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This study examines the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) for use by Special Forces (SF) staffs at the battalion /group level while planning multiple and simultaneous operations. The research is prefaced by stating the MDMP, in its current form, provides an excellent decision-making tool for the Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A). The author identifies current trends and potential hypothesis on why conventional and SF field grade commisioned officers are failing to appropriately apply doctrinal mandates of the MDMP. The research concludes the MDMP is adequate for SF staffs at the battalion /group level when SFOD-As are mutually supporting or interdependent. When SFOD-As are interdependent, they require synchronization and therefore require SF battalion /group staffs to execute all steps within the MDMP. Ironically, SFOD-As are normally not interdependent and more accurately characterized as mutually exclusive of each other when employed by SF battalions /groups. The author contends the inappropriate application of the MDMP by SF staffs may negatively impact on subordinate SFOD-As. Research on the use of the MDMP enables SF staffs at battalion /group level while planning multiple and simultaneous operations to perform their organizational functions in a more efficent and timely manner.

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THE MILITARY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND SPECIAL FORCES MISSION PLANNING: *"A SQUARE PEG FOR A ROUND HOLE?"*

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

THOMAS M. JOYCE, MAJ, USA
B.B.A., St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, 1987
M.B.A., Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, 1997

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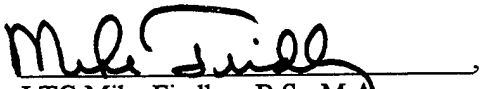
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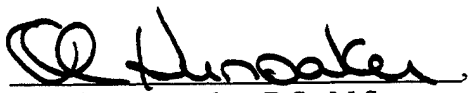
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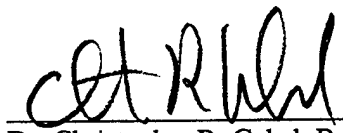
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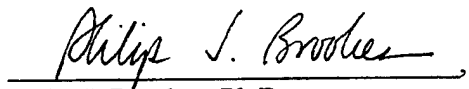
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (Reference to this study should include the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

ABSTRACT

THE MILITARY DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND SPECIAL FORCES MISSION PLANNING: *"A SQUARE PEG FOR A ROUND HOLE?"* by MAJ Thomas M. Joyce, USA, 87 pages.

This study examines the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) for use by Special Forces (SF) staffs at the battalion/group level for planning multiple and simultaneous operations. The research is prefaced by stating the MDMP, in its current form, provides an excellent decision-making tool for the Special Forces Operational Detachments (SFOD-A). The study identifies current trends and potential hypothesis on why conventional and SF field grade commissioned officers are failing to appropriately apply doctrinal mandates of the MDMP. The research concludes the MDMP is adequate for SF staffs at the battalion/group level when SFOD-As are mutually supporting or interdependent. When SFOD-As are interdependent, they require synchronization and therefore require SF battalion/group staffs to execute all steps within the MDMP. Ironically, SFOD-As are normally not interdependent and are more accurately characterized as mutually exclusive of each other when employed by SF battalions/groups. The author contends the inappropriate application of the MDMP by SF staffs may negatively impact on subordinate SFOD-As. Research on the use of the MDMP enables SF staffs at battalion/group level while planning multiple and simultaneous operations to perform their organizational functions in a more efficient and timely manner.

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Most importantly, thanks goes to Jana and Carrie. As my partners in the CGSC journey Jana and Carrie were more than patient with the sacrifices incurred from the long hours of classes, research, and redrafts.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSAT	Air Force Satellite
AM-SSB	Amplitude Modulated Single, Side-Band
AOB	Advanced Operating Base
ARI	Army Research Institute
CINC	Commander-in-Chief
CRP	Common Relevant Picture
DoD	Department of Defense
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officers Course
HF	High Frequency
JRTC	Joint Readiness Training Center
JSOA	Joint Special Operations Area
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
MDMP	Military Decision-Making Process
MHz	Megahertz
MOOTW	Military Operations Other than War
MTP	Mission Training Plan
OPSEC	Operational Security
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo
OSS	Office of Strategic Studies

PERSTEMPO	Personnel Tempo
RPD	Recognition-Primed decisions
SAMS	School of Advanced Military Studies
SF	Special Forces
SFOD-A	Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha
SOCCE	Special Operations Command and Control Element
SOT-A	Special Operations Team-Alpha
SOTD	Special Operations Training Detachment
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TACSAT	Tactical Satellite
TASKORDS	Mission Tasking Orders
UHF	Ultra-High Frequency
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USAJFKSWC	U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This chapter formats the basis for evaluating the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process when used by Special Forces (SF) battalion/group staffs for planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

Problem Statement

Non-adherence to the doctrinal Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) impedes the Special Forces (SF) battalion/group staff from discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

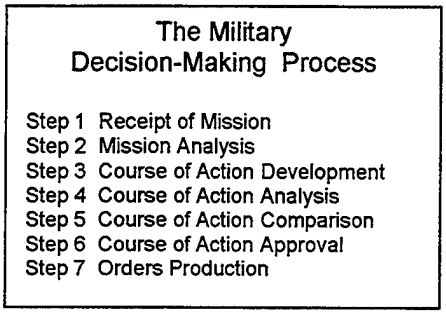

Figure 1. The Military Decision-Making Process. Source: U.S. Army *Field Manual 101-5, Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-2.

Importance of the Study

A segment of the total population of field grade commissioned officers fails to adhere to the Military Decision-Making Process, as illustrated in Figure 1. These officers fail to correctly apply the Military Decision-Making Process for two reasons. They either do not fully understand the Military Decision-Making Process or they deliberately disregard the doctrine. The operative question is, why do these field grade commissioned officers fail to follow this doctrine? This

research will focus on the sub-population of field grade commissioned officers who view the Military Decision-Making Process as inadequate.

Contributing to the problem are several environmental influences. Outlined in Appendix A, these environmental influences play a role in the problem and must be examined to understand the larger dynamics of the situation. These environmental influences combined with other institutional influences have cascading consequential effects. As time becomes more and more constrained by increased environmental/institutional influences, the value of time as a resource increases exponentially. The usage of inadequate planning tools by Special Forces staffs directly impacts on subordinate units specifically identified to support contingencies. "Time is the only nonrenewable resource and is often the most critical resource a unit must manage."[1]

Background

As contingency deployments increase and the Army's population decreases, staff efficiency and effective time management by field grade officers become an increasingly important individual competencies. The initial environmental influences affecting conventional and SF staffs are further exasperated by the challenge for units to retain field grade commissioned officers that embody these critical individual competencies. Efficient staff procedures have become especially essential for Special Forces staffs planning multiple and simultaneous contingency taskings.

An Army-wide trend of field grade commissioned officers, in ranks from major to colonel, demonstrating poor staff skills underline the complications for Special Forces units. A study conducted by the Army Research Institute (ARI) concluded a significant portion of the field grade officer population exhibited inadequate staff skills. Field grade commissioned officers in the study demonstrated poor time management skills by failing to visualize future requirements and quantifying those operational needs within time and space.[2]

Inadequate staff skills by field grade staff officers translates into less time for subordinate commands. These observations infer that appropriate levels of analysis may not be completed. It further implies subordinate units were receiving less time to conduct troop-leading procedures than if the staff had practiced good staff skills.

This research assumes the analysis conducted by the ARI was a representative sample of field grade commissioned officers in the Army. The probability sampling theory states that general statistical trends present in a sample population can be inferred to be constant in a smaller subset of the same sample population.[3] Thus, it is inferred from the ARI study that general trends in the sample population of field grade commissioned officers are present in Special Forces field grade commissioned officers.

This inference means that, like conventional units, there are a proportional number of Special Forces field grade commissioned officers working on staffs at the battalion/group level who demonstrate poor staff skills. The lack of individual staff skills significantly impede Special Forces staffs when planning multiple and simultaneous operations. Other staff skill deficiencies such as non-adherence to decision-making doctrine, impede Special Forces staffs from discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

Compounding the lack of staff skills present in field grade commissioned officers is this trend in non-adherence to the Military Decision-Making Process. Research findings in 1993 on tactical planning all indicate that doctrinal concepts and organizational interpretations of the MDMP differ widely.[4] The application of the Military Decision-Making Process, by doctrine, is one with little variance for innovation and is viewed as a doctrinally mandated tool. "There is still only one process, however, and omitting steps of the MDMP is not the solution."[5]

In contrast to *Field Manual 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations*, is the ARI's published report clearly identifying the diverse opinions regarding appropriate application of the Military Decision-Making Process. The ARI's executive summary states observer/controllers

in the field are reporting a disconnect between presentations on doctrine and pre-training and what gets executed—not solely because of poor training.[6]

Non-adherence to doctrinal decision-making, impedes Special Forces staffs from effectively planning. Transitioning staff products from higher to lower echelons is complicated by individuals' subjective interpretation of the Military Decision-Making Process. The flow of information is affected and organizational responsibilities are overlooked by the inconsistent application of the Military Decision-Making Process. Neglected or duplicated coordination measures occur because of inconsistent understanding the Military Decision-Making Process application criteria. These consequential effects collectively disrupt the efficient operations of a unit and more specifically impede the planning of operations by staffs. The use of approved systems facilitates the rapid and consistent assessment of the situation by minimizing confusion over the process.[7]

Linkage of Problem to Research

The lack of organizational adherence to the Military Decision-Making Process doctrine is not the subject of this research. However, this organizational trend in doctrinal application does create the basis for this document's primary research question. The trends in the ARI study yield some interesting implied potential hypotheses on why field grade commissioned officers are not appropriately applying doctrinal mandates of the Military Decision-Making Process.

In the first hypothesis, field grade commissioned officers simply fail to understand the Military Decision-Making Process. In the second hypothesis, field grade commissioned officers view the MDMP criteria as flexible and open to interpretation/derivation.

The first hypothesis of failed understanding by field grade commissioned officers has obvious implications. The failed understanding slows a staff's processing of mission tasking orders (TASKORDS) dramatically. Unnecessary and duplicate coordination is executed by the poorly trained staff. These unnecessary staff procedures do not provide any additional value to

their subordinate units. The expended time in unnecessary staff processes could be used by a subordinate unit for training and planning.

Also implied in Hypothesis #1 is the issue of Military Decision-Making Process improvement. If the ARI observations are true, significant numbers of field grade commissioned officers fail to understand the Military Decision-Making Process. As a result, little intellectual discussion occurs among field grade commissioned officers regarding the Military Decision-Making Process. Thus no substantial improvement to the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) can occur.

The second hypothesis for field grade officers failing to adhere to the Military Decision-Making Process is officers view the process as flexible and open to interpretation. Hypothesis #2 for failing to adhere to Military Decision-Making Process doctrine has two underlining explanations or rationales. The first rationale for field grade commissioned officers in the study interpreting the MDMP application criteria as flexible is from misinterpretation of the doctrine. Field grade officers viewing the Military Decision-Making Process in its current form as inadequate is the second rationale.

