

INTRODUCTION

Special Operations

Unconventional warfare and special operations are as old as war itself. Throughout history, success by a small force against a strategic or operational objective usually has called for units with combinations of special equipment, training, people, or tactics that go beyond those found in conventional units. These characteristics have allowed such units to be employed in unusual ways, for which the enemy often was unprepared.

The following five requirements distinguish special operations from conventional military operations.

■ **Unconventional Training and Equipment.**

The unusual demands of a special operations mission define the training and equipment required. Often, accomplishing the special operations mission calls for a unique mixture of specialized skills and equipment that may be outside the capabilities of conventional forces.

- ### ■ **Political Sensitivity.**
- Virtually every aspect of a special operations mission is constrained by the politically sensitive context in which it is conducted. For instance, the cultural mores of a country may dictate a low-profile operation, while in another situation, larger political considerations may require a visible presence in an advisory capacity.

- ### ■ **Unorthodox Approaches.**
- Special operations missions do not negate the traditional principles of war. Rather, a different emphasis is placed on their combination or relative importance. In a special operations mission, surprise achieved through speed, stealth, audacity, deception, and new tactics or techniques can be far more effective and efficient than a conventional force using traditional tactics based on massed firepower and tactical maneuvers.



Sniper student dressed in a gilly suit moves to a new site at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School.

- ### ■ **Limited Opportunity.**
- Some special operations missions — particularly direct action, counter-terrorism, hostage recovery, or search and seizure of maritime targets — must capture the appropriate moment for complete success. Tactical advantage may be limited and fleeting. Repeat opportunities are unlikely, and failures will be politically and militarily costly.
- ### ■ **Specialized Intelligence.**
- Special operations missions are intelligence-driven and intelligence-dependent. They require immediate and continuous access to information from traditional, as well as nontraditional sources. Special operations generally rely on formal intelligence structures; but for certain sensitive missions, tactical and operational information must be developed using SOF assets such as advance or reconnaissance forces. Moreover, SOF need detailed national and theater intelligence products at the tactical level of execution, often in near real time.

SOF Characteristics and Capabilities

Special operations have been a part of our military history since the colonial era. In every conflict since the Revolutionary War, the United States has employed special operations tactics and strategies to exploit an enemy's vulnerabilities. These operations have always been carried out by specially trained people with a remarkable inventory of skills.

SOF Characteristics

- Mature professionals with leadership abilities
- Specialized skills, equipment, and tactics
- Regional focus
- Language skills
- Political and cultural sensitivity
- Small, flexible, joint-force structure

The characteristics of SOF personnel are shaped by the requirements of their missions and include: foreign language capabilities; regional orientation; specialized equipment, training and tactics; flexible force structure; and an understanding of the political context of their mission. These characteristics make SOF unique in the U.S. military and enable SOF personnel to work as effectively with civilian populations as they do with other military forces to influence situations favorably toward U.S. national interests. Because of these characteristics, SOF can be formed into small, versatile, self-contained teams that have a number of important capabilities. They can:

- be tasked to organize quickly and deploy rapidly to provide tailored responses to many different situations.
- gain access to hostile or denied areas.



Civil affairs soldier gathers medical information from a woman in Central America during a medical capabilities exercise.

- provide limited security and medical support for themselves and those they support.
- communicate worldwide with unit equipment.
- live in austere, harsh environments without extensive support.
- survey and assess local situations and report these assessments rapidly.
- work closely with regional military and civilian authorities and populations.
- organize indigenous people into working teams to help solve local problems.
- deploy at relatively low cost, with a low profile and less intrusive presence than larger conventional forces.

SOF Missions and Activities

In sum, we can say special operations are characterized by the use of small units in direct and indirect military actions focused on strategic and operational objectives. These actions require units with combinations of specialized personnel, equipment, training, and tactics that go beyond the routine capabilities of conventional military forces. In support of the national defense strategy, SOF are

currently organized and trained in nine principal mission areas. Based on their unique capabilities, SOF are also frequently tasked to participate in other activities that are not principal SOF mis-

sions. These collateral activities tend to shift in response to the changing international environment. The SOF principal missions and collateral activities are described in the following charts.

SOF Principal Missions

- **Counterproliferation (CP)** — The activities of the Department of Defense across the full range of U.S. government efforts to combat proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, including the application of military power to protect U.S. forces and interests; intelligence collection and analysis; and support of diplomacy, arms control, and export controls. Accomplishment of these activities may require coordination with other U.S. government agencies.
- **Combatting terrorism (CBT)** — Preclude, preempt, and resolve terrorist actions throughout the entire threat spectrum, including antiterrorism (defensive measures taken to reduce vulnerability to terrorist acts) and counterterrorism (offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism), and resolve terrorist incidents when directed by the National Command Authorities or the appropriate unified commander or requested by the Services or other government agencies.
- **Foreign internal defense (FID)** — Organize, train, advise, and assist host nation military and paramilitary forces to enable these forces to free and protect their society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.
- **Special reconnaissance (SR)** — Conduct reconnaissance and surveillance actions to obtain or verify information concerning the capabilities, intentions, and activities of an actual or potential enemy or to secure data concerning characteristics of a particular area.
- **Direct action (DA)** — Conduct short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions to seize, destroy, capture, recover, or inflict damage on designated personnel or materiel.
- **Psychological operations (PSYOP)** — Induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behaviors favorable to the originator's objectives by conducting planned operations to convey selected information to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.
- **Civil affairs (CA)** — Facilitate military operations and consolidate operational activities by assisting commanders in establishing, maintaining, influencing, or exploiting relations between military forces and civil authorities, both governmental and nongovernmental, and the civilian population in a friendly, neutral, or hostile area of operation.
- **Unconventional warfare (UW)** — Organize, train, equip, advise, and assist indigenous and surrogate forces in military and paramilitary operations normally of long duration.
- **Information operations (IO)** — Actions taken to achieve information superiority by affecting adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems.

