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**UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL FORCES – THE 21ST CENTURY
URBAN CHALLENGE**

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United States Army Special Forces – The 21st Century Urban Challenge

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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Global urbanization and the international security environment are increasing the chances that the U.S. will face urban warfare situations in the 21st century. Potential adversaries may take advantage of cities in an attempt to offset US advantages in maneuver, firepower and technology. The US will likely fight as part of a coalition, making command and control a very difficult task in built-up areas. Urban fighting is often nonlinear and conducted on three levels: subterranean, ground level, and aboveground level. Buildings block line of sight communications and this makes coordinated actions above the small unit level extremely difficult. The likelihood of heavy casualties makes urban assaults a far less acceptable approach than an indirect approach such as isolating the enemy within an urban area.

Regardless of whether a direct or indirect strategy is employed, intelligence is equally critical. The greatest shortfall that Russian forces encountered in Chechnya was the need for accurate and timely HUMINT on enemy leaders, troop concentrations, strong points and logistic centers.

In urban scenarios involving US forces, Special Forces may be asked to conduct a broad range of missions including special reconnaissance, direct action, unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense. In addition, other activities including coalition warfare support, peace keeping support and humanitarian assistance operations will probably involve Army Special Forces units.

This research project looks out to the year 2020 in order to study the ramifications of urban warfare on the roles, missions, and training of Army Special Forces units. As part of my conclusions, I have recommended areas of emphasis to prepare for the 21st Century urban warfare challenge.

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PREFACE

This is a study of the effects of urban operations on urban operations on U.S. Army Special Forces over the first 20 years of the 21st Century. The intent of this study is to formulate perspectives on the urban posture of Army Special Forces today, and recommend the first steps in addressing the urban warfare challenge. The urban security environment of the 21st Century is outlined in Chapter 1. A theoretical approach to urban warfare is discussed in Chapter 2. A uniquely Special Forces view of urban warfare is contained in Chapter 3. An examination of Special Forces urban operations and why they are fundamentally different than rural operations is contained in Chapter 4. Regional perspectives on urban warfare are detailed in Chapter 5. The broad recommendations and conclusions of this study are contained in Chapter 6. U.S. Army Special Forces operations are embraced by a host of related operations: joint and combined special operations, mainstream Army operations, coalition operations, civil affairs operations and psychological operations. To fully develop this study, certain aspects of these related operations are discussed to a limited degree. The 21st Century urban arena will be closely integrated; therefore separate studies to fully develop the implications for all SOF are merited.

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U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES – THE 21ST CENTURY URBAN CHALLENGE

“The worldwide increase in sprawling urban areas has made it impossible for forces conducting...operations to avoid cities and towns.”

— U.S. Army Field Manual 90-10-1

Military planners confronted with increased chances of urban fighting will find that the United Nations (UN) provides an illuminating look at the extent of urban development: “At the beginning of the 20th Century, only one person in 10 lived in a city or town. Today, on the threshold of the new millennium, almost 3 billion people; half of humanity lives in towns or cities. The result of this rapid increase in the urban population is that of the estimated 1.5 billion poor, most are now concentrated in slums and squatter settlements.”¹ The UN Population Fund reported in 1996: “Within 10 years, the majority of the world’s population will be living in urban conglomerations. Almost all urban growth will occur in the developing world, spawning 10 large cities a year.”² The UN Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) reported in 1996 that the growth of most cities was slower in the 1980s than in any of the three previous decades, owing to many people moving out of, rather than into cities during that time.”³ However, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis reported in 1997 that “the world’s hyper cities (those over 15 million) have reached a size off the scale of human experience. Some 58 of the world’s largest metropolitan areas in the developing world are growing at twice the rate of cities as a whole.”⁴

For Special Forces planners, the urban growth rate in the developing world is especially significant. Developing nations hold great potential for the employment of Special Forces in advisory, training and liaison roles. Urban warfare is not new to Special Forces. However, urban warfare has taken on an increased significance because of the phenomenal growth rate of the urban population. With the increased significance of urban warfare comes a number of challenges for Special Forces including the role of Unconventional Warfare (UW) and the development of an intelligence architecture to support urban warfare. In respect to the former, conducting UW in an urban environment is a difficult proposition, and one that is also very relevant to a CINC that requires timely and detailed information on the enemy. In respect to the latter, an intelligence architecture to support urban warfare ranging from the strategic level to the tactical level must be developed.

The prospects of urban warfare raise a number of issues that must be examined. The increased integration of Special Forces operations with conventional operations requires further study, as does the adequacy of current planning and urban warfare training programs. To understand the challenge of urban warfare, this study begins by examining the security environment in the 21st Century.

URBAN WARFARE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

"Political fragmentation with the breakup of failed states and empires resulting in problems of increasing crime, ungovernability, withering of central governments, and anarchy"⁵

- Dr. Robert Phaltzgraff

As Dr. Phaltzgraff (one of the leading thinkers in the security studies field) indicates above, failed states such as Somalia, Haiti, and Yugoslavia are creating conditions that prompt interventions and lead to potential urban conflicts. Major General Scales, one of the most prominent thinkers in the urban warfare field, points to some of the factors underlying this trend:

Future conflicts will most likely occur along the same geopolitical and cultural fault lines separating civilizations for millennia. These historic lines extend across northern and southern Europe, converge in the Balkans, and traverse through the Middle East; continuing beyond Eurasia, turning south towards the Pacific Rim, down the Malay Peninsula and into the Indonesian Archipelago. As in the past, these geopolitical fault lines will continue to witness ethnic, religious, economic, and political confrontation.⁶

Urban areas become the very focus of this instability because increasingly that is where the majority of inhabitants live. In the absence of traditional centers of gravity there are instead centers of instability. Within the center of instability there can be warring ethnic or religious factions, terrorists or international criminals.

Mr. Robert Kaplan, journalist and author of Balkan Ghosts said that in the 21st Century: "there would be more instability because the global middle class is not growing as fast as the global peasant class. The most stable countries are democracies with large middle classes. Thugocracies will give way to Messy Mexicos."⁷

At balance, urbanization and the international security environment indicate increased potential for a variety of urban warfare situations. Next, we must examine how the urban environment impacts on the employment of military forces in general and Special Forces in particular. Below, Dr. Christopher R. Gabel provides a summary of how cities have come to affect warfare:

Throughout history, terrain has shaped the conduct of military operations. Traditionally, generals have been concerned with watercourses, elevations, depressions, and vegetation in the planning and conduct of battle. With the coming of the industrial age, a new terrain feature-the modern city-became important in the waging of war.⁸

In ancient times, a city's military significance resided in its fortifications and its garrison. If these could be overcome, a city ceased to be a military impediment. In modern times, however, an urban area can constitute a major military obstacle. A modern city might be large enough to block a strategic avenue of approach into an enemy's land. Its population also poses major logistical, administrative, and security problems for the invader. Tactically, a city's closely packed buildings, basements, alleyways, and sewer systems offer cover, concealment, and ready made defensive positions to the defenders. Masonry buildings muffle the blast effect of the attacker's artillery, and when destroyed, these buildings choke the streets with rubble and broken glass. Offensive movement

through urban terrain is further hindered by the canalizing effect of man-made terrain such as roadways, embankments and cuts.⁹

Weapons systems are constrained because some require minimum arming distances. The collateral damage posed by some weapons rule them out. Small arms are often ineffective against walls and doors. Generally, a modern city magnifies the power of the defender and robs the attacker of his advantages in firepower and mobility. A city can ingest an invading army, paralyze it for weeks on end and grind it down to a state of ineffectiveness.¹⁰

Having examined the international security environment in the 21st Century and the urban warfare environment itself, several items stand forth. Small internal conflicts will more frequently arise than state on state conflicts.¹¹ Urban areas in the developing world are likely locations for internal conflicts. The enemy will be difficult to identify and may originate from causes including nationalism and ethnic or religious strife.¹² The prospects of attacking a conventional or asymmetric enemy in an urban area is likely to be costly in terms of casualties and materiel. Because conflicts in the 21st Century are likely to be derived from long-standing political, ethnic and religious issues, the prospects for clear victory and early withdrawal are dim. Yet urban warfare seems to be increasingly unavoidable, so the central issue then becomes how to proceed in a way that brings about the desired end state in an acceptable fashion.

