# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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# THESIS

**CREATING PATHS OF CHANGE: UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS CAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS BE THE SUPPORTED COMMAND?**

by

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This thesis focuses on command and control for irregular warfare operations and the organizational design elements that determine when special operations forces (SOF) can be a supported command. The complexities, uncertainty, speed, and need for interoperability in the 21st-century operational environment require flexible organizations capable of integrating across U.S. governmental agencies. Integration and organizational flexibility are fundamental to conventional forces—but what about their interdependence with SOF to achieve maximum effects?

Militaries have long been uniting conventional and irregular forces. Since the Revolutionary War, U.S. conventional and irregular forces have fought side by side. Throughout each conflict, SOF have performed a supporting role.

The conditions on today's battlefields are much more decentralized and much less simple. The environment is unstable, with U.S. and enemy forces conducting asymmetrical warfare. Insurgencies have required fighting unconventionally. Additionally, information flows can cause friction that further destabilizes the environment. The argument is not that conventional forces cannot adapt to a dynamic operational environment—only that their organizational structure is less effective in an uncertain or complex environment. Dynamic, unpredictable environments call for an organic, decentralized structure. Insights from organizational theory suggest SOF units can be the supported command in these conditions.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| C2 | Command and Control |
| CA | Civil Affairs |
| CJSOTF | Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force |
| CF | Conventional Forces |
| COIN | Counterinsurgency |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| FID | Foreign Internal Defense |
| GCC | Geographic Combatant Command |
| IO | Information Operations |
| JTF | Joint Task Force |
| MISO | Military Support Operations |
| PRT | Provincial Reconstruction Teams |
| RAC | Regionally Aligned Command |
| SAF | Special Action Force |
| SFA | Security Force Assistance |
| SFAB | Security Force Assistance Brigade |
| SFG | Special Forces Group |
| SFODA | Special Force Operational Detachment Alpha |
| SFODB | Special Forces Operational Detachment Bravo |
| SFODC | Special Forces Operational Detachment Charlie |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| SOTF | Special Operations Task Forces |
| SSTR | Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction |
| STRAC | Strategic Army Corp |
| TSOC | Theater Special Operation Command |
| USASOC | United States Army Special Operations Command |
| USSOCOM | United States Special Operations Command |
| USSOF | United State Special Operations Forces |
| VSO | Village Stability Operations |

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# I. INTRODUCTION

> SOF and CF often share the same operational areas for extended periods when they are mutually reliant on each other's capabilities. SOF-CF synchronization facilitates unity of effort; maximizes the capacity of the joint force; and allows the JFC to optimize the principles of joint operations in planning and execution.
>
> —Joint Publication 3–05[1]

This thesis focuses on tactical and operational command and control for irregular warfare operations (IW), and the organizational design elements to determine under what conditions special operations forces (SOF) can be a command supported by conventional forces (CF). The complexities, uncertainty, speed, and interoperability of operations in today's operational environment demand flexible organizations capable of integrating across the United States and international governmental spectrum. By the mid-twentieth-century, modern warfare saw combined arms maneuver integrated at the tactical level, with maneuver force commanders controlling fires in support of their objectives. Naval forces gave fire support to amphibious landings; air power has been a decisive factor since World War II. The United States began to plan and conduct joint warfare.

Today, tactical, operational, and strategic commanders adjust the task organization of their subordinate units to ensure mission accomplishment. Integration, organizational flexibility, and change are fundamental to conventional forces—but what about integration with SOF to achieve maximum effects? In the history of land warfare, commanders have often combined the employment of conventional forces and irregular forces to fight in a unified direction, each element conducting operations leveraged toward its organizational capabilities and capacity to achieve battlefield superiority. Chinese Communists commanded by Mao Zedong organized local militias, regional

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[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, JP 3-05 (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014).

forces, and a conventional army to defeat a nationalist government. North Vietnam conducted a guerrilla warfare campaign against South Vietnam that culminated in a conventional army invasion, unifying the nations.[2] Since the American Revolutionary War, the United States conventional and irregular forces have fought side by side, including in the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.

Historically, during each conflict, SOF have usually supported a conventional force commander not highly trained in SOF capabilities.[3] We assert that SOF and CF should not rely solely on the creation of new organizations but instead improve upon successful examples to fit future operational requirements. SOF has natural advantages due to training and organization for conducting operations against the hybrid threats that have been increasingly common in the 21st century.[4] While the case studies presented in this thesis are dissimilar, they all examine the dynamic command relationships, organizational designs, and military environments in which regular and irregular forces are used concurrently.

After September 11, 2001, the U.S. Army deployed two distinct but complementary forces to combat in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other secondary conflict zones. First, U.S. Army conventional forces organized and trained to fight against traditional enemies, and second, special operations forces organized and prepared to succeed in an irregular warfare environment. In these fights, approximately 7,000 American service members have died, and 52,300 have been wounded in conflicts the

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[2] Andrew James Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942–1976* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 221.

[3] There are diverse explanations for this, and none are definite. U.S. involvement in counterinsurgencies has often failed because of mismatched strategy. Many argue the reason military senior leaders struggle with the complexities of counterinsurgency operations is that they offer a completely different type of difficulty than conventional operations, with uncertainties and ambiguities that do not fit well in the conventional service planning process (U.S. Naval War College Study Guide 2016–2017, 3–15). Since 2001, no previous Special Forces group commander has ever been a theater GCC commander.

[4] Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC), Version 1.0* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2007), 13, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/concepts/joint_concepts/joc_iw_v1.pdf.

Middle East.[5] The numbers become even more agonizing when the tens of thousands of allied and civilian causalities are included.[6]

These irregular and hybrid-warfare conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries have led to much debate about whether the fundamental nature of war has transformed—or have just the tactics, techniques, and procedures changed? Warfare itself comprises the military institutions and the environment, both of which are interactive and which mature at differing rates, but in relation to each other. This maturation is best viewed through strategic-interaction theory and how relative material power is ineffective if misapplied or applied in the absence of an adaptive institution.[7] The military revolution and change process has been characterized by "technological change, systems development, operational innovation, and organizational adaptation."[8] All of these contribute to the ability to address warfare's fundamental structure. Should that structure change, then so too must the context change and, by extension, the nature and execution of warfare itself.[9] The evidence of such changes in fundamentals of warfare is the shift from platform-centric elements favored by CF to network-centric efforts ideal for SOF.

The rising complexity and interactivity of the environment due to technological advances and globalization have created a driving need to increase capacity to conduct network-centric warfare.[10] This is planted in the recognition that environmental

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[5] Department of Defense, "Casualties: Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom," accessed November 22, 2017, https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf.

[6] Neta C. Crawford, "Update on the Human Costs of War for Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2001 to mid-2016" (Providence, RI: Watson Institute International and Public Affairs, Brown University, 2016), http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2016/War%20in%20Afghanistan%20and%20Pakistan%20UPDATE_FINAL_corrected%20date.pdf.

[7] Ivan Arreguín-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 93–128.

[8] Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions," *National Interest* (Fall 1994): 30–31.

[9] Hy Rothstein, "Less Is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare in an Era of Collapsing States," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 275–276.

[10] Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Garstka, "Network-Centric Warfare: Its Origin and Future," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (January 1998), 1.

considerations beyond the institution of the military itself must be taken into account when targeting enemy formations and infrastructure. The interactivity which the military and the environment share defines and guides the changing face of warfare, and so it is impossible to fully separate the institution's growth from the environmental change. As more focus is given to network-centric warfare, more emphasis is also placed on how enemy networks are structured and the means by which they interact. This change in the character of warfare has broadened the breadth and depth of the environment which, impacts military institutions and has heightened the frequency of change it produces.

Historical examples abound with regard to the development of more advanced and precise means of striking at the enemy and organizational changes required to do so. Considerable U.S. military investments in advanced technology and experience in combined arms maneuver warfare since World War II have given the U.S. conventional forces (CF) dominance in traditional warfare over other nations. Unlike other world powers, the United States emerged from World War II and the Cold War as a global economic-military hegemony, the self-described leader of the free world, and thus, according to Joseph Nye, presumed for itself the role of world policeman.[11]

Historically, the United States has prevailed against conventional competitors like Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Saddam's Iraq in both 1991 and 2003.[12] However, U.S. military interventions against weaker enemies since 1945 in Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia, post-2003 Iraq, and Afghanistan have been problematic. In many circumstances, these disputes have involved thousands of causalities in protracted conflicts, sometimes lasting decades.[13] The potential for traditional warfare on a large scale has been replaced

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[11] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 5.

[12] For legal reasons, the fighting in Korea was called a conflict, not a war.

[13] Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces,* FM 31-22 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1981), http://cdm16635.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16635coll8/id/55641.

by fragile states, regional instability, the proliferation of advanced disruptive technologies, complex irregular warfare, and terrorism. Many of these threats transcend geographic combatant command (GCC) geographic areas of responsibilities. America's conventional military power incentivizes potential adversaries to reorganize irregularly to counter the U.S. military's strength.

## A.     THESIS QUESTION

This thesis seeks to examine ways in which conventional forces (CF) and special operations forces (SOF)[14] might interact more efficiently in future operational environments. The research group consists of three U.S. Army Special Forces officers, with significant recent conventional and Special Forces combat experience from the CENTCOM area of responsibility in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Resolute Resolve.

This thesis asks, "Under what conditions can special operations forces be the supported command?" We debate whether the SOF supporting/supported command relationship should be determined by the task at hand, priorities, how SOF and CF coordinate for unity of effort, and resources for effectiveness.[15] The United States Special Operations Command Publication 3–33 describes a supported/supporting command relationship that allows SOF the most freedom to maneuver in order to shape the battlefield without regard to geographic or operational boundaries and focuses on access to resources, not operational control. However, in practice, we assert this vague concept is counterintuitive to the conventional forces commander who traditionally has held overall operational responsibility for what happens within his geographic area of

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[14] Special Operations Forces. "Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF" (Joint Publication 1-02).

[15] Jason Wesbrock, Glenn Harned, and Preston Plous, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces: Integration, Interoperability, and Interdependence," *PRISM* 6, no. 3 (2016): 84.

responsibility. This ambiguous command relationship allows the supporting SOF commander to select the tactics and techniques employed, while the supported commander determines the priority of support. Ultimately, the supporting SOF commander is accountable for the mission success of the supported CF commander.[16]

By analyzing the principles, imperatives, and paradoxes of counterinsurgencies, the U.S. government can learn from the failures and successes of comprehensive efforts to contain and defeat insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq.[17] We argue that the mechanism that will set conditions for success, and has a defined metric for success, is one that uses the right force, for the appropriate task, at the right time, in the right sequence, and at the right place. Adhering to the principles and imperatives of counterinsurgency, under what conditions should the U.S. reduce the overall number of conventional force headquarters to minimize friction and allow for more flexibility and adaptability and greater opportunities for SOF to take initiatives? Additionally, should this approach place less emphasis on attack aircraft and drones and instead focus on building sustainable partner capacity through indigenous militias, security force assistance, counter narcotics and terrorism advisement, and foreign internal defense?[18] Finally, should an indirect local approach allow the partner force to develop trust and create regional cohesion, eventually developing into a capable and confident fighting force that is self-sustaining, self-reliant, and self-sufficient?

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[16] Joel P. Ellison and Daniel G. Hodermarsky, "Conventional and Special Operations Forces Integration at the Operational Level" (PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2012), 16.

[17] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Counterinsurgency,* JP 3-24 (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_24.pdf.

[18] Security force assistance: "USG security sector reform (SSR) focuses on the way a HN provides safety, security, and justice with civilian government oversight. The Department of Defense's (DOD's) primary role in SSR is to support the reform, restructure, or reestablishment of the HN armed forces and the defense aspect of the security sector, which is accomplished through security force assistance" (Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, II-11); foreign internal defense: "Foreign internal defense refers to US activities that special operations support a host nation's (HN's) internal defense and development strategy and program designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their internal security and stability" (Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations,* II-10).

## B. RESEARCH AND SCOPE

This thesis looks to build upon two previous Naval Postgraduate School theses: Majors Joel Ellison and Daniel Hodermarsky's "Conventional and Special Operations Force Integration at the Operational Level" and Majors David J. O'Hearn, Damon S. Robins, and Aaron C. Sessoms's "Flattening the Learning Curve: SOF as the Supported Command in the Irregular Warfare Environment."[19] To investigate the thesis's hypothesis, the authors examined three historical case studies comparing operations led by special operations forces and including subordinate conventional forces. These include the Special Action Forces, which sent thousands of advisory teams throughout the world during the 1960–70s, Village Stability Operations in Afghanistan (2009–2014), and Task Force Viking, an SOF-led invasion of Northern Iraq in 2003.

## C. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter II gives an overview of the United States' potential future operating environment and operational challenges. Chapter III presents the three case studies of American conflicts, set in different social, political, and military environments. While the case studies are dissimilar in many ways, they are linked by the occurrence of a somewhat modified command structure. The Special Action Forces (SAF) from 1963–1972 included Special Forces groups supported by conventional force infantry backup brigades. The Special Action Forces were designed as an operating adhocracy to allow the Special Forces groups to selectively decentralize and deploy multidisciplinary training teams to confront any unstable and uncertain environments.[20] The 1,500-man SFGs formed the operating core consisting of 36 Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (SFODA), nine Special Forces Operation Detachment Bravos (SFODB), and

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[19] Aaron C. Sessoms, Damon S. Robins, and David J. O'Hearn, "Flattening the Learning Curve: SOF as the Supported Command in the Irregular Warfare Environment" (PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2012).

[20] An operating adhocracy innovates and solves problems directly on behalf of its clients; Henry Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 198.

three Special Forces Operational Detachment Charlies (SFODC). The SAFs also included an array of professional detachments. A smaller professional bureaucracy working alongside the Special Forces soldiers consisting of a civil affairs group, a psychological operations battalion, an engineer detachment, a medical detachment, an intelligence detachment, and an Army Security Agency unit gave the SAFs additional trained experts to aid foreign armies in conducting stability operations.[21]

The second case study is United States special operations forces (USSOF) Village Stability Operations (VSO), a combined counterinsurgency and foreign internal defense (FID) campaign in Afghanistan from 2009–2014. Village Stability Operations was an SOF supporting campaign within the supported CF campaign. However, conventional-forces infantry battalions provided infantry platoons to augment USSOF at the VSO sites. The third case study is Task Force Viking's operation in Northern Iraq in 2003. Task Force Viking was commanded by the 10th Special Forces Group and composed of units from U.S. Army Special Operations, conventional U.S. Army and Marine infantry, and indigenous Kurdish Peshmerga.