SOF Collateral Activities

- **Coalition support** — Integrate coalition units into multinational military operations by training coalition partners on tactics and techniques and providing communications.
- **Combat search and rescue (CSAR)** — Penetrate air defense systems and conduct joint air, ground, or sea operations deep within hostile or denied territory at night or in adverse weather to recover distressed personnel during wartime or contingency operations. SOF are equipped and manned to perform CSAR in support of SOF missions only. SOF perform CSAR in support of conventional forces on a case-by-case basis not to interfere with the readiness or operations of core SOF missions.
- **Counterdrug (CD) activities** — Train host nation CD forces and domestic law enforcement agencies on critical skills required to conduct individual and small unit operations in order to detect, monitor, and interdict the cultivation, production, and trafficking of illicit drugs targeted for use in the United States.
- **Humanitarian demining (HD) activities** — Reduce or eliminate the threat to noncombatants and friendly military forces posed by mines and other explosive devices by training host nation personnel in their recognition, identification, marking, and safe destruction. Provide instruction in program management, medical, and mine awareness activities.
- **Humanitarian assistance (HA)** — Provide assistance of limited scope and duration to supplement or complement the efforts of host nation civil authorities or agencies to relieve or reduce the results of natural or manmade disasters or other endemic conditions such as human pain, disease, hunger, or privation that might present a serious threat to life or that can result in great damage to, or loss of, property.
- **Peace operations** — Assist in peacekeeping operations, peace enforcement operations, and other military operations in support of diplomatic efforts to establish and maintain peace.
- **Security assistance (SA)** — Provide training assistance in support of legislated programs which provide U.S. defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies or objectives.
- **Special activities** — Subject to limitations imposed by Executive Order and in conjunction with a Presidential finding and congressional oversight, plan and conduct actions abroad in support of national foreign policy objectives so that the role of the U.S. government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly.



SEALs undergo rigorous training to be ready for all-terrain, all weather, worldwide operations.

U.S. Special Operations Command

The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), one of nine unified commands in the U.S. military's combatant command structure, is composed of Army, Navy, and Air Force SOF. USSOCOM's mission is to support the geographic commanders-in-chief (CINCs), ambassadors and their country teams, and other government agencies by preparing SOF to successfully conduct special operations, including civil affairs and psychological operations, spanning the entire spectrum of operations.

The commander in chief of USSOCOM (USCINCSOC) has two roles. In his capacity as a supporting CINC, he provides trained and ready SOF. In his role as a supported CINC, the USCINCSOC must be prepared to exercise command of selected special operations missions when directed by the National Command Authorities.

Congress created USSOCOM in 1987 to correct serious deficiencies in the ability of the United States to conduct special operations and engage in low-intensity conflict activities. The command was assigned many service-like responsibilities, including training, ensuring combat readiness, monitoring personnel promotions and assignments, and developing and acquiring SOF-peculiar equipment. USSOCOM was also given responsibility for managing a separate major force program (MFP), MFP-11, which ensures the SOF program has visibility at the Department of Defense and congressional levels.

These last two tasks give USSOCOM great flexibility in training, equipping, and employing its forces. USCINCSOC is the sole unified commander with responsibility for planning, programming, and budgeting of military forces. In addition, he has the authority similar to that of a service chief for the development and acquisition of special operations-peculiar equipment, materials, supplies, and services. In short, he is the only CINC with a checkbook.



SEAL Delivery Vehicles ensure SEALs get to their destination target areas without detection.

Under the same legislation that created USSOCOM, the Congress also established the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)) as the policy and resource focal point for all special operations and low-intensity conflict activities of the Department of Defense. Aided by these reforms, enormous improvements in the readiness and capabilities of our nation's special operations forces were made.

USSOCOM's mission can be effectively accomplished only with the support of the Army, Navy, and Air Force who provide quality personnel, common equipment, base operations support, logistical sustainment, and core skills training. This support allows USCINCSOC to focus on SOF-specific training and equipment, as well as the integration of SOF into the entire range of military operations.

With only 1.3 percent of the Department of Defense budget and about 1.4 percent of the military manpower, SOF provide the United States with a combat-ready, highly-capable, and flexible force — a force that is structured, manned, equipped, and trained to meet current and future security challenges in support of national defense objectives.

The Relevance of SOF

Around the world, U.S. security and interests increasingly are being challenged in unconventional ways. Although the security environment, now and into the foreseeable future, is marked by the lack of a global peer competitor able to militarily challenge the United States, we will continue to confront a variety of regional dangers. Foremost among these is the threat of coercion and large-scale, cross-border aggression against U.S. allies and friends in key regions by hostile states with significant military power.

In addition, the proliferation of advanced weapons and technologies will remain a problem as states find it increasingly difficult to control

the flow of sensitive information and regulate the spread of advanced technologies that can have military or terrorist uses. Of particular concern is the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and their means of delivery.

U.S. security and regional interests — as well as American citizens abroad and at home — are increasingly at risk from a myriad of problems that do not recognize national boundaries. These transnational dangers include humanitarian and relief emergencies, mass migration of refugees, unchecked trafficking in illegal drugs, and acts of terrorism. Attacks on our information infrastructure through computer-based networks are also a growing threat.



Air Force special tactics pararescueman establishes perimeter security for a casualty evacuation point.