AN ARMY PERSPECTIVE: THE INDIRECT APPROACH TO URBAN WARFARE

Urban warfare, fighting in cities, war in complex terrain. To the casual observer, the words seem detached, almost pristine. However, the words are real to military professionals who have seen the images of great destruction and excessive casualties in cities such as Berlin, Stalingrad, Hue, and Beirut. Urban warfare, a subject that many military professionals would prefer to avoid, is still with us. Moreover, it may be the preferred approach of future opponents.¹³

- MG Robert H. Scales, Jr.

MG Robert H. Scales, USA, former head of the Army After Next project, developed a broad strategy for avoiding the pitfalls of modern urban combat. Based on war games conducted at the U.S. Army War College in 1998, his strategy called for an indirect approach. During the war games, it was observed that an enemy could take advantage of a large urban center to offset U.S. advantages in firepower and maneuverability. The scenario envisions an aggressor country invading a neighbor to seize military objectives including a large urban center that controls key lodgment facilities and national centers of gravity. Using political, diplomatic and military means to delay the strategic deployment of U.S. forces, the enemy concurrently fortifies the urban complex. The U.S. is then faced with the dilemma of taking high casualties in the course of reducing the urban center or enduring the enemy's successful attainment of its aggressive goals.¹⁴

To counter such an enemy strategy, MG Scales articulates a strategy of first surrounding the urban center with a loose cordon of forces which do not seek to fight enemy forces unless they attack. Then,

because the enemy has lost the ability to maneuver, he loses the initiative, and time is on the side of the intervening coalition. Through the use of psychological operations (PSYOP) and control of the media, the enemy's position as a hostile occupying force is used to mobilize the emotions and actions of the urban populace. As coalition forces gain control of the countryside, safe havens and camps are built for refugees that will receive safe passage through coalition lines. As time progresses, the procurement of basic needs by the remaining populace within the city becomes increasingly difficult. The enemy forces occupying the city are seen for what they have become – impotent aggressors who cannot provide for the basic needs of the populace. Eventually, the city collapses upon itself.¹⁵

MG Scales recognizes, "There are many variables associated with the success of the indirect approach. The attitudes of the populace and ability of the city to sustain itself will affect the length of time to achieve the desired outcome. So too will the cohesiveness and logistics posture of enemy forces within the city. Finally, the prospects of a sustained crisis may weaken the political resolve of the intervening coalition, particularly because some casualties are inevitable even with an indirect approach. At an opportune moment the enemy still has the option of initiating peace talks in order to achieve concessions."¹⁶

MG Scales concludes that " Future conditions will force us to fight in complex terrain. However, we cannot afford to fight at the cost incurred in WW II. The indirect approach allows us to use our advantages of maneuver and speed to their fullest advantage and at the lowest cost in human life and suffering."¹⁷

ARMY SPECIAL FORCES: AN INDIRECT APPROACH TO URBAN WARFARE

MG Scales' analysis of urban strategy combined with already existing analysis of the roles and missions of Special Forces in the 21st Century provides an excellent foundation for the study of urban warfare. General (Ret.) Wayne A. Downing also looked ahead across the security environment of the 21st Century and provided an operational profile for Special Forces:

Special Forces will be involved in a broad range of situations in the post-cold war period. These include proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counter proliferation, power projection, forward presence, ethnic conflict, international criminal organizations, insurgencies, and counter-terrorism.¹⁸ Special Forces will be engaged with missions that either call for direct contact with the enemy or indirect contact with the enemy. There will be a wide variety of threats including a well-equipped nation state such as Iraq. More commonly, drawing on experiences in Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti, threats to peace do not have a well-defined center of gravity and a conventional army. The threat is a sub-national organization, disintegrating social structures, disease, and environmental degradation.¹⁹

We will need forces capable of not only operating behind an enemy's front lines, attacking targets of major importance, integrating reconnaissance efforts, establishing clandestine and unconventional operations, and working with coalition forces, but also of contributing to a strategy of PSYOP.²⁰

After the war phase itself, such forces will be needed to provide intelligence and to delay, disrupt, divert and deceive withdrawing enemy military units. After the armed conflict has ended, forces will be called upon to assist in nation building, peacekeeping, and humanitarian support...However, such a capability will need to have the means for deployment in situations where an opponent possesses, or actually uses, WMD, including not only nuclear, but biological and chemical weapons.²¹

Given GEN (Ret.) Downing's analysis and MG Scale's indirect strategy for urban warfare, what needs to be done is to see how the two interact. Specifically, the roles and missions of Special Forces can be aligned with MG Scales' indirect urban campaign as follows:

In the early stages of the enemy's aggression, and before a major deployment of U.S. and coalition forces took place, special operations forces (SOF) may be tasked to respond if key U.S. facilities and personnel are put at risk. Potential non-combatant evacuation operations or attempts to free hostages would be high-risk Direct Action operations. Their success would set a positive tone for the entirety of the U.S. strategy. Even before U.S. forces secured lodgments, SOF could begin coordination and training with their foreign peacetime partners as part of a coalition building effort and Foreign Internal Defense/Internal Defense and Development program.

Concurrent with the establishment of overseas lodgments, SOF would be critical in playing the role of accelerators to the overall indirect urban strategy. SOF employ primarily indirect approaches to warfare and would be invaluable in accelerating the pace of the urban center's collapse: Throughout the conduct of the indirect strategy, SOF would serve as the *glue* that would keep the coalition together. Army Special Forces would be key players in the coalition support team role. In support of the strategic information gathering effort, Special Forces elements would be ideal to conduct Special Reconnaissance in areas adjoining the urban center, along hostile borders and in remote areas of the invaded country.

In support of the U.S. commander, Special Forces elements could be asked to perform valuable force protection roles including protection of key personnel.

An indirect urban strategy would also present a potentially high-payoff opportunity for Unconventional Warfare (UW) actions to include recovery of aircrew from the urban center or from the enemy homeland, information gathering, and low-visibility disruption and harassment of enemy activities within the urban complex.

In summary, it appears that a clear vision of Special Forces missions on the urban battlefield can be derived from an examination of GEN (Ret.) Downing's and MG Scales' works. Special Forces capabilities are most effective where an indirect approach is adopted. In urban scenarios, Special Forces can contribute critical capabilities to an indirect campaign by conducting a broad range of missions including SR, DA, UW and FID. In addition, other activities including coalition warfare support, peace keeping support and humanitarian assistance operations will provide depth and breadth to an indirect campaign. UW appears to be the most difficult and potentially the most lucrative mission area in 21st Century urban warfare.

SPECIAL FORCES URBAN OPERATIONS

Urban terrain requires light infantry, mechanized, and armor forces to plan and fight differently than in open terrain. "Maneuver forces control terrain through observation, firepower, and speed. In urban areas, terrain is controlled through troop presence."²² Special Forces planners must view urban warfare as a fundamentally different proposition as well. In urban environments where the enemy force is asymmetrical, there is a blending of tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Special Forces teams may engage in one or more levels of warfare at the same time while operating in close proximity to U.S. and coalition forces. They may also be conducting combat operations in one part of the city while they are conducting peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance missions in other parts of the city. Urban operations place unique demands on Special Forces units that can best be summarized as follows:

Command and Control (C2): Command and control of Special Forces in an urban environment is significantly different than in rural areas. Within one relatively confined area, there can be a relatively dense configuration of combat, combat support, and combat service support forces. Combat units usually fight on narrower frontages because command and control is much more difficult and manpower requirements are much higher. Special Forces are capable of executing many operations inside the operating areas of friendly maneuver forces including force protection, sniper operations, convoy operations, force protection, special reconnaissance, combat service support, humanitarian assistance, and liaison/coalition support operations. This close interaction between Special Forces and forces requires a greater degree of integration and coordinated execution with conventional forces. A Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) or a Combined/Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) could do the overall integration of Special Forces into the urban campaign efficiently. Additionally, a Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) could further imbed this coordination and integration process in the joint war fighting headquarters. The SOCCE is best located so that it is integral to the Joint Operations Center (JOC) of the Joint Task Force (JTF) or Combined /Joint Task Force (CJTF).