Chapter IV compares and contrasts summary conclusions and recommendations from each case study to produce a recommendation for creating a counterinsurgent strategy to determine when conventional forces should be the supported headquarters and when special operations forces should be.

## D.    METHODOLOGY

This thesis primarily uses historical case studies and theories from Arreguín-Toft, Mintzberg, and Galbraith to analyze which organizations are best suited to operate and lead in the complex-unstable environments of the past and present.[22]

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[21] Charles M. Simpson III and Robert B. Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years—A History of the US Army Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 68.

[22] Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars* (2005); Henry Mintzberg, "The Structuring of Organizations," in *Readings in Strategic Management*, ed. David Asch and Cliff Bowman (London, UK: Macmillan Education UK, 1989), 322–352; Jay Galbraith, Diane Downey, and Amy Kates. Designing Dynamic Organizations: A Hands-On Guide for Leaders at All Levels (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2001).

Using Mintzberg's theory on organizational stability, each case study will identify which of his four categories the United States military faced, considering the environmental stability and the environmental complexity. The four possible categorizations of each case study's environment are simple and unstable, complex and unstable, complex and stable, and simple and stable (Figure 1).

## Four Environment-Mintzberg
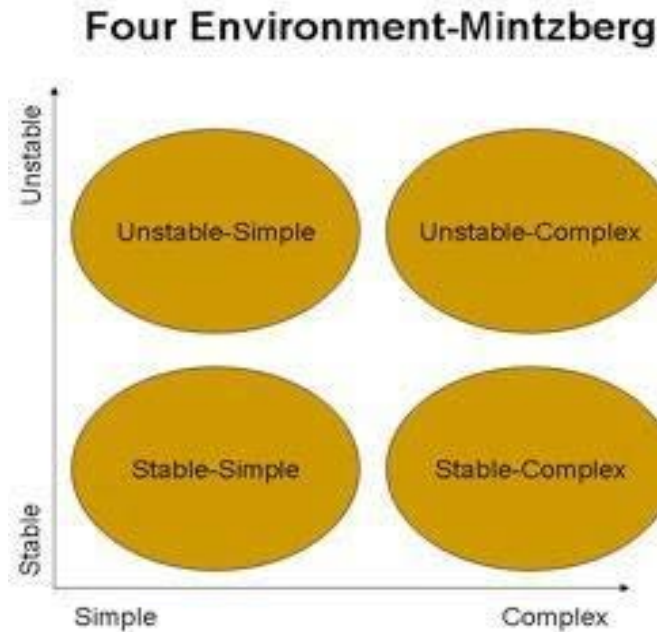


Figure 1.    Mintzberg Four Dimensions.[23]

### 1.    Performance within the General Environment

The thesis identifies the organizational structure of SOF and conventional forces based on how they performed in the environments. We use Mintzberg's theory, which states that as uncertainty increases, the environment becomes more unstable and complex. Additionally, according to Mintzberg, certain organizational structures are best suited for an environment depending on its complexity and stability.[24]

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[23] Study Blue. Popular Study Materials from Dairy Science1 with Janson. https://www.studyblue.com/notes/note/n/org-design-midterm/deck/67042. Naval Post Graduate School

[24] Mintzberg, "The Structuring of Organizations" (1989).

1.      An adhocracy is best suited for unstable-complex environments.

2.      A machine bureaucracy is best suited for stable-complex environments.

3.      A professional bureaucracy is best suited for an unstable-simple environment.

4.      A simple structure is best suited for a stable-simple environment.


## 2.      Structural Configuration

Similarly, using Mintzberg's theory of structural configurations (Figure 2), we categorize structural components of SOF and conventional forces based on differences in "dimensions of the five configurations."[25]

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[25] Henry Mintzberg. "Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?" *Harvard Business Review,* January 1981.

The machine bureaucracy "is dominated by its techno structure and ensures that there is a standardized work process. Operating in a simple and stable environment, this organizational form relies on a centralized form of management, and given its rather large size, has difficulty adjusting to changes in the environment" (Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979)).

The professional bureaucracy "is dominated by the operating core and relies on a standardization of skills for efficiency. Operating in a complex and stable environment, decentralized control ensures that flexibility can be achieved in addressing a wide range of problems. This organizational type has less difficulty in adjusting to changes in the environment, but still relies on a large yet specialized operating core" (Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*.).

The simple structure "is dominated by the strategic apex and relies on direct supervision by managers to ensure that outputs are successfully produced. Simple structures operate in simple and unstable environments, and their nature is inherently centralized. This organizational type is typically small, and can only react to limited problems, but will likely survive as the environment becomes more hostile" (Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*).

Adhocracy "refers to an extremely flexible organization dominated by its support staff yet utilizes mutual adjustment to coordinate or synchronize outputs towards meeting common goals and objectives. Operating in a complex and unstable environment, the adhocracy's lack of formalization and decentralization enables it to adapt to significant changes in a complex environment. The adhocracy's small operating core is highly educated and specialized and can provide the biggest return on investment when things become uncertain" (Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*).

The divisional form "is the largest of all structures. What further differentiates it is that it generates multiple independent organizations with an overall command structure. The divisional structure is typically formed when product lines are diversified among each independent organization. The focus of control for this organizational form is middle line management, and it requires a standardization of outputs to ensure success" (Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*).
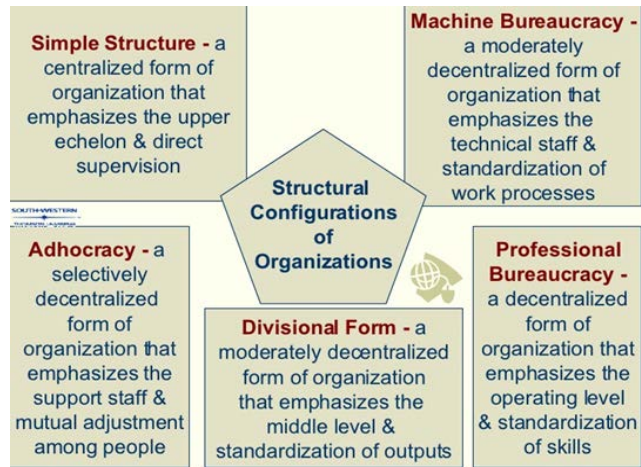
Figure 2.　Structural Configurations of Organizations.[26]

To further describe each of the structural configurations, we use Mintzberg's model of dimensional organization (Figure 3). This first involves identifying the five elements (strategic apex, middle line, support staff, techno structure, and operative core) of SOF and conventional forces. Next, within each case, we identify the different coordination measures necessary to adjust to the environment.[27]
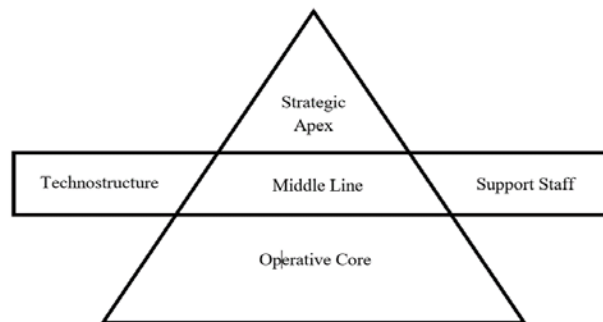


Figure 3.　Mintzberg Dimensions of Organization.[28]

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[26] Chapter 14 Nelson and Quick Organizational Design and Structure. Copyright 2005 by South-Western, a division of Thompson Learning. All rights reserved. http://slideplayer.com/slide/5241517/. Slide 13 of 39.

[27] Nelson and Quick Organization Design, slide 13.

[28] Team 6 Systems and Quality. "Key Parts of an Organization". https://www.emaze.com/@AZWRCZQQ. Emaze.

In each case study, we analyze the coordination measures based on each structural element. Using historical evidence exhibited by SOF, conventional units, and doctrine, we make a determination as to which kinds of organization SOF and conventional forces represent.

### 3. Galbraith Star Model

Considering factors other than organizational structure, we use Galbraith's Star Model (Figure 4) as a rubric for how the organizations in the case studies were well connected and aligned to successfully achieve goals while influencing behavior. The areas where we explore interconnectedness include strategy, structure, processes, rewards, and people.[29] Here, the model (SOF or a conventional command and control structure) is placed in the middle of the star as a focal point that ensures all five components are coherent. More importantly, we explore how the Department of Defense's decisions on command and control structure impact implementation across the five areas.

The Star Model (Galbraith, 2002)
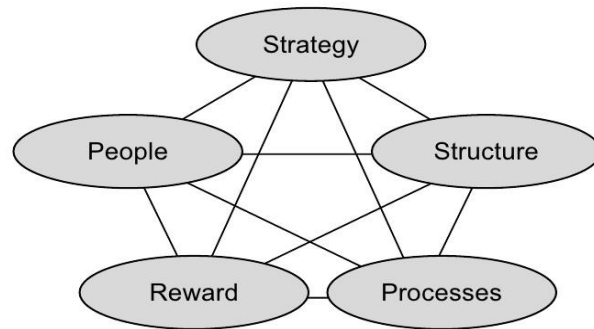


Galbraith, J. Designing Organizations, San Francisco; Josssey-Bass, 2002

Figure 4.     Galbraith Star Model[30]

[29] Amy Kates and Jay R. Galbraith. *Designing Your Organization: Using the STAR Model to Solve 5 Critical Design Challenges.* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

[30] Source: Jay Galbraith, *Designing Operations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

## 4.    Projected Results

Using Mintzberg's theories of environmental stability, dimensions, and coordination members, to include analysis from Galbraith's Star Model, we will determine which command and control structure (SOF or conventional) is likely to be the best fit to tackle challenges in a highly complex environment with a highly adaptable enemy.

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## II.    CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

**Traditional Warfare:** This form of warfare is characterized as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states. This form is labeled as traditional because it has been the preeminent form of warfare in the West since the Peace of Westphalia (1648) that reserved for the nation-state alone a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. The strategic purpose of traditional warfare is the imposition of a nation's will on its adversary nation-state(s) and the avoidance of its will being imposed upon us.

—Joint Publication 1–0[31]

**Irregular Warfare:** This form of warfare is characterized as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). This form is labeled as irregular in order to highlight its non-Westphalian context. The strategic point of IW is to gain or maintain control or influence over, and the support of, a relevant population.

—Joint Publication 1–0[32]

Infrequently have militaries had the luxury of being able to organize and perform one specific job. Carrying out conventional war is the organizational culture of the U.S. Army, but it has never been the soldier's only role. U.S. soldiers spend more time deployed performing a wide range of functions in situations short of war—stability operations, humanitarian aid, or irregular warfare—than fighting in conventional conflicts.[33]

Since World War II, the United States has maintained the strongest military power in the world, enjoying a supremacy that has resulted in victories in major combat

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[31] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States,* JP 1 (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), I-5.

[32] Joint Chiefs, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces,* I-6.

[33] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine*, 3.

operations by defeating the enemy in conventional wars.[34] At the time of writing, this statement remains true. The U.S. Army continues to be tactically and operationally dominant and is not currently threatened by a near-peer competitor. However, after 16 years of protracted war against weaker foes, the January 2017 *Global Trends* report predicts the increase of transnational terrorism and low-intensity "gray zone" state conflict.[35] These asymmetric strategies undermine the current strength of the U.S. military by sidestepping decisive combat and instead relying on elusive psychological, informational, and irregular forms of warfare (Figure 5). Despite this shift, the U.S. Army's organizational construct in 2017 is still based on a "divisional organization" Cold War infantry divisions structure (Figures 6 and 7).[36]
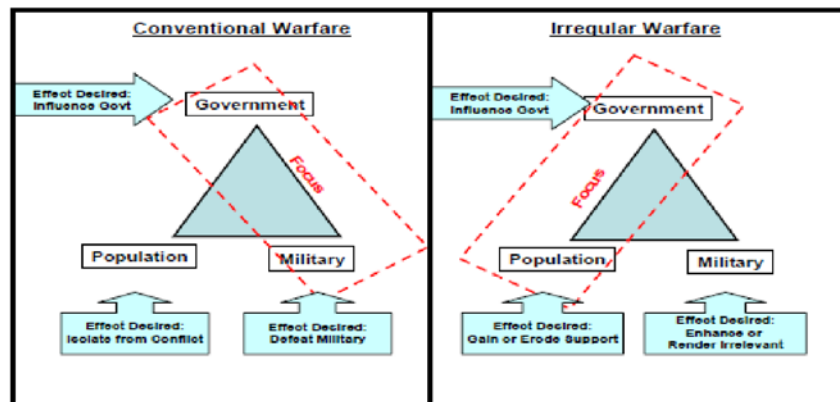


Figure 5.    Contrasting Conventional and Irregular Warfare.[37]

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[34] Andrew Mack. "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," World Politics 27, no. 2 (1975): 175–200; Jeffrey Record, "Why the Strong Lose," Parameters (Winter 2005-2006): 16–31.

[35] National Intelligence Council, Global Trends: Paradox of Progress (Director of National Intelligence, January 2017), https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/nic/GT-Full-Report.pdf.

[36] See figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 is the traditional division-centric structure. Notice the alignment of infantry battalions (green) organized underneath a brigade HQ. Artillery battalions (yellow) are also consolidated underneath an artillery brigade. Figure 7 displays the Army's move to a brigade-centric design. Armor battalions are listed in red, infantry battalions are listed in green, artillery in yellow, and engineer companies in purple. The BCTs are still a divisional organizational structure. The brigade-centric design is less an integrated unit than a set of semi-autonomous units under a central administrative core.

