

STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ARMY SPECIAL FORCES: A GOOD FIT FOR PEACE OPERATIONS

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USAWC Strategy Research Paper

Army Special Forces: A Good Fit for Peace Operations

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The challenge of the 21st century for the U.S. Army Special Forces is to remain relevant to the security environment in which they operate. Yet, the Army, and to a lesser degree Special Forces, remain myopically focused on war-fighting requirements. In the aftermath of the Cold War and in an era of declining military budgets, the Army's challenge for the future is to retain and to fully resource the forces which are best suited for both peace operations and full-scale combat. The United States Army Special Forces is one such force. Special Forces should adopt peace operations as a primary mission. Moreover, Special Forces must develop the appropriate doctrine and supporting tactics, techniques, and procedures to ensure success in future peace missions.

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The challenge of the 21st century for the U.S. Army Special Forces is to remain relevant to the security environment in which they operate. Yet, the Army, and to a lesser degree Special Forces, remain myopically focused on war-fighting requirements. In the aftermath of the Cold War and in an era of declining military budgets, the Army's challenge for the future is to retain and to fully resource the forces which are best suited for both peace operations and full-scale combat. The United States Army Special Forces is one such force.

More commonly known as the Green Berets, the Special Forces have forged an impressive record of combat achievements from Viet Nam to the Gulf War. Groomed as trainers of foreign forces, the Green Berets have performed a host of special activities not appropriate for conventional formations. More recently, the Green Berets have demonstrated their prowess in peace-like operations in Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia.

The Special Forces possess four key competencies which make them uniquely qualified for peace and humanitarian assistance operations. The Army Special Forces are foreign language trained, culturally-sensitive, mature, and possess the capability to collect information for the peacekeeping commander. Most importantly, Special Forces has displayed the skills, knowledge, and abilities to adapt to the special requirements of peacekeeping-type missions.

In order to remain relevant to the security challenges of the 21st century, Army Special Forces should adopt peace operations as a primary mission. Moreover, Special Forces must develop the appropriate doctrine and supporting tactics, techniques, and procedures to ensure success in future peace missions.

DEFINING PEACE OPERATIONS

Peace operations mean different things to many people. The major subcategories of peace operations include traditional peacekeeping, multidimensional peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, and peace enforcement.¹ As such, the term peace operations encompasses several aspects of international conflict management and humanitarian relief activities. Peace operations are routinely conducted under the United Nations (UN) auspices.

The Department of Defense defines **peace operations** as military operations to support diplomatic efforts to achieve a long-term political solution to establish or maintain peace. Peace operations include peacekeeping operations (PKO) and peace enforcement operations (PEO) conducted in support.² **Peacekeeping operations** are military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties in a dispute, designed to monitor and facilitate implementation of an agreement (cease fire, truce, etc.) and support diplomatic efforts to reach a long-term political settlement.³ Traditional peacekeeping operations consisting of multinational observers are often conducted in accordance with UN Chapter VI authority. Although not a UN Chapter VI action, the Multinational Force and Observer (MFO) mission established by the Israel-Egypt peace treaty in 1981 is a good example of a traditional peacekeeping operation.

Peace enforcement is the application of military force, or the threat of its use, normally pursuant to international authorization, to compel compliance with UN resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order.⁴ Peace enforcement missions are usually authorized under UN Charter VII. Operation Uphold

Democracy in Haiti is an example of a peace enforcement operation. The U.S. lead multinational force was prepared to forcibly remove the Haitian military junta in order to restore democracy to the country and to return President Aristide to power.

Humanitarian assistance programs are conducted to relieve the results of natural disasters or other conditions that present a serious threat to life or great damage to property.⁵ Humanitarian operations are often an incidental activity to the conduct of a peacekeeping operation.⁶ Historically, UN peacekeeping mandates have not addressed humanitarian assistance operations. Yet, in reality, UN peacekeeping operations have routinely engaged in humanitarian assistance activities to varying degrees.⁷

