

**SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

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This document states operational doctrine for planning and executing Air Force special operations. It describes the mission, force composition, command relationships, and support requirements for Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF). Additionally, it provides guidance for direct participation with other special operations forces and with conventional forces. These other forces may be supported by or support AFSOF. This document is the authoritative source for AFSOF doctrine and applies to all United States Air Force (USAF), United States Air Force Reserve (USAFR), and Air National Guard (ANG) units conducting special operations.

**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

AFDD 35 updates Air Force Special Operations doctrine outlined in AFM 2-10; discusses the principles of war and military operations other than war as they relate to special operations; and incorporates SOF mission criteria, and explains why and how SOF should be integrated into air operations.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

**1.1. General.** AFSOF is an umbrella term for those active and reserve component Air Force personnel, designated by the Secretary of Defense, that are specifically organized, trained and equipped to conduct and support special operations. AFSOF assets include specially equipped fixed-wing and vertical-lift aircraft, aircrews, special tactics teams (STTs), tactical command and control communications, intelligence, and weather personnel. They are specially trained in infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, aerial refueling, close air support, and psychological operations.

1.1.1. Air Force SO are air operations that influence the accomplishment of national and theater objectives and are usually conducted in enemy-controlled or politically sensitive territories. Additionally, Air Force special operations may complement general purpose force operations.

1.1.2. While virtually all aerospace forces have the potential for employment in special operations, the Air Force, in conjunction with the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), trains, equips, and provides certain units to conduct SO. SOF are normally

organized and employed in small formations capable of both complementary actions and independent operations, with the purpose of enabling timely and tailored responses across the range of military operations.

**1.2. Special Operations.** Joint Pub 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, defines special operations (SO) as "Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted...[across the range of military operations], independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, nonspecial operations forces (SOF). Political-military considerations frequently shape SO, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques, and oversight at the national level. SO differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and

dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets."

1.2.1. Historically, national security strategy has required a military special operations capability able to respond to National Command Authorities (NCA) direction across the range of military operations. With SOF, the NCA have the ability to take appropriate, timely, and effective action when national interests are challenged. SO are most often conducted by joint forces following joint doctrine.

1.2.2. The NCA may direct the use of SOF against a wide range of adversaries including terrorists, insurgents, guerrillas, or regular combatants. Likewise, SOF can be used to support insurgents, guerrillas, or regular conventional operations. SOF may operate deep in enemy territory to disrupt, distract, or reconnoiter enemy forces and otherwise assist in friendly conventional actions.

1.2.3. SOF are unique in that they are trained and

employed to be particularly responsive to a broad range of political, military, cultural, and geographic considerations. SOF are not substitutes for strong conventional forces but necessary adjuncts to conventional capabilities. Depending on mission requirements, SOF may operate in place of, or in addition to, conventional forces throughout the range of military operations. The small size, special equipment, and area-oriented training which characterize SOF make them useful in situations and areas where use of conventional military forces might be less feasible operationally or politically. For some missions, such as foreign internal defense (FID), because of small unit training skills, SOF may be best suited to accomplish the mission; thus avoiding deployment of large scale conventional forces. These characteristics not only enable employment in these unique circumstances, but also enhance these forces' capabilities when deployed in support of conventional military operations.

## Chapter 2

### FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

**2.1. AFSOF Mission.** AFSOF, as the Air Force element of SOF, should be structured to provide aerial mobility, surgical firepower, tanker support, and special tactics units. They normally act in concert with Army and Navy SOF, including Special Forces, Rangers, Army Special Operations Aviation, Navy Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) teams, PSYOP forces, and Civil Affairs units. AFSOF should be prepared to support activities ranging from combat operations of relatively limited duration to the longer term materiel and advisory support of foreign governments and military services. To meet SOF requirements, AFSOF can provide trained personnel; aircraft and equipment; mission planning expertise; maintenance and logistics support; and the required command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C<sup>4</sup>I) support.

**2.2. Priority of Tasks.** The supported commander normally establishes AFSOF mission priorities. The supported commander's priorities may shift as situations change; thus, AFSOF should maintain the flexibility to respond to a number of missions.

**2.3. Characteristics of AFSOF.** AFSOF units should be organized to permit force tailoring to meet particular combat or support requirements. They should be ready to deploy and employ worldwide on short notice. To enhance mobility, flexibility, and responsiveness, AFSOF should maintain the capability to conduct limited self-deployments with organic maintenance and logistics support. For extended deployments, AFSOF normally require airlift for vertical-lift aircraft, support personnel, and equipment. AFSOF

should be trained and equipped to operate in all geographic areas and climates and under austere operating conditions. Aircrews are trained and equipped to conduct operations at night and in adverse weather. AFSOF's success depends on accurate and reliable intelligence, communications, and security. Due to their small size and demanding mission requirements, these units should have capable, highly skilled personnel, experienced SO leadership, and dependable equipment. SO missions rarely permit a second chance or a call for backup forces.

**2.4. Mission Characteristics.** Several aspects of SO missions distinguish them from conventional military operations (Figure 2.1). SO missions:

2.4.1. Are high-risk and high-gain. The success or failure of a SO may have a direct impact on the national interests and reputation of the United States and other countries. Clandestine or covert projection of forces and operations in foreign areas in peacetime has far-reaching political implications. For this reason, the NCA retain the peacetime authority to approve these operations.

2.4.2. Depend on timely intelligence and strict security. Intelligence and security are paramount in SO and should be emphasized during all phases of planning. Deficiencies in either intelligence or security may result in mission failure and the potential loss of lives and resources. Intelligence provides SOF commanders with the information necessary to tailor the force against a particular target whether military, political, social, psychological, or economic.

**Figure 2.1. SO Mission Characteristics.**

High Risk-High Gain
Intelligence and Security Dependent
Small, Trained Force
Culturally and Linguistically Trained
Technologically Versatile
Multi-Dimensional Planning
Simple to Execute
Carefully Consider the Principles of War and Military Operations Other Than War
Joint in Nature
Logistically Flexible

2.4.3. Depend on a small, highly trained force. SOF depend on force quality and cannot rely on quantity to do the job. The training time required to qualify AFSOF personnel precludes the ability to rapidly generate a trained and ready replacement force. Within this small group of personnel resides a highly coordinated and integrated force with significant planning, employment, and C<sup>4</sup>I support capabilities and expertise.

2.4.4. Depend on a culturally and linguistically trained force. SO personnel may need to interact with foreign individuals or groups, while avoiding conflicts over sensitive socio-political issues. SOF personnel should adjust to the environment and customs in which they are operating. Difficulties with cultural or physical adaptation could threaten individual and team performance, and security. A detailed area orientation, including mastery of language and culture, may be necessary, depending on mission assignment.

2.4.5. Are technologically versatile. AFSOF should exploit the entire spectrum of technology. On some missions, they can employ tactics and plans based on using equipment that is on the leading edge of technology. AFSOF should also be prepared to assist host nations with their existing technology systems when supporting certain FID or security assistance (SA) programs.

2.4.6. Require multi-dimensional planning. Planners should consider an extensive list of variables, including foreign cultures, adequate intelligence, security, deployment distances, logistics, and medical support. Joint coordination, cover, rehearsal, weather, media, political support, and communications should also be considered when developing a mission scenario.

2.4.7. Are simple to execute. Operational success depends on comprehensive and analytical planning to achieve a relatively simple course of action, consistent with the training and preparation time available.

2.4.8. Carefully consider the principles of war and military operations other than war. The operations of the Armed Forces are guided by a common set of principles of war and military operations other than war. The principles of objective and security are common to both war and military operations other than war. A proper understanding and application of the following principles as they relate to SO could preclude mission failure and the potential loss of valuable assets.

2.4.8.1. Objectives assigned to SOF can often be as political, economic, or psychological as they are military. In war, SO objectives predominantly focus on enemy military vulnerabilities without direct force-on-force confrontation. During military operations other than war, SOF can be assigned objectives that lead directly to the accomplishment of national or theater level objectives.

2.4.8.2. SO are inherently offensive. Although SO may be employed in the context of a strategically defensive effort, at the operational and tactical level they are employed offensively.

2.4.8.3. SOF are not employed to mass in the conventional sense. Acceptance of attrition or force-on-force battle is not applicable to SO. SOF normally concentrate their combat power, albeit subtly and indirectly, at decisive times and places. Planners should take care not to fragment the efforts of SOF against attractive (but perhaps operationally or strategically irrelevant) targets. Extensive SO planning and rehearsal may be required to achieve temporary superiority of force or to avoid engagements altogether. In SO, concentration of force relies as much on the quality and focus of tactics, timing, and weaponry as it does on numerical quantity.

2.4.8.4. SOF may be employed strategically as an economy of force measure to allow the concentration of other forces elsewhere. This can be particularly effective when SOF are employed in conjunction with indigenous forces to create a force multiplier effect, or when SO are conducted for the purpose of deception.

2.4.8.5. SOF do not maneuver against an enemy in the classical sense. With respect to SO, maneuver implies the ability to infiltrate and exfiltrate denied areas to exploit enemy vulnerabilities. When employed, maneuver implies the ability to adjust the plan in order to concentrate and strike the enemy where and when it is most vulnerable and to disperse to avoid its strengths. Such flexibility in planning and execution is especially germane to SO.

2.4.8.6. SOF should be placed in a command relationship appropriate to the way in which they will most likely be employed. They ensure unity of command by avoiding layering between the headquarters assigning the mission and the operational unit conducting the mission.

2.4.8.7. Security is paramount. Planning is often compartmented and staffs are normally kept small. However, within a compartmented activity, information should be shared by all. Intelligence, counterintelligence, cover, deception, and electronic warfare are all integrated throughout the planning and execution of SO to enhance security and achieve surprise. During military operations other than war, security deals principally with force protection. This applies equally to SOF as well as other forces involved in an operation.

2.4.8.8. The achievement of surprise is a principal talent of SOF. SO require bold, imaginative, and audacious actions but should be tempered with patience and forethought. SOF normally achieve surprise by exploiting indirect approaches and doing the unexpected.