"The commander decides how to shorten the process."[8] This statement from chapter five of the doctrinal Field Manual 101-5 is a potential source of confusion regarding the Military Decision-Making Process and supports Rationale #1.

The diverse array of references regarding the subject of the Military Decision-Making Process also contributes to an inappropriate interpretation of the MDMP doctrine. Within the 1984 version of Field Manual 101-5 were multiple tables and various models for the Military Decision-Making Process. The ARI determined this extensive array of training materials and references significantly contributed to the organizational confusion between operational users and field evaluators on the Military Decision-Making Process criteria.[9]

The adequacy rationale, for failing to adhere to the doctrinal template of the Military Decision-Making Process, is rooted in the field grade commissioned officer's own perception. Viewed as inadequate, the Military Decision-Making Process fails to support the planning needs of various members of the ARI's sample population.

This view that the Military Decision-Making Process is inadequate was further substantiated by recommendations made in the ARI study. Figure 2, the Hypothesis/Rationale Matrix, summarizes the potential explanations for non-adherence to the Military Decision-Making Process doctrine.

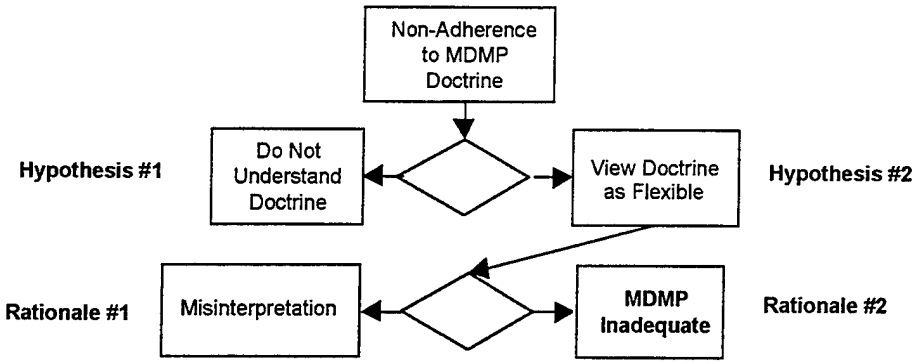

Figure 2. Hypothesis/Rationale Matrix.

The executive summary of the ARI's study states doctrinal principles should be evaluated to better replicate the required human tasks within the process from a naturalistic standpoint versus the current deductive analytic process. The study continues to recommend a shift in emphasis of the Military Decision-Making Process from decision-making to a planning orientation.[10] This subject will be further explained in chapter two.

Again, the probability sampling theory can be applied to the two distinct hypotheses. In other words, the Special Forces field grade commissioned officers failing to adhere to doctrinal application mandates of the Military Decision-Making Process either do not understand the process or view the process as flexible.

It was previously hypothesized that the original populations of field grade officers view the Military Decision-Making Process as flexible from the rationalization that the MDMP might be inadequate. This view is present among the subset of Special Forces field grade commissioned officer population as well.

The deduced perception of the adequacy rationale is substantiated by the Special Operations Training Detachment at the Joint Readiness Training Center. Viewed as the institutional expert for Special Operations Forces tactical planning and employment, the Special Operations Training Detachment concludes that much of the planning doctrine, designed with conventional units in mind, is not fully suited for the planning requirements of Special Forces staffs. Within their quarterly training documents the Special Operations Training Detachment states, "The guidance provided by US Army manuals is certainly not tailored to SOF operations."[11]

Scope

The principal echelon of interest for the analysis of the Military Decision-Making Process is the Special Forces battalion/group staff level. The use of the conventional Military Decision-Making Process by Special Forces Operational Detachments (SFOD-As) is not in question. The Military Decision-Making Process provides an excellent tool for the SFOD-As to conduct their decision-making. Research on improving the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) for Special Forces staffs at battalion/group level will enable these organizations to use the MDMP to perform their organizational functions in a more efficient and timely manner.

Research Questions

1. Is the Military Decision-Making Process adequate to meet the needs of staffs at the Special Forces battalion/group level when planning multiple and simultaneous operations?

2. Why do field grade commissioned officers fail to adhere to the Military Decision-Making Process?

3. Why do field grade officers intentionally disregard the Military Decision-Making Process doctrine?

4. If the Military Decision-Making Process is failing to meet the needs of the conventional combined arms branches, what is its functionality for Special Forces staffs at battalion/group level?

5. What are the doctrinal and implied rationales for the sequential steps in the Military Decision-Making Process?

6. What are the operational differences between conventional combined arms battalions/brigades and Special Forces battalions/groups?

7. Do the concluded Military Decision-Making Process doctrinal and implied rationales fit with the operational differences inherent to Special Forces battalions/groups?

8. Given the implied primary rationale for COA development is to synergize subordinate, interdependent units, why does Special Forces doctrine continue mandating this process given the absence of interdependence among SFOD-As?

9. What is the origin of this Special Forces organizational fixation on unnecessary synchronization?

Limitations

A gap in the relative Special Forces (SF) specific material addressing planning and application of the Military Decision-Making Process by SF staffs will be a limitation in the research process.

Delimitations

The research does not address organizational design changes to Special Forces battalion/group staffs due to the current cultural and political trends supporting military downsizing. The research will not evaluate the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process for Special Forces staffs planning multiple and simultaneous operations during MOOTW

(Military Operations Other Than War). This would complicate the research beyond the scope of available time. A more accurate level of research needs to include the requirements of conventional combined arms units as well.

Assumptions

The research assumes that organizational and operational differences of Special Forces battalions/groups were not comprehensively analyzed prior to standardization of the Military Decision-Making Process, within the SF branch. This research assumes the analysis conducted by the ARI was a representative sample of field grade commissioned officers in the Army.

Problems

A significant shortage of detailed, intellectual literature focused specifically on the mission planning criteria necessary for Special Forces operational planning staffs at battalion/group level is anticipated.

Solutions

The lack of detailed Special Forces specific literature on the subject can be overcome through the extensive body of knowledge addressing the Military Decision-Making Process theory. Additionally, the void in SF specific publications can be offset through documents generated by the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), After-Action Reviews (AARs) documenting post-contingency results, and actual interviews with Special Forces operational planners who participated in contingencies as well as deployments to any of the Army's Combat Training Centers (CTCs).

Research Method

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter two identifies the information requirements and availability to establish an approach to determining the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process for Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level. Chapter three includes further analysis by determining the doctrinal and implied rationale of the seven steps in

the Military Decision-Making Process. Chapter four highlights the operational differences between a conventional combined arms battalion/brigade and a Special Forces battalion/group. Chapter five evaluates the consistent attributes associated with the development of the Military Decision-Making Process in support of conventional operations, relative to the operational differences associated with SF battalions/groups, outlined in chapter four. Chapter six summarizes the conclusions formulated in the previous chapters of the thesis. The chapter then finalizes the research question and follows with an examination of some recommendations for writers of Military Decision-Making Process and Special Forces doctrine. The concluding chapter completes the discussion with recommendations to Special Forces staffs and leadership.

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[1]US Department of the Army, "Tactical Decision Making: 'Abbreviated Planning" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Training and Doctrine Command, Center For Army Lessons Learned, 1979), I-3.

[2]Jon J. Fallesen, "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Research Institute, September 1993), 16.

[3]Earl R. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co. 1979), 169.

[4]Jon J. Fallesen, "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Research Institute, September 1993).

[5]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-27.

[6]Jon J. Fallesen, "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Research Institute, September 1993), vi.

[7]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-1.

[8]Ibid., 5-27.

[9]Jon J. Fallesen, "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Research Institute, September 1993), 3.

[10]Ibid., ix.

[11]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center. *Special Operations Training Bulletin* (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Directorate, February 1995), 2.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose

The chapter begins with an examination of patterns within the existing literature. The section then discusses authoritative works on the Military Decision-Making Process. The chapter concludes with a summation of the key works forming primary sources for the research.

Background

The US Army's Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) has a long and diverse history. Its beginnings are associated with the Prussian Army's attempts, in the 1700's,[1] at analytical decision-making, but is more commonly associated with more modern publications in the twentieth century. Two of the original publications include Major Eben Swift's 1906 booklet on *Field Orders, Messages and Reports*, and Captain's Roger S. Fitch's 1909 *Estimating Tactical Situations and Publishing Field Orders*. Three years later the Army's decision-making was further standardized as it was introduced to the War College in 1911 by General Tasker H. Bliss. These documents establish the initial foundation of what eventually became the US Army's current institutional doctrine for decision-making.[2]

After World War II, the US Army integrated some of the German Army's decision-making methodology from their pre-war operations manual, *Truppenfuehrung*. In addition, the Army transitioned to a more centralized decision-making process. This derivation was a result of the emergence of nuclear weapons and the increased US role in global affairs.[3] The Army's complex evolution of decision-making culminated in the current methodology known today as the Military Decision-Making Process.

Gaps in Existing Knowledge

While the depth of extant knowledge regarding the Military Decision-Making Process is extensive, significant gaps exist in the current body of knowledge regarding usage of the MDMP in Special Forces units. Part of the problem is addressed by Major Steve Fondacaro in his School of Advanced Military Studies monograph published in 1989. "There are few personnel, active duty or retired, who can honestly call themselves SOF experts, though many aspire to, especially within the United States. For the most part, those individuals with the most recent experience have been parties to failures, and as a result have little credibility."[4]

The key doctrinal proponent of the Military Decision-Making Process in Special Forces units is the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center (USAJFKSWC). In the absence of MDMP doctrinal guidance, the Special Operations Training Detachment (SOTD) of the Joint Readiness Training Center provides some planning recommendations to fill the gap. Unfortunately, the primary focus and scope of these organizations' documents are planning and decision-making at the SFOD-A level.

Deductive inferences are once again concluded due to the substantial lack of institutional references focused on the discrete usage of the Military Decision-Making Process by Special Forces battalion/group staffs. Patterns in existing knowledge are delineated into two categories: *Traditionalist* and *Liberalist.*

Patterns in Existing Knowledge

Doctrinal patterns in scholarship seem to reflect an intellectual dichotomy in written documents and organizational interpretation. There currently exists two distinctly different, diametrically opposed schools of thought regarding the usage of the Military Decision-Making Process. The *Traditionalist* view the application of the Military Decision-Making Process doctrine in its strictest form. The *Traditionalist* believe the usage of the Military

Decision-Making Process and its doctrinal applications are not subject to interpretation or alteration.

