

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES ROLES
IN ASYMMETRIC WARFARE

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

ABSTRACT

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES ROLES IN ASYMMETRIC WARFARE, by MAJ Heinz P. Dinter Jr., 122 pages.

The U.S. National Security Strategy is the basis of a preventive solution through *global engagement*, which fosters international interoperability and cooperation to defeat complex asymmetric threats. The study examined how U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) can advance this interoperability and cooperation, and identified three evolving roles; Strike Force, Warrior Diplomats, and Global Scouts. As they transition into the 21st century, the central research question is: will U.S. Army Special Forces need to redefine themselves in terms of mission, doctrine, training, or organization as a result of their evolving roles conditioned by an asymmetric threat environment?

The study examined the relevance of core, collateral, and emerging missions. It concluded that basic SF doctrine remains sound, but the changing environment and evolving roles of SF will call for a certain amount of *refinement*. Tactics, techniques, and procedures will change as new technologies are introduced into SF organizations, but emphasis on the human element remains essential, and SF core competencies and warrior skills must be preserved.

The study concluded with recommendations to preserve the relevance and efficiency of SF as the premier mechanism for extending U.S. influence in a world of increased global interaction, required to meet security needs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Given the U.S. supremacy in conventional forces and advanced weaponry, few potential opponents will deliberately seek a direct military confrontation with the United States. Instead, future adversaries who resort to some sort of military action against the United States will probably employ asymmetric strategies involving innovative yet affordable weapons and tactics designed to weaken U.S. resolve and impede the employment of its conventional military capabilities. A future opponent might employ nonconventional weapons (chemical, biological, or nuclear), terrorism, or even information warfare attacks against military or civilian targets on American or foreign territory to deter or impede U.S. intervention in a regional conflict.¹

Throughout history adversaries have sought to gain the advantage over one another. Often, opponents found they did not possess the means to gain the advantage over their enemies. For whatever reason, resources or technology, they found themselves inferior to their enemy. This imbalance meant an alternate or “asymmetrical” tactic would have to be utilized that would result in gaining an advantage that would otherwise be unachievable through traditional or conventional methods. These nonstandard tactics were derived from attempts to negate the other side's current advantages in technology, equipment, or organizational ability. Asymmetric warfare exploits the “Achilles heel” of an opponent. The simple timing of an attack, when the complacency of your opponent leaves him unwary and unprepared physically or geographically, will always result in a devastating form of achieving goals through asymmetry.

In 9 A.D., the Teutoburger Wald (Teutoburg Forest) was the scene of a significant battle in German history. The Roman Emperor Augustus decided to create the new province of Germania, stretching from the Rhine to the Elbe Rivers. In what amounted to a strategic blunder by the superpower of the day and a well-timed “asymmetric” attack, three Roman Legions under the general Publius Quintilius Varus, were annihilated in the forest by Teutonic tribes. These tribes had been clandestinely unified and organized by Arminius, the first German national hero. As a result of the battle, Rome lost all possessions east of the Rhine River, which became the northeastern boundary of the Roman Empire². This event sends an enduring message to modern day superpowers on the significance of understanding an opponent's motivations and convictions, and fully comprehending the means available at which he can achieve his goals.

The Roman Emperor Augustus decided, in 9 A.D., that the time had come to make Germania a full-fledged Roman province under the direct control of a Roman governor. He was convinced that such an expansion of Roman Empire lands was necessary to enhance Roman national security by protecting against excursions by barbarian tribes residing both in Germania and the lands east of the Elbe River. The combination of natural resources, agricultural potential, and strategic space made Germania quite attractive as a Roman province. One important resource Germania possessed in abundance was high quality iron, an important material even then. Thus, the newly acquired province would help to advance Roman “national prosperity.” The task of gaining the new province for the Roman Empire fell on the newly designated Roman governor of the future province of Germania, Publius Quintilius Varus. However, Augustus badly overestimated Roman influence with the Teutonic tribes. They were completely unwilling to accept the Roman provincial “status.” This miscalculation at the strategic level passed down to the operational level for resolution.³

The Teutonic tribes east of the Rhine were fiercely independent. Warriors by nature, they strongly opposed domination by anyone. As a result of the Roman efforts to

subjugate Germania, the great Teutonic leader and a young prince of the Cherusci tribe, Arminius, emerged and secretly united many of the quarreling Teutonic tribes to resist the Roman advance.⁴ Unfortunately for the Romans, Arminius gave every indication of being in league with them; even signing an alliance that gave him Roman citizenship and even the honor of being a Roman knight.

Arminius set the trap for the Roman disaster by employing deception. He arranged for Varus to receive false reports indicating that a supposed rebellion was emerging among some Teutonic tribes. Varus, at this point, decided to march on these “rebels” with enough force to either intimidate them into submission, or smash the resistance. Arminius even escorted Varus across the Rhine and traveled with him and the Roman force for a while as they marched northward. Arminius' plan for the Romans consisted of a massive ambush in a confined area of the Teutoburg Forest, through which he knew they would have to march.⁵ He combined his knowledge of the Roman mode of operation with a disinformation plan. Since his force would be much smaller and not as well equipped as the Romans, his attack would have to be asymmetrical in nature. His employment of personnel in a nonlinear manner, during less than ideal environmental conditions, altered the battlefield and negated the Roman advantage in military strength, organization, and equipment.

The advantage he sought to gain against the empirically stronger Roman force, would come when the Romans would be the most vulnerable to attack. His attack took advantage of dominating terrain that negated the “symmetry” of the Roman columns and would degrade their ability to engage. Arminius took advantage of the element of

surprise, as the attack would come at night. His “timing” of the asymmetric attack would amplify its devastating effects. Basically, the Romans would not know what hit them.

The initial combat took place in an area known as the Niewedder Senke, a narrow gap between some mountainous terrain and a large marsh. The Teutons, with some knowledge of ambush tactics, improved the engagement area by constructing walls and trenches to further inhibit the Roman ability to maneuver. The whole area was covered by thick forest making it an ideal large force ambush site. Varus moved his entire force into the Niewedder Senke in a long column six kilometers in length. The movement was difficult due to the undergrowth and even more so when it started to rain. The leather and wool clothing of the Romans became soaked with rain and weighed them down. Just as the lead element of the column reached the narrowest point of the Niewedder Senke, a thunderstorm struck. So did the Teutons. The Romans were completely surprised by the sudden attack by screaming savages leaping out of the dark woods and striking them through the sheets of rain. Punctuated by flashes of lightning and thunderclaps, the Romans must have thought they walked straight into the mouth of hell. The heavily wooded area offered the Romans little room to form ranks for a counterattack--a normal reaction of Roman legions on the march. The legions tried to form a defensive perimeter that also failed due to the obstacles employed by the Teutons and the sheer exhaustion of the Romans. The six companies of Teuton auxiliaries soon deserted. The unarmed logistics group was slaughtered with their animals. The situation slipped from desperation to despair. In the end the Romans simply threw away their arms and awaited their fate. Varus committed suicide by falling on his sword.⁶

The result was three Roman legions and three cavalry regiments, a force of about 10 percent of the Roman Army's strength, completely annihilated. Teutonic losses are unknown, but were probably light. To add to the psychological effect and to dishonor the Romans, the Teutons stripped the fallen Romans of everything of value and left their bodies unburied. Some bodies were decapitated and their heads nailed to trees. The head of Varus was sent back to a Roman official of the Rhine who forwarded it to Augustus.⁷ After Teutoburg Forest, a Rhine-Danube defensive line would become the permanent northern boundary of the Roman Empire until it disintegrated several centuries later under marauding hordes of barbarians.

The strategic defeat of the (Roman) superpower of the time sends a cautionary message to the last remaining superpower, the United States, today. The faulty judgment of political leaders and military commanders has been central to historic miscalculations that have often shaped the course of history, and should be examined today for lessons that may be applicable to future conflicts. Some of the gravest miscalculations come as a superpower strives to advance its national interests and objectives. Today, that translates into operations dealing with insurgency and pacification or peacekeeping. The United States has an oceanic source of intelligence products; however, these estimates concentrate on potential enemy "characteristics and capabilities." They rarely address true enemy intentions derived from his convictions or motivations, especially those that well-up from deep cultural, ethnic, and religious reservoirs of sentiment that result in fierce reactions to superpower actions. The full range of intentions that an opponent could elect to manifest, even if such decisions are not entirely logical or rational within the system of a superpower, should be taken into consideration.⁸

The United States emerged as the world's last remaining superpower after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. The U.S. faces some of the same challenges as the Romans did in 9 A.D. The U.S. must not only identify emerging threats to its national security and vital interests, its leaders must also strive to fully understand the true intentions of a potential opponent. They must also identify the various means he may employ against U.S. intentions to further his own agenda. In doing this, our own vulnerabilities must be analyzed to best derive preventative methods that counter new threats.

The U.S. maintains a military advantage not enjoyed by most other countries. Our technologically superior military is vital for the advancement and sustainment of our national interests. The U.S. defense budget, at over \$280 billion for fiscal year 2000, is several times larger than the combined spending of the countries generally perceived as the most likely future adversaries: China, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, Syria, and Yugoslavia. No potential opponent comes close in advanced conventional weaponry (cruise missiles, stealth aircraft, laser-guided munitions, navigation, surveillance, target acquisition, and communications systems). Even the Pentagon predicts that a peer competitor will not emerge until around 2010, and most analysts consider that possibility as unlikely.⁹ The obviously wide advantage maintained by the U.S. in military strength can easily turn into a false sense of security. As the Romans discovered in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 A.D., true convictions that motivate adversaries into action may not be fully understood. They may feel threatened by superpower interests being promoted as an initiative that is “allegedly” in their best interest. They

will challenge even the strongest of superpowers in the name of their own organizational or national interests and identity.

Like the Teutons in 9 A.D., such a modern adversary could be very selective, timing the moment of an attack to maximize its effect. Although the U.S. would ultimately prevail, the increased financial and human costs might undermine the political will of U.S. leadership to sustain a conflict or possibly deter allies from providing assistance.¹⁰

The 12 October 2000 attack on an AEGIS Class Destroyer, the *USS Cole*, in the Port of Aden, Yemen, was one such asymmetric attack. The U.S. Navy destroyer was enroute to a mission in the Persian Gulf in support of UN sanctions against Iraq. As the destroyer was preparing to conduct refueling operations, a small rubber raft with two men aboard, apparently involved in the mooring of the ship, ran along side of the warship and detonated an explosive device. The massive explosion ripped a 60x60 foot hole in the vessel, resulting in the deaths of seventeen U.S. sailors and dozens more injured. The attack, that came at a time when the ship was probably at its most vulnerable, was well timed and coordinated. This relatively cheap and unsophisticated asymmetric attack against the *USS Cole* resulted in the defeat of a technologically advanced weapon of U.S. power projection by an otherwise insignificant force. It resulted in a \$1 billion warship out of commission for at least a year and a significant blow to the U.S. Navy's strategic plan in the Middle East. This attack represents the “manifestation” of an opponent's conviction. A conviction so strong, that one's personal life is not important if its sacrifice supports the advancement of a greater cause.

Knowing your adversaries, that is, understanding their true intentions, as well as comprehending and negating the means with which they seek to achieve their goals and the means with which he may confront you, is the basis for a strategy of “Preventive Defense.” A strategy of preventive defense seeks to eliminate asymmetric and other threats through cooperation between the United States and its allies as they seek to promote democracy and free-market economies. As stated by former Secretary of Defense William Perry:

The U.S. program of preventative defense rests on the premise that fewer weapons of mass destruction in fewer hands makes America and the world safer; that more democracy and more free-market economies in more nations mean less chance of conflict; and that defense establishments have an important role to play in building democracy, trust, and understanding in and among other nations.¹¹

This national level program dovetails into the U.S. Defense Strategy’s “Initiative of Engagement,” that further promotes vital U.S. interests and security. Our national engagement policy is the key national and military solution to the deterrence of aggression and promotion of U.S. national security and vital interests. The President's National Security Strategy stresses the imperative of engagement and the enhancement of our security through integrated approaches that allow the nation to shape the international environment. This will create conditions favorable to U.S. interests and global security. This program has inherent advantages that address the prevention of asymmetric threats employed by potential adversaries. Global engagement, as preventive defense, relies heavily on international cooperation and the enduring friendships with our foreign allies. Therefore, a means must exist to ensure that these relationships are maintained, new relationships can be fostered, and information and ideas can be exchanged and shared contributing to global security against emerging threats. Such a means already exists

within the Department of Defense. This means or “force” of prevention is U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF), and in particular, the U.S. Army Special Forces (SF). Based on Army Special Forces traditional core missions and capabilities, forward global presence and employments, regional orientation, unique language skills, and cultural awareness, Special Forces have and will continue to be the premier implementing force for the U.S. Preventive Defense.¹²

To Army Special Forces, this priority translates into peacetime engagements and activities designed to detect and resolve pending crises or conflict and create the conditions that support enduring peace. These peacetime engagements will likely dominate our strategic security environment for the next decade.¹³ Cooperation and continued friendship with our foreign friends is the primary benefit and objective of Special Forces employments in support of taskings from the National Command Authorities (NCA), the geographical CinCs (Commanders in Chief), and our American ambassadors.¹⁴

The unpredictable and dynamic strategic security environment demands a military force that can avert or prevent armed conflict, establish trust among nations, work to alleviate problems that plague developing nations and threaten their survival, and help lay the foundation for lasting peace and stability. U.S. Army Special Forces are in the best position to adapt to the changing security environment in the developing world where U.S. interests reside by providing security and other forms of assistance to foreign governments, their militaries, and their populations through traditional Foreign Internal Defense (FID) missions, humanitarian relief, medical support, and other international activities.¹⁵ Equally important will be Special Forces unconventional capabilities to

respond to challenges from pariah states and non-state actors such as terrorists, undeterred by the U.S. conventional threat or nuclear retaliation.¹⁶ Actors with intentions and motivations, that may seem irrational to the western thought, will employ nonstandard, “asymmetric” techniques to manifest their motivations in reaction to the trend of “westernization” of the rest of the world. A trend they find unacceptable, and one that may threaten their basic national identities or ideology.

The primary question this thesis asks is, will U.S. Army Special Forces need to redefine themselves in terms of mission, doctrine, training, or organization as a result of their evolving roles conditioned by an asymmetric threat environment? To answer this question it will first be necessary to explore the nature of asymmetric warfare as a threat to U.S. interests, by identifying the primary actors in the new operational environment who may utilize asymmetric techniques; the types of asymmetric attacks that potential opponents may choose to manifest (terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction-WMD, information warfare); and examine how has the asymmetric threat shaped the new operational environment? The U.S Defense Strategy, in particular, the “Initiative of Engagement,” from which SF roles flow, will be examined as a preventive strategy and hedge against asymmetric threats. The thesis will examine the primary roles of U.S. Army Special Forces in today’s operational environment, and its role as a premier implementing force of the national security strategy through their active and passive activities. The thesis will examine current Special Forces core and collateral missions, other active and passive activities, and examine some emerging roles, which may or may not be conducive to the efficient employment of SF. It will also explore whether certain missions could be divested to conventional military forces and identify whether any

changes to the mission profiles, doctrine, organization, training and equipping of U.S. Army Special Forces are necessary to preserve their relevance in the 21st Century. Ultimately, the thesis will identify the roles and activities most effective in promoting national defense strategy and policy, and show why Special Forces can be regarded as the force of choice for national decision makers.

Although the change to the operational environment, as a result of asymmetric challenges, effects the armed forces as a whole and Special Operations Forces in general, this thesis will focus predominantly on U.S. Army Special Forces. It will take an unclassified look into whether Special Forces will have to redefine itself as a result of their emerging roles; the unit's core and collateral missions, passive roles, organization, doctrine and training will be examined.

The thesis will examine likely actors, both state and non-state in the strategic environment, likely to employ asymmetric techniques. There are various means of asymmetric attack. This thesis will examine three forms of asymmetric attack we can expect to confront. They are Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), terrorism, and information warfare. These vulnerabilities are expressed in the 1997 National Military Strategy (still current), the base document defining the Army Special Forces mission.

The thesis will examine the National Security Initiative of Engagement as a hedge to asymmetric and other threats, in which Special Forces have a critical role, and explore how Special Forces core competencies contribute to the advancement of this initiative. Recommendations made will focus on what Special Forces will need to do to adapt to the complex, global environment; needed changes to their present missions, doctrine, organization, training, and employment; and, what measures must be taken to support the

SF roles at the National, Department of Defense (DoD), and Special Operations Command levels, assuming that U.S. Special Forces are and remain the force of choice for a strategy of prevention through engagement.

The United States recognizes the significant danger that asymmetric threats pose to the vital interests and national security of the country. The National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, and various strategic assessments have been published addressing the asymmetric threat. These documents help shape the missions conducted by Special Forces and contribute to its developing roles.

The December 1999 National Security Strategy (NSS) cites, in broad terms, the necessity for not only prevention, but also for preparedness in response to threats. It states that the U.S. will do all it can to deter and prevent destructive and threatening forces such as terrorism, WMD use, disruption of critical infrastructures, and regional or state-centered threats from endangering our citizens. If an emergency occurs, we must be prepared to respond effectively at home and abroad to protect lives and property, mobilize the personnel, resources, and capabilities necessary to effectively handle the emergency, and ensure the survival of our institutions and infrastructures. To this end, the U.S. will sustain efforts to maintain comprehensive, all-hazard emergency planning by federal departments, agencies and the military, as well as a strong and responsive industrial and technology base, as crucial national security emergency preparedness requirements.¹⁷ The NSS states that our security strategy is founded on continued U.S. engagement and leadership abroad. That the U.S. must lead abroad to be secure at home and the U.S. is the only nation capable of providing the necessary leadership and capabilities for an international response for shared challenges. Since the many

challenges we face cannot be addressed by a single nation, international cooperation will be vital for building security.¹⁸

The 1995 National Military Strategy (NMS) directly refers to asymmetric means that non-state or state actors may resort to in countering the U.S. military. Such means that include unconventional and inexpensive approaches that “circumvent our strengths, exploit our vulnerabilities, or confront us in ways we cannot match in kind. Of special concern are terrorism, WMD, and information warfare. These three risks in particular have the potential to threaten the U.S. homeland and population directly and to deny us access to critical overseas infrastructure.”¹⁹ The NMS states that the “global engagement posture” of our armed forces, is critical, in that it helps to shape the international environment by promoting stability and the peaceful resolution of problems. It also deters aggression and helps to prevent conflict. It also preserves our access to important infrastructure, position our military to respond rapidly to emerging crises, and serve as the basis for concerted effort with others.²⁰ Both the NSS and the NMS clearly lay out the principles of global engagement and international cooperation, the framework for the prevention and deterrence of aggression and asymmetric threats. This framework clearly fits the role of the U.S. Army Special Forces and its capabilities.