2.4.8.9. Although SOF often use sophisticated and unorthodox methods and equipment, the plans and procedures that drive their employment should be simple and direct in order to facilitate understanding, withstand the stress of operational environments, and be adaptable to changing situations.

2.4.9. SOF carefully consider the following principles during military operations other than war: unity of effort, restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy.

2.4.9.1. The principle of unity of command in war also applies in a related manner to military operations other than war, but may be more difficult to attain. SOF may apply their unique characteristics to provide liaison to multinational and nongovernmental partners, thereby increasing the unity of effort.

2.4.9.2. In military operations other than war, rules of engagement will often be more restrictive, detailed, and sensitive to diplomatic concerns than in war. Availability of SOF gives the combatant commander more flexibility to accomplish the mission with the restraint, provided by smaller, specially equipped units.

2.4.9.3. SOF units are trained to conduct extended operations such as those common to foreign internal defense programs. Smaller forces typical of SO facilitate resupply and funding of a long term operation.

2.4.9.4. PSYOP and Civil Affairs units are particularly suited to increasing the perception of legitimacy of actions taken by US and multinational partners in military operations other than war. Maintaining the perception of legitimacy is crucial to accomplishment of the mission.

2.4.10. Are joint in nature. In philosophy, design, force structure, and employment, SO are joint in nature. The application of SOF usually involves resources well beyond those of a single Service. AFSOF routinely join with Army Special Operations Aviation, and frequently assume Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander (JSOACC) responsibilities. Additionally, commanders often need non-Department of Defense (DOD) agencies to support or participate in certain phases of assigned missions. Joint SOF training missions and

exercises develop the teamwork, timing, and unity of command that are essential to successful execution.

2.4.11. Are logistically flexible. Logistics requirements may be defined on short notice. Sources and application may be situationally unique. Consequently, AFSOF needs the flexibility to procure, modify, or design equipment and procedures on short notice to meet a mission's peculiar transportation, equipment, weapons, supply, and other support requirements. Close coordination with theater, Service, and SO logisticians is necessary to ensure timely and responsive support.

**2.5. AFSOF Mission Criteria.** There are five mission criteria that should be carefully applied prior to planning and executing SOF operations. These criteria assist SOF commanders and their staffs to objectively evaluate missions, providing a clear set of tests to determine the feasibility and utility of SOF operations. They can ensure SOF apply their resources wisely, allowing them to conduct meaningful operations which contribute to the overall theater campaign. They can also be used to advise the Joint Force Commander (JFC) of the proper application of SOF in light of the total force structure available and the desired objectives. These five criteria should be applied across the range of military operations.

2.5.1. The operation should be an appropriate SO mission. During hostilities, SOF units should not be expected to conduct operations which other units routinely train for, and do not take advantage of unique SOF skills and capabilities. To prepare for combat, units should not normally exercise operations which are not part of their Mission Essential Task List (METL) or Designed Operational Capability (DOC) statement. While it is essential for SOF units to exercise METL and DOC requirements, this should not be viewed as a negative restriction impairing the natural SOF characteristics of flexibility, adaptability, and force tailoring. Further, this should not preclude ANG units from conducting state missions.

2.5.2. SO should support the theater campaign plan. Each geographic Commander-in-Chief (CINC) has a theater command strategy. SOF commanders should know and understand the CINC's priorities and goals; and should ensure their unit training either supports these goals and priorities directly, or improves their ability to conduct operations supporting the goals and priorities during times of crisis. Operations which do not support the CINC's campaign or objectives should be avoided.

2.5.3. SO missions should be operationally feasible. SOF cannot afford to waste resources on missions that are beyond their capability. This does not mean SOF should not prepare to take on difficult challenges. This simply means commanders should be realistic and understand their specific operational limitations.

2.5.4. Required resources should be available to execute SO. Certain SO may rely heavily on conventional

support. Support like close air support, air refueling, electronic countermeasures, diversion, and deception may be essential to ensure successful mission execution. In some instances, higher priority SO missions may preclude other theater SO; in other cases, SO may be unaffordable and counterproductive because they require too many theater resources to support them.

2.5.5. The expected outcome should justify the risk. Commanders should ensure operations make more than a marginal contribution to the CINC's campaign plan, and should not be conducted simply because they can be done.

**2.6. AFSOF Capabilities.** AFSOF aircraft should be capable of operating in hostile airspace, at all altitudes, under conditions of minimum visibility (darkness or adverse weather) while navigating precisely within narrow time parameters, to arrive at specifically defined drop or landing zones, infiltration points, or targets. Deceptive electronic countermeasures, including low probability of intercept/detection (LPI/D) communications, and passive warning systems can be used to avoid engagement by enemy defenses. AFSOF should maintain fixed and vertical-lift transport, aerial tankers, fixed-wing gunships, and PSYOP support aircraft, capable of meeting joint SOF mission requirements. Additionally, other theater assets may be provided for support on a mission-by-mission basis.

2.6.1. AFSOF aircraft should be able to support unconventional warfare (UW), direct action (DA), special reconnaissance (SR), and counterterrorism (CT) requirements. AFSOF fixed-wing and vertical-lift aircraft should be equipped for long-range, adverse weather, deep penetration of hostile areas and capable of airlanding and airdropping personnel, equipment, and psychological warfare materials, or extracting personnel by airborne pickup devices or airlanding. Vertical-lift aircraft should also be equipped for suppressive fire support, personnel recovery, and medical evacuation. They should also be able to operate in confined areas, employing hoist, rope ladder, fast rope, or rappelling procedures, to infiltrate or exfiltrate SOF ground and maritime personnel. In certain situations, AFSOF gunships may be required to provide close air support for both SOF and conventional forces.

2.6.2. Certain AFSOF units may train, assist, and advise other nations in support of FID. These activities may require selective AFSOF language skills and detailed area orientation. Unlike UW, DA, SR, and CT missions, AFSOF participation in FID often does not normally focus on high technology equipment. Rather, AFSOF should be prepared to lend expertise on a level of technology compatible with the host nation's resources and capabilities. Involvement in such FID activities may include operations, maintenance, intelligence, and logistics support to host nation counterinsurgency, counterdrug, and other related security assistance operations. Additionally, AFSOF may be required to

provide specialized training support to other US forces conducting FID operations.

2.6.3. To extend the operating range of its vertical-lift aircraft, AFSOF should possess aircraft capable of providing in-flight refueling. Those aerial tankers, when equipped, should also be capable of refueling from other airborne tankers.

2.6.4. Historically, USAF has required specially configured aircraft with a variety of sensors and weapons to acquire and engage static and moving surface targets. To meet both Joint SOF and conventional ground requirements, AFSOF should possess aircraft capable of providing close air support, interdiction, or armed escort. These aircraft could also be employed to provide security for rear area bases.

2.6.5. USAF assets can be employed in a variety of ways to support either SO or conventional PSYOP requirements. Certain aircraft are capable of airdropping leaflets containing PSYOP messages, while others are capable of broadcasting airborne messages. In the past, USAF assets have also supported PSYOP efforts with massive carpet bombing operations (Joint Pub 3-53, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, and Joint Pub 3-13, *Command and Control Warfare Operations*, contain additional PSYOP information).

2.6.6. SO require dedicated forces to facilitate the air-to-ground interface in the Joint Special Operations Area. This interface is normally provided by AFSOF STTs; they are composed of Combat Control and Pararescue personnel. Operating in uncertain and hostile environments, they can provide assault zone selection, assessment and marking; air traffic control (ATC) service; Special Operations Terminal Attack Control (SOTAC) capabilities; and trauma medical services focused toward rapid casualty recovery, triage treatment, and evacuation staging. SOTAC qualified special tactics personnel can provide target designation, terminal guidance, and control of CAS in support of SO missions, and could conduct the same activities in support of other components. Additionally, STTs can operate Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARPs); direct and position aircraft using radio, visual and electronic signals; assist in offensive attack and demolition operations; provide airfield reconnaissance; conduct personnel recovery and advanced trauma care; and coordinate evacuation operations. These duties can be conducted as primary SOF missions, as part of SOF collateral activities, or in support of general purpose forces.

2.6.7. Army and Air Force SOF require special operations weather teams to support certain operational requirements. This support is normally provided by Air Force Special Operations Weather Teams (SOWTs). These teams can support unilateral or joint air, ground, and maritime special operations. Teams should be capable of operating independently in permissive or uncertain environments, or as augmentation to other SO

elements in hostile environments. To assist decision-makers, SOWT can collect critical weather observations from data-sparse areas, generate mission tailored forecasts, and determine the impacts of meteorological and oceanographic conditions on current and planned operations. See Chapter 5, AFSOF EMPLOYMENT, for examples of weather impacts.

2.6.8. To facilitate tactical communications with the SO headquarters, other SOF components, subordinate aviation headquarters, and mission aircraft, AFSOF normally require special operations communications flights (SOCF). SOCFs can provide satellite communication links for tactical operations and high frequency radios, as well as telephone, facsimile, and message services to link deployed elements. These teams should be flexibly structured to simultaneously meet a wide range of requirements. Depending on mission requirements, this could include sending liaisons to the theater Air Force Special Operations Component, its subordinate detachments and elements, the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), the Joint Force Commander (JFC), Special Operations Command (SOC), the Joint Task Force headquarters (JTF), and embassies.

**2.7. Augmenting USAF Forces.** Although not classified as AFSOF, certain general purpose forces may receive specialized training and equipment to conduct missions supporting special operations. These enhancements allow conventional forces to support SO on a nondedicated, mission-specific basis. Examples of these forces include:

2.7.1. Special Operations Low-Level (SOLL). SOLL-capable forces can be used to quickly augment AFSOF for the conduct and support of selected special operations. SOLL missions flown by specially trained aircrews or modified aircraft can enhance certain SO by carrying oversized or outsized cargo in various threat environments.

2.7.2. Air Refueling of AFSOF Aircraft. To ensure AFSOF can maintain a long-range operating capability,

USAF maintains tanker crews familiar with the air refueling requirements of fixed-wing SO aircraft.

2.7.3. Depending on the mission, the NCA, or the theater CINC for the assigned or attached forces, may allocate any DOD asset to support special operations. Such support is usually mission-specific and of short duration. Capabilities required may include theater bombing, airlift, close air support, airborne warning or control, electronic warfare, reconnaissance, deception, resupply, combat rescue, combat control, security, or space-based support.