[37] Adapted from Department of Defense, Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC).
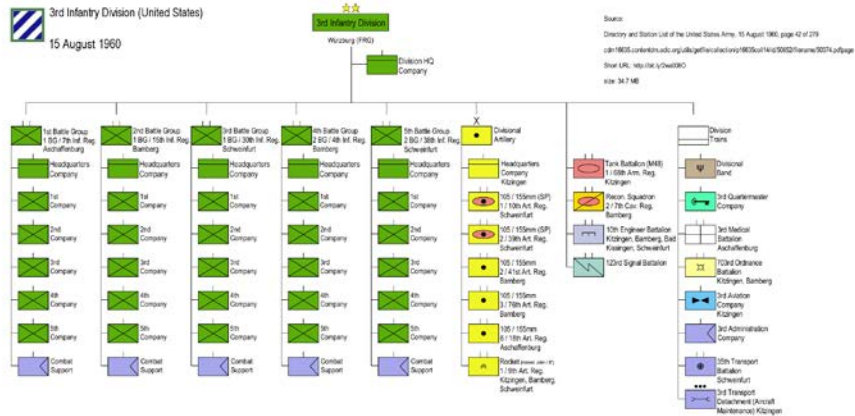
Figure 6. Third Infantry Division Organizational Chart 1960.[38]
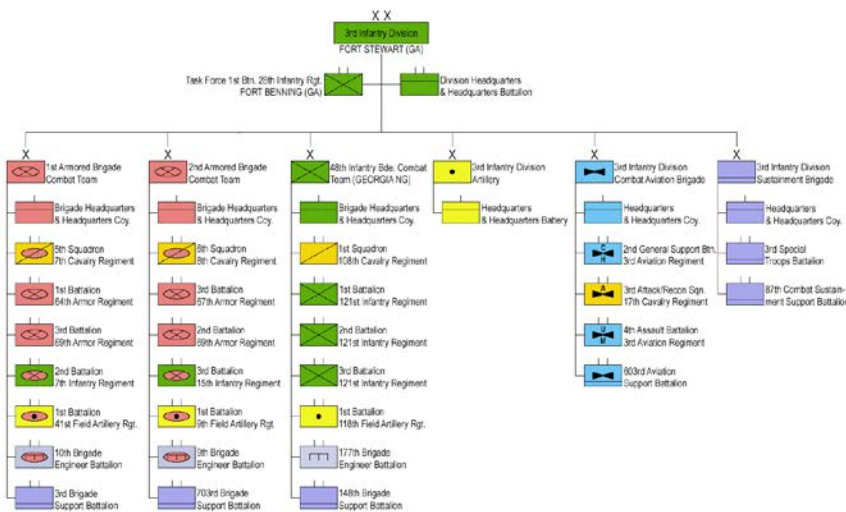


Figure 7. Third Infantry Division Organizational Chart 2017.[39]

The unique properties of a given operational environment will cause an organization's leadership to selectively decentralize units to deal with the more diverse characteristics of its environment.[40] The U.S. Army has a long, often reactive history of reorganizing its force structure to remain effective. Task organization is the primary tool

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[38] "3rd Infantry Division (United States)" Wikipedia accessed, 12 February, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd_Infantry_Division_(United_States)

[39] "3rd Infantry Division (United States)".

[40] Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*, 151.

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with which commanders customize forces to the operational environment they are about to encounter.[41]

However, below the division level, in 2003, the U.S. Army began adjusting its Cold War force structure to address the operational challenges of overseeing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and support the enduring needs of the six geographic combatant commanders. The primary concept involved restructuring the Army from its traditional division-centric structure into a modular brigade-centric force.[42] In this process, the Army reorganized 17 different types of brigades into three: armor (ABCTs), stryker (SBCTs), and infantry brigades (IBCTs). Each brigade combat team has unique combat mobility platforms and organizational support structures. This reorganization provided the BCTs with additional organic combat, combat support, and service support units, previously provide by the parent division. These new units include a direct support recon squadron, a brigade support battalion, an artillery battalion, and a special troop's battalion. This new structure meant the divisions were no longer the premier unit of choice.[43] The organizational shift to BCT modularity provided the Army with more flexible, sustainable, and capable units. The BCT is currently the U.S. Army's primary deployable and maneuver force designed to conduct operations across the spectrum of military operations. However, we assert that the "spectrum of military operations" does not include many military operations in the irregular warfare battlespace.

The military instrument of land power will continue to have the most engaged and deployed personnel throughout the globe in the foreseeable future. The force rearrangement to the current structure reflects the Army's organizational culture of reacting to environmental change by modifying its forces to confront current threats. It is modularized to better deal with the more diverse characteristics of its environment. Sixteen years of persistent engagement in conflict zones is shaping the

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[41] Stuart E. Johnson et al., *A Review of the Army's Modular Force Structure* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), 15, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2012/RAND_TR927-2.pdf.

[42] Stuart E. Johnson et al., *A Review of the Army's Modular Force Structure*., iii.

[43] Stuart E. Johnson et al., *A Review of the Army's Modular Force Structure*., 11

United States toward indirect involvement in unstable environments. These new requirements compel the U.S. Army to become a more flexible and expeditionary organization, but still the brigade-centric organization is not so much an integrated unit but a set of semiautonomous units under a central headquarters, which is not effective in unstable/uncertain environments.[44]

After September 11, 2001, the U.S. Army deployed two distinct but complementary forces to combat: U.S. Army conventional forces, organized and trained to fight against traditional enemies, and special operations forces, organized and prepared to succeed in an irregular warfare environment. Recent combat operations in the Middle East have demonstrated that the U.S. conventional Army and Special Operations must be able to fight together to counter irregular and hybrid threats.[45] Modern land warfare has evolved away from traditional warfare and shifted toward irregular warfare fought against non-state actors.

This paradigm shift has led to an increased reliance on SOF to seal the CF's operational gaps and has resulted in significant SOF expansion and battlefield influence, more than at any other time in U.S. SOF history.[46] After 16 years of protracted conflict, the U.S. conventional Army continues to mostly remain the supported headquarters, while SOF remains a supporting element against an irregular enemy.[47]

The U.S. Army's conventional operational approach in both Iraq and Afghanistan (represented by the BCT) seems to have achieved its maximum efficiency within its scope of capability and capacity, yet it still falls short of what is necessary for a counterinsurgency campaign. Unfortunately, conventional force corps and division headquarters are leading an indirect war, primarily fought by supporting U.S. SOF.

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[44] Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations* (1979), 380; Phillip A. Chambers and Tarn D. Warren, "RAF Movement and Maneuver Warfighting Function," Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, Strategic Studies Institute, 2015.

[45] Ellison and Hodermarsky, "Conventional and Special Operations Forces Integration," v.

[46] Linda Robinson et al., *Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), xi.

[47] Linda Robinson et al., *Improving Strategic Competence*, 1–2.

Currently, the institutional organization of coalition forces and special operations forces exhibits gaps and seams while conducting irregular warfare, and specifically counterinsurgency and asymmetric warfare. In this case, a major contributing factor that has led to these deficiencies is the BCT construct, which is designed for destruction of enemy units and not well suited for population-centric warfare. U.S.-supported governments control most of the main population centers and major lines of communication, while insurgencies dominate the territories that border third-party actors.

According to Adams, throughout U.S. history, operational success by irregular units against a strategic or operational objective has required a specialized organization with select soldiers possessing language expertise and cultural awareness, enabling them to operate efficiently in combination with indigenous forces. Despite distinguished indirect successes in Vietnam, El Salvador, Iraq, and early Afghanistan (Northern Alliance), U.S. special operations forces have fought for small political victories to maintain operational relevance. Future counterinsurgency victories will depend in part upon organizational change and proper allocation of military resources.[48] Adapting the wrong strategy or failing to adjust to a competitive environment may produce undesired or conflicting results. The following three case studies will use organizational theory to posit the environmental conditions in which SOF units can be the supported command.

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[48] Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Psychology Press, 1998), 11–12.

# III.   CASE STUDIES

## A.   SPECIAL ACTIONS FORCES (SAF) 1963–1972

U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Forces: Those forces which are comprised
of Special Action Forces and other U.S. Army units, elements, or
personnel trained and designated for a counterinsurgency mission
assignment. These forces are capable of operating in vulnerable areas,
when invited by a host government, to provide training and military advice
and operational assistance to indigenous military and paramilitary forces
engaged in maintaining or restoring internal security and defeating a
subversive insurgency.

—FM 31–22[49]

### 1.   Introduction

In the lengthy history of war, a recurring premise is the combined and
occasionally synchronized use of conventional forces and irregular forces to achieve a
strategic victory. An examination of recent American history outside of the Vietnam War
will show how conventional forces and irregular forces have been a wise combination in
war fighting and will demonstrate the U.S. military's ability to implement organizational
change to achieve its objectives and U.S. national interest.[50]

### 2.   Background (1953–1962)

No organizational change progresses without strategic foresight to envision future
scenarios. A present modification is meshed with the change before it and after it; the end
of one move is the beginning of another.[51] Henry Mintzberg, in his book *The Structuring
of Organizations*, states that most machine bureaucracies exist to produce organized and
coordinated actions rather than to stimulate critical thinking and choice.[52] When an

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[49] Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces.*

[50] Thomas M. Huber, *Compound Warfare: That Fatal Knot* (Collingdale, PA: DIANE Publishing, 2002), vii.

[51] Patrick E. Connor and Linda K. Lake, *Managing Organizational Change* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 1994), 15.

[52] Mintzberg, The Structuring of Organizations, 320–321.

organization is specifically designed to deal effectually with one set of objectives, tasks, and situations, difficulties may occur when the organization has to handle a supplementary objective, task, or situation. Coordinating different organizational actions also means decreasing the variety of actions available. While the reduction in variety may increase efficiency, it also undermines the organization's ability to stimulate new values, implement new tasks, and manage new situations. Productivity rarely goes conjointly with flexibility.[53]

In his research, Mintzberg classifies the different types of organizational structures and their capability to influence the environment (Figure 8). According to Mintzberg, organizations have one of five structures, which fit different organizational types: entrepreneurial, machine, professional, divisional, and adhocracy. Each configuration contains the seeds of destruction and of mission accomplishment. In highly organized societies, organizations must be able to change structures to survive.[54] These five types of organizations fit within the four larger types of task environments shown in Figure 8. The more complex and unstable and environment becomes, the more critical it is for adjustment and adaptability to drive organization structure. While entrepreneurial organizations work well in simple, unstable environments, the large corporate machine or divisional organizational types work well in simple, stable environments with centralized supervision. It is important to note that machine and divisional organizations both fit within "Standardization of Work Processes" in this model, but are differentiated by being technocratic/not fashionable or middle-line/fashionable, respectively. By the same token, adaptability and flexibility of adhocracies allows for successful operation in unstable, highly complex environments (Figure 8).

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[53] Mintzberg, The Structuring of Organizations, 320–321.

[54] Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management*, 152.
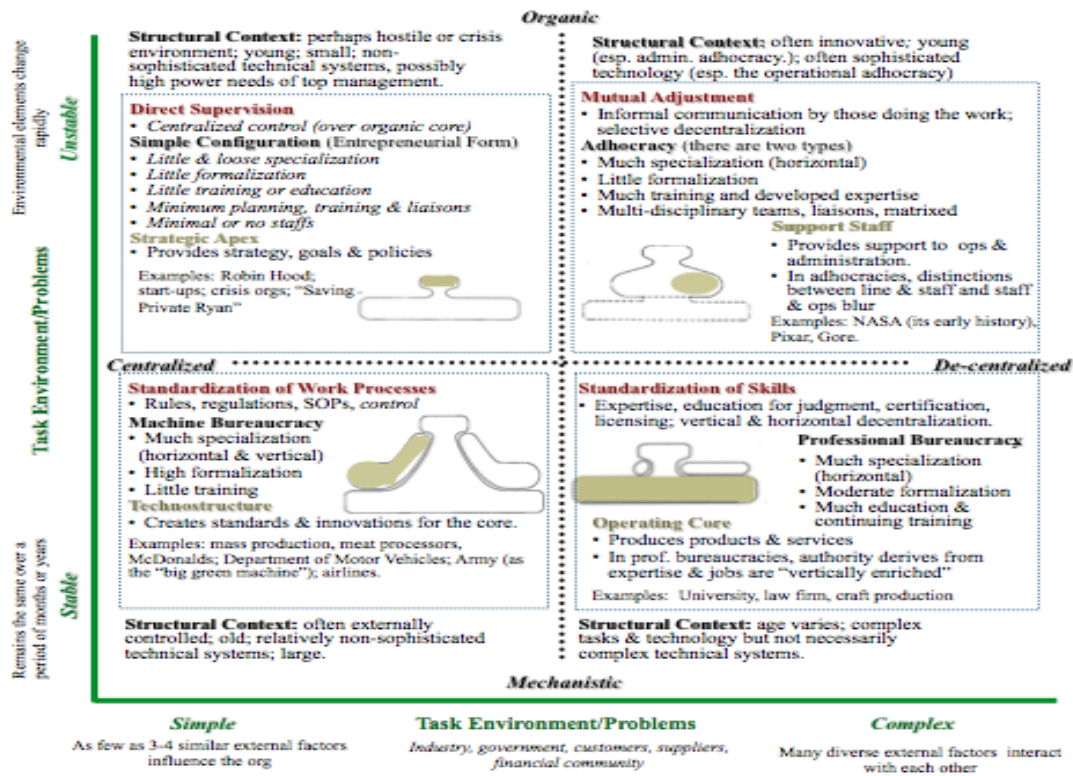
Figure 8.    Mintzberg Organizational Chart.[55]

Inflexible bureaucracies create two issues. One, large organizations can sustain themselves off of past successes. If an organization has strong credibility, it can refuse any changes proposed by others outside it. If an inflexible bureaucratic organization were to give in, it would risk losing legitimacy and access to resources. Secondly, inflexible organizations are usually unwilling to adapt to a changing environmental domain to maintain legitimacy. In the end, they will fail, to the disadvantage of their members and nation, since the cost of allowing large organizations to perish and replacing them with new organizations is extremely high. If avoiding organizational idleness is the point, it may be more advantageous to adapt the existing organization at the time. This adaptation is what occurred in the U.S. military after World War II.

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[55] Source: Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 13–14.

When President Eisenhower took office in 1953, nuclear weapons dominated U.S. military strategy and appealed to the American society's fondness for simple solutions. The Navy had developed nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear missiles. The Air Force was rewarded with a budget twice the size of the Army's budget to sustain the nuclear-capable strategic bomber force that had brought a decisive end to World War II in the Pacific. Nuclear weapons became the U.S. military's strategic dogma. The environmental domain to deter communism and the technological advancement of nuclear weapons had changed the military's organizational structures and past organizational interdependence. Each division of the military was resource dependent on the Department of Defense (DoD) and contributed to the protection of the United States, but they were functioning independently. The U.S. Army was facing organizational idleness, and national leaders and defense strategists were questioning whether the Army would have a role in the era of nuclear weapons.