Communications: Satellite communications will remain to be one of the primary communications links used in urban warfare, particularly over extended distances. However, in some situations, outstations may be located in much closer proximity to both the base station and each other making satellite communications ineffective. Additionally, communications systems must be capable of working effectively in urban *canyons* and inside buildings. The clutter of obstacles in an urban setting easily disrupts line of sight communications. To communicate effectively in an urban maze, consideration must be given to issuing hand-held radios to each individual, to be used in conjunction with a network of repeaters to operate over extended distances.

Intelligence: LTG (Ret.) Patrick Hughes, former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said, "We may face emerging threats such as the rise and fall of alliances - history is full of them. The future is many small internal wars and we may see the emergence of a peer competitor or a threat from an alliance of countries distributed in different parts of the world."²³

One of the fundamental difficulties with military operations in urban areas is the acquisition of accurate and relevant intelligence. GEN Shinseki recently commented that when speaking of urban warfare, our intelligence systems are not finely tuned enough for acquisition and situation awareness.²⁴ At the strategic level, limited information on roads, bridges, ports, and airfields is often available. However, assessments that accurately depict the current logistics situation inside the city are typically nonexistent. Additionally, planners are most often without accurate mapping of a city's political, ethnic and religious enclaves.

At the tactical level, urban operations require troops to have much of the same cultural/political intelligence as strategic planners. Moreover, actual urban fighting in the past has typically required troops to fight with little intelligence on their tactical objectives. There is often little specific information about building layout and construction. Clearly, military planners at the strategic, operational and tactical level face systemic intelligence gaps in conducting intelligence preparation of the battlefield. Urban logistics studies, political/cultural studies, and building construction data are required to prevent military forces from operating blind.

Special Reconnaissance (SR): In rural areas, mounted or dismounted Special Forces teams are able to employ long-range observation techniques to observe strategic targets such as key facilities or lines of communications. Employing terrain, camouflage and optics to maximum advantage does this. Special Forces elements conducting reconnaissance in mountainous, savannah or desert terrain can observe accurately at a distance of 1,000 meters or more. The situation in urban areas is much different. Although multi-story buildings can provide limited vantage points, for the most part, frontal and lateral fields of observation are greatly diminished, sometimes to several hundred meters or less. Urban reconnaissance operations are therefore significantly more manpower intensive than rural reconnaissance operations. Special Forces soldiers will have heavier demands placed on them as they attempt to provide adequate coverage of assigned terrain.

Direct Action Missions (DA): Urban warfare, depending on its scope and intensity, can create conditions that lead to the employment of Special Forces teams in the DA role. Potential DA missions include recovery of downed pilots or captured personnel and equipment, hostage situations, and precision strikes on enemy personnel or equipment. A potential worst-case urban scenario involves the acquisition of a weapon of mass destruction by an asymmetric enemy in an urban center. SF snipers have the advanced skills and maturity that make them capable of operating effectively in an urban environment where the potential for collateral damage is high. Special Forces sniper elements present on the battlefield possess skills that are in demand from conventional commanders and this is an area where SF and conventional operations are likely to become integrated. Special Forces teams are also capable of controlling aerial fire support platforms such as the AC-130 that can provide accurate and effective fires necessary for many urban combat situations.

Unconventional Warfare (UW): In the urban UW arena lays Special Forces' greatest challenge. SF has the potential to conduct a broad range of operations including sabotage, intelligence collection,

training and employing surrogate forces, information operations and command and control warfare.²⁵ Where appropriate surrogate forces exist, the conduct of UW in urban areas will be much facilitated. Beyond secure havens, it will be difficult to concentrate a U.S. unilateral force for planning, operations, rest or refit without the risk of being detected and attacked. Special Forces elements must be trained and equipped to blend into the local populace, otherwise urban areas held by enemy forces become denied areas. Urban areas also effectively prevent the establishment of fixed bases or safe operating areas. Unilateral UW teams in urban areas will likely be constrained to the point where operations are restricted to information gathering, personnel recovery operations and occasional small attacks. As author David W. Hogan writes of U.S. Army Special Operations in WW II:

During WW II, OSS teams operating in France found that urban areas could be valuable sources of supplies and information, but actual operations were difficult because of controls placed on movement and the difficulty of remaining undetected in densely populated areas. However, after the Allied invasion of France, OSS operatives in conjunction with partisan forces stepped up the tempo of their operations. Partisan forces reported on the locations of German forces and did everything they could to delay and harass the Germans.²⁶

During the 1999 Strategic Responsiveness seminar in Washington, D.C., Professor Dick Shultz from the Fletcher School at Tufts University made some extraordinary comments that speak to the need for more advanced UW capabilities:

SOF will play a critical role in forging true joint cooperation in the next century. SOF's mission articulated in Joint Pub 1 clearly points to this. The overt capabilities of SOF have made great strides; the overt missions of SOF during Peace Operations are well known. It is on the black side that it appears that work needs to be done. In the 1980s, SOF were revitalized, but not without opposition. It was a real dogfight between the mainstream community and special operations. Today we need to pay some attention to the black side - covert operations. Lessons from the SOG experience point to lasting problems and challenges. QDR planners need to address this because asymmetric threats will need to be addressed, and past presidents despite their enthusiasm for them did not understand the complexities of covert operations. Misunderstanding at the policy level and micro-managing...this is epitomized by the SOG experience. There are important values to be drawn from the SOG experience for the military. Many esoteric skills such as HUMINT and agent handling....these still need to be addressed including UW. In the overt arena, SOF has come of age - on the covert side it has not. Opposition from senior military leadership was strong. The effort of SOF in Vietnam was never integrated into the mainstream effort of the war. The interagency effort with the CIA did not go seamlessly...quite the opposite. So in SOG there are long-term lessons...cold war lessons that had some problems. Will future Presidents need a covert military capability to counter future military challenges? There are several areas of relevance to covert SOF; proliferation of WMD by rogue states, or threats by non-state actors (he cited the example of how the Chechens have been so effective in **urban combat** despite Russian advantages in military power), disruptive policies of Iran, Iraq, North Korea, terrorism and ethnic violence, and international criminal activity. So the U.S. will face all of these in the years ahead. All instruments of state power must be considered. Obstacles and impediments to the use of covert forces must be fixed. That will be a formidable task for post-cold war presidents.²⁷

Coalition Support and Liaison Operations: Special Forces teams will be in demand to provide liaison and support to coalition forces. However, coalition forces performing special duties such as the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) may have a CST also. In some situations, Special Forces teams may be placed in certain sectors of the city or surrounding towns and villages to provide a presence and a conduit for liaison and coordination with the local government and populace.

Operations with special operations aviation: Rotary and fixed wing assets bring important firepower, transport and informational gathering capabilities to the urban battlefield. However, the limitations placed on special operations aviation assets by urban warfare are significant. Urban areas have limited landing zones/pick-up zones (LZ/PZ) that increase the chance that helicopters will be ambushed by ground fire, particularly in daylight. Furthermore, the enemy's air defense posture may entirely preclude the use of aircraft as means for ingressing or egressing the urban area, reducing the options for transport in and out of the area to some type of indigenous ground vehicle.