**2.8. AFSOF Limitations.** Historically, AFSOF assets have been less effective when employed outside their intended operational environments. For instance, infiltration and exfiltration platforms have proven less effective in conditions other than darkness and adverse weather. Based on lessons learned, some additional limitations include:

2.8.1. AFSOF only have a limited self-deployment and sustainment capability. AFSOF are dependent on established support and logistics packages which normally accompany employment aircraft. Operations may be sustained from a bare base. However, the technological sophistication of some AFSOF resources may limit their beddown flexibility as some avionics equipment may require extensive maintenance support.

2.8.2. AFSOF may be highly vulnerable to attack by enemy air-to-air and surface-to-air weapon systems and mission effectiveness may be degraded due to increasingly sophisticated enemy defenses. This may require deployment of additional air and ground defense forces at landing strips and FARPs.

2.8.3. Aircrew endurance, aircraft systems limitations, as well as maintenance and flying regulations may restrict the duration or frequency of employment.

2.8.4. Long-range deployment and employment may require non-organic air refueling support.

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## Chapter 3

### SPECIAL OPERATIONS PRINCIPAL MISSIONS AND COLLATERAL ACTIVITIES

**3.1. Missions.** AFSOF conducts operations in six of the seven principal SO missions: unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, foreign internal defense, and psychological operations. Depending on mission circumstances, conventional Air Force resources may be required to support special operations. AFSOF do not routinely conduct the seventh SO mission, which is civil affairs.

**3.2. Unconventional Warfare (UW).** UW includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive, low visibility, covert or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence collection, and evasion and escape. Armed rebellion against an established or occupying power is often the context for UW. Along with other agencies, SOF may provide advice, training, and assistance to existing indigenous

resistance organizations in order to exploit a hostile power's political, military, economic, and psychological vulnerabilities. During war, AFSOF may directly support the resistance movement by infiltrating operational elements into denied or sensitive areas for the purpose of organizing, training, equipping, and advising or directing indigenous resistance forces. Typically, successful UW operations need long term, patient political support and US military commitment. In situations when direct US military involvement is inappropriate, AFSOF may provide indirect support from an external location.

3.2.1. Guerrilla warfare consists of military and paramilitary operations conducted by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces in enemy-held or hostile territory.

3.2.2. Subversion is an activity designed to undermine the military, economic, political strength, or morale of a regime or nation.

3.2.3. Sabotage includes those actions aimed to injure or destroy resources within the enemy's infrastructure in areas presumed to be safe from attack.

3.2.4. UW intelligence activities are designed to collect and report information concerning the capabilities, intentions, and activities of the established or occupying power and its external sponsors.

3.2.5. Evasion and escape is an activity that assists military personnel and other selected persons to move from an enemy-held, hostile, or sensitive area to areas under friendly control; to avoid capture if unable to return to an area of friendly control; or, once captured, to escape.

**3.3. Direct Action (DA).** DA missions are short-duration strikes and other small scale offensive actions principally taken by SOF to seize, destroy, or inflict damage on a specified target; or to destroy, capture, or recover designated personnel or material. In the conduct of these operations, SOF may employ raid, ambush, or direct assault tactics; place mines and other munitions; conduct standoff attacks by fire from air, ground or maritime platforms; provide terminal guidance for precision guided munitions; and conduct independent sabotage.

**3.4. Special Reconnaissance (SR).** SR consists of reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted by SOF to obtain or verify, by visual observation or other collection methods, information concerning the capabilities, intentions, and activities of an actual or potential enemy. It includes securing data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, geographic, or demographic characteristics of a particular area. It also includes target acquisition, area assessment, and post-strike reconnaissance.

**3.5. USAF Responsibilities in UW, DA, and SR.** As mentioned, USSOCOM trains, equips, and provides certain units to conduct SO. However, USAF is

responsible for either ensuring or coordinating with USSOCOM to directly or indirectly support the following UW, DA, SR requirements:

3.5.1. AFSOF can meet air mobility and other support requirements (infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, close air support, PSYOP) of joint special operations forces. Equipment should be designed and configured to conduct operations (airland, airdrop, airborne extract) in the required mission environment and in enemy territory. This may involve remaining at a laager site or FARP location in hostile territory following the airdrop or airland operation prior to exfiltration. Aircrews should plan missions to avoid detection and prevent mission compromise. Procedures and equipment should be compatible with supported units, including air-surface communications equipment. Specialized teams should be prepared to support unique SOF requirements (SOWT, STT).

3.5.2. Airborne radio relay and communications surveillance in denied areas is provided.

3.5.3. Close air support is provided for supported SOF, as required.

3.5.4. Designated targets are clandestinely or covertly attacked with precision munitions, as required.

3.5.5. Visual, electronic, and imagery reconnaissance is conducted, as required.

3.5.6. Doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, is consistent with joint doctrine and that equipment can be tailored for operations which support other US Services, Government agencies, and allied governments.

**3.6. Counterterrorism (CT).** Counterterrorism consists of offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism; this includes intelligence gathering and threat analysis in support of those measures. AFSOF fixed-wing and vertical-lift aircraft are well suited to support Counterterrorism operations. Additionally, AFSOF gunships can provide highly accurate and mobile firepower and could be especially important in the rapidly changing environment of a counterterrorist operation. Air refuelable AFSOF aircraft could enhance flexibility and reduce reaction time in meeting terrorist threats.

**3.7. Foreign Internal Defense (FID).** SOF are a primary means of providing US military expertise to other governments in support of their internal defense and development efforts. Providing such expertise in a timely and effective manner can preclude deployment or combat involving the conventional or strategic forces of the United States.

3.7.1. The purpose is to help host nations protect their own internal development of economic, social, political, and military segments. The primary role of SOF in this US Government interagency activity is to train, advise, and assist host nation military and paramilitary forces.

3.7.2. Within a foreign country, the US Government organizes its departments, agencies, and military Services into a country team to promote a united and coordinated effort to prevent and defeat insurgency as well as to help combat lawlessness and subversion. Normally, the senior members of all US Government agencies assigned within a host country form the country team. The head of the country team is the US ambassador or senior US diplomatic representative. This team provides the central management, coordination, and integration of diplomatic, economic, and military efforts. Nonmilitary efforts designed to eliminate the political, economic, and social conditions that supported the original insurgency are often the most critical to successful collective security operations. If US military action is necessary, USAF can provide a broad range of assistance. This could range from training host nation units, to airlift, to direct support.

3.7.2.1. The extent of USAF participation in civic action programs varies with the needs of the individual country, the resources available, and the host government's willingness to use help. Historically, the host government achieves the best and most long-lasting results through self-help programs.

3.7.2.2. DOD usually gives the USAF responsibility in developing host nation essential air facilities -- including the communications necessary for control, navigation, and meteorological support. An important objective in these actions is to facilitate contact between the central government and the people, particularly in rural areas.

3.7.2.3. US assistance should be compatible with host nation needs and capabilities. USAF should help the host nation develop a capability to gather intelligence and conduct visual and photo reconnaissance through discriminating research and evaluation of every available human, documentary, and material resource. Also, USAF should train the host nation security forces to protect vital assets (including air assets), identify targets, choose weapons and mode of delivery, develop proper techniques for supporting ground forces, and develop logistics and supply systems.

3.7.2.4. USAF may also provide continuous, long-term guidance in the operational employment of indigenous air units and supporting activities. The presence and active support of USAF demonstrates firm US resolve and provides a base for expanding US efforts as required. If the situation deteriorates or escalates, the ambassador, in conjunction with the combatant commander may request additional assistance and guidance. Joint Pub 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense* and AFDD 36, *Foreign Internal Defense*, provide detailed information on foreign internal defense.

**3.8. Psychological Operations (PSYOP).** Dedicated PSYOP forces are assigned to USSOCOM and can conduct operations in conjunction with other SO missions,

or employ in support of general purpose forces. SO can support strategic, operational, tactical, or consolidation PSYOP objectives, by providing intelligence, leaflet delivery, or media broadcasts.

3.8.1. PSYOP can support the FID efforts of SO by targeting insurgents, local populace, military forces, and neutral forces. PSYOP can specifically assist FID efforts by helping discredit insurgent forces, and strengthening support for the host nation.

3.8.2. PSYOP may support UW by reaching out to resistance sympathizers and the uncommitted and by targeting hostile military forces and their sympathizers to achieve certain psychological effects in support of SO objectives.

3.8.3. PSYOP could also play a key role in DA, SR, CT action conducted by AFSOF. Effective PSYOP could maximize the psychological impact of successful operations and minimize the adverse impact of failed or compromised actions.

3.8.4. AFSOF can provide support to PSYOP. This support ranges from leaflet delivery to media broadcasts of PSYOP programs by specially configured aircraft. Commanders could also employ SOF against targets primarily for psychological effect. Joint Pub 3-53, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, and Joint Pub 3-13, *Command and Control Warfare Operations*, provide detailed information on PSYOP.

**3.9. Collateral SO Activities.** Because of some inherent platform and personnel capabilities, AFSOF may also be tasked to support missions other than those which SOF are principally organized, trained, and equipped. Some common collateral activities in which AFSOF may be tasked to participate include: security assistance, humanitarian assistance, antiterrorism and other security activities, counter-drug operations, personnel recovery, coalition support, and other special activities.

3.9.1. Security Assistance (SA) is a group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act, the Arms Export Control Act, or other related US statutes. The US Government provides defense articles and services, including training, to eligible foreign countries and international organizations that further US national security objectives. The primary SOF role in SA is to provide mobile training teams (MTT) and other forms of training assistance. Personnel providing SA services (to include mobile training assistance) are prohibited by law from performing combatant duties.

3.9.2. Humanitarian assistance refers to programs employing military personnel that are principally designed to promote nonmilitary objectives within a foreign civilian community. These objectives may include disaster relief, medical, veterinary and dental aid, rudimentary construction, water and sanitation assistance, and support to or resettlement of displaced civilians (refugees or evacuees).

