons must be established, to include at a minimum: the theater joint operations center, other theater components, supported headquarters, Department of State, appropriate Department of Defense and non Department of Defense agencies, and

foreign forces. During the employment phase the Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander commits forces at the direction of the Joint Force Commander . As the situation develops, the JFSOCC recommends further SOF employment through the joint targeting process. Through his liaison elements the COMSOC ensures plans and operations are synchronized and deconflicted with those of other components. Reliable control measures must be implemented, maintained, and coordinated with component commanders. During employment, the Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander serves as an information conduit, receiving reports from deployed elements and passing appropriate information to the combatant commander, other supported commanders, and the theater intelligence architecture (JP 3-05.3 1993, V5, 6). The tactics, techniques, and procedures outlined in joint doctrine publications are authoritative, but not directive. The publications make it clear that commanders should exercise judgment when applying the procedures described to accomplish their missions.

### Scope

Historical operations provide valuable insights in determining the important considerations for successful command and control of a joint Special Operations Force when it is deployed in response to a crisis situation. This thesis examines four examples of SOF employment since 1995. Figure 1 demonstrates that these operations span the continuum of operational environments. Thesis research determined the operational environment for the operations as depicted below.

Brief descriptions of the operations are outlined in chronological order below. A more detailed analysis is covered in chapters 3 and 4.

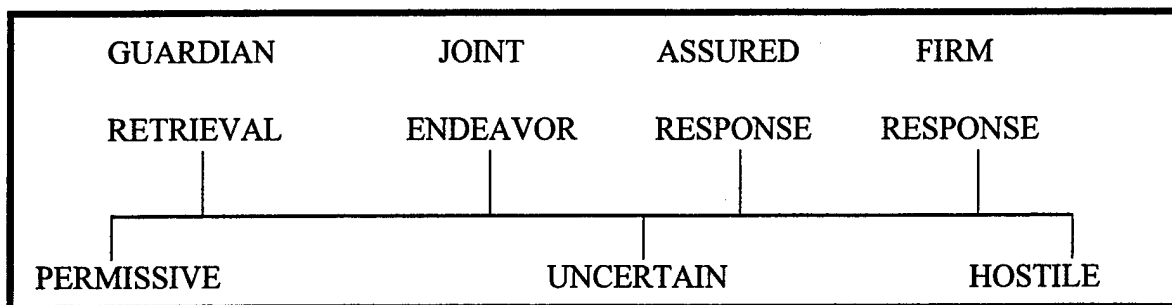


Figure 1. Operational Environments

### Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR

In 1995 Special Operations Forces were deployed as part of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR and provided support to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization led Multinational Operations. Warring rival ethnic states within the former Yugoslavia signed the Dayton Peace Accords in November of 1995. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) organized the Implementation Force to oversee and support the implementation of the accords. Realizing the need for Special Operations Force involvement, Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) established Special Operations Command Implementation Force (SOCIFOR) and superimposed it over a standing JSOTF operating out of San Vito, Italy. The purpose of the Special Operations Command Implementation Force was to assist the Implementation Force integration of NATO and non-NATO forces to accomplish peace enforcement. All SOF deployed into Bosnia-Herzegovina were assigned to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), the SOF component to the land forces component, titled Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC). Each of the ARRC's three divisions (called

multinational divisions (MND)) had a Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) which controlled special operations in that division's sector. The SOCCE coordinated special operations with the conventional forces, advised the division commander on SOF capabilities and limitations, and provided reliable and secure communications. The SOCCEs sent out Liaison Coordination Elements (LCEs) to the NATO and to, more importantly, non-NATO units within their sectors. These LCEs insured that information and instructions, to include intent, that was passed from the division commanders to the brigade or battalion commanders were understood. The LCEs, with their attached Air Force Tactical Control Personnel, also had the capability to do laser-target designation, call for fire, and request medical evacuation. The LCEs conducted daily patrols with the supported battalions, maintaining reliable communications, assessing the attitudes of local populations and former warring factions, spreading the word on the IFOR mission, and providing accurate information on any incidents. Additionally, SOCIFOR supported the IFOR mission by: continuing the personnel recovery coverage; providing SOF aircraft support, flying through weather that grounded all other aircraft; providing a quick reaction force; and Navy SOF (called SEALs) support to the bridging of the Sava River. Other key players in the conflict that had an impact on SOF command and control included non-governmental organizations and private volunteer organizations. The operational environment in Bosnia was uncertain. In December of 1996 Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR transitioned to Operation JOINT GUARD. Though SOCIFOR was disbanded, SOF remained, under control of the revamped CJSOTF, and continued the missions outlined above

(USSOCOM History 1998, 53-55). Operations in theater after the conclusion of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR exceed the scope of this thesis.

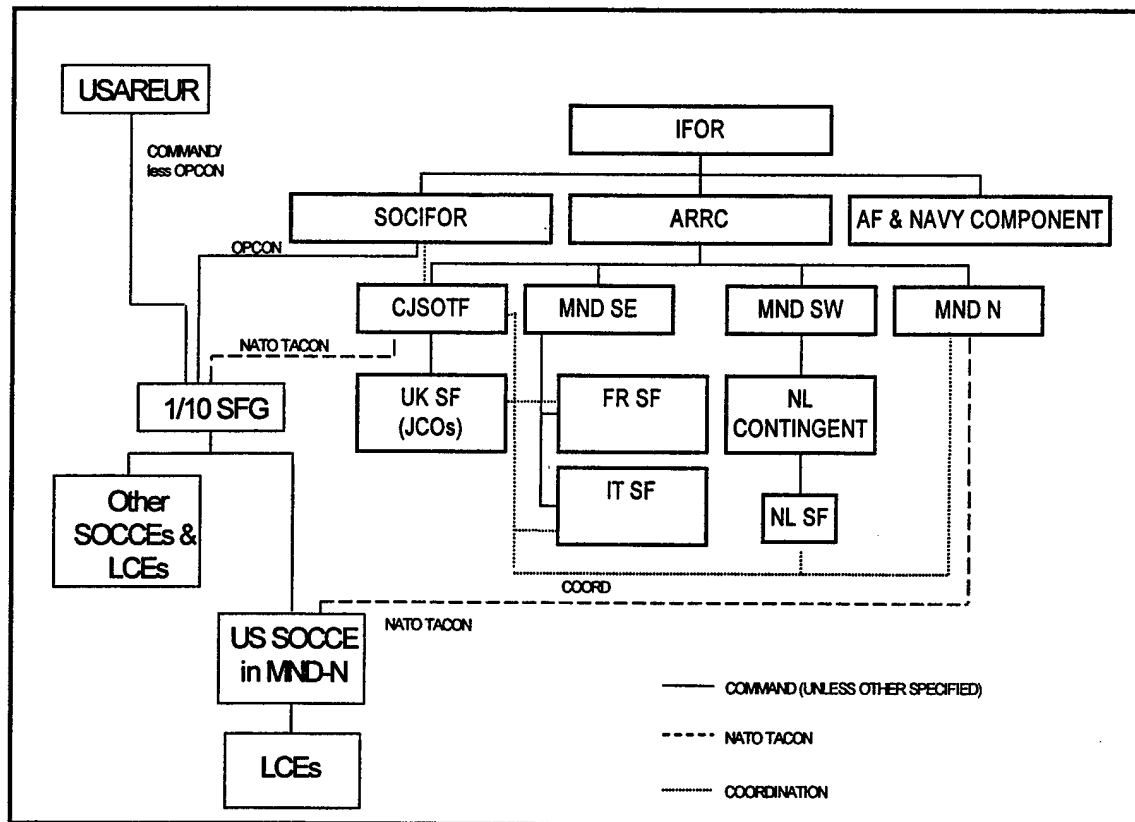


Figure 2. - JOINT ENDEAVOR Task Organization

The task organization outlined in figure 2 taken from Colonel Mike Findlay's Monograph on Special Forces integration in Bosnia Herzegovina. The Map in figure 3 shows the locations of principal headquarters which impacted on mission execution.

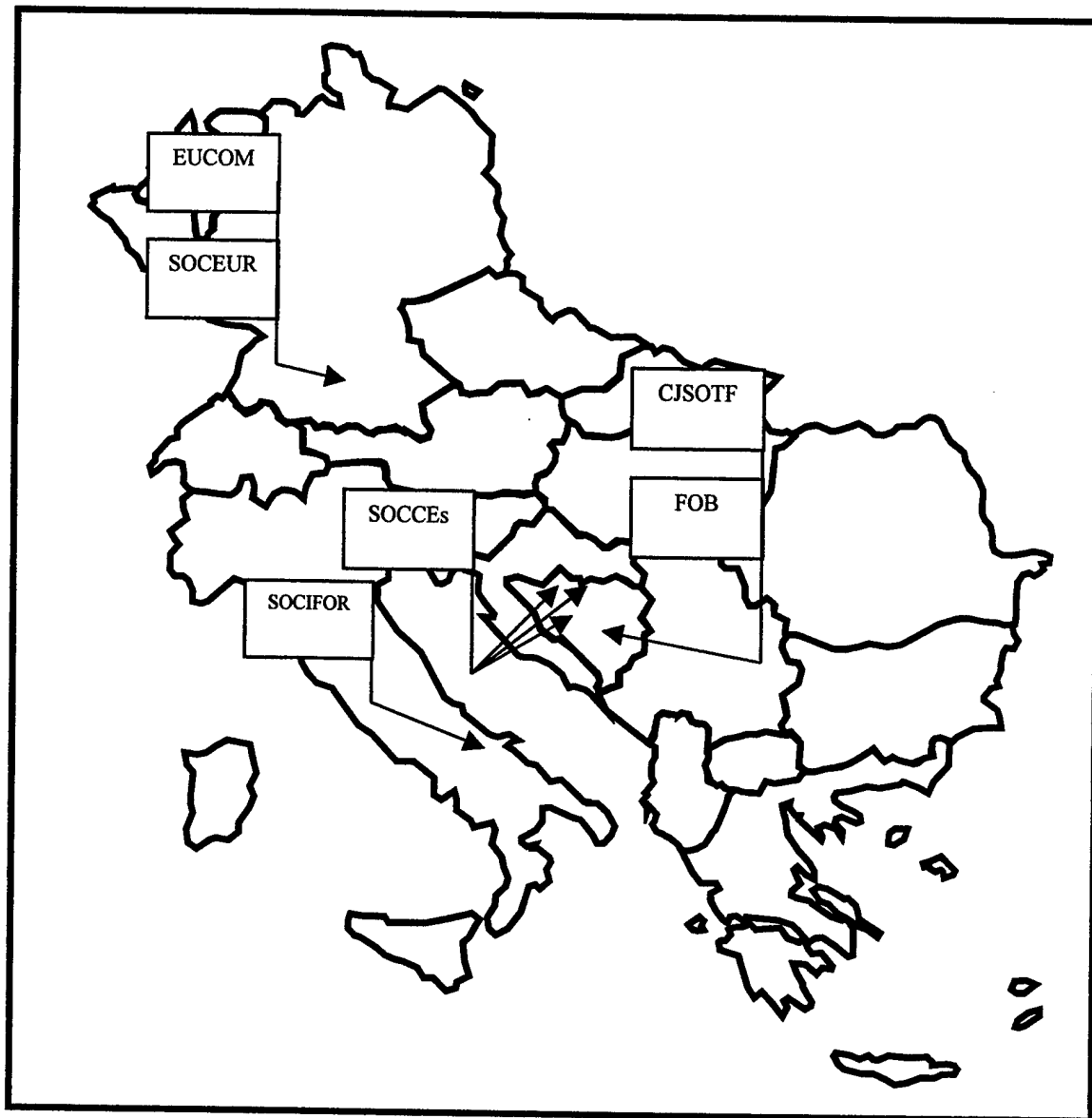


Figure 3. - JOINT ENDEAVOR Area of Operations

#### Operation ASSURED RESPONSE

While conducting operations in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, a situation arose causing Special Operations Forces to deploy to evacuate noncombatants