Other reports, such as the May 1997 Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, stated that a future adversary could “employ asymmetric methods to delay or deny U.S. access to critical facilities; disrupt command control, communications, and intelligence networks; or inflict higher than expected casualties in an attempt to weaken our national resolve.”²¹ *Joint Vision 2010*, a study relating to warfare in the next century by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, states that “our most vexing future adversary may be one who can use

technology to make rapid improvements in its military capabilities that provide asymmetrical counters to U.S. military strengths, including information technologies.”²²

Additionally, the two primary agencies that make up the United States intelligence community, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), have amplified the importance of addressing the asymmetric global threats to the U.S. National Security.

In a 2 February 2000 statement, CIA Director, George J. Tenet, testifying before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence stated:

The realities of our national security environment in the first year of the 21st century: where technology has enabled, driven or magnified the threat to us; where age-old resentments threaten to spill-over into open violence; and, where a growing perception of our so called hegemony has become the lightning rod for the disaffected. Moreover, this environment of rapid change makes us even more vulnerable to surprise.²³

He conceded that WMD programs appear to be maturing with the appearance of secondary suppliers of weapons technology, such as Iran. That our profile in the world and thus our attraction as a terrorist target will not diminish any time soon, and terrorist groups worldwide continue to explore how rapidly evolving and spreading technologies might enhance the lethality of their operations. Finally, he stated that our country's security will depend more and more on the unimpeded and secure flow of information, and that an adversary that develops the ability to interrupt that flow or shut it down will have the potential to weaken us dramatically or even render us helpless.²⁴

In a 3 February 2000 “Statement for the Record,” to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Director of the DIA, Vice Admiral Thomas R. Wilson, stated:

Adversary anticipation of continued U.S. military superiority is the genesis of the asymmetric challenge. Potential U.S. opponents (from drug lords and

terrorists to criminal gangs, insurgents, and the civilian and military leadership of opposing states) do not want to engage the U.S. military on its terms. They are more likely to pursue their objectives while avoiding a U.S. military confrontation, and/or to develop asymmetric means (operational and technological) to reduce U.S. military superiority, render it irrelevant, or exploit our perceived weaknesses. Asymmetric approaches are imperative for U.S. adversaries and are likely to be a dominant component of most future threats.²⁵

Finally, *SOF Vision 2020*, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) framework for building and maintaining the necessary operational capabilities for special operations forces (SOF), is the Special Forces link to the NSS, the NMS and Joint Vision 2010. It provides a long-range strategy for SOF missions, force structure, equipment and capabilities into and beyond 2020. One key aspect is that *SOF Vision 2020* anticipates the emergence of the new threat, which implies crisis resolution as an emerging component of future U.S. military strategy. It emphasizes that the threat environment requires unique skills, tactics, systems, and training to counter it successfully. It supports the National Security Strategy of global engagement, which fosters international interoperability and cooperation from the establishment of military to military and civilian contacts in potential areas of interest. United States Army Special Forces can advance this interoperability and cooperation, because they remain regionally oriented--culturally, linguistically, and politically--while remaining a rapidly deployable, agile, joint force with capabilities ranging from humanitarian assistance to surgical strikes.²⁶

In a world of increased global interaction required to meet security needs, U.S. Army Special Forces will likely be the premier mechanism for extending U.S. influence, ideals and values. Faced with an increasingly volatile world and diminishing resources, Special Forces will provide access and promote stability with an affordable, yet effective

force for implementing U.S. National Strategies. When U.S. interests are faced with an unpredictable “asymmetric” threat, Special Forces can provide flexible and precise, lethal and non-lethal options to the National Command Authority. They provide core competencies not available anywhere else in the military.²⁷ These competencies enable them to devise and execute innovative solutions to crises in an uncertain world with an uncertain threat.

¹Jonathan B. Tucker, “Asymmetric Warfare: An Emerging Threat to U.S. Security,” *Forum For Applied Research and Public Policy* (Monterey: Monterey Institute of International Studies, 1997), 1-11.

²Lawrence G. Karch, “Disaster in the Teutoburg Forest: Lessons for the Modern Superpower,” *Strategic Review*, (summer 1998): 34-39.

³Ibid., 35.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 36.

⁶Ibid., 37.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 34.

⁹Tucker, 11.

¹⁰Ibid., 2.

¹¹ Henry H. Shelton, GEN, USA, Commander in Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command commentary, “Special Operations Forces: Key Role in Preventive Defense,” 1997, 1.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 2.

¹⁵Ibid., 3.

¹⁶Ibid., 4.

¹⁷The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington: The White House, 1999), 18.

¹⁸Ibid., 3.

¹⁹GEN John J. Shalikashvili, USA, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy*, (Washington: GPO, 1995), 7.

²⁰Ibid., 6.

²¹U.S. Department of Defense, “Section II: the Global Security Environment,” *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, May 1997:

²²U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010*, (Washington: GPO, 1997), 10-11.

²³George J. Tenet, Director CIA, in a statement before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, “The Worldwide Threat in 2000: Global Realities of our National Security,” (Washington: 2 February 2000), 1.

²⁴Ibid., 2-5.

²⁵Vice Admiral Thomas R. Wilson, Director DIA, in a statement for the record to the Senate Armed Services Committee, “Military Threats and Security Challenges Through 2015,” (Washington: 3 February 2000), 3.

²⁶GEN Henry H. Shelton, USA, Commander in Chief, USSOCOM, *SOF Vision 2020*, (Washington: GPO, 1996), 2-3.

²⁷Ibid., 25.

CHAPTER 2

THE ASYMMETRIC CHALLENGE

The new operational environment that the United States military will face is shaped by asymmetric challenges. Asymmetry is an imperative for those opposing the United States, and is therefore the primary component of future threats.¹ The continued expectation of U.S. military superiority is the genesis of the asymmetric challenge. The U.S. military's commitment to Joint Vision 2010 outlines a plan to maintain superior and unique capabilities in the face of any potential military opponent. This capability has the following features: global power projection; superior knowledge, planning, and information dominance; deep-strike capability; joint and combined doctrine; high-performance combat units.² This capability basically *requires* the use of asymmetric techniques by would-be opponents, because these opponents cannot come close to matching this capability in order to confront the U.S. on equal terms.

Before roles and missions can be determined, or even strategies suggested, a hard look must be taken at the threat as a whole. This includes identifying possible opponents, their motivations, and the various ways they may choose to achieve their goals, particularly, through the use of asymmetric warfare.

Potential opponents to the U.S. face an unpromising prospect: confront the U.S. military on their terms and lose. The challenge to such opponents is to develop new (asymmetric) methods to reduce U.S. military superiority, render it irrelevant, or expose other perceived weaknesses in the U.S. security or military strategies. Asymmetric warfare is a set of operational practices aimed at negating advantages and exploiting

vulnerabilities rather than engaging in traditional force-on-force engagements. The incentive to engage in asymmetric warfare is usually greatest for the weaker party against a stronger foe. Asymmetric concepts and techniques seek to use the physical environment and military capabilities in ways that are atypical and presumably unanticipated by more established militaries, thus catching them off-balance and unprepared.³

The future development of asymmetric techniques is further aggravated by the fact that U.S. conventional superiority is complex. It does not rely on a particular system or component, rather, it dominates on the basis of a system of systems. However, present and future opponents may expend considerable intellectual and material resources to develop political-military responses designed specifically to upset or counter the great strengths inherent in the force posture advocated by document such as the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The nation's great capability in high-technology power projection forces may lead future opponents to devise a variety of “asymmetric” counters or stratagems to frustrate, if not defeat, the U.S. military advantages.⁴

Joint Pub 1, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States states: “Asymmetric engagements are battles between dissimilar forces. These engagements can be extremely lethal, especially if the force being attacked is not ready to defend itself against the threat.”⁵ Asymmetric warfare employs methods that do not fit how we traditionally picture warfare--big armies pitted against each other on the battlefield, using like strategies, tactics, and weapons. Put simply, asymmetric threats or techniques are a version of not “fighting fair,” which can include the use of surprise in all its operational and strategic dimensions and the use of weapons in ways unplanned by the United States.

Historical examples of such strategies include the following: NATO's Cold War doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons to compensate for the non-nuclear superiority of the Soviet Army; Operation *Anadyr*--the Soviet deployment of medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM), and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM), and tactical nuclear weapons to Cuba in 1962; terrorism by proxy, used by various Islamic states against U.S. and European interests; Serbs taking UN personnel hostage to deter military escalation by NATO forces during 1994-95; exploitation of major nuclear-armed allies, such as the Soviet Union and China, by North Korea and North Vietnam to limit options for military escalation by the United States during their respective major theaters of war (MTWs).⁶

Future opponents will have many options for attempting to deter, disrupt, or defeat U.S. use of military power. Several broad options could be part of an asymmetric response to current and foreseeable U.S. superiority in regional combined-arms warfare capability. One option is the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long-range ballistic or cruise missiles. A potential regional opponent could threaten U.S. and allied forces with a dramatic form of military escalation, especially in a situation where the U.S. and its allies wish only for measured responses to a threat. Even without operational use, the mere presence of such capability would act as a regional-strategic shadow and might weaken the commitment of key allies to any future U.S. military response to regional aggression. Another option, the exploitation of cyber-weapons, could be used to disrupt the next generation of information-technology (IT) military logistics systems or to bring the war home by attacking the national strategic infrastructure (NSI).

Also, opponents could choose to fight in environments, such as large cities or jungles that degrade the U.S. capacity to find and attack militarily significant targets. This would be done at a time when politically, U.S. forces are restricted by rules of engagements (ROE), or other constraints, that relegate them to fight away from populated urban areas. Material limitations may cause units to bypass terrain that would hamper their mobility. Opponents could also conduct acts of aggression that purposely blur boundaries between actions considered crimes and those viewed as warfare.⁷

Against a nominally impregnable superpower like the United States, terrorism will probably be the option of first resort for small desperately aggrieved groups that otherwise remain powerless and impotent.⁸ No one definition of terrorism has gained universal acceptance. For the purpose of this thesis the definition contained in Title 22 of the *United States Code*, Section 2656f(d), will be used. That statute defines terrorism as premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant (civilian) targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.⁹ Asymmetry gives terrorists their strength. They operate outside of accepted international behavior and according to value systems radically different than those of the U.S., Europe, or even Russia. For instance, some of today's nonstate combatants operate according to a "warrior clan" ethos, a philosophy at odds with the ethic of modern, professional armed services. Culturally, the West has difficulty comprehending a value-based approach that legitimizes atrocity as a weapon of war, such as when Serbian soldiers in the 1990s employ rape as a way to undermine the will of their opponents.¹⁰

Asymmetric adversaries thrive on simplicity, not complexity. We tend to miscalculate the real ability of opponents to devise low-cost, low-tech methods to offset

capabilities of technologically superior adversaries. Effective psychological operations, media manipulation, atrocities, genocide, and unrestricted assaults against civilians are familiar methods used by groups that employ widely available technology, but apply to its use a different set of values than those prevailing in the West. Yet the West has developed neither the military imagination to streamline its conventional way of war nor the political will to deter or defend against asymmetrical threats.¹¹ How Western nations have handled asymmetries up until now illustrates the legal and cultural constraints that they place on themselves. A trial of the terrorists accused of complicity in the Pan Am Lockerbie tragedy finally began in 1999, ten years after the incident. This is a perfect example of a civil, symmetrical response to an asymmetrical attack.¹²

Perceptions affect the actions of potential enemies and allies alike. It is the root of asymmetric warfare. Nations of the world will use their perceptions of the U.S. and its military forces as a guide to seek ways to negate our current advantages in training, technology, organization, and conventional ability. Nations construct military capabilities in accordance with their assessments of external or internal threats or opportunities. It is therefore logical to assume that potential threats to the United States will base their military estimates and actions upon their perceptions of the U.S. and its armed forces.

A study of these perceptions, by the National Ground Intelligence Center (NGIC) and the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO), indicates that there are commonalities among both allies and potential adversaries, regardless of region and motivations. In general, common foreign perceptions of the U.S. are: we are unwilling to accept heavy losses and are risk-adverse; we avoid close combat and rely on stand-off technologies and

air superiority; our leadership is very sensitive to domestic and world opinion--we lack commitment over time; and our military operations are both predictable and templateable.¹³ Future adversaries study every aspect of our doctrine, training, and technological capabilities with a view toward defeating us tactically, operationally, and strategically. An assessment of this foreign study effort coupled with foreign contemporary writings dissecting our current and past operations provide clear indications that there is little likelihood that our opponents will seek to fight “our kind of war.”¹⁴ These stated peculiarities are exactly what an asymmetric opponent will seek to exploit.

The media provides an instant myth. An illusion of America is depicted, courtesy of lurid television serials that exaggerate wealth, ease, and sexuality, and are devoid of antecedents. The world sees our wealth, but not the suffering of our ancestors in the creation of that wealth. It is as if the riches fell from the sky; an unbearable spectacle to those less fortunate. Those watching from abroad may find themselves less and less able to compete with the American juggernaut. Economic structures, the decline of relative military power, educational inadequacies, social prohibitions, counter-productive customs, and the ineffectiveness of civil law constrict the potential of other cultures to compete with the U.S. and its most culturally agile allies.¹⁵

When nations and their underlying cultures fail to qualify in today’s hyper-competitive world, they first will complain. Then, if there is no improvement, they kill. Our future enemies will be of two kinds; those who have seen their hopes disappointed, and those who have no hope. Do not worry about a successful China; worry about a failing China. But even a failing China is unlikely to become the threat that defense contractors would have us believe. China is culturally robust. Our most frequent

opponents will rise from cultures strained by change. In the past century, Germany and Russia grew most dangerous after their cultural organizations failed. This means that the Islamic world will be a problem for the foreseeable future, since it is unprepared to deal with the demands and mandatory freedoms of the modern age. Beyond that faded, failing civilization, we must be wary of other change resistant cultures, from tribes and clans to states that never shook off agrarian mentalities.¹⁶

Of great concern is the fact that any number of what were previously considered stable countries are experiencing religious, ethnic, and other internal conflicts with increasing numbers of separatist movements trying to carve larger countries into smaller and more tightly focused ethnic areas. Some of these conflicts are ancient and have been the cause of conflict for hundreds of years. Others are more recent and the results of demographic shifts, changing political regimes, or religious and ideological shifts. Add to these factors political and ethnic internal disintegration caused by faltering economic circumstances in several parts of Southwest Asia, the Far East, Africa, South America, to name a few, and we have a combustible mix that is certain to fuel future conflicts in a number of parts of the globe for the foreseeable future. Societies traditionally contain a myriad of subcultures that are based on strongly held ethnic, religious, cultural, and ideological beliefs. In instances where many subcultures interact, new subcultures are generated in much the same way as living cells divide until finally a new entity is created. Thus the structural integrity of a given society becomes increasingly complex. Most incumbent ideologies are struggling to maintain their dominant identity within their immediate communities. Because of conflicting ideologies, religious and ethnic diversity has not materialized in many societies. For this reason, the concept of vertical ethnic and

religious integration has given way to horizontal migration and factional polarization within these societies. This situation creates a breeding ground where fanatical ethnic and religious tribalism has emerged as fractal subcultures, vying with each other for inclusion, with mutually exclusive and often conflicting agendas. This situation results in ethnic and religious migration to both geographic and political positioning within the existing society.¹⁷

The future strategic environment will remain multi-polar and complex. The key powers from a global context will most likely be the United States, the European Union, China, Japan, and Russia. Future regional alliances, coalitions and partnerships will most likely be tied back to these nations. Key regional powers, whose activities or issues have the greatest possibility for creating global consequences are most likely to be Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, and Mexico. This is not to imply that these nations are the most powerful in a given region. It simply illustrates the growing significance of certain states in the global setting.¹⁸

Of the 192 Nation-States in the world today, as many as 30 have the potential for failure as a consequence of their inability to meet the needs of their populations or as a product of ethnic, cultural, or religious friction. In the past 10 years, there have been more than 50 ethnic wars, 170 border conflicts and 2 major wars involving extra-regional forces. These facts demonstrate that, released from the grip of a bi-polar power paradigm, nations, transnational actors, and non-nation state entities are free to challenge and redefine the global distribution of power, the concept of sovereignty, and the nature of warfare.¹⁹

The structure of the future international security environment will be viewed by using the following categories, as selected from the *1998 Strategic Assessment Report*:²⁰

Core states: Free market, relatively stable and effective democratic states, primarily North America, Western Europe, Japan, and Australia. These states will exhibit common interests, share and deepen their degree of economic integration, share common values and norms, and generally dominate geopolitical activities. These states tend to be technologically advanced with extensive political, economic and cultural integration of elites, with a reliance on information-based (perhaps transitioning to a knowledge-based) source of wealth and identity.²¹

Transition states: Larger states on the “path of reform and integration” for example China, Indonesia, Russia, and India. A common characteristic of these states is the level of uncertainty on the outcome of this reform, transition, or integration. Integrating or co-opting these states into the prevailing international system remains the central challenge for the United States and the core states. Economically, these states are industrial based with cycles of political stability and instability. Profound ecological decay and cultural tensions may be present, leading to violence or a violent transition.

Rogue states: Weaker states that are hostile to the core states, interests and common values (such as North Korea, Cuba, Iraq, and Iran). Also, non-state rogue actors will present real problems, including terrorist organizations, drug trafficking, mercenary operations, multinational and sub-state political movements. Small “pockets of industry surrounded by regions of dire poverty” characterize these states.