The *Liberalist* is the second school of thought regarding the Military Decision-Making Process. The *Liberalist* believe the Military Decision-Making Process in its current form is too rigid and is dysfunctional in situations constrained by time. The *Liberalist* contend the Military Decision-Making Process is a structured response to complex situations where choices are unstructured and distinct from each other. The *Liberalist* reason the Military Decision-Making Process is the Army's structured replication of the unstructured critical thinking and reasoning process exemplified in Napoleon, Grant, and Patton. The *Liberalist* further contend the Military Decision-Making Process is too tightly focused on selection of options instead of the creation of options.

Authoritative Works in the Field

The authoritative works in the field include publications from the Department of the Army, Army Research Institute, and various periodicals, plus unpublished research projects. The Special Forces doctrinal references Field Manual 100-25, *Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces,* and Field Manual 31-20, *Doctrine For Special Forces Operations,* fail to refer to the use of the MDMP by Special Forces battalion/group staffs for operational planning. The only reference to the Military Decision-Making Process or decision-making in thirty-six collective pages from both references is one page of considerations for mission planning. The assumption for the lack Special Forces specific planning doctrine is current military doctrine in Field Manual 101-5 is applicable for use in planning Special Forces missions.

This assumption contrasts with documents produced, published, and distributed Army-wide from the Special Operations Training Detachment at the Joint Readiness Training Center (SOTD). As mentioned in this document's "Introduction," the SOTD

recognizes certain aspects of US Army doctrine are not tailored to SOF operations.[5] The intent of drafting these support bulletins is to "address issues not covered in current Army or SOF publications, as well as bridge the gap between conventional doctrine and how it applies to SOF."[6]

In the Joint Readiness Training Center *Special Operations Training Bulletin*,[7] dated December 1996, the SOTD regurgitates the contents of chapter five of Field Manual 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*. It includes several applicable Special Forces specific tips on the MDMP, but does little except rephrase the contents of the baseline doctrine in Field Manual 101-5.

Another Special Forces specific document that addresses MDMP is the USAJFKSWC's *Special Forces Qualification Course Deliberate Decision-Making and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*, dated Feb. 1997.[8] This document is an excellent tool for the SFOD-A, but does not contain any information applicable for use by staffs at the battalion/group level.

Some of the generic authoritative texts listed below represent a fraction of the available references available on the Military Decision-Making Process. Although none of the below mentioned texts reference the Military Decision-Making Process in support of Special Forces operations, these references are worth mentioning because they provide significant input to subsequent chapters in this thesis.

Supporting the *Traditionalist*, Major Fastabend's research entitled "Fighting the Numbers: The Role of Quantification in Tactical Decision Making,"[9] emphasizes US Army decision doctrine should focus primarily on quantitative and analytical procedures. In his monograph, Fastabend concludes the Army's increased requirement to efficiently apply combat power mandates a scientific approach to decision-making be adopted. He

recommends the Army incorporate tactical quantification into the framework of theory, doctrine, training and force development.

Contrary to Major Fastabend's position is the CGSC thesis, "Combat Orders: An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process."[10] In his analysis, Major John Antal concludes the decision-making system being used by the Army is generally ineffective. Major Antal believes the tactical orders process must change in order to meet the requirements of the future battlefield. The time intensive Military Decision-Making Process has failed to evolve into a process that can be used in a environment characterized by explosive speeds, immense distances, and precision munitions.

Other research on the Military Decision-Making Process's adequacy focuses on the confusing array of references available on the subject. Major Tim Lynch's, "Problem Solving Under Time Constraints: Alternatives for the Commander's Estimate,"[11] concludes Field Manual 101-5 must explicitly outline what commander's and staffs must do to abbreviate the process under time constrained situations.[12] Major Lynch also recommended branch specific manuals and Mission Training Plans need standardization with doctrinal problem solving processes.

Like CGSOC students, School of Advanced Military Studies students have elected to research the Military Decision-Making Process for various reasons. Major Frame's 1996 monograph entitled "Gazing Into the Crystal Ball Together: Wargaming and Visualization for the Commander and Staff,"[13] is critical of the MDMP. In his writings, Frame concludes the current Military Decision-Making Process doctrine has shifted the primary responsibility of wargaming to the staff. Frame writes that narratives in Field Manual 101-5 fail to articulate the roles and responsibilities of the commander.[14] As a result, commanders rarely wargame with their staff. Consequentially, a common vision is not shared between a staff and the commander.

In addition to CGSOC and School of Advanced Military Studies students, institutional studies have frequently been sanctioned in order to evaluate the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process. One example of institutional research is the US Army Research Institute's January 1993 study "Desert Storm Challenges: An Overview of Desert Storm Survey Responses."[15] The ARI conducted an adequacy analysis of the MDMP with selective Desert Storm participants. Of 1667 responses 1396 or 84 percent said there was not an overwhelming problem with the Military Decision-Making Process.[16]

The validity of these conclusions was later questioned after extensive, follow-up interviews with the participants. Some of the comments stated during interviews represented notable deviations from the Military Decision-Making Process's doctrinal application criteria. These deviations from doctrine were apparently ignored by the respondents when judging the adequacy of the MDMP. The ARI also refuted the survey's adequacy conclusion due to the large amount of time available to plan the initial attack. In addition, the over abundance of staff personnel available to surveyed units may have contributed to conditions not likely to be experienced on future battlefields. ARI also refuted the adequacy conclusion because a significant percentage of the respondents indicated that once the ground war started "No process was used."[17]

Gary Klein's May 1989 *Military Review* article, "Strategies of Decision-Making,"[18] supports the *Liberalist* school of thought. Klein contends military decision-makers rely too heavily on analytical decision-making tools like the Military Decision-Making Process. The article outlines the advantages and disadvantages of the analytical systems and offers a "recognitional model." Klein agrees with Major Lynch's contention that the Military Decision-Making Process, in its multi-attribute form, does not work under time pressure because it takes too long.

Klein deduces there are basically two techniques for solving problems. One model is Field Manual 101-5's analytical approach. Klein says the other model is the recognitional approach, used by many experienced decision-makers. The recognitional model avoids expending time and energy seeking the best option and strives to find a practical option that works. There is no deliberated option comparison in the recognitional model, therefore decisions flow quicker. RPD or recognition-primed decisions are a function of a decision-maker's expertise level. The greater the expertise the larger the percentage of RPDs.

Greg Foster, a professor at the Industrial War College contends the critical thinking and reasoning skills necessary to exploit any non-analytical decision making systems, are largely discouraged within the military. In his commentary, "Research, Writing, and the Mind of the Strategist,"[19] Foster concludes "pervasive doctrine, regulations, and operating procedures breed an orthodoxy that drives out originality."[20] He believes these factors within the military organization need to change in order to create an environment that encourages creative reasoning and thought. Foster states the greatest contradiction for a profession whose *raison d'etre* is closely tied to outwitting adversaries is to promulgate an environment that fails to embrace non-analytical reasoning.[21]

As a response to the *Liberalist* research, the academic curriculum at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) is currently undergoing some evolution. Lessons were recently added to the CGSOC that focus on critical and creative thinking. The reasoning concepts taught in these courses, assist officers in developing their own conceptual process of figuring solutions to problems. The course modifications are intended to facilitate the CGSOC student's transition from the world of "direct leadership" at the junior level to "indirect leadership" at the senior level. The course provides ways to develop a broader and richer perspective from which decisions can be made. Two key works of the *Traditionalist* and *Liberalist* schools of thought help conceptualize these perspectives.

Key Works

The key document for the *Traditionalist* view of the MDMP is chapter five, of the US Army's Field Manual 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*. Chapter five describes the Military Decision-Making Process as a procedure used by the commander and his staff to arrive at and execute tactical decisions. The process consists of seven steps. The description identifies what is done by the commander and staff during each step, but it does not describe the details of how or why to conduct them. As stated in the text "the disadvantage of using the MDMP is that it is a time-consuming process."[22]

Supporting the *Liberalist* school of thought is Jon Fallesen's "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research." Jon Fallesen, a behavioral scientist employed by the Army Research Institute and author of as many as thirty-five research studies on the Military Decision-Making Process is a noted scholar in this area. In his treatment of tactical planning Fallesen reviewed available research on the human dimension of planning. The summation of Fallesen's research concludes that doctrinal mandates to compare options concurrently and to avoid making early decisions may not be appropriate.[23] The findings determine that alternatives selected without deliberated option comparison, as directed by current MDMP doctrine, produce equal or better results. Fallesen attributes success in decision-making to staffs acquiring and understanding information thus improving their situational awareness. The report indicates that higher quality staff procedures, and a early decision method enhances a staff's planning success.[24]

The adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process emerged in much of the research summarized in Fallesen's report. At a Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) war fighter, the Army's Division level simulation exercise, a division commander reported the Military Decision-Making Process was too formal and required too much time under

tactical conditions.[25] Lower echelon commanders having consternation with the MDMP were other sources of this research conclusion.

In a recent interview, Fallesen described his perspective on the Military Decision-Making Process.[26] The MDMP, with its very formal structure is synonymous with economic theory. In economic theory, decisions are made to optimize the outcome with the greatest benefit and least cost. In the MDMP theory, attributes of a problem can be translated into certain and unchangeable values. Unfortunately, the dynamics of combat and adversarial situations conflict with the assumption of certainty that the MDMP theory requires to operate. In essence, the selection of an alternative, using MDMP theory, creates a false sense of security in a selected course of action.

Fallesen argued that the Military Decision-Making Process is not a decision-making process but more accurately defined as a planning or designing tool. He also concluded that the complexities of developing unique solutions to dynamic situations can not be simply resolved with flowcharts, diagrams and one chapter of text in Field Manual 101-5.

Fallesen believed, "It is one's knowledge and how they think about that knowledge that will lead to a better or worse solution and/or decision." Improved critical and creative thinking is the path by which improvements to tactical planning will occur.

Conclusion

The facts presented in this chapter illustrate a portion of the academic trends at CGSC and other military training colleges in analyzing the adequacy of the Military Decision-Making Process for use in military operations. If the Military Decision-Making Process is failing to meet the needs of the conventional combined arms branches, what is its functionality for Special Forces staffs at battalion/group level? From this inquiry and the apparent lack of academic analysis of the Military Decision-Making Process in Special Forces operations, further research on this subject is substantiated.

[1]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Special Operations Training Bulletin*, (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Directorate, December 1996), 3.

[2]David A. Fastabend, "Fighting by the Numbers: The Role of Quantification in Tactical Decision Making" (School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1987).

[3]Ibid., 1.

[4]Steve A. Fondacaro, "Airland Battle and SOF: A Proposal for an Interim Doctrine for Joint Special Operations" (School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1989), 2.

[5]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Special Operations Training Bulletin* (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Directorate, February 1995), 2.