from Liberia in support of Operation ASSURED RESPONSE. In April of 1996 fighting between rival factions in the vicinity of the American Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia, prompted the U.S. Ambassador to request additional security forces. The National Command Authority alerted the United States Commander In Chief Europe to prepare for the evacuation of noncombatants. A Joint Task Force (JTF) was established under the command of the Commander Special Operations Command Europe (COMSOCEUR). It was comprised of elements from: SOCEUR headquarters, 1-10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Naval Special Warfare Group 2, and the 352d Special Operations Group. Later elements from the 160th Special Operations Regiment, Southern European Task Force (SETAF), and the 9th Psychological Operations Group were also placed under the operational control of the JTF. The purpose of the mission was to conduct a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) to protect the lives of American citizens, and designated third country and host country nationals. The Joint Task Force had three operational objectives. The first objective was to enhance the security at the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia so the evacuation could take place. The second objective was to maintain complete accountability of all evacuees throughout their movement. The last objective was to conduct the evacuation as quickly as possible. An intermediate staging base (ISB) was established in Freetown, Sierra Leon. The JTF headquarters, the forward operating base (FOB) of 1/10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and the 352d Special Operations Wing headquarters were all located at the ISB. A JTF command and control cell was co-located with the evacuation control center (ECC) on the embassy compound in Monrovia. The 3-325th Parachute Infantry Regiment (part of SETAF) provided the

quick reaction force and was located at the ISB. Other key players who had an effect on Special Operations Forces command and control or on the outcome of the mission included: U.S. Department of State personnel in Freetown and Monrovia, and non-government organizations and private volunteer organizations. The operational environment in Sierra Leon was permissive and in Monrovia it was uncertain. The concept involved Army Special Forces and Navy SEALs providing security for the embassy compound and the Army Special Forces processing personnel for evacuation. SOF rotary-wing aircraft transported non-combatants from Monrovia to Freetown where they were transloaded to SOF fixed-wing aircraft and flown to a safe haven located in Dakar, Senegal. Air Force Special Operations AC-130 aircraft provided close air support over the evacuation site in Monrovia. Because of the distance between Monrovia and Freetown the helicopters required in-flight refueling on one leg of the trip. Over 2,100 personnel, including 436 Americans, were evacuated prior to the mission being turned over to the Marine Amphibious Ready Group (Partin and Rhoden 1997). The information used to construct the task organization chart outlined in figure 4 was taken from the United States Special Operations Command official history of the event, *Operation ASSURED RESPONSE: SOCEUR's NEO in Liberia*, by Partin and Rhoden. The task organization is notable because of its similarity to the doctrinal examples as depicted in *Joint Publication 3* and *Joint Publication 3-05*. The effects the task organization had on the operation are discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5.

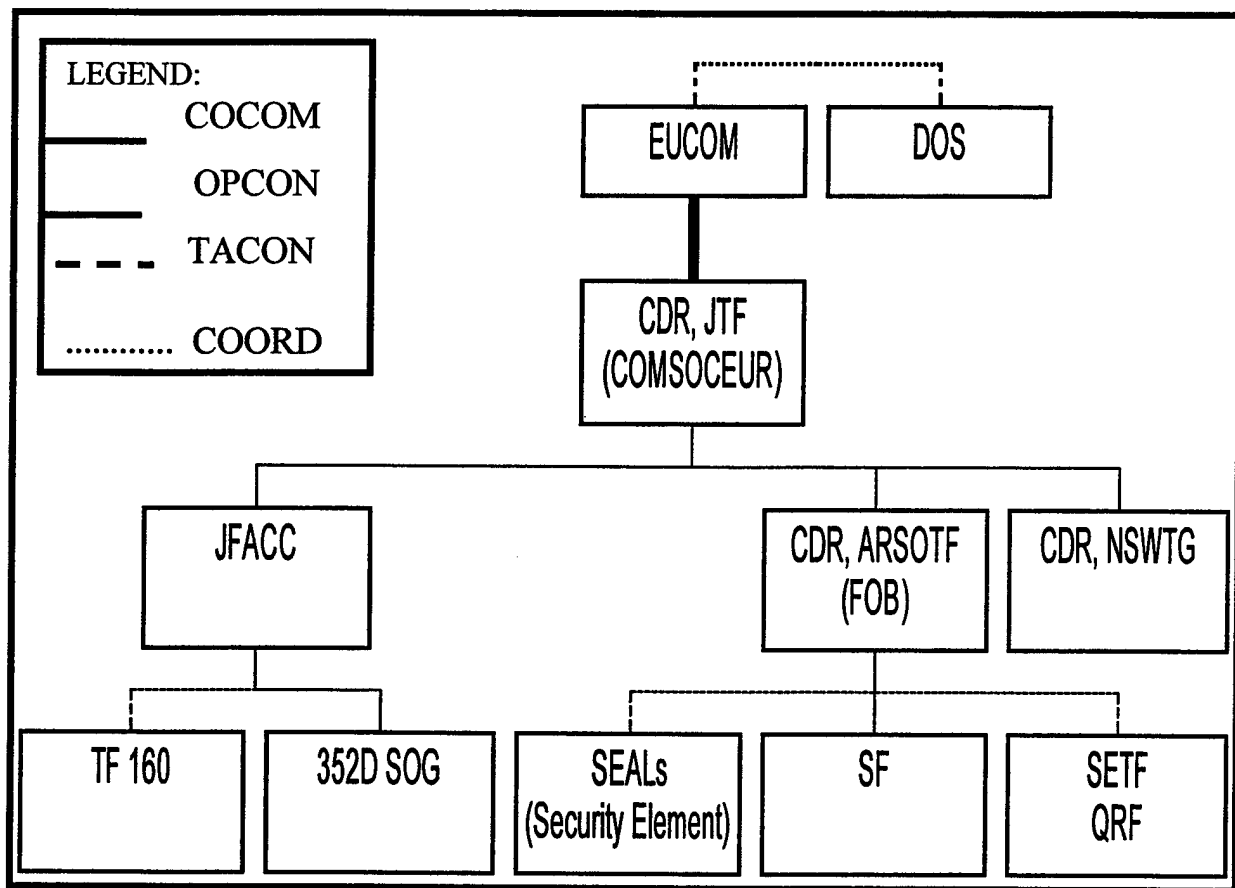


Figure 4. ASSURED RESPONSE Task Organization

The Map in figure 5 shows the locations of principle headquarters which impacted on mission execution. The vast distances between home station and the crisis point had a definite impact on the operation. The impact those distances had on the placement of headquarters and on communications systems requirements are discussed in chapter 4.

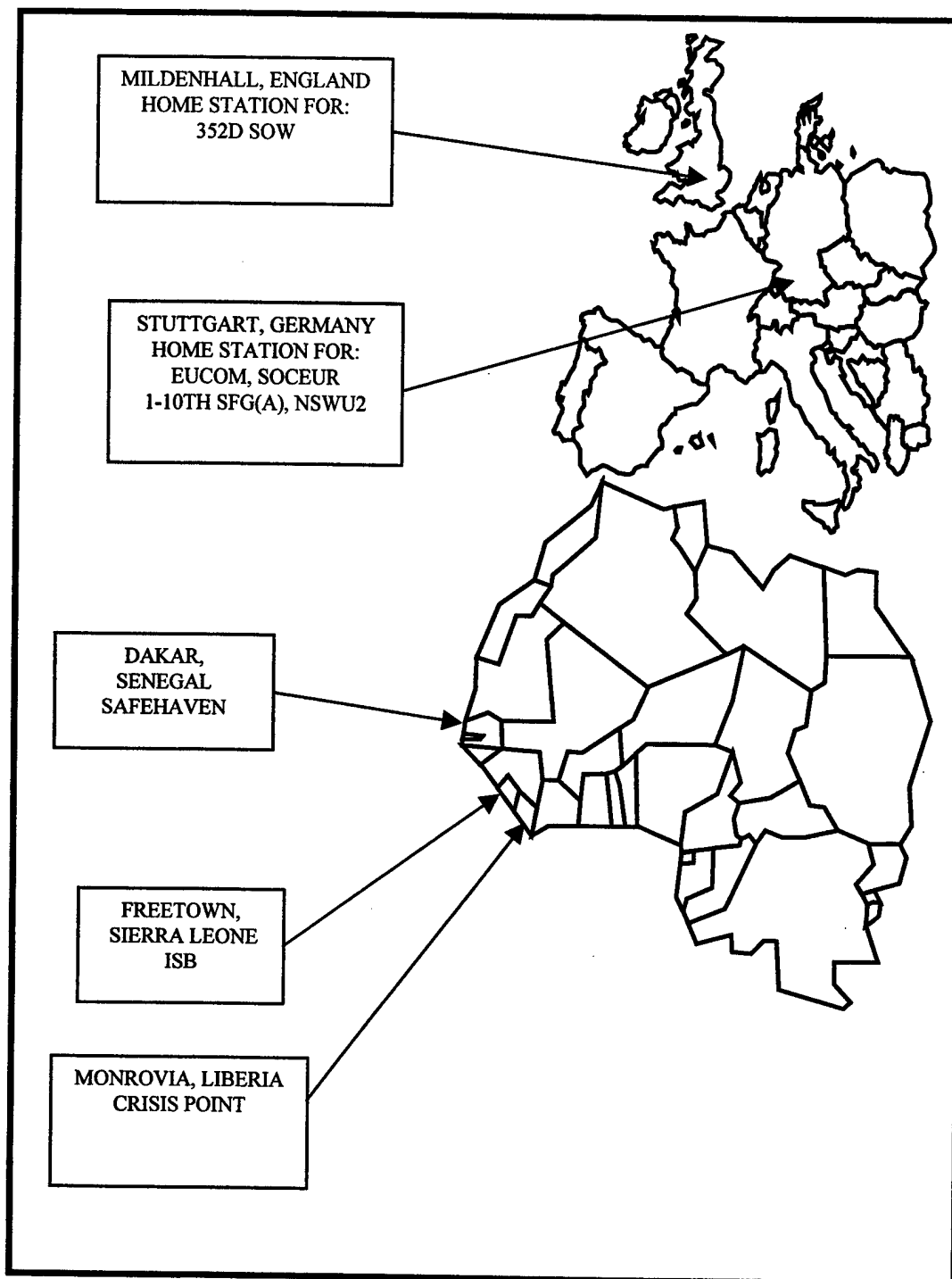


Figure 5. - ASSURED RESPONSE Area of Operations

## Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL

In 1997 Special Operations Forces were deployed to conduct a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation in support of Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL. In March of 1997 the Department of State, on behalf of the American Embassy in Kinshasa, Zaire, alerted the National Command Authority that the situation in Kinshasa was unstable. The theater commander, CINCEUR, established a Joint Task Force commanded by the SETAF commander. COMSOCEUR established a Joint Special Operations Task Force comprised of 352d Special Operations Wing, 1/10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and Naval Special Warfare Unit 2, which was placed under the operational control of the Joint Task Force. Also attached to the JSOTF were two Army Special Forces Operational Detachments from the 3d Special Forces Group (Abn) that were conducting a training mission in the Congo, as well as their company commander, the group surgeon, and several French linguists who were flown in from a Joint and Combined Exercise for Training in Senegal. The purpose of the JSOTF was to be the primary evacuation force for the evacuation of approximately 1500 American citizens and other designated personnel until the Marine Expeditionary Unit could steam out of the Mediterranean. The JSOTF had four operational objectives. The first objective was to establish liaisons and a working relationship with the Belgian, French, and British forces in country to evacuate their citizens. The second objective was to secure the crossing sites on both sides of the river splitting the Congo and Zaire. Third was to establish evacuation control centers to process the evacuees. The final objective was to evacuate designated personnel without regard to weather or threat conditions. An ISB was established in Libreville, Gabon,

with a Forward Staging Base in Brazzaville, Congo. Kinshasa is directly across the Congo River from Brazzaville. Because the situation was so unstable in Zaire, SOCEUR leadership assumed NEO would be conducted in an uncertain or non-permissive environment (Heinemann 1999). The concept involved using a combination of riverine craft (including contract civilian ferry boats, Naval Special Warfare Zodiac boats, and British hovercraft) to ferry personnel from staging areas in Kinshasa across the river to transload point in Brazzaville, then by bus to the evacuation control center (ECC). An alternate plan had SOF rotary-wing aircraft transport personnel from staging areas in Kinshasa directly to the ECC located at the Maya Maya civilian airport in Brazzaville. At the Evacuation Control Center the noncombatants would be processed and then evacuated by SOF fixed-wing aircraft to the ISB. The JTF and JSOTF headquarters were located in Brazzaville, as were the forces required to operate the boat crossing sites and the Evacuation Control Center. The Army SF FOB and the Air Force special operations headquarters were located at the intermediate staging base. At the same time British, French, and Belgian forces were making preparations to evacuate their citizens from Kinshasa. Despite the commonality of the missions and close proximity of forces and noncombatants, it was not a combined operation but rather a cooperative operation. The situation stabilized before any American citizens were evacuated, and on 6 April the control of the operation was passed from the JSOTF to the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (1/10th SFG (A) 1997). The task organization depicted in figure 6 is a composite developed from 1/10th SFG (A) briefing slides, SOCEUR briefing slides, and the SETAF Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL after action review. The complexities of the task

organization, and the impact they had on the overall mission are discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5.