Special Forces Medical Operations: Special operations medics will be at a premium because of their advanced skills in treating trauma. An Army Times article recently discussed the increased difficulties of treating the wounded under urban conditions:

Air and ground approaches to urban battle sites can be heavily canalized and easily interdicted by enemy forces. Medics will have to stabilize casualties and treat them for longer periods. Evacuation of the wounded can take 12-15 hours or more because of the difficulty in getting air or ground transport in and out of compartmented urban battles. Special operations medics already train for this scenario, but it will take the Army years to improve trauma assessment and treatment skills to an acceptable level. Urban battles are likely to consist of many small infantry engagements where evacuation assets extract casualties one at a time from site close to the fighting. Casualties in the 1993 raid in Mogadishu did not receive treatment for 18 hours because of enemy fire. Streets were too narrow to land helicopters and ground evacuation was subject to ground fire and ambushes.²⁸

Medical treatment of military casualties differs significantly in urban warfare than in more conventional warfare. Instead of being absorbed in earth or sand, bullets fly and skip along roads and walls until they find a target. Troops must rely more heavily on body armor for protection making them less mobile and more prone to fatigue and heat. Rules for medics change in urban fighting. In more conventional fighting, the majority of injuries are expected to be less dangerous fragmentation wounds from aerial bombs or artillery. Urban fighting brings more wounds from small arms fire and at closer ranges that can be more dangerous.²⁹

The difficulties inherent in medical treatment under urban conditions are exacerbated by the competing mission sets with which SF medics are tasked. Within one urban center, special operations medics may be simultaneously trying to support combat operations, peacekeeping operations and medical civic action projects. Medical civic action projects alone are likely to exceed the capability of special operations medical assets given the high incidence of civilian casualties and disease related issues that come with urban fighting.

In summary, an examination of Special Forces urban operations presents several far-reaching conclusions:

- Integration of special operations with conventional operations is much more extensive than in rural operations because the battlefield tends to be geographically smaller and more complex than in rural environments. Additionally, Special Forces elements present on the battlefield possess skills that are critical to conventional commanders.
- UW in an urban environment has the potential to produce intelligence that has enough resolution and timeliness to affect operations.
- Under urban conditions, the Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) for Special Forces missions vary significantly from those employed under rural conditions.

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN OPERATIONS

The previous chapters of this paper have discussed the nature of the urban security environment in the 21st Century and current thinking about how urban campaigns might be conducted. This chapter provides a look at urban warfare from the regional perspective. As this chapter will outline, urban warfare situations can range from relatively short duration intense combat operations to urban insurgencies that last for decades. This chapter provides the empirical view that will be combined with the forward-thinking views from Chapters 2 through 5 to complete the foundation on which to base some recommendations and conclusions in Chapter 6.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Ambassador David Passage writes that in Latin America, "There is a large-scale influx of population from rural areas to urban centers. This migration represents a major threat to regional stability. In fact, Latin America is a region where there is no significant external threat to peace and no serious threat of armed conflict among states beyond border clashes and rivalries that can flare up. Despite the absence of external military threats and the predominance of democratic governments, many underlying causes of instability are present and are still growing."³⁰

"Responses by democratic governments to the social and economic need of the populace are generally inadequate. The ruling elite and middle class in Latin American states is generally much smaller and much more resistant to change than in the United States. One response from the populace is the rural-urban migration as workers seek jobs and access to schools, hospitals, housing and consumer goods. Another response from the populace has been instability. Insurgencies such as the *Sendero Luminoso* in Peru and insurrections in Guatemala, Columbia, and Chile reveal that democracy is a thin

vener. The information revolution has shown the workers and farmers what they are missing. What is needed most in Latin America is competent and uncorrupt governments. Latin American governments will need to be supported by well-trained and disciplined military forces and police forces.”³¹

Ambassador Passage's comments imply that one of the direct effects of urbanization is likely to be a greater emphasis on urban warfare in joint and combined exercises, security assistance programs and joint operations and contingency planning. In the 21st Century, the capability to operate effectively in urban terrain will be one of the most critical skills for Latin American military and security forces. Just as important is the ability of U.S. Special Forces to operate with Latin American forces in urban environments. Border patrols, counter-narcotics operations, riverine patrols, and civil affairs/civil engineering projects are all additional areas that will be of great importance in Latin America, and all require the capability to be conducted in and around urban centers.

Buenos Aires, Argentina	12,594,974
Medellin, Columbia	1,970,691
Havana, Cuba	2,124,000
Managua, Nicaragua	1,200,000
Port Au Prince, Haiti	1,255,078
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil	12,807,706
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	2,055,000
Santiago, Chile	5,180,757
Sao Paulo, Brazil	31,588,925

TABLE 1 - SELECTED URBAN CENTER POPULATIONS: CENTRAL/SOUTH AMERICA³²

Operation Just Cause in December of 1989 is a good example of the intricacies of modern urban combat and the importance of conducting such operations at night. Dr. Thomas M. Huber writes:

Traditionally, U.S. attacks have favored dawn as a starting time, but conditions in Panama dictated use of the night from the beginning of planning in February of 1988. Special operations planners drew on assets from each service. SOF including Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, Army Special Forces, and Air Force AC-130 gunship participated in the operation.³³

The targets of the invasion were the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) and their dictator, Manuel Noriega. The population of the city was not the target and one objective was to avoid civilian casualties. The mission of defeating the PDF units scattered near the Panama Canal required surprise, as did capturing Noriega. Some of the PDF units were garrisoned in urban areas, so night operations were mandated to maximize chances of surprise and to conduct operations at a time when the presence of civilian populace was minimal.³⁴

At Torrijos International Airport, a key objective on D-Day, there was only one flight after midnight. Because there was no way to warn civilian air flights without revealing the intention to invade, a time had to be chosen which minimized the risk to civilian air transport. Military planners envisioned that because several key operations were to be conducted in urban areas at night, confusion and friendly fire incidents might take place.

Planners emphasized air space management and clear delineation of unit boundaries. While the invasion of Panama was a great success, the difficulties of fighting in built-up areas took their toll. Navy SEALs seeking to seal Noriega's potential escape via Patilla Airport suffered 4 killed and eight wounded from sniper fire before successfully securing the airport.³⁵

During fighting around the Commandancia, an AC-130 gunship mistakenly took two U.S. armored personnel carriers under fire causing a significant number of U.S. wounded.³⁶ Night vision devices, considered to be critical to the overall success of the operation, also revealed a potentially exploitable flaw during urban fighting. City lights, fires and explosions neutralized to an extent, the advantage that night vision devices provided to U.S. forces. In the future, an astute enemy might attempt to deny U.S. forces the technological advantage of advanced night vision devices by the use of lights, smoke, fires, and explosions.³⁷

For the most part, U.S. forces quickly accomplished their missions. U.S. Special Forces units conducted reconnaissance missions, personnel recovery missions and fought Panamanian forces at several locations including the Pacora River Bridge.³⁸ As combat operations culminated, a new phase of stability operations began. Stability operations and managing the consequences of combat is vitally important to the conduct of urban warfare. As Dr. Lawrence Yates writes:

The day after Operation Just Cause began, stability operations to restore law and order were authorized. These politically oriented efforts were integrated with ongoing military operations. This required troops to fight under one set of Rules of Engagement (ROE), and transition quickly to stability operations under a radically different ROE. For many troops this was a difficult adjustment, one for which many had not been adequately trained. Troops not experienced in political-military operations learned that low intensity conflict doctrine calls for the primacy of the political effort.³⁹

In summary, the invasion of Panama provides an excellent case study of urban operations in the 1980s. The lessons from the invasion of Panama are clear:

- Night operations minimize civilian casualties
- There must be clear delineation of unit boundaries.
- More emphasis on making friendly personnel identifiable to friendly aircraft is needed.
- Soldiers must be trained in the political-military considerations of the urban operation they are undertaking.

Turning to more recent operations in Haiti, Gen (Ret.) Downing commented: "Special Forces teams speaking French and Creole conducted operations to prepare for the return of civilian rule. Special Forces elements operated in many towns and villages to assist in the creation and to facilitate the operations of local police, judiciary and government structures. Special Forces soldiers solved disputes, fixed public works, prevented violence, provided medical assistance, and conducted public information campaigns. Special Forces provided Coalition Support Teams to Multinational Force and International Police Monitor Force."⁴⁰

Haiti provides a good example of decentralized Special Forces operations in what could be termed a "failed state". Special Forces teams provided a stabilizing presence in the impoverished towns and

villages. They helped the Haitian police become more effective through training and monitoring efforts. Many civic action projects were completed including bridge repairs, sewer repairs, town market revitalization, drinking water system repairs, medical equipment repair and schoolhouse construction. The overall strategy of providing a period of stability for the Haitian people to get back on their feet is probably the most effective strategy available. Yet oftentimes solutions cannot be provided to hundreds of years of political and societal turmoil and economic disrepair. Only time will tell if U.S. actions helped the Haitian people establish democracy and begin to repair the economy.