No sooner had the United States adopted its military nuclear policies than the Soviet Union changed the strategic environment. Confronted with a U.S. nuclear monopoly, the Soviets developed and expanded their own nuclear program to counterbalance their vulnerability to U.S. influence. This long-term and complex effort would take years to complete. In the interim, the Soviets needed a flexible strategy to avoid direct confrontation with the United States while maintaining their influence around the world. To the surprise of the Americans, the Soviets modified the environment by introducing wars of national liberation by expanding their support to Communist insurgencies.[56] The changing environmental domain—the United States' reliance upon nuclear weapons—left U.S. national leaders with two options to counter Communist aggression: nuclear war or compromise.

The fundamental strength of the machine bureaucracy is its ability to buffer itself from external forces in order to maintain efficiency and rationalize operations. Machine bureaucracies may exhibit short periods of change, but often at great cost to time and

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[56] Summers, *On Strategy*, 73–74.

resources.[57] Unique to the machine bureaucracy is the considerable power contained within the strategic apex. Strategies are formulated at the strategic apex then sent down to the executing unit for implementation. Military art acknowledges this division as strategy and tactics: strategy dictates the general direction the Army is moving, while tactics are the ways and means by which the subordinate organizations will execute the strategy.[58]

The U.S. Army, still confident in its conventional warfare function and role in national security, was culturally struggling to comprehend a grand strategy to remain relevant in a nuclear age.[59] A national military policy reliant upon nuclear weapons left many of the Army's senior leaders uncertain of its future and anxious about institutional extinction. For the Army to survive, new motivations, organizational goals, and modified domain would need to be forged out of military deprivations.[60]

In the late 1950s, the Army created the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC), consisting of the conventional forces 82nd Airborne, 101st Airborne, and 1st and 4th infantry divisions.[61] The organizational restructuring gave the Army new legitimacy, with several mobile infantry divisions to execute direct contingency operations against Communist insurgencies.[62]

In 1960, Army chief of staff General George H. Decker (a conventional force commander) advocated further organizational change by designating two smaller, regionally-oriented task forces, designed for uncertain conditions short of war, to

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[57] Mintzberg, The Structuring of Organizations, 151.

[58] Mintzberg, The Structuring of Organizations, 325.

[59] Mintzberg, The Structuring of Organizations, 54–55.

[60] Domain "is the chosen environmental field of action. It is the territory an organization stakes out for itself concerning products, services, and markets served. A domain defines the organization's niche and defines those external sectors with which the organization will interact to accomplish its goals." Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 48); I. V. Gordon et al., *Comparing US Army Systems with Foreign Counterparts: Identifying Possible Capability Gaps and Insights from Other Armies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015).

[61] Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management*, 354.

[62] Contingency "means that one thing depends on other things, and for organizations to be effective, there must be a 'goodness of fit' between their structure and the conditions in their external environment" (Daft, *Organization Theory and Design*, 600).

suppress insurgencies. This new concept consisted of a conventional Army airborne brigade and an airborne Special Forces group to perform direct-action missions in a target country during a Cold War contingency. Wittingly or unwittingly, the U.S. Army was slowly changing to adopt an indirect conventional/irregular force to ensure the organization's legitimacy.[63]

In 1961, the DoD united STRAC into a joint U.S. Army/Air Force entity, Strike Command (STRICOM), under the command of a U.S. Army general. Strike Command's purpose was to develop doctrine and plan operations to conduct joint contingency operations to ensure the Army and Air Force were capable of executing those operations. The creation of STRICOM, with the upgrades to the Air Force's strategic transport aircraft, improved the Army's capability to deploy rapidly, and the Army began to explore designing contingency forces especially for conditions between peace and war.[64]

When President Kennedy took office, he brought both a new aspiration and a national strategy to confront the spread of international Communism. President Kennedy's military assistance strategy to deter and defeat Communism differed from the nuclear-oriented doctrine and culture of prior administrations. The president sought to improve the United States' adeptness in conducting warfare without subsequent use of nuclear weapons. Kennedy considered a flexible U.S. Army response using social reform, economic development, and indirect military strategy—the critical armaments in fighting Communist-backed insurgencies in underdeveloped countries. After much self-study of irregular warfare and communist revolutions due to his personal interest, he stated, "It is nonsense to think that regular forces trained for conventional war can handle jungle guerrillas adequately."[65] In his commencement remarks to the United States Military Academy in 1962, he further pointed out that the United States was confronting a new kind of war, with different opponents, different military requirements, and various political objectives.

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[63] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine*, 198.

[64] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine*, 198.

[65] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine*, 225.

This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin—war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat, by infiltration instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him. It is a form of warfare uniquely adapted to what has been strangely called "wars of liberation," to undermine the efforts of new and poor countries to maintain the freedom that they have finally achieved. It preys on economic unrest and ethnic conflicts. It requires in those situations where we must counter it, and these are the kinds of challenges that will be before us in the next decade if freedom is to be saved, a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.[66]

In January 1962, President Kennedy told the secretary of defense he was not assured of the U.S. Army's success in addressing the increasing danger of Communist insurgencies. He commissioned the Army to conceive a force to meet an emerging Communist irregular threat. As the chief of staff added,

Our splendid field armies in Europe and Korea and reserve in the United States… are designed for conventional and tactical nuclear warfare. Their purpose is to meet clearly defined, large-scale military threats. Obviously, these units are not the proper response to a band of guerillas, which in a flash will transform itself into a scattering of "farmers." Neither are they best geared to move into a weak country and help it move up the development ladder by training local forces to improve the people's health, transportation, and building program.[67]

The Army optimistically embraced the president's idea by cultivating specialized adhocracy organizations to improve national advice and assistance programs. This was apparent after the Army's staff further refined the "divisional" airborne brigade/Special Forces group organizational model and mission. In 1962, General Decker removed the airborne brigade and tasked the "adhocracy" Special Forces groups with creating a mutual adjusting of the U.S. Army Special Action Forces (SAF) to conduct foreign internal defense and security force assistance in foreign countries (Figure 9).

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[66] Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, "John F. Kennedy: Remarks at West Point to the Graduating Class of the U.S. Military Academy, June 6, 1962," American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8695.

[67] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine,* 225.
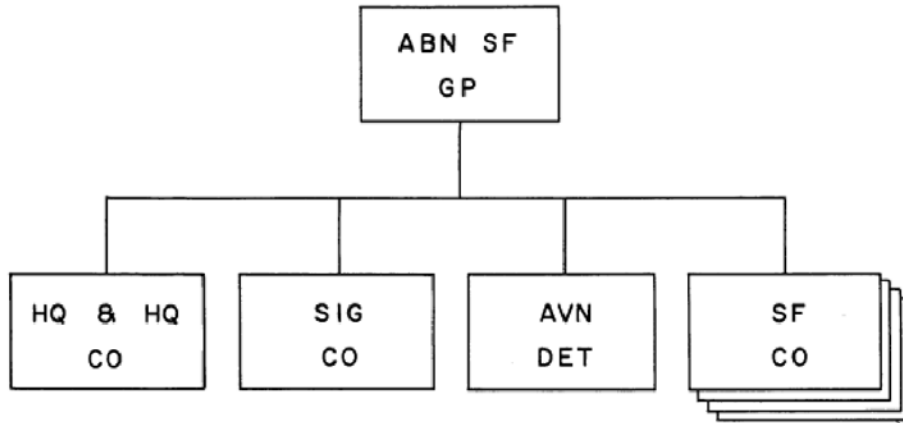
Figure 1. Airborne special forces group.

Figure 9.    Airborne Special Forces Group.[68]

The SAFs were accessible to the strategic commander of a unified command to support limited and general war campaigns by delivering training teams of varying sizes and capabilities according to theater requirements.[69] The Special Action Forces were designed as an operating adhocracy to give the Special Forces groups the ability to selectively decentralize and deploy multidisciplinary training teams to confront any unstable and uncertain environment.[70] An unstable environment called for an organic structure; an uncertain environment demanded a decentralized organizational structure. As Mintzberg states, "there is no better way to fight a war in the jungle," where the conditions of irregular warfare are dynamic and complex.[71] The operating adhocracy is the only organizational structure to that provides both the organic structure and the decentralized structure. The 1,500-man SFGs formed an operating core consisting of 36 Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (SFODA), nine Special Forces Operation Detachment Bravos (SFODB), and three Special Forces Operational Detachment Charlies (SFODC). The SAFs also included an array of professional detachments. A smaller

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[68] Source: Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces.* *198*

[69] Source: Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces.* *198*

[70] Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management,* 198.

[71] Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*, 449.

professional bureaucracy working alongside the Special Forces soldiers consisting of a civil affairs group, a psychological operations battalion, an engineer detachment, a medical detachment, an intelligence detachment, and an Army Security Agency unit gave the SAFs additional trained experts aid foreign armies in conducting stability operations.[72] These detachments' standard program focused on a narrower "specialized" mission set to mitigate uncertainty and drive creative innovations.

Reinforcing the SAFs were original Cold War contingency reserve infantry divisions: the 82nd, 101st, 1st, and 4th. From those infantry divisions, the SAFs could draw a conventional infantry brigade backup force consisting of infantry, armor, cavalry, artillery, aviation, and other support units (Figure 10). This flexible interdependence gave the GCC the ability to converge or diverge in strategic focus.[73]



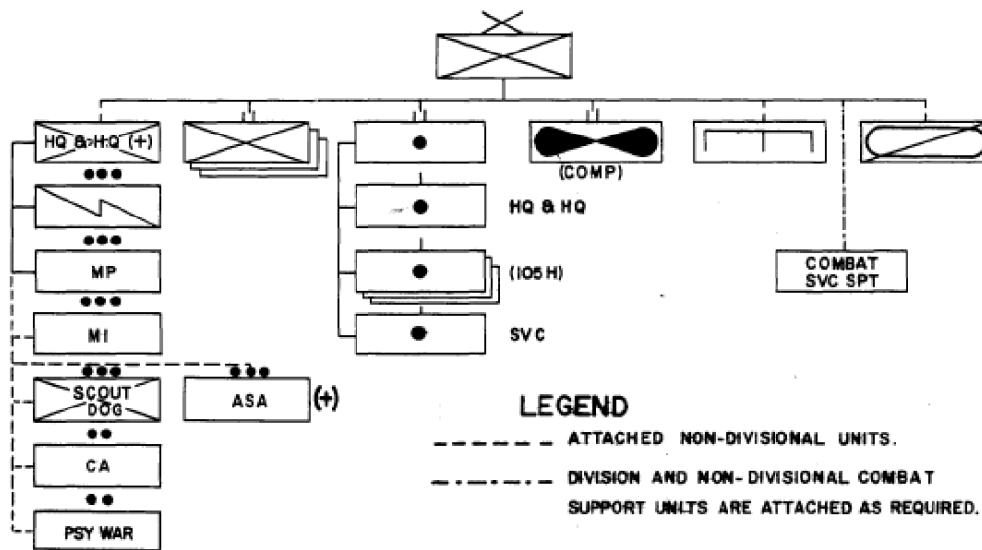Figure 10.    Brigade-Size Backup Force.[74]

[72] Simpson and Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets*, 68.

[73] Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management*, 198.

[74] Source: Department of the Army*, Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces*, 43.

In addition to providing assistance personnel, the brigades offered mobile training teams to augment the SAFs and were able to reinforce the SAFs if hostilities escalated to conventional war. The brigades could operate autonomously in a host country for over a month before requiring follow-up supplies and augmentation, and their mission, training, and organization often mirrored the SAFs'. The backup brigades' personnel received limited cultural and language training reinforced by six weeks of counterinsurgency training each year. However, since they were customarily deployed after hostilities had commenced, training prominence was placed on combat capabilities.[75]

### 3.     Analysis

The strategic commander of a unified command enabled the SAFs to be the supported command conducting counterinsurgency campaigns in uncertain/unstable environments because the SAFs could deploy training teams of varying sizes and capabilities according to theater requirements.[76] The SAFs were commanded by a Special Forces group commander who was regarded by the unified commander or geographical combatant commander as his senior counterinsurgent specialist.[77] The augmentation forces from the conventional force brigade supported the SAF commander's operational goals.

The command relationship required the CF commander to be responsible for the success of the SAF commander and obliged the CF commander to stay involved during design, planning, and execution of the counterinsurgency mission. The supported SAF command with the supporting backup brigade gave the SAF commander assured access to additional CF capabilities while executing counterinsurgency lines of effort for the GCC's theater campaign plan. The GCC commander further enabled this relationship by providing clear priorities to both the SAF and CF brigade commanders, organizing mission approval authorities, requiring the commanders to crosstalk, and reaching out for

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[75] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine,* 199.

[76] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine,* 199.

[77] Each unified command is led by a combatant commander who is a four-star general or admiral; Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces,* 20.

their input on force considerations.[78] The SAF-supported, infantry-brigade-supporting command arrangement reflected a high recognition that the U.S. government and Army had specially trained, linguistically and culturally sensitive CF-SOF soldiers with a limited footprint available for operations across the spectrum of warfare during the Cold War. In 1965, a special commission to review the status of the counterinsurgency program stated the U.S. Army had been the only government organization to develop a coherent counterinsurgency program.[79]

From 1961 to 1965, the U.S. Army had improved the capacity and capability of counterinsurgency assistance it offered to host nations. The U.S. Army had reorganized its infantry divisions to execute a flexible strategy. Simultaneously, increasing the number of Special Forces groups and establishing the Special Action Forces concept helped with the proliferation of American counterinsurgency doctrine throughout the world in uncertain/unstable conditions. During the 1960s, the SAFs sent hundreds of mobile training teams across the globe to conduct counterinsurgency operations.[80] The Special Actions Forces became the boundary-spanning role at the operational level to synchronize State Department and military efforts as United States country teams.[81] The forces' main effort was to assist the host nation's government by enabling the local population to create solutions to their unique local problems, with credit for mission accomplishment going to the local government.[82] With this grassroots approach, the SAFs were able to assess the will of the host nation's soldiers and the mood of the villages and to supply services that were measured by the local citizens upon delivery. For the first time in the U.S. Army's history, it was organizationally prepared to conduct synchronized counterinsurgency campaigns with conventional brigades (divisional),

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[78] Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces,* 20.

[79] Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces,* 277–278.