Some humanitarian assistance missions simply require military assets to assist in the recovery effort. The initial U.S. forces deployed to Somalia in the summer of 1992, Operation Restore Hope, was essentially a humanitarian assistance mission designed to deliver food and supplies to the famine victims.⁸ Special Forces conducted route reconnaissance and provided liaison and coordination elements to facilitate the relief effort. More than 28,000 metric tons of food and supplies were successfully delivered and distributed in Somalia by UNITAF, the Unified Task Force.⁹ Occasionally, humanitarian assistance activities have evolved into a peace enforcement mission as in Somalia and, more recently, Bosnia.¹⁰

Multidimensional peacekeeping is a fairly recent evolution of traditional peace operations. It is an effort that goes well beyond the separation of the warring parties. Multidimensional peacekeeping includes assistance in protecting relief shipments, caring for refugees, enforcing embargoes, removing land mines, and even disarming warring parties.¹¹ Multidimensional peacekeeping attempts to complement the political process

in resolving the fundamental causes of the hostilities. Probably the best example of a multidimensional peacekeeping effort is NATO's Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina. NATO has designed its military objectives to control the warring parties and to assist the political process in finding a peaceful solution for the Balkan region.

The categories of peacekeeping and its definition have actually evolved over time to address specific disputes in a particular region of the world at a given point in time. In application, they appear less clear and distinct. The trend in multidimensional operations like the NATO involvement in the Balkans--may represent the new wave in peacekeeping. However, what is most striking about defining peace operations is that they span the full spectrum of conflict. The inclusion of peace enforcement under the peace operations umbrella essentially mandates that participating forces be capable of full-scale combat operations.

SF COMPETENCIES

Through nearly four decades of evolution, Special Forces today possesses several essential competencies for success in future peace operations. Representing only two percent of the total Army personnel structure, Special Forces soldiers are mature, language-trained, and culturally attuned professionals. These personal skills combined with the ability to collect reliable intelligence make them invaluable assets for the peacekeeping commander.

Maturity. "SOF personnel are usually more experienced and more mature than those in conventional units and are better able to work with local military, political and

civil leaders.”¹² The average Special Forces soldier is 31 years old, possesses two years of college education and has more than ten years of active military service. This maturity and experience can be leveraged during the conduct of peace operations. Military forces deployed in peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations routinely interface with representatives of the warring factions, local police forces, and civilians. The degree of maturity possessed by Special Forces personnel make them qualified to serve as joint commission observers or arms control inspectors who are often critical to the success of peace missions.

Language Capability. The Special Forces training program has evolved over the years to the extent that now the SF soldier learns only one foreign language and stays with that language over the entire course of his military career. “It is not surprising that highly motivated Special Forces soldiers have been able to acquire linguistic skills with little difficulty.”¹³ Some achieve a professional level of linguistic ability. While Special Forces soldiers are not interpreters, they do possess adequate foreign language communications skills to effectively coordinate military activities. This critical capability has obvious application to multinational peace operations in support of a combined forces commander.

Cultural Sensitivity. The one-language training policy for Special Forces soldiers is supported by a regimental-type assignment policy. The SF soldier spends the vast majority of his active duty career in one Special Forces Group. By mission directive, Special Forces Groups are regionally oriented. With repetitive assignments in the same SF Group, the Special Forces soldier gains a familiarity of the operational area and local customs achieved by few including Foreign Area Officers (FAOs).

Recurring exercises, mobile training team missions, deployments for training, and foreign exchanges allows SF soldiers “to develop expertise in the culture, language, traditions, geography, infrastructure, politics and environmental conditions of a particular area.”¹⁴ Frequent operational and training deployments to foreign countries are one of the cornerstones of Special Forces training. On any given day, there are more than 1,400 special operations soldiers conducting missions in more than 40 foreign countries.¹⁵ Over time these soldiers often become area experts in their own right and form lasting associations with foreign forces and dignitaries.

The combination of language capability and cultural awareness of the Special Forces soldier makes him uniquely suited to support multinational operations in peace and war. Small SF elements can be collocated with coalition partner headquarters to serve as liaisons and provide a means of control for the combined forces commander.