3.9.3. Antiterrorism and other security activities reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorism. Responding to requests from the Services and other government agencies, SOF can provide training and advice on how to reduce vulnerability to terrorism and other hostile threats. SOF can also evaluate the adequacy of existing physical security systems against potential threats. When directed, SOF can augment existing security forces to protect important persons, resources, and events.

3.9.4. Counterdrug measures are interagency activities taken to disrupt, interdict, and destroy illicit drug activities. The primary SOF role is to support US and host nation counterdrug efforts abroad by advising, training, as well as assisting host nation military and paramilitary forces. When specifically authorized, SOF assist police operations targeted at the sources of narcotics.

3.9.5. AFSOF have the inherent capability to accomplish personnel recovery missions. AFSOF are not organized, trained, or equipped to conduct search and rescue or combat search and rescue. There may be situations, however, when the capabilities of AFSOF are required to

recover isolated personnel whose recovery may be beyond capabilities of other theater combat rescue forces. Often such personnel recovery missions would resemble DA operations. These are characterized by detailed planning, preparation, rehearsal, and thorough intelligence analysis. Alternatively, AFSOF could be tasked to recover downed personnel in conjunction with a SO mission.

3.9.6. AFSOF should be prepared to conduct SO under conditions of coalition support. SOF may be required to apply their broad range of military skills resident in SOF teams to provide liaison to coalition forces, thus facilitating interoperability.

3.9.7. Special Activities are governed by Executive Order and require presidential approval and congressional oversight. These are activities conducted abroad in support of national foreign policy objectives. They are normally conducted in such a manner that US Government participation is neither apparent nor publicly acknowledged. When supporting or conducting a special activity, AFSOF can perform any of its traditional missions, subject to the limitations imposed on special activities. Such activities are normally highly compartmented and centrally managed and controlled.

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## Chapter 4

### ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND AND CONTROL

**4.1. General Information.** SO command and control arrangements are normally more flexible and diverse than for conventional forces. The theater commander normally employs AFSOF through the commander of a theater Special Operations Command (COMSOC) or through the commanders of a Joint Task Force (CJTF) or Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF). COMSOC normally organizes AFSOF so that they can employ jointly with other special operation forces, or in support of the general purpose Service components. To facilitate certain mission requirements, COMSOC can be directed to transfer operational control (OPCON) or tactical control (TACON) of AFSOF to a CJTF or CJSOTF (see figures 4.1 and 4.2).

**4.2. Commander, Air Force Special Operations Component (COMAFSOC).** AFSOF may be organized into an Air Force Special Operations Component (AFSOC) for theater operations. An AFSOC may be a SO component of a unified command, Joint Task Force (JTF), joint special operations command, Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF), or a multinational force. An AFSOC is not normally a standing organization but is formed in response to a specific contingency or operation. When an AFSOC is formed it is normally named based on the region or contingency. As an example, an AFSOC

formed in the PACOM AOR could be named AFSOCPAC and would be commanded by COMAFSOCPAC.

4.2.1. The commander of a theater AFSOC normally directs, coordinates, and integrates the AFSOF air effort through control of assigned and attached Air Force resources. The AFSOC may be further structured into squadron sized detachments (AFSODs) or elements (AFSOEs). The size and composition of the organization depends on the nature and length of the mission, the type of aircraft and personnel involved, the type of sustainment required, and the characteristics of the facilities from which operations will be conducted.

**4.3. Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander (JSOACC).** The COMAFSOC may be dual-hatted as the JSOACC. The JSOACC is the commander within a SOC, JSOTF, or Joint Task Force responsible for planning and executing joint SO aviation missions and for coordinating and deconflicting SOF air operations with conventional air operations. The JSOACC is normally the commander of the SOC Service component providing the preponderance of SO aviation forces (for example airframes, STT, SOWT, support personnel) or the SOC Service component commander most capable of conducting, commanding and controlling SO missions (the requisite C<sup>4</sup>I infrastructure). As the

JSOACC, the COMAFSOC normally provides command and control, operations, logistics, transportation, intelligence, weather, communications, medical, maintenance, and security support for the joint SOF aviation forces.

4.3.1. The JSOACC is the single spokesperson for all SOF aviation concerns. The JSOACC is not a competitor to the JFACC. This individual's responsibilities closely parallel those of the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), but only as they relate to special operations. The JSOACC maintains liaison with the other SOF components and ensures the close, effective coordination of AFSOF activities with the JFACC through the Air Operations Center (AOC) or other Service components through their respective air operations centers.

4.3.2. Also, depending on the mission, the theater commander can assign other conventional air assets, either Air Force, Army, Navy, or Marines, under the OPCON or TACON of the SOC commander to provide additional support for discrete SOF operations.

**4.4. Responsibility for Coordination and Deconfliction.** The Joint Force Commander (JFC) normally designates the JFACC as the Area Air Defense Commander (AADC) and the Airspace Control Authority (ACA). Coordinating and deconflicting SO with joint conventional air operations is critical because SO often involve air or surface operations which transit the airspace control area, the air defense area, an amphibious objective area (AOA), or a joint operating area (JOA). While the JSOACC may coordinate SOF aviation operations directly with the JFACC, ACA, and AADC, the JFSOCC normally provides a special operations liaison element (SOLE) for this purpose.

4.4.1. The SOLE is normally composed of SO personnel with SOF weapon system, and other operational and functional expertise, such as STT and intelligence. It is normally located at the JFACC's AOC and coordinates, and where able, integrates SOF operations, as well as activation of Joint Special Operations Areas (JSOA), with the JFACC.

4.4.2. The SOLE can assist with the Air Tasking Order and Airspace Coordination Order generation, provide real-time mission support with the AOC, coordinate with the special plans function, and provide airspace management and deconfliction of SOF with conventional air forces. The SOLE's main purpose is to ensure the consistent, expeditious coordination of both SOF surface and air operations with the JFACC necessary to prevent duplicative targeting, airspace conflicts, and fratricide.

**4.5. Integrating SOF into Joint Air Operations.** Because SOF and the joint air forces share a common objective and a common operating environment, the SOF commander should closely coordinate, deconflict,

and where able, integrate operations with the JFACC. To effect this relationship, the SOF commander should provide a SOLE to the JFACC's headquarters. The SOLE is integrated into the JFACC's staff with representation in all major functional areas including combat plans, combat operations, and the Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSRC), (if collocated with the JFACC's headquarters).

4.5.1. The planning of "tomorrow's war" is the responsibility of AOC Combat Plans. Building the Air Tasking Order (ATO) and drafting the air operations plan to support the JFC's theater campaign is also a responsibility of combat plans. Another primary function is airspace deconfliction. This is normally where SOF air and surface operations are deconflicted from conventional air operations. The SOLE can ensure SOF operations are properly integrated into the ATO. The SOLE can also coordinate and publish Joint Special Operating Areas (JSOAs), allowing SOF ground and air forces to safely conduct operations without fear of friendly fire.

4.5.2. Combat Plans is normally responsible for long range planning. The SOLE is responsible for integrating SOF into the deep battle area. SOF personnel provide the necessary link which coordinates SOF into and with air operations. In addition to their primary theater objectives, SOF can contribute to joint air operations in one of four areas: First, SOF can act as an **economy of force measure**, striking certain targets which allow conventional assets to strike other priority targets. Second, SOF may be able to conduct some **surgical operations** which may be beyond the capability of conventional assets. Third, because of unique training or aircraft capability, SOF can also combine with conventional airpower in a **synergistic attack**. Finally, because of some inherent personnel and platform capabilities, SOF can provide other contributions enhancing the air campaign (**enhancement operations**). Each is discussed below.

4.5.2.1. Economy of force measures are those operations which can be conducted by either conventional air or SOF. By conducting these operations, SOF free up conventional air to conduct other priority or deeper operations. When considering employing SOF as an economy of force measure, commanders should ensure the mission meets the SOF mission criteria outlined in chapter 2.

4.5.2.2. SOF assets can also conduct certain surgical operations which may be beyond the capabilities of conventional airpower. Surgical operations can also be used when conventional bombing may be considered too costly (in terms of collateral damage) and could counter US goals and objectives. SOF has the capability to destroy targets which may be either mobile or concealed to the air (for example, triple canopy jungle and camouflaged concealment). SOF can also be employed when the intent is to damage a target, rather than destroy it.

4.5.2.3. Synergistic attack is an operation SOF and conventional airpower conduct jointly, but may not be able to conduct independently. These operations enhance the effectiveness of both SOF and conventional airpower, thereby providing an effect in total which is greater than the sum of the parts. With sophisticated equipment, SOF personnel and assets can operate in a hunter-scout or hunter-killer role by designating targets for conventional assets visually, electronically, or optically. SOF can also locate perishable targets, or those targets which can be disassembled and relocated, and can then positively identify and designate them for airpower to destroy. SOF can also act in a pathfinder role. Because of sophisticated navigation equipment, SOF aviation assets have traditionally been employed to lead in other fixed- and rotary-wing assets. Additionally, SOF personnel have been used to place navigation beacons at key locations, allowing conventional assets to update their navigation equipment. This action can increase bombing accuracy and reduce possibilities of collateral damage.

4.5.2.4. Because of inherent personnel and platform capabilities, SOF assets provide capabilities which can enhance the overall air campaign. SOF may be tasked to conduct certain combat rescue operations and can be used during psychological operations. Select SOF aircraft are capable of broadcasting messages on both military and civilian frequencies, to include radio and television. All SOF aircraft are capable of conducting leaflet operations. Some are capable of delivering the 15,000 pound BLU-82, which can be used as a psychological warfare weapon or to create instant helicopter landing zones.

4.5.3. The SOLE is also represented in the AOC Combat Operations where the JFACC fights "today's war." Execution of the daily ATO is carried out by combat operations. This organization closely follows the actions

of "today's war," shifting missions from their scheduled times or targets and making adjustments as the situation changes. The SOLE monitors each mission, providing real-time deconfliction and appraising the JFACC's staff of any changes in the tactical scenario. Because the air and space environment is so dynamic, SOF personnel should work very closely with personnel in the AOC. This is where decisions may be made to divert joint force assets to support SOF operations and where SOF can be requested to do the same for JFACC operations. Divert decisions may be necessary for assets that are on the ATO for coordination purposes and not directly tasked by the JFACC (for example, component direct support assets). Divert decisions approval must be coordinated through the component liaison officers.