Failed or failing states: States that have traditionally not participated in the global economic, political, and technological development are considered failing (Central Africa, Southern Balkans and the Middle East) and present a threat to the core states. They will typically present the core states with “major humanitarian and transnational

challenges.” These entities may be “ungovernable, occasionally anarchical, fraught with violence, ecological decay, and political fragmentation.”²²

As with the trends, the global security structure is not static. Actors can shift between categories based on changes in their cultural, economic, technological, or political structures. Most conflict will originate between the core states and the other categories with global consequences. Conflict with one or more states or coalitions represents “regional or state-centered threats.” Threats that transcend international borders comprise “transnational” or “transregional” (terrorist, international crime, drug trafficking, culturally or nationalistically motivated groups) threats. Such groups will resort to asymmetrical means to counter U.S. capabilities or to exploit its weaknesses as circumstances permit. Equally important as the potential threat is the willingness of the U.S. to engage these threats militarily. National survival (vital interest) is not the only situation that will result in the use of U.S. military force. However, this interest is of such importance that the U.S. would act unilaterally should the occasion arise. The U.S. would also probably respond to important interests (defined as interests that affect our national well being and character, i.e. security, peace, prestige, status quo) as a member of an alliance. The U.S. may also act with military force as a member of a coalition or as a result of a humanitarian or other interest.²³

The complexity of today's global environment transcends into the operational environment that U.S. military forces will be thrust into. The more complex the environment, the more lucrative are the options for asymmetric opponents. Templating the enemy will be difficult as he adapts and tries to create alternatives and exploits opportunity. He will attempt to seek conditions for which we are not prepared. His

patterns will change as he experiences defeat, and will remain situationally dependent. The current operational environment for military forces is extremely fluid with continually changing coalitions, alliances, partnerships and new actors (both national and transnational) appearing and disappearing from the scene. Complex terrain such as urban environments with civilian population and infrastructure are increasingly becoming required areas of operation (AO). These changing AOs may add the aspect of humanitarian crisis conditions requiring population management and/or support and control. In addition to civilians, there is also a marked increase in the potential for the presence of private, non-governmental, regional and international organizations each with their own, sometimes supporting but sometimes competing, agendas. Many of these organizations are increasing in power and influence and are thereby able to exert greater pressure on what was once purely military.²⁴

The importance of the widespread presence of information architectures, systems, and organizations, both private and public, cannot be overstated. The global flow of information, technology, knowledge, and power now create a fruitful environment for all facets of information operations, information dissemination, and information warfare. Technological advances, diversity and access are generating changes in force structure and methods of operation as well as creating conditions for technological surprise. This situation has begun an erosion process that is slowly eating away at the technological superiority the U.S. has enjoyed over the last decade.²⁵

Cultural and demographic factors that transcend border or state issues make conflict resolution a complicated and lengthy process often requiring several changes in the nature of an operation before an end state can be achieved. These instances will only increase in

significance and number. In sum, today's operational environment is more complex, more interconnected, more dynamic and perhaps more volatile than the recent past. Yet, out of this chaos, scholars and analysts have isolated some probable trends.²⁶

Within the present strategic environment nations, transnational actors, and non-nation state entities are free to challenge and redefine the global distribution of power, the concept of sovereignty, and nature of warfare. The geopolitical landscape, acted on by the factors of information technology, transportation technology, the acceleration of the global economic community and the emergence of networked society have given rise to some trends that are leading us into the 21st Century.²⁷

Nation-states are still dominant actors. However, some power is shifting to non-traditional actors. Political, economic, cultural, religious, and environmental actors will challenge existing power structures without regard for tradition.

The United States will continue to be the hegemon and will be globally engaged (politically, technologically, economically, and militarily). The global distribution of power will remain in flux, and the U.S. homeland will find itself increasingly "exposed to attack."

Fragmentation of states along tribal, ethnic, or religious lines and instability will continue. Environmental conditions (water shortages, pollution, climate changes, etc.) and demographic trends will lead to increased tensions both inter- and intra-nationally. Growing power imbalances between developing and developed states will heighten the advanced industrialized countries' interest in sanctioning "unacceptable" political and social policies (i.e. genocide, ethnic cleansing, forced migration) undertaken by actors in the weaker developing countries.

The focus on military alliances will shift to preserving the status quo and controlling the future “commanding heights” in military technology and advanced weaponry.

Economic interdependence will cloud lines between foreign and domestic policy, and create greater demand for precision strikes and reduced collateral damage.

Socioeconomic inequality gaps between “have and have-nots” will widen, leading to global tensions leading many groups to adopt terrorism and asymmetrical means to promote their agendas and resist the Western cultural invasion.

Advanced technology and weapons proliferation (conventional, WMD, CBW, etc.) will continue to spread. This proliferation may allow an enemy to achieve limited or unexpected parity and possible superiority in selected (pocket or niche) technologies.

Technological advances will impact military capabilities and, with these advances, the vulnerabilities of technology and forces will be constantly and unexpectedly changing.

Through the global transfer of technology, unforeseen technological surprises will become common.²⁸

It is critical to remember that these geopolitical trends and conditions are non-linear. For example, the impact and effects of information and information technology are embedded in and across all the trends. Many of these themes may appear to be contradictory; this paradox can be attributed to the complexities of the global environment. All of these trends may possess either integrative or disintegrative results. Thus, the most commonly accepted theme applied to international landscape is one of overall dominance by the United States and its friends and allies.²⁹ It is this theme that will foster the change and growth of asymmetric challenges against the U.S. and its allies.

A growing concern among U.S. policy makers is the fact that asymmetric warfare could just as easily be manifested on the soil of the American homeland as it is against U.S. interests abroad. Our civil infrastructure and society is particularly vulnerable to asymmetric attack. It represents a potential soft target. Our focus generally is abroad toward vital national interests and where the U.S. military is engaged to protect them. This focus away from our own backyard will allow an opponent to exploit an indirect solution in defeating the U.S. and achieving his objectives. Attacking the U.S. homeland would be the classic asymmetric response to our conventional military superiority, and must be considered in promoting preventive responses to the asymmetric threat.

By attacking the American homeland, an opponent can gain several advantages. First he bypasses our strength (deployed combat forces) and frees himself up to target things to promote his political objectives. He can attack the civil and military infrastructure upon which our military depends for power projection. The American military strategy is based on engagement and power projection.³⁰ A campaign against the power projection infrastructure in CONUS could be very attractive to an opponent. Central to much of today's military planning is the assumption that the American homeland will remain a secure sanctuary in all conflicts short of strategic nuclear warfare with a peer. Force protection, missile defense, and other measures guard forces deployed overseas; however, CONUS-based forces are less well defended, and the civil infrastructure is virtually unprotected. Potential targets include seaports and airports where forces embark; railway infrastructure between bases and ports; barracks facilities; high value targets such as strategic bombers and other assets; and the command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, and surveillance (C4ISR) and battle

management infrastructure (satellite communications, intelligence receiving stations, data processing and key personnel) needed to control the modern American military. The result of a campaign against our military infrastructure could be a delayed or crippled U.S. response to aggression overseas. The enemy would seek to make intervention too costly and too time consuming for the U.S. to undertake. Such a strategy interdicts and begins to attrite forces before they arrive in theater. Although this strategy offers several advantages, attacking power projection bases still attacks the military directly. For a long-term victory, the defeat of the American political will to fight will provide victory more completely than attacking the U.S. forces. In the U.S. the political will of our nation and its leaders is the will of the people.³¹

The aim of attacks against the American people would raise the level of pain felt by the U.S. for their intervention. This could take the form of direct physical attacks against people, attacking financial and transportation systems, and psychologically destroying faith in domestic institutions and systems. By disruption of the livelihoods of the American people, direct threats to their person, and undermining their sense of security, an enemy can inflict pain to the point that the people demand change to the government's policies. This does not suggest that the American people are inherently weak or unwilling to accept pain or casualties. It does suggest that all people have a threshold for discomfort, pain, and danger directly proportional to the perceived importance of an objective. In Somalia, the threshold was seeing eighteen U.S. soldiers killed. In Operation Desert Storm that threshold seemed to be much higher than we had to endure. In the foreseeable future, with interventions into ethnic strife and complex humanitarian disasters, it is doubtful that America's survival or way of life will be

threatened enough for Americans to accept substantial pain to achieve victory. When intervening in ethnic wars the threshold of pain of our enemies will be far greater than our own. Attacking the American people and their way of life, physically and psychologically, is a way of attacking our will. Defeat our will to fight, and the enemy will most likely achieve his political objectives.³²

U.S. military dominance is the catalyst for the asymmetric challenge. Not seeking a direct confrontation with the U.S. military, potential opponents and competitors ranging from state to nonstate groups such as terrorists, insurgents, and new unpredictable extremists will employ asymmetric techniques to offset our conventional advantage. They will even go so far as to challenge the American homeland to achieve their political goals. The trends in the international global system of nations provide various situations that will serve to foster the implementation of asymmetric strategies against the U.S. and its allies. The complex nature of the asymmetric challenge makes the operational environment extremely fluid. It will require military forces flexible enough to respond to the rapid tempo and abrupt changes. Asymmetry and the threat of asymmetric warfare is perhaps one of the gravest challenges the U.S. will face while maneuvering politically in the strategic environment and militarily in the operational environment. Opponents will devise a variety of “asymmetric” counters or strategies to frustrate, if not defeat, the U.S. military advantages and counter U.S. intentions and policy abroad.

¹Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), “Understanding the Asymmetric Challenge (draft)” (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1998), 1.

²Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), “Engaging Power for Peace, Ch. 11: Asymmetric Threats,” *Strategic Assessment 1998* (Washington: GPO, 1998), 1.

³Paul F. Herman Jr., “Asymmetric Warfare: Sizing the Threat,” *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*, 6, no.1 (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 176.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John J. Shalikashvili, GEN, USA, Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 5.

⁶INSS, 2.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Lloyd J. Matthews, *Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America be Defeated?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1998), 112.

⁹U.S. Dept. of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999*, publication 10687, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2000), 6.

¹⁰Winn Schwartau, “Looming Security Threats: Asymmetrical Adversaries,” *Orbis* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1999), 199.

¹¹Ibid., 201.

¹²Ibid., 199.

¹³U.S. Army, TRADOC White Paper, *The Operational Environment* (Fort Leavenworth: GPO, 2000), 7.

¹⁴Ibid., 3.

¹⁵Ralph Peters, “Our New Old Enemies,” from Lloyd J. Matthews comprehensive work, *Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America be Defeated?* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1998), 223-224.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Clark L. Staten, “Asymmetric Warfare, the Evolution and Devolution of Terrorism: The Coming Challenge for Emergency and National Security Forces” (Washington: Emergency Response and Research Institute, 1998), 1-2.

¹⁸U.S. Army, TRADOC, 2.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 6.

²¹Ibid.

²²U.S. Army, TRADOC, 7.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 4.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 5.

²⁷Ibid., 21.

²⁸Ibid., 5-6.

²⁹Ibid., 6.

³⁰Joseph C., Cyrulik, “Asymmetric Warfare and the Threat to the American Homeland,” *Landpower Essay Series* no. 99-8. (Washington: AUSA Institute of Land Warfare, 1998), 2.

³¹Ibid., 3.

³²Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

THE U.S. SECURITY STRATEGY AND ASYMMETRIC COUNTERS

The most significant aspect of the U.S. National Security Strategy, in respect to a preventive defense, is the “imperative of engagement.” Our national engagement policy is the key national and military solution to the deterrence of aggression and the promotion of U.S. national security and vital interests abroad. The President’s National Security Strategy stresses the imperative of engagement and the enhancement of our security through integrated approaches that allow the nation to shape the international environment. This shaping creates conditions favorable to U.S. interests and global security.

To support the imperative of engagement, the Department of Defense (DoD) has laid out a strategy, supported by the Department of Defense through the National Military Strategy, to promote national interest. The National Security Strategy requires DoD to help shape the international security environment in ways favorable to U.S. interests, respond to the full spectrum of crises when directed, and prepare to meet the challenges of an uncertain future. These three elements--shaping, responding, and preparing--define the U.S. defense strategy between now and 2015.¹

Global engagement fosters international interoperability and cooperation from the establishment of military-to-military and civilian contacts in potential areas of interest. United States Army Special Forces (SF) can advance this interoperability and cooperation, because they remain regionally oriented (culturally, linguistically, and politically) while remaining a rapidly deployable, agile, joint force with capabilities

ranging from humanitarian assistance to surgical strikes. To understand further the developing roles of Special Forces, it is imperative to understand the Initiative of Engagement as a strategy of prevention, from which SF roles ultimately flow, and a strategy of which Special Forces activities are an integral part.

Engagement is a characterization of our basic global posture. We need to be engaged in the world and we need to be engaged with other nations in building and maintaining a stable international security system.² Engagement is difficult. It entails costs and carries risks. The U.S. faces dangers while engaged globally, especially from asymmetric threats. Engagement is also difficult because it sometimes requires us to make policy choices contrary to deeply held values. For example, engagement with China requires that we reconcile our deeply held convictions about human rights abuses with our knowledge that a policy of isolating China would be self-defeating. Engagement with allies may be difficult at times when they, for example, do not wholeheartedly support our efforts to enforce sanctions on nations we believe guilty of sponsoring global terrorism. Engagement, some politicians may find, is difficult for political reasons. People do not win elections by promising to devote a great deal of time and attention to foreign affairs, for any reason. Those in positions of responsibility must make compromises, take risks to get things done, and bear the criticism if initiatives fail.³

The Department of Defense has an essential role to play in shaping the international security environment in ways that promote and protect U.S. national interests. DoD efforts help to build coalitions, promote regional stability, prevent or reduce conflicts and threats, and deter aggression and coercion on a day-to-day basis in many key regions of the world. To do so, the Department employs its forces either

permanently stationed abroad, rotationally deployed overseas, or deployed temporarily, and undertakes exercises, combined training, and military-to-military interactions. Moreover, the Department plays an important role in international arms cooperation and management of the U.S. military assistance program. Through Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, presidentially directed drawdowns of defense assets, and transfers of Excess Defense Articles, the United States provides its friends and allies with equipment, services, and training for self-defense and participation in multinational security efforts. DoD's role in shaping the international environment is closely integrated with diplomatic efforts. On a daily basis, U.S. diplomatic and military representatives work together towards U.S. objectives in all regions of the world. In times of crisis, diplomacy becomes critical when the United States seeks and works with coalition partners and requires access to foreign bases and facilities. Diplomacy is frequently supported by the potential for a military response.⁴

The first aspect of the military's key role in shaping the international security environment is promoting regional stability. In regions where the United States has vital and important interests, the U.S. military helps bolster the security of key allies and friends and works to adapt and strengthen alliances and coalitions to meet the challenges of an evolving security environment. Through engagement, bilateral and multilateral relationships that increase military openness, enhance cooperation, and advance regional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms form. For instance, transfers of U.S. defense equipment and training strengthen security partners' ability to fight alongside U.S. forces in coalition efforts. In addition, the U.S. military often serves as the preferred means to engage countries that are neither staunch friends nor confirmed foes. These

contacts build constructive security relationships and help to promote the development of democratic institutions today, in an effort to keep these countries from becoming adversaries tomorrow. Through both example and enforcement, U.S. forces encourage adherence to the international norms and regimes that help provide the foundation for peace and stability around the globe. Examples of this are nonproliferation and other arms control agreements that support U.S. national security objectives, the development of appropriate conflict prevention and conflict resolution mechanisms, freedom of navigation, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Promoting regional stability places a premium on building close working relationships with other U.S. government agencies, coalition partners, and nongovernmental organizations.⁵

Second, U.S. military forces and other DoD resources can be critical in efforts to prevent or reduce threats and conflicts. Their role in conflict prevention is a key rationale for the U.S. commitment to maintain forces overseas, conduct peacetime engagement activities, and fund various policy initiatives. Such preventive measures include focused efforts to reduce or eliminate NBC capabilities, as has been done with the U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework and the Cooperative Threat Reduction program with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Kazakhstan. These initiatives discourage arms races and the proliferation of Nuclear Biological or Chemical (NBC) capabilities, as is being done by DoD efforts to control exports of proliferation-related equipment and technologies and monitor and support arms control agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Missile Technology Control Regime. They also help prevent and deter future terrorism and reduce U.S. vulnerability to terrorist acts through DoD efforts to enhance intelligence collection capabilities and protect DoD personnel and critical

infrastructure, and also deter the production and flow of illegal drugs into the United States, using DoD manpower and assets in the Joint Interagency Task Forces--overseas and in international air and sea space contiguous to the U.S. borders--to directly assist law enforcement agencies seize over 100 metric tons of cocaine each year. Finally, they lessen the conditions for conflict, as has the deployment of U.S. forces to Macedonia. Relatively small and timely investments in such targeted prevention can yield disproportionate benefits, often mitigating the need for a more substantial and costly U.S. response later.⁶

The third aspect of the military's key role in shaping the international security environment is deterring aggression and coercion in key regions of the world on a day-to-day basis through the peacetime deployment of U.S. military forces abroad. The United States' ability to deter potential adversaries in peacetime rests on several factors: a demonstrated will and ability to uphold U.S. security commitments when and where they are challenged, a declaratory policy that effectively communicates U.S. commitments and the costs to potential adversaries who might challenge these commitments, and warfighting capabilities that are credible across the full spectrum of military operations. Credibility is shown by U.S. forces and equipment strategically stationed or deployed forward, rapidly deployable power-projection forces, the U.S. ability to gain timely access to critical infrastructure overseas, and the demonstrated ability to form and lead effective military coalitions.⁷

Walt Slocombe, U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for policy, has led DoD's international security engagement for more than six years. Recently he shared his views on the role of the U.S. military in safeguarding U.S. economic, political, cultural, and

strategic interests. He pointed out that today's armed forces are vitally involved in more cooperative military activities-exercises and exchanges with more countries in more corners of the world than ever before. He explained that our concern with other nations cannot be limited to securing our borders or even to protecting our trade. Without security and stability on a broader scale, neither our safety nor our prosperity can be assured. He insisted that investments in the military are not only investments in deterring and winning future war. Our armed forces play an important role by engaging with other countries to increase our security and build bridges of understanding.⁸

The U.S. military will, at times, be called upon to respond to crises in order to protect national interests, demonstrate U.S. resolve, and reaffirm the nation's role as global leader. Therefore, U.S. forces must also be able to execute the full spectrum of military operations, from deterring an adversary's aggression or coercion in crisis and conducting concurrent smaller-scale contingency operations to fighting and winning major theater wars. Although the United States will retain the capabilities to protect its interests unilaterally, there are often advantages to acting in concert with friendly nations when responding to crises. Acting in coalition or alliance with other nations, rather than alone generally strengthens the political legitimacy of a course of action and brings additional resources to bear, ensuring that the United States need not shoulder the political, military, and financial burdens alone. Because coalitions will continue to present important political benefits, careful design and collaboration will be needed to ensure the United States and its allies and partners meet new interoperability challenges. U.S. forces must plan, train, and prepare to respond to the full spectrum of crises in concert with the forces of other nations.⁹ Through a robust peacetime military-to-military

engagement program, these interoperability challenges are minimized and collaboration is enhanced.