[6]Ibid., 1.

[7]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Special Operations Training Bulletin* (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Directorate, December 1996),

[8]US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, *Special Forces Qualification Course Deliberate Decision-Making and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* (Ft. Bragg, NC: GPO, February 1997).

[9]David A. Fastabend, "Fighting by the Numbers: The Role of Quantification in Tactical Decision Making" (School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1987).

[10]John Antal, "Combat Orders: An Analysis of the Tactical Orders Process" (Masters of Military Art and Sciences thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1989).

[11]Tim D. Lynch, "Problem-Solving Under Time Constraints: Alternatives for the US Army Commander's Estimate" (School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1989).

[12]Major Lynch's 1989 observations were integrated into the May 1997 *Field Manual 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations.*

[13]John E. Frame, "Gazing Into the Crystal Ball: Wargaming and Visualization for the US Army Commander and Staff." (School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1996).

[14]Major Frame's 1996 observations were integrated into the May 1997 *Field Manual 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations.*

[15]Stanely M.Halpin, "Desert Storm Challenges: An Overview of Desert Storm Survey Responses (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: " US Army Research Institute, January 1993).

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., Table 10.

[18]Gary A.Klein, "Strategies of Decision Making," *Military Review* (May 1989): 28.

[19]Gregory Foster, "Research, Writing, and the Mind of the Strategist," *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 1996): 111.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 112.

[22]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-1.

[23]Jon J. Fallesen, "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Research Institute September 1993), viii.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., 11.

[26]Jon J. Fallesen, interview with author by electronic mail, 16 October 1997. Ft Leavenworth, KS.

CHAPTER 3

MDMP RATIONALE

Purpose

This chapter examines in detail the discrete doctrinal and implied rationale for each of the seven steps within the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP). The analysis done in this chapter forms the basis for the overall adequacy evaluation of the Military Decision-Making Process for use by Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level. By analyzing the Military Decision-Making Process rationales, both doctrinal and implied, with Special Forces operational differences, outlined in chapter four, this research can further determine if the Military Decision-Making Process is adequate for Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level. The intent of this chapter is *not* to rephrase the contents of FM 101-5's chapter five on *how* to use the Military Decision-Making Process, but more importantly determine the doctrinal and implied *why* of the process.

Background

The Military Decision-Making Process was developed for war fighting headquarters characterized by consistent factors common to most combined arms branches. It was these factors from which the MDMP emerged. The four ambient factors of conventional units are span of control, interdependent subordinate units, synchronization, and employment criteria.[1] The first factor exhibited in units for which the MDMP has developed is a standardized span of control of combat forces ranging from three to five major subordinate units.

The second ambient factor from which the Military Decision-Making Process emerged is the presence of a symbiotic relationship among subordinate units. As shown in Figure 3, this symbiosis is characterized by units being cognizant of the activities of their brethren adjacent units. Frequently, the success of an individual unit's mission may be contingent on the achievements of an adjacent unit. This symbiotic relationship creates interdependent units. This

requires their higher headquarters to define success of an operation on the collective attainment of individual supporting missions. Furthermore, this symbiotic tendency among subordinate units, demands that staff planners strive for synergy in execution.

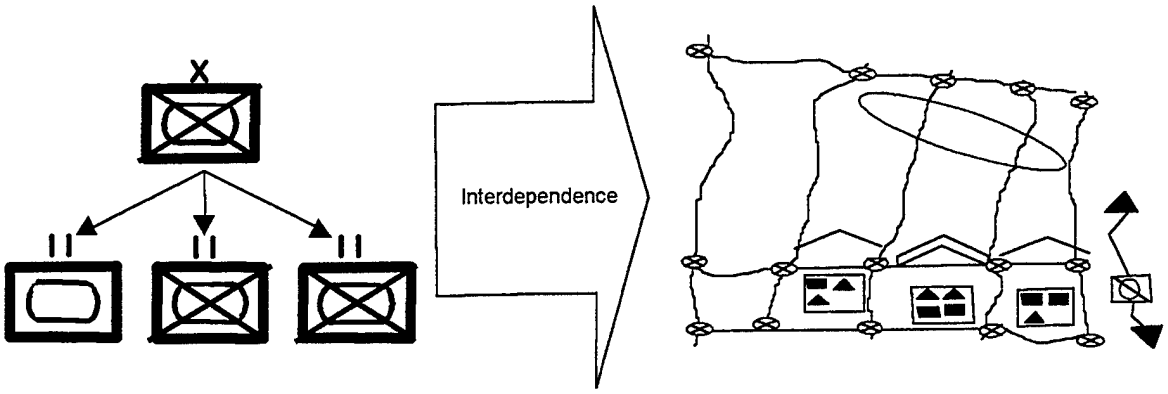

Figure 3. Subordinate Unit Interdependence.

Synergy is defined as a process whereby the total output of a well coordinated organization is greater than the sum of its individual parts. Through staff integration, information sharing and a mutual understanding of other unit's activities synergy can be achieved.

Additionally, the mutually supporting/symbiotic relationship between subordinate units requires higher staffs optimize finite resources through centralized planning. Among each other, interdependent subordinate units, will coordinate directly with each other to further harmonize the leveraging of resources first initiated by their higher headquarters.

Synchronization is the third ambient factor among conventional units from which the Military Decision-Making Process emerged. The necessity for operational synergy coupled with the maximization of finite resources creates a demand for synchronization. The Army's AirLand Battle doctrine defines synchronization as arranging activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point.[2] The desired synergistic effect and management of finite resources are leveraged between subordinate units through complex staff synchronization. The Military Decision-Making Process provides a basis for synchronizing combat power among interdependent units. The fourth

factor common to most combined arms branches, from which the Military Decision-Making Process emanated, is employment criteria.

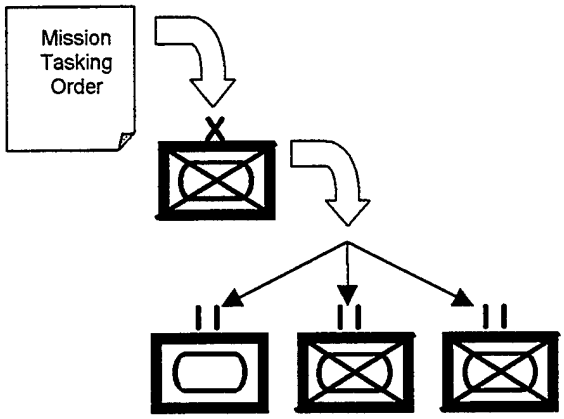

Figure 4. Conventional Mission Tasking Order Process.

In combat, military strategists insulate the interdependent/symbiotic attribute of conventional units by focusing on employing a unit in total. By tasking a unit with missions that do not enable a Commander to mass and synchronize the unit's combat power, its collective "*punch*" is diluted.

Therefore, the mission tasking process for conventional units always consider the inherent weaknesses of interdependent units when employed. Employing a unit in a *piece-meal* fashion inhibits its organic requirement for synergy, and is avoided in most mid-to-high intensity combat situations. The four ambient factors common to most combined arms units and their interrelationships are illustrated in Figure 5.

The Military Decision-Making Process

The Military Decision-Making Process, a seven step process, begins with the receipt or anticipation of a new mission.[3]

Step 1. Receipt of Mission:

A mission is normally issued from a higher headquarters or initiated as a derivation of an ongoing mission. The order received from a higher headquarters normally provides the what, when, and why the mission is being tasked to subordinate force as a whole.

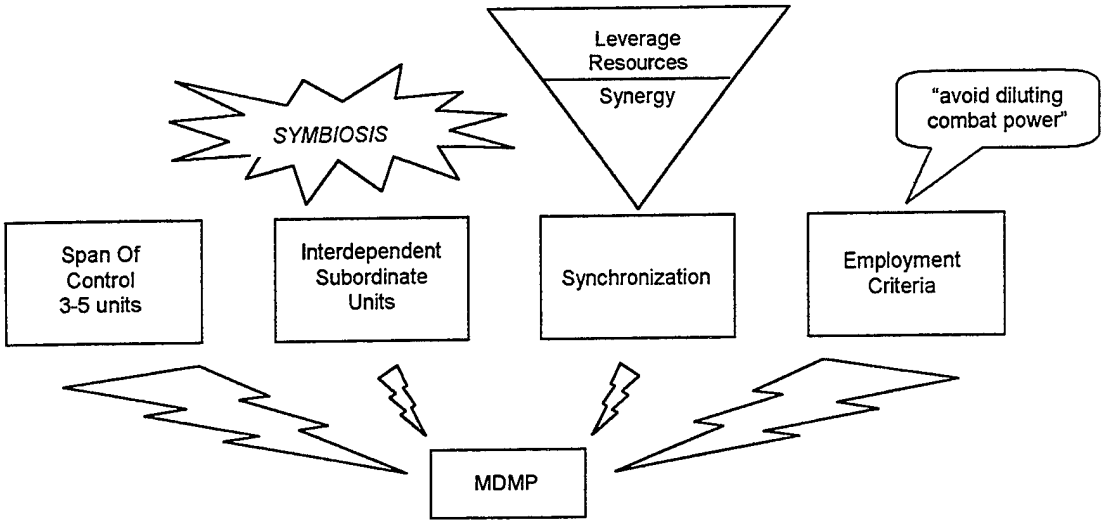

Figure 5. Ambient Factors of Conventional Units.

Occasionally conventional higher headquarters initiate mission tasking orders directing support from a subordinate unit requiring only a portion of a unit's available combat power. These taskings are normally processed by staffs in an abbreviated fashion. The commander typically provides limited guidance for the subordinate unit tasking.

As a result, higher commander must entrust his subordinate commanders with developing a detailed battlefield visualization for the partial tasking. When these taskings encompass only a portion of the commander's available combat power, a staff will focus on coordinating finite resources and charge the subordinate commander with developing a visualization and planning the lion's share of the mission tasking.

For missions requiring the majority of a unit's combat power the commander's perspective can be translated into a battlefield visualization and later be linked to a concept by way of the commander's intent. Output of step one of the Military Decision-Making Process is the first warning order to any subordinate units and the commander's initial guidance to his staff.

The initial commanders guidance to his staff may include, how to abbreviate the Military Decision-Making Process, initial time allocation, and liaison officers to dispatch. It may additionally include initial reconnaissance requirements, any authorized movement, and additional tasks the commander wants the staff to accomplish.[4]

Step 2. Mission Analysis:

The second step in the Military Decision-Making Process is *Mission Analysis*. The purpose of the second step of the MDMP is to allow the commander and his staff to see the terrain, see the enemy, and see themselves, within the context of the higher headquarters' mission tasking.[5]

During *mission analysis*, the commander and staff translate conditions present on the battlefield into usable data that facilitates developing methods to accomplish the mission. They do so by analyzing various portions of the higher headquarters' mission tasking order. The higher's mission statement and concept of operations, the commander's intent two levels up, the current situation and resources available are only some of the areas staffs analyze and coordinate to identify the desired endstate.[6]

The desired conclusion of the second step of the Military Decision-Making Process is a staff that has a shared visualization of an operation in time and space consistent with their commanders intent and the intents of commander's two echelons above.[7] Critical to achieving this condition within a staff is the commander's articulation of his battlefield visualization.