[80] The missions were the same—counterinsurgency—but the structures and outputs that produced them were radically different.

[81] Simpson and Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets,* 83.

[82] Simpson and Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets,* 277–278.

SAFs (adhocracies), and governmental (professional) organizations which were oriented towards interdependence (Figure 11).



**Task (or Work Flow) Interdependence among existing Departments**

Thompson's theory takes an Inter-Departmental Focus: It focuses on relationships between departments with respect to their task activities and work flows

Dept. of Defense    U.S. Army    Special Action Force

USAF Army Navy    Infantry SF Armor    SFODA CF DoS
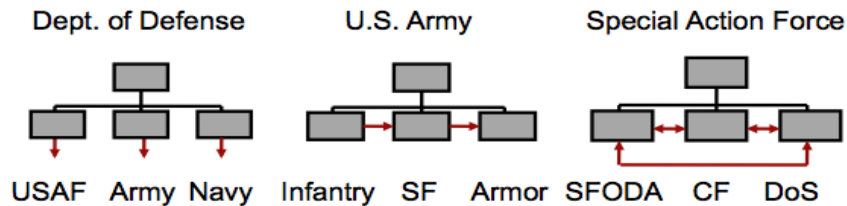
In Thompson's model, these rectangles are departments, not tasks. The arrows represent the flow of work.

ejansen@nps.edu                    Hodge, Anthony, & Gales (1996)

Figure 11.    Interdependence.[83]

Operating adhocracies are prone to short life cycles—organizational aging often drives the adhocracy into more stable settings and bureaucratic structure.[84] The Special Action Force concept and strategy functioned, but the lack of commitment from the U.S. Army and the overall organizational effectiveness were difficult to quantify. Over time, the U.S. Army created, but never fully staffed or implemented, six regionally affiliated SAFs and a strategic reserve. The Special Action Forces were never able to neutralize insurgencies in host nations entirely, but they were able to reduce threats to host-nation rural areas.[85] The Army machine bureaucracies tended to favor the tangible and measurable over the intangible and immeasurable. After force reductions at the end of the Vietnam War and the subsequent loss of popular support for external conflicts, the

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[83] Hodge, B., W. Anthony, and L. Gale. "Organizational Theory: A Strategic Approach. (Prentice Hall, New York.)." (1996).

[84] Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations,* 456.

[85] Simpson and Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets,* 81.

Special Action Force concept was canceled.[86] Instead, the Army reestablished a strategic focus on conventional warfare against a near-peer competitor and turned its attention away from counterinsurgency.

### 4. Conclusion

Parallels in conflict and lessons from the past often provide a window on opportunities for the future. Over time, an organization gains a reputation for what it does best, and that encourages it to repeat its attention to past programs.[87] The Special Action Force structure increased the United States' ability to conduct foreign internal defense and security force assistance on a global scale. The overall campaign plan was approved by the U.S. president with a strategy to counter Communist-backed insurgency and support the host-nation army and population.[88] The strategy included Special Action Forces who had the capacity to conduct irregular warfare with host-nation forces due to unique core activities. Additionally, the conventional forces' ability to seize terrain and their other skills allowed the SAFs to maintain the momentum they would need in order to achieve their objectives.

The structure of an organization determines the location of influence and authority in that organization. According to Mintzberg, organizational structures fall into four categories: specialization, shape, distribution of power, and departmentalization. In the case of the SAFs, the structure necessary to support the overall campaign plan in the unstable environment required specialization. This is apparent in the use of both Special Forces operations and conventional forces, who were able to conduct and coordinate operations involving different cultures while synchronizing efforts among geographic combatant commands, the Department of State, and country teams.

The second case study, Village Stability Operation in Afghanistan, is another successful merger of SOF and CF that maximizes each organization's capability for

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[86] Simpson and Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets,* 216.

[87] Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*, 456.

[88] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine,* 226.

operational and tactical success. Before the attacks of September 11, 2001, special operations and conventional forces primarily operated independently, with little integration operationally or during training exercises. Since the ground war began in Afghanistan, CF and SOF forces have mutually supported each other out of operational necessity to balance organizational weakness against an irregular threat. These experiences and personal relationships have developed the best operational command relations between CF and SOF in U.S. history and continue to evolve today.[89]

## B. AFGHANISTAN VILLAGE STABILITY OPERATIONS

VSO are one example of how a dynamic and complex environment provides ripe conditions for special operations forces to be the supported command. In this case study, we see unique examples of how an adhocracy has been misapplied or misused in opportune conditions (unstable and complex). The extensive documentation of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan has covered many aspects of the U.S. SOF campaign to oust the Taliban regime. The U.S. and Coalition efforts in nation building and establishing functioning governance have also been discussed a great deal, but the key elements that these efforts are built upon and the ways in which the U.S. SOF and CF coordinate and synchronize have not been fully examined. This analysis has fallen short regarding the future coordination needed for SOF and CF to conduct air-land battle while integrating population-centric and enemy-centric campaign concepts such as provincial reconstruction teams (PRT). The U.S.-Coalition formation of the PRT ultimately led to the genesis of the Village Stability Operations which are currently in use.[90]

The VSO were and are critical indicators of how SOF was and is currently being misapplied through subordination to CF headquarters. Conventional commanders are not making full use of special operations to accomplish greater stability. In the case of

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[89] Ellison and Hodermarsky, "Conventional and Special Operations Forces Integration," 15.

[90] Donald C. Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan," *Special Warfare Magazine* (October–December 2011), http://www.soc.mil/SWCS/SWmag/archive/SW2404/SW2404ForecastingThe FutureOfAfghanistan.html; Robert Hulslander and Jake Spivey, "Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police," *PRISM* 3, no. 3 (June 2012): 125–138; Ty Connett and Bob Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations: More than Village Defense," *Special Warfare Magazine* (July–September 2011): 1–4.

Afghanistan, greater gains can be made through more organic application of SOF forces subordinate to Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) and U.S. Special Operations Command CENTCOM (SOCCENT). This organization restructuring would require discussion of organizational efficiency and design in order to fully understand the importance of balanced SOF and CF commands in an insurgency environment. It also means identifying the key conditions for which this type of organization will be most beneficial: decentralized, ambiguous, and less simple.

The experience of special operations forces in Afghanistan has included a full spectrum of organization and reorganization as various commanders have sought to orient around the insurgency problem. This organizational and operational design closely echoes what Mintzberg defines as machine bureaucracy and adhocracy.

Descriptive comparison between these two situates the conventional U.S. Army forces as machine bureaucracy: high standardization regulated by standard operating procedures and much control, but little ability to adapt. Such organizations are usually better situated for simple and stable environments. SOF, however, are more appropriately labeled as an adhocracy: though rooted in conventional Army doctrine, SOF have developed and adapted into a highly flexible organization with a high level of specialization, training, and developed expertise.[91] This formation allows the organization to navigate unstable and complex environments such as insurgencies and unconventional warfare.

These organizational design considerations are correctly applied with careful consideration of the environment and conditions. Mintzberg discusses the impact of environment on organizational structuring and how greater complexity increases the need for decentralization, and he highlights the difficulty of standardization in the form of a traditional bureaucracy.[92] In much the same way, greater environmental complexity (read: insurgency) requires military organizations specifically trained and structured to be adaptable and easily decentralized, just as Mintzberg prescribes organization based upon

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[91]Source: Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives*, 13–14.

[92] Mintzberg, "Fashion or Fit?" 10.

environmental configurations (see Figure 14). This environmental consideration can furthermore be synonymous with conditions, as they both show that the inherent outside or environmental factors which impact the organization are accounted for and incorporated into organizational structures (Figure 12). Mintzberg's Dimensions of the Five Configurations highlight how environment determines whether the organization should be simple, machine, professional, divisionalized, or should become an adhocracy. Of particular note is that the environment draws apart the differences in machine and divisionalized and changes the power from technocratic to middle line control, respectively.

**EXHIBIT 3**
Dimensions of the Five Configurations
(Continued)

| | SIMPLE STRUCTURE | MACHINE BUREAUCRACY | PROFESSIONAL BUREAUCRACY | DIVISIONALIZED FORM | ADHOCRACY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ENVIRONMENT | Simple and Dynamic; Sometimes Hostile | Simple and stable | Complex and stable | Relatively simple and stable; diversified markets(esp. products and services) | Complex and dynamic; sometimes disparate (in administrative adhocracy) |
| POWER | Chief executive control; often owner managed; not fashionable | Technocratic and external control; not fashionable | Professional operator control; fashionable | Middleline control; fashionable (esp. in industry) | Expert control; very fashionable |

Figure 12.    Mintzberg's Dimensions of the Five Configurations.[93]

This comparative discussion will show how Special Forces has been structured to leverage this decentralized approach to effectively meet and counter insurgencies. Conventional forces can serve in an amplifying role by providing the coordinating core bureaucracy to allow SF to focus on its mission while receiving operational direction from an overall special operations command.

Adaptivity to insurgency and unconventional warfare play an important role, as the environment is more readily defined by the insurgent. The disparate insurgencies that have been fought the world over have all been similar on the surface but show inherent singular characteristics when analyzed in depth. Successful practices in counterinsurgency operations address the uniqueness of each individual insurgency, as no

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[93] Mintzberg, "Fashion or Fit?" 13.

two are the same. The Taliban in Afghanistan present their own challenges and complexities militarily, economically, governmentally, and culturally. These must all be taken into account to best organize forces to meet and defeat the threat.

Following the October 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, U.S. Special Forces teams quickly established groups of fighters in the Northern Alliance and were ultimately successful in driving the Taliban from its long-held seat (circa 1996). The real challenge of coordination, however, began when conventional forces took the helm of efforts in Afghanistan. Operation Anaconda in 2002 was a clear indicator that better coordination between CF and SOF was much needed for efforts to be successful. National- and theater-level SOF were under different levels of command, and operational control changed hands from the special operations task force (SOTF) to the joint task force (JTF).[94] Compounding the issue of early success was the 4,000-man peacekeeping force, which was limited to Kabul. This was due to both Rumsfeld's lack of desire to commit more troops, counter to Colin Powell's recommendation, and because of a lack of desire on the part of the Pentagon to become entangled in a perceived occupation by U.S. forces. The other 4,000 conventional U.S. troops were a combat force focused on engaging with or hunting Taliban.[95]

The difference in campaign planning between the two entities was a core component of their different approaches to problem solving in Afghanistan: CF planned campaigns using enemy-centric metrics, while SOF used population-centric metrics. Prior to 2001, the general view of special operations was that they supported the efforts of conventional forces. The increasing number of irregular threats have led to a rapid adaption for special operations to integrate with conventional forces, but the joint task force or combatant commanders are still the conventional headquarters that dictate how and where special operations will operate.[96] This difference in approach greatly impacted

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[94] Wesbrock, Harned, and Plous, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces," 90.

[95] David Rohde, "An Afghan Symbol for Change, then Failure," *New York Times*, September 5, 2006.

[96] Charles T. Cleveland, James B. Linder, and Ronald Dempsey, "Special Operations Doctrine: Is it Needed?", *PRISM* 6, no. 3 (2016), 9.

the mission focus and priority that each command possessed. It also complicated addressing the problem of a stable Afghanistan that was prepared for self-governance.

The early goals, which had been laid out by the DoD and the U.S. State Department, were becoming more and more elusive as the Taliban identified and exploited the gaps U.S. policy and campaign planning had left. Former director of policy planning for the U.S. State Department Richard Haas freely acknowledged that security was the primary failing following the invasion. Former special envoy to Afghanistan James Dobbins also acknowledged that DoD hopes of quickly establishing Afghan security were unrealistic. No peacekeepers were deployed outside of Kabul immediately following the U.S. invasion, so security forces at both the village and regional levels consisted solely of what the local Afghans could provide themselves. The lack of local security provided openings for the Taliban to reinsert itself into Afghan villages through expanded relationships with drug-trade members and through corruption of local leaders.[97]

The ad hoc nature of the security approach was highly detrimental to U.S.-Coalition rebuilding efforts such as infrastructure, which were initially attempted with local leadership. The Taliban's ability to insert itself into villages and produce a counter narrative about American "invaders" left many villages and leaders skeptical or heavily intimidated. The Taliban was able to exploit these weaknesses and develop contacts with drug-trade networks and forcibly corrupt leaders at the local level.[98] SOF was also culpable in this misapplication of force, as the focus was primarily on hunting the Taliban in Helmand Province in direct action operations as opposed to joining with and integrating into Afghan villages to develop local security.

By 2004, the problem had been well identified and was being addressed by provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). These teams would focus on bottom-up development within each province of Afghanistan to facilitate self-government as well as the development of more effective local security. The PRTs met stiff resistance to their

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[97] Rohde, "Afghan Symbol for Change."

[98] David Rohde, "An Afghan Symbol for Change, then Failure," *New York Times*, September 5, 2006.

efforts but continued because security was not fully enough established to allow the necessary rebuilding projects to go on as scheduled. This lack of effective security, at the expense of meeting unrealistic goals, resulted in the death of many foreign aid workers, construction workers, and local government officials. This pressure to quickly accomplish the mission occurred concurrently with the increase in U.S. spending from $962 million to $2.4 billion in aid.[99] The initial failing of CF and SOF was evident and would soon have to be addressed. This would come on the heels of the development and resurgence of counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine. The most outspoken proponent of this doctrine was arguably General David Petraeus.

Petraeus laid the groundwork for stronger commitment to counterinsurgency operations, which brought conventional and SOF units together for VSO. The DoD increased the number of field manuals dealing with insurgency and stability operations beginning directly before invading Iraq in 2003 and continuing through the surge in Iraq in 2007. These manuals consisted of: FM 2–07 *Stability Operations and Support Operations,* 3–07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (2004), Joint Forces Command's *Stability Operations Joint Operating Concept, DoD Directive 3000.05 Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR)* (2005), and Joint Forces Command and SOCOM's *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept* (2010).[100] According to James A. Russell, "All of these directives and reports were in one way or another designed to foster growth of counterinsurgency capabilities across the board, which was seen as necessary to improve performance in the field."[101]

What these directives and manuals provided was the supposed lessons learned from Vietnam and the recipe by which CF could conduct operations to tamp Taliban growth and sustained operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The problem with this was that the failed state of Afghanistan was not ready to support COIN operations, because

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[99] Rohde, "Afghan Symbol for Change.".