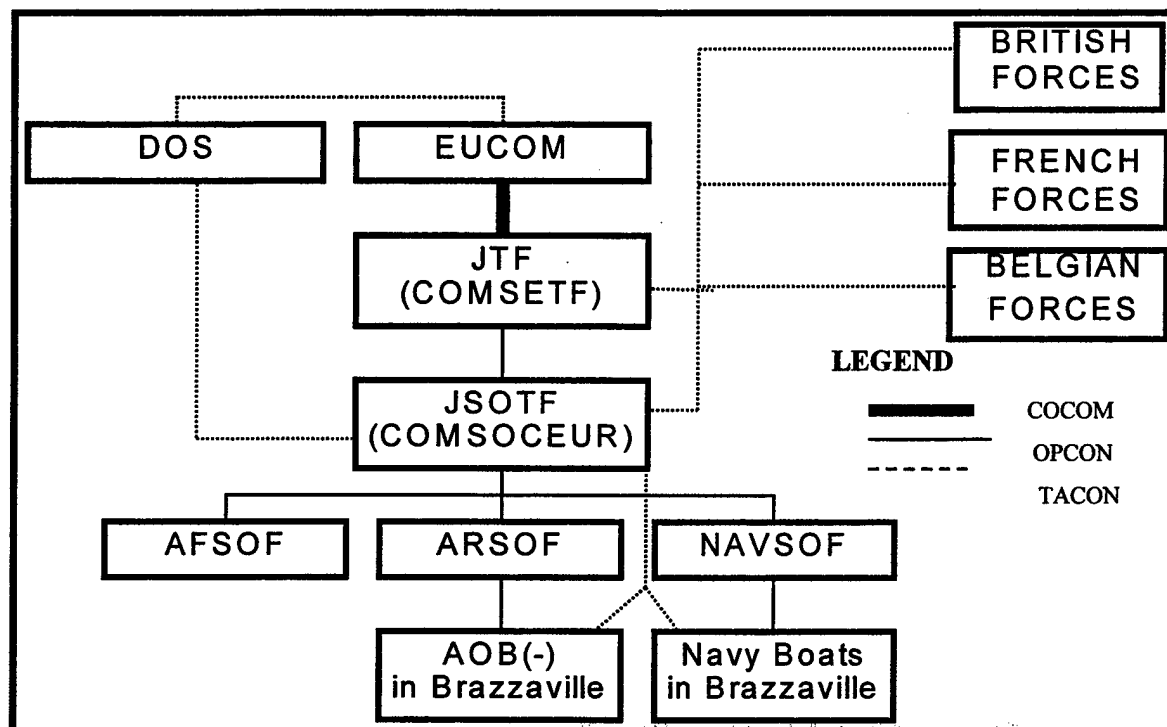


Figure 6. GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL Organization Chart

The map in figure 7 shows the locations of principle headquarters which impacted on mission execution. These distances played a distinct role in the conduct of the operation, especially the distance between the ISB in Libreville and the crisis point in Kinshasa. The impact these distances had on the operation is discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

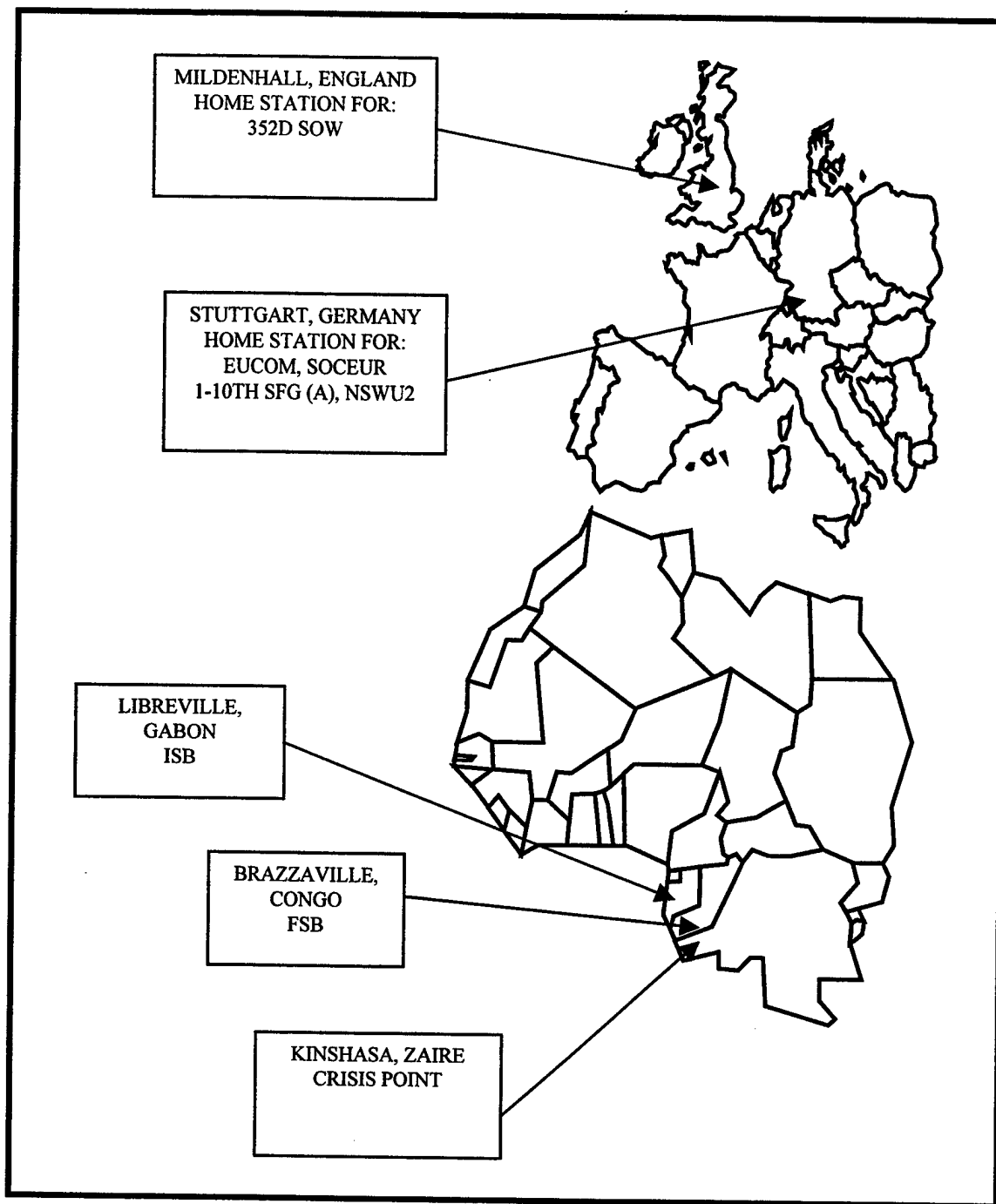


Figure 7. GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL Area of Operation

## Operation FIRM RESPONSE

Later in 1997 Special Operations Forces were again deployed to conduct a NEO in support of Operation FIRM RESPONSE. In June 1997 the U.S. Department of State requested assistance due to fighting in Brazzaville between Congolese government forces and opposition forces. EUCOM designated COMSOCEUR as the commander of the Joint Task Force, and directed a reinforced SOCEUR European survey and assessment Team (ESAT) be sent to Brazzaville, Congo. The purpose of the ESAT was to provide support to the U.S. Chief of Mission and advise CINCEUR on the situation while setting appropriate conditions for force protection and personnel security (HQ U.S. EUCOM 1997). This purpose was later expanded to include assessing the status of ongoing French evacuation of American citizens, and later expanded again to include assessment of the need for further U.S. assistance. SOCEUR had the on-order mission to deploy forces to conduct reinforcement or security operations for the American Embassy, Brazzaville, and to be prepared to conduct a follow-on NEO to protect the lives of approximately eighty seven American citizens and an unknown number of third country nationals. The operational environment in Brazzaville was initially thought to be permissive, but deteriorated to uncertain as the Congolese government forces continued to be successfully engaged by opposition forces. When the ESAT arrived in Brazzaville on a 352d SOG MC130H, French forces were controlling the airfield and a firefight was taking place around the airport. The ESAT moved to the U.S. Embassy later, under the cover of darkness. As the situation in Brazzaville continued to deteriorate, the ESAT established and maintained communications with the French forces at the airfield as well

as with EUCOM. When the decision was made to evacuate and close the embassy, the ESAT executed the evacuation with support from the French forces (Krongard 1997). The information for the task organization outlined in figure 8 was compiled from U.S. EUCOM and SOCEUR briefing slides.

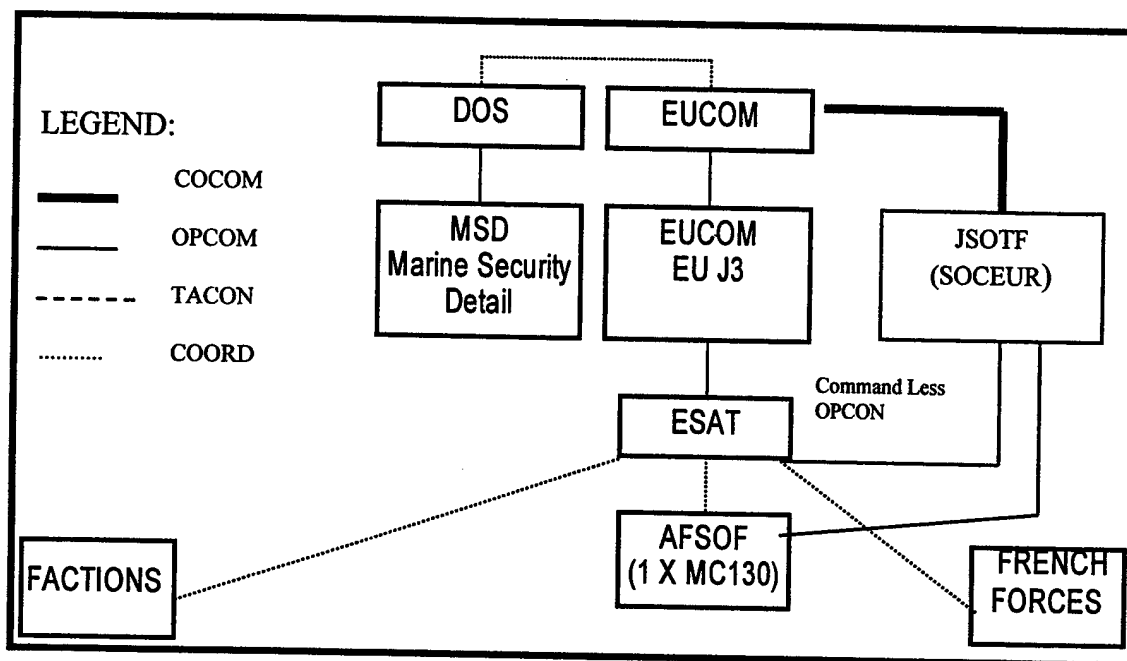


Figure 8. FIRM RESPONSE Task Organization

The Map in figure 9 shows the locations of principle headquarters which impacted on mission execution. The impact these distances had on the execution of the operation is discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5.