Battlefield visualization is the process whereby the commander develops a clear understanding of his current state with relation to the enemy and environment. Then the

commander envisions a desired endstate including the sequence of activities moving his force from its current state to endstate.[8]

The staff assists the commander with his visualization by collecting, processing, analyzing and transforming data into knowledge. But, the commander must be able to first implant his vision of the operation into the minds of his staff.[9] The battlefield visualization is a key component to the remaining steps of the Military Decision-Making Process.

Each of the succeeding steps within the Military Decision-Making Process builds on the information analyzed in the previous steps.[10] The staff must successfully complete step two before proceeding to step three. The second step, mission analysis, of the Military Decision-Making Process is composed of seventeen sub-steps. See Figure 6.

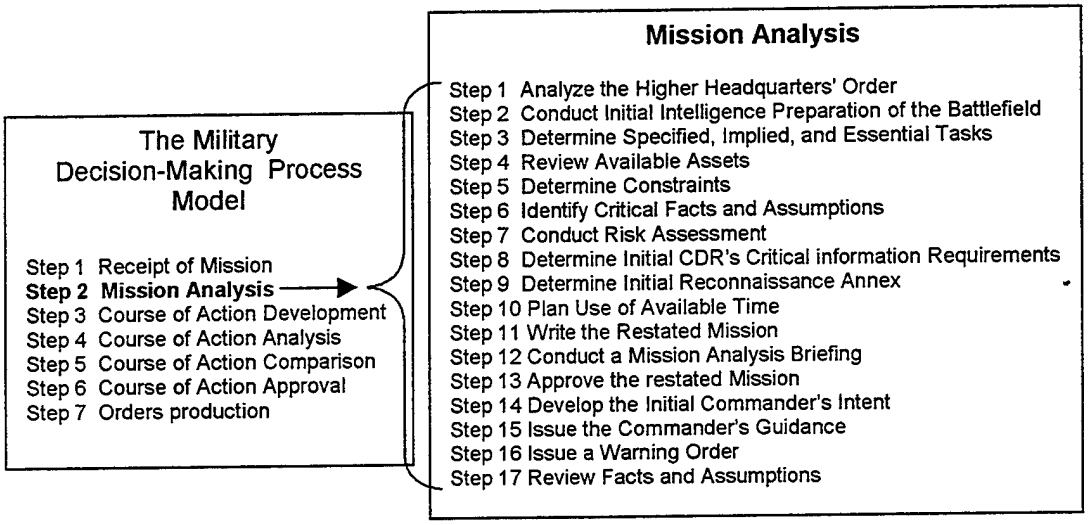

Figure 6. Mission Analysis Steps. Source: U.S. Army Field Manual 101-5, Staff Organizations and Operations, (Washington: Government Printing Office, May 1997), 5-5.

Sub-Step 1. Analyze The Higher Headquarters' Order: In this step of *mission analysis* a commander and staff evaluate their higher headquarters' intent statement, concept of operation and how other interdependent units are vertically and horizontally nested.

Nested plans embody a concept which articulates their interdependent linkage of main and supporting efforts in a synchronized manner from corps through battalion. Symbiotic, interdependent relationships are optimized when units understand how they are nested both vertically and horizontally. The horizontal linkage between main and supporting efforts ensures the action of a unit will take place in concert with those units on their left and right.[11]

Sub-Step 2. Conduct Initial Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB): IPB is an analytical methodology employed to reduce uncertainties concerning the enemy, weather, and terrain for all types of operations. The purpose of the IPB is the generation of intelligence products allowing the staff to see the terrain and how it will impact on the operation. Using products generated from the IPB process, the commander and staff can identify high value targets (HVTs) and high payoff targets (HPTs) in the battle area.[12] IPB allows the unit to see how the enemy will fight. IPB is the responsibility of all staff members and includes the commander. Staff officers assist the S2 in developing the situation template within their own areas of expertise.[13]

The output for this phase of *mission analysis* is a modified combined operations overlay (MCOO) and enemy situation templates. The output might also include an initial intelligence collection plan which may result in the deployment of reconnaissance assets.

Sub-Step 3. Determine Specified, Implied, And Essential Tasks: These tasks are identified and analyzed in relation to a unit's current location/situation to include potential areas of operation in the future. Resource requirement forecasting for these identified tasks is also conducted during this phase of *mission analysis*.

The output for this step within mission analysis is a tentative list of tasks to be executed during a given operation. Within this overall list is a sub-list of tasks to be executed in order to accomplish the mission.[14] These are the essential tasks.

Sub-Step 4. Review Available Assets: The commander and staff examine the current task organization and conduct an analysis of the specified and implied tasks to be accomplished with the available logistics and combat power.[15] If shortages exist, additional resources are identified/requested to support mission execution. Output for this step is a resource shortage list.[16] Additionally, the commander and staff determine an initial task conceptualization of units on the battlefield while weighing current and anticipated capabilities with tasks assigned.

Sub-Step 5. Determine Constraints: Constraints are defined as a requirement, directed by a higher headquarters, to do something or a prohibition on action.[17] Constraints are normally outlined within the higher headquarters' scheme of maneuver, concept of operations and coordinating instructions.

Sub-Step 6. Identify Critical Facts And Assumptions: Facts are statements of known details concerning the situation. Assumptions are theories about the current situation presumed to be true in the absence of facts. Assumptions must meet the validity and necessity test. A valid assumption is one which is likely to be true. The necessity test is whether an assumption identified by a staff is essential for continued planning. If planning can continue without the assumption, it is unnecessary and should be discarded.[18]

Sub-Step 7. Conduct Risk Assessment: When assessing risk the commander and staff must evaluate two kinds of risk, tactical and accidental risk. Tactical risk is associated with the enemy on the battlefield. Accidental risk is associated with all the other potential hazards to the operation.[19] The Risk Management Process consists of five steps: Identify hazards, assess hazards, develop controls and make risk decisions, implement controls, supervise and evaluate.[20]

Sub-Step 8. Determine Initial Commanders Critical Information Requirements (CCIR): CCIR is sub-composed of three distinct components. These components assist the commander with his or her visualization. CCIR serve as a screening tool for information flowing to the commander. The CCIR outline information crucial to the commander in making decisions.

CCIR sub-components are priority intelligence requirements (PIR), essential elements of friendly information (EEFI), and friendly forces information requirements (FFIR).

PIR is the tool around which reconnaissance, surveillance and targeting revolves. It is how the commander visualizes the enemy. PIR assists in answering questions that must be answered in order to accomplish the mission.[21] An example of PIR, is the location of an enemy's regimental artillery group (RAG).

EEFI is the tool around which operational security measures (OPSEC) and force protection efforts are focused. It summarizes friendly information the commander believes needs to be protected from enemy reconnaissance/collection assets. EEFI is an attempt to discern what information is essential to the enemy in order to defeat friendly units.[22] An example of EEFI, is the location of a friendly division's aviation brigade's tactical assembly area.

FFIR provides focus to the staff about friendly adjacent and subordinate unit information needed by the commander to make informed and timely decisions.[23] An example of FFIR, is the readiness status of M1A1s within the unit.

Sub-Step 9. Determine Initial Reconnaissance Annex: The IPB and CCIR combine to identify intelligence collection requirements. These requirements become the focal point for the reconnaissance plan of the unit. Collection and recon assets are employed as soon as possible to provide information to the commander and staff to facilitate continued planning efforts.[24]

Sub-Step 10. Plan Use Of Available Time: This critical task of the analysis evaluates the time line provided by the higher headquarters, with the estimated time to accomplish the essential tasks. An analysis of the time required to execute the essential tasks evaluated against the enemy's time line. This analysis provides windows of opportunity for the friendly unit to exploit and conversely when the friendly unit is at risk to enemy activity. Available time can be maximized via warning orders, allowing subordinate units to initiate parallel planning.[25]

Sub-Step 11. Write The Restated Mission Statement: The restated mission statement is a clear concise statement of the task or tasks to be accomplished by the commander and the purpose to be achieved.[26] Carl Von Clausewitz summarized the function of purpose, "Purpose takes precedence over task: If a battalion is ordered to drive an enemy from the hill, a bridge, etc., the true purpose is normally to occupy that point. The destruction of the enemy's force is only a means to an end, a secondary matter. If mere demonstration is enough to cause the enemy to abandon his position the objective has been achieved."

Sub-Step 12. Conduct A Mission Analysis Briefing: The briefing emphasizes relevant conclusions reached during the analysis. This is a key initial step in developing and disseminating the commander's battlefield visualization among the staff. It provides the commander and the staff with a uniform reference point from which they later initiate course of action development.[27]

Sub-Step 13. Approve The Restated Mission: This represents the commander's concurrence that the staff's proposed restated mission statement satisfies the requisites of the higher headquarters as well as his own assessment.

Sub-Step 14. Develop The Initial Commander's Intent: Intent links the commander's battlefield visualization with the concept of operations.[28] The commander's intent does not include the "method" by which the force will get from its current state to the end state.[29] It establishes the foundation and direct linkage for the battlefield visualization.[30]

Sub-Step 15. Finalize and Issue the Commander's Guidance: To further disseminate his battlefield visualization, the commander issues additional guidance to the staff after the mission analysis brief. This guidance will provide additional information to the staff on how to proceed through the remaining portion of the Military Decision-Making Process. Specific guidance to the staff is crucial if the intent of the staff planning is to maximize available time for the subordinate units.

Sub-Step 16. Issue A Warning Order: Immediately after the staff receives the commander's guidance, they issue a warning order to subordinate and supporting units.

Sub-Step 17: Review Facts And Assumptions: Facts and assumptions should be reviewed throughout the process. As assumptions become facts or invalid, and facts simply change, modifications to the plan may be in order. These changes must be assessed by the commander and staff on how they impact on the operation.

Step 3. Course of Action Development

Course of action (COA) development is the first phase in a series of analytical steps used to synchronize interdependent subordinate units in a synergistic fashion. Another implied rationale of course of action development is to leverage finite resources among subordinate units at the decisive moment of an engagement.