Indeed, in view of U.S. dominance in the conventional military area, adversaries are more likely to avoid direct military confrontation with the United States, using instead unconventional approaches such as terrorism, NBC threats, information warfare, or environmental sabotage to achieve their goals.

Today's world is complicated and unpredictable. The only certainty we face is the inevitability of changes — changes in political, social, economic, and military structures worldwide.

SOF Role in the National Defense Strategy

The often complex and nontraditional nature of these dangers underscores the need to maintain and employ a diverse, flexible, highly capable force ready not only to protect our national and regional interests, but also to deter threats to democratic progress and prosperity worldwide. That force is SOF men and women — warrior diplomats — trained and ready to meet the challenges posed by the dangers now threatening America's values and interests. SOF serve three strategic purposes which are increasingly important in promoting national security and influencing international events in ways favorable to U.S. security policies.



Air Force communications operator sets up a UHF antenna.

- **Expanded Options.** SOF expand the range of options available to decision-makers confronting crises and contingencies — such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and insurgency — that fall between wholly diplomatic initiatives and overt use of large conventional forces.
- **Strategic Economy of Force.** SOF act as force multipliers by reinforcing, augmenting, supplementing, and complementing conventional forces before, during, and after a conflict, thereby increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of our military effort.
- **Tailor-to-Task Capabilities.** SOF are rapidly adaptable to a broad and constantly varying range of tasks and conditions. This organizational agility allows SOF to quickly concentrate synergistic effects from widely dispersed locations and assist joint force commanders in achieving decisive results without the need for time-consuming and risky massing of people and equipment. Even under the most austere conditions, SOF can conduct 24-hour, multi-dimensional operations to penetrate denied or sensitive areas and resolve terrorist activity, preempt the threat posed by WMD, or strike key targets with precision and discrimination. Although a potent military force, SOF can often accomplish their mission without resorting to the use of force. SOF training skills, combined with language proficiency, cultural awareness, regional orientation, and an understanding of the political context of their missions, make SOF unique in the U.S. military — true warrior-diplomats. Moreover, this broad array of versatile capabilities allow SOF to tailor-to-task and operate effectively in any situation or environment.

The National Security Strategy

The United States seeks to play a leadership role in the international community, working closely and cooperatively with nations that share our values



SEALs supported the bridging of the Sava River in Bosnia during Operation Joint Endeavor.

and goals, and influencing those that can affect U.S. national well-being. Thus, the United States will remain engaged abroad while supporting efforts to enlarge the community of secure, free-market and democratic nations and create new partners in peace and prosperity. To support this national security strategy, the U.S. military and the Department of Defense must be able to help shape the international security environment in ways favorable to U.S. interests, respond to the full spectrum of crises when directed, and prepare now to meet the challenges of an uncertain future. These three elements — shaping, responding, and preparing — define the essence of the U.S. national defense strategy. SOF provide significant capabilities in support of the core national objectives through a combination of each of its nine principal missions. Further, SOF have the unique capability to provide additional support through application of their collateral activities.

Shaping the international environment includes activities aimed at promoting regional stability, preventing or reducing conflicts and threats, and deterring aggression and coercion. The success of our “shaping” or preventive defense strategy depends heavily on cooperation and enduring relationships with our foreign friends and allies — a primary benefit and objective of SOF employments in support of the geographic CINCs and our U.S. ambassadors. Each geographic CINC has a regional plan to secure U.S. national interests and each U.S. ambassador has a country plan to do the same thing in his or her country. In peacetime operations, SOF conduct both



Special Forces medic examines a Haitian child's eyes during Operation Uphold Democracy.

principal and collateral operations. But whatever their role, SOF must be incorporated into — and must fully support — the regional and country plans of the geographic CINCs and U.S. ambassadors.

SOF extensive regional experience, language capabilities, and cultural awareness frequently allow SOF personnel to deal directly with the local population and leaders. SOF can amplify the effects of conventional forces through civil affairs (CA) and psychological operations (PSYOP), and facilitate communications and interoperability with foreign forces through participation in coalition support teams. For example, PSYOP forces provide the capability to develop, produce, and distribute a wide variety of products that can be used to encourage allied and friendly contributions, and influence the attitudes and behavior of military and civilian leaders and the local population. They also can be effective in providing instructions on receiving needed aid or influencing the population to support the development goals of local civil authorities. CA units are trained to deal with large numbers of civilians and to help provide the infrastructure

required to bring government services to the population. The regional orientation of PSYOP and CA units makes them much more effective because they understand the local customs, infrastructure, and requirements. Moreover, SOF are well suited to peacetime operations in situations where the presence of a large conventional force might not be desirable, where instead a small number of highly trained people operating with minimal support can provide the necessary assistance to the local government.



Civil affairs soldiers inoculate livestock and advise farmers on animal health practices in Central America.

In addition to PSYOP and CA, foreign internal defense, combatting terrorism, and counter-proliferation are primary SOF missions with direct applicability to shaping activities. Counterdrug activities and humanitarian assistance are also key SOF collateral activities that can influence the international landscape. Furthermore, SOF provide significant capabilities in support of many intangible national and theater objectives such as pro-democracy efforts, humanitarian demining operations, counterdrug use and trafficking, and the training of foreign forces in the appropriate relationship between civilian rule and military and paramilitary forces. In this regard, SOF provide an inexpensive and invaluable tool for the nation and those who carry our ideals abroad. In addition to serving as first-hand examples of the role of the military in a democratic society, SOF also demonstrate, both through the training they impart and by their own actions, the respect for human rights that is a cornerstone of our policies abroad.