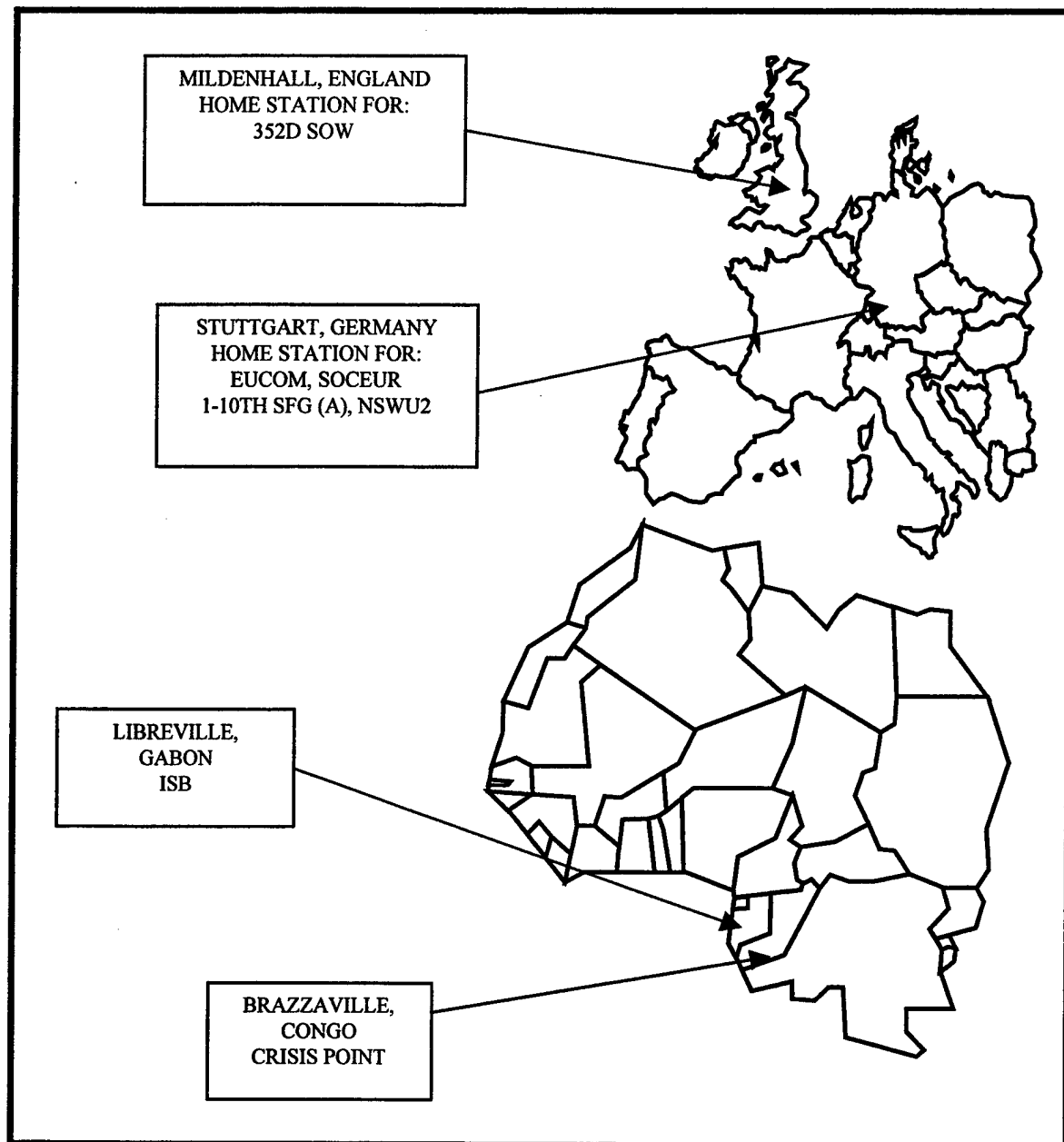


Figure 9. FIRM RESPONSE Area of Operations

### Problem

As theater commanders call upon Special Operations Forces to respond to future crises that arise, it will be imperative that these forces employ appropriate and effective command and control. There are various command relationships and control mechanisms when CIFs are deployed as part of a Joint Special Operation Force package. If these relationships and mechanisms are not clearly defined and easily implemented, the chances of mission success are degraded. Different situations will call for different force packages. Time and distance factors will dictate the communications packages to be employed. These systems will be critical to control forces arrayed across great distances. Personalities of commanders and current unit capabilities must be considered. Past CIF employments have been of short duration. If the crisis, or the CIF's employment, becomes protracted, logistical support may become an issue. Special Operations Forces rely on external support for extended employment. The successful integration and command and control of these logistical elements will be critical to success.

### Purpose

The primary focus of this thesis is to analyze selected historic employments of Joint Special Operations Forces, determine what aspects of their command and control directly influenced mission success or failure, and draw conclusions which will promote success on future employments. The primary research question which will be answered in this thesis is: What are the important considerations for successful command and control of a CIF when it is employed as part of a joint special operations contingency

force? To answer this question the following subordinate questions are first asked, and then answered:

1. What organizational elements comprise a CIF?
2. What is Joint Doctrine on SOF command and control in theater?
3. How have CIFs been commanded and controlled during past contingency operations?
4. What elements of command and control contributed to the success or failure of past employments?

#### Assumptions

This thesis makes three basic assumptions that influence both the validity of this project and the outcome. First, CIFs will continue to be called upon by CINCs to resolve crises within their theaters. Second, the nature of crisis response dictates that command and control issues are solved rapidly. Third, the CIF will be employed within theater or at a minimum, under the control of the theater CINC.

#### Definitions

The following definitions are taken from current publications and are applied throughout the thesis. In many cases the definitions spell out Joint SOF command and control doctrine, particularly the command relationships.

Combatant command (COCOM). Combatant command is nontransferable command authority established by title 10, U.S. Code, section 164, exercised only by commanders of unified or specified commands. COCOM is the authority of a combatant commander to organize, employ, assign tasks, designate objectives, and give authoritative

direction over all military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish assigned missions of the command. OPCON is inherent in COCOM (JP 1-02 1994, 98).

Command and Control (C2). Command and control is the exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are accomplished by incorporating personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures during planning and execution. Command is the authority a commander in military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank and assignment. Commanders possess authority and responsibility and are accountable while in command. Control is the promulgation of the commander's decisions, guidance, and intent with subsequent supervision and adjustment of subordinate forces' execution to ensure compliance with the commander's intent (JP 1-02 1994, 102).

Contingency. A Contingency is an emergency involving military forces caused by natural disasters, terrorists, subversives, or by required military operations. By their nature they require special plans and procedures, as well as rapid response to protect personnel, installations, and equipment (JP 1-02 1994, 114).

Crisis. A Crisis is an incident or situation involving a threat to the United States, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions, or vital interests, which develops rapidly and may require commitment of U.S. military forces to achieve national objectives (JP 1-02 1994, 127).

Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC). The Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander is the commander of all special

operations forces for a particular operation. At theater level, the Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander is normally the commander of the theater special operations command (COMSOC). For subordinate joint forces, the JFSOCC is normally the commander of a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) (JP 3-05.3 1993, iV).

Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). A Joint Special Operation Task Force is composed of special operations units from more than one service, formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. The JSOTF may have conventional units assigned or attached (JP 1-02 1994, 256).

Operational Control (OPCON). Operational Control is transferable command authority that may be exercised by commanders at all levels. OPCON is the authority to organize and employ forces, assign tasks, designate objectives, conduct joint training, and give authoritative direction to accomplish assigned missions. TACON is inherent in OPCON (JP 1-02 1994, 332).

Operational Environment. The operational environment is the sum of all conditions, circumstances, and influences that must be considered when employing military forces.

1. Permissive environment. When the host country military and law enforcement agencies have sufficient control, the capability, and the intent to support operations a unit intends to conduct the operational environment is considered to be permissive.

2. Uncertain environment. When the host country forces do not have totally effective control of the territory and population in the intended area of operations the operational environment is considered uncertain. The host government can oppose, or be receptive to, the operations that a unit intends to conduct.

3. Hostile environment. When hostile forces have sufficient control and the intent, as well as the capability, to effectively disrupt the operations a unit intends to conduct the operational environment is considered hostile (JP 3-05 1998, GL-8).

Tactical Control (TACON). Tactical Control is command authority over attached or assigned forces that is limited to the detailed, and usually local, direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or assigned tasks (JP 1-02 1994, 445).

### Limitations

Research for this thesis was limited to unclassified sources. Some of the information on the historical employments of CIFs is classified. There was enough material in unclassified sources to make the research valid.

### Delimitations

To keep the thesis manageable the scope of the research is limited to the employment of CIF forces in permissive and uncertain environments. The thesis does not directly address conclusions to planned or scheduled Joint Special Operations Task Forces. Administrative control and command less opcon relationships were not evaluated or addressed. Research is further limited by considering only CIF employment in the EUCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). The diversity of countries within the AOR, as

well as the number of SOF employments within the theater, allows valid conclusions to be drawn. This thesis does not consider employment of Rangers, Civil Affairs, or Psychological Operations forces since those forces are not permanently stationed outside the Continental United States, and therefore normally not readily available to the theater SOC for crisis response. Though Marine forces have some of the same capabilities as the CIF forces discussed in this thesis, they are not normally OPCON to the SOC, and are therefore not discussed.

### Significance of the Study

Special Operations Forces will continue to be one of the forces of choice as the threats to United States interests become more asymmetrical. Almost certainly these forces will be joint and might include non-SOF elements. Command and control relationships within Special Operations Forces often are very complex. Command and control relationships for SOF and non-SOF forces are even more complex. If operational level commanders do not have a good understanding of command options and control mechanisms prior to a crisis, there will not be time to learn them during employment. When non-SOF staffs plan contingency response, they must be aware of SOF capabilities and limitations. They must also understand the unique requirements of SOF command and control to properly integrate them for mission success.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

If all your tools are hammers, then all your problems start to look like nails.

(Russian Proverb)

#### Introduction

Command and control of Special Operations Forces during crisis response is extremely complex, and often requires a wide variety of forces that are task organized in unique ways to accomplish the mission. To research effective SOF command and control it is essential to use numerous and varied sources. Printed material from the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL), the Joint Electronic Library (JEL), and interviews with senior SOF personnel who were involved in the operations discussed proved to be the most useful. This thesis researches the problem in three phases. First, current joint doctrine on command and control, and more specifically joint SOF command and control, is evaluated. Second, background information on the four crises incorporated into this thesis is researched. Finally the critical elements of joint special operations command and control as determined in phase one are applied to each specific crises. Each of the three research phases is discussed in detail in this chapter. Only major sources of information are discussed here; however, a more complete list of sources is contained in the Sources Considered, located at the end of the thesis.

#### Doctrine

Joint command and control doctrine and joint SOF C2 doctrine form the logical basis for research into the critical elements of command and control required for

successful SOF employment. Department of Defense Joint Publication 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, lays the groundwork for joint operations, including command and control aspects. Moving into more specific doctrine addressing the peculiarities of command and control for SOF, two publications provide valuable information. Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, discusses employment doctrine, including command and control, in broad terms. Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-05.3, *Joint Special Operations Operational Procedures*, discusses tactics, techniques, and procedures for SOF employment. This publication has a section that specifically deals with the Commander of Theater Special Operations Commands, and his responsibilities when responding to a crisis situation. The joint publications listed above have all been updated since 1993, providing current doctrine which were in effect during the operations studied. This doctrine can be applied to the evaluation of the crises examined in this thesis. Key definitions required for research and understanding were taken from Department of Defense Joint Publication 1-02. The overall results of this phase of research are summarized in chapter 1. Results of this phase of research also formed the basis for the evaluation criteria applied to each crisis and are discussed further in both chapters 3 and 4.

#### Crises Background Information

The four operations examined in this thesis were all conducted under different circumstances and therefore all provide different insights. For each employment the following information was researched and recorded: the cause of the crises, when and

where it occurred, the stated purpose of U.S. response, the key players, the concept of the operation, the command relationships involved, the operational environment, and how the situation was resolved. This information is crucial as a baseline for further research into command and control issues. It is included in the thesis to provide basic background knowledge to aid in understanding command and control discussions. Background information was gathered from three types of sources: published documents, unpublished documents, and interviews. Each type of source provides information from a different perspective, multiplying the benefits. Once the basic scenario (including all the information listed above) was recorded, it was verified by participants of the operation. Specifics for each operation are discussed below.

For Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR the primary published source of information is *Bosnia Herzegovina Combined Arms Assessment Team: Elections Initial Impressions Report*, published by the Center for Army Lessons Learned. Non published briefing slides from 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) provide valuable information about task organization and the plan for execution. Colonel Frank Bohle, who was the 1-10th SFG (A) Commander during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, was directly involved with the effectiveness of command and control on a day-to-day basis. He is a valuable source of information, primarily about the command relationships between the Special Forces battalion and SOCEUR and the CJSOTF. His first-hand experiences are valuable not only for historical clarification but also for insight into what the problems were and possible solutions. Major Jim Moller, who was the 1-10th SFG (A) Operations Officer during the operation, is able to provide a wealth of information on

the command and control issues. His insights are especially useful in evaluating the relationships between the SF battalion and the U.S. Forces operating in the Multi-National Division North sector. Lieutenant Colonel Ron Newton, who was the Assistant SOCEUR Operations Officer during the operation, is also a valuable source of information. Colonel Timothy Heinemann, who assumed duty as the SOCEUR J3 during the conduct of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR also has much valuable information that is very useful to the study of C2 issues during that operation.