In conducting Smaller-Scale Contingency (SSC) Operations, the United States, along with others in the international community, will seek to prevent and contain localized conflicts and crises before they require a military response. If, however, such efforts do not succeed, swift intervention by military forces may be the best way to contain, resolve, or mitigate the consequences of a conflict that could otherwise become far more costly and deadly. These operations encompass the full range of joint military operations beyond peacetime engagement activities but short of major theater warfare. They include show-of-force operations, interventions, limited strikes, noncombatant evacuation operations, no-fly zone enforcement, maritime sanctions enforcement, counterterrorism operations, peace operations, foreign humanitarian assistance, and military support to civilian authorities. In addition, when rogue states defy the community of nations and threaten common interests, the United States may use its military capabilities--for instance, through maritime sanctions enforcement or limited strikes--to help enforce the international community's will and deter further coercion. U.S. participation in SSC operations must be selective, depending largely on the interests at stake and the risk of major aggression elsewhere. However, these operations will still likely pose the most frequent challenge for U.S. forces through 2015 and may require significant commitments of forces, both Active and Reserve.¹⁰

To deter aggression, prevent coercion of allied or friendly governments, and defeat aggression should it occur, the Department must prepare U.S. forces to confront this scale of threat far from home, in concert with allies and friends, but unilaterally if

necessary. Toward this end, the United States must have jointly trained and interoperable forces that can deploy quickly--across great distances to supplement forward-stationed and forward-deployed U.S. forces--to assist a threatened nation, rapidly stop an enemy invasion, and defeat an aggressor, even in an environment of NBC weapons threat or use.¹¹

As a global power with worldwide interests, it is essential that the United States be able to deter and defeat large-scale, cross-border aggression in two distant theaters in overlapping time frames, preferably in concert with regional allies. This is particularly important in a highly dynamic and uncertain security environment impregnated with asymmetric challenges. One can never know with certainty when or where the next major theater war will occur, who the next adversary will be, how an enemy will fight, who will join the United States in a coalition, or precisely what demands will be placed on U.S. forces. Such a capability is the essential quality of a superpower and is vital to the credibility of the overall U.S. national security strategy. It also supports the Department's continued engagement in shaping the international environment to reduce the chances that such threats will develop in the first place. If the United States were to forego its ability to defeat aggression in more than one theater at a time, its standing as a global power, as the security partner of choice, and as the leader of the international community would be called into question. Some allies would read a one-war capability as a signal that the United States, if heavily engaged elsewhere, would no longer be able to help defend their interests. This fact is also unlikely to escape the attention of potential adversaries, especially ones seeking an asymmetric advantage to confront the U.S. A one-theater war capacity would risk undermining both deterrence and the credibility of

U.S. security commitments in key regions of the world. This, in turn, could cause allies and friends to adopt more divergent defense policies and postures, thereby weakening the web of alliances and coalitions on which the United States relies to protect its interests abroad.¹²

The challenge confronting the Department of Defense is that U.S. forces must meet the demands of a dangerous world by shaping and responding. To do so, the DoD must meet its requirements to shape and respond in the near term, while at the same time it must transform U.S. combat capabilities and support mechanisms to be able to shape and respond effectively to future challenges. The nation must maintain its military superiority in the face of evolving, as well as discontinuous, threats and challenges.¹³ Without such superiority, the United States' ability to exert global leadership and to create international conditions conducive to the achievement of its national goals would be in doubt. To maintain this superiority, the United States must achieve a new level of proficiency in its ability to conduct joint and combined operations. This proficiency can be achieved only through a unified effort by all elements of the DoD. Achieving this new level of proficiency also requires improving the U.S. military's methods for integrating its forces and capabilities with those of its allies and coalition partners.

Six basic requirements can be identified that must be addressed to execute the defense strategy as stated. First, shape the international environment through DoD engagement programs and activities. This action will support friends and allies by sustaining and adapting security relationships; enhance coalition capabilities; promote regional stability; prevent or reduce threats and conflict.¹⁴ Second, shape the international environment and respond to the full spectrum of crises by providing

appropriately sized, positioned, and mobile forces. This step means supporting U.S. regional security objectives; deterring hostile actors or activities in peacetime and in times of crisis; conducting multiple, concurrent smaller-scale contingency operations, if required; and fighting and winning two nearly simultaneous major theater wars, if required. Third, prepare now for an uncertain future by pursuing a focused modernization effort that maintains U.S. qualitative superiority in key warfighting capabilities. Fourth, prepare now for an uncertain future by exploiting the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) in order to improve the U.S. military's ability to perform near-term missions and meet future challenges. Fifth, maintain highly ready joint forces to perform the full spectrum of military activities: maintaining high personnel and unit readiness; recruit and retain well-qualified military and civilian personnel; providing equal opportunity and a high quality of life; and improving force management procedures throughout DoD. And sixth, fundamentally reengineer the Department and achieve a 21st century infrastructure by reducing costs while maintaining required military capabilities across all DoD mission areas.¹⁵

In this complex and uncertain security environment, the United States must continually reassess the environment, the defense strategy, and the associated military requirements. If the security environment were to change dramatically and threats of large-scale aggression were to grow or diminish significantly, it would be both prudent and appropriate for the United States to review and reappraise its warfighting requirements.¹⁶ Deterrence rests on a potential adversary's perception of our capabilities and commitment, which are demonstrated by our ability to bring decisive military power to bear and by communication of U.S. intentions. Critical to the execution of our security

strategy are engagement activities, including information sharing and contacts between our military and the armed forces of other nations. These activities promote trust and confidence and encourage measures that increase our security and that of our allies, partners, and friends. Engagement builds constructive security relationships, helps to promote the development of democratic institutions, and helps keep some countries from becoming adversaries tomorrow.¹⁷ The U.S. military capabilities form the foundation of mutually beneficial alliances and security partnerships, insure stability in key regions, and back the current worldwide climate of confidence that encourages peace, economic growth, and democratization. Our global engagement makes the world safer for our nation, our citizens at home and abroad, and our vital interests.¹⁸

Opponents will devise a variety of asymmetric counters or techniques to frustrate or defeat conventional U.S. military advantages. They will continue to seek unconventional innovations to counter U.S. activities abroad associated with the U.S. Security Strategy. These state or nonstate actors will use approaches that circumvent our strengths, exploit our vulnerabilities, or confront us in ways we cannot readily match. Critical to maintaining the U.S. military superiority in the 21st century is the ability of DoD, as well as that of our friends and allies, to adapt to asymmetric threats such as terrorism, information warfare, and use of WMD (nuclear, biological, and chemical). These three areas represent possible gaps in our security strategy that may be exploited by our potential opponents. These three risks are of special concern because their use has the potential to threaten the U.S. homeland and population directly and deny us access to critical overseas infrastructures. Their potential use has created new requirements that

must be addressed by the U.S. and DoD to mitigate their effects and ensure the success of the national security strategy.

Many adversaries believe that the best way to avoid, deter, or offset U.S. military superiority is to develop a capability to threaten the U.S. homeland. In addition to a nuclear threat, our nation is vulnerable to disruptions by physical and computer attack. The interdependent nature of the communications and information, power, and transportation infrastructures creates even more vulnerability. Foreign states have the greatest potential capability to attack our infrastructures because they possess the intelligence assets to assess and analyze infrastructure vulnerabilities, and the range of weapons-conventional munitions, WMD, and information operations tools to take advantage of the vulnerabilities. The most immediate and serious infrastructure threat, however, is from insiders, terrorists, criminals, and other small groups or individuals carrying out well-coordinated strikes against selected critical nodes. While conventional munitions attacks are the most likely to occur, our adversaries are seeking to develop an increased capacity to employ WMD. They are also likely to increase their capabilities for computer intrusion.¹⁹

Terrorism is a common asymmetric counter that involves a calculated use of violence or threat of violence to invoke fear. Its intent is to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. Terrorism and the terrorist threat has changed markedly in recent years due primarily to five factors: changing terrorist motivations; the proliferation of technologies of mass destruction; increased access to information and information technologies; a perception that the United States is not willing to accept casualties; and the accelerated

centralization of vital components of the national infrastructure. As a result of these constantly changing threats, the United States must continue to improve its ability to stay ahead of terrorists' ever-expanding capabilities.²⁰

The DoD program for combating terrorism has four components: antiterrorism, counterterrorism, terrorism consequence management, and intelligence support. Antiterrorism consists of defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals, forces, and property to terrorist acts. Counterterrorism consists of offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. Terrorism consequence management consists of measures to mitigate the effects of a terrorist incident, including the use of a weapon of mass destruction. Intelligence support consists of the collection, analysis, and dissemination of all-source intelligence on terrorist groups and activities to protect, deter, preempt, or counter the terrorist threat to U.S. personnel, forces, critical infrastructures, and interests.²¹

Five key DoD initiatives support its antiterrorism efforts. First, the Joint Staff Integrated Vulnerability Assessment Teams and CINC and Service Vulnerability Assessment Teams provide commanders with critical assistance to force protection programs. Second, DoD continues to improve its Antiterrorism Force Protection Training Program. This program provides antiterrorism awareness training to all DoD military and civilian personnel and their families, specialized training for Antiterrorism Force Protection Officers, pre-command training for prospective commanders, and operational level seminars for senior officers. Third, the Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiative Fund provides an important means for combatant commanders to fund time-critical, emergent requirements that cannot wait for the normal budget or acquisition

processes. Fourth, DoD has embarked on a major effort to provide minimum force protection standards for military construction projects. Finally, technology continues to be important in enhancing DoD's ability to counter terrorism. Key technology enablers include threat analysis and warning, explosive device detection, and early detection of weapons of mass destruction.²²

In the area of counterterrorism, U.S. armed forces possess a tailored range of options to respond to terrorism directed at U.S. citizens, interests, and property, both domestically and overseas. DoD can employ the full range of military capabilities, including rapid-response Special Operations Forces that are specifically trained, manned, and equipped to preempt or resolve incidents of international terrorism. DoD also continues to refine its capabilities, which have been intensively exercised with interagency counterparts.²³

In the area of terrorism consequence management, DoD continues to work hard to deter, and when necessary, minimize the effects of weapons of mass destruction incident. DoD has created, and is continually refining, an excellent response capability. For example, in October 1999, the United States Joint Forces Command established Joint Task Force Civil Support to assume overall responsibility for coordinating DoD's consequence management support efforts to civil authorities for weapons of mass destruction incidents within the United States, its territories, and possessions.²⁴

In the area of intelligence support, DoD recognizes the importance of timely dissemination of terrorist threat information from the intelligence community to the operators in the field. DoD continues to strive toward its goal of having fully coordinated joint operations and intelligence fusion cells at all levels. DoD intelligence organizations

remain engaged in an aggressive long-term collection and analytic effort designed to provide information that can better alert local commanders to potential terrorist attacks. Close working relationships with other members of the national intelligence community are being strengthened, and intelligence exchanges with U.S. allies have been increased.²⁵

Through international and domestic legislation and strengthened law enforcement, the United States seeks to limit the room in which terrorists can move, plan, raise funds, and operate. Our goal is to eliminate terrorist safehavens, dry up their sources of revenue, break up their cells, disrupt their movements, and criminalize their behavior. We work closely with other countries to increase the international political will to limit all aspects of terrorists' efforts.²⁶ The United States conducts a program to train foreign law enforcement personnel in such areas as airport security, bomb detection, maritime security, VIP protection, hostage rescue, and crisis management. To date, we have trained more than 20,000 representatives from over 100 countries. Terrorism will be with us for the foreseeable future. Some terrorists will continue using the most popular form of terrorism--the truck or car bomb--while others will seek alternative means to deliver their deadly message, including weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or cyber attacks. We must remain vigilant to these new threats, and we are preparing ourselves for them. All terrorists--even a "cyber terrorist"--must occupy physical space to carry out attacks. The strong political will of states to counter the threat of terrorism remains the crucial variable of our success.²⁷

"Information operations" refers to actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while protecting one's own information and information systems. The increasing availability of technology and sophistication of potential

adversaries demands a commitment to improving the U.S. military's ability to operate in the face of information threats.²⁸ Information warfare or "INFOWAR" is drawing increased attention. The U.S. is particularly vulnerable to IW attack. The U.S., on the civilian as well as the military side, is more dependent on electronic information systems than anyone else in the world. In addition to the possibility that computer systems and communications could prove to be a weak link for the military, there is also the danger that hostile parties could attack the civilian information systems directly. Attacking these systems is easier, less expensive, and less risky than sabotage, hijacking, or bombing, and a quick cost-effective calculation might make IW an aggressor's strategy of choice.²⁹ The IW threat grows because the entry costs are low. As the cost of information technology falls, a greater number of foreign governments and non-government organizations will present a potential IW threat to the U.S. IW is a great entry-level asymmetric technique to counter U.S. advantages in military systems. As a result of the trend of many potential threats utilizing IW, the DoD will have to examine the possibility of IW threats coming from a number of different directions.³⁰

Dealing with the IW threat, and especially with aggressive attackers who use IW as their main weapon against the U.S., will require new approaches. It will probably be impossible in most cases to build a foolproof defense for the civilian information infrastructure. But it should be possible to prevent small or limited attacks by informing the general public and industry of the threat through formal and informal networks for government and civilian cooperation. The FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) has recently unveiled "InfraGard," an initiative developed in concert with private companies and academia to encourage information sharing about cyber intrusions,

exploited vulnerabilities, and physical infrastructure threats. This program establishes not only a mechanism for two-way info sharing, but also a channel for NIPC to disseminate analytical threat products to the private sector.³¹

In the case of vital military communications links and computer systems, it may be possible to build hardened “point” defenses, taking extra steps to thwart attackers. These measures could include building dedicated transmission lines for communications, isolating critical computers from outside networks, and using hardware and software security systems that may be excessively expensive or inconvenient for commercial use but necessary for vital DoD systems. These measures would also have to be repeated in the production of hardware and software and, in some cases, dedicated production lines might be necessary for the most sensitive systems.³² The most challenging measures, though, are likely to be political, economic, and cultural, as we strive to fully integrate friendly nations, followed by the rest of the world, into the secure informational environment. IW requires new concepts within DoD because traditional approaches to military planning and military command and control (C2) will not work for it. The same is true across society, where the measures for countering the IW threat will often collide with the essential features of the democratic, free-market system that an IW policy is intended to protect.³³

Defense against hostile information operations will require unprecedented cooperation among services, defense agencies, other U.S. government agencies, commercial enterprises, and U.S. allies and friends. In addition, the United States’ ability to protect information must extend to those elements of the civilian infrastructure that support national security requirements.³⁴

Potential adversaries believe they can preclude U.S. force options and offset U.S. conventional military superiority with the development of WMD. The pressure for potential asymmetric opponents to acquire WMD is high, and the post-Cold War environment is more amenable to proliferation activities. New alliances have formed, providing pooled resources for developing these capabilities, while technological advances and global economic conditions have made it easier to transfer material and expertise. The basic sciences necessary to produce these weapons are widely understood. Most of the technology is readily available, and the raw materials are common. The prospects for limiting proliferation are slim, and the global WMD threat to U.S.-allied territory, interests, forces, and infrastructure will increase significantly. Several rogue states are likely to acquire nuclear weapons during the next 10-20 years, and some existing nuclear states are likely to increase their inventory. As these trends unfold, the prospects for limited nuclear weapons use in regional conflicts will rise. So too will the potential for a terrorist or some other potential opponent to acquire and use a weapon. Chemical and biological weapons are generally easier to develop, hide, and deploy than nuclear weapons and will be readily available to those with the will and resources to attain them. These types of weapons will be widely proliferated, and could be used in a regional conflict over the next twenty years. Adversaries may use chemical or biological agents in a terrorist or insurgent operation. Such an event could occur in the U.S. or against U.S.-allied forces and facilities overseas. The planning for such “smaller-scale” incidents would be extremely difficult to detect and, consequently, to deter or warn against.³⁵

The possibility of a terrorist weapon of mass destruction (WMD) event--a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN), or large explosive weapon--continues to increase. Although most terrorists continued to favor proven and conventional tactics, such as bombing, shooting, and kidnapping, some terrorist groups were attempting to obtain CBRN capabilities. For example, Usama Bin Ladin spoke publicly about acquiring such a capability and likened his pursuit of those weapons to a religious duty. Some terrorist groups have demonstrated CBRN use and are actively pursuing CBRN capabilities for several reasons. Increased publicity highlighted the vulnerability of civilian targets to CBRN attacks. Such attacks could cause lasting disruption and generate significant psychological impact on a population and its infrastructure. So far, the largest attack involving chemical weapons against civilians was Aum Shinrikyo's sarin nerve agent attack on the Tokyo subway system in March 1995. Some groups, especially those motivated by religious and cultural ideologies, have demonstrated a willingness to inflict greater numbers of indiscriminate casualties. Since 1995, other less predictable, but potentially dangerous groups have also emerged. Those groups may not adhere to traditional targeting patterns. CBRN materials, information, and technology became more widely available, especially from the internet and the former Soviet Union.³⁶