“Humanitarian demining is one of the most fundamental humanitarian missions that the United States — and special operations forces — can be involved in”

H. Allen Holmes
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict)

The goal of the U.S. humanitarian demining mission is to help countries establish long-term indigenous infrastructures capable of educating the population to protect themselves from landmines, eliminating the hazards posed by landmines, and returning mined areas to their previous condition. SOF are the primary U.S. military resource for the training programs. Special Forces units train host country nationals to train others in their country to locate landmines, to mark minefields and to destroy the mines strewn indiscriminately on key roads, in villages, and in fields. CA units play a key role in developing indigenous demining entities and helping them to develop sustainable long-term programs. PSYOP personnel conduct mine awareness programs which educate populations in affected areas regarding the dangers of landmines, what they look like, and what to do if a landmine is located. The success of the U.S. humanitarian demining effort is demonstrated by the following sample of accomplishments:

- In those Cambodian provinces where the United States has been most active, the death rate is now half of what it was three years ago.
- In Namibia, the casualty rate has dropped by 90 percent and in Mozambique, over 20,000 square kilometers of land and over 6,000 kilometers of roads have been cleared of mines.
- In Ethiopia, over 35,000 mines and unexploded ordnance have been destroyed.
- In Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, over 3,600 mines have been destroyed.



Special Forces instructor monitors progress of a Royal Cambodian armed forces soldier's mine clearing techniques.

Responding to the full spectrum of crises: The U.S. armed forces must be able to execute the full spectrum of military operations, from deterring an adversary's aggression or coercion in crisis and conducting smaller scale contingency operations to fighting and winning major theater wars. Responding to the full spectrum of crises is another challenge which SOF are particularly well organized, trained and equipped to meet. SOF are prepared to respond across the spectrum of security threats before, during, and after conflict to bring the full measure of their diverse capabilities to bear on the problem. While SOF are not, and cannot

be, a substitute for conventional forces — designed to provide an overwhelming capability against a wide range of adversarial forces using standardized equipment and doctrine common to the services — SOF provide capabilities-based forces with distinctive characteristics, tailored to strategic or theater requirements in support of national military objectives.

In general, the United States, along with others in the international community, will seek to prevent and contain localized conflicts and crises before they require a military response. If, however,

such efforts do not succeed, swift intervention by military forces may be the best way to prevent, contain, resolve, or mitigate the consequences of a conflict that would otherwise be far more costly or deadly.

When conducted in conjunction with conventional forces, special operations leverage conventional capabilities. Thus, their importance lies in the manner in which they support the joint force commander's (JFC) campaign plan. SOF missions originate with the JFC — often with the advice of the joint force special operations component commander (JFSOCC) — and SOF missions are directed toward exactly the same ends as the operations of conventional forces. It is as an integrated part of a joint or combined force that SOF proves of greatest assistance to the conventional commander.

Conventional forces can use SOF direct action, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, and PSYOP to bring about a loss of cohesion among enemy forces and overwhelm the enemy psychologically. Direct action missions against key command and control nodes may destroy the enemy's ability to coordinate counterattacks,



Special operation forces fast rope from an MH-60 helicopter.

further assisting friendly forces in massing and maneuvering. Unconventional warfare missions can create large threats in the enemy rear to diffuse enemy forces, making it easier for conventional forces to attain mass. Special reconnaissance missions assist the JFC in determining the decisive time and place to mass conventional forces. PSYOP can be particularly effective in supporting deception operations, causing the enemy to concentrate his forces incorrectly, making them vulnerable to attack and creating fissures which can be exploited.

SOF support conventional maneuver through special reconnaissance, targeted on operational objectives for conventional forces to maneuver against, and through direct action missions that attack critical enemy operational command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) nodes, which decrease his ability to react to friendly maneuver. PSYOP can facilitate conventional maneuver by supporting deception plans, by decreasing enemy morale and effectiveness, and by using tactical psychological operations to induce the enemy to surrender without fighting.

SOF facilitates the security for the JFC by special reconnaissance that alerts friendly forces to enemy operational threats and other attempts to surprise the conventional force. In an operational area, CA forces not only help control civilian populations — a potential JFC security concern — but also serve as an important conduit for valuable information attainable only from the civilian population.

SOF can help conventional forces achieve surprise by the timely disruption or degradation of enemy early warning capabilities and C4I facilities prior to a conventional force attack. SOF deception operations, especially PSYOP, can be effective in misdirecting the enemy.

Counterproliferation of WMD is USSOCOM's highest operational priority. SOF can enhance the effectiveness of the U.S. military, other government agencies, and international organizations

in deterring proliferation of WMD and reacting appropriately should deterrence measures fail. SOF capabilities may be called upon to enforce U.S. or international policy long before the authorization of direct military action by conventional forces. If diplomatic or political nonproliferation efforts fail, SOF can use precisely measured force to prevent or delay adversaries from acquiring, developing, or employing WMD. Operating in small units and equipped for independent action, SOF can also carry out measures to interdict sea or land shipments of dangerous material or provide deep reconnaissance to locate WMD and conduct precision strikes to capture or destroy them. SOF are, and will continue to be, a cost-effective means of deterring and countering proliferation of WMD.



SOF train for direct-action missions.

Unfortunately, as political settlements and reconciliation fail to keep pace with the ambitions and demands of extremists, terrorism will remain a fact of life in international politics. Fanaticism combined with increasingly lethal and sophisticated technologies imperil all people. The SOF combatting terrorism mission was mandated by legislation to prevent, deter, and, if necessary, respond to terrorist acts. SOF offer a wide variety of skills to combat terrorism, from defensive antiterrorism measures, such as training and advising on security techniques, procedures and systems that reduce vulnerability,

to offensive counterterrorism measures directed at preventing, deterring, and vigorously responding to terrorist acts against U.S. interests, wherever they occur. SOF counterterrorism units receive the most advanced and diverse training available and continually exercise — often with foreign counterparts — to maintain proficiency and to develop new skills. SOF capabilities are ideally suited for this type of mission where there is no margin for error.