[100] James A. Russell, "Counter-insurgency American Style: Considering David Patreus and Twenty-First Century Irregular Warfare," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 25, no. 1 (2014): 69–71.

[101] James A. Russell, "Counter-insurgency American Style: Considering David Patreus and Twenty-First Century Irregular Warfare," 78.

the structure of coalition forces there did not provide for a ground-up methodology. The Army also failed to adapt its personnel management system to accommodate necessary programs to create sustainable and enduring relationships, like AfPak Hands and Security Force Advise and Assist Teams, preventing lasting efforts for stability.[102]

Additionally, the rapid rotation of personnel through Afghanistan prevented long-term relationships from being established in order to support growth and to maintain continuity. The outcome might have been different had focus been on individuals who could develop partner-force capacity to operate large security forces and the requisite self-governance and civil stability which are critical components of success. Thus, the Village Stability Operations were born out of necessity and also as a return to SOF population-centric efforts to stabilize Afghanistan.

The road to establishing VSO in Afghanistan began with General McChrystal's July 2009 guidance to ISAF Joint Command (IJC) under Lieutenant General Rodriguez. This guidance provided that the regional command would serve as a headquarters at division level that would oversee all forces within the area of operations (AO). This more closely aligned the Regional Commands with the COIN strategy, thereby allowing Brigadier General Reeder (U.S. Special Forces Command) to organize the newly established Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A) by nesting beneath IJC and ISAF commands. SOF support for this COIN effort would fall under Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) at the tactical level, as well as its subordinate special operations task forces (SOTFs).[103]

The transformation from COIN to VSO would occur swiftly from 2009 to 2010. The CJSOTF-A operations began as the Community Defense Initiative (CDI), then became the Local Defense Initiative (LDI) and finally morphed into both the Village Stability Operations (VSO) in May of 2010 and then the foreign internal defense (FID)

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[102] Thomas E. Ricks and Jason Dempsey, "Our Generals Failed in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, October 19, 2016.

[103] Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan."

program, which focused on working with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). VSO would become the CJSOTF-A tactical priority, seconded by the FID mission, which partnered with the Afghan National Army as well as commandos and ANA Special Forces.[104]

To support these operations, CJSOTF-A organized to support the operational plans of CFSOCC-A, who would become the operational control element by April of 2010, but maintained tactical control through the respective SOTFs. In March 2010, Brigadier General Miller assumed command of CFSOCC-A and worked through General Petraeus and Lieutenant General Rodriguez to solidify the VSO and ALP efforts through sponsorship and authorization from Afghan president Hamid Karzai in September 2010.[105]

For VSO to be successful, certain key elements needed to be addressed, and SOF was well suited to address those based on its mission set. Working directly with indigenous Afghan forces and integrating fully with them was an elemental part of the SOF mission. As opposed to bringing in CF to provide local security, the SOF teams worked with what was already there and bolstered the capability. This also enabled SOF teams to provide a lasting narrative at the local level to counter Taliban influence. These are all parts of the SOF foreign internal defense (FID) mission that Special Forces regularly conducts worldwide.

As an example of a FID mission, two SF Operational Detachment Alphas (ODAs) successful in Nangarhār leveraged local capability and addressed local problems to convince the Afghans to stand up for themselves.[106] This differed from the COIN approach that was espoused as successful for CF, however, in that it was SF specific and was part of the core Special Forces mission set. Due to insufficient numbers of Coalition

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[104] Bolduc, "Forecasting the Future of Afghanistan"; Lisa Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP: Comparing Past and Current Challenges to Afghan Local Defense" (working paper, RAND Corporation, December 2012), 11.

[105] Lisa Saum-Manning, "VSO/ALP: Comparing Past and Current Challenges to Afghan Local Defense"

[106] Douglas A. Samuelson, "How to Win: Village Stability Operations," *Foreign Policy*, March 31, 2016, http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/31/how-to-win-village-stability-operations.

SOF teams available to establish and operate Village Stability Platform (VSP) sites, the number of SOF soldiers was increased to two battalions. These SOF teams were experienced in working with Afghan local police (ALP) and better trained to conduct the VSO mission, especially when focused on bolstering local governance and development. These SOF-operated VSO sites made more progress in governance and especially development than those operated by conventional units.[107]

Despite the successes of these VSO sites, communication between International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and CFSOCC-A was not always effective and resulted in pay issues as well as personnel administrative issues in keeping the Afghan security forces operating. According to a 2012 DoD assessment, "Lack of effective coordination and communication among the responsible commands [had] created confusion and disruption in implementation of the ALP at the district and village level, most notably in the areas of logistics."[108] There was still a need to increase coordination between CF and SOF forces to better synchronize the COIN and VSO efforts.

As a result of the U.S. joint combined arms maneuver (JCAM) capability, the insurgent Taliban network was forced to operate in the gray zones of conflict to leverage the divide between CF and SOF operating in Afghanistan. A shift in attitude about irregular warfare and its consideration as a pillar of national defense policy was critical in order to bring every instrument of U.S. diplomatic and military might together to achieve long-lasting strategic goals. This has necessitated a change in thinking about how SOF could be an added benefit to CF in conflict and especially in the rebuilding of Afghan stability.

The change must start with the joint force commander (JFC) and with a realization that equal and measured use of CF and SOF must be applied continuously throughout the sphere of conflict.[109] The JFC should leverage the creation of ADP 3–05

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[107] Department of Defense, "Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Afghan Local Police," Inspector General, Special Plans and Operations, July 9, 2012.

[108] Department of Defense, "Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Afghan Local Police"

[109] Cleveland, Linder, and Dempsey, "Special Operations Doctrine: Is it Needed?"

and the formation of the 1st U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) through increased use of special operations. Newly published doctrine can enable the joint, interagency and policy decision makers to better understand SOF capabilities and the gray zone in which ARSOF operates. An example of this successfully working through integrated use of CF and SOF where SOF was the lead is Task Force Panther One in 2011. In this case, CF become the centralized administrative core headquarters, and SOF was able to focus on flexible and adaptable core mission capabilities as in a true adhocracy, while also maintaining command of the mission.

In May of 2011, CJSOTF-A was tasked with conducting VSO in Regional Command-North and was provided elements from the 82nd Airborne to support those operations. Elements from the 1st and 5th Special Forces groups, as well as SEAL Team 7, conducted VSO while acting as tactical control (TACON) to Task Force Panther One. This task force was under the operational control (OPCON) and command of CJSOTF-A throughout the VSO effort in RC-North and was so successful that SOF command and control (C2) assets were able to conduct other operations while Task Force Panther One maintained C2 of the respective VSO operations. This is a successful example in which CF and SOF worked closely together in mutually supporting roles but SOF maintained the overall operational control of VSO efforts. The SOF familiarity with this style of mission and inherent experience with the human element and population-centric approach of VSO made it an excellent fit for the mission.[110]

This specific mission fit was recognized by those in leadership who were particularly familiar with the needs of operational design in an insurgency campaign, such as generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus. General McChrystal had an extensive background in leading Special Forces through his five years at Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and then in JSOC-Forward as commanding general. His Special Forces background allowed him to see through the previous organizational attempts and identify the overarching requirements for the campaign. This created a unique opportunity for Special Forces to have a representative in a position of influence

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[110] Wesbrock, Harned, and Plous, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces."

while he was commanding the ISAF in Afghanistan. General David Petraeus lacked McChrystal's Special Forces background, but he was no stranger to the unique organizational and operational requirements of an insurgency. General Petraeus is widely known for the 101st Airborne Division's efforts in Mosul, Iraq, and subsequent creation of the U.S. Army Field Manual 3–24, *Counterinsurgency.* He leaned on this experience to further the ISAF efforts in Afghanistan by reorganizing and following through with the VSO concept.

Both of these leaders had experience with insurgency and irregular warfare, which was key to their recognizing the organizational failings based on environmental fit. They both also understood the balance of SF operational capabilities and the limits of how much a specialized force could accomplish without assistance in the form of CF integration. This set conditions for organizations such as Task Force One Panther to form out of SF and CF cooperation efforts. The efforts in Afghanistan have resulted in the Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning, as well as U.S. SOCOM's development of special operations campaigning doctrine.[111] This fit of organization to environment and goals is very much in line with the way Galbraith approaches organizational design. In Galbraith's Star Model, the mission components are broken down into people, strategy, structures, processes, and rewards.[112] Structure is adjusted to align specialized skills and core component skills to allow maximum efficiency of the respective CF and SF operators (the people). This streamlines the processes to meet mission and achieve strategy goals. All adjustments are made with the other components in mind and rely on effective evaluation of the environment to correctly orient the organizational resources. This type of adjustment will be critical in the future as focus on irregular and hybrid warfare increases.

In an article for *PRISM,* Charles T. Cleveland, James B. Linder, and Ronald Dempsey wrote, "The recent emphasis on Irregular Warfare, the confirmation of special operations as an Army core competency, and the acceptance of the U.S. Army Functional

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[111] Wesbrock, Harned, and Plous, "Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces," 88.

[112] Mintzberg, Structure in Fives.

Concept for Engagement are several efforts within the Army that illuminate the need for a new appreciation and recognition of special warfare as a primary pillar in our national defense policy and approaches."[113] Special Operations best understands the particular complexities and requirements of irregular warfare and the human component. Additionally, as Kaley Sepp noted for *Military Review,* "in the U.S. Armed Forces, only the Special Forces (SF) are expressly organized and trained for counterinsurgent warfare and advising indigenous forces."[114] As such, SOF and its various command components are the most appropriate force available to support and conduct VSO. The challenge to the Army as a whole, then, is to incorporate and support SOF commands without usurping the leadership and expertise which SOF possesses in the counterinsurgency fight.

Army recognition of the inherent need for a strong counterinsurgency capability has gone beyond just the continued operation of U.S. Army Special Forces. The Army has created the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), in Fort Benning, GA. This force focuses on the development of partner-nation security-force capability and takes some of the burden off Special Forces in the "train and advise" capacity. While this step acknowledges the importance of security force assistance (SFA), it fails to address the root problem of leadership within the organization during counterinsurgent operations. This organization is an additional departmentalization of the machine bureaucracy of CF, whereas stronger CF and SOF integration with SOF as the lead is a more critical area which needs integration.

The addition of the SFAB also does not truly address organizational structuring with regard to the environment or conditions which best suit SOF and CF. Because the conditions of uncertainty and instability best suit SOF, having a dynamic relationship is critical. Establishing stronger communication and coordination between SOF and CF (as opposed to simply adding another bureaucratic layer) would create a more coherent and

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113 Cleveland, Linder, and Dempsey, "Special Operations Doctrine: Is it Needed?", 8.

114 Kalev Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, May–June 2005, 8–12.

solid connection between organizations to rapidly adapt to the dynamic and uncertain conditions of the environment. This is especially true in irregular warfare or insurgencies.

The development of best practices and organizational hierarchy continue to play a critical role in U.S. efforts in Afghanistan to counter the Taliban. By developing integrated approaches which leverage the adaptive and flexible nature of SOF and supporting those SOF forces with large, centrally structured support elements such as CF command and control elements (nested under SOF component commands), balance between high formalization and standards and multidisciplinary teams can be achieved.

## C.     TASK FORCE VIKING

### 1.     Introduction

Similar to VSO operations in Afghanistan, the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq in 2002 featured multiple aspects that allowed success of special operations forces through a joint effort involving conventional forces and indigenous forces. Working in uncertain, dynamic, and complex conditions, special operations forces solved unusual problems on an accelerated timeline. Specifically, Task Force Viking made appropriate use of SFO to command and control a complex-unstable environment in the 2002 invasion of Iraq. As noted in JP 3–05,

> In some cases, a C2 construct based on SO expertise and influence may be better suited to the overall conduct of an operation (i.e., superiority in the aggregate of applicable capabilities, experience, specialized equipment, and knowledge of and relationships with relevant populations), with the JTF being built around a core SO staff. Such a JTF has both SOF and CF and the requisite ability to command and control them.[115]

Arreguín-Toft's theory of strategic interactions supports the use of special operations ("weak force") against the "strong force" in Iraq, but in keeping with the unifying method of this thesis, in this case study we will mainly focus on Special Forces

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[115] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*.

doctrine, historical examples, and organizational design theories based on Henry Mintzberg and Jay R. Galbraith.[116]

## 2.    Background

As Leigh Neville noted in *Special Operations Forces in Iraq,* "Responsibility for special operations was assigned to Combined Special Operations Task Force-North (CJSOTF-North), known as Task Force Viking."[117] It mainly consisted of the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), who were the appropriate unit choice because they had combat experience during Operation Provide Comfort in Kurdistan between 1991 and 1996.[118] Other special operations forces in Task Force Viking included the 3rd Battalion, the 3rd Special Forces Group, and the U.S. Air Force 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.[119] Conventional units in the task force included the 173rd Airborne Division and some elements from the 10th Mountain Infantry Division. Leadership and background were also crucial in the success of the core element of Task Force Viking. Colonel Charlie Cleveland, Colonel O. G. Mannion, and Lieutenant Commander Tovo all came from an SOF background that required adaptable personalities and unique method of solving problems.[120]

The original task of Task Force Viking was to support the axis of advance of the 4th Infantry Division (ID) from Turkey to Baghdad. However, due to Turkey's denial of staging rights, this was infeasible. TF Viking's new task changed from enabling 4th ID from being the strike force to becoming the main effort to prevent the reinforcement of Iraqi forces in the north from reaching Baghdad; changing the 4th ID's role from supported to supporting. With no large presence of infantry units in the north, TF Viking conducted special operations, such as establishing infiltration routes that bypassed

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[116] Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars* (2005); Mintzberg, "The Structuring of Organizations" (1989); Galbraith, Downey, and Kates, *Designing Dynamic Organizations.*

[117] Leigh Neville, *Special Operations Forces in Iraq* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), 8.

[118] Leigh Neville, *Special Operations Forces in Iraq.*

[119] Leigh Neville, *Special Operations Forces in Iraq.*

[120] Jerry K. Sweeney and Kevin B. Byrne, eds., *A Handbook of American Military History: From the Revolutionary War to the Present* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 327.