4.5.4. The SOLE can also support the JSRC. Although not necessarily part of the JFACC's staff, the JSRC may collocate with the AOC, because it is the most up-to-date source of information concerning the deep battle area. The SOLE is composed of STT personnel who are familiar with SOF mission areas and who are also familiar with personnel recovery techniques and procedures. As in the AOC, SOF personnel monitor missions to assist in immediate personnel recovery planning, coordination, and execution.

4.5.5. There are a variety of other SOLE functions. Because of the size of the SOLE, it cannot be represented in every major function of the JFACC's headquarters. This becomes even more of a factor when conducting JFACC operations afloat. SOLE representatives are responsible for coordinating with other JFACC functions which include: Airspace Management/Air Defense Artillery Section, Air Mobility Element, Joint Reconnaissance Center, and other component elements, as required.

Figure 4.1. AFSOF Command Relationship-Generic Theater.

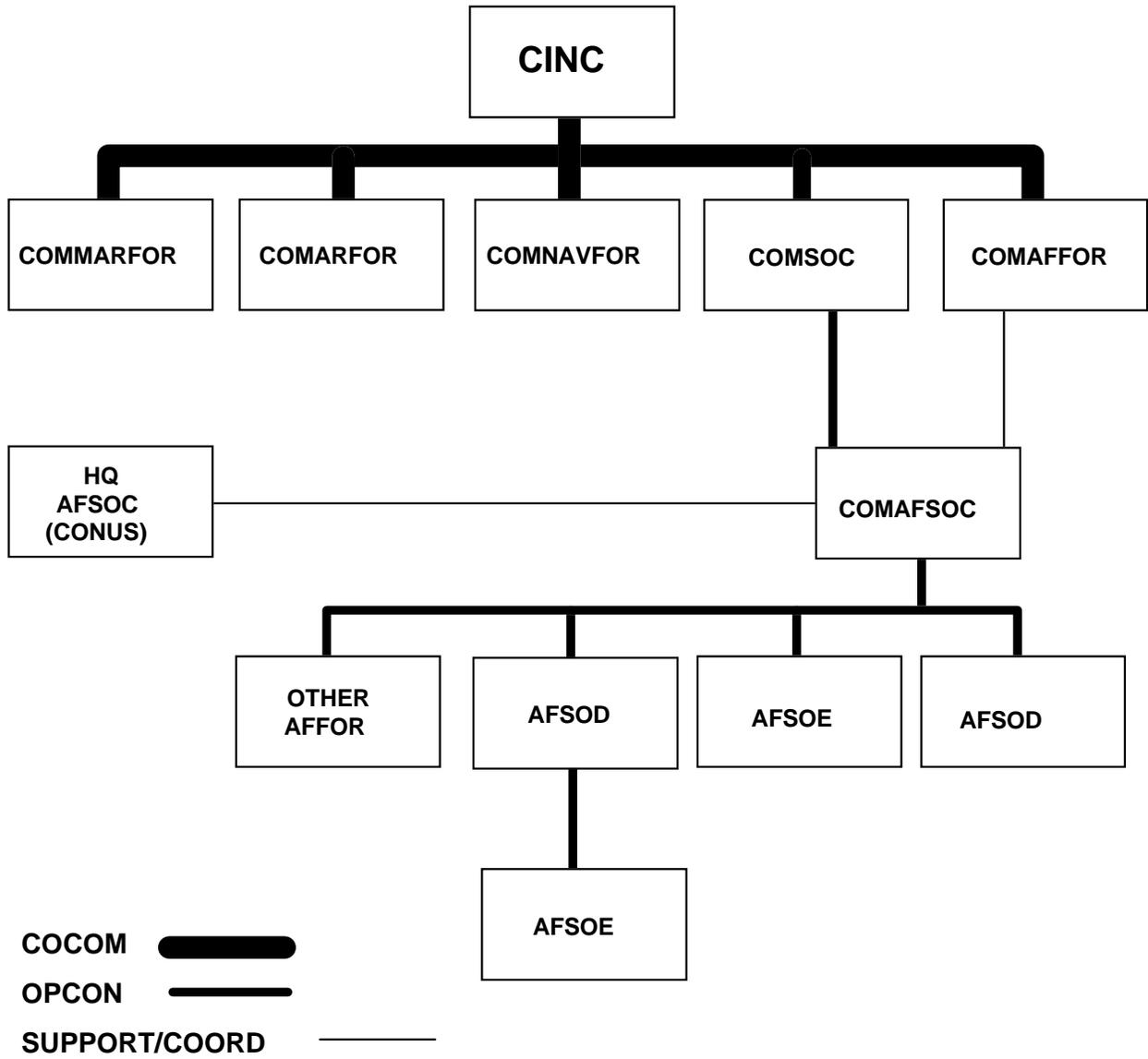
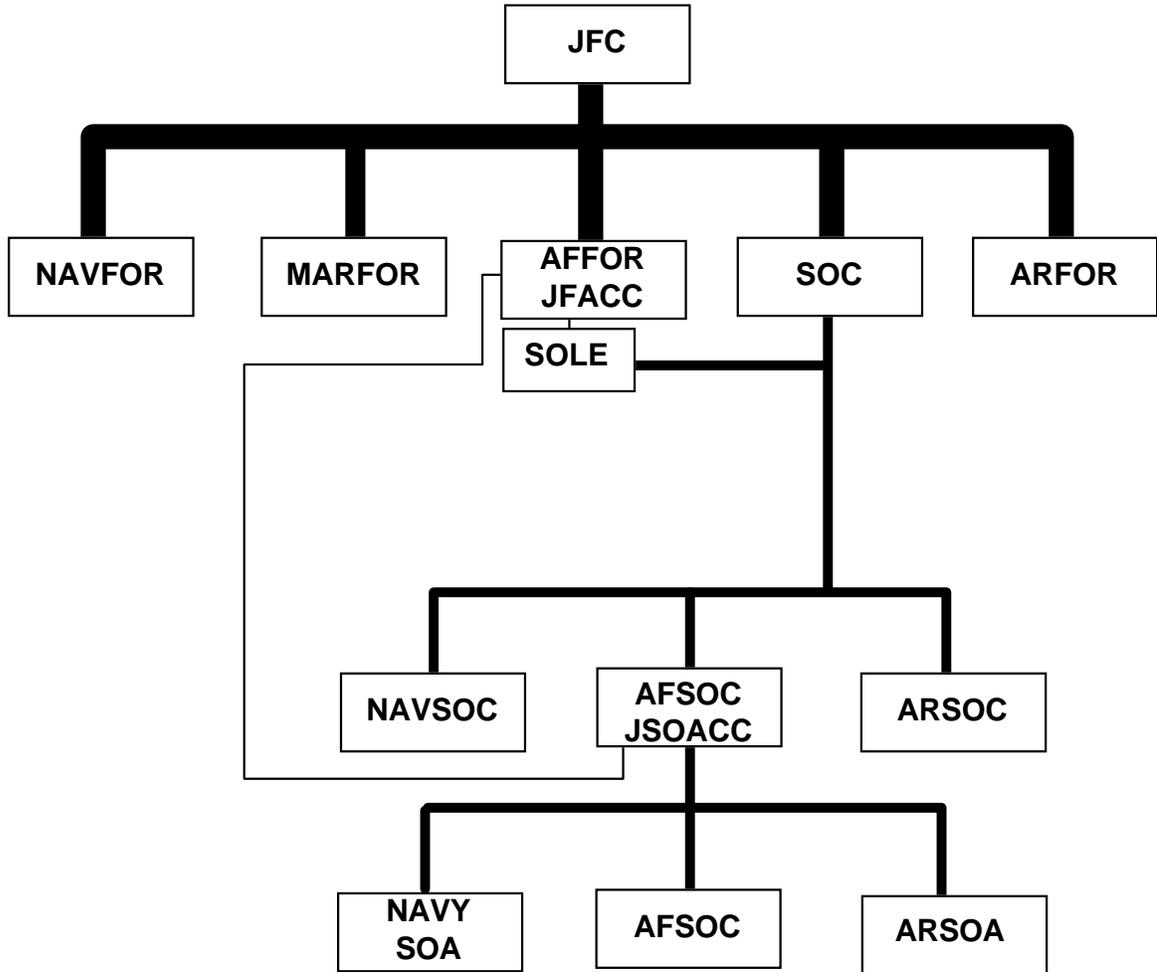


Figure 4.2. AFSOF Command Relationship-Generic Join Force.



**COCOM**

**OPCON**

**SUPPORT/COORD**

**NOTES:**

1. ASSUMES COMAFFOR AND COMAFSOC HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED JFACC AND JSOACC.
2. SOLE IS LOCATED AT JFACC'S AOC BUT UNDER OPCON OF SOC.

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## Chapter 5

### AFSOF EMPLOYMENT

**5.1. General Information.** Commanders have a multitude of options and considerations when employing AFSOF. As in conventional operations, a commander should consider the force size and capabilities, support requirements, environmental factors, rules of engagement, and other pertinent factors when determining how to achieve military objectives. SOF personnel should routinely conduct joint mission planning on a face-to-face basis. Experience has demonstrated that the people who execute missions should be involved in the planning from the beginning. For example, it would be extremely advantageous for a SOF aircrew to plan jointly with the infiltrating SOF ground unit.

**5.2. Conditions of Employment.** AFSOF train and equip to conduct operations at night and in adverse weather. When mission parameters permit, commanders should employ AFSOF during these conditions to fully exploit their capabilities. Commanders should consider the following advantages and disadvantages of night and adverse weather operations:

5.2.1. Adverse weather and night operations may offer significant advantages for special operations. While commanders should exploit the opportunities offered by darkness and adverse weather, they should not underestimate the harmful effects inclement weather has on SO or overestimate the ability of AFSOF to operate in extremely adverse weather.