Information Collection. Special Forces have traditionally been an intelligence collection asset employed by commanders to augment the space-based surveillance systems, to provide area assessments, and to conduct ground tactical collection. Special Forces conducts reconnaissance and collects information in hostile or politically sensitive territory and when technological systems are less than satisfactory or infeasible.¹⁶ Technical information collection from space-based satellites does not satisfy the kinds of information required for political-military type operations. Special Forces can sense the attitudes of the local populace, report the reaction to peace enforcement operations, and observe shifts in the mood of warring factions which are critical to the success of peace missions.

Special Forces Coalition Support Teams (CST) can be employed with allied units of a peace operations to provide liaison, intelligence connectivity, and access to the coalitions fire support network. CSTs can also provide the peacekeeping commander with assessments about the allied forces participating in the peace mission. Coalition partner units must receive assignments which it can reasonably accomplish. Special Forces can assess the capabilities and limitations of allied units to ensure that they are properly employed.

In contrast to the conventional forces deployed to conduct Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, Special Forces deployed into the countryside and interacted with the Haitians daily on an individual level.¹⁷ Special Forces routinely live among the indigenous population. "In peace operations, low level source operations, elicitation, debriefs of indigenous personnel, screening operations, and patrolling are the primary information gathering techniques...SOF also can provide in-depth knowledge and information of the projected JOA (Joint Operations Area)."¹⁸ This provides the joint force commander with first-hand observations and area assessments, which can be critical to the success of his mission.

PEACE OPERATIONS & U.S. POLICY

There are two essential reasons why the U.S. Army should assign Special Forces the primary mission of peace operations. First, the growing international intention to deal directly with conflict management. Second, the Clinton Administration's emphasis on peacetime engagement and supporting emerging democratic governments.

Former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali observed in his “Agenda for Peace” that, “In these past months a conviction has grown, among nations large and small, that an opportunity has been regained to achieve the great objectives of the Charter - a United Nations capable of maintaining international peace and security...”¹⁹ This prophetic statement announced in 1992 foreshadowed a surge in peace operations of unprecedented proportions. More importantly, it established peace operations as a priority agenda item for years to come. Fueled largely by consensus in the Security Council since 1990, the UN authorized an ever increasing number of peace operations.

Over a six-year period from 1988 to 1994, peace mission deployments tripled. During the same period, the numbers of troops deployed in support of peace operations grew by a factor of eight, reaching a high of more than 73,000 soldiers deployed in 1994. Simultaneously, costs incurred in supporting peace operations jumped from \$230.4 million U.S. dollars to an alarming \$3,610 billion.

Statistics on UN activities related to peace and security (1988-1994)

	1988	1992	1994
Security Council Resolutions adopted preceding 12 months	15	53	78
Disputes/conflicts in which UN was actively involved preventive diplomacy/ peacemaking preceding 12 months	11	13	28
Peacekeeping operations deployed	5	11	17
Military Personnel Deployed	9,570	11,495	73,393
Countries contributing military/police forces	26	56	76
UN budget for PKO (US \$ Mil)	\$230.4	\$1,689.6	\$3,610.0

Table 1²⁰

The threefold rise in peacekeeping operations sparked international criticism from the major national bill payers but did not slow the pace of operations. Simultaneously, it spawned a review of which forces were available and best-suited for peace operations. In peace operations "[t]he fit between capabilities and mission requirements is crucial to success."²¹ In large measure, the success of the NATO peacekeeping mission, JOINT ENDEAVOR, in Bosnia has been attributed to deploying a credible force under a capable command and control structure. The NATO force had a full range of special operations capabilities which worked in concert with the conventional forces mission.

As the data in Table 1 indicates, not only were more peace operations deployed in the 1990s, but a greater number of nations participated. The UN's increasing interest in peace operations is bolstered by the Clinton Administration's policy to actively promote democracy on the world scene.²²

U.S. SECURITY TRENDS

The National Security Strategy sets in simple terms, Engagement and Enlargement, the broad direction in which America will secure its future.²³ The policy statement is heavily laden with the Clinton Administration's emphasis on peace operations and humanitarian assistance activities. The National Military Strategy which supports the security strategy possesses three fundamental thrusts: peacetime engagement, deterrence and conflict prevention, and fight to win.²⁴ What is clear in the national military strategy is its emphasis on being proactive and preventive in nature prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Likewise, the majority of the current national military

strategy emphasizes non-combat actions. This complements well with the national security policy's objective to prevent or limit armed conflict.