The Department has progressed substantially toward fully integrating considerations of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons use against U.S. forces into its military planning, acquisition, intelligence, and international cooperation activities. These include efforts to: embed counterproliferation considerations in all aspects of the planning and programming process; adapt military doctrine and operational plans to deal

with NBC weapons in regional contingencies; adjust acquisition programs to ensure that U.S. forces will be adequately trained and equipped to operate effectively in contingencies involving NBC threats; reallocate intelligence resources to provide better information about adversary NBC capabilities and how they are likely to be used; undertake multilateral and bilateral cooperative efforts with U.S. allies and friends to develop a common defense response to the military risks posed by NBC proliferation.³⁷

DoD must meet two key challenges as part of its strategy to ensure future NBC attack preparedness. It must integrate counterproliferation considerations in every facet of military activity, from logistics to maneuver and strike warfare. It must also internationalize those same efforts to ensure U.S. allies and potential coalition partners train, equip, and prepare their forces to operate with U.S. forces in an actual or potential NBC environment.³⁸

To advance the institutionalization of counterproliferation, the Joint Staff and CINCs will develop a joint counter-NBC weapons operational concept that integrates both offensive and defensive measures. This strategy will serve as the basis for refining existing doctrine so that it more fully integrates all aspects of counter-NBC operations. In addition, the Services and CINCs will place greater emphasis on individual, unit, joint, and combined training and exercises that incorporate realistic NBC threats. The Services will work to develop new training standards for specialized units, such as logistics and medical units, and larger formations to improve their ability to perform complex tasks under prolonged NBC conditions. Finally, many counterproliferation-related capabilities must be available prior to or very early in a conflict. The Services will develop capability packages that provide for prepositioning or early deployment of NBC and theater missile

defense capabilities and personnel into theaters of operations. The timing necessary for the arrival of such capabilities will in part determine whether or not those capabilities reside in Active or Reserve components.³⁹

Unless properly prepared to deal with NBC threats or attacks, allies and friends may present vulnerabilities for the U.S. in a coalition. In particular, potential coalition partners cannot depend on U.S. forces to provide passive and active defense capabilities to counter NBC threats. U.S. counterproliferation cooperation with its NATO allies through the Senior Defense Group on Proliferation provides a template for improving the preparedness of long-standing allies and other countries that may choose to act in concert with the United States in future military coalitions. Similar efforts with allies in Southwest Asia and Asia-Pacific will continue to ensure that potential coalition partners for major theater wars have effective plans for NBC defense of populations and forces.⁴⁰

A growing number of nations are working to acquire ballistic missiles, including missiles that could threaten the territory of the United States. Ballistic missiles can be used to deliver nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. The increasing availability of sophisticated technology today may enable a nation to develop or acquire, with very little warning time for the United States, an intercontinental range ballistic missile capability. To protect against this growing threat and deter possible adversaries from considering such attacks on American territory, the United States is engaged in a vigorous effort to develop a national missile defense (NMD) system with an intent to deploy such a system by 2005. The NMD system under development would defend all 50 states against a limited strategic ballistic missile attack such as could be posed by a rogue state. An

NMD system could also provide some inherent capability against a small accidental or unauthorized launch of strategic ballistic missiles from existing nuclear capable states.⁴¹

The fact that the United States is arguably the world's last remaining superpower does not negate its vulnerability. In fact it may make us a larger threat to those state and nonstate actors who don't share our interests, values, and beliefs, especially while we exercise our national security strategies. Key to our security strategy is our policy of engagement. Engagement forms bilateral and multilateral relationships that increase military openness, enhance cooperation, and advance regional conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. Engagement is a multiplier to thwart conventional threats and help deter and defeat unconventional, asymmetric attacks. A vital aspect of engagement and necessary requirement to the success of our security strategy is a constant and continued exchange of ideas, information, and shared technology with our allies and coalition partners. The willingness of foreign governments to confront the challenges of future threat is another requirement vital to the success of our strategy. Engagement demonstrates the commitment of our nation. It helps to improve interoperability, reassures our allies and friends, and conveys democratic ideals.

Another requirement vital to the success of our security strategy in confronting future threats is the emphasis on the proper collection and dissemination of intelligence. Good sources of intelligence are the one constant advantage we enjoy to follow trends of emerging threats and to hedge against possible attacks. Interagency coordination is vital to ensure a free flow of vital information and to maximize resources. Combat capabilities augmented with advances in technology must be maximized to respond to future threats. These capabilities must then be fully integrated with the capabilities of our allies and

coalition partners. Engagement serves as the basis for a concerted effort with other nations, which helps to meet interoperability requirements and focuses activities toward common goals. Effective consequence management by DoD and civilian agencies, as well as international partners, is another requirement that will mitigate the effects of asymmetric challenges such as terrorism, INFOWAR, and WMD.

The initiative of global engagement is the core of our national security strategy. It provides us greater access overseas, promotes the rapid flow of information, technology, and vital resources; promotes interagency and inter-service coordination; and helps to fully integrate our combat capabilities with those of our allies and coalition partners. U.S. Army Special Forces are particularly suited to many of the activities that flow from the National Security Strategy (NSS). They are often regarded as the premier implementing force of the NSS as a preventive strategy, because their forward global presence and deployments allow them to detect and resolve pending crises or conflict and create the conditions that support enduring peace.

The success of a preventive strategy against the rise in asymmetric challenges depends heavily on the cooperation and enduring relationships with our foreign friends and allies. This is the primary benefit and objective of SF deployments in support of taskings from the National Command Authorities (NCA), the geographical CINCs, and our American ambassadors.⁴² Their activities meet the requirements of strengthening cooperation and ensuring interoperability with our foreign friends and allies. Cooperation ensures a free flow of intelligence and information which deprives potential enemies of their sanctuary and promotes self sufficiency on the part of allies threatened by complex adversaries. The establishment of partnerships ensures rapid

cooperation to hedge against potential crises and facilitates the development of effective coalitions during times of crisis. As the subsequent chapters will show, SF is a key implementing force because the overseas access achieved and maintained by them, allows an unprecedented, rapid response to areas of national interest, with an immediate capability to confront those threats that seek to challenge the U.S. and its national interests both conventionally and asymmetrically.

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³Ike Skelton, US House of Representatives, Democrat, Missouri, “International Engagement-Why We Need to Stay the Course,” *Military Review* 89, no. 1 (Mar-Apr 99): 1.

⁴*Ibid.*, 2.

⁵Cohen, 6.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, 7.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Linda D. Kozaryn, “Nation’s Prosperity Linked to Global Engagement,” comments by Walt Slocombe, U.S. Undersecretary for Policy, address to U.S. Chamber of Commerce on 5 October 2000, in *November 2000 ROA National Security Report* (Washington: American Forces Press, 2000), 33.

¹⁰Cohen, 7.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 17.

¹⁶Ibid., 18.

¹⁷Ibid., 10.

¹⁸John J. Shalikashvili, GEN, USA, *National Military Strategy* (Washington: GPO, 1997), 3.

¹⁹Ibid., 6.

²⁰Vice Admiral Thomas R. Wilson, Director DIA, “Military Threats and Security Challenges Through 2015,” from a statement to the Senate Armed Services committee, 3 February 2000, Washington, D.C.: 4.

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²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 9.

²⁷Michael A. Sheehan, State Department, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Patterns of Global Terrorism-1999*, pub. 10687 (Washington: Department of State, 2000), 1.

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²⁹Cohen, 6.

³⁰John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, “In Athena's Camp: Preparing For Conflict in the Information Age” (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), 175.

³¹Ibid., 182.

³²Paul Davis, “Countering Cyber Threats: The FBI’s InfraGard Program,” *Counterterrorism and Security International* 6, no.4 (Arlington: IACSP, 2000), 9-10.

³³Arquilla, 188.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 189.

³⁵Cohen, 6.

³⁶Wilson, 5.

³⁷Sheehan, 5.

³⁸Cohen, 6.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³Henry H. Shelton, GEN, USA, Commander in Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command commentary, “Special Operations Forces: Key Role in Preventive Defense,” 1997; 1-2.

CHAPTER 4

EXAMINING THE ROLES AND RELEVANCE OF U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES

U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) can assist in preempting, ameliorating, or resolving problems in the broad spectrum of operations that affect the political, social, religious, and humanitarian aspects of today's complex and uncertain global environment. Their enduring traits consisting of tactical and technical expertise, regional orientation, and intercultural skills enable them to interact effectively with foreign military and civilian populace in the geographical Commander in Chief's (CINC) Area of Responsibility (AOR). Their small size, inherent flexibility, and versatility enable them to deploy rapidly to shape the environment and respond to crises.¹

Special Forces serve three purposes that are increasingly important in the current international environment. First, they expand the range of options available to the National Command Authority (NCA) confronting conflicts below the threshold of war, and asymmetric crises such as terrorism, WMD threats, and Information Operations. Second, they act as force multipliers in support of conventional forces engaged in major conflicts, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. military effort. Finally, they expand national capabilities to react to situations requiring exceptional sensitivity, including noncombatant missions such as humanitarian assistance, security assistance, and peace operations.

Special Operations differ from conventional military operations in degree of political risk, their unconventional mode of employment, their independence from friendly support, and their dependence on detailed intelligence and indigenous assets. For these reasons, some SF missions carry an exceptionally high degree of physical risk. Because of the political sensitivities surrounding many SF missions, where failure can damage national prestige, close coordination at the interagency level between SF and U.S. government agencies is necessary. Close interagency coordination maximizes SF effectiveness in the political-military environment short of war. Skillful integration of SF with conventional forces allows SF to be a force multiplier in conventional operations.

DoD is improving SF interoperability with conventional forces and ensuring SF's inclusion in strategic planning, joint training, and interagency exercises. SF contributes directly to conventional combat operations, complicating enemy operations through assistance to indigenous forces allied with the United States, and sealing the victory through post-hostility and restoration activities. In Operation Desert Storm, for example, SF special reconnaissance, direct action, and other missions behind Iraqi lines, contributed to deception operations and misled the enemy about the coalition's operational plan and facilitated coalition warfare.

Special Forces are particularly suited to many of the activities that flow from the National Security Strategy (NSS). They are the premier implementing force of the NSS as a preventive strategy, because their forward global presence and deployments allow them to detect and resolve pending crises or conflict and create the conditions that support enduring peace. The success of a preventive strategy against the rise in asymmetric challenges depends heavily on the cooperation and enduring relationships

with our foreign friends and allies. This is the primary benefit and objective of SF deployments in support of taskings from the National Command Authorities (NCA), the geographical CINCs, and our American ambassadors.² Their activities support the NSS by helping to ensure U.S. access to vital areas of interest and critical overseas infrastructures in peacetime and in times of crisis or regional conflict. They support the National Military Strategy's requirement to "shape, respond, and prepare now," by providing decision makers with an array of expanded options, represent a strategic economy of force, and provide "tailor to task" capabilities.³ Their activities strengthen cooperation and ensure interoperability with our foreign friends and allies. Cooperation ensures a free flow of intelligence and information, which deprives potential enemies of sanctuary and promotes self sufficiency on the part of allies threatened by complex adversaries. The establishment of partnerships ensures rapid cooperation to hedge potential crises and facilitates the development of effective coalitions during times of crisis.

To support the National Security Strategy of Initiative Engagement, Special Forces provide decision makers with increased options for achieving the national military objectives of promoting stability and thwarting aggression. To maximize their potential as strategic assets, SF receive national level oversight to ensure their full integration into planning for conventional operations and interagency planning. The DoD Reorganization Act of 1986, as amended by the National Defense Authorization Act of 1987, mandated unique relationships for command, control, and oversight of SOF. The act directed the establishment of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict ASD (SO/LIC)) to serve as the senior civilian advisor to the Under

Secretary of Defense for Policy and to the Secretary of Defense on matters pertaining to special operations and low intensity conflict. The act also directed the establishment of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and assigned it several service-like responsibilities, including programming, budgeting, and acquisition responsibilities. The policy and resource oversight responsibilities of ASD (SO/LIC) and the service-like responsibilities of USSOCOM create a unique relationship within the Department of Defense. This relationship facilitates SF's responsiveness and adaptability to the needs of the National Command Authorities in the changing national security environment.⁴

Special Forces have three primary roles of increasing importance in today's global environment that directly and indirectly challenge complex asymmetric threats. They are a *penetration and strike force*, able to respond to specialized contingencies across the conflict spectrum with stealth, speed, and precision. They are also *warrior-diplomats* capable of influencing, advising, training, and conducting operations with foreign forces, officials, and populations. Finally, they are *global scouts*, maximizing the advantage of their forward presence by detecting emerging crises, helping to resolve crises before they mature into full-blown conflicts, and developing the situation by providing decision makers critical "ground truth" information through real-time connectivity and on-the-spot updates.

As a *penetration and strike force*, SF has a unique "tailor to task" capability. They are rapidly adaptable to a broad and constantly varying range of tasks and conditions. This organizational agility allows SF to quickly concentrate synergistic effects from widely dispersed locations and assist Joint Force Commanders in achieving

decisive results without the need for time-consuming and risky massing of people and equipment. Even under the most austere conditions, SF can conduct 24-hour, multidimensional operations to penetrate denied or sensitive areas and resolve terrorist incident, preempt the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD), or strike key targets with precision and discrimination. Their operational and strategic missions directly or indirectly support the Joint Force Commander's campaign plan. They fully integrate into the campaign plan and attack high-value, time sensitive targets throughout the battlespace to assist in rapidly achieving land, air, sea, space, and information dominance.⁵

As *warrior diplomats*, SF training skills combined with language proficiency, cultural awareness, regional orientation, and understanding of the political context of the mission, make Special Forces unique in the U.S. military. They use their expertise to assist American ambassadors and geographic CINCs in influencing situations favorably to U.S. national interests through recurring interaction with current and potential allies. Their proactive peacetime engagement allows them to help host nations to meet their legitimate defense needs while encouraging regional cooperation, maintaining U.S. access, and visibly demonstrating the role of a professional military in a democratic society.⁶ Special Forces operate and train frequently with coalition forces and other foreign militaries to enhance the proficiency and professional development of these allies, and at the same time improve interoperability between them and U.S. forces. They interact with senior political and military leadership of the various countries they deploy to and establish special enduring relationships with their host nation counterparts. In many parts of the world, the military is often the most cohesive institution and wields

significant power and thus can influence the outcome of events during a crisis and affairs of the government. By working and training with foreign militaries, SF can reduce tensions, enforce democratic values, and build trust among nations.⁷

As *global scouts* they must maintain vigilance for signs of turmoil or pending crisis and conflict, while engaged throughout the world, whether in support of the NCA, geographic CINCs, or American ambassadors.⁸ Global Scouts acquire and sustain situational awareness by face-to-face contact with local populations and militaries. Information dominance is key to maintaining the edge against our potential adversaries. Special Forces are trained observers. They have the ability to assess a situation and quickly analyze information that can then be efficiently and accurately passed to decision makers. Therefore, when confronted with a potential asymmetric challenge, U.S. forces can be prepared to thwart or counter any action that may be posed by opponents to our presence and policies.

One of these three generic SF roles (strike force, warrior diplomats, global scouts) is at the base of each of the following special operations missions:

Direct Action (DA). DA, as defined by Joint Pub 1-02, are short duration strikes and small scale offensive operations to seize, capture, destroy, recover, or inflict damage on designated personnel or material. In the conduct of these operations, SF units may employ raid, ambush, or direct assault tactics; emplace mines and other munitions; conduct stand-off attacks from various platforms; provide terminal guidance for precision guided munitions; and conduct independent sabotage.⁹ These operations will be in pursuit of targets generally located within hostile or denied territory. They will generally

incorporate an immediate withdrawal from the objective area, and can provide specific, well-defined, time-sensitive results of strategic and operational significance.

An example of a classic SF DA mission was during Operation JUST CAUSE, when one SF team conducted a mission to prevent dictator Manuel Noriega from rallying his scattered troops. The U.S. Southern Command assigned the mission on 20 December 1989, to an 18-man SF team, from 3d Battalion 7th SFG (A). The team landed near the Cerro Azul television relay station, above Panama City, Panama. Augmented with two TV technicians from the 1109th Signal Battalion, the team went to the site via helicopters from the 617th SO Aviation Detachment. The team members fast-roped to the ground, captured the station, and removed several critical station components to prevent broadcast operations. After combat operations were completed in Panama City, the team returned to the station and replaced the critical parts so U.S. PSYOP forces could begin PSYOP broadcasts. The combination of a DA strike with PYSOP follow-on mission achieved the desired results with the minimum force and visibility.¹⁰ It also demonstrated the synergistic characteristic of SF when combined with other SOF elements.

Special Reconnaissance (SR). Special Reconnaissance is defined by Joint Pub 1-02 as 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 may also include assessment of chemical, biological, residual nuclear, or environmental hazards in denied areas, target acquisition, area assessment, and post-strike reconnaissance. SR compliments national and theater intelligence and collection systems

by obtaining specific, well-defined, and time-sensitive information of operational or strategic significance.¹¹ Special Reconnaissance is tied to selective human intelligence (HUMINT) activities that place U.S. or U.S. controlled eyes-on target in permissive or non-permissive environments. This aspect of SR will be emphasized in future missions in an effort to gain information dominance over asymmetric opponents by exposing their activities and fill intelligence gaps incapable of being filled by other national level agencies.