5.2.2. Night Operations provide several advantages. AFSOF executing missions at night enhance operational security and tactical surprise through concealment and a possibly degraded enemy defensive posture. Darkness not only conceals the approach and withdrawal of AFSOF, it also conceals the size and composition of the force and enhances its chances of escape if detected. Where enemy forces are known to be postured for daylight operations only, commanders can exploit a relaxed readiness and decreased alertness of enemy defensive forces at night. Darkness enhances tactical surprise by permitting AFSOF to get closer to the target. Frequently, the enemy reduces its guard force levels at night and, if the enemy is not acclimated to or equipped for night operations, alertness levels decrease, due to human circadian rhythms. Finally, depending on enemy weapons and detection system capabilities, darkness can adversely affect the enemy's ability to coordinate a response.

5.2.3. Adverse weather gives AFSOF the same advantages as darkness by providing concealment, enhancing tactical surprise, and degrading the enemy's defensive posture. Each type of adverse weather offers unique operational advantages and limitations. Precipitation attenuates

enemy radar returns enhancing the ability of AFSOF to approach and withdraw from their target undetected, while extreme temperatures induce enemy forces to remain in shelters, further reducing AFSOF's potential exposure to the enemy.

5.2.4. Night Operations also have several disadvantages. The lack of visual references during darkness makes precise navigation and the identification of other aircraft difficult. Without visual references, AFSOF crews are dependent on electronic equipment for rendezvous operations.

5.2.5 Adverse weather presents AFSOF with the same disadvantages as night operations navigation. Adverse weather will also make rendezvous operations more difficult. Each type of inclemency has unique disadvantages for AFSOF. When planning SO missions, planners should take the following factors into consideration.

5.2.5.1. Temperature outside the human comfort zone may have adverse effects on SOF missions from temperature-related injuries (such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, and frostbite). Hot or cold operating environments normally increase the personal equipment load and resupply requirements of each SOF unit, decreasing its mobility and the amount of armament the unit can carry. The increased load further limits aircraft range and numbers of SOF personnel and equipment the aircraft can carry. Cold temperatures also decrease battery life as well as degrade electronic devices and communications equipment. Extreme heat may adversely impact operation of electronic devices by causing overheating or premature failure.

5.2.5.2. Heavy precipitation may interfere with the navigation capability of AFSOF aircraft. It also increases the difficulty of land navigation and rate of overland movement for AFSOF surface forces; however, these disadvantages are generally offset by the advantages of concealment and tactical surprise. Precipitation also reduces visual cues that AFSOF crews use to backup electronic navigation systems. SOF transported by air can have their effectiveness reduced by motion sickness brought on by turbulence associated with precipitation. Freezing precipitation can cause severe icing conditions and preclude low-level flying activities (in-flight refueling, airdrops, takeoffs, and landings).

5.2.5.3. Sand and dust storms may have an adverse impact on AFSOF aircraft operations, degrading equipment performance and requiring more maintenance. They can also increase navigational problems for ground

operating AFSOF units, while decreasing the ability of these units to observe enemy forces and activity.

5.2.5.4. High sea states can restrict operation of boats and craft infiltrating or exfiltrating SOF, as well as hampering recovery of personnel in the water by AFSOF. Sea conditions, along with high winds, can complicate AFSOF helicopter operations from ships.

5.2.5.5. Strong wind over rough terrain causes turbulence which can fatigue aircrew members, as well as passengers. This turbulence may preclude low-level flying activities.

Also, the risk associated with parachute infiltration of SOF units significantly increases with wind velocity. Depending on parachute type, each parachute infiltration will have a wind threshold which may preclude execution of the infiltration.

5.2.6. Contaminated areas may limit AFSOF employment options. Commanders should consider AFSOF capabilities, equipment, and operating limitations when conducting SO in an NBC environment.

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## Chapter 6

### SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS

**6.1. Security.** Operations security (OPSEC) and physical security are vitally important to AFSOF from initial planning stages to force recovery stages of a special operation. Mission critical information and OPSEC indicators should be controlled to prevent the enemy from planning and acting against AFSOF. From secure training sites to secure employment bases, the small, tailored AFSOF should be shielded from undesired attention and hostile intelligence collectors. Special arrangements should be made to control OPSEC indicators and inadvertent information release. For example, secure communications should be virtually undetectable during most SO missions. Effective planning and coordination can ensure information is adequately controlled, and that procedures or requirements do not inhibit access to equipment or activities necessary for flexible operations.

**6.2. Intelligence Information.** AFSOF planning and execution is intelligence-intensive. All-source intelligence should be broad in scope, yet minutely detailed. Intelligence collection and production agencies should respond rapidly to identified needs before and during mission planning and during mission execution.

6.2.1. Commanders should identify intelligence information requirements as early as possible to support anticipated and probable AFSOF missions. This will ensure that collection, production, and dissemination agencies can provide the critical intelligence needed.

6.2.1.1. Commanders should use all-source intelligence (collection) from both organic and external intelligence sources for special operations.

6.2.1.2. Organic collection capabilities include aircrew members; local and host country personnel; AFSOF aircraft airborne sensors (infrared, radar, and low-light television recorders); and STTs, SOWTs, and attached ground personnel.

6.2.1.3. External collection capabilities include the following: Army, Navy, and allied SOF units, National

Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Air Intelligence Agency, Defense Mapping Agency, US Space Command, and theater command collection assets.

6.2.2. While some of the information collected by intelligence sensors and sources can be used directly in a near-real-time mode, most should be processed and interpreted (production) to provide the basic intelligence needed to execute SO missions. AFSOF intelligence personnel have the responsibility to gather, collate, integrate, and produce intelligence and mapping, charting, and geodesy (MC&G) that supports AFSOF operations from both organic and external collection and production agencies. The resulting intelligence products should support:

- Development of SOF mission folders.
- Mission planning and rehearsal.
- Development of evasion and escape plans for all missions.
- Development of combat tactics and concepts of employment based on expected threat scenarios.
- Mission execution.
- Combat assessment.

6.2.3. Post-mission reports (dissemination) on organically-collected intelligence, target area analysis, and intelligence assessments may be constrained by the sensitivity of many types of SOF missions. Depending on the sensitivity of the mission, commanders should report data acquired during special or covert operations either through special access or routine intelligence reports or channels.

6.2.4. When working with external collection and production agencies, AFSOF intelligence personnel should ensure intelligence required by AFSOF units is sanitized or decompartmented to the appropriate level.

**6.3. Communications.** AFSOF communications support falls into two categories: command and control communications and mission support. Communications

for command and control deal with operation and execution. The sensitivity of SO can require communications connectivity from the NCA to the mission commander. Mission-support communications can support planning, intelligence, logistics, and other functions at an Air Force SO location. AFSOF normally require dedicated communications specialists and equipment to provide a rapidly deployable communication capability.

6.3.1. Communications are integral to mission planning. Ideally, systems should provide alternative methods of communication in case of equipment failure, adverse atmospheric conditions (propagation), or natural and man-made interference, etc. However, commanders should consider actions to be taken with and without communications during all phases of the mission. Communications failure is not the same as communications silence and can be catastrophic. Communications should provide connectivity with other component SOF and any supporting or augmenting conventional forces. Additionally, computer systems should be interoperable among supporting organizations.

6.3.2. To enhance deployability and reliability, SOF communication equipment should be lightweight, secure, jam-resistant, survivable, maintainable, interoperable with other SOF units, and as small as practical. Organic communications should include intelligence communications channels to receive "sensitive" compartmented information which may have an impact on mission planning, targeting, escape and evasion, and threat reaction forces.

**6.4. Logistics.** The interrelationship between tactics, strategy, and logistics is especially critical to AFSOF where the technological edge can help offset enemy defenses and adequate sustainment can provide vital insurance against the unexpected. The Air Force Component is responsible for providing logistics support to AFSOF. When deployed, AFSOF is normally supported by the theater Air Force component commander unless otherwise provided for by directives. AFSOF should provide sustainment requirements to the Air Force component logisticians during both deliberate and crisis action planning. This is necessary to ensure requirements are included in the operations plan or operations order time-phased force and deployment data. Requirements can then be sourced by the logistics agencies and distributed by the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System. Coordination of the AFSOF logistics support concept with the Air Force component logisticians, and early identification of requirements, are key to responsive sustainment support. If the theater Air Force commander cannot satisfy the AFSOF sustainment requirements, then the theater commander may direct another Service to provide this support.

6.4.1. AFSOF should have the ability to execute time-sensitive, discreet deployments. In addition to speed, the system used to mobilize and deploy SOF should be able to function in an environment where OPSEC is so strict as to preclude normal predeployment coordination. This heightened security environment may necessitate significant tailoring of established mobilization procedures at the unit level. AFSOF's day-to-day activities should closely resemble its deployment processing activities.

6.4.2. Highly specialized airplanes operating in small numbers should be adequately supported by Readiness Spares Packages (RSP). RSP should be maintained at sufficient levels to ensure a quick response and sustained operating capability for short duration contingencies. A broken airplane that generates out-of-the-ordinary communications for maintenance parts can ruin an otherwise perfect OPSEC plan or, worse, result in mission failure.

**6.5. Weather.** AFSOF needs accurate and timely weather support during all phases of planning. The USAF has established the SOWT as the basic element designed to provide critical weather and oceanographic support for Air Force and Army special operations. Team composition is scenario-dependent, but generally consists of individuals to provide observation, forecasting, and staff weather officer services to deployed SOF.

**6.6. Space Support.** Space support systems can support SOF across the range of military operations, from initial planning through mission execution until force recovery. Space assets can provide assistance with communications, positioning and navigation, intelligence, and weather satellites. Traditional uses of space systems include Global Positioning System for precise all-weather navigation, and communications satellites for secure voice, data, and intelligence broadcasts. Satellite imagery and electronic intelligence can also be used for mission route planning, detection and threat avoidance, navigation, and objective area operations.

**6.7. Tactical Deception (TD).** It is extremely important for an AFSOF commander to use the appropriate tools to conduct a SOF mission. Commanders and operations planners should consider employing TD into battle plans and individual missions at the beginning of the planning process in order to support combat objectives and to enhance the overall probability of mission success. TD helps a commander to attain operational security and surprise by causing an adversary to misallocate combat, combat support, or intelligence force resources, in time, place, or quantity applications. TD planning processes parallel and complement the normal sequence of operations planning actions, therefore TD planners should be involved in all phases of execution planning.