For Operation ASSURED RESPONSE the primary published source of information is *Operation Assured Response: SOCEUR's NEO in Liberia*, published by the United States Special Operations Command. Colonel Bohle was still in command of 1-10th SFG (A) during this operation. His input is invaluable to the analysis of command and control issues in Chapter Four of this thesis. Lieutenant Colonel Newton provides input from the SOC staff perspective.

For Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL the primary published source is an after-action report by the Southern European Task Force. SOCEUR briefing slides and A/1/10 Special Forces Group (Airborne) briefing slides, though not officially published, both also provide valuable information. Colonel Heinemann is able to provide information from his perspective as the SOCEUR operations officer. Major Moller, commander of A/1/10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), is again a valuable source of information. His experience as the battalion operations officer during operations in Bosnia enables him to clearly understand command and control issues during this operation in Brazzaville.

The primary source of information for Operation Firm Response was an unpublished after action report put together by Lieutenant Commander Alex Krongard, who participated as part of the European Survey and Assessment Team. SOCEUR Briefing Slides and CINCEUR mission guidance are also valuable unpublished sources of information. Colonel Heinemann is able to provide his perspective as the SOCEUR J3. Lieutenant Colonel Dave Mamaux and Lieutenant Commander Krongard, who were both on the ground in Brazzaville, are able to provide valuable insights on how command and control relationships affect operations under hostile fire.

#### Application of Critical Elements

To determine how the doctrinal command and control principles were applied, two methods were used. First published material was reviewed to determine if these issues were addressed. The publications listed above for each crisis were used for this. Second, the personnel listed above as key participants in the operations were interviewed to obtain their views on the effectiveness of doctrinal command and control application. As a prelude to the interview each source was provided a packet that included: general information about the thesis, crisis information, the organization chart, the specific evaluation criteria as defined in the thesis, and the evaluation matrix. Fortunately key personnel from different echelons of the SOF elements involved were available to provide input for each operation. These personnel all provide candid information which leads to a balanced perspective.

### Conclusion

The availability of published and unpublished information, coupled with the firsthand information from personnel directly involved with command and control issues during each of the operations, provides sufficient information to draw valid conclusions for operations in the U.S. European Command Area of Responsibility. These conclusions lead to trends which are identified in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The identification of a command and control organizational structure for SOF should depend upon specific objectives, security requirements, and the operational environment. (JP 3-05 1998, ix)

#### Introduction

The complex nature of Special Operations Forces command and control can not be evaluated without understanding current published doctrine and then analyzing its application during recent SOF employment. This thesis therefore conducts research in three phases. First, a baseline of current Joint SOF command and control doctrine and operational procedures is established. Second, historical employments of SOF in response to crises are examined. Third, a general template is developed which can be adapted to mission, enemy, terrain, time, troops, and civilians (METT TC). The thesis therefore is a combination of historical research and analytical application.

The research during phase one is concentrated on the systems currently in place to conduct the employment of a CIF to resolve a crisis. This phase consists of a review of current literature and where necessary, historical doctrine. The results of this research are in chapter 1. This information forms the basis for the evaluation criteria outlined in this chapter. Subordinate research questions 1 and 2 are answered in this phase.

The thesis, in phase two, examines four employments of SOF as part of joint contingency responses: JOINT ENDEAVOR, ASSURED RESPONSE, GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL, and FIRM RESPONSE. First the mission is evaluated to determine if it was a success or failure. Then the missions are analyzed to determine which factors affecting effective command and control had an impact on their success.

The information and conclusions from phases one and two are analyzed in phase three. Analyzing combined data identifies common strengths and weaknesses and how they influenced the success or failure of the operations. Subordinate research questions 3 and 4 are answered in this phase. Research conducted in this phase provides the information required to answer the primary research question: What are the important considerations for successful command and control of a CIF when it is employed as part of a joint special operations contingency force?

#### Success Criteria

This thesis first determines if each operation was an overall success or failure. This will form the basis for determining if, and how, each key doctrinal command and control element affected the outcome. All four missions evaluated were Stability and Support Operations and as such success is defined as mission accomplishment within established parameters. To determine if the mission was successful three questions were asked: Were operational objectives accomplished? Was the purpose accomplished? And was the force protected? Each question is defined below.

Operational objectives are the mission's component objectives which when achieved lead to overall success. Objectives should focus actions toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal. Objectives assigned to Special Operations Forces may often be political, economic, or psychological as well as military (FM31-20 1998, 1-6). The accomplishment of all operational objectives does not automatically equal success; however, it is a valuable tool in overall success determination. The operational objectives for all four operations are discussed in chapter 1.

The purpose of an operation is the desired or intended result and is stated in terms related to the desired situation. The purpose of a mission is normally expressed in the why portion of the mission statement (FM 101-5-1 1997, 1-125). The purposes for all four operations are discussed in chapter 1.

Special operations often are conducted under circumstances which contain potential risk. Commanders must determine during planning at all three levels, strategic, operational, and tactical, how much can be risked to achieve success. The environment obviously plays an important role in the direct risk associated with an operation. The operational environment for all four operations is graphically portrayed in Chapter One. To achieve overall success, commanders at all levels must accomplish the mission within acceptable loss levels. The level of acceptable loss is based on the importance of the strategic objectives. These levels are seldom published, often leaving commanders guessing as to what they actually are. One way that risk levels are addressed is to identify the overall risk as low, medium, or high. This subjective determination is normally the result of detailed analysis and experience. When an operation is identified as being high risk, senior leaders closely scrutinize it to insure the expected results are worth the risk. Commanders are faced with accidents and injuries from accidents as well as danger from the hostile forces. These losses can be mitigated by proper risk assessment and risk management techniques. The ability of commanders and staffs to manage risk is a good tool to determine overall success.

#### Evaluation Criteria

Six elements of special operations command and control are identified in current doctrine, specifically in Joint Publication 3-05.3, *Joint Special Operations Operational*

*Procedures.* These elements form the basis for the evaluation criteria used to analyze each operation in this thesis. The evaluation criteria are described and defined in this chapter. The results of the research are consolidated onto matrices for each operation being analyzed. These matrices, along with the effects the application or exclusion of the six evaluation criteria had on the missions, will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. A generic matrix is included here to assist with comprehension of the discussion of the evaluation criteria.

TABLE 1  
SAMPLE EVALUATION CRITERIA MATRIX

| CRITERIA                                                          | ACCOMPLISHED? | IMPACT ON MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Clear Chain of Command IAW Current Joint Doctrine                 |               |                                  |
| Sufficient Authority Granted Down to Appropriate Levels           |               |                                  |
| Integrated Planning Process                                       |               |                                  |
| C2/HQ Positioned to Maximize Influence Across Span of Control     |               |                                  |
| Capabilities Matched to Requirements                              |               |                                  |
| Liaison with Other US Forces, HN, and Other Countries Established |               |                                  |

The first element assessed is whether a clear chain of command is established in accordance with current joint doctrine. The command relationship between the theater CINC, the Joint Task Force Commander (if applicable), the Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC), and the tactical commanders should be

in accordance with one of the doctrinal models. These models are located in the appendix. The chain of command should be clear, unambiguous, and adhered to. Lines of communication must be valid.

The second element assessed is whether sufficient authority is granted down to appropriate levels. Commanders should be given the authority to organize the force and execute the mission in a manner that is appropriate to ensure accomplishment of the overall mission. Frequent transfer of OPCON of SOF between Commanders should be avoided. Resources should be allocated and controlled with minimum restrictions on their employment.

The next element assessed is the incorporation of an integrated planning process. The JFSOCC, his staff, and his component commanders and staffs should be integrated in the planning process. Sufficient staff experience and expertise to plan, conduct, and support the operation should be provided.

The next element assessed is the ability of the chain of command to maximize its influence across the span of control. Sometimes this can be accomplished by positioning the headquarters forward in a geographic location where it can exert positive and direct influence on the action. Other times it can be accomplished by positioning the headquarters where it has direct access to critical communications and intelligence nodes. A combination may be needed in other circumstances. Available communications assets must enable adequate communications across the span of control and may influence positioning. The Joint Operations Center and other tactical operations centers must be capable of performing current operations and planning functions on a twenty four-hour basis.

The next element assessed is the matching of capabilities to requirements. Component and element capabilities should be matched with mission requirements. The plan and task organization should be adaptable to the situation as defined by: mission enemy, terrain, time, troops, and civilians. It should also provide flexibility. Task organization should ensure synchronization and unity of effort. Elements should possess the equipment required to accomplish the mission.

The last element assessed is the liaison established with other U.S. forces, host nation, U.S. Governmental agencies, and other countries. Liaison should also be established with Department of State personnel. If nongovernmental organizations and private volunteer organizations are operating in the area liaison may also need to be established with them.

If the elements listed above were accomplished on the operation, a yes is entered in the matrix. If they were not accomplished a no is entered, and N/A (for nonapplicable) is entered if the element is not applicable to that particular operation. The elements are then evaluated to determine how their application impacted on mission accomplishment. If the application of the element, or its exclusion, was critical to the CIF's ability to conduct the mission, it will be given a rating of high. If the application or exclusion of the element had a moderate effect on the CIF's ability to conduct the mission it will be given a rating of medium. If the application or exclusion of the element had little impact on the ability of the CIF to accomplish its mission, it will be given a rating of low. The impact is then identified as positive or negative. Because the CIF is composed of several echelons, the overall ratings are a composite of how SOF did as a whole. The assigned

values are subjective, and are determined by analyzing the input from all the sources considered during the conduct of the research.

### Conclusion

The detailed research of current joint special operations command and control doctrine leads directly to the identification of elements which are important to successful mission accomplishment. The evaluation of the four operations identified determines trends which in turn lead to conclusions about which elements are the most critical. These trends are discussed in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

SOF give decision makers more options. SOF's strength lies in their versatility and adaptability, as well as the success of the highly skilled, relatively small-sized teams. (U.S. Special Operations Command 1998, 14)

General Henry H. Shelton

#### Introduction

Special Operations Forces are expected to accomplish missions strategically important to the United States across the operational continuum, despite trying circumstances and difficult environmental conditions, without much preparation time. Many factors influence the outcome of these operations. Key among them is the ability to command and control forces throughout the changing circumstances of the conflict. This thesis determines how successful the four identified SOF operations were, then examines how the application of doctrinal command and control elements affected that outcome.

#### Analysis of Overall Mission Success

The first step in evaluating command and control effects on mission success is to determine if the operation overall was a success. This thesis applies the mission success criteria discussed in chapter 3 to each of the four operations and the information is recorded on the matrix illustrated in table 2 below. Based on the mission success criteria identified in this thesis all four operations were successful. Several specifics concerning the success criteria from each operation are noteworthy and are discussed below. The operations are arranged on the matrix and discussed in chronological order.

TABLE 2  
OVERALL MISSION SUCCESS FACTORS

| OPERATION          | OBJECTIVES ACCOMPLISHED | PURPOSE ACCOMPLISHED | FORCE PROTECTED | OVERALL SUCCESS |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | YES                     | YES                  | YES             | YES             |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | YES                     | YES                  | YES             | YES             |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | MOST                    | NO                   | YES             | YES             |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | YES                     | YES                  | YES             | YES             |

During Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, Special Operations Forces were able to accomplish their purposes and objectives while protecting the force. The conduct of daily liaison between NATO and non-NATO forces and the local population in Bosnia Herzegovina by the Liaison and Coordination Elements and the Special Operations Command and Coordination Elements was the key to SOCIFOR's accomplishment of its purpose. This contributed to the Implementation Forces ability to accomplish its purpose of peace enforcement during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. These successes were a significant contributing factor in the evolution of the Implementation Force into the Stabilization Force, and of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR into Operation JOINT GUARD (CALL 1998, ii). The ability of SOF to accomplish their operational objectives and purpose without incurring or inflicting casualties in this stability and support operation clearly demonstrates overall mission success.