Turkey and organizing the Peshmerga and Kurdish forces to disrupt Iraqi divisions. After long diplomatic negotiations, Turkey later allowed Coalition forces over-flight rights. This allowed Task Force Viking to expand operations by incorporating conventional forces, who provided fire support and heavy equipment to maintain momentum in northern Iraq.[121] Additionally, Task Force Viking conducted "Terminal Guidance, Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, and unconventional warfare missions"[122] in order to disrupt and fix Iraqi forces arrayed along the Green Line, a 350-kilometer boundary separating the Kurdish region from Iraq.[123] As a result of SOF integrating with conventional and indigenous forces, Task Force Viking was able to decisively degrade an overwhelmingly large mechanized force.[124]

### 3.    Analysis

Particular elements of success from previous studies have been synchronization, coordination, and the ability to adjust to external factors. In this case, TF Viking demonstrated the importance of identifying a problem, using SOF in accordance with their defined Special Forces core activities, and maximizing effects via the use of mutual support involving conventional forces and indigenous forces. These unique Special Forces core activities are direct action, special reconnaissance, counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, security force assistance, counterinsurgency, information operations (IO), military information support operations (MISO), and civil affairs operations.[125] In general, the most adaptable organization in that complex environment proved to be most appropriate to lead and coordinate efforts in support of the overall strategic plan during the Iraqi invasion.

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[121] Jamie Hammond, "Special Operations Forces: Ready, Relevant and Precise," *Canadian Military Journal* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 2004), http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo5/no3/special-01-eng.asp.

[122] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*.

[123] Leigh Neville, *Special Forces in the War on Terror* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 301.

[124] Hammond, "Special Operations Forces."

[125] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*.

As Mintzberg wrote in *Structure in Fives,* "The most complex organizations engage sophisticated specialists, especially in their support staffs, and require them to combine their efforts in project teams coordinated by mutual adjustment. This results in the adhocracy configuration, in which line and staff as well as a number of other distinctions tend to break down."[126] In Task Force Viking, this adhocracy (Figure 13) was the SFO. The Task Force emphasized their support staffs through combination of project team efforts and were able to leverage decentralization in order to rapidly adjust to changing mission and operational factors. This mutual adjustment advantage is what Mintzberg highlights in Structural Configuration of Organizations (Figure 13) when compared with professional bureaucracies or divisional organizations.
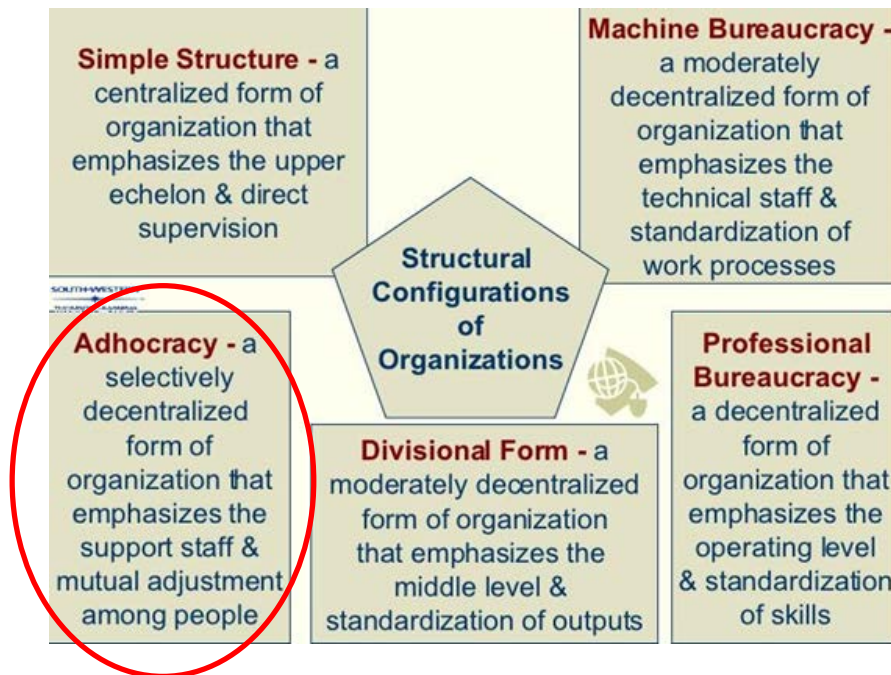


Figure 13.   Structural Configurations of Organizations.[127]

126 Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives*.

127 Chapter 14 Nelson and Quick Organizational Design and Structure. Copyright 2005 by South-Western, a division of Thompson Learning. All rights reserved. http://slideplayer.com/slide/5241517/. Slide 13 of 39.

Mintzberg suggested that organizations—for example, those similar to Task Force Viking—"can be differentiated along three basic dimensions: (1) the key part of the organization, that is, the part of the organization that plays the major role in determining its success or failure"[128] (the U.S. administration); (2) "the prime coordinating mechanism, that is, the major method the organization uses to coordinate its activities"[129] (special operations forces); and (3) "the type of decentralization used, that is, the extent to which the organization involves subordinates in the decision-making process"[130] (involving special operations forces advisement to Peshmerga and coordinating TF Viking's staff with conventional forces).[131]

This structuring can further be seen in Mintzberg's Structure in Organizations (Figure 14) as Strategic Apex of US Policy guides the middle line of Task Force Viking's Headquarters and Support Staff (Technostructure) and Special Operations along the Middle Line. All of these elements base themselves upon the Operative Core of Indigenous Forces, Special Operations Forces, and Conventional Forces.

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[128] Chapter 14 Nelson and Quick Organizational Design and Structure. Simpson and Rheault, *Inside the Green Berets,*

[129] Chapter 14 Nelson and Quick Organizational Design and Structure.

[130] Chapter 14 Nelson and Quick Organizational Design and Structure.

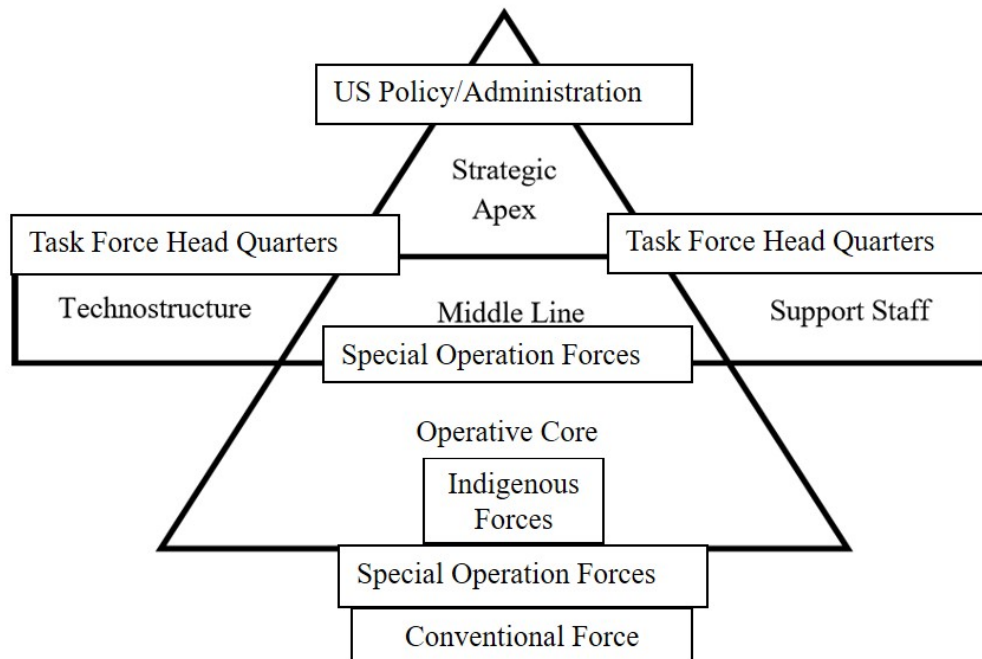[131] Mintzberg, *Structure in Fives*.

Figure 14.    Mintzberg's Structure in Organizations.[132]

Having the right "fit" in an organization increases its overall effectiveness. Previous research on Task Force Viking has reaffirmed this concept. In Scott Jackson's *Tactical Integration of Special Operations and Conventional Forces Command and Control Functions*, he stated that "when the need for physical integration exceeds the level of C2 integration, effective employment of an asset will be slower and less responsive, undoubtedly less accurate, and inherently riskier."[133] To address SOF's challenge of countering the C2 integration, SOF should continue to leverage and display adaptability in complex environments by having the capacity to effectively take the lead in complex and unstable situations. Considering the objective of fixing the Iraqi Army along the Green Line, protecting Coalition forces advancing in the south, and preventing Turkish incursion into Kurdistan, the environment was not only dynamic but highly

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[132] Team 6 Systems and Quality. "The Key Parts of an Organization". https://www.emaze.com/@AZWRCZQQ. Emaze.

[133] Scott A. Jackson, *Tactical Integration of Special Operations and Conventional Forces Command and Control Functions* (Monograph, Fort Leavenworth: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2002), 6.

complex.[134] Examples of such difficult factors included accelerated planning timelines, delayed approval from higher up, adjustments from disapproval of overflight rights from third parties, and the use of conventional forces to seize terrain and deliver material in support of indigenous forces. In terms of structural context, an adhocracy like special operations typically has innovative individuals and advanced technology to adjust to a changing environment. Similarly, using the characteristics of SOF in JP 3–05, SOF are versatile, highly trained, and distinct from Coalition forces. Not only are SOF carefully trained and selected but "SOF can be formed into versatile, self-contained teams that provide a joint force commander (JFC) with a flexible force capable of operating in ambiguous and swiftly changing scenarios."[135]

In terms of creativity in an adhocracy, Task Force Viking planned to infiltrate northern Iraq via Turkey. Turkey did not grant permission for an invasion of Iraq from its soil or over its airspace, limiting the Task Force's ability to achieve its organizational goal.[136] However, according to the New York Times editor, Michael D hasting in the article titled "Threats and Responses" written in March 2013, their (TF Viking) adaptability and innovation, commanders adjusted with more creative infiltration routes over Jordanian airspace via Operation Ugly Baby, the longest infiltration since WWII.[137] In terms of mutual adjustment, after much diplomatic maneuvering, Turkey finally allowed American over-flight rights on March 23, which allowed Task Force Viking to expand to 50 individual Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha ODAs.[138]

The combined joint task force consisted of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, U.S. Army Special Forces, the 9th Psychological Operations Battalion, the 26th Marine Expeditionary

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[134] Finlan Astaire, *Special Forces Strategy and the War on Terror* (New York: Routledge and Taylor Group, 2008).

[135] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations.*

[136] Hastings Michael D., *Integration of Conventional Forces and Special Operation Forces* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Command and General Staff, 2005).

[137] Eric Schmitt with Dexter Filkins, "Threats and Responses: Turkey; Erdogan, Turkish Party Leader, to Form Government as U.S. Presses for Use of Bases," *New York Times,* March 12, 2003.

[138] Hammond, "Special Operations Forces."

Unit, the Air Force Special Operations Group, and Peshmerga.[139] Considering Mintzberg, Task Force Viking headquarters' staff can be considered the "Support Staff providing both operational and administrative support to subordinate [units.] There is no distinction between an operational staff and an administrative staff."

According to JP 3–05,

In some cases, a C2 construct based on [Special Operation] (SO) expertise and influence may be better suited to the overall conduct of an operation (i.e., superiority in the aggregate of applicable capabilities, experience, specialized equipment, and knowledge of and relationships with relevant populations), with the JTF being built around a core SO staff. Such a JTF has both SOF and CF and the requisite ability to command and control them.[140]

SOF required a mutual adjustment to efficiently operate as an organization capable of achieving their goals. Differences in organizational structure among units in TF Viking, including differences in culture and political ideology, required informal communication by those doing the work.

One solution suggested by Mintzberg for an adhocracy like TF Viking is the use of liaisons to allow synchronization while avoiding the lag time in decision making caused by machine bureaucracies. According to JP 3–05, "liaising among all components of the joint force and SOF, however they are arrayed, is vital for effective SOF employment as well as coordination, de-confliction, synchronization, and the prevention of fratricide."[141] For example, key leaders that Special Forces could liaise with include diametrically opposed individuals such as Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Massoud Barzani of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan to enable unity of effort in deterring the Iraqi Army in the Green Line.[142]

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[139] Charles H. Briscoe, *All Roads Lead to Baghdad: Army Special Operations Forces in Iraq* (USASOC History Office, 2006), 117.

McCool, John (2005). Interview with Major David Harris, USAF, Operational Leadership in the Global War on Terrorism. Combat Studies Institute, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

[140] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations.*

[141] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations.*

[142] Astaire, *Special Forces Strategy and the War on Terror.*

In contrast to the DoD's current efforts in disrupting insurgencies, a contributing factor to the relatively quick success of TF Viking was the environment, which included engaging to destroy a conventional Iraqi force rather than an unconventional insurgency. Despite the relative ease with which they achieved objectives due to phasing and timing, TF Viking's organizational structure can be considered a successful adhocracy for the task at hand—namely, beating a formidable conventional opponent. Utilizing the SOF mission criteria, Task Force Viking was a success because the overall campaign plan incorporated SOF to fully execute their core activities. Next, Task Force Viking's mission supported the joint force commander's campaign plan and special activities. Task Force Viking supported the Peshmerga through UW activities while fixing the Iraqi Army and allowing Coalition forces in the south freedom of maneuver. For an adhocracy to be successful, the mission or method of action must be operationally feasible, approved, and fully coordinated, and Task Force Viking fit these criteria. Finally, the required resources must be available to execute and support the SOF mission, as seen in the conventional support of heavy mobility assets to the Peshmerga. Based on this case study and Mintzberg's theories of organizational design, an adhocracy (SOF) versus a machine bureaucracy (conventionally led operations) was more suited to an unstable environment as seen in Iraq (2002).

### 4. Conclusion

Using Galbraith's Star Model, one can see how future conflicts in unstable environments justify the use of SFO and an SFO command to achieve strategic goals set by U.S. policy. The five elements of the Star Model (Figure 4. Galbraith Star Model) are strategy, people, structure, rewards, and processes.[143]

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[143] Amy Kates and Jay R. Galbraith, *Designing Your Organization: Using the STAR Model to Solve 5 Critical Design Challenges* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010); Jay R. Galbraith, "The Star Model," *The STAR Model* (2011).

Looking at TF Viking through this lens, the strategy or direction in the overall campaign plan approved by the U.S. administration was to fix the enemy and support the Peshmerga. The people or the skill and mindsets included SOF who had the capacity to conduct irregular warfare with Peshmerga forces due to unique core activities. Additionally, the unique ability of conventional forces to seize terrain and deliver material allowed TF Viking to maintain momentum to achieve their objectives.