**6.8. Training.** SO place extraordinary demands on assigned personnel. Taskings are demanding and require knowledgeable, trained individuals. Many of the AFSOF weapon systems are unique within the USAF, and training requirements vary with each system. To ensure combat readiness, AFSOF should train to its most demanding standards. To complement training, AFSOF should also acquire and use mission planning and rehearsal devices which ensure mission readiness and success.

**6.9. Legal Matters.** AFSOF can be employed across the range of military operations. Depending on the situation, tactical decision authority may rest on an on-scene commander or the NCA. Consequently, it is important that all participants in a special operation have an adequate appreciation for the legal considerations of the mission. Legal advice begins during training and continues throughout mission planning and mission execution. Legal training for AFSOF should extend beyond the required legal briefings conducted annually for all personnel and include relevant US law, international law, and the law of armed conflict issues. Failure to comply with these laws could bring discredit upon the United States, subject the violator to prosecution under US law or the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and possibly deny legal protection to SOF personnel in the event of their capture or detention. During actual operations, the commander and his or her staff should have access to legal advice as the mission progresses.

**6.10. Medical Information.** SO medical support requirements depend on the number of supported personnel, their location, the military situation, and access to existing medical facilities. AFSOF missions often test the limits of crew endurance. Crews often operate from areas where lack of preventive medicine could result in mission degradation. In addition to rendering routine or emergency medical care to deployed personnel, SO medical personnel should be able to ensure

applicable elementary field sanitation and hygiene, disease prevention and control, vector control and prevention, and environmental risk factor assessment and control.

6.10.1. SO medical personnel should provide detailed analysis for planning and intelligence functions. They should be aware of potential health hazards, endemic diseases, and other related data associated with the destination country.

6.10.2. Recovery of hostages or survivors normally presents unique medical considerations for those who have been subjected to traumatic events. Hostages or survivors may be confused, apprehensive, physically incapacitated, or act in a manner that can impede their rescue. SOF personnel conducting personnel recovery missions should also be prepared may need to covertly use indigenous medical facilities to support hostage recovery operations.

6.10.3. AFSOF medical personnel may be required to provide organic evacuation to points where conventional airlift and aeromedical evacuation are located. To support this requirement, selected AFSOF medical personnel should be trained to provide initial aeromedical evacuation support within areas restricted to SOF operations. SO planning should consider evacuation interface, outline hand-off procedures with conventional medical and aeromedical evacuation forces, and employment of organic medical resources to provide limited stabilization prior to evacuation.

**6.11. Safety.** Commanders should ensure that AFSOF combat capability is preserved by minimizing the unnecessary loss of personnel, equipment and materiel resources through mishaps. Safety staffs identify, evaluate, and recommend corrective actions for hazards associated with employing weapon systems and satisfying operational and training requirements. Commanders, functional managers, and supervisors directing AFSOF should eliminate and reduce risks and hazards consistent with mission requirements.

RONALD R. FOGLEMAN, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

**GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND TERMS**

This glossary includes abbreviations and acronyms used in this publication and others commonly encountered when working with or supporting special operations.

<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	<i>Definitions</i>
AADC	Area Air Defense Commander
ACA	Airspace Control Authority
ADA	Air Defense Artillery
AFCC	Air Force Component Commander
AFFOR	Air Force forces
AFRES	Air Force Reserve
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command (in theater, Air Force Special Operations Component)
AFSOD	Air Force Special Operations Detachment
AFSOE	Air Force Special Operations Element
AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Forces
ANG	Air National Guard
AOA	Amphibious Objective Area
AOC	Air Operations Center
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ARSOA	Army SO Aviation
ARSOC	Army Special Operations Command (in theater, Army Special Operations Component)
ARSOE	Army Special Operations Element
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATO	Air Tasking Order
AWADS	Adverse Weather Aerial Delivery System
C <sup>2</sup>	Command and Control
C <sup>4</sup> I	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence
CA	Civil Affairs
CAS	Close Air Support
CD	Counterdrug
CINC	Commander in Chief
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
CJSOTF	Commander, Joint Special Operations Task Force
CJTF	Commander, Joint Task Force
COCOM	Combatant Command (command authority)
COMAFSOC	Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command (in theater, Component)
COMJTF	Commander, Joint Task Force
COMSOP	Commander, Special Operations Command (in theater, Component)
CONPLAN	Operation Plan in Concept Form
CSAR	Combat Search and Rescue
CT	Counterterrorism
DA	Direct Action
DOC	Designed Operational Capability
DOD	Department of Defense
DZ	Drop Zone
EA	Electronic Attack
E&E	Evasion and Escape
EWO	Electronic Warfare Officer
EZ	Extraction Zone
FARP	Forward Arming and Refueling Point
FLIR	Forward Looking Infrared Radar
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FOL	Forward Operating Location

**Abbreviations  
and Acronyms****Definitions**

GW	Guerrilla Warfare
HA	Humanitarian Assistance
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
IMC	Instrument Meteorological Conditions
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JFACC	Joint Force Air Component Commander
JFC	Joint Force Commander
JFSOCC	Joint Forces Special Operations Component Commander
JOA	Joint Operations Area
JSOA	Joint Special Operations Area
JSOACC	Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JSRC	Joint Search and Rescue Center
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTTP	Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
LPI/D	Low Probability of Intercept/Detection
LZ	Landing Zone
MC&G	Mapping, Charting, and Geodesy
METL	Mission-Essential Task List
MOB	Main Operating Base
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NAVSOCC	Naval Special Warfare Special Operations Command (in theater, Component)
NCA	National Command Authorities
NEO	Noncombatant Evacuation Operations
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
NSWG	Naval Special Warfare Group
NSWTG/TU	Naval Special Warfare Task Group/Task Unit
NSWU	Naval Special Warfare Unit
NVG	Night Vision Goggles
OPCON	Operational Control
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OPSEC	Operations Security
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
RSP	Readiness Spares Packages
SA	Security Assistance
SATCOM	Satellite Communications
SEAL	Sea-Air-Land (Team)
SF	Special Forces
SFG	Special Forces Group
SFOB	Special Forces Operations Base
SFOD	Special Forces Operational Detachment
SO	Special Operations
SOC	Special Operations Command
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOG	Special Operations Group
SOLE	Special Operations Liaison Element
SOLL II	Special Operations Low-Level (Qualification Level II)
SOS	Special Operations Squadron
SOTAC	Special Operations Terminal Attack Controller
SOW	Special Operations Wing
SOWT	Special Operations Weather Team
SR	Special Reconnaissance
SRC	Search and Rescue Center

**Abbreviations  
and Acronyms****Definitions**

STAR	Surface-To-Air-Recovery
STT	Special Tactics Team
TACON	Tactical Control
USCINCSOC	Commander in Chief, United States Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions

**Terms**

Unless identified as extracted from Joint Pub 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, terminology is applicable only in the context of this document and is identified by AFDD 35.

***Air Force Special Operations Component (AFSOC)***--The Air Force component of a joint force SO component. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Air Force Special Operations Detachment (AFSOD)***--A squadron-size headquarters, which could be a composite organization composed of different Air Force SO assets. The detachment is normally subordinate to an Air Force SO component, Joint SO Task Force, or Joint Task Force, depending upon size and duration of the operation. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Air Force Special Operations Element (AFSOE)***--An element-size Air Force SO headquarters. It is normally subordinate to an Air Force SO component or detachment, depending upon size and duration of the operation. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF)***--Those active and reserve component Air Force forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. (Joint Pub 1-02) Included under AFSOF management and Service proponency are reserve component PSYOP units.

***Antiterrorism***--Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include limited response and containment by local military forces. See also Counterterrorism and Terrorism. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Army Special Operations Component (ARSOC)***--The Army component of a joint force special operations component. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF)***--Those active and reserve component Army forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Civil Affairs (CA)***--The activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces and civil authorities, both governmental and nongovernmental, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile area of operations in order to facilitate military operations and consolidate operational objectives. Civil affairs may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of local government. These activities may occur prior to, during, or subsequent to other military actions. They may also occur, if directed, in the absence of other military operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Clandestine Operation***--An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of identity of sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Close Air Support**--Air action by fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft against hostile targets which are in close proximity to friendly forces and which require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Also called CAS. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Coalition Force**--A force composed of military elements of nations that have formed a temporary alliance for some specific purpose. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Combatant Command (Command Authority) (COCOM)**--Nontransferable command authority established by title 10, United States Code, section 164, exercised only by commanders of unified or specified combatant commands unless otherwise directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense. Combatant command (command authority) is the authority of a combatant commander to perform those functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to the command. Combatant command (command authority) should be exercised through the commanders of subordinate organizations; normally this authority is exercised through the Service or functional component commander. Combatant command (command authority) provides full authority to organize and employ commands and forces as the combatant commander considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Combat Recovery**--The act of retrieving resources while engaging enemy forces.

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

**Conventional Forces**--Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons. (Joint Pub 1-02) Also, those forces not specially trained, equipped, and organized to conduct SO (see also special operations).

**Counterdrug (CD)**--Those active measures taken to detect, monitor, and counter the production, trafficking, and use of illegal drugs. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Counterinsurgency**--Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Counterterrorism (CT)**--Offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Covert Operation**--An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. A covert operation differs from a clandestine operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of identity of sponsor rather than on concealment of the operation. (Joint Pub 1-02) In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine.