Special Operations Forces achieved all three of the mission success criteria, as outlined by this thesis, during Operation ASSURED RESPONSE. The Joint Task Force

accomplished all of its operational objectives during the operation: enhance security at the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia; maintain complete accountability of all evacuees throughout their movement; and conduct the evacuation as quickly as possible. This enabled them to achieve their purpose of conducting a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) to protect the lives of American citizens and designated third country and host country nationals. Again, the ability of the special operators to conduct a complex humanitarian assistance mission in an unstable situation over great distances without inflicting or sustaining casualties is a clear indicator of overall mission success.

The evaluation of the success of Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL is a little more complex. The purpose of the JSOTF was to be the primary force for the evacuation of American citizens and other designated personnel until the Marine Expeditionary Unit could steam out of the Mediterranean. The JSOTF's purpose was not accomplished since the situation never required the evacuation of noncombatants. The JSOTF did accomplish the operational objectives which prepared them to conduct the evacuation under permissive and uncertain conditions. Because of force positioning, they were not able to implement the plan that would have allowed them to evacuate noncombatants under hostile conditions. The specifics of these problems are discussed in detail later in this chapter. The evaluation that the mission was overall a success is based on the forces established capability to conduct the NEO under permissive and uncertain conditions.

The European Command (EUCOM) Survey and Assessment Team deployed by SOCEUR to conduct Operation FIRM RESPONSE met all three mission success criteria. The stated threefold purpose of the ESAT was to provide support to the Chief of Mission; and to advise CINCEUR on the situation and the need for further U.S. assistance to

conduct a NEO, while setting appropriate conditions for force protection and personnel security, which they did. In fact, they were able to conduct the NEO without any additional U.S. forces. The fact that this small force was able evacuate the designated personnel under hostile conditions without causing or suffering any casualties clearly demonstrates overall success.

#### Analysis of Evaluation Criteria

The conduct of contingency response operations by joint special operations forces are complex and multi escheloned. Command and control trends must be determined by looking at the overall operation, to include the mission headquarters as well as at the actions of subordinate elements. Each of the four operations is examined separately. The matrix for each operation shows how well each aspect of effective command and control was accomplished overall. Specifics about each evaluation criteria are discussed; including how subordinate element actions affected overall performance.

#### Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR

The application or exclusion of all six special operations command and control elements had an impact on the overall success of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. Each specific element is addressed on the matrix in table 3 and then discussed in detail.

TABLE 3

## JOINT ENDEAVOR EVALUATION CRITERIA MATRIX

| CRITERIA                                                          | ACCOMPLISHED? | IMPACT ON MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Clear Chain of Command IAW Current Joint Doctrine                 | NO            | MEDIUM (-)                       |
| Sufficient Authority Granted Down to Appropriate Levels           | NO            | MEDIUM (-)                       |
| Integrated Planning Process                                       | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |
| C2/HQ Positioned to Maximize Influence Across Span of Control     | YES           | MEDIUM (+)                       |
| Capabilities Matched to Requirements                              | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |
| Liaison with Other US Forces, HN, and Other Countries Established | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |

A clear chain of command was not established in accordance with current U.S. joint doctrine. This did not cause mission failure, but it did complicate operations and had a moderate negative impact on SOFs ability to completely support all mission requirements. Examination of the organization chart for SOF during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, located in chapter 1, shows how complex the command relationships were. Several problems resulting from this organization are discussed below.

All U.S. Special Operations Forces were under the operational control of SOCIFOR and under the tactical control of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF). The British Special Operations Forces were under the command of the CJSOTF and the Special Operations Forces from France, Italy, and the Netherlands were all under the command of the multinational divisions for whom they worked. The fact

that all four National Command Authorities reserved the right (if not in writing, at least in practice) to approve complex and risky missions complicated the command relationships. While this never caused serious problems, the potential was there for catastrophe in the event of a short-fused rescue type mission (Moller 1999). Another problem was that there is one set of rules and definitions for U.S. single service operations, another for U.S. joint operations, and yet another set for combined operations. Conventional U.S. Army personnel have a hard time understanding joint command and control relationships while U.S. SOF struggle with understanding joint and combined (NATO) relationships (Moller 1999). Since the command structure for JOINT ENDEAVOR involved all three types of forces and relationships, it was difficult to determine when each set of rules applied. For example, CJSOTF worked for the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, which had different policies and regulations than the Multi National Division (MND) North, in whose area of responsibility SOF operated extensively. Problems arose when the MND force protection policies were imposed on SOF (by Military Police) operating in that sector. Finally, waivers were implemented to solve the problem. Initially, commanders and their staffs within the MND North did not understand their command relationship with the Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) working with them. At one point early in the operation the misunderstanding of their authority to reorganize the force led MND personnel to try to take satellite communications radios from the SOCCE. This situation required the SF FOB Commander to intervene (Moller 1999). The complex command and control relationships encountered during Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR are not an anomaly; rather, they will probably be the standard for future joint and combined operations.

Sufficient authority to make decisions and conduct operations was not always granted down to appropriate levels, which had a moderate negative impact on the ability of Special Operation Forces to conduct operations to their full potential. On more than one occasion SOF headquarters not directly involved in the operation imposed limitations on SOF missions. One example of this involves intelligence collection. Special Operations Forces possess an inherent ability to gather intelligence through organic resources. Perhaps because these activities can be risky, both physically and politically, they were not allowed. Another example of higher headquarters not granting approval to conduct a mission participating SOF deemed appropriate involves reconnaissance. There were opportunities to conduct Special Reconnaissance missions to observe suspected mass gravesites which were not allowed (Bohle 1999). The inability of SOF commanders to conduct missions they felt would support overall mission success, because they were not given the authority to make decisions, resulted in a degradation of the support given to the overall mission commander.

The planning for Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR was integrated throughout the echelons of the Special Operations Forces. This had a very positive effect on the overall success of the mission. During the initial planning phase Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) acted as the European Command Special Operations element, and as such was able to establish liaisons for planning with the United Kingdom, France and other NATO countries as well as with the U.S. Embassy staff in Sarajevo. These planning liaisons played a significant role in establishing a well coordinated plan. As the operation moved into the preentry phase, Special Operations Command Implementation Force (SOCIFOR) was activated and moved to San Vito, Italy, and a forward element

was positioned in Zagreb, Croatia with the JTF staff. This co-location with the Joint task Force (JTF) helped insure final modifications to the plan were coordinated (Newton 1999). A turn of events led to challenges in the planning process. Originally, 3/10 SFG (A) was identified to conduct the FOB and SOCCE missions. A planning cell, to include the group commander, was sent to Stuttgart to conduct planning with SOCEUR. Less than 30 days from execution the element responsible was changed from 3/10th to 1/10th. While this was a short period of time to reorganize and re-plan, one reason it was possible was the exercises conducted in the summer and fall of 1995 (Mountain Shield and Mountain Eagle). These exercises provided 1/10th SFG (A) commanders and staff with an in-depth understanding of the tasks required; they also formed the basis for interoperability with conventional units (Moller 1999). The inclusion of personnel from 1/10th SFG (A) in the planning process was in accordance with the SOF command and control doctrinal principal of involving operators in the planning of missions involving Special Operations Forces.

The command and control elements and headquarters were positioned to maximize influence across their span of control. This enabled the leaders to positively influence the operation on a continuous basis. The area of operation was immense, and the command and control structure was spread from Stuttgart, Germany through San Vito, Italy and into various locations in Bosnia. Fortunately the capabilities of the communications systems and the operational reach of supporting 160th SOAR assets enabled the chain of command, especially the commander of the CJSOTF and the commander of SOCIFOR, to communicate effectively with subordinates. The critical element was the ability to influence the battle and insure that the intent was understood

(Bohle 1999). Because of space limitations SOCIFOR could not get their headquarters into Bosnia. They were positioned in Italy where they were within sufficient distance to put assets where they were needed in a timely manner. The in-flight refueling capability of the AFSOC elements, notably the MH60 and MH53 helicopters refueled by MC130H airplanes, made this possible. This positioning of the headquarters did have the added benefit of helping to minimize the IFOR footprint in Bosnia (Bohle 1999). In one instance, the positioning of a SOF headquarters had a negative impact on the ability to influence operations. The SOCCE in the MND North sector relocated to a building outside the MND tactical operations center complex. This caused difficulties maintaining sufficient communications with division personnel. This situation was eventually corrected by re-positioning the SOCCE headquarters (Moller, 1999). Overall the positioning of headquarters was appropriate for the complexities of the operation and facilitated mission success.

The capabilities of SOF elements were matched with requirements which had a very positive impact on overall mission accomplishment. Three problems, however, are worth mentioning. Initially airlift shortfalls and political considerations limited the number of operators in position to affect the situation. As the theater of operation matured and developed, the problem quickly dissipated (Newton 1999). Another problem that had some adverse effects was that SOF did not have digital capability to link into the conventional force intelligence network. This problem was partially mitigated by obtaining intelligence data directly from the MND headquarters. Finally SOF did not have enough organic tactical vehicles to conduct all operations. This

problem was partially mitigated by using commercial vehicles (Moller 1999). Overall the SOF force package was properly tailored to support the IFOR mission.

Liaisons with other U.S. forces, Host Nation (HN), and other countries were successfully established, contributing immensely to overall mission accomplishment. Liaison was one of the primary missions of SOF on the ground in Bosnia, and it was accomplished well. The LCE locations were not identified until late which did cause some problems with planning and task organization. Overall the liaisons established by SOF facilitated NATO command, control, and information operations and provided access to NATO close air support and casualty evacuation for supported non-NATO units which enable interoperability within IFOR. This contributed significantly to the planning and execution of the overall mission and was one of the strongpoints of the operation for Special Operations Forces.

The two special operations command and control elements which had the biggest impact on the success of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR were the proper matching of capabilities with requirements and the liaison and coordination conducted by SOF. The complex SOF task organization at times made command and control cumbersome and was a detractor from smooth operations.

#### Operation ASSURED RESPONSE

Operation ASSURED RESPONSE was conducted quickly and successfully. Effective command and control was instrumental to that success. The impact each special operations command and control element played in that success is addressed on the matrix in table 4 and then discussed in detail.

TABLE 4

## ASSURED RESPONSE Evaluation Criteria Matrix

| CRITERIA                                                          | ACCOMPLISHED? | IMPACT ON MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Clear Chain of Command IAW Current Joint Doctrine                 | YES           | MEDIUM (+)                       |
| Sufficient Authority Granted Down to Appropriate Levels           | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |
| Integrated Planning Process                                       | NO            | LOW (-)                          |
| C2/HQ Positioned to Maximize Influence Across Span of Control     | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |
| Capabilities Matched to Requirements                              | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |
| Liaison with Other US Forces, HN, and Other Countries Established | YES           | MEDIUM (+)                       |

A clear chain of command was established in accordance with current doctrine. This had a positive impact on mission accomplishment. The forward positioning of headquarters meant they were not typically escheloned but this did not adversely impact command and control. There was a problem with the Air Force command structure that is worth mentioning. A Joint Forces Air Component Commander was not officially named. This made interaction between the Air Force Special Operations component and U.S. Air Force Europe difficult (Partin 1997, 49). Overall the clear and concise chain of command worked very well and was appropriate for this type of operation.

Sufficient authority was granted down to appropriate levels enabling commanders to accomplish their missions, as they deemed appropriate. Amazingly despite the fact that the U.S. Ambassador, the commander of SOCEUR, the Army SF Forward Operating

Base Commander, the Navy Seal Commander, and both Army SF Company Commanders were all located on the embassy compound in Monrovia, micromangement was not a problem. One significant contributing factor to the success in this area was the working relationships developed between the Special Operations Forces leadership during previous exercises.

There was not an integrated planning process for the conduct of Operation ASSURED RESPONSE. One reason is that there was not sufficient time to conduct integrated planning because of the short time from notification to deployment. Another reason integrated planning was not accomplished was that all participating elements were not identified at the start of the operation. The planning process became much more complex when it was identified that special operations aviation assets from the Continental United States (CONUS) were required. Once the EUCOM staff and the SOCEUR staff had finalized an integrated plan, the approval process for the deployment of CONUS based assets did not occur in a timely manner. This was a result of the complex and convoluted approval process at both the special operations and Joint Staff levels (Newton 1999). The lack of integrated planning had a low negative impact on the accomplishment of the mission because the commander of SOCEUR had directed a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) exercise program and 1-10 SFG (A) Battalion Commander had implemented NEO Standard Operating Procedures revisions (Bohle 1999). If the mission had been a different type, the lack of integrated planning might have had a more significant impact.