Peace operations are nested in the deterrence and conflict prevention aspect of the military strategy. "Policy statements by both Republican and Democratic administrations emphasize the importance of peace operations in reducing instability and limiting conflict...[and] can be seen as efforts to forestall larger regional conflicts"²⁵ The political leadership's consistent emphasis upon peace operations in the past foreshadows what the U.S. Army may anticipate in the future. The bipartisan preference for peace operations reflects the national values but also recognizes the fiscal realities of war in the twenty-first century. While the financial burden of peace operations appears high, the cost of modern-day war in U.S. blood and treasure is probably prohibitive for all but the most vital interests.

At odds with the national policy is the Defense Department's fixation on the two major regional contingency methodology for developing future military forces. This focus fails to recognize requirements for operations short of full combat. Some speculate that the current Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is simply another bureaucratic rationalization for cutting the defense budget a la the Bottom-Up Review of 1992. If these ruminations are true, the increasing tempo of peace operations, coupled with the declining defense budget, mandates that the Army resource those capabilities which can successfully function to support all three aspects of the national military strategy.

It is reasonable to conclude that the United States' political leadership, and those of the leading countries of the world, will continue to prefer peace operations over the alternative. "Although an increasing number of military leaders and strategists do

understand the relevance of peace operations to national security, there are those who continue to view them as distracting from the military's primary function of fighting and winning wars."²⁶ It is the tug-of-war between the national security strategy and the supporting military strategy which causes the friction over the appropriate roles and missions for Army forces.

Peace operations may well become the main effort in military operations for the foreseeable future. Most military analysts agree that no enemy is likely to challenge the U.S. conventional forces for at least the next decade. However, U.S. military forces are engaged in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations throughout the world on an unprecedented scale. It is imperative that the Army retain and adequately resource multi-purpose forces like Special Forces which can effectively function across the full spectrum of conflict.

PROBLEMS WITH PEACE

There are three primary obstacles to assigning Special Forces a primary mission of peace operations. SF has long suffered from too many missions and insufficient resources. Second, peace operations may adversely affect combat readiness and drive up operational deployments. Finally, Special Forces lacks an adequate doctrinal framework to conduct peace operations.

Ross Kelly asserts that "Strategic reconnaissance, direct action, FID [foreign internal defense], guerrilla warfare: they all remain generic Special Forces tasks."²⁷ This has been the "conventional" wisdom for Special Forces. For far too long the Special Forces focused on how to conform to the broader, conventional Army's expectations.

Consequently, roles and missions were derived based upon supporting the needs of the conventional forces commander. This approach may have been reasonable in the Cold War context when the focus was on general war in Europe. However, it does not provide an adequate basis to derive roles and missions for a future built on preventing or limiting conflict. Combat operations will continue to be a major focus of Special Forces, but it should not necessarily be the sole defining one. Several special-operations roles and functions might benefit from a review that could help determine what additions to, subtractions from and other adjustments would be appropriate.²⁸

Special Forces have long operated within the low-intensity conflict framework. The current doctrinal emphasis on Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) reflects the conventional forces awakening to a spectrum of activities in which Special Forces has historically operated. Peace operations are compatible with the traditional Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense (FID) mission. Doctrinally, "FID is an umbrella concept that covers a broad range of activities, always with the primary intent of helping the legitimate host government address internal threats and their underlying causes."²⁹

Special Forces are, however, challenged by an ever-growing list of missions. The conventional wisdom and parochialism of the past must be discarded. The core missions that will carry SF through the next 20 years must be determined. The issue will be properly resolved when the appropriate mission set is identified based upon the contribution made to the national military strategy.

READINESS & PERSTEMPO

The primary objection for the U.S. military's participation in peace operations is that it degrades the war-fighting readiness of participating forces. "Pentagon defenders argue that the more U.S. forces participate in UN peace operations, the more the readiness of the American military will decline, undermining its ability to fight simultaneously two regional wars."³⁰ A recent General Accounting Office report underscores this view. The survey on the Multinational Force Observers in the Sinai cited defense officials' concerns that the reduction of one infantry brigade equivalent when combined with other global commitments and the drawdown strains Army Infantry and support resources.³¹ This attitude is further reinforced with the notion that peacekeeping duties are little more than garrison activities or a lower form of soldiering.³² This was true of some of the traditional peace observer missions. However, the current NATO mission in Bosnia demands that the forces be fully prepared to fight to enforce the peace.