The structure of the organization determines the placement of power and authority in organizations, which fall into four categories: specialization, shape, distribution of power, and departmentalization.[144] In the case of TF Viking, the structure necessary to support the overall campaign plan in the unstable environment required specialized skills, as seen with the use of Special Forces operations, who were able to conduct and coordinate operations involving different cultures while synchronizing efforts among different services.

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[144] Daniel Katz and Robert Louis Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, vol. 2 (New York: Wiley, 1978).

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# IV. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> SOF are not a substitute for CF. In order to preserve SOF capabilities,
> SOF should not be employed to conduct operations where CF could be
> used to achieve the same objectives.

> –JP 3–05

## A. FUTURE CONFLICT TRENDS

Effective organizations undertake strategic consideration to envision alternate futures and frame the long-term strategy and organizational development necessary for survival. For much of the 20th century, the CF U.S. Army operated in a stable, certain environment, in which strategic planners could concentrate on large organizational structures and systems to keep their organizations running efficiently. The challenges facing the U.S. Army today are quite different from those in the past; the experiences of the last 16 years in Iraq and Afghanistan and recent developments in Russia, Syria, Iraq, and the Ukraine indicate the nature of conflict is migrating toward a complex, irregular form. Security threats at the regional level will continue to pursue operational advantages against the U.S. Army's conventional strengths; these may include hybrid conventional/irregular organizations in sovereign or ungoverned states.

The U.S. Army, organizationally, is trying to address these common problems. Specific uncertain challenges include competing with emerging near-peer competitors, the expansion of irregular threats, and countering the proliferation of disruptive technologies that undermine the Army's conventional base of power. Internal problems include supporting diversity and maintaining high standards of personnel and ethics while still upholding the warrior ethos, ideas, customs, and fundamental values key to the Army's culture. The U.S. Army will need to move culturally, mentality, and physically outside its comfort zone and think of the unthinkable to position itself for future success.

To build a better organization, capable of fighting in irregular warfare environments, a body must have firm organizational foundations. The progress the U.S. Army has made over the past 16 years in creating a more flexible and agile force

is historic. Although the material strength of the U.S. Army will remain in the conventional forces, leaders are finding their units must expect the unexpected and be ready for rapid change. Future conflicts will require organizations to draw on agencies and networks. A critical aspect of the relationship between conventional and special operations forces is the way in which they amplify each other's strengths and increase the variety of threats they pose to an opposing force. Irregular forces compel an enemy to diffuse his conventional units that would otherwise form up in mass. Conventional forces apply pressure to an enemy to mass forces that he would like to disperse to attack irregular forces.

However, at the time of writing, the demand for SOF and CF units is more substantial and diverse than the forces available. This is another argument for effective integration of SOF-CF forces to meet present and future challenges. SOF originated with the United States' need to efficiently operate in the unstable irregular warfare domain in the 1950s and differs from conventional forces in that SOF organizations are about people, rather than being weapons platforms. SOF relies on adhocracy organizations with multidisciplinary teams. The individual team member is not the weapon—but the organization's ability formulates an implicit strategy by the innovative judgments they make holistically, at one time.

## B.     AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Ultimately, under what conditions can special operations be the supported headquarters? An aggregate review of the three cases suggest an answer. First, the Special Action Forces during Vietnam were characterized by specially trained, linguistically and culturally sensitive CF-SOF soldiers with a limited footprint available to conduct operations across the spectrum of warfare. The strategic commander of a unified command enabled the SAFs to be the supported command to conduct counterinsurgency campaigns in uncertain/unstable environments because the SAFs could deploy training teams of varying sizes and capabilities according to theater

requirements.[145] The Special Action Forces were designed as an operating adhocracy to give the organization the ability to selectively decentralize and deploy multidisciplinary training teams to confront an unstable and uncertain environment.[146] The unstable environment called for an organic structure; the uncertain environment demanded a decentralized organizational structure. The SAFs were commanded by a Special Forces group commander who was regarded by the unified commander or geographical combatant commander as his senior counterinsurgent specialist in the region.[147] The augmentation forces from the conventional force brigade were used to support the SAF's organizational goals.

Second, the SAF command (with the supporting backup brigade) gave the SAF commander assured access to additional CF capabilities (most notably infantry, intelligence, and armor) while executing counterinsurgency lines of effort for the GCC's theater campaign plan. The GCC commander further enabled this relationship by providing clear priorities to both the SAF and CF brigade commanders, organizing mission approval authorities, requiring the commanders to crosstalk, and reaching out for their input on force considerations.[148]

Third, the VSO experience in Afghanistan illuminated the need for a stabilization capability that went beyond what Special Forces and special operations could provide due to manning. This led to the genesis of the SFAB. Unfortunately, this created a false solution to the problem of instability, because it more aptly addressed bureaucratic structuring than organizational cooperation. The addition of the SFAB also failed to truly address the organizational structuring with regard to the environment or conditions for which SOF and CF are best suited. Because the conditions of uncertainty and instability most call for SOF, having a dynamic relationship is critical. Establishing stronger communication and coordination between SOF and CF (as opposed to simply adding

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[145] Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine*, 198.

[146] Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management,* 198.

[147] Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces,* 20.

[148] Department of the Army, *Command, Control, and Support of Special Operations Forces,* 20-21.

another bureaucratic layer) would create a more coherent and solid connection between organizations to rapidly adapt to the dynamic and uncertain conditions of the environment. This is especially true in irregular warfare or insurgencies.

Finally, Task Force Viking displayed that under very complex and dynamic situations, Special Operations Command was more agile and could therefore better adapt to the changing environment seen in the accelerated planning cycling, friction in the external environment caused by Turkey's refusal to grant staging rights, and creativity in working by, with, and through indigenous forces to achieve effects.

The maturation of the counterinsurgency capability within the U.S. armed forces, specifically within the U.S. Army conventional and special operations forces, must be guided by precise analysis of the environment in which those forces will operate. The model of failure and success in previous insurgencies has shown that a counterinsurgency operation must be oriented around an organized framework of headquarters and combat elements that have delineated responsibilities and specialized skill sets. The highest level of responsibility within that counterinsurgency effort must be trained, skilled, and experienced with the methodology for developing counterinsurgency campaign plans and operations.

The development of those campaign plans and operations, along with command and control, will certainly benefit from the integration of conventional forces subcommands within the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) when conducting counterinsurgency operations. CF supplementation of SF efforts allows higher operational C2 capabilities to process and provide information to higher headquarters. The intensity of conflict and evaluation of environmental factors should guide the structuring of these commands in the future so that CF can play an integral role in allowing SF elements to employ their highly specialized skillset without losing mission focus. The amount of integration will be based on whether the forces are facing small-scale or large-scale insurgencies.

Currently, the U.S. Army recognizes the future environment will demand mutually adjusting organizations with SOF-like capabilities. At the time of writing, the

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U.S. Army is progressively staffing six security force assistance brigades (SFABs) to perform security force assistance equivalent to Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas. The SFABs are expected to provide similar regional counterinsurgency solutions to what the SAFs provided in the 1960s to deter the spread of insurgency. The operational successes of the SAFs throughout the world indicate a flexible organization that can economically address threats without resorting to a resource-intensive CF footprint.

The regional alignment of SFABs and SFGs offers the geographic combatant commander a uniquely flexible model for approaching an economy-of-force mission where large-scale conventional force organizations are not required. Additionally, the 1st Special Forces Command and SFABs can now facilitate CF-centric, SOF-centric, and SOF-CF operations.[149] The SFABs may offer an opportunity for SF and CF to cultivate a long-term organizational relationship and continue to build regional expertise. Historic organizational reciprocal models and relationships, such as the SAF concept, can provide the U.S. Army with likely hypotheses for how to train, deploy, and synchronize SOF-CF capabilities.[150]

The development of regionally aligned brigades and SFABs is a step toward allowing Special Forces to focus on their core mission set without sacrificing operational capacity to conduct special operations. These concepts fail, however, in that they further departmentalize the CF headquarters and further remove the specialization and highly technical training of SF from the critical headquarters element of the counterinsurgency effort. This failure can be avoided by subordinating the SFABs and regionally aligned brigades to the TSOCs or even the 1st Special Forces Command when deploying to theater. The 1st Special Forces Command and TSOC expertise will identify critical areas where these SFABs or regionally aligned brigades can improve or change their efforts or

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[149] Robinson et al., *Improving Strategic Competence,* xviii.

[150] James B. Linder, Eric J. Wesley, and Elliot S. Grant, "A New Breed of Advisory Team: Security Force Assistance Brigades to Collaborate with Special Operations Forces," Association of the United States Army, June 19, 2017, https://www.ausa.org/articles/new-breed-advisory-team-security-force-assistance-brigades-collaborate-special-operations.

focus. This direction can be developed through the close relationship special operations has with embassy teams within partner nations.

This subordination will also benefit from the close integration that Special Forces has with many U.S. embassies and embassy teams. By aligning the U.S. State Department and DoD efforts through this existing relationship, the addition of SFABs or regionally-aligned brigades will allow for a more coherent and unified counterinsurgency campaign plan, which directly supports the National Security Strategy and ambassadors' country priorities.

## C.   CONCLUSION

"The Spartans do not ask how many are the enemy, but where are they."

—Plutarch[151]

Therefore, under what conditions can SOF be the supported command? Any successful organization must mesh and be organizationally suited with its environment. The argument here is not that conventional forces cannot adapt to dynamic operational conditions—however, the CF organizational structure is less effective in the modern irregular warfare environment. Every form of organization contains the elements to create its own destruction. Organizations succeed by balancing the dynamic forces of conflict with its executing forces, ideologies, and culture. Adopting the wrong strategy or failing to adjust to a competitive environment can produce undesired or conflicting results. Machine bureaucracies often create innovative sub-organizational structures, temporary adhocracies for a period to bridge operational gaps, frequently at extreme cost to time and resources. Today's battlefield is much more decentralized and ambiguous and much less simple than the battlefields of the past. Prevailing organizational theory suggests SOF units can be the supported command in these kinds of uncertain, unstable environments. This dynamic environment, being unpredictable, calls for an organic, decentralized structure. Operational success over time encourages the organization toward a more

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[151] Steven Pressfield, *The Warrior Ethos* (Black Irish Entertainment LLC, 2011).

stable environment, causing it to formalize. It is difficult to keep a young adhocracy in an organic state for a long period and prevent the structure from formalizing into a bureaucracy. However, as the environment begins to stabilize, command should transition control to a CF organization, and SOF units should shift back to a supporting role.

Based on the three case studies, the primary condition under which SOF is best suited for supported command is when operations take place in a complex-unstable environment. The case studies evaluated in this thesis demonstrate different domains of SOF-CF interoperability, interdependence, and outcomes. While the case studies presented are dissimilar, they all examine the dynamic command relationships, organizational designs, and environments in which regular and irregular forces are used concurrently. Although every future environment will likely be different, the lessons from these cases can be applied to future involvement of SOF-CF in uncertain and complex domains. Proper organizational design allows for the optimal employment of conventional forces and special operations forces. The history of modern warfare has demonstrated the synchronized and combined use of air superiority, combined arms maneuver, special operations forces, and amphibious power. The goal is always the same: to engage the enemy. Success on the battlefield does not require a perfect fit, simply a better fit.

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# APPENDIX.  GLOSSARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN TERMS

**Boundary-Spanning Roles:** "link and coordinate an organization with key elements in the external environment. Boundary spanning is primarily concerned with the exchange of information to (1) detect and bring organization information about changes in the environment and (2) send information into the environment that presents the organization in a favorable light."[152]

**Bureaucratic Organizations:** "emphasize designing and managing organizations on an impersonal, rational basis through such elements as clearly defined authority and responsibility, formal recordkeeping, and uniform application of standard rules."[153]

**Contingency:** "means that one thing depends on other things, and for organizations to be effective; there must be a 'goodness of fit' between their structure and the conditions in their external environment."[154]

**Culture:** "the underlying set of key values, beliefs, understandings, and norms shared by employees."[155]

**Domain:** "is the chosen environmental field of action. It is the territory an organization stakes out for itself with respect to products, services, and markets served. A domain defines the organization's niche and defines those external sectors with which the organization will interact to accomplish its goals."[156]

**General Environment:** "includes those sectors that may not have a direct impact on the daily operations of a firm but will indirectly influence it. The general environment often includes the government, sociocultural, economic conditions, technology, and financial resource sectors."[157]

**Institutional Perspective**: "argues that under high uncertainty, organizations mimic or imitate other organizations in the same institutional environment."[158]

**Integration:** "is the quality of collaboration between departments."[159]

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[152] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design,* 55.

[153] Daft, *Organization Theory and Design,* 600.

[154] Daft, *Organization Theory and Design,* 600.

[155] Daft, *Organization Theory and Design,* 601.

[156] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 48.

[157] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 48.

[158] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 58.

[159] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 57.

**Simple-Complex Dimension:** "concerns environmental complexity, which refers to heterogeneity, or the number and dissimilarity of external elements relevant to an organization's operations."[160]

**Specialization:** "is the degree to which an organization's tasks are subdivided into a narrow range of task. If specialization is extensive, each employee performs only a narrow range of task. If specialization is low, employees perform a wide range of task in their jobs."[161]

**Stable-Unstable Dimension**: "refers to whether elements in the environment are dynamic. An environmental domain is stable if it remains the same over a period of months or years. Under unstable conditions, environmental elements shift abruptly."[162]

**Organization Differentiation:** "is the difference in cognitive and emotional orientations among managers in different functional departments. When the external environment is complex and rapidly changing, organizational departments become highly specialized to handle the uncertainty of their external sector."[163]

**Organizational Environment:** "is defined as all elements that exist outside the boundary of the organization and have potential to affect all or part of the organization."[164]

**Resource Dependence:** "means that organizations depend on the environment but strive to acquire control over resources to minimize their dependence."[165]

**Uncertainty:** "means that decision makers do not have sufficient information about environmental factors, and they have a difficult time predicting external changes."[166]

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[160] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 52.

[161] Daft, *Organizational Theory and Design*, 413.

[162] Daft, *Organizational Theory and Design*, 52.

[163] Daft, *Organizational Theory and Design*, 601.

[164] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 48.

[165] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 60.

[166] Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 52.

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