Command and control elements and headquarters were positioned to maximize influence across their span of control. COMSOCEUR was positioned forward at the U.S.

Embassy in Monrovia with a forward Joint Operations Center. The main JOC was at the intermediate staging base where they could oversee the transload operation. The Army SF Battalion Commander was also forward at the embassy in Monrovia with elements from his staff. The commander of the Naval Special Warfare Unit was also positioned in the embassy. These three key leaders were in position to maximize their influence and insure operations there went smoothly. The Special Operations Wing Commander was located at the ISB, where he could directly influence both rotary wing operations to and from Monrovia and fixed wing operations to Dakar. While the Survey and Assessment Team is not technically a command and control element it did play an important role, especially during the early stage of an operation. The ESAT arrived in Sierra Leone only two to four hours ahead of the main body due to flight route approval problems. This precluded them accomplishing the coordination tasks that would have smoothed initial operations. Overall the positioning of command and control nodes and their communications capabilities played a significant positive role in the overall success of the mission.

The capabilities of the special operations units conducting the operation matched the requirements. The assets available to conduct the operation were limited because of ongoing SOCEUR responsibilities in Bosnia. This meant forces were allocated as in a "pick-up game." The experience of the key players in the command directed NEO exercises however allowed them to understand the requirements and therefor allocate the correct forces for the mission. The size of the JTF was limited because of airlift and available space constraints. This made proper tailoring of the force critical.

Liaison with other U.S. forces, HN, and other countries was established which had a highly positive impact on the successful accomplishment of the mission. The liaisons established with U.S. Department of State personnel in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Dakar, as well as the liaison with local officials all served to smooth the operation. While the liaisons that were established proved very effective, there were other problems. A more robust liaison element from USEUCOM would have facilitated coordination and requests to the unified command (Partin 1997, 49). Overall the activities accomplished by the liaison elements contributed significantly to the success of the operation.

The command and control elements which contributed most to the overall success of the mission were the authority granted to subordinate leaders, and the allocation of the proper forces to meet requirements.

#### Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL

Overall Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL was a success despite the fact no American citizens had to be evacuated from Kinshasa while SOF were involved in the operation. Several of the points discussed concerning the evaluation criteria focus on the probable situation that would have been encountered if an evacuation had been required in an uncertain or hostile environment. The matrix in table 5 depicts the incorporation of the special operations command and control elements. Noteworthy is the fact that three of these elements were not adequately incorporated into the execution of the operation.

TABLE 5

## GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL EVALUATION CRITERIA MATRIX

| CRITERIA                                                          | ACCOMPLISHED? | IMPACT ON MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Clear Chain of Command IAW Current Joint Doctrine                 | YES           | LOW (+)                          |
| Sufficient Authority Granted Down to Appropriate Levels           | NO            | MED (-)                          |
| Integrated Planning Process                                       | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |
| C2/HQ Positioned to Maximize Influence Across Span of Control     | NO            | HIGH (-)                         |
| Capabilities Matched to Requirements                              | NO            | HIGH (-)                         |
| Liaison with Other US Forces, HN, and Other Countries Established | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |

A clear chain of command was established in accordance with current joint doctrine. The theater CINC and his headquarters directed operations through the Joint Task Force headquarters to the Joint Special Operations Headquarters, which was responsible for execution. The command and control structure, while doctrinally correct, was not sufficiently streamlined to execute operations in a crisis situation. The large JTF headquarters was disproportionate to the relatively small JSOTF headquarters. Another interesting aspect of the chain of command was the control of the ESAT located at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa through the different phases of the operation. EUCOM originally exercised operational control of the ESAT and the U.S. Ambassador had tactical control. Once the JTF was stood up the ESAT was placed under their operational control, TACON remained with the Ambassador, and the JSOTF exercised command less

OPCON. The Ambassador understood how to effectively incorporate the ESAT into the ongoing activities and the JSOTF provided informal advice and direct support. These two facts aided the JTF in more effectively using the ESAT as its eyes and ears in the crisis site, Kinshasa (Heinemann 1999). Despite the doctrinally correct chain of command the command structure did not have a major impact on the operation.

Sufficient authority was not granted down to appropriate levels. The theater commander wanted an Army led NEO as opposed to a SOF led NEO. He also wanted a major general as the JTF commander who could command and control whatever subordinate forces might be required. This led to placing the SETAF commander in charge of the JTF. The JTF did not understand the SOF's capabilities and limitations in relation to the ongoing situation. Therefore they did not empower the JSOTF to plan and execute the operation as the JSOTF, the only force available, deemed appropriate. The Joint Task Force headquarters, forward deployed to Brazzaville, provided no major benefits during the dangerous initial phase of the operation because its size prevented the forward positioning of SOF NEO forces. Command and control by the JSOTF was also hampered by the CINC's micromanagement of the situation (Heinemann 1999). Another problem with authority occurred when the JSOTF attempted to incorporate an element from 3d SFG (A), in Congo conducting a Joint and Combined Exercise for Training, into the operational plan. It took several days to get authorization from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff to change the elements purpose from training to participation in an operational mission. The problems caused by the withholding of authority at various levels could have caused significant problems if the operational environment had deteriorated and an evacuation had been required.

Integrated planning was not conducted between EUCOM headquarters, the Joint Task Force, and the Joint Special Operations Task Force prior to deployment. Force caps in Congo, imposed by U.S. Department of State and the CINC, prevented liaison elements critical to integrated planning from deploying into Brazzaville. This problem was partially mitigated by the integrated planning conducted by the JSOTF and the French, Belgian, and British forces in Brazzaville. There was not an official coalition, however all four forces understood the complex nature of the evacuation, and were therefore willing to cooperate. COL Heinemann describes the success the JSOTF had in establishing a plan that was mutually beneficial, especially to the U.S. Forces, as an example of cooperative control. This coordinated planning would have paid high dividends if the evacuation of American citizens had been required. It also set the stage for allied cooperation with the follow-on United States Marine Corps JTF that eventually executed the NEO.

Some of the command and control elements were positioned to maximize influence across their span of control and some were not. This could have caused serious consequences if a short notice evacuation had been required. The Joint Task Force had a large headquarters forward in Brazzaville and the Joint Special Operations Task Force also had its headquarters there. Because a cap had been placed on the total number of forces allowed in Brazzaville by the U.S. Ambassador, a majority of the personnel required to actually conduct the evacuation, to include the Army SF and Air Force Special Operations headquarters were forced to remain in Libreville, Gabon. The inability to position these two headquarters with the JSOTF headquarters had a negative impact on the planning process as well as on the ability to ensure the safety of American

citizens. It also forced the JSOTF to directly supervise the SOF operators in Brazzaville preparing for the evacuation. This direct supervision exceeded the JSOTF's normal command and control capabilities. The communication capabilities of the headquarters slightly offset their positioning problems. The positioning of command and control elements was barely functional during the planning process and would not have been adequate if a NEO had been required under less than permissive circumstances.

The capabilities of the deployed elements were not adequately matched with mission requirements. The plan developed to accomplish the mission required Army SF troops to accomplish evacuee processing, Navy SEALs to conduct the ferry operations, and Air Force fixed wing and rotary wing assets to be used for airlift. Unfortunately, force caps imposed by the U.S. State Department in Congo caused most of these assets to be positioned over four hours (alert plus rotary-wing flight time) away. Due to distances involved from the Intermediate Staging Base in Gabon where the bulk of the operators were located, any situation requiring immediate response would have to wait until the caps were lifted, then troops flown in. Another problem with capabilities involved the security force. The special operations forces had the capability to respond, with a minimum amount of force, to localized threat situations, but lacked the manpower to provide overall security for the operation which could have been required if the operational environment had deteriorated (Heinemann 1999). While the minimum adequate capabilities existed to conduct the NEO, they were not positioned properly to execute it on short notice under unfavorable conditions. Also there was not sufficient redundancy of assets to cover likely contingencies.

Effective liaison with other U.S. forces, host nation forces and officials, and other countries was established. The cooperative control effected by these liaisons was one of the strong points of the operation and contributed significantly to the overall success of the mission. Because of the communications equipment and capabilities possessed by U.S. SOF, they were able to establish Liaison and Coordination Elements with the British, French, and Belgian headquarters, and at over thirty different transload and control points. This provided not only information on the current situation but allowed the JSOTF forces to positively influence activities. The relationship and liaison established by the JSOTF with the U.S. Embassies in both Brazzaville and Kinshasa supported a cooperative atmosphere the JTF did not enjoy. The liaisons and subsequent cooperation would have gone a long way toward mission accomplishment if the situation had deteriorated and immediate evacuation had been required.

The SOF command and control element which had the greatest negative impact on Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL was the positioning of forces and headquarters where they could not maximize their influence on operations. The ability of SOF to influence the situation through cooperative control had the biggest positive impact

#### Operation FIRM RESPONSE

Operation FIRM RESPONSE was a success. Problems with some of the special operations doctrinal command and control elements were overcome by the skillful application of others. The matrix in table 6 displays the impact the special operations command and control elements had on mission accomplishment. Positive and negative examples are discussed below.

TABLE 6

## FIRM RESPONSE EVALUATION CRITERIA MATRIX

| CRITERIA                                                          | ACCOMPLISHED? | IMPACT ON MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Clear Chain of Command IAW Current Joint Doctrine                 | NO            | LOW (-)                          |
| Sufficient Authority Granted Down to Appropriate Levels           | NO            | MEDIUM (-)                       |
| Integrated Planning Process                                       | YES           | MEDIUM (+)                       |
| C2/HQ Positioned to Maximize Influence Across Span of Control     | YES           | MEDIUM (+)                       |
| Capabilities Matched to Requirements                              | NO            | HIGH (-)                         |
| Liaison with Other US Forces, HN, and Other Countries Established | YES           | HIGH (+)                         |

A clear chain of command was not established in accordance with current doctrine. The all SOF European Survey and Assessment Team that went into Brazzaville was effectively under the operational control of the EUCOM J3 (who conferred directly with the CINC) and under tactical control of the U.S. Ambassador to Congo. However, in a memorandum delineating Terms of Reference, the theater CINC directed COMSOCEUR to provide command and control of the ESAT. This left COMSOCEUR nominally and legally as the Joint Task Force Commander, with command less operational control of the ESAT, but with no decision authority. SOCEUR was able to minimize the negative effects of this command relationship by maintaining constant communications with the ESAT and by providing advice and guidance on a regular basis. Another problem with the chain of command was the U.S. Ambassador in Brazzaville was in a combat situation and did not know how to operate effectively in that

environment. The nondoctrinal chain of command put the SOCEUR commander in the awkward position of being caught between operational and political realities. This compelled him to command and control the situation while maintaining appropriate respect for his legal superior (Heinemann 1999). As a result the established chain of command had a negative impact on the success of the operations.

Sufficient authority was not granted down to appropriate levels. The command relationship outlined above gave COMSOCEUR responsibility for the operation without providing him the authority to direct actions. The EUCOM EC-J3 negated the benefits of having SOCEUR as the Joint Task Force by his direct control of the ESAT. The ESAT commander, however, was given a great deal of latitude to execute the operation on the ground in Brazzaville because of the Ambassador's inabilities (Heinemann 1999). The ESAT commander, by virtue of his ability as a French linguist, his operational expertise, prior experience in Brazzaville, and his physical location, was in a position of dominance which helped offset the negative impact of the lack of authority given to COMSOCEUR.

The planning process was integrated within SOCEUR. The EUCOM staff appropriately let the SOCEUR staff conduct the planning for the operation. This had a moderately positive impact on the execution of the mission.

The headquarters and command and control structures were positioned to maximize influence across their span of control. Communications assets enabled both the EUCOM headquarters and the SOCEUR headquarters to communicate effectively from Stuttgart to Brazzaville. The capabilities of the ESAT commander and the relatively small size of the force on the ground negated the need for a higher headquarters command presence forward.