In summary, urban warfare will continue to be an important issue in Latin America and the surrounding area for the foreseeable future. The invasion of Panama provides an example of how a dictator's ambition can be halted by military and political means in an urban environment. Haiti is an example of a failed state that required an inter-agency effort by the United States and a major effort by the United Nations to provide a period of stability that will allow for the beginnings of democratic government and economic growth in the cities, towns, and villages.

THE PACIFIC REGION

Colonel (Ret.) Russell D. Howard writes, "In the Pacific region, North Korea still poses the greatest threat."⁴¹ Seoul, the capitol of South Korea, is sure to be a major focus of hostilities with North Korea and could be the scene of urban terrorist operations, widespread urban war damage and huge dislocated civilian problems. Pyongyang, the capitol of North Korea, would present an urban challenge of the first order should North Korea implode in the face of widespread unrest or hunger. Colonel Howard writes the following about the future of the Pacific region:

The Pacific region also encompasses one of the world's major uncertainties, the Peoples Republic of China. China has one fifth of the world's population and has major urban centers including Peking. China has regional aspirations and has maintained military forces totaling 3 million. China has increased its defense spending and is aggressively modernizing its strategic arsenal. The Pacific region is the scene of combinations of political, economic, ethnic or religious strife in Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia. Drug trafficking is endemic to the region.⁴²

Political developments are unfolding in an era of increasing urbanization in the Pacific region. Clearly, the Pacific will play a major part in the urban challenge for Special Forces in the 21st Century.

Bombay Urban Agglomeration, India	12,596,243
Dhaka Urban Agglomeration, Bangladesh	6,105,160
Jakarta, Indonesia	9,000,000
Kuala Lumpur	1,145,342
Peking, Peoples Republic of China	6,560,000
Pusan, South Korea	3,814,325
Pyongyang, North Korea	2,639,448
Seoul, South Korea	10,231,217
Shanghai, Peoples Republic of China	8,760,000

TABLE 2 - SELECTED URBAN CENTER POPULATIONS: ASIA/SOUTH ASIA⁴³

The Vietnam War experience bears relevance to a future urban battlefield where the threat is derived from political, ethnic or religious disintegration. Colonel Francis J. Kelly, former Commander of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) wrote that:

During the Vietnam War, Special Forces soldiers trained, advised, and fought along side forces organized from the local populace. Initially a defensive measure against Viet Cong penetration, these forces were known as Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG). Later CIDG units transitioned to active measures to seek out and engage Viet Cong units. CIDG units were composed of tightly knit ethnic or religious minority groups that had a fierce loyalty to each other and to those who treated them with respect and consideration.⁴⁴

The greatest single shortcoming of the U.S. effort in Vietnam was the lack of reliable, timely intelligence. In 1966, the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) senior intelligence officer reported that over 50 percent of the ground intelligence reports in the country came from Special Forces sources.⁴⁵ The CIDG troops also fought in the cities during enemy Tet offensive in 1968.⁴⁶ In the course of the Tet offensive, CIDG troops were employed in the defense of certain urban centers, a combat role new to them, but one which they proved to be very effective in.⁴⁷ CIDG units also successfully came to the relief of other urban areas under Viet Cong attack. Urban areas successfully defended by the CIDG included Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, Kontum, Pleiku, Chau Doc, Ban Me Thuot, Plan Thiet, and Dalat. The fighting ability of the CIDG troops in the defense of these towns was somewhat surprising in view of the fact that their training had not been geared for that kind of combat.⁴⁸

Major General Joseph A. McChristian wrote the following about the role of intelligence during the Vietnam War:

Special Forces and the CIDG were supported by Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam. This organization produced conventional intelligence products including Ground Order of Battle (GOB) and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). Noting that conventional intelligence approaches to dealing with an asymmetric threat were lacking, the Combined Intelligence Center formed a Political Order of Battle Section. This section produced intelligence on

the boundaries, locations, structure, strength, personalities, and the political activities of the Communist political infrastructure from the hamlet through national level. The Area Analysis Branch had the responsibility for compiling studies on transportation, communications and military geography. The Imagery Interpretation Branch of the Combined Intelligence Center was responsible for the Photo Study Program. The Photo Study Program produced 1:50,000 scale photo mosaics that could be directly compared to tactical maps. Overlays of lines of communications and area defenses were provided with the photo studies. In the span of six months, the Combined Intelligence Center produced 64 different photo studies. The Research and Analysis Branch produced reports and studies on the economic, political, sociological and psychological characteristics and vulnerabilities of the enemy's military and political forces.⁴⁹

In summary, the Pacific region offers much to the study of urban warfare. Based on the Vietnam model, intelligence studies can provide a more focused view of the requirements for operating in large urban centers. The capability to design battle-focused unilateral, joint and combined training exercises will also be improved as a result of intelligence studies. Similarly, research, development and acquisition efforts would be enhanced by an improved knowledge of the operating environment. Drawing on the experience of Vietnam, the following intelligence products would be extremely relevant to urban warfare:

- Political Orders of Battle containing the boundaries, locations, structure, strength, personalities, and the political activities of the various political, ethnic and religious factions within the urban center.
- Transportation, communications and military geography studies of urban centers.
- Photo Studies produced from 1:50,000 scale photo mosaics that could be directly compared to tactical maps with accompanying overlays of lines of communications and area defenses.
- Research studies on the economic, political, sociological and psychological characteristics and vulnerabilities of the populace and military forces within urban centers.

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Major General (Ret.) John R. Landry writes that conflicts within states, massive population migrations and terrorism each threaten to destabilize society further and is compounded by the reemergence of power rivalry between East Europe, Germany, and Russia. SOF are well suited to address current threats and are part of a strategy that will keep NATO from being undermined in its ability to address future power rivalries.⁵⁰

In the 20th Century, the cities and towns of Europe have been a major focus for a wide variety of military activities including terrorism, ethnic cleansing, population deportation, information warfare,

PSYOP, peacekeeping, civil-military operations, humanitarian assistance operations, strategic bombing, and intelligence gathering. Europe and the former Soviet Union were the sites of numerous urban battles in WW II. In December of 1942, Soviet forces in Stalingrad broke out of the ring of German and Finnish forces that had surrounded the city for more than one year. During that time, the population of the city suffered staggering losses of life while depending on one narrow resupply route over the ice of Lake Ladoga⁵¹. Several locations in Europe have recently witnessed conflicts in cities. Kosovo, Grozny, and Bosnia have all witnessed warfare of a type that is oriented on urban terrain, military forces, and the population itself.

Athens, Greece Metropolitan Area	3,072,922
Berlin, Germany	3,467,300
Hamburg, Germany	1,708,000
Moscow, Russia	8,600,000
Paris, France	10,660,600
Prague, Czechoslovakia	1,212,010
Rome, Italy	2,645,322
St Petersburg, Russia	4,800,000
Tbilisi, Georgia	1,300,000

TABLE 3 - SELECTED URBAN CENTERS: EUROPE/CENTRAL ASIA⁵²

Russian experiences in Chechnya (1994-1995) are important to the study of urban warfare. The Russian Army was no stranger to urban combat, having fought in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1979. Yet Russian forces encountered serious difficulties for a wide variety of reasons. Fundamentally, the Russian Army was employed in Chechnya as a means of resolving a deeply rooted political conflict. As this paper is being written, Russian forces are still in Chechnya, trying to defeat Chechen desires for independence from Moscow.