Preparing now for an uncertain future includes pursuing a robust modernization effort to replace aging systems; incorporating cutting-edge technologies; and, developing new capabilities through carefully tailored acquisition programs and advanced concepts, doctrine and organizations, to ensure U.S. military superiority over time. Along with managing MFP-11, USSOCOM's research, development and acquisition (RD&A) responsibility has been essential to its ability to provide the best equipped SOF in the world. Technological superiority enables small, highly-trained teams or individuals to successfully accomplish tasks that would be too costly or physically impossible for larger forces. Special operations research and development activities seek to identify technologies that can be used as force multipliers, offsetting enemy superiority in numbers, firepower, or mobility. An ongoing challenge is the selection of technologies that provide the greatest benefit for the resources expended.

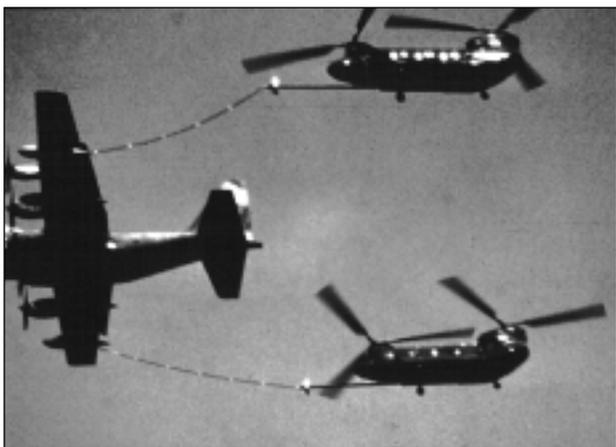


Ranger aims an M-4 carbine during target practice.

Ideally, special operations should always exploit and employ leading edge technology. However, because of constrained resources, USSOCOM has adopted a process of prudent innovation, choosing carefully which technological paths to take and fully leveraging the research conducted by the military departments, national laboratories, other government agencies, and the private sector. Also, USSOCOM uses commercial, off-the-shelf components and non-developmental items, whenever possible, to reduce development time and cost.

Mobility is the SOF modernization priority.

- **Aircraft Mobility.** All C-130 platforms have been upgraded to SOF-improved capability (enhanced navigation, self-defense, and communications systems). Pre-planned product improvement efforts will continue to improve the capabilities of the MH-60K and the MH-47E helicopters, the AC-130 Gunship and the MC-130 Combat Talons. When delivered, the CV-22 will provide essential deep-penetration infiltration/exfiltration mobility with vertical lift capability. This will improve USSOCOM's self-deployment and performance capability, increasing the probability of success for certain assigned clandestine missions.



MC-130P Combat Shadow refuels two MH-47 Chinook helicopters.

- **Maritime Mobility.** SOF Maritime mobility has been significantly improved with the introduction of the patrol coastal (PC) class ships and

Mark V special operations craft (SOC). The PC is designed for and is highly effective in coastal patrol and interdiction missions, in addition to its secondary role of SOF support. The Mark V SOC is a high-speed boat, capable of carrying SOF personnel on medium-range insertion and extraction missions. The PC and Mark V have increased the operational range and speed for conducting surface maritime missions. Another major Navy program is the development of the Advanced SEAL Delivery System, a dry submersible, or minisubmarine. When delivered, it will significantly increase the speed and range for conducting clandestine insertion and extraction of SEALs in hostile or denied waters.



Mark V Special Operations Craft on patrol.

Other priority RD&A programs include enhancements to:

- **Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) Systems.** The evolving SOF Information Operations mission will become increasingly more critical and mandate new tactics, weapons, and skills to respond to new forms of conflict offensively or defensively. USSOCOM is implementing a master plan that significantly restructures its C4ISR architecture and the way it will procure and utilize hardware to support the C4ISR system. Another high priority modernization program is command, control, and communications equipment, such as the SCAMPI communications network and the Special Mission Radio System.

- **Counterproliferation.** Development of SOF counterproliferation capabilities must be accelerated to allow engagement of the full range of WMD targets, improvised devices, means of delivery, and supporting infrastructure.
- **Ground Combat Systems.** The emphasis on ground combat improvement is aimed at completing efforts for SOF-peculiar accessories that provide individual operators a versatile, lightweight personal weapons system which supports improved target acquisition and engagement in day or night operations.

Detailed information on these and other key SOF programs and systems is provided in Appendix B.



Ranger with body armor during training exercise.