Capabilities were not appropriately matched with mission requirements. Force caps imposed by U.S. Department of State and EUCOM Headquarters limited the ESAT to one aircraft. A plan was developed to use 1-10th SFG (A) and 352d SOG assets to conduct the non-combatant evacuation. This plan could not be executed because of the force caps, leaving the ESAT as the only U.S. force on the ground. This definitely put the operation at risk in an uncertain environment that turned hostile. The abilities of the ESAT commander, LTC Mamaux, a healthy dose of luck, and the bravery and dedication of the French forces in Brazzaville, all were essential to the mission being accomplished. While the SOF forces on hand were capable of executing the mission, the successful outcome could have been dramatically altered if either of the rebel factions had decided to initiate hostilities against U.S. personnel.

Effective liaison with other U.S. forces, the host nation, and other countries was established. This was the key element to the success of the operation. Once again the cooperative control established by members of the ESAT enabled them to positively influence the situation. The relationship developed with the U.S. Ambassador enabled the ESAT personnel to exert their position and execute the mission as they knew it needed to be executed. The relationship developed with the French forces at the airfield were critical to avoiding fratricide during movement through the city, as well as to the evacuation of noncombatants. It was helpful that several members of the ESAT had been involved in Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL earlier that same year, and had developed professional relationships with members of the Department of State staff and soldiers from the French forces. The cooperative relationship developed between the ESAT and the local rival factions allowed them to conduct the evacuation without hostile

intervention. While the liaisons established did not eliminate the danger, they did contribute decisively to the success of the mission.

Operation FIRM RESPONSE validated the important role cooperative control and personal influence play in the success of sensitive operations. This control of the situation offset the potential problems from not matching capabilities with requirements.

### Conclusion

In this chapter the thesis examines four operations, all of which were conducted under different circumstances. In each case the six identified special operations command and control elements played a discernable role. Lessons learned and the trends determined by evaluating all four operations are discussed in chapter 5 and may prove useful when planning future operations involving SOF.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Without forward deployed SOF forces under one command who train together, we could not have done this mission in a timely manner (Partin 1997, 48).

BG Michael Canavan speaking of the NEO in Liberia

#### Introduction

The stated purpose of this thesis is to analyze historical employments of Joint Special Operations Forces to determine what aspects of their command and control influenced mission accomplishment and then to draw conclusions which can be applied to future operations. To achieve this end the thesis identifies and discusses trends in the special operations command and control elements from the four operations considered. This allows conclusions to be drawn about the importance of each element. The thesis then draws conclusions about special operations command and control doctrine in general. These conclusions lead to suggestions for both SOF and non-SOF commanders and staffs to assist with the planning and execution of operations involving Special Operations Forces. Finally, since the thesis is by no means a comprehensive discussion of all the aspects required to conduct successful Joint Special Operations, it identifies proposed further research topics.

#### Identified Trends in the Applicability of SOF C2 Elements

When the application, or exclusion, of the six SOF command and control elements are viewed together, several trends become evident. These trends can then be amplified by details of the operations studied by this thesis. Each element is addressed

separately. Trends are identified and then discussed. Finally, specific recommendations are made.

#### Clear Chain of Command Established

It is obvious that different command structures are required for different types of SOF operations. The comparison of the effects that a clear chain of command had on all four operations is portrayed in table 7. This comparison shows that this element had only a medium to low impact without regard to whether it was applied or not.

TABLE 7

#### CLEAR CHAIN OF COMMAND MATRIX

| OPERATION          | CLEAR CHAIN OF<br>COMMAND<br>ESTABLISHED | IMPACT ON MISSION |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | NO                                       | MEDIUM (-)        |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | YES                                      | MEDIUM (+)        |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | YES                                      | LOW (+)           |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | NO                                       | LOW (-)           |

One logical explanation for this is that doctrinal examples, as outlined in current joint doctrine, serve as a start point for modifications based on mission requirements. As future contingency operations become more complex, requiring a mix of conventional and joint forces, as well as multinational forces, the required command organizations will also become more complex. This is not to say that planners should ignore the doctrinal models. They do make sense, and in most cases, form the basis for a command and control structure that is understandable, and easily implemented. When complex or non-doctrinal command structures are required, it is imperative that they are clearly explained to all elements and documented.

### Authority Granted Down to Appropriate Levels

Examination of the matrix in table 8 shows that granting commanders sufficient authority to conduct operations as they deemed appropriated had a medium to high impact on success in all cases.

TABLE 8

AUTHORITY GRANTED MATRIX

| OPERATION          | SUFFICIENT<br>AUTHORITY GRANTED<br>TO COMMANDERS | IMPACT ON MISSION |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | NO                                               | MEDIUM (-)        |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | YES                                              | HIGH (+)          |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | NO                                               | MEDIUM (-)        |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | NO                                               | MEDIUM (-)        |

Empowering leaders to make decisions and accomplish the stated purpose of the mission is one of the cornerstones of U.S. Army doctrine. The key is to achieve a balance between allowing subordinates to exercise initiative without unhinging a synchronized plan, or creating an international incident. This challenge is not unique to SOF, but it is made more critical because of the strategic importance of many SOF missions. There are two ways to improve the chances of success when empowering subordinate commanders. First training events should provide leaders the opportunity to execute initiative, and learn from the results. Second, during execution the purpose of each element, and the way their purpose nests into the overall purpose of the operation, should be clear.

## Integrated Planning Process

An integrated planning process was a significant contributing factor to three of the four operations. This is graphically portrayed in table 9. The fact that a lack of integrated planning did not have a dramatic impact on the success of Operation ASSURED RESPONSE is probably an anomaly, and explained by the generic NEO preparation conducted by SOCEUR and its subordinates, as discussed in chapter 4.

TABLE 9

### INTEGRATED PLANNING PROCESS MATRIX

| OPERATION          | INTEGRATED PLANNING PROCESS | IMPACT ON MISSION |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | YES                         | HIGH (+)          |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | NO                          | LOW (-)           |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | YES                         | HIGH (+)          |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | YES                         | MEDIUM (+)        |

One of the strengths SOF brings to operations is the ability to conduct contingency response planning quickly and effectively at the Theater SOC level. This is especially true in EUCOM where two of the three service special operations components are located within close proximity of the SOC headquarters. Another factor contributing to successful contingency planning is the numerous opportunities the SOC staff and component staffs have to train together. These two factors of proximity and familiarity, coupled with having operators participate in the planning process, was critical to mission success. This trend validates the SOF doctrinal planning position.

## Command and Control Positioned to Maximize Influence

The positioning of command and control elements and headquarters has a significant impact on Special Operation Force's ability to accomplish assigned missions. This does not mean that command and control elements must be located at the crisis point, but rather they must be able to positively influence actions there. Advances in communications technology and the extended operational reach of special operations aviation assets provide greater flexibility in the positioning of SOF headquarters. This does not diminish the requirement to effect the operation when necessary. The information in table 10 portrays the moderate to high impact the inclusion, or exclusion, of this element had on the evaluated operations.

TABLE 10  
HEADQUARTERS POSITIONING MATRIX

| OPERATION          | C2/HQ POSITIONED TO<br>MAXIMIZE INFLUENCE | IMPACT ON MISSION |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | YES                                       | MEDIUM (+)        |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | YES                                       | HIGH (+)          |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | NO                                        | HIGH (-)          |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | YES                                       | MEDIUM (+)        |

Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR and Operation FIRM RESPONSE were both successful with the principle SOF headquarters located a great distance away. Operation ASSURED RESPONSE demonstrated how moving the majority of the chain of command forward to the crisis site could be effective. Finally Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL is a good example of how too much headquarters forward can interfere with mission planning and execution.

There is no doctrinal template for positioning command and control assets. Planners must determine the correct array based on the individual mission requirements, the operational environment, and any imposed force caps, capitalizing on available communication and mobility assets. It is important to remember when discussing the ability of a headquarters to maximize its influence across its span of control that electronic communications may be as effective as face to face contact. It is also important to consider the radius of long range SOF helicopters coupled with their aerial refuel capability. SOFs inherent communications and mobility assets, both equipment and personnel, should be exploited to maximize influence across the span of control.

#### Capabilities Matched to Requirements

Matching capabilities to mission requirements requires an understanding of not only capabilities, but also limitations. As illustrated in table 11 the ability to position forces with the capability to meet requirements had a very high impact on mission success.

TABLE 11  
CAPABILITES MATRIX

| OPERATION          | CAPABILITIES<br>MATCHED TO<br>REQUIREMENTS | IMPACT ON MISSION |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | YES                                        | HIGH (+)          |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | YES                                        | HIGH (+)          |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | NO                                         | HIGH (-)          |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | NO                                         | HIGH (-)          |

Adequate forces with appropriate capabilities were positioned to handle not only the specified tasks, but also respond to contingency situations during operation JOINT ENDEAVOR and Operation ASSURED RESPONSE. Conversely forces with the capability to resolve contingency situations were not positioned where they could influence the action during Operation GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL or Operation FIRM RESPONSE. When planners determine which elements will be positioned in what locations they must consider not only the current operational environment, but also what degradations to that environment could rapidly occur. Force caps and mobility assets must also be considered. Operators and critical command and control elements should be given priority over headquarters and support elements when space or lift are limited. SOF posses a wide variety of capabilities which can provide commanders with the flexibility to accomplish missions in uncertain or changing conditions. It is imperative that their capabilities be balanced against their limitations.

#### Liaisons Established

Effective liaisons were established during all four of the operations evaluated. As depicted on table 12 this had a significant impact on the success of each operation.

TABLE 12

#### LIAISON ESTABLISHMENT MATRIX

| OPERATION          | EFFECTIVE LIAISON ESTABLISHED | IMPACT ON MISSION |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| JOINT ENDEAVOR     | YES                           | HIGH (+)          |
| ASSURED RESPONSE   | YES                           | MEDIUM (+)        |
| GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL | YES                           | HIGH (+)          |
| FIRM RESPONSE      | YES                           | HIGH (+)          |

One aspect of successful liaison is identifying requirements during planning and then giving those personnel priority during positioning. Another reason why SOF liaison can be so successful is their interpersonal communications skills. The regional expertise, language capability, and experience that many special operations personnel possess enable them to exert a great deal of personal influence. This influence can be used to establish cooperative control which can mean the difference between success and failure.

### Conclusion

This thesis has determined that all six special operations command and control elements should be considered during both the planning and execution of operations involving SOF. The three elements which are the most critical to success are: matching capabilities to requirements; establishing liaison; and conducting integrated planning. Once requirements are identified it is imperative to position assets where they can influence the outcome in the desired manner. Key to SOF liaison is understanding and implementing interpersonal communications skills. Having SOF operators integrated into the planning process with experienced SOF and conventional staff should be accomplished if at all possible. When senior leaders grant sufficient authority to subordinate commanders, the fourth element, the resulting initiative can dramatically improve the effectiveness of the operation. The critical aspect of the fifth element, positioning headquarters to maximize influence, is the incorporation of communication and mobility assets, not the actual position on the ground. The final element, a clear chain of command, while desirable, may not be possible in future operations. The ability of special operations personnel to establish cooperative control with other players in contingency response operations is critical to overcoming shortfalls in other areas.

Special Operations Forces can maximize their chances for success by integrating the special operations command and control elements in a way that gains a synergistic effect for the interaction between all six.

#### Suggestions for Commanders and Their Staffs

SOF commanders and staffs first and foremost need to understand how to apply current joint special operations command and control doctrine. There is extensive published doctrine for the command and control of Special Operations Forces. It has all been updated recently and provides a substantial base for planning and executing special operations missions.

Conventional U.S. forces often operate at the single service tactical level and may need assistance to understand joint and combined (NATO) rules. This becomes even more critical when Special Operations Forces, with their unique operational methods and requirements, become involved. One possible solution is an "on-call" briefing given by theater staff to help explain the rules of the game. Another way to solve the problem is to include the information in an annex to the operations order as the NATO staff did in OPLAN 10406 (JOINT GUARD), *SACEUR Operations Plan for the Stabilization of the Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

Because command relationships will continue to be so complex, they need to be defined in detail in the transfer of authority document. While command relationships are important, so are administrative and logistical relationships and they also need to be defined and understood. Transfer of authority documents need to be maintained as point of reference.

### Proposed Further Research Topics

The results of the research and analysis of this thesis lead to two areas where further research may be warranted. The first question is; Are there changes required in the conduct of the U.S. Army Special Forces Officer Qualification Course to more adequately cover special operations command and control doctrine? The second question is; What are the doctrinal support and administrative control relationships for Special Operations Forces conducting contingency operations? The final question raised is; How do NATO or other multi-national command structures affect special operations command and control?

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