Some military strategists believe that preparing for a major regional contingency, the most lethal of environments, will adequately prepare forces for all operations short of a MRC. "The debate about whether or not peace operations degrade readiness has become highly politicized and almost theological...that preparation for and engagement in them detract from true military readiness."³³ These objections stem principally from the Army's focus on fighting a major regional contingency rather than preparing for and conducting the most likely missions consistent with the national security and national military strategies. The same holds true for Special Forces who cling to its traditional combat missions despite clear evidence to the contrary.

Without question, conventional forces combined-arms skills deteriorate while engaged in peace operations. However, many of the fundamental SF skills are either used or could be maintained while deployed in peacekeeping operations.

That is not to suggest that there aren't problems associated with Special Forces deploying on peacekeeping missions. Ross Kelly suggests that all SOF continue to be adversely affected by insufficient personnel, too many missions, too broad training requirements and limited funding and together these result in "serious shortfalls."³⁴ In the recent past, adequate funding levels have been provided since the establishment of the U.S. Special Operations Command nearly a decade ago.

The limited numbers of SF personnel is a historic problem even assuming 100% fill of all manpower authorizations. This factor, coupled with and the rapid increase in the demand for peacekeepers, portends a future problem in what is commonly called "PERSTEMPO." PERSTEMPO relates to the number of days a soldier spends deployed away from home each year. This is not a new issue. Special Forces have historically had a high PERSTEMPO rate, often averaging more than 180 days annually.

In the Army-wide drawdown of personnel authorizations, Special Forces has lost two of its four reserve component groups and eliminated all of the theater Special Operations Support Commands. Although to date, they have preserved all five of the active duty Groups. The principal concern is that peace operations are often long-term commitments. Even a relatively small operation like Haiti required elements from three of the five active duty SF Groups to support the mission.

Conventional forces often use Army Reserves and National Guard forces to augment long-term commitments. This option is extremely limited for Special Forces.

SF National Guard augmentation could fill some--not all of the requirements. Short of full mobilization, the SF Guard assets could be called upon to provide individual replacements rather than unit rotations. Regardless, Special Forces active duty units continue to bear the burden of increasing peace operations and deployments.

DOCTRINAL DEFICIENCIES

The US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) states that SOF can conduct both principal and collateral special operations in peacetime.³⁵ Army doctrine broadly recognizes the contributions that Special Forces can make during peace operations. Special Forces can collect intelligence, conduct multinational liaison, train local security forces, and execute precision strikes to support the peacekeeping commander.³⁶

The fundamental question is whether peace operations require a unique set of doctrine and derivative training tasks for Special Forces? The answer is a simple, resounding--yes! Doctrine aims at defining the nature of operations and the mission requirements for a specified activity. The nature of peace operations warrants special consideration and should be codified in formal doctrine. The afteraction report from the UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM II) highlighted the lack of SOF doctrine regarding peace missions as affecting the proper employment of Special Forces.³⁷ Unfortunately, even in light of the recent Special Forces operations in Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia, the latest draft doctrine for Special Operations Forces fails to treat peace operations as either a primary mission or a collateral activity.³⁸

Special Forces must possess a doctrinal framework to prepare for and operate in the politically volatile and ambiguous threat environment encountered during peace

missions. The specific mission and task requirements of peacekeeping operations for Special Forces need clear articulation so as to maximize SF's core competencies. Building the proper doctrinal framework for Special Forces peace operations will accomplish three critical things. First, it will formally capture the lessons learned paid for in blood from past operations. Second, it will provide a framework for the development of supporting individual, team, and collective training tasks. Finally, it will build a buffer to avoid the misuse of Special Forces for missions it is not prepared nor equipped to accomplish.