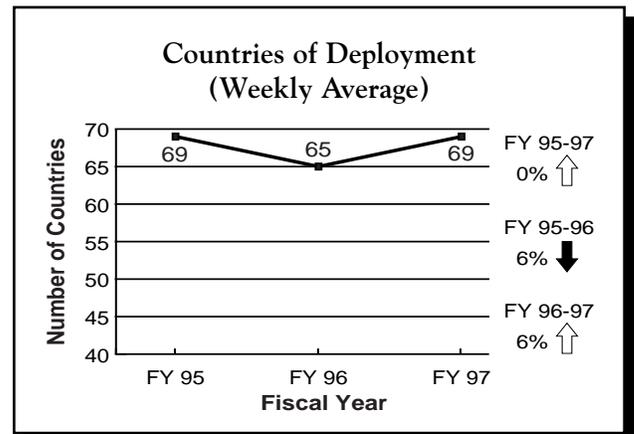
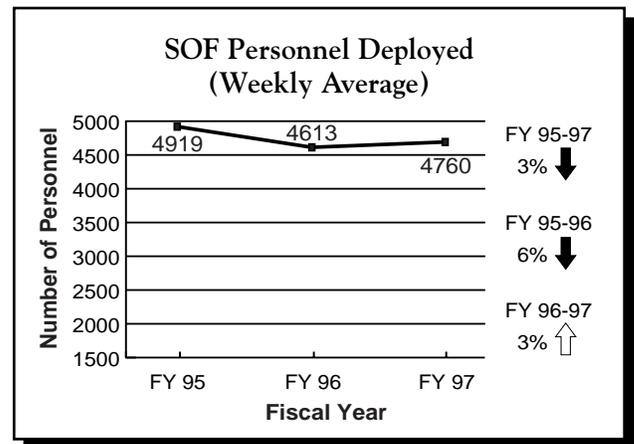
SOF — The Force of Choice

Fundamentally, the United States seeks to play a leadership role in the international community. To do so, the United States will remain engaged abroad. This is essential to protect and promote our national interests in a world in which we as a nation must often act in concert with others

to create our preferred international conditions and secure our basic national goals.

Thus, well-trained, well-equipped SOF continue to be an essential instrument of national policy and a positive force to influence the course of international events. SOF have a long and proud history of responding to threats to our nation during war and to various crises and conflicts during peace. Their achievements in fostering calm and stability where anarchy and violence reign, and their ability to perform in high-risk and politically sensitive environments, have propelled them to the forefront in operations other than war.

The result of SOF utility overseas is clearly demonstrated by the number of SOF deployments over the past few years. As the charts below illustrate, in any given week between FY 1995 and FY 1997, approximately 4,500 SOF operators are deployed in nearly 70 countries worldwide.



People — The Most Important Asset

SOF are made up of some of America's most dedicated men and women from the Army, Navy, and Air Force — many of whom first demonstrate superior performance and high degrees of maturity, intelligence, combat skills, physical stamina, and mental endurance in the conventional forces. SOF personnel may be from active, national guard, and reserve units.

Several characteristics distinguish SOF:

- SOF units are composed of mature, high-caliber professionals with intelligence, stamina, problem-solving skills, mental toughness, flexibility, determination, integrity, and extraordinary strength of character and will.
- SOF personnel undergo intense training that ranks them among the nation's consummate military professionals. This includes specialized training relevant to their missions, regular training with conventional forces, and constant training with other SOF components.



SEALs operate in the most unforgiving environment, water.

- SOF personnel are regionally oriented, which enables them to interact easily with people from diverse cultures and social environments. Not only must SOF personnel excel in the

military arts, but they must undergo further training and education to develop the diplomatic and linguistic skills that support regionally-oriented missions. Their regionally-focused language and cross-cultural communication skills allow SOF to be immediately effective once they have been deployed.

- Above all, SOF understand the broad context in which their unique skills are to be employed; thus, they act with discretion and discipline.

Assessment and Selection

A vigorous and extensive selection process ensures that only mature, dependable, and self-reliant individuals join SOF. The selection and retention of high-quality, motivated, and dedicated personnel are most important as SOF operate in circumstances where the reputation of the United States may rest on the successful completion of the mission.



AC-130 Spectre Gunship crewmember loads a 105 mm round.

Given the unique nature of special operations and the often isolated environments, it takes a discriminating selection and assessment process and hard work to find the right person. But it is important to learn up front whether a person has the qualities and the will necessary to perform to highly demanding standards.

SOF Development

After selection, personnel are trained extensively in the individual combat skills, foreign languages, and technical specialties required for their profession. Next, they join a SOF aircrew, team or squad and participate in extensive unit training. Finally, they are cross trained in essential, special skills and advanced techniques. SOF training places great emphasis on individual and team professional development. An essential part of all training and education is the building of teams who work together well; who know the strengths, capabilities, and weaknesses of each member of the team; and who share a common doctrine that allows precise communication with minimal ambiguity.

Physical Fitness. Special operations are often extremely physically demanding. The body and mind are the fundamental operating system, and their capability to withstand stress is enhanced by high levels of physical fitness. Special operators require a high level of physical fitness because missions often take place in harsh climates, over extended periods of time, far from conventional support, and frequently with little time to adjust to climatic changes. A unit that stresses top physical condition for its members — all of the time — can count on them being ready for any contingency.



Special Forces soldiers establish radio contact during training exercises in Canada.

Regional Orientation. Regional orientation has grown in importance over the past few years and requires SOF to maintain proficiency

in a number of languages. Regional orientation, however, is much more than language training. It is not enough to speak the language. To communicate effectively, one must know the culture and customs, to include the subtleties of non-verbal communications. For example, foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare operations have as their focus preparing foreign forces, either military or paramilitary, to conduct operations on a wide range of tasks from combat to internal development, in peace as well as in war. Successful conduct of these operations relies on the ability of SOF teams to establish rapport with and positively influence those they train. As such, these operations place a high premium on not only knowing the language of the people being taught, but in having a thorough understanding of the culture and the area where these operations take place. Units that conduct these operations invest a great deal of time and energy in language proficiency, cultural awareness, regional orientation, cross cultural communications, and negotiation within the context of culture.



Civil affairs linguist interprets as a medical officer gathers information from a sick child in South America during a medical capabilities exercise.

Readiness

Force readiness is the SOF top priority and crucial to mission success. USSOCOM's FY 1999 President's Budget Request is predicated on maintaining and sustaining readiness as the top priority. SOF must maintain a consistently high state of readiness.