For Special Forces planners, several aspects of the 1994-1995 fighting in Chechnya are particularly important. A recent study entitled "Urban Warfare: Lessons from the Russian Experience in Chechnya – 1994-1995" indicates that "Despite suffering high casualties and loss of materiel, Russian forces eventually achieved significant progress through the use of overwhelming firepower. Chechen forces responded by attacking several targets within Russia to embarrass Russian forces and political leaders. In June 1995, a 100 man Chechen raiding party seized hostages in the Russian town of Budyonnovsk. In January 1996, Chechen President Dudayev's son-in-law seized a maternity home and hospital in the town of Kizlar. As a result of both incidents, Russian security forces botched rescue attempts that led to large numbers of civilian casualties and a major Chechen propaganda victory."⁵³

Keeping the Russian experience in mind, it appears that forces experienced in rescue situations may play a critical role during future urban conflicts. Hostage situations may develop within the urban complex itself, or hundreds of miles from the urban complex.

In a future urban conflict, Special Forces elements could potentially play a key role in isolating the urban area and cutting off outside assistance to enemy forces. Special Forces elements could be employed effectively to provide reporting on conditions in areas outlying the urban center and monitor the flow of support and assistance into the urban center. According to "Urban Warfare: Lessons from the Russian Experience in Chechnya – 1994-1995" Russian forces in Chechnya were unable to effectively prevent the flow of support to Chechen rebels. As a result, "the Russians claim that the Chechens got as many as 5,000 volunteers from 14 different countries, some with combat experience in the Caucasus or Afghanistan. Chechen rebels were also able to seize significant numbers of tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, rocket launchers and air defense weapons. The Chechens supplemented these seizures from corrupt Russian officials and arms dealers."⁵⁴

The same study reports that Russians learned some valuable lessons concerning intelligence support during operations in Chechnya. "Russian forces suffered from abysmal intelligence support during fighting in Grozny, the capital. Grozny's urban canyons were highly constricted by buildings, roadways and other urban obstacles. Chechen rebels, task organized into armor killing teams, roamed the battlefield and apparently ambushed Russian forces at will. The non-standard dress worn by Russian forces and Chechen rebels made it extremely difficult to determine friend from foe. Russian forces had little reliable intelligence concerning Chechen capabilities or intent. Pre-hostilities intelligence estimates grossly underestimated the capabilities of the Chechen rebel forces. Russian officers found themselves without overhead imagery because the satellites had been turned off to save money. Maps were needed in the detailed 1:25,000 and 1:12,500 scales to fight in the complex urban terrain."⁵⁵ For Special Forces planners considering urban operations in the future, the solution to the intelligence support issue lies in peacetime preparation. Area studies, intelligence estimates, mapping and imagery products similar to those produced in support of the CIDG in Vietnam will go a long ways towards filling the systemic gaps existing in our preparation for urban warfare today.

The Russians never took advantage of the capabilities of their Special Forces units during fighting in Chechnya according to "Urban Warfare: Lessons from the Russian Experience in Chechnya – 1994-1995". "Grozny appeared to offer the potential for use of units like the 'Alpha Team' and the 'Vypel Team' but they were never employed there. The 'Alpha Team' was apparently successful in capturing the Afghan Presidential Palace in Kabul with little loss of life. The limited Spetsnaz troops that were employed spearheaded commando-like assaults instead of conducting reconnaissance and covert operations. Serious problems developed when commanders attempted to employ Spetsnaz in their traditional reconnaissance role. Teams were inserted without adequate means to extract them, usually due to poor coordination with helicopter units. Spetnaz teams also reportedly lacked proper radios and other mission essential equipment required to operate in the cities."⁵⁶

Northern Ireland has witnessed urban fighting for decades. The strife in Northern Ireland is a good example to illustrate the role of military force in a primarily political struggle for Northern Ireland's destiny. Although the roots of the struggle in Northern Ireland stretch back for centuries, the last 30 years has seen an upswing in violence. Political disputes between Catholics and Protestants over civil rights, power sharing, and independence erupted into worsening cycles of violence. According to the Economist, a newspaper in the United Kingdom:

In 1971, 184 people died as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) shot soldiers and bombed Protestant districts. In return, Protestant para-militaries bombed Catholic pubs. As a result, a policy of internment was introduced, and 374 arrests were made in Belfast, one of the North's major urban centers. The worst year of fighting was 1972 when there were 497 deaths. Over the past 30 years, the IRA employed a wide array of tactics. The IRA killed 18 soldiers at Warren point in 1979, and in 1981, 10 republicans starved themselves to death as a political protest.⁵⁷

Seeking to intensify the political pressure on Great Britain to negotiate a settlement, the IRA bombed the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the conservative party conference in 1984. In 1991, the IRA fired improvised mortar shells at 10 Downing Street in London. Then in 1993, the first talks to find a political solution began between Catholic and Protestant leaders. After a number of reversals, these efforts to find peace resulted in the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. This agreement provides for more equitable power sharing and a more democratic approach to Northern Ireland's status.⁵⁸

According to author John Lindsay, "British soldiers were trained extensively in preparation for the stress of operations in Northern Ireland. Combat skills including urban marksmanship, land navigation and tactical movement were honed during training programs for new soldiers that lasted 18 weeks or more. Troops were kept under pressure for extended periods as an important part of training for operations in the hostile streets of Northern Ireland. After arriving in Ireland, British troops endured in an environment where insults, bricks and bottles were hurled at them routinely. Shooting and bombing incidents occurred with relative infrequency yet many soldiers were negatively affected by the apprehension that accompanied them everyday as they patrolled the streets."⁵⁹

John Lindsay goes on to write that one of the common impressions of a long duration urban internal conflict is the apparent futility of the effort, a sense of defeat despite knowing that one served well. According to one three-tour British Army veteran of Northern Ireland, "Lots of people in my platoon were commended and decorated for gallantry. We knew that we had done a damn good job there. But at the end of the day the whole thing was a waste of time. All of those people killed and mutilated and I just ask myself 'Why?'"⁶⁰

Perhaps the greatest strategic lesson to be derived from the conflict in Northern Ireland lies in recognizing the role of the British Army in the conflict. Significantly, the Army was able to establish and maintain a rough equilibrium in Northern Ireland until political measures eventually outpaced the use of force. This was a considerable achievement because the army was operating under guidance that minimized violence and did not allow for an aggressive counter-insurgency campaign. The British Army's policy of containment was perhaps the wisest because an increase in military activity sometimes brought

on a flare up in Catholic violence in response. Although the British Army was unsuccessful in dismantling the IRA's political and para-military efforts, it was successful in maintaining the equilibrium that allowed peace to eventually obtain a foothold.

In summary, urban warfare will continue to capture headlines as events unfold in troubled areas of Europe. Chechnya and Northern Ireland are two forms of asymmetrical warfare that is rooted in religious and ethnic differences and is championed by non-state actors. Chechnya brings with it lessons about the misuse of Special Forces and the crippling effects of insufficient intelligence support. The urban conflict in Northern Ireland raises questions that must be answered when military planners formulate strategy for future urban conflicts. Is a long-term policy of containment acceptable to the U.S.? Will it work? Can limited Special Forces assets be committed to a long-term effort?

THE MIDDLE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

General (Ret.) Joseph P. Hoar writes: "The major thrust of the coalition effort is to deter Iraq and Iran by helping the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states."⁶¹ Should the coalition fail to deter Iraq and Iran, the consequences may be played out in the increasingly urbanized GCC states. Should the coalition have to act against Iraq or Iran, both are also witnessing a strong trend towards urbanization.

Urban centers in the Middle East and North Africa have consistently been a major consideration to military planners. The Iranian Revolution, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and UN peacekeeping in Somalia all heavily involved urban centers. Most of the key events in the Iranian Revolution took place in Teheran and other major cities in Iran. The revolutionary factions that combined forces to overthrow Shah Pahlavi were supported from both inside and outside the urban areas, and even had developed international support networks. Yet the revolution itself was largely an urban movement that had little initial impact on life in the countryside.