COL Glenn Harned has cautioned that "Doctrinal changes are not panaceas; they cannot solve problems in training, in force structure, or in operational overcommitment."³⁹ However, the key point here is that Special Forces doctrine must reflect current and future operating requirements. Moreover, the Army and Special Forces must recognize the future priority of peace operations. Fighting and winning the nations battles will always be the primary function of the military, but the fundamental nature of battles may be changing. U.S. military forces will be utilized in a far broader context in the future as derived from the national military strategy. Adequate doctrine must be developed to support Special Forces operations in peace missions and to define the training and operational requirements. It is up to the military departments to devise a doctrine that ensures the success of its forces. Special Forces must likewise develop a doctrinal framework for the employment of its unique competencies.

THE PAST & THE FUTURE

Past deployments have well documented the contributions made by Special Forces during the conduct of peace operations. Special Forces were key to the success of the UN's and the United States' efforts in Somalia from 1992-1994. SF established liaison with the warring factions, provided force protection information, and conducted numerous area assessments that facilitated the relief and security operations.⁴⁰ Additionally, Special Forces teams assisted in identifying landmine hazards, resettled refugees, and actually collocated with some of the warring factions providing daily intelligence to the UNOSOM and UNITAF commanders.⁴¹ Coalition Support Teams provided training for allied partners destined for Somalia as well as served as a communications and command mechanism once deployed into Somalia.⁴²

Special Forces have also been a significant element of NATO's operations in Bosnia. Special Forces provided liaison and coordination elements to all of the non-NATO unit headquarters to provide communications, intelligence, fire support, and casualty evacuation connectivity with the multinational division headquarters. U.S. Special Forces currently are providing land mine clearance assistance, serving as joint commission observers, and conducting reconnaissance operations in support of the sector commanders.

The trend towards increasing use of peacekeeping and peace enforcement as methods to ward off conflict and avoid war will continue. President Clinton's Presidential Policy Decision (PPD)-25 levied numerous restrictions and caveats that potentially dampened future U.S. participation in UN peace operations. The decision softly rejected greater involvement in peace operations and represented a less than

enthusiastic endorsement of multilateral peacekeeping.⁴³ Many perceived that PPD 25 would actually slow U.S. involvement in peace operations--but that has not been the case. What is obvious is that U.S. military forces will increasingly be deployed in peace operations and humanitarian assistance activities.

Furthermore, future peace operations will be multinational endeavors. International peace operations require a politics of shared risk. The US participation can not be easily limited to solely support-type functions while poor countries are tasked with the more-risky patrolling and security missions.⁴⁴ Naturally, America's intensity of involvement will and should vary according to its national interest in any given peace operation. When vital U.S. interests are not at stake, Army Special Forces could provide a small, inexpensive, yet politically visible demonstration of U.S. commitment to its allies and friends.

As more countries participate in future peace operations, a need may arise to train peacekeepers for deployment to an operation. Several reforms have been recommended in training peacekeeping forces and suggested that national training teams be used to "train the trainers" in smaller troop contributing states.⁴⁵ Training future multinational peacekeeping forces could be supported by Special Forces mobile training teams. Special Forces are deployed routinely worldwide on a number of similar missions to include support to demining, assistance in counterdrug operations, and traditional Foreign Internal Defense program missions.

Finally, there have been suggestions that the UN expand its peace operations efforts and broaden its military capability. The former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali proposed that the UN authorize "peacemaking" actions to bring hostile parties to

agreement.⁴⁶ UNOSOM II, the UN multidimensional peace enforcement operation in Somalia, was authorized to use force to disarm the warlords who refused to surrender their weapons as a measure to ensure the relief convoys reached the needy people.⁴⁷ Peace enforcement or peacemaking operations imply the willingness of the peacekeepers to use force to compel the warring parties to comply with UN mandates. The leap to peacemaking implies the offensive use of force to compel belligerents to cease hostilities. Special Forces can provide the command and control connectivity through use of CSTs to support the peace enforcement commander's requirements.

Regardless of whether peacekeeping or even peacemaking operations are undertaken, one thing is for sure-- it will be a coalition effort. Given that peace operations are probably under UN auspices, it is likely that coalitions may include NATO and non-NATO members.⁴⁸ Special Forces can provide the critical liaison and coordination throughout all levels of the operation to enhance the effectiveness of a multinational peacekeeping force.