People and training are key factors that help to determine SOF current readiness posture.



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman helps park an EC-130 Commando Solo after a psychological operations broadcast mission.

Training

SOF require a combination of basic military training and specialized skills training to achieve operational proficiency. Training and education are the twin pillars of special operations professional development. Training is designed to produce individuals and units that have mastered the tactics, techniques, and procedures through which units accomplish their missions. Through education, individuals learn the art and science of war and peacetime operations, and develop military judgment necessary to apply initiative and creativity to the solution of problems and challenges. Training and education can be effective only in an environment that encourages innovation and allows — in fact, demands — subordinates to exercise independent judgment, and builds trust and confidence among all leaders in a unit. The SOF training system encompasses three processes: institutional training, component training, and joint training.

Institutional Training. There are two types of institutional training: joint and common institutional training and service special operations training. USSOCOM has oversight of joint and common institutional training, ensuring programs of instruction adhere to joint doctrine and reflect current tactics, techniques, and proce-

dures. Institutional special operations training, conducted by USSOCOM's service component schools, develops SOF unique abilities through intensive training at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; the Naval Special Warfare Center at Coronado, California; and, the Air Force Special Operations School at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Courses cover a broad range of topics and scenarios from doctrine and foreign policy to mission-specific skills to cross-cultural communications skills and language training.



Combat diver students conduct corrective training at the JFK Special Warfare Center and School's Key West training facility.

Component Training. The focus of this training is to ensure units are capable of performing assigned wartime missions through the accomplishment of individual and collective tasks. Component training, managed by the USSOCOM service component commands, is governed by the doctrine of the military departments and primarily driven by mission requirements identified in the various geographic regions by the theater SOCs.

Joint Training. Although each of these processes is important, SOF places great emphasis on joint training with conventional forces. SOF joint training is primarily accomplished through participation in exercises sponsored by the chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)/CINC and USSOCOM's joint/combined exchange training (JCET) events. Through SOF participation in over 60 CJCS exercises annually, geographic

CINC needs are met. Additionally, SOF are able to train to meet the regional, cultural, and language demands of each theater. Furthermore, SOF annually participate in approximately 200 JCET events. These events are conducted overseas, often with host nation forces. JCETs focus on SOF tasks which are essential for mission accomplishment and also provide valuable forward presence in support of the geographic CINC's strategic objectives. JCETs provide SOF access to areas which may not typically be open to larger conventional forces. In this respect, JCETs open doors — politically, diplomatically, and militarily — for U.S. forces to train with foreign military forces. Joint training provides Army, Navy, and Air Force special operators the opportunity to train as a joint team, performing tasks and activities that span the entire range of military operations.



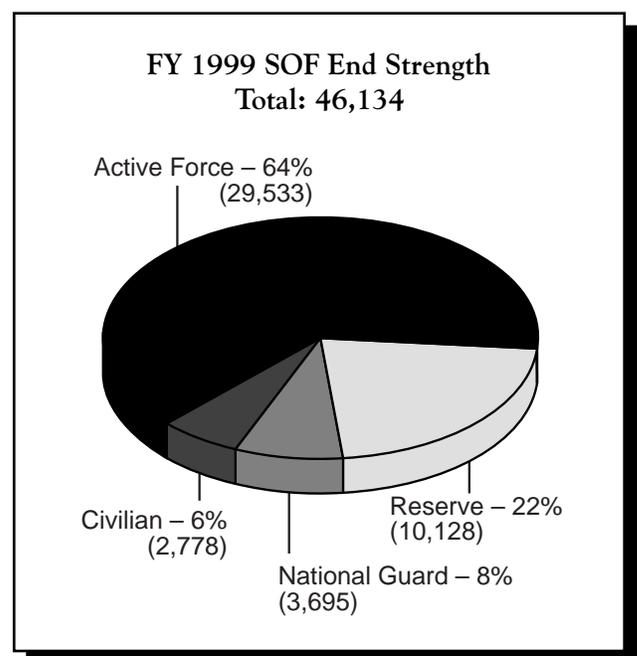
Jordanian soldiers teach fellow soldiers under the watchful eyes of U.S. Special Forces soldiers.

As SOF prepare to execute missions and conduct activities in the international security environment of the future, training priorities will reflect shifting emphasis among missions. The future environment, characterized by regional instability and transnational dangers, will mandate increasing attention to training in nonlethal techniques and support of peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief operations. SOF conduct joint/combined, no-notice deployments ensuring that the training is vigorous, realistic, and focused on preparing SOF to meet the entire spectrum of future demands.

SOF must remain combat ready to meet the challenges of the international security environment. SOF personnel, who have been properly selected, and trained and professionally developed throughout their careers, will be instrumental in meeting future challenges. The return on the SOF human resource investment is a high-quality force ready to serve the nation.

Manpower

Manpower End Strength. As the chart below portrays, the SOF total end strength for FY 1999 is about 46,000 with approximately one-third of their military personnel in reserve component units. Although the active force is largely responsible for meeting the demands of regional crises and conflicts and providing overseas presence, USSOCOM relies on reserve component units to augment and reinforce the active force. U.S. Army Reserve SOF personnel, for example, provide a variety of essential skills, particularly in the areas of civil affairs and psychological operations. Additionally, about 2,700 civilians join SOF active and reserve military personnel as partners in defense. Detailed information regarding SOF end strength is depicted in Appendix C.