As an example of urban conflict, the Iranian Revolution presents somewhat of a worst case for military planners. Iran's history indicates that several factors including foreign influence, secularism, and poor governmental management fueled discontent in the general populace. Author John D. Stempel writes, "Iranians were distinctly Islamic in their thinking, society, and government. Throughout history, Iranians felt the pressure of foreign influence and developed a wary and resentful attitude towards outsiders. Events of the 20th Century convinced many Iranians that foreign influence tore at the fabric of Iranian culture, was ruinous to Iran's economy, and marginalized the role of Islam in government."⁶²

On 1 February 1979, the Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile in Paris while 2 million watched. Only days later, top military leaders decided the crisis was a matter for the clerics to resolve, opening the way for Islamic forces to seize key government facilities and military bases.⁶³

Although the revolution was widely viewed as an Islamic movement, it was fundamentally a coalition of opposition factions including clerics, communists, and secular opposition to the Shah. The late

1970s brought inflation, economic dislocation, and government breakdown that combined with unfulfilled expectations among the populace to produce a tinderbox of revolution in the cities. In the final analysis, Khomeini succeeded because he had a clearly definable ideology, an effective organization, achievable goals, effective tactics and information operations. The Shah failed because of the historical conditions he inherited which were worsened by his ill health, indecisiveness, and failure to understand the Iranian people.

One of Khomeini's most valuable assets in this urban conflict was his mosque network that he used to deliver important messages and organize the populace. The mosques also served as platforms to conduct anti-government propaganda campaigns. Another asset effectively employed by Khomeini was a decentralized leadership style whereby he always appeared to represent the wishes of the people while never controlling or directing the actual events of the revolution. Significantly, military actions were not the focal point of Khomeini's strategy. He employed an indirect approach that combined information operations and civil resistance to breakdown an already weakened Shah monarchy.

The Iranian Revolution provides an excellent example of modern urban instability. The revolution also provides a superb example of the use of the indirect approach by the Ayatollah Khomeini. One of the primary lessons for the future is the importance of information operations and PSYOP in urban conflict.⁶⁴ Islamic paramilitary forces were employed at the proper time and place, but only to consolidate power and not to destroy the opposing government military forces.⁶⁵ With an eye to the future, it is clear that Special Forces planners would be faced with a volatile situation were a nation to request advice and assistance while threatened by wide spread political unrest in urban centers. There is no readily applicable doctrine to provide quick solutions to problems whose origins are embedded in several centuries of history. It would require a large joint and inter-agency effort to come to terms with the scope of issues arising from destabilized urban centers. In the face of a deteriorating situation in a friendly nation, Special Forces elements may be tasked to bolster the confidence and morale of host-nation security forces through training exercises and advisory roles. Special Forces liaison teams could also greatly assist the coordination and execution of host nation operations in and around urban areas. Given that instability is often the result of a crisis of confidence between an administration and its citizens, PSYOP and civic action projects would likely be of great value in reestablishing order.

In 1982, soon after the Iranian Revolution, another milestone in Middle Eastern affairs occurred. After nearly three decades of failure in open warfare, an alliance of Arab state and non-state actors pushed Israeli mechanized forces out of Beirut. As Major General Robert A. Scales writes:

Back streets, tall buildings and other forms of urban clutter provided the Arabs just enough respite from the firepower intensive methods of the Israelis to wear away Israeli morale both in the field and at home. Unable to bring the full force of their superior maneuverability and shock effect to bear, the Israelis paused just short of their operational objectives. Excessive casualties and the public images of bloody excesses on both sides eventually resulted in Israeli withdrawal from Beirut. The success in Beirut soon provided Israel's enemies in the region with a new and promising method to offset the Israeli superiority in open mechanized combat. Now a spectrum of low-tech threats, that run the gamut from weapons of mass destruction delivered by crude missiles, to

random acts of terrorism, to children throwing rocks at soldiers, confront and increasingly frustrate the Israeli military and public.⁶⁶

Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia	1,700,000
Alexandria, Egypt	3,431,000
Algiers, Algeria	1,866,000
Amman, Jordan	1,300,042
Baghdad, Iraq	3,841,268
Beirut, Lebanon	1,500,000
Cairo, Egypt	6,052,836
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	1,500,000
Nairobi, Kenya	1,758,900
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	1,800,000
Teheran, Iran	6,758,845
Karachi, Pakistan	9,269,265

TABLE 4 - SELECTED URBAN CENTER POPULATIONS: MIDDLE EAST/SOUTH WEST ASIA⁶⁷

Beirut is an interesting example of how an enemy can use low-technology means to support an indirect approach; avoid Israeli shock, firepower, and superior maneuverability thereby wearing away at Israeli morale and will to continue fighting by inflicting an unacceptable level of casualties. Israeli Defense Forces also faced a formidable challenge in dealing with low technology threats during the Palestinian Intifadah.

One of the most important recent events to the study of urban warfare was the raid by U.S. forces in Mogadishu, Somalia on October 3, 1993:

Elements of U.S. SOF including Rangers, Special Forces and Special Operations Aviation took part in the raid. The raid was conducted to capture Muhammad Farah Aideed (Somali war lord) and key leaders from the clans opposing U.N. forces. The assault force succeeded in capturing 24 Somali clansmen during the initial assault. However, heavy resistance from Somali clansmen developed during the raid. U.S. soldiers and helicopters were subjected to intense fire from small arms and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). As a result, several U.S. helicopters were hit by Somali fire. Two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters were shot down. As the day progressed, U.S. forces became primarily focused on extracting the assault force and the rescue and recovery of air crewmembers and equipment from the crash sites. By the morning of 4 October 1993, a combined relief column of U.S., Malaysian, and Pakistani forces enabled the raid force to complete the extraction from hostile sections of the city.⁶⁸ During the raid in Mogadishu, 18 U.S. soldiers died and many more were wounded.⁶⁹

The "Battle for Mogadishu" which was a tactical operation that lasted for less than two days, brought with it several important lessons about urban warfare that have strategic implications. The first and most important lesson is that the nature of urban warfare makes it possible for an asymmetric enemy

such as clansmen to counter superior technology, firepower and maneuverability by careful study and development of tactics.

The second lesson lies in the unpredictable nature of urban warfare. Intense Somali fire from unexpectedly large numbers of clansmen forced the extraction of the raid force by the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) composed of tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCs) and wheeled vehicles.⁷⁰ Prior to the raid, the QRF was primarily a light infantry force organized for a variety of situations that the UN could face.⁷¹ During the raid, the intensity of Somali fires caused the US commander to augment the QRF with Malaysian APCs and Pakistani tanks. Ultimately, this task organization succeeded, but time was lost in the process.⁷² Special Forces operations must be closely coordinated with and supported by combat maneuver forces. A greater degree of integration and coordination with conventional forces is required because of the unpredictable nature of urban warfare.

The third lesson lies in the reliance on rotary wing aircraft. Just as problems with helicopters in 1979 played a major role in the failed Iran hostage rescue mission, so too were rotary wing aircraft central to the difficulties encountered by the Mogadishu raid force.⁷³ The Russians encountered serious losses of helicopters in Chechnya, causing one leading ground commander to conclude that helicopters were unsuitable for urban warfare.⁷⁴ Helicopters provide critically needed capabilities on the urban battlefield, but are very vulnerable to ambush. Consideration should be given to development of a special operations rotary wing platform that provides better survivability for the passengers, aircrew and airframe.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

THE 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGE

U. S. Army Special Forces are far better prepared to enter the arena of urban warfare in the 21st Century than the mainstream Army. Special Forces already possess many of the capabilities that will be required. These include language and cultural skills, an appreciation for the political dimension of modern combat, the ability to plan flexibly and to task organize rapidly.⁷⁵ The regional orientation of Special Forces will remain essential to be able to interact with diverse ethnic groups found in urban centers. Special Forces units maintain a high state of readiness that is essential because an asymmetrical enemy will attempt early on to harass or interdict our deployment of forces.⁷⁶ The research, development and acquisition effort of Special Forces will remain critical. An asymmetrical enemy in an urban area can be assumed to have at its disposal at least the level of technology available to the business world on the open marketplace. Therefore, research, development and acquisition efforts are critical to maintaining a technological edge over an asymmetric enemy. Finally, Special Forces have the ability to rapidly integrate in support of principle customers –the geographic CINCs, American Ambassadors, country teams and other government agencies.⁷⁷