SR played a significant role in 1991 in the Gulf War. SF teams from the 3d, 5th, and 10th SFGs (A) conducted SR missions that supported the February 1991 offensive operation. At the start of the air war, SF teams were sent into Iraq by helicopter at night, in search of Scud launchers and to conduct reconnaissance to support the campaign plan. Several teams flew into Iraq to take photos and soil samples to determine the suitability of the terrain for coalition operations as they moved through Iraq. Just prior to the beginning of the ground war, SF teams conducted twelve SR missions deep inside Iraq to watch for the repositioning of Iraqi forces and signs of intended Iraqi counterattacks.¹² Perhaps the biggest SF story from the Gulf War was the hunt for Iraqi Scud launchers targeting Israel. Special Forces hunted the launchers for allied F-15E and A-10 aircraft in an area of western Iraq. Pave Low helicopters from the 20th SOS flew approximately sixty missions to insert and extract SF teams. In all, the SF teams on the ground are credited with locating more than forty mobile launchers that evaded overhead reconnaissance. In the last hours of the war, Iraq prepared to barrage Israel by firing twenty-nine Scuds at it. But these were located by ground teams and destroyed by A-10 Warthogs in a fusillade of Maverick missiles and cannon fire.¹³

Often SF teams, while conducting an SR mission on a target, are directed to transition the SR mission over into a Direct Action (DA) mission, to interdict the observed target. It is more efficient to destroy a target by the same team that observed it, rather than to commit additional resources to its destruction. If timing a strike is critical to an overall plan, it may be more efficient if executed by the observers on the ground. The SR team has had the advantage of observing any peculiarities in regard to the target that may affect its interdiction. Therefore contingencies must be considered during mission planning for the possibility of a follow-on DA strike.

Unconventional Warfare (UW). Unconventional Warfare is a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are trained, organized, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees, by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence collection, unconventional assisted recovery (UAR), and other low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations behind enemy lines or in politically sensitive territory.¹⁴ Essentially, execution of a UW mission means conducting military operations in enemy-held, enemy-controlled or politically sensitive territory. The U.S. may engage in UW in three ways: as part of a major theater war or lesser regional contingency, in support of a citizen or partisan defense intended as a deterrent, and as an effort to support an insurgency. SF provides advice and support as training and assistance to UW organizations. Past experiences such as in Nicaragua in the 1980's, prove that support for an insurgency can be an effective way of putting indirect pressure on adversaries. Costs versus the benefits of using UW against states that support insurgencies against the U.S. and its allies must be carefully considered

before employment.¹⁵ Because of its sensitive nature politically and its inherent need for support in its legitimate application, UW is one of the most debated SF missions today. The complex and evolving nature of today's asymmetric challenges limit the application of UW against all asymmetric entities, however, UW may find renewed applicability when applied as indirect pressure against an actual nation or regime that seeks to confront the U.S.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID). In FID, SF train, advise, and assist host nation military, paramilitary, police and other civilian forces in support of programs designed to free and protect a society from lawlessness, subversion, and insurgency. Like UW it is an umbrella concept covering a broad range of activities. The primary intent is to help the legitimate host government address internal threats and their underlying causes. FID is not restricted to times of conflict. It can take place in the form of training exercises and other activities to show U.S. resolve in the region. Through FID exercises, host nation forces are trained to deal with internal threats. Activities consist of indirect assistance such as participation in combined exercises and training programs or limited direct assistance without U.S. participation in combat operations. These actions support the HN in establishing internal defense and development programs.¹⁶ One example of FID is the U.S. efforts in Central America during the 1980s. Teams from the 7th Special Forces Group started training the armies of Honduras and El Salvador and the Civil Guard of Costa Rica in the 1970s. This training was in response to a Marxist takeover in Nicaragua that was spilling over into neighboring countries. In El Salvador, where a civil war by a communist backed movement threatened to overturn the government, SF advisors established a training facility to provide basic and advanced training for the El

Salvadoran Army. In addition, SF advisors were attached to brigade sized units to provide assistance in all areas of training and logistics. From a poorly staffed and led force of 8,000 soldiers in 1980, SF trainers created a hard-hitting counterinsurgency force of 54,000 by 1987. This force fought the guerrillas to a standstill and established the groundwork for a negotiated end to the conflict in 1991.¹⁷

Through activities in support of FID, SF has achieved a fine tradition in establishing new contacts in third world countries and fledgling democracies. The U.S. needs to take full advantage of the opportunities derived through FID as we enter the 21st century. In particular, in nations recently liberated from the yoke of totalitarianism, Special Forces could establish military to military contacts to be expanded by conventional military personnel. These exchanges would have two primary objectives: to provide local militaries with the training to deal with threats against their fledgling governments; and, to discourage the military threat to the civilian government through and effective military professional development program.¹⁸ The most valuable result of SF FID missions is that the international relationships developed help preserve access to vital areas of interest, especially during times of crisis or conflict.

Combating Terrorism (CBT). This interagency activity encompasses actions, including antiterrorism (defensive measures taken to reduce vulnerability to terrorist acts), and counterterrorism (offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism), taken to oppose terrorism throughout the entire threat spectrum. CBT involves offensive, interdepartmental and interagency measures designed to deter and, if necessary, defeat domestic and transnational terrorism. Special Mission Units designed expressly for these purposes prepare to resolve these incidents primarily abroad, but may

advise, train, and indirectly assist other CBT forces of the U.S. government inside the U.S. if directed to do so by the President or Secretary of Defense.¹⁹ Most CBT activities are classified and further discussion of CBT is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is important to note however, that terrorism, as a likely asymmetric counter to U.S. presence and interests, is a consideration in planning all SF missions. The primary mission of SF in combating terrorism is to apply highly specialized capabilities to preempt or, if no other forces are available, resolve terrorist incidents abroad. Ideally, their forward presence and training will at a minimum allow them to stabilize and develop the situation for follow-on national level CBT resources. Additionally, SF will play a significant role in coordinating and cooperating with foreign governments in the area of *counterterrorism*, thereby reducing the threat to both domestic societies and the international community.²⁰

Counterproliferation (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). CP is a relatively new SF mission and the subject of emerging doctrine. It is one of the new core missions that can be positively linked to the asymmetric challenge of WMD. The CP mission is a direct descendent of an earlier activity known as theater missile defense (TMD). This activity originated during the Gulf War, and involved mounted SF teams Scud-hunting; essentially a mounted (or dismounted) SR mission that would role over into a target interdiction mission. The CP mission is more complex and involves additional complimentary activities among the various services. The proliferation of these types of weapons, along with various non-state actors seeking to acquire them, will remain a significant threat in the near term.

SF will support CINCs, country teams, and other government agencies in their CP strategies to prevent proliferation, deter the use of NBC weapons, and defend against their use. SF can conduct or support special reconnaissance or collect intelligence and assess WMD capability. SF will maintain a robust capability to locate and destroy delivery systems and supporting infrastructure. The proliferation of WMD is one of the most serious security threats that the United States, its allies, and friends confront in the post-Cold War era. When U.S. forces are faced with a theater WMD threat, SF can assist in deterring, destroying, or defending against it. SF can support deterrence by communicating to foreign audiences a U.S. commitment and capability to prevent the proliferation and use of WMD. SF direct action capabilities contribute to deterrence and destruction options by providing a precision strike capability against weapons, storage facilities, and command and control nodes. SF special reconnaissance capabilities can contribute to the defense against WMD threats by providing real-time intelligence unavailable from other sources.²¹ As with CBT, the specifics of CP activities conducted by SF are classified, and not within the scope of this thesis.

Information Operations. Info Ops is a broad activity that involves attacking adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. As reliance upon electronic information systems grows, their value is matched by their significance as targets and as weapons. Information Operations must orient not just on technology, but also on the most crucial factor in all aspects of warfare, the human element. The ultimate targets of IO are the will and the ability of the decision makers, leaders, and commanders to observe, interpret, reason, and make and implement sound decisions. Conversely, individuals or groups of any size can obtain the

systems and human expertise needed to pose credible threats to vulnerable friendly information systems. Hostile actors may consider this innovative form of asymmetric attack against their adversaries rather than to engage their forces directly. Such actors, might, for example, try to disable telecommunications components of essential infrastructures critical to support national defense.²²

Special Forces will play an increasingly important supportive role in Information Operations. IO is another example of how the changing threat environment has caused SF missions to evolve. Although this new mission is the subject of developing doctrine, SF is likely to be involved executing IO capabilities categorized as *Information Warfare (IW)*. IW activities that support the exploitation, dominance, or destruction of an enemy's information system while maintaining the integrity of SOF systems from attack, include *Military Deception*, *Physical Attack/Destruction*, and *Computer Network Attack (CNA)*. Military deception when performed as offensive IO, causes adversaries to form inaccurate impressions about friendly dispositions, waste intelligence assets, or fail to use resources to their best advantage. Physical destruction and Computer Network Attack are aimed at blocking or reducing an opponent's ability to conduct offensive IO and disrupt, degrade, or destroy computers, networks, or the information in them.²³ Essentially, SF and their precision strike capability would conduct Direct Action (DA)/ Information Warfare (IW) operations that contribute to gaining information superiority. Defensive IO techniques could be taught to friendly nations, contributing to their internal security through SF peacetime engagement activities.

Collateral Activities. SF's collateral activities are security assistance, counter-drug activities, countermine activities, humanitarian assistance, search and

rescue/personnel recovery, special activities, and coalition support. In these areas, SF shares responsibility with other SOF and conventional forces as directed by geographic combatant commanders. To remain as robust a “special operations” force as possible, it may become necessary to divest some missions, probably of the aforementioned collateral type, to the conventional military. This, of course, will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Many of these missions ultimately provide SF with the means to achieve and maintain access into areas vital to national interest. Preserving access is a primary benefit of SF and an integral part of the U.S. security and defense strategy.

One collateral mission that will remain dominantly SF is coalition support. Building and maintaining effective coalitions present significant challenges, from policy coordination at the strategic level to interoperability among diverse military forces at the tactical level. In the ever-growing politically sensitive views of nations, the utilization of coalitions contributes to the legitimacy of an effort. Because coalitions will continue to present both important political benefits careful design and collaboration will be needed to ensure the United States and its allies and partners meet new interoperability challenges. SF can plan, train, and prepare to respond to the full spectrum of crises in cooperation with the forces of other nations. Because of their language skills and regional orientation, Special Forces are particularly well suited to conventional coalition warfare. For example, in Operation Desert Storm, SF personnel were deployed as liaison officers to multinational staffs under the tactical control of the Commander in Chief of U.S. Central Command. Their in-depth knowledge of the coalition members, language, culture, and militaries allowed them to successfully link the CINC to each member of the

coalition. General Norman R. Schwarzkopf referred to this contribution as the glue that held the coalition together.²⁴

Special Forces greatest contribution to holding the coalition of Operation Desert Storm together was its mission of combining foreign internal defense operations with its newly expanded mission of coalition warfare. Specifically tailored SF coordination and training teams (CTT) were provided to work with the coalition forces. Initially, these teams were assigned to support Saudi ground forces, but as other nations (Egypt, Syria, Oman, and Qatar) joined the coalition, SF teams were assigned to their forces as well. These teams provided assistance to every level of the coalition forces, down to the battalion level. SF CTT teams advised coalition commanders on how to employ their forces for an integrated defense, utilizing sand berms, minefields, and antitank ditches, and covering these obstacles with indirect fires. They provided for the safety of troops by working out contingencies for the passage of lines if they had to withdraw. The SF teams also helped to prevent fratricide by providing liaison between non-U.S. units and American air support.²⁵ This widespread use of SF teams proved the need for SF as trainers and liaison with foreign forces, legitimizing their value during coalition support operations.

All Special Forces activities, for the purpose of examination, are categorized as one of two types: *active* and *passive*. Their active roles are clearly made up of their core and collateral missions as previously described, and are applicable to today's global environment conditioned by asymmetric threats. Passive activities are those that can be executed "coincidentally" to the primary ones. Two primary passive functions will be integral components to the Special Forces role as "global scouts." However, since they

are coincidental functions, they can be executed concurrently with virtually any SF mission. These two passive functions of increasing importance are *passive intelligence collection* and *advanced force operations (AFO)*.

Passive intelligence collection is a by-product of the situational awareness Special Forces maintain in conducting their day-to-day activities abroad. Contact with the civilian population and the military of a host nation can provide an exclusive insight to the current socio-political situation or other trends in a particular country. Special Forces, in general, are trained observers, and their senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) have advanced Operations and Intelligence training (O&I) that gives them additional skills in analysis and data collection. The typical SF mission ends with intelligence debriefs done by the unit intelligence officer (S-2/J-2) or his representative. It is primarily a generic format that covers a myriad of information that Special Operators may or may not have happened to observe. These reports are passed to higher for further analysis and filed for future planning purposes by follow-on missions. To maximize this “coincidental” SF collection capability, efforts have recently been made to coordinate national level intelligence agencies with SF missions that may be able to provide critical “on-the-ground” information to fill gaps to national intelligence collection requirements. Representatives from the intelligence communities can prebrief SF units prior to mission execution, to focus their attention to various aspects of the operational area, where specific requirements for intelligence might exist.

Another benefit of interagency coordination occurs to the SF unit itself. Through this coordination, the intelligence community can provide current information on the operational area to the SF unit significantly aiding its mission planning efforts. Upon

mission completion, the intelligence community representatives can have personnel on hand to conduct not only their own debriefs, but to also obtain the information from the standard SF intelligence debriefs. This type of interagency lash-up adds to critical redundancy to intelligence systems with the addition of this human intelligence (HUMINT) collection ability. It also reduces the amount of circular reporting (same information from various sources) that contributes to a slowed intelligence process. SF can observe trends and emerging crisis on the ground. This can significantly contribute to the degradation of potential adversaries from gaining advantages of any kind, since negative trends are indicators of possible or impending asymmetric challenges. Care must be taken in executing passive collection activities because foreign governments may interpret such activities as espionage if prudence is not maintained and limits are not observed.²⁶

During *advance force operations* (AFO), Special Forces facilitate the introduction of follow on forces. Whether already on the ground executing engagement activities, or infiltrating into a non-permissive environment, SF units are an early entry force that can provide initial situation assessments, establish communication in austere environments to pass critical information, and enable the introduction of additional SOF or conventional forces into a crisis or conflict. The Quadrennial Defense Review requirement that the military be able to fight two major theaters of war almost simultaneously, means we must be able to transition quickly to fighting a major theater of war from a position of global engagement. Because of inherent capabilities, forward global presence, regional orientation, language skills, and cultural awareness SF offer an important capability for facilitating the transition from peacetime engagement to war--and back again.²⁷ In their

role as “global scouts,” in a crisis area, SF can provide vital “environmentals,” or assessments on various aspects of the area of operations to include information on airports, seaports, weather, terrain, lines of communication, and hostile forces. They can establish communications and provide real-time intelligence and situational updates. In austere conditions they can survey and mark drop zones, helicopter landing zones, assembly areas, beach landing sites, fast rope sites, and routes into and out of the objective area. Their role as “warrior-diplomat” utilizes language skills and cultural acuity to utilize and coordinate for host nation support of transportation and lodgment facilities, if available. Their inherent skills as a strike force will enable SF to stabilize and possibly contain a crisis situation, in preparation to hand-off the operation to follow on forces, or if necessary resolve the situation in lieu of follow on forces.

Special Forces play an important role in low-intensity conflict because of the unique capabilities resident in SF and the special character of low-intensity conflicts. Low-intensity conflict is a particularly challenging area for the United States, because it encompasses a range of activities that weaken regional security and undermine the ability of the U.S. to accomplish its objectives. U.S. efforts to counter low-intensity threats do not focus on traditional military objectives. They are not driven by the requirement to destroy enemy forces or capture terrain, but rather by the need to establish or reestablish an environment conducive to regional or international stability without resorting to the political, economic, and military risks of war. Additionally, many of the skills in the Special Forces inventory are directly applicable to support friendly, democratic regimes. With their linguistic ability and cross-cultural sensitivities, SF can quickly establish an effective working rapport with foreign military and paramilitary forces and, when

required, government officials. Specifically, Special Forces (SF) can assist interagency coordination and conduct foreign liaison. Operation Uphold Democracy, in Haiti, is a classic example of how unique SF language and cultural skills can be successfully applied in the initial stages of a peacetime military campaign plan. In Haiti, SF performed a number of key functions. During the peak of the multinational force phase of the operation, there were SF personnel operating in small teams, based in as many as 30 population centers throughout Haiti. From those centers, SF was essential in establishing a safe and secure environment. Conventional military units, especially combat support and combat service support units--such as engineer or medical units--and even some civilian agencies have benefited from SF personnel during overseas peacetime missions. Prior to deployment, SF personnel can train members of various units or organizations in the cultural aspects of their projects and how to effectively deal with local military and civilian officials. During deployment, SF can assist them in coordinating with local representatives and populations.²⁸

Homeland Defense and support, is another major role suggested for Special Forces in response to domestic emergencies and transnational, asymmetric threats. Two major implications immediately flow from this prospect. The first is that direct SF involvement in predominantly civilian duties will affect the efficiency and readiness of SF; and second, the general reluctance by the American people and civilian leaders to use the military to solve civil problems. This is based on the fundamental principle in a democracy that the military should be excluded from civilian domestic affairs and should only be called upon on a limited basis in extraordinary cases. This attitude may change, of course, in light of a possible domestic asymmetric threat. Some argue that SOF in

general, could assist or assume responsibility from local and national law enforcement agencies in hostage or barricade situations (e.g., that of the Branch Dividians in Waco, Texas). Further, it is argued that SF skills that proved so relevant to the humanitarian assistance mission to the Kurds in Northern Iraq could be used to similar effect during domestic emergencies such as the catastrophic damage to South Florida caused by hurricane Andrew. While SF could bring formidable capabilities to bear on nonmilitary problems--martial efficiency, effective organization and training, interpersonal skills, unique assets--tackling domestic problems would require SF and the military as a whole to become more like its domestic counterparts and blunt the very characteristics that make SF effective in their three primary global roles. If martial efficiency, training and organizing, and interpersonal skills, augmented with some special assets, are relevant to domestic problems, the preferred solution should be to transplant these characteristics to those civilian agencies normally tasked with these problems. If these characteristics cannot be transplanted, it is because the civilian environment imposes more social constraints than does the military. These constraints if transferred to military forces working domestic issues would ultimately reduce their efficiency at executing their wartime roles. For any military organization, including SF, to assume a major role in support of domestic authorities would risk readiness for their primary roles and potentially result in redundancy of the capabilities resident in civilian agencies responsible for domestic activities.²⁹

When directed by the NCA, military assets supporting a lead agency may operate with the Department of Justice to provide support to counterterrorism. Currently, the FBI has the lead on the threat of domestic terrorism, with responsibility for crisis

management. Special Forces may possibly be called on to provide specialized or technical capabilities to help defuse or resolve the crisis. Although local authorities will be the first to respond to domestic incidents of WMD, Army forces have a supporting role and can quickly respond when authorized. The Army National Guard (ARNG) has specialized WMD response teams that act as advanced parties to facilitate subsequent deployment of other DoD assets. In a permissive overseas environment, the NCA may make available Army assets to assist a foreign government after a WMD incident.³⁰ In this case SF will play a vital implementing role to direct this type of support, and to act as liaison between U.S. assets and the host nation.