A course of action developed as an output of this step must meet four criteria.[31] A course of action must be suitable, feasible, acceptable, and distinguishable. A suitable course of action complies with the commander's guidance. A feasible course of action meets the mission requirements within available time, space, and resources. An acceptable course of action is subjectively evaluated by the cost required with advantage gained. The advantage achieved must justify the cost, especially with regard to casualties. Distinguishable COAs differ from others in the use of reserves, task organizations, day or night operations, or different schemes of maneuver.

As mentioned earlier "synchronization is the arranging activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point."[32] Course of action development enables staffs to develop a synergistic plan, via synchronization, to accomplish an assigned mission. As shown in Figure 7, course of action development provides synchronized concepts with optimized finite resources at the decisive time and place.[33]

Courses of action developed centrally to achieve synergy among subordinate units is the goal of course of action development. The output for the third step in the Military Decision-

Making Process is one or more courses of action addressing the enemy COAs, as directed by the commander. In summary, the implied rationale for course of action development is a deliberate attempt to design unpredictable, synergistic methods using interdependent subordinate efforts while simultaneously leveraging finite resources.

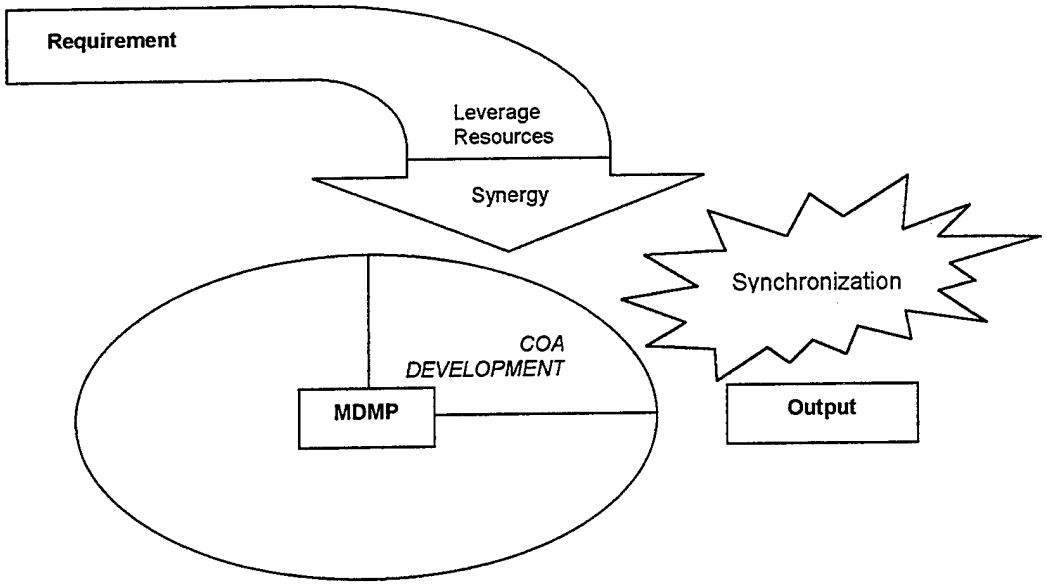

Figure 7. COA Development Rationale.

Course of action development, consists of six sub-tasks. The steps within course of action development are analyze combat power, generate options, array initial options, develop the scheme of maneuver, assign headquarters, and prepare course of action statements and sketches.[34]

Sub-Step 1. Analyze Combat Power: Combat power is the effect of combining the elements of maneuver, firepower, protection, and leadership in combat against the enemy. In this sub-step of course of action development the commander and staff integrate and apply the effects of these elements with other battlefield operating systems (BOS) to generate overwhelming combat power to accomplish the mission at minimal cost.[35]

Sub-Step 2. Generate Options: The staff generates several courses of action capable of defeating the enemy's courses of action. In each course of action the staff determines the

decisive point. The decisive point is identified and is the focus for the main of for the unit. All other tasks enhance the main effort in a synergistic method and are called supporting efforts. The purpose of the main effort relates directly to the overall mission of the headquarters synchronizing its subordinate units. The purposes of supporting efforts relate directly to the main effort.[36]

Designating a point of main effort and supporting efforts help units and their staffs to allocate resources accordingly. They provides focus to the operation while setting priorities, determining risks, promoting unity of effort, and facilitating understanding of the commander's intent.[37]

Sub-Step 3. Array Initial Forces: The initial array of forces provides the total number of units needed and furthers the methods of dealing with the enemy during scheme of maneuver development.[38] If the number arrayed is greater than the number available, the course of action may be deemed unacceptable and the shortfall is added to the initial requirement for additional resources identified in mission analysis.

Sub-Step 4. Develop Scheme of Maneuver: The scheme of maneuver describes how the synchronized, interdependent subordinate units will accomplish the commander's intent. Step three of the Military Decision-Making Process, course of action development, provides the output used in the remaining three analytical steps of the MDMP.

Step 4. Course of Action Analysis:

Step four of the Military Decision-Making Process has eight sub-steps assisting in the analysis process.[39] The purpose of this step is to further refine and synchronize the COAs in time and space.[40] The key outputs for this step are refined course of actions. Other outputs are illustrated in Figure 8.

Step 5. Course of Action Comparison:

Step five's inputs are refined derivations of the outputs of step three, course of action development, of the Military Decision-Making Process. Through the use of decision criteria selected by the commander and staff as well as each COA's relative advantages/disadvantages a comparison is done of all the course of action options. The output for this step is a recommended course of action, presented to the commander in a decision brief.[41]

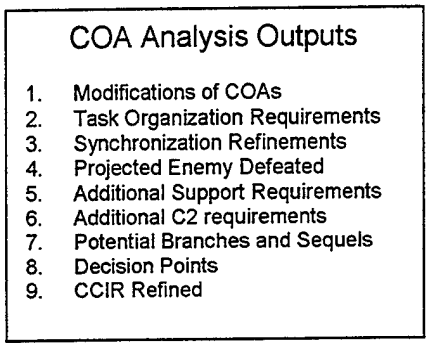

Figure 8. COA Analysis Outputs. Source: William Salter, "Combat Decision-Making Process (CDMP)," (National Training Center, Ft Irwin, Ca., 1995), 22.

Step 6. Course of Action Approval:

The sixth step in the Military Decision-Making Process is course of action approval. Course of action approval is the commander's decision on the course of action he or she believes most advantageous.[42]

Step 7. Orders Production:

Step seven of the Military Decision-Making Process graphically and verbally portrays the unit's operation to accomplish the mission.[43] The output for this step is a clear understanding of the mission, subordinate unit's specified tasks and purpose in support of that mission.[44]

Conclusion

The current doctrine associated with Military Decision-Making Process is the culmination of years of development and experimentation. The underlying purpose for the Military Decision-Making Process however, has remained unchanged during its evolution--to synergize the effects of subordinate, symbiotic members. Thus, the overarching implied rationale for conventional combined arms battalion and brigade staffs to use the Military Decision-Making Process is simple. These staffs use the Military Decision-Making Process to synchronize interdependent, mutually supporting subordinate units and optimize among them finite resources required to secure the commander's intent.

The relationship of the third step, course of action development, with the remaining steps in the Military Decision-Making Process is to provide the initial process by which the remaining steps further develop the COAs into viable courses of action and eventually an operational plan. The cascading derivation of outputs initially processed from the course of action development step through orders production may all be traced back to the course of action development. Without the need for the course of action development step, the remaining COA processing steps are immediately nullified and unnecessary.

Mission tasking orders ***lacking*** the organizational requirement of synergy among interdependent subordinate units may allow expeditious orders processing by higher staffs. Staff expediency of these mission tasking orders increases available time and provides subordinate units with more time to conduct their own MDMP and troop leading procedures. Focusing staff efforts of certain portions of the MDMP allows them to gain (and pass down) better situational awareness as described in Jon Fallesen's successful staff attributes.[45]

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[1]The ambient factors of conventional units were deduced by the author of this thesis during his research.

[2]US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 1993), 2-8.

[3]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-3.

[4]Ibid., 5-5.

[5]William Salter, "Combat Decision Making Process (CDMP)" (Ft. Irwin, CA: US Army National Training Center, Observer/Controller Operations, 1995. Photocopied), 4.

[6]US Army Command and General Staff College, *C310 Combat Operations* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff Officers Course, GPO, July 1997), 15.

[7]William Salter, "Combat Decision Making Process (CDMP)" (Ft. Irwin, CA: US Army National Training Center, Observer/Controller Operations, 1995. Photocopied), 4.

[8]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 1-3.

[9]William Salter, "Combat Decision Making Process (CDMP)" (Ft. Irwin, CA: US Army National Training Center, Observer/Controller Operations, 1995. Photocopied), 4.

[10]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Special Operations Training Bulletin* (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Directorate, December 1996), 6.

[11]US Army Command and General Staff College, *C310 Combat Operations* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff Officers Course, GPO, July 1997), 17.

[12]US Department of the Army, *FM 34-130 Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1989), 1-1.

[13]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-6.

[14]Ibid., 5-7.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., J-2.

[20]Ibid., J-1.

[21]Ibid., 5-8.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-9.

[27]Ibid.

[28]US Department of the Army, *FM 71-100 Division Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, August 1996), 3-22.

[29]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-9.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., 5-11.

[32]US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 1993), 2-8.

[33]William Salter, "Combat Decision Making Process (CDMP)" (Ft. Irwin, CA: US Army National Training Center, Observer/Controller Operations, 1995. Photocopied), 4.

[34]Ibid., 5-14.

[35]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-11.

[36]Ibid., 5-12.

[37]US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 1993), 6-6.

[38]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-13.

[39]The focus of this chapter is on the rationale/purposes of the MDMP. The inputs to step four of the MDMP are derivatives of COA development. As a result, a detailed discussion of the sub-steps and their rationales were required in COA development. The eight sub-steps of the COA analysis are process oriented and are irrelevant to this research. Critical to the research is the overall rationale for each step and its organic output .

[40]William Salter, "Combat Decision Making Process (CDMP)" (Ft. Irwin, CA: US Army National Training Center, Observer/Controller Operations, 1995. Photocopied), 4.

[41]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-24.

[42]Ibid., 5-26.

[43] William Salter, "Combat Decision Making Process (CDMP)" (Ft. Irwin, CA: US Army National Training Center, Observer/Controller Operations, 1995. Photocopied), 4.

[44]Ibid.

[45]US Army Command and General Staff College, *C310 Combat Operations* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff Officers Course, GPO, July 1997), 16.

CHAPTER 4

SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Purpose

This chapter highlights the operational differences of a Special Forces battalion/group to further formulate the adequacy evaluation of the Military Decision-Making Process for Special Forces staffs. The output of this chapter will be compared with the Military Decision-Making Process rationales discussed in chapter three.