"Peace operations take place, almost by definition, in a multilateral political-military environment that usually requires forces to exhibit impartiality and restraint in the use of force to an unaccustomed degree."⁴⁹ This was again realized in Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti where political imperatives led to a search for coalition partners with greater concern for broadening participation than for the actual capabilities of participating units.⁵⁰

The multinational nature of peace operations places unique demands upon the command structure to control and coordinate operations much like coalition warfare during combat operations. Army Special Forces elements were attached to every Arab

coalition unit during the Gulf War to assist these units with communications, liaison, training, and combat support.⁵¹ Faced with a similar challenge of equipment incompatibility, communications shortfalls, and linguistic barriers, U.S. Special Forces soldiers were deployed to Bosnia for Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. Special Forces were deployed with nine non-NATO units to ensure effective command and control and to provide a mechanism to provide close air support to those units if necessary. SF provided the means to meld the multinational forces together for General Walker, the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps commander.

Another challenge of peace operations is that they sometimes happen with little notice and are organized as the forces are notified for deployment. Peacekeeping force commanders may cope with both deploying their forces and providing for effective integration simultaneously.⁵² The task of assembling forces, deploying units, and providing for effective command and control for a multinational operation is a daunting one at best. Special Forces can be utilized in a multinational operation to facilitate command and control as was done in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. Special Forces Liaison and Coordination Elements (LCEs) were deployed to each of the non-NATO battalion and higher headquarters to ensure effective transfer of control from the UN Protective Forces UNPROFOR to NATO.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis of the nature of peace operations, future trends in political intentions, and the value of Army Special Forces in contributing to the national military strategy leads to several conclusions. Special Forces are specialized by region and ideally

suited for peacetime engagement and peace operations.⁵³ As trained linguists, Special Forces soldiers can accomplish a myriad of liaison and coordination tasks critical to the success of a peacekeeping mission. Historically, it can be shown that the success of the peace initiative hinges on the initial phase of a peacekeeping operation as well as the quality and conduct of the military force deployed into the region.⁵⁴

The trend towards peacemaking implies that the deployed forces may in the future fight to enforce the peace. A far greater military capability than has been historically used for peace operations may be necessary. Special Forces provide a capability with obvious peacetime utility and has demonstrated its capability to fight across the full spectrum of conflict.⁵⁵ Special Forces provides a mechanism to integrate and control peacemaking operations for the combined commander. If necessary, SF can enhance combat effectiveness of the multinational force in peacemaking operations much like the coalition support teams did in DESERT STORM.

Properly conducted by forces that have planned and trained for them, peace operations may preclude the need to deploy larger forces at substantially higher costs in blood and treasure.⁵⁶ Many in the conventional ranks still view Special Forces as a side-show. In some peace operations, SF could well become the main event. Certainly, it was a major contributor to the success in Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti.

As a force multiplier in peace operations its role is indisputable. General Crouch, currently in command of the NATO operation in Bosnia, recently stated that he had replaced 7,500 American soldiers with 270 Special Forces. In budget constrained years, Special Forces should be one of the prime choices for joint forces deployments in support of peace operations.

Regionally oriented special operations forces are prepared to support U.S. and UN commanders in peacekeeping operations worldwide.⁵⁷ Trained and ready -- Special Forces routinely operate in a joint and combined environment which prepares them to “conduct complex contingency-response operations, without having to spend long train-up periods before the deployments.”⁵⁸ The operational readiness and core competencies of Special Forces matches well the nature of peace operations.

Special Forces is challenged by too many missions and too few soldiers. “The sheer diversity of SOF missions affects all decision making about force structure, training, equipment, communications, and other elements.”⁵⁹ The only way to correct this historical problem is with a earnest review of the national military strategy, a scupulous appraisal of what the core missions of SF should be and then restructure, if necessary, increase the force to meet the mission requirements of the 21st century. SOF are mature soldiers who are linguistically trained, culturally attuned, and fully prepared to serve as the U.S. ready reaction force for peace support and humanitarian operations.⁶⁰ Peace operations should be a mission for Army Special Forces.

ENDNOTES

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