Organization

The geographic CINCs identify the forces necessary to accomplish the missions assigned within their areas of responsibility. These requirements provide the guidance that drives the development capabilities and force structure. All active and reserve Army, Navy, and Air Force SOF based in the United States are assigned to USSOCOM. USSOCOM's service component commands are the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the Naval Special Warfare Command, and the Air Force Special Operations Command. The Joint Special Operations Command is assigned as a sub-unified command of USCINCSOC. Component command organization and force structure are presented in detail in Appendix A.

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). The U.S. Army Special Operations Command, headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, commands active and U.S. Army Reserve special operations forces. USASOC is responsible to USSOCOM for the readiness of Special Forces, Rangers, and special operations aviation, civil affairs, and psychological operations units for deployment to unified combatant commands around the world.

The Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM). The Naval Special Warfare Command, located in Coronado, California, is responsible to USSOCOM for the readiness of active and reserve naval special warfare (NSW) forces. NSW Group ONE and Special Boat Squadron ONE in Coronado, California and NSW Group TWO and Special Boat Squadron TWO in Little Creek, Virginia are the major operational components of NAVSPECWARCOM. The groups deploy SEAL and SEAL delivery vehicle teams worldwide and administratively support forward-based NSW units. The special boat squadrons deploy special boat unit detachments and patrol coastal (PC) ships which provide surface mobility for all NSW forces.

The U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). The Air Force Special Operations Command, located at Hurlburt Field, Florida, is responsible to USSOCOM for the readiness of active, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard SOF for worldwide deployment. Three special operations wings, two special operations groups, and one special tactics group are assigned to AFSOC.

The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). The Joint Special Operations Command was established in 1980 and is located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. JSOC is a joint headquarters designed to study special operations requirements and techniques; ensure interoperability and equipment standardization; plan and conduct joint special operations exercises and training; and develop joint special operations tactics.

Theater Assets

Theater Special Operations Commands. The Special Operations Command (SOC), established as a sub-unified command of the combatant unified commands, is the geographic CINC's source of expertise in all areas of special operations, providing the CINC with a separate element to plan and control the employment of joint SOF in military operations. Theater SOCs normally exercise operational control of SOF (except civil affairs and psychological operations) within each geographic CINC's area of responsibility. Additionally, the SOCs provide the nucleus for the establishment of a joint special operations task force (JSOTF) when a joint task force is formed. The theater SOC commander is responsible to the geographic CINC for planning and conducting joint special operations in the theater, ensuring that SOF capabilities are matched to mission requirements, exercising operational control of SOF for joint special operations, and advising the CINC and component commanders in theater on the proper employment of SOF. While the USCINCSOC provides funding and personnel for the SOCs, each SOC reports directly to the geographic CINC.



Special boat unit crew members supervise as a Mark V Special Operations Craft is unloaded from a C-5 in Dakar, Senegal, for joint combined exchange training with Senegalese sailors.

Operational experience, both in peace and war, indicates that SOF are most effective when closely integrated into campaign plans. The SOCs' efforts have paid great dividends in this regard. The result is the full integration of SOF into theater and country peacetime plans, as well as the geographic CINCs' war plans. The key role of the theater SOCs and the recent accomplishments of SOF in the theaters are highlighted in other sections of this document.

Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Support to Geographic CINCs. CA and PSYOP are SOF principal missions, but their functional command and control relationships are structured to support both special operations and conventional forces. USSOCOM provides forward deployed CA and PSYOP support to the geographic CINCs to accomplish planning and coordination for forward presence, peacetime support, contingency, and wartime operations.

Ongoing CA support to unified commands in the execution of peacetime engagement activities and contingency operations has helped integrate reserve component CA capabilities in theater-level operations. In place CA support to unified commands is under development today to fully integrate CA into both deliberate and crisis action planning processes.

PSYOP support to geographic CINCs is vital to attaining theater objectives. Normally located on the geographic CINC's staff, PSYOP forward liaison detachments (FLDs) are an important resource in planning politically sensitive, yet invaluable PSYOP. Currently the only PSYOP group in the active component force structure, the 4th PSYOP Group (Airborne), provides FLDs to USEUCOM, USPACOM, USSOUTHCOM, and United Nations Command (Korea).



Psychological operations soldier in Bosnia prepares an insert to reach a wide target audience through host-nation newspapers.

Quality of Life

The term "quality of life" is used to encompass the entire package of compensation, benefits, and work and living environments for military personnel. Because SOF rely on the military departments for most aspects of quality of life, the SOF community continues to work closely with the military departments to provide for the basic needs of SOF personnel and their families. Quality of life improvements are needed to sustain healthy levels of recruitment, retention, and morale that are necessary to maintain a ready, high-quality fighting force. The overall objective is to protect the commitment to service members through quality of life enhancements and to maintain currently provided benefits. To this end, the SOF community and the military departments share the following quality of life concerns:

- Adequate pay and allowances.
- Adequate access to quality and timely medical care.

- Adequate retirement benefits.
- Adequate housing and quarters for military families and single personnel.
- Adequate community support facilities.

Additionally, the SOF community has undertaken initiatives to standardize, within the services' regulations and policies, special and incentive pay for SOF personnel. Standardization will result in comparability pay for all service members who possess like skills and perform the same duties.



Pennsylvania Air National Guardsman checks life support equipment aboard an EC-130 Commando Solo aircraft.

Retention and Morale

In general, retention rates for SOF personnel outpace their service counterparts with few exceptions. Increasing requirements, personnel loss, management dynamics, and high training pipeline attrition contribute to low inventories in some SOF specific skills; however, USSOCOM, in coordination with components and the services, is undertaking a number of initiatives to address these issues. Realistic training and deployments on significant missions are positive contributors to SOF retention rates. SOF are proud of their contributions to the nation, and this sense of pride bolsters morale that is reflected in the overall retention of quality SOF personnel.