Background

Within the Special Forces operating environment the Military Decision-Making Process has been completely institutionalized. After its inception as a combined arms branch in 1987, the Special Forces branch embraced many operational, doctrinal and organizational concepts of the conventional branches. The Special Forces leadership wanted the branch to quickly assimilate into the main stream Army.

Some of the many challenges the Special Forces leadership oversaw included standardization of terminology and doctrine consistent in content and design to conventional Army items and doctrine. These evolutions, within the Special Forces branch, were necessary and have significantly contributed to the branch's improved readiness and interoperability with other Army units.

The use of the Military Decision-Making Process, in Special Forces units, was another evolution in the branch providing standardization and logic to the mission planning cycle. The rationale for implementing this useful tool was well founded and provided Special Forces planners with a uniform mechanism to develop orders in a linear, succinct fashion.

The integration of Army doctrine into the Special Forces branch served the organization well. However, operational differences between conventional combined arms branches and the Special Forces branch exist. These operational differences provide impetus for additional

analysis of the Military Decision-Making Process for use by Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level while planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

Operational Differences

As a component of Army Special Operations Forces (SOF), Special Forces (SF) units plan and conduct military operations throughout the spectrum of conflict. In peacetime, conflict, and war a Special Forces unit's unique operational characteristics contrast them significantly from other conventional combined arms branches. Operational differences exist in span of control, unit interdependence, and functions of their respective headquarters.

Span of Control

In variation to a conventional combined arms branch with a combatant span of control ranging between three and five maneuver units, a Special Forces battalion/group commander may have as many as eight combatant subordinate units. As shown in Figure 9, Special Forces subordinate units under the control of a battalion/group headquarters might include Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-As), Special Operations Command and Control Elements (SOCCE), Advanced Operating Bases (AOB), Special Operations Teams-Alpha (SOT-A). On occasion and depending on mission basis, a Special Forces battalion/group might have operational control of a conventional US/coalition maneuver unit.

Unit Interdependence

Prior to any mission, SFOD-As and other Special Forces units are sequestered from each other for planning and rehearsals. Referred to as the isolation phase, this compartmentalization of subordinate units is a significant matter of operational security (OPSEC). "SFOD-As and other teams committed to separate missions and separate operational areas are isolated to preclude mission compromise."[1]

The isolation phase grew out of the need for extreme secrecy in training clandestine special operation forces in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during WWII. The idea was

not only to preserve secrecy and instill in agents the necessity of concealing their actions from others, but to remove as many distracters as possible from the training. The practice of compartmentalization prevented agents who might be captured from compromising the remaining operations.[2]

Colonel Aaron Bank, the founder of Special Forces, served in the OSS and used his WWII experiences as the model for Special Forces doctrine and organization. In today's ambiguous environment, isolation continues to be important when operational security is critical.

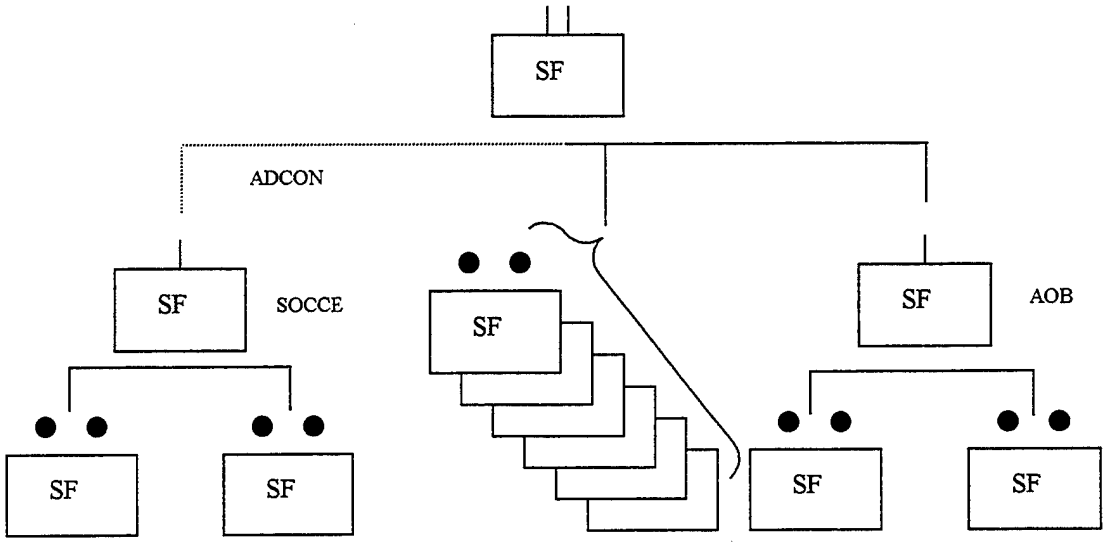

Figure 9. SF Span of Control.

Compartmentalization of Special Forces units contrasts with General Depuy's organizational concept of horizontal nesting. Horizontally and vertically nested by the Special Forces battalion/group staff, the SFOD-As, for security purposes, are not always made cognizant of how their respective missions are horizontally nested relative to other deploying Special Forces subordinate units. See Figure 10. General Depuy explained this concept best, "Allowing your subordinates to understand how their "why" directly or indirectly supports the units around them increases understanding and reduces uncertainty."[3]

The compartmentalization of subordinate Special Forces units further indicates that synergy among these units is not an operational requirement. In fact, SFOD-As are not typically massed in a complex, synchronized manner. Force multiplication rather than direct force application is the SFOD-A's forte.[4] These subordinate Special Forces units are accurately described as mutually exclusive from one another. Furthermore, the success of one SFOD-A is not normally dependent on the success or failure of another SFOD-A.

This contrasts with the level of unit interdependence present in conventional combined arms branches. The purpose of unit interdependence in the combined arms branches is to achieve a collective synergy. Conventional combined arms units are nested, but are individually aware of how they are horizontally nested with units to their left and right. The horizontal linkage between main and supporting efforts ensures the action of one unit takes place in concert with those units on their flanks.[5]

Functions of Respective Headquarters

The functions of the Special Forces battalion/group headquarters are different than the conventional combined arms battalion/brigade headquarters. Functions of the Special Forces battalion/group headquarters during operations, differ from their conventional counterparts in mobility, and staff processing.

Mobility: The Special Forces battalion/group headquarters are different than the conventional combined arms battalion/brigade headquarters for its lack of mobility. Special Forces headquarters do not maneuver against its adversaries. Special Forces headquarters prepare and control non-interdependent subordinate units during specified missions.

The Special Forces headquarters, due to its lack of organic mobility and combat power assets is typically located in a fixed location, normally situated in a secured rear area. Site selection for a Special Forces headquarters' requires a location considered permissive for SOF

operations. These sites require host nation support and therefore are located in locales where level III hostile activities are at a minimum.

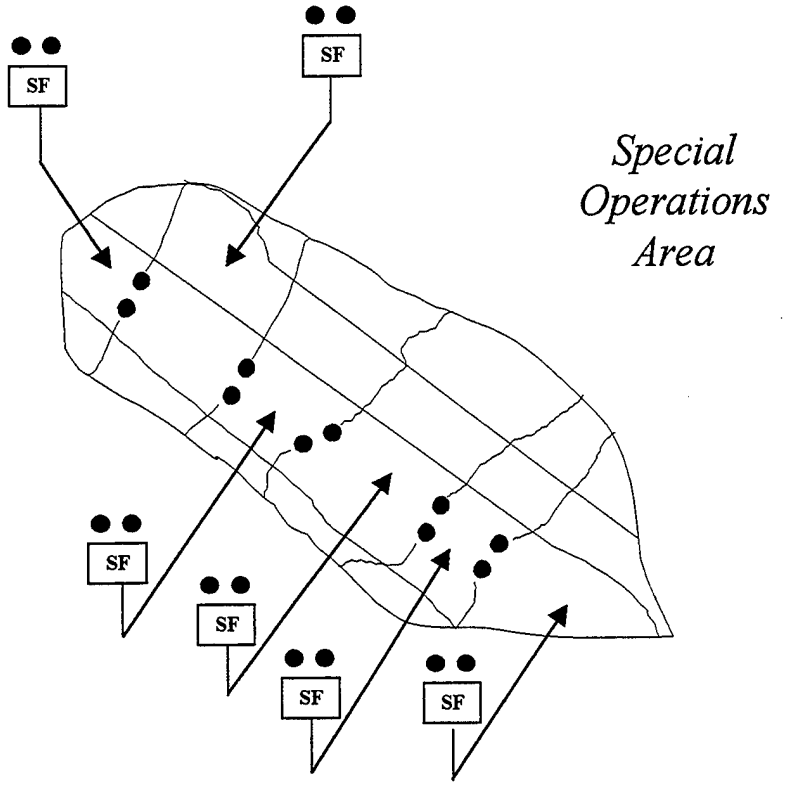

Figure 10. SFOD-A Non-Interdependence.

The Special Forces battalion/group headquarters' operational functions coupled with its organic inability to maneuver causes it to be separated from its subordinate units by substantial geographic distances. The Special Forces battalion/group headquarters is commonly co-located or within close proximity of its respective Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) headquarters. See Figure 11. Contrary to a Special Forces headquarters, is an infantry battalion/brigade headquarters, which has the capability to maneuver and is normally located within close proximity of its subordinate maneuver companies.

Staff Processing: Authorities disagree on this point, but the optimum range or span of control that can be effectively managed is normally not in excess of five to eight subordinates or units, doing routine activities.[6] The more specialized and complex the activities, the shorter the span of control.[7]

From the monitoring and reporting function of the expanded combatant span of control, the Special Forces Staff has a greater requirement than its combined arms counterpart. Within Special Forces units, individuals demonstrating a high degree of initiative is a small part of why Special Forces battalion/group staffs can monitor such vast arrays of subordinate units. Contributing to the Special Forces staff's capacity to monitor an extended span of control is lack of unit interdependence between SFOD-As.

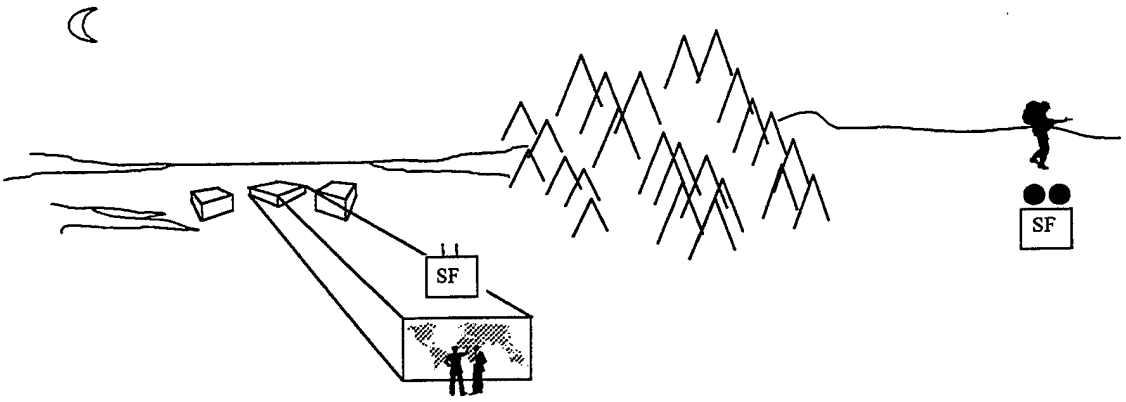

Figure 11. SF HQ Mobility/Geographic Location.