For the most part, we can expect SF to have a continued “limited” role in issues of domestic law enforcement, counterterrorism, WMD events, or other issues of domestic preparedness. The primary factor limiting the SF role in domestic crises is their growing role in the global arena, high repetition of these missions and constrained resources. However, when directed by the NCA, SF can and will support issues of domestic preparedness at the local, state, and federal levels, through training, expertise assistance, advice, and collaboration on new techniques and equipment. Also, sharing of intelligence data between domestic agencies and SF, concerning potential transnational threats, is an additional activity to help add to domestic preparedness and contribute to the preparedness of our foreign partners.

Shifting some SF missions to conventional forces is an issue presently in debate, due to growing mission roles and limited resources. Top officials feel this condition will pose significant challenges for SOF as they attempt to transform for the future. The Bush administration is examining the missions assigned to SOF and questioning how

deployments affect operations tempo and readiness levels. Robert Newberry, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for SO/LIC, the Defense Department's top official for special operations and low-intensity conflict, indicated during a February 2001 SO/LIC conference that SOF is performing a delicate balancing act between readiness and modernization. He said that readiness is being strained by an increased operational tempo and limited resources. However, SOF are being asked to perform more missions than ever, and trends indicate they will be deployed with increasing frequency in the future, especially during urban operations, according to officials who spoke at the conference. Newberry told the conference that special operations and low intensity conflict would emerge as the most probable form of warfare. Officials said that changes in how SOF is used may be on the horizon based on two key studies--a strategic military review being conducted by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the next Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). A major outcome of these evaluations may be that SOF will hand off some missions to conventional forces.³¹

Numerous senior officials who attended the 12th Annual Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict conference in February 2001 said SOF is overburdened and would like the services to start conducting some of its traditional missions. SOF has traditionally conducted missions that the conventional forces were not able to accomplish because they lacked the technology or were not properly trained. However as the services--and the Army in particular--undergo transformation and acquire new technology, SOF may be able to shift some missions to them and concentrate on the areas that need the most attention and specialization, said Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Lambert, Director of Operations, plans, and policy for U.S. Special Operations Command. Lambert said that SOF is not in

danger of going out of business and will continue to operate “in the seams” and where capability gaps exist. But he added that SOF needs to focus on becoming “blacker” and “better,” indicating a need for SOF specific roles, and the conventional forces may be in a position to help SOF do so by assuming some operations. As part of a Defense Department review of military needs and requirements, SOF has identified a few mission areas that could be given to the services, according to Air Force Brig. Gen. Gary Heckman, USSOCOMs Director of Resources. For example, Heckman stated that Army contractors could conduct humanitarian demining operations and that the Coast Guard could perform more counterdrug missions. He added that the Army and the Air Force could possibly assume more missions in Africa. Heckman also suggested that the Air Force might be able to conduct combat rescue operations without the help of SOF. However, transferring missions is a trade-off. Some missions, such as demining and counterdrug may not be critical to national security interests, but they give SF access to other countries and foreign governments they would not otherwise obtain.³² This is a critical element for the Engagement Initiative as a hedge to asymmetric challenges. Even the lowest priority missions in other countries provide Special Forces with critical language and cultural sensitivity exposure.

The debate that SF faces concerns which missions to hand-off in order to relieve the high OPTEMPO and which missions to keep in order to remain engaged and maintain practical skills. It is also not clear whether the services would be willing to assume SF missions and what kind of strain those missions will place on their resources and readiness. Another issue is whether sharing roles will blur the line between SOF and conventional forces to the detriment of the Special Operations community. According to

Air Force Brig. Gen. Folkerts, Director of CBT, Policy and Support for SO/LIC, if SOF stays where it is it will have to compete with conventional forces that often have more bureaucratic clout for priority of missions and resources. If conventional forces become more involved in traditional SOF areas, then what happens to SOF itself? He noted that the mission of SOF has always been to accomplish that which conventional forces cannot, and the organization specializes in developing skills that no other forces have. In the end, there will always be a need for both SOF and conventional forces. The SOF mission is likely to remain heavy in areas where SOF has a comparative advantage. Although conventional forces may increasingly resemble SOF, there are still areas where SOF excels way beyond traditional forces.³³ The solution, rather than to divest traditional SOF missions to conventional forces, may lie in evaluating which missions we deem legitimate in advancing our strategic security objectives, also which are legitimate missions emphasizing the specialties of SOF, and which are not. Thus the solution may lie in prioritization and evaluation, rather than in divesting missions from SOF to the conventional side.

The characteristics of Special Forces are shaped by the requirements of their mission and include mature professional soldiers with leadership abilities; foreign language capabilities; regional orientation; specialized equipment, training, and tactics; a flexible force structure; and an understanding of the political context of their mission. These enduring traits make Special Forces unique in the U.S. military and enable SF personnel to work as effectively with civilian populations as they do with other military forces to influence situations favorable to U.S. national interests.³⁴ Like any change in environment, the complex asymmetric environment has had implications on the way

Special Forces defines itself in terms of roles, missions, doctrine, training, and, in some cases, organization. ARSOF XXI is the Army's operational concept for Force XXI special operations (SO). The concept describes how ARSOF will develop and integrate its forces to support the Army Force XXI multidimensional decisive operations and MOOTW. Although the basic enduring traits of SF and organizational capabilities and specialties are unlikely to be redefined in the near term as a result of this new concept, the changing complex environment and evolving roles of SF will call for a certain amount of refinement.

In terms of changes and refinements in missions, the asymmetric challenges of today have contributed to the adoption of two new core Special Operations missions; Counter Proliferation against WMD (CP) and Information Operations (IO) and are the subject of developing SF doctrine. It has also resulted in a renewed emphasis on the capabilities necessary to execute the Combating Terrorism (CBT) mission, since terrorism is a primary asymmetric "counter" strategy to U.S. forward presence and international policy.

Basic SF doctrine remains sound. However, tactics, techniques, and procedures will change as new technologies are introduced into SF organizations in the 21st Century. As SF transitions through the information age, they cannot forget the many SF activities that demand the timeless low-tech solutions that focus on the human dimension. The three pillars of the Army training system--institutional, unit, and self-development--must change, adapt, and keep pace with the new technologies that are being incorporated into the Army. Training time in SF units is at a premium, with continued readiness, advanced and refresher training, and current operations constituting the annual life cycle of the unit.

Therefore SF training must concentrate on adoption and employment of advanced technologies and techniques. Soldiers and leaders must train to work real world problems in their operational environment, and hone skills by training in a variety of “what-if” scenarios. Training environments must accurately portray the complexity of special operations, by training to integrate joint, interagency, and multinational capabilities in peace and in war. SF must train as they operate, under realistic and challenging conditions, in a joint, interagency, and multinational training environment that focuses on complex contingency operations in complex terrain.³⁵

SF leaders must not only be masters of their craft, they must also understand the full impact of conventional forces in decisive operations, capabilities of joint warfighting and the ways those capabilities can help them dominate the battlespace, long term focus of military operations other than war (MOOTW), and how they support the National Military Strategy. Leadership development programs in SF must emphasize the importance of the joint, multinational, and geopolitical arenas. SF leaders and soldiers must be physically, mentally, and professionally fit, masters of cross-cultural communication and interpersonal skills, computer literate, capable of operating under isolated battlefield conditions, and situations of ambiguity, and able to train themselves, their subordinates, and their foreign counterparts. Special Forces operations are designed to take advantage of the Army’s most valuable resource--its highly skilled and dedicated soldiers. They are key to the successful conduct of Special Operations in the 21st Century. The increased demands placed on the SF soldier by the information age and the complexity of the threat environment will require an even higher standard of assessment and selection.³⁶

From an organizational standpoint, SF organizations must remain modular, flexible, and rapidly deployable. They will require resources to match the threat in each theater of operations in order to meet the peacetime engagement strategy and the contingency requirements of the warfighting CINCs. They will incorporate advanced technologies into their future operational capabilities with a priority given to reliable, flexible, and protected C4 systems that are fully compatible with the defense information infrastructure and fully integrated vertically from the detachment level to the theater and national levels. Automated systems will enhance the SF ability to plan, analyze, rehearse, and execute missions at the unit level. Enhanced mobility systems will allow SF to penetrate hostile airspace and return undetected.³⁷

Refinement of the SF capability, rather than redefinition, may be the most practical solution to shape the force in response to the complex environment. The new ARSOF XXI concept ensures that SF trains, recruits, and retains quality soldiers--the most valuable resource--and provides them with the right doctrine, organization, and training, and the best possible weapons, equipment, and sustainment in the 21st Century. Refinement will result in a highly versatile force characterized by enhanced capabilities to counter diverse and complex threats across the conflict continuum in support of the national military strategy and theater CINCs.³⁸

The Army enjoys certain “measures of success,” when reflecting on recently completed missions. Soldiers are motivated by the difference they can make, the effect they have, and the results of their action in response to a hostile threat. From an SF perspective, measuring success can be as ambiguous as the asymmetric adversaries we are likely to encounter. Measures of success for an SF organization might be the

successful integration with conventional forces, other U.S. agencies, friendly foreign forces, and other international organizations (United Nations, Red Cross, etc.). It may be the continued mil-to-mil contact with foreign militaries or an invitation to return to a country where political interaction is scarce. The overall measure of success will be the maintenance of access into foreign countries where vital national interests lie. These are intangible and transparent results. It is imperative for SF leaders to maintain a focus on the “big picture” in terms of how their operations effect the international environment. It is even more important for these same leaders to convey the importance of the SF roles to their subordinates and the critical impression their actions have in shaping U.S. global presence. Understanding the strategic impact of their contributions will impart a feeling of job satisfaction on them and maintain highly motivated individuals capable of executing the three primary SF roles--strike force, warrior diplomat, and global scouts--with unprecedented enthusiasm.

Operations of the late 1980s and 1990s proved that SF are invaluable as facilitators and peacetime operators, as well as strike troops. In order to be as effective as possible, SF face two major challenges: they must integrate with conventional forces, other U.S. agencies, friendly foreign forces, and other international organizations (United Nations, Red Cross, etc.), yet they must preserve the autonomy necessary to protect and encourage the unconventional approach that is the soul of special operations. This flexibility will facilitate meeting the other major challenge of the 21st Century: to develop capabilities and perceptions that enable SF to conduct operations successfully in an environment conditioned by complex asymmetric threats. Terrorism, WMD employment, and subversive information operations, will continue to be some of the

principal means by which state and non-state actors carve out their places in the world. Such asymmetric activities may be to weaken regional security by undermining support for U.S. presence, reducing U.S. access and influence, complicating the coordination of collective defense efforts, or directly attacking Americans, allies, or regimes friendly to the United States. U.S. Army Special Forces, as the premier implementing force of the national preventative strategy, will refine themselves to maximize the effectiveness of its three primary roles. Because of these unique roles, SF will remain operationally unique and strategically relevant in utility to national decision makers in the 21st century, in an operational environment conditioned with asymmetric challenges.

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²Henry H. Shelton, GEN, USA, Commander in Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command commentary, "Special Operations Forces: Key Role in Preventive Defense," 1997; 1-2.

³Peter J. Schoomaker, GEN, USA, Commander in Chief, USSOCOM, "The Way Ahead," commentary, December 1997; 2.

⁴William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, "Special Operations," *ADR 2000-Chapter 22* (Washington: GPO, 2000), 2.

⁵Schoomaker, 2-3.

⁶*Ibid.*, 3.

⁷Shelton, 2.

⁸*Ibid.*, 4.

⁹FM 100-25, 2-9.

¹⁰USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC, vignette illustrating DA for FM 100-25, (Washington: Dept of the Army, 1999), 2-9, 2-10.

¹¹FM 100-25, 2-11.

¹²Susan L. Marquis, “Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces” (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1997), 234.

¹³Terry White, “Swords of Lightning-Special Forces and the Changing Face of Warfare” (London: Brassey’s, 1992), 266.

¹⁴FM 100-25, 2-2,3.

¹⁵Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁶Ibid., 2-4.

¹⁷USASOC History Office (Fort Bragg, NC), “FID in Central America,” a vignette for FM 100-25 (Washington, D.C.: Dept of the Army, August 1999), 2-4.

¹⁸Joel Nadel with J.R. Wright, “Special Men and Special Mission: Inside American Special Operations Forces 1945 to the Present” (London: Greenhill Books, 1994), 242.

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²⁰Dr. W. Bradley Stock, “Special Operations Forces in an Era of Cold Peace,” from *Special Operations Forces: Roles and Missions in the Aftermath of the Cold War* (Washington: Diane Publishing, 1998.), 41.

²¹Cohen, 2.

²²U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Information Operations: A Strategy for Peace, The Decisive Edge in War* (Washington: GPO, 1999), 3-4.

²³Ibid., 10-11.

²⁴Cohen, 3.

²⁵Marquis, 233.

²⁶Title 50 United States Code, *War and National Defense*, Chapter 15, Subchapter I, Sections 403 and Section 404f (Washington: GPO, 1995).

²⁷H. Allen Holmes, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD-SOLIC), “Military Operations in the Post Cold-War Era,” remarks at the Intelligence Partnership Conference, June 26, 1997 (Andrews AFB: Joint Military Intelligence College, 1997), 2.

²⁸Cohen, 3.

²⁹Christopher J. Lamb, “Perspectives on Emerging SOF Roles and Missions: The View from the Office of the Secretary of Defense,” from *Special Operations Forces: Roles and Missions in the Aftermath of the Cold War* (Washington: Diane Publishing, 1998.), 203-204.

³⁰U.S. Command and General Staff College, ST 3-0, *Operations*, Chapter 10–Support Operations (Ft. Leavenworth: 2000), 10-7 thru 10-11.

³¹Chris Strohm, “Special Operations Officials Outline Key Challenges, Needs,” *Inside the Army* (February 2001), 1.

³²*Ibid.*, 4.

³³*Ibid.*, 5.

³⁴Brian E. Sheridan, ASD-SOLIC, *U.S. Special Operations Posture Statement 2000* (Washington: GPO, 2000), 1.

³⁵USAJFKSWCS Pub. 525-31, “ARSOF XXI: Operational Concept for the 21st Century” (Ft. Bragg: JFK Special Warfare Center and School, May 1997), 31-32.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 32.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 32-33.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 33.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Asymmetric Warfare is not a new concept. Throughout history, opponents have sought innovative ways to gain an advantage over one another. Potential adversaries of the U.S. are no different today. The essence of asymmetric warfare is to avoid your enemy's strengths, exploit his weaknesses, and remain patient in order to choose the time of your attack when your enemy is at a position of disadvantage, geographically or tactically. Since no state or non-state actor would deliberately seek to confront the U.S. conventionally, future opponents are likely to seek out indirect, asymmetric methods to challenge the U.S. superiority in advanced weaponry.

One general conclusion this study makes is that asymmetric warfare has always been present; however, today the proliferation of information technologies and hardware to prosecute asymmetric attacks is more prevalent. The asymmetric challenge is a condition that has changed the strategic environment and shaped the operational arena in which the U.S. military will be tasked to operate in. Strategies to defeat the asymmetric threat must be based on enemy capabilities, intent, and a full understanding of their objectives and level of conviction. Motivations due to political, religious, ethnic, and cultural predilection must be examined before any strategy, missions, or roles for the military can be identified. Most of these potential adversaries see global "westernization" as a potential threat to their ideals and way of life, and will seek to disrupt, deter, or defeat American presence and intervention via asymmetric attack.

Second in light of this new technologically advanced asymmetric threat, our national engagement strategy has become a “preventive strategy” against asymmetric threats and other aggression. Our “global engagement” posture provides the necessary cooperation, integration, and access to vital overseas infrastructures and U.S. overseas areas of interest in peacetime and in times of crisis. Overseas access is necessary to hedge the threat of asymmetric warfare. Engagement fosters international interoperability and cooperation from the establishment of military to military and civilian contact in potential areas of interest. It reassures our allies and friends, and conveys democratic ideals. Necessary to the success of our security strategy will be a continued exchange of information, ideas and shared technology with our allies and coalition partners, and a willingness of foreign governments to confront the challenges of future threats.

The U.S. global engagement posture combined with its military superiority is the catalyst for adversaries to conduct asymmetric warfare. Critical to maintaining the U.S. military superiority in the 21st century is the ability of DoD, as well as our friends and allies, to adapt to asymmetric threats such as terrorism, information warfare, and use of WMD. These three areas represent possible gaps in our security strategy that may be exploited by our potential opponents. Their potential use has created new requirements that must be addressed by the U.S. and DoD, and integrated into the security systems of our overseas partners to mitigate their effects and ensure the success of the national security strategy. Engagement serves as the basis for a concerted effort with other nations, which helps to meet interoperability requirements and focuses activities toward common goals.

Based on current national level concerns and security assessments, this study examined likely asymmetric actors and asymmetric counters, and concluded that terrorism, WMD employment, and subversive information operations will continue to be some of the principal means by which these state and non-state actors carve out their places in the world. Such asymmetric activities will weaken regional security by undermining support for U.S. presence, reducing U.S. access and influence, complicating the coordination of collective defense efforts, or directly attacking Americans, allies, or friendly governments.