Special Forces soldiers also possess some of the most critical survival skills required to operate in the cities. A significant portion of Special Forces units routinely practice moving, shooting, and

communicating in close quarters combat situations. Special Forces medics are also uniquely qualified to provide immediate assessment and interim treatment of battlefield injuries on the battlefield. However, much work remains to be done before Special Forces are fully prepared to act as part of a coordinated SOF team that maximizes its potential in a future urban conflict. The first step towards that goal is to recognize the nature of the challenge. Dr Faltzgraff has accurately identified the challenge of the 21st Century below:

We will need forces capable of not only operating behind an enemy's front lines, attacking targets of major importance, integrating reconnaissance efforts, establishing clandestine and unconventional operations, and working with coalition forces, but also of contributing to a strategy of PSYOP.⁷⁸

After the armed conflict has ended, forces will be called upon to assist in nation building, peacekeeping, and humanitarian support...However, such a capability will need to have the means for deployment in situations where an opponent possesses, or actually uses, WMD, including not only nuclear, but biological and chemical weapons.⁷⁹

Recognizing the challenge above, it will be the future efforts of Special Forces to capitalize on a relatively positive starting position and institute changes to transform the force into one that is trained, organized and equipped to succeed on the urban battlefield. Peacetime preparation is the key to success in the future. Timothy L. Thomas summarizes an approach below that will benefit Special Forces; it is based on lessons learned during the Battle for Grozny, Chechnya in 1995:

Preparations for urban combat should begin in peacetime. There is a vast array of possible course of action, options, constraints, limitations, force mixes, enemy compositions, legal factors, and city characteristics that must be studied and understood. The most important point is that there is no "standard urban operation." Each is unique to the opponent, the city, specific operational and tactical issues, and geopolitical considerations, among other factors. Understanding the elements and ramifications of urban combat is a difficult but crucial task for any army, but especially for one moving from a forward deployed to an expeditionary state. In the latter case, the tasks required to sufficiently sustain or support urban combat are enormous.⁸⁰

Urban warfare situations can range from relatively short duration intense combat operations to urban insurgencies that last for decades. There are a number of broad areas of emphasis for Special Forces in preparing for any likelihood of urban warfare in the future. Several of these areas have implications for SOF as a whole including the role of UW and the development of an intelligence architecture to support urban warfare:

Unconventional Warfare

Urban warfare presents a potentially high-payoff opportunity for UW actions including recovery of aircrew from urban centers or from the enemy's homeland. Other high-payoff UW activities include information gathering, and low-visibility disruption and harassment of enemy activities. It is in the UW arena that Special Forces face the greatest challenge. The unilateral conduct of UW in an urban

environment is a difficult proposition. In enemy dominated urban areas it is unlikely that UW forces could be concentrated for planning, rest and refit. Urban areas also effectively constrain the establishment of fixed bases or safe operating areas. Therefore, surrogate forces capable of blending into the local populace would greatly assist a UW effort. Unilateral UW teams in urban areas will likely be restricted to information gathering, occasional small attacks and attempts to recover downed aviators. Despite the challenges of urban UW, the potential exists for Special Forces to make a critical contribution. Special Forces have the potential to generate critical information that has enough resolution and timeliness to affect strategic and theater-level operations.

Intelligence Support for Urban Warfare

A regionally focused intelligence development campaign would yield a very productive gain in readiness for urban warfare. Our collection efforts today are largely focused on conventional enemy forces and WMD. What is needed is an intelligence collection and production campaign that is regionally based, but narrows the focus to urban centers themselves as the centers of instability with their attendant religious, political and ethnic subdivisions. An intelligence architecture ranging from the national level to the operational unit level and even an intelligence culture that is attuned to the needs of urban warfare should be developed.

Based on the Vietnam model, intelligence studies can provide a more focused view of the requirements for operating in large urban centers. The capability to design battle-focused unilateral, joint and combined training exercises will also be improved as a result of intelligence studies. Similarly, research, development and acquisition efforts would be enhanced by an improved knowledge of the operating environment. Drawing on the experience of Vietnam, both conventional Army units and Special Forces would greatly benefit from the following products:

- Political Orders of Battle containing the boundaries, locations, structure, strength, personalities, and the political activities of the various political, ethnic and religious factions within the urban center.
- Transportation, communications and military geography studies of urban centers.
- Photo Studies produced from 1:50,000 scale photo mosaics that could be directly compared to tactical maps with accompanying overlays of lines of communications and area defenses.
- Research studies on the economic, political, sociological and psychological characteristics and vulnerabilities of the populace and military forces within urban centers.

Urban Warfare Implications

This study indicates that there are a number of additional areas that must be examined as we prepare for the 21st Century urban challenge:

- The first and most important lesson is that urban warfare makes it possible for an asymmetric enemy such as clansmen to counter superior technology, firepower and maneuverability by careful development of tactics.⁸¹
- Integration of special operations with conventional operations is more extensive than in rural operations because the battlefield tends to be geographically smaller than in rural environments. Additionally, Special Forces units have advanced individual and collective capabilities that are critical to conventional commanders.
- Urban warfare will have a significant effect on the security assistance programs in developing nations. Governments in developing nations will need to be supported by well-trained and disciplined military forces and police forces.⁸² In the next century, the capability to operate effectively in urban terrain will be one of the most critical skills for military and security forces in developing countries.
- Under urban conditions, the Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) for Special Forces missions vary significantly from those employed under rural conditions. Existing TTPs should be reviewed for sufficiency in light of urban warfare's unique requirements.
- Urban warfare training sites resourced on par with NTC and JRTC will be needed to replicate a joint and integrated urban battlefield.
- Plans and exercises that address urban warfare and the use of SOF within theater urban campaign plans will become increasingly important.
- In the aftermath of an urban conflict, humanitarian demining operations are likely to play a large role. The U.S. has spent over 406 million dollars over the past six years to support demining operations. An estimated 65 countries still have landmine problems and mines are still being laid in countries including Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Mozambique.⁸³
- In the future, soldiers will have to be trained in the political-military considerations of the urban operation they are undertaking. SOF routinely engage in political-military operations,

hence they are probably the best prepared for such operations. However, the study of political-military considerations will need to be given greater emphasis during individual, collective and predeployment training.

- Keeping the Russian experience in Chechnya in mind, it appears that hostage taking will remain to be a viable option for the enemy. Hostage situations may develop within the urban complex itself, or hundreds of miles from the urban complex.
- In any future urban conflict, Special Forces will likely be considered to play an active role in isolating the enemy inside the urban area and cutting off outside assistance to enemy forces. Special Forces elements could be employed effectively to provide reporting on conditions in areas outlying the urban center and monitor the flow of support and assistance into the urban center.
- Throughout the conduct of an urban indirect strategy, SOF would serve as the *glue* that would keep the coalition together. Army Special Forces would be key players in the coalition support team role. In support
- Special Forces operations must be closely integrated with an overall SOF strategy that includes information operations and PSYOP to modify the outlook and actions of enemy forces.
- Similarly, Special Forces operations will require close coordination with Civil-Military operations that will play a critical role in managing and advising on civil population issues and reconstruction activities.
- The urban conflict in Northern Ireland raises questions that must be answered when military planners formulate strategy for future urban conflicts. Is a long-term policy of containment acceptable to the U.S.? Can the situation be stabilized? Can limited Special Forces assets be committed to a long-term effort?
- It would require a large joint and inter-agency effort to deal with the issues arising from a major urban center that has become destabilized. In the face of a deteriorating situation in a friendly nation, Special Forces elements may be tasked to bolster the confidence and morale of host-nation security forces through training exercises and advisory roles. Special Forces liaison teams could also greatly assist the coordination and execution of host nation operations in and around urban areas. Given that instability is often the result of a crisis of

confidence between an administration and its citizens, PSYOP and civic action projects would likely be of great value in reestablishing order.

WORD COUNT= 12,112

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