**Deception**--Those measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence to induce him to react in a manner prejudicial to his interests. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Direct Action (DA)**--Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions by special operations forces to seize, destroy, capture, recover, or inflict damage on designated personnel or materiel. In the conduct of these operations, SOF may employ raid, ambush, or direct assault tactics; emplace mines and other munitions; conduct standoff attacks by fire from air, ground, or maritime platforms; provide terminal guidance for precision-guided munitions; and conduct independent sabotage. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Evasion and Escape**--The procedures and operations whereby military personnel and other selected individuals are enabled to emerge from an enemy-held or hostile area to areas under friendly control. (Joint Pub 1-02)

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

**Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP)**--A temporary facility, organized, equipped, and deployed by an aviation commander, and normally located in the main battle area closer to the area of operation than the aviation unit's combat service area, to provide fuel and ammunition necessary for the employment of aviation maneuver units in combat. The forward arming and refueling point permits combat aircraft to rapidly refuel and rearm simultaneously. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Forward Operations Base (FOB)**--In special operations, a base usually located in friendly territory or afloat that is established to extend command and control or communications or to provide support for training and tactical operations. Facilities may be established for temporary or longer duration operations and may include an airfield or an unimproved airstrip, an anchorage, or a pier. An forward operations base may be the location of special operations component headquarters or a smaller unit that is controlled and/or supported by a main operations base. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Guerrilla Force**--A group of irregular, predominantly indigenous personnel organized along military lines to conduct military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held, hostile, or denied territory. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Guerrilla Warfare (GW)**--Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces. (Joint Pub 1-02) GW may also be conducted in politically denied areas.

**Humanitarian Assistance**--Programs conducted 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. Humanitarian assistance provided by US forces is limited in scope and duration. The assistance provided is designed to supplement or complement the efforts of the host nation civil authorities or agencies that may have the primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Infiltration**--1. The movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. When used in connection with the enemy, it infers that contact is avoided. 2. In intelligence usage, placing an agent or other person in a target area in hostile territory. Usually involves crossing a frontier or other guarded line. Methods of infiltration are: black (clandestine); grey (through legal crossing point but under false documentation); white (legal). (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Insurgency**--An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Joint Force Commander (JFC)**--A general term applied to a commander authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a joint force. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC)**--The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of SOF and assets, planning and coordinating special operations, or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. The JFSOCC is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander. The JFSOCC will normally be the commander with the preponderance of SOF and the requisite command and control capabilities. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander (JSOACC)**--The commander within the joint force special operations command responsible for planning and executing joint special air operations and for coordinating and deconflicting such operations with conventional non special operations air activities. The joint special operations air component commander normally will be the commander with the preponderance of assets and/or greatest ability to plan, coordinate, allocate, task, control, and support the assigned joint special operations aviation assets. The joint special operations air component commander may be directly subordinate to the joint force special operations component commander or to any nonspecial operations component or joint force commander as directed. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Joint Special Operations Area (JSOA)**--A restricted area of land, sea, and airspace assigned by a joint force commander to the commander of joint SOF to conduct special operations activities. The commander of joint SOF may further assign a specific area or sector within the joint special operations area to a subordinate commander for mission execution. The scope and duration of the SOF' mission, friendly and hostile situation, and politico-military considerations all influence the number, composition, and sequencing of SOF deployed into a joint special operations area. It may be limited in size to

accommodate a discrete direct action mission or may be extensive enough to allow a continuing broad range of unconventional warfare operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF)**--A joint task force composed of special operations units from more than one Service, formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. The joint special operations task force may have conventional nonspecial operations units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Main Operations Base (MOB)**--In special operations, a base established by a joint force special operations component commander or a subordinate special operations component commander in friendly territory to provide sustained command and control, administration, and logistical support to special operations activities in designated areas. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)**--The range of military actions required by the National Command Authorities, except those associated with major combat operations conducted pursuant to a declaration of war or authorized by the War Powers Limitation Act, in support of national security interests and objectives. These military actions can be applied to complement any combination of the other instruments of national power and occur before and after war.

**Naval Special Warfare (NSW)**--A specific term describing a designated naval warfare specialty and covering operations generally accepted as being unconventional in nature and, in many cases, covert or clandestine in character. These operations include using specially trained forces assigned to conduct unconventional warfare, psychological operations, beach and coastal reconnaissance, operational deception operations, counterinsurgency operations, coastal and river interdiction, and certain special tactical intelligence collection operations that are in addition to those intelligence functions normally required for planning and conducting special operations in a hostile environment. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Naval Special Warfare Forces (NAVSOF)**--Those Active and Reserve component Navy forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Naval Special Warfare Group (NSWG)**--A permanent Navy echelon III major command to which most naval special warfare forces are assigned for some operational and all administrative purposes. It consists of a group headquarters with command and control, communications, and support staff; sea-air-land teams; and sea-air-land delivery vehicle teams. The group is the source of all deployed naval special warfare forces and administratively supports the naval special warfare units assigned to the theater combatant commanders. The group staff provides general operational direction and coordinates the activities of its subordinate units. A naval special warfare group is capable of task-organizing to meet a wide variety of requirements. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Naval Special Warfare Special Operations Component (NAVSOC)**--The Navy special operations component of a unified or subordinate unified command or joint special operations task force. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Naval Special Warfare Task Group (NSWTG)**--A provisional naval special warfare organization that plans, conducts, and supports special operations in support of fleet commanders and joint force special operations component commanders. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Naval Special Warfare Task Unit (NSWTU)**--A provisional subordinate unit of a naval special warfare task group. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Naval Special Warfare Unit (NSWU)**--A permanent Navy organization forward based to control and support attached naval special warfare forces. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Operational Control (OPCON)**--Transferable command authority that may be exercised by commanders at any echelon at or below the level of combatant command. Operational control is inherent in Combatant Command (command authority) and is the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Operational control includes authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations and joint training necessary to accomplish missions assigned to the command. Operational control should be exercised through the commanders of subordinate organizations; normally this authority is exercised through the Service component commanders.

Operational control normally provides full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions. Operational control does not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Operations Security (OPSEC)**--A process of identifying critical information and subsequently analyzing friendly actions attendant to military operations and other activities to: a. Identify those actions that can be observed by adversary intelligence systems. b. Determine indicators hostile intelligence systems might obtain that could be interpreted or pieced together to derive critical information in time to be useful to adversaries. c. Select and execute measures that eliminate or reduce to an acceptable level the vulnerabilities of friendly actions to adversary exploitation. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Overt Operation**--An operation conducted openly, without concealment. See also clandestine operation; covert operation. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Perishable Target**--A force or activity at a specific location whose value as a target can decrease substantially during a specified time. A significant decrease in value occurs when the target moves or the operational circumstances change to the extent that the target is no longer lucrative. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Psychological Operations (PSYOP)**--Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Raid**--An operation, usually small scale, involving a swift penetration of hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or to destroy installations. It ends with a planned withdrawal upon completion of the assigned mission. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Rangers**--Rapidly deployable airborne light infantry organized and trained to conduct highly complex joint direct action operations in coordination with or in support of special operations units of all Services. Rangers also can execute direct action operations in support of conventional nonspecial operations missions conducted by a combatant commander and can operate as conventional light infantry when properly augmented with other elements of combined arms. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) Team**--A naval force specially organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations in maritime, littoral, and riverine environments. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Search and Rescue (SAR)**--The use of aircraft, surface craft, submarines, specialized rescue teams and equipment to search for and rescue personnel in distress on land or at sea. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Security Assistance (SA)**--Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services, by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Forces (SF)**--US Army forces organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct special operations. Special forces have five primary missions: unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, direct action, special reconnaissance, and counterterrorism. Counterterrorism is a special mission for specially organized, trained, and equipped special forces units designated in theater contingency plans. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Forces Group (SFG)**--A combat arms organization capable of planning, conducting, and supporting special operations activities in all operational environments in peace, conflict, and war. It consists of a group headquarters and headquarters company, a support company, and special forces battalions. The group can operate as a single unit, but normally the battalions plan and conduct operations from widely separated locations. The group provides general operational direction and synchronizes the activities of subordinate battalions. Although principally structured for unconventional warfare, special forces group units are capable of task-organizing to meet specific requirements. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Forces Operations Base (SFOB)**--A command, control, and support base established and operated by a special forces group or battalion from organic and attached resources. The base commander and staff coordinate and synchronize the activities of subordinate and forward-deployed forces. A special forces operations base is normally established for an extended period of time to support a series of operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Operations (SO)**--Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted during peacetime competition, conflict, and war, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, nonspecial operations forces. Political-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques and oversight at the national level. SO differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Operations Command (SOC)**--A subordinate unified or other joint command established by a joint force commander to plan, coordinate, conduct, and support joint SO within the joint force commander's assigned area of operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Operations Forces (SOF)**--Those active and reserve component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Operations Low Level (SOLL)**--Selected airlift SOLL crews trained to augment core AFSOF by performing specialized low-level flight. SOLL are limited to a no-to-low threat environment during visual weather conditions.

**Special Operations Liaison Element (SOLE)**--A special operations liaison team provided by the JFSOCC to the JFACC (if designated) to coordinate, deconflict, and integrate SO air and surface operations with conventional air. (AFDD 35)

**Special Operations Terminal Attack Controller (SOTAC)**--Selected Special Tactics Combat Controllers who are specially trained and certified to perform the terminal attack control function on a routine basis in support of SOF-specific missions. (AFDD 35)

**Special Operations Weather Team (SOWT)**--Specially organized, trained, and equipped Air Force weather personnel. These teams of Air Force weather people are organized, trained, and equipped to support Army and Air Force SOF units. They support unilateral or joint air, ground, and maritime special operations. Teams are trained to operate independently in permissive or uncertain environments, or as augmentation to other special operations elements in hostile environments. They are able to collect critical weather observations from data-sparse areas, generate mission tailored forecasts, and determine the impacts of meteorological and oceanographic conditions on operations in order to assist decision-makers in developing appropriate courses of action. (AFDD 35)

**Special Reconnaissance (SR)**--Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted by SOF to obtain or verify, by visual observation or other collection methods, information concerning the capabilities, intentions, and activities of an actual or potential enemy, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. It includes target acquisition, area assessment, and post-strike reconnaissance. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Special Tactics Team (STT)**--An Air Force team composed primarily of special operations combat control and pararescue personnel. The team supports joint SO by selecting, surveying, and establishing assault zones; providing assault zone terminal guidance and air traffic control; conducting direct action missions; providing medical care and evacuation; and, coordinating, planning, and conducting air, ground, and naval fire support operations. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Tactical Control (TACON)**--The detailed and, usually, local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. (Joint Pub 1-02)

**Terrorism**--The calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. (Joint Pub 1-02)

***Unconventional Warfare (UW)***--A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive, low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape. (Joint Pub 1-02)