Our response to asymmetric actions has usually been to react with defensive, hunkering-down, panic decisions, or in some cases, to retaliate ineffectively with air or cruise missile attacks, occasionally injuring noncombatants and thus losing legitimacy with the media and international community. An asymmetric adversary that is weaker in resources or complex command and control systems can compensate for that with superior cleverness, morale, offensive attitude, security, surprise, flexibility, and organizational design that fit the task at hand. Enemy asymmetric actions must be preempted by attacking the cohesion and flow of their operational cycle. An adversary must plan, gain support, move, stage, attack, and regroup during any operation or in pursuit of a particular cause or objective. He can be caused to fail anywhere along this process-optimally prior to the attack. It's all a matter of gaining positional advantage, mentally or physically, over an opponent. At this our adversaries have often been successful. This advantage can be reversed, by subjecting him to the same tactics. Asymmetrical targeting (deny, destroy, disrupt, dislocate, degrade) of adversary moral and organizational domains, instead of the typical and predictable, conventional approach

against physical strength, provides a faster, more effective defeat. Indirectly preventing adversaries from gaining ascendancy over the local population, denying organizations the use of safe areas, disrupting cash flow and other supplies, negating effective use of the media, exposing corruption, disgracing their leadership, and breaking up their alliances will put adversaries on the defensive and force them off-balance. This requires initiative, momentum, out-of-the-box thinking, flexibility, and a winning mindset.¹ This study has shown the relevance of U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) as an organization within DoD, capable of such activities in support of the National Security Strategy (NSS).

The U.S. Army Special Forces are often regarded as the premier implementing force of the NSS, because they remain regionally oriented--culturally, linguistically, and politically--while remaining a rapidly deployable, agile, joint force with capabilities ranging from humanitarian assistance to surgical strikes. Their forward global presence and deployments allow them to detect and resolve pending crises or conflict and create the conditions that support enduring peace. The success of a preventive strategy against the rise in asymmetric challenges depends heavily on the cooperation and enduring relationships with our foreign friends and allies. This is the primary benefit and objective of SF deployments in support of taskings from the National Command Authorities (NCA), the geographical CINCs, and our American ambassadors.² Their activities meet the requirements of strengthening cooperation and ensuring interoperability with our foreign friends and allies. Cooperation ensures a free flow of intelligence and information which deprives potential enemies of their sanctuary and promotes self-sufficiency on the part of allies threatened by complex adversaries. The establishment of partnerships ensures rapid cooperation to hedge against potential crises and facilitates the

development of effective coalitions during times of crisis. Currently, Special Forces expand the range of options available to the NCA by confronting conflicts below the threshold of war and asymmetric crises such as terrorism, WMD threats, and Information Operations. They act as force multipliers in support of conventional forces engaged in major conflicts, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. military effort. They expand national capabilities to react to situations requiring exceptional sensitivity, including noncombatant missions such as humanitarian assistance, security assistance, and peace operations.

This study concludes that Special Forces has three prominent roles of increasing importance in today's complex global environment, conditioned by asymmetric challenges. First, they are a *strike force*, able to respond to specialized contingencies across the conflict spectrum with stealth, speed, and precision. They are also *warrior-diplomats* capable of influencing, advising, training, and conducting operations with foreign forces, officials, and populations. Finally, they are *global scouts*, maximizing the advantage of their forward presence by acquiring and sustaining situational awareness by face-to-face contact with local populations and militaries, detecting emerging crises and helping to resolve crises before they mature into full-blown conflicts, and developing the situation by providing decision makers critical "ground truth" information through real-time connectivity and on-the-spot updates. One of these three primary SF roles is the foundation of each of the following special operations missions and collateral activities, as defined by Joint Pub 1-02. Their core missions include: Direct Action (DA), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Unconventional Warfare (UW), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Combating Terrorism (CBT), Counterproliferation (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction

(WMD, and Information Operations. Their collateral activities are security assistance, counter-drug activities, countermine activities, humanitarian assistance, search and rescue/personnel recovery, special activities, and coalition support. In these areas, SF share responsibility with other SOF and conventional forces as directed by geographic combatant commanders.

The primary conclusion of this study is that, in spite of a complex environment conditioned with asymmetrical challenges, U.S. Army Special Forces will not have to redefine itself in terms of mission, doctrine, training, or as an organization. Redefinition is a term synonymous with transformation, something that, in respect to SF, is not necessary. This is primarily due to the enduring traits that characterize SF such as mature professional soldiers with leadership abilities; foreign language capabilities; regional orientation; specialized equipment, training, and tactics; a flexible force structure; and an understanding of the political context of their mission. These enduring traits make Special Forces unique in the U.S. military and enable SF personnel to work as effectively with civilian populations as they do with other military forces. SF can quickly establish an effective working rapport with foreign military and paramilitary forces and, when required, government officials. They can assist interagency coordination and conduct foreign liaison to influence situations favorable to U.S. national interests.

A continued challenge for SF however, is to maintain its relevance during a period in which the rest of the Army struggles with transformation. SF has traditionally conducted missions that the conventional forces were not able to accomplish because they lacked the technology or were not properly trained. Relevance can be achieved by focusing SF on their core missions and activities that remain “special operations,” and

that emphasize the enduring traits of SF. Focusing on core missions will allow SF to concentrate on refining its roles and primary missions.

As the services undergo transformation and acquire new technology, SF may be able to further refine themselves by divesting some collateral missions. To allow SF to remain as robust as possible and concentrate on the areas that need the most attention and specialization, this study recommends several changes. First, transfer all counter-drug activities to DEA, FBI, and local law enforcement agencies, supported, if necessary, by Reserve and National Guard units. Second, security assistance and humanitarian assistance missions should be handed off to conventional forces or other relief organizations as soon as these organizations can establish themselves in the operational area. Third, shift SF search and rescue/personnel recovery support to the Air Force; and finally, relegate countermine activities to civilian contractors or conventional engineering units once a working relationship has been established with the host nation.

Shifting missions will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis since many of these missions provide SF with the means to achieve and maintain access into areas vital to national interest, which is a primary benefit of SF activities and an integral part of the U.S. security and defense strategy. Once access has been achieved and rapport established by SF, an operation could be handed off to another service or agency.

To further refine the SF role in mitigating asymmetric threats, this study recommends that two passive activities be integrated into every SF mission. These two passive activities are *passive intelligence collection* and *advanced force operations (AFO)*. Passive intelligence collection is a by-product of the situational awareness Special Forces maintain in conducting their day-to-day activities abroad.

Contact with the environment, the civilian population, and the military of a host nation can provide an exclusive insight to the current socio-political situation or other trends in a particular country. Interagency coordination with SF units will result in the production of intelligence as a result of passive collection. This will help to fill gaps in national level intelligence requirements. During advanced force operations (AFO), Special Forces can facilitate responsiveness to an impending crisis or threat by assisting with the introduction of subsequent forces. SF units as an early entry force can provide vital “environmentals,” or assessments on various aspects of the area of operations to include information on airports, seaports, weather, terrain, lines of communication, and hostile forces. They can establish communications and provide real-time intelligence. In austere conditions they can survey and mark drop zones, helicopter landing zones, assembly areas, beach landing sites, fast rope sites, and routes into and out of the objective area.

Homeland defense has been a suggested role for SF. However, SF should have a continued “limited” role in issues of domestic law enforcement, domestic counterterrorism and WMD events, or other issues of domestic preparedness. The primary limiting factor for the use of SF in domestic crises, is their growing role in the global arena, high repetition of missions, and constrained resources. However, when directed by the NCA, SF can support issues of domestic preparedness at the local, state, and federal levels, with training, expertise assistance and advice, and collaboration on new techniques and equipment. Also, the sharing of intelligence between domestic agencies and SF, concerning potential transnational threats, will help add to domestic preparedness and contribute to the preparedness of our foreign partners.

Basic SF doctrine, training, and organization remain sound. However, tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) will have to be refined as new technologies are introduced into SF organizations in the 21st Century. Doctrine for the two additional core missions of Counter Proliferation (CP) and Information Operation (IO) is presently developing, and training will have to be refined to incorporate these two new missions. Many of SF activities focus on the time-proven, low-tech solutions that focus on the human dimension, and SF operations are designed to take advantage of the Army's most valuable resource-its highly skilled and dedicated soldiers. Refinement of the SF capability, rather than redefinition is the most practical solution to shape the force in response to the complex environment. The product will be a highly versatile force characterized by enhanced capabilities to counter diverse and complex threats across the conflict continuum in support of the national military strategy and theater CINCs.

The demand for forces with a capability to respond selectively to diverse regional concerns is likely to increase in the future. This study recommends the following to guide the SF community in preserving their relevancy and maximizing their effectiveness:

Ensure that appropriate missions are tasked to SF. Special Forces have key capabilities that distinguish them from conventional forces, and their utility is based upon regional orientation and cultural awareness, flexibility, political and cultural sensitivity, and unconventional solutions. Appropriate missions ensure relevance and increase efficiency by allowing SF to refine their most critical and specialized core activities.

Encourage unorthodox approaches and unconventional techniques that bring flexible thinking and innovation in addressing complex threats. This approach must be

emphasized throughout the qualification and training of SF personnel and should be the foundation of their leadership development. Decentralized execution of the SF mission also supports this concept, as it allows the SF unit to react appropriately to conditions they encounter in the area of operations.

Ensure that force structure reflects the mix of SF missions. As the sophistication of adversaries grows and the nature of SF roles and missions evolve, special operations activities will require greater specialization in training as physical and technical requirements increase. This is particularly true with the addition of the two new core missions of Counter Proliferation (CP) and Information Operations (IO).

Develop consistent and enhanced training in areas that further the linguistic, cultural, and political needs of the FID and UW missions. These missions will increase as the regional security environment becomes more complex. The regional orientation of SF is an essential ingredient of success. To maintain the regional orientation of SF soldiers, retain them in one primary SF organization, oriented on one region of the world, to facilitate the maintenance of linguistic and cultural skills particular to a certain region.

Invest in technology to maintain SF technical superiority in weaponry, materiel, and delivery systems, with an emphasis in communications and intelligence collection technology. Equipment must remain simple, deployable, and support interoperability; SF must continue to acquire materiel and technology that fit SF roles and enhance and maximize current SF missions. SF missions or roles should never be redefined as the result of the acquisition of new materiel or technology.

Continue to integrate with conventional forces as force multipliers and pursue interagency coordination to further enhance their ability to support their principal

customers--the geographic CINCs, U.S. ambassadors and their country teams, and other government agencies. Consider the establishment of a small detachment at the SF Group level of personnel from national agencies to comprise a “national liaison element.” This element could facilitate operational deployments, through direct coordination to such agencies as the State Department, CIA, and DIA.

Ensure maximum flexibility with an emphasis on forward-basing, quick deployment, and adaptability to regional contingencies, since SF missions are fluid, shaped by political context and tactical developments, and often require modifications and expediencies.

The National Security Strategy of *global engagement* fosters international interoperability and cooperation to defeat complex and asymmetric threats. U.S. Army Special Forces can advance this interoperability and cooperation, while employed in one of their three primary roles of Strike Force, Warrior Diplomats, or Global Scouts. U.S. Army Special Forces will likely be the premier mechanism for extending U.S. influence, ideals and values in a world of increased global interaction, required to meet security needs. Faced with an increasingly volatile world and diminishing resources, Special Forces will provide the NCA an option to maintain global access and promote stability with an affordable, yet effective force for implementing U.S. National Strategies. When U.S. interests face an unpredictable “asymmetric” threat, Special Forces can provide flexible and precise, lethal and non-lethal options to the National Command Authority. They provide core competencies not available anywhere else in the military. Refinement of their roles and competencies will enable them to devise and execute innovative solutions to crises in an uncertain world with an uncertain threat.

¹Grange, David L., BG (Ret.) “Asymmetric Warfare: Old Method, New Concern,” *ROA National Security Report* (Washington: American Forces Press, Mar 01), 29-32.

²Shelton, Henry H., GEN, USA, Commander in Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command commentary, “Special Operations Forces: Key Role in Preventive Defense,” 1997; 1-2.

APPENDIX A

OPERATIONAL TERMS

Antiterrorism (AT): Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorism. Also called AT. See also Counterterrorism, Combating Counterterrorism, and Terrorism.

Area Assessment: In unconventional warfare, the prescribed collection of specific information by the commander which commences immediately after infiltration and is a continuous operation. It confirms, corrects, refutes, or adds to previous intelligence acquired from area studies and other sources prior to infiltration.

Area Oriented: A term applied to personnel or units whose organizations, mission, training, and equipping are based upon projected operational deployment to a specific geographic area.

Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF): ARSOF is an umbrella term for Army forces that conduct and support special operations (SO).

Asymmetric warfare: Warfare that focuses whatever may be one side's comparative advantages against an enemy's relative weakness. It encompasses anything – strategy, tactics, technology, organization, or culture that alters the battle space to give one side an advantage or negate the other's advantage.

Coalition Warfare: The combined effort of nations with common strategic interests to coordinate their war fighting capability for defense of those interests.

Collateral Mission Activities: The inherent capabilities of all military forces may periodically be applied to accomplish missions other than those for which the forces are principally organized, trained, and equipped. Collateral activities in which special operations forces, by virtue of inherent capabilities, may be tasked to participate include humanitarian assistance, security assistance, search and rescue, counternarcotics, antiterrorism, and other security activities, and special activities.

Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR): A specific task performed by rescue forces to effect the recovery of distressed personnel during wartime or contingency operations.

Combatting Terrorism (CBT): Actions, including antiterrorism (defensive measures taken to reduce vulnerability to terrorist acts) and counterterrorism (offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism), taken to oppose terrorism throughout the entire threat spectrum.

Command and Control Warfare (C2W): The integrated use of operations security, military deception, psychological operations, electronic warfare, and physical destruction, mutually supported by intelligence, to deny information to influence, degrade, or destroy adversary command and control capabilities, while protecting friendly command and control capabilities against such actions. Command and control warfare is an application of information warfare in military operations and is a subset of information warfare. Command and control warfare applies across the range of military operations and all levels of conflict. C2W is both offensive and defensive: a. C2 attack. Prevent effective C2 adversary forces by denying information to, influencing, degrading, or destroying the adversary C2 system. b. C2-protect. Maintain effective command and control of own forces by turning to friendly advantage or negating adversary efforts to deny information to, influence, degrade, or destroy the friendly C2 system.

Conventional Forces: Those forces that are capable of conducting operations using non-nuclear weapons. Also, those forces not specially trained, equipped, and organized to conduct special operations. (See also Special Operations)

Counterdrug (CD): Those active measures taken to detect, monitor, and counter the production, trafficking, and use of illegal drugs.

Counterintelligence (CI): Information gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted by or on behalf of foreign governments or elements thereof, foreign organizations, or foreign persons, or international terrorists activities.

Countermine (CM): To explode the main charge in a mine by the shock of a nearby explosion of another mine or independent explosive charge. The explosion of the main charge may be caused either by sympathetic detonation or through the explosive train and or firing mechanism of the mine.

Countermine Operation: In land mine warfare, an operation to reduce or eliminate the effects of mines or minefields.

Counterproliferation (CP): Counterproliferation refers to actions taken to seize, destroy, render safe, capture or recover weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Counterterrorism (CT): Offensive measures taken by civilian and military agencies of the government to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. (JOINT Pub 1-02) The primary mission of special operations forces in this interagency activity is to apply specialized capabilities to preclude, pre-empt, and resolve terrorist incidents abroad.

Deception: Those measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence to induce the enemy to react in a manner prejudicial to his interests.

Direct Action (DA): Short-duration strikes and other small scale offensive actions by Special Operations Forces 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, Special Operations Forces 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.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID): The 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. The primary role of Special Operations Forces in this interagency activity is to train, advise, and otherwise assist host nation military and paramilitary forces.

Humanitarian Assistance (HA): Assistance provided by DoD forces, as directed by appropriate authority, in the aftermath of natural or man-made disasters to help reduce conditions that present a serious threat to life and property. Assistance provided by US forces is limited to scope and duration and is designed to supplement the efforts of civilian authorities who have primary responsibility for providing such assistance.

Host Nation (HN): A nation in which representatives or organizations of another state are present because of government invitation or international agreement. The term particularly refers to a nation receiving assistance relevant to its national security.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT): A category of intelligence derived from information collected and provided by human sources.

Information Operations (IO): Actions taken to achieve information superiority by affecting adversary information and systems while defending one's own information and systems.

Information Warfare: Actions taken against an adversary's information, systems, or informational infrastructure both actively or passively. Computer hacking and exploitation of the media fall in this category.

Interoperability: Ability to integrate two dissimilar entities or units where the systems from one can function with the systems of another producing a concerted effort toward a common goal.

National Command Authorities (NCA): The President and the Secretary of Defense or their duly deputized alternates or successors.

National Objectives: The aims, derived from national goals and interests, toward which a national policy or strategy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied.

National Policy: A broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives.

National Security: A collective term encompassing both national defense and foreign relations of the United States. Specifically, the condition provided by:

- a. A military or defense advantage over any foreign nation or group of nations.
- b. A favorable foreign relations position.
- c. A defense posture capable of successfully resisting hostile or destructive action from within or without, overt or covert.

National Strategy: The art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives.

Operational Environment: All conditions, circumstances, and influences, which affect the employment of military forces and bear on the decisions of the unit commander.

Special Activities (SA): Activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives, which are planned and executed so that the role of the United States government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly. They are also functions in support of such activities, but are not intended to influence United States political processes, public opinion, policies, or media and do not include diplomatic activities or the collection and production of intelligence or related support functions.

Special Forces: US Army units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct five primary missions: unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, counter-terrorism, foreign internal defense. Also called SF and Green Berets.

Special Operations Forces (SOF): Military units in the Army, Navy, and Air Force organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct special operations.

Special Operations: 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, wartime, or crisis scenarios.

Special Reconnaissance (SR): Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted by special operations forces 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.

Terminal Guidance: 1. The guidance applied to a guided missile between midcourse guidance and arrival in the vicinity of the target. 2. Electronic, mechanical, visual, or

other assistance given an aircraft pilot to facilitate arrival at, operation within or over, landing upon, or departure from an air landing or airdrop facility.

Terrorism: Public, repetitive violence or threats of violence to achieve sociopolitical objectives by inspiring widespread fear among people not personally involved.

Threat: In reality, a Threat is any specific foreign nation or organization with intentions and military capabilities that suggest it could be adversarial or challenge the security interests of the U.S., its friends or allies.

Unconventional Warfare (UW): UW is a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces that 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 collection, and evasion and escape.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD): Weapons of mass destruction are any weapon system capable of delivering large amounts of casualties. Typically in this category; chemical and biological agents and nuclear weapons.

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