The extensive and sometimes elaborate spans of control are complicated for the Special Forces battalion/group staffs to monitor. In most cases, the Special Forces battalion/group staff supporting a contingency requires additional personnel to augment its normal staffing to oversee the myriad of functioning subordinate units.

The fixed location of the Special Forces headquarters' site significantly reduces the administrative and planning burden of the SF staff. It enables its staffs to focus on subordinate units and disregard the complicated mobility considerations common to combined arms units.

These considerations include accounting for displacement of the operations center while simultaneously maintaining command and control of subordinate units. The location of the Special Forces headquarters in a secure area, isolated from Level III enemy threats, allows the staff to disregard complex staff planning for displacement of the operations center.[8]

Another significant difference between staff processing of the conventional combined arms headquarters and the Special Forces battalion/group headquarters is the complex synchronization of subordinate units during execution phases. The normal lack of interdependence among Special Forces subordinate units infers that complex, centralized synchronization by the SF staff is virtually eliminated. Coordination of subordinate Special Forces units by their staffs at the battalion/group level is more simplified due to the autonomous nature of the SF mission profiles.

Resource allocation and prioritization is required by an Special Forces staff at the battalion/group level, but these coordinations normally occur during the infiltration and exfiltration phases, not during execution phases. The Special Forces battalion/group staffs rarely have to plan the complex tasks of synchronizing subordinate SFOD-As at the decisive moment of an engagement. Also different from the conventional headquarters and subsequently effecting staff processing is the typically sequential process by which Special Forces headquarters receive their numerous mission tasking orders (TASKORD) for SF missions.

The nature of the Special Forces environment, and the respective staffing processes during contingencies provide unique administrative challenges for the Special Forces commander and staff. The nature of the mission tasking process within Special Forces is a function of the emergent missions in which its Special Forces forces are employed.

Special Forces units empower a CINC or JTF commander with a versatile force multiplier and characteristically are employed against strategic and operational targets. This agile force enables a CINC to exploit success and seize initiative on short notice. As a result, not all

Special Forces missions can be anticipated during contingency planning or during its initial stages of execution.

Special Forces battalion/groups may be task organized subordinate to a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). After the initial phases of a contingency plan or operations order are completed, Special Forces mission tasking orders assume an emergent nature. Mission tasking orders (TASKORD) are transmitted to the battalion/group staff for further analysis. The JSOTF staff exploits the autonomous nature of the SFOD-As and designs most emergent TASKORDs to be directly tasked to SFOD-As.

On rare occasion, a battalion/group commander may elect to further task organize a mission tasking order to be executed by multiple subordinate units. This is not the norm and occurs with SFOD-As being supported by CA, PYSOP, or SOT-As. Unusual would describe a mission tasking order requiring two SFOD-As to simultaneously support each other.

Additionally, these JSOTF TASKORDs are sequentially spaced over time in uneven and sporadic patterns as a function of mission requirements identified by a CINC or JTF commander. A Special Forces staff may receive emergent a TASKORD twenty-four hours after arriving in a operational theater. The initial TASKORD may be followed by other distinctly different TASKORDs with only minutes or hours separating the different taskings. Subsequent TASKORDs may not be received by the Special Forces battalion/group headquarters for days or weeks after the initial volleys of TASKORDs were issued. See Figure 12.

This contrasts significantly with the process by which conventional combined arms branches receive their TASKORDs. A conventional combined arms branch receives mission tasking orders deliberately designed to optimize their finite combat power in a unified state.

Conventional planners will insulate a conventional unit's inherent interdependent/symbiotic attribute by focusing on employing a conventional unit in total. By

tasking a unit with missions that do not enable a commander to mass and synchronize the unit's combat power, its collective "*punch*" is diluted.

In summary, employed SFOD-As, the sword of Special Forces units, are *not interdependent* with other employed SFOD-As. These subordinate Special Forces units are not massed to achieve any synergistic effect and therefore require minimal coordination by their respective staffing headquarters. The stated synchronization of SFOD-As, defined in FM 100-5, implies that SFOD-As are "arranged in time and space to mass at the decisive point."[9] In most cases, SFOD-As are not massed at an engagement's decisive point. This significant operational difference in unit interdependence greatly simplifies the planning and execution requirements placed on the Special Forces staffs at battalion/group level.

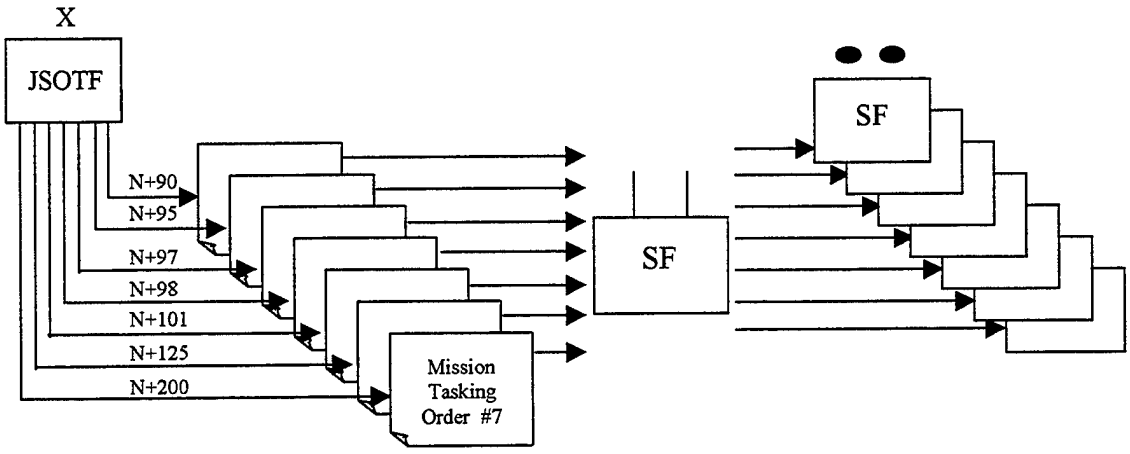

Figure 12. SF Mission Tasking Order Process.

The unique Special Forces mission tasking order process optimizes the force multiplication capability of the non-interdependent SFOD-As, by employing the SF units in an individualistic, *piece-meal* fashion. Furthermore, span of control principles also indicate relative conclusions about the operational differences of Special Forces units.[10] These principles infer the staff processes executed to support the expansive Special Forces span of control are more

simplified than their conventional combined arms counterparts. Therefore, the staff management challenge of the increased Special Forces span of control is significantly offset by the lack of synchronization required during the planning and execution phases of a mission.

Conclusion

Significant operational differences exist between Special Forces and conventional forces in terms of span of control, subordinate unit interdependence, and functions the respective headquarters. These subtle differences, and other attributes not mentioned, further suggest an adequacy analysis of the MDMP (Military Decision-Making Process) may be in order for Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level while discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

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[1]US Department of the Army, *FM 31-20 Doctrine for Special Forces Operations*,. (Ft. Bragg,, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO, April 1990), 6-8..

[2]US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, *Special Forces Qualification Course Deliberate Decision-Making and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* (Ft. Bragg, NC: GPO, February 1997), 4.

[3] US Army Command and General Staff College, "Instructors Guide to Teaching Mission Analysis" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combined Arms Tactics Division, August 1997. Photocopied), 3.

[4]John Collins, *Green Berets, SEALS, and Spetsnaz* (Washington DC: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Inc. 1987), 24.

[5]US Army Command and General Staff College, *C310 Combat Operations* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff Officers Course, GPO, July 1997), 17.

[6]Albert Shapero, *Management Techniques for Professional People* (London: The Free Press, Collier Macmillian Publishers, 1985), 7.

[7]Lester R. Bittel, *Organizational Management* (Chicago, IL: Mcgraw-Hill Book Co. 1980), 137.

[8]"Level I Threats – a variety of enemy actions which can be defeated by base defenses. Level II Threats – enemy actions which exceed the capability of base defense forces to defeat, but can be defeated by early response forces normally MPs. Level III Threats – enemy actions which necessitate the commitment of a tactical combat force." (idem, *FM 71-100 Division Operations*, 2-17).

[9]US Department of the Army, *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 1993), 2-8.

[10]Albert Shapero, *Management Techniques for Professional People* (London: The Free Press, Collier Macmillian Publishers, 1985), 7.

CHAPTER 5

MDMP RATIONALE AND SF OPERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Purpose

This chapter begins with a comparison of the Military Decision-Making Process doctrinal and implied rationales developed in chapter three with Special Forces operational differences, outlined in chapter four. The chapter then discusses the negative aspects of unnecessary synchronization. The chapter concludes with an examination of *"why"* Special Forces doctrine continues to mandate course of action development of non-interdependent SFOD-As.

Conflicts

The primary purpose of the Military Decision-Making Process is to synchronize interdependent subordinate units to achieve a synergistic effect while optimizing finite resources. Interdependent subordinate units are defined as elements with mutually supporting relationships among each other. The success of one interdependent unit is contingent on the successful achievements of other members in the symbiotic relationship. The higher headquarters of these interdependent units defines success of an operation on the collective attainment of individual supporting efforts.

The survival of one element in the symbiotic relationship is often contingent upon the success of its partner. Staffs overseeing this symbiotic relationship are mandated with the task of optimizing the potential of each interdependent member. Staffs achieve this by focusing the collective effort of the group in a synergistic manner. The output of the synchronized organization, as a whole, is greater than the sum of its individual efforts.

Synchronization is the manipulation of finite resources and combat power at the decisive time and place to achieve the desired effects.[1] This definition presupposes the fact that the decisive time and place arise during the execution phase of a multi-phased operation. To assume

otherwise violates the definition of synchronization in the Army's Field Manual 100-5 (Operations). Synchronization includes the allocation of finite resources during the decisive moments of an operation.

Finite resources are combat multipliers added, at the decisive moment, to the effects of combat power, to energize the synergistic effects of the interdependent units to an even greater level. The timing of finite resources is a critical component for understanding its definition. Resources, constrained or otherwise, are particularly finite at the decisive moment of an engagement. Fire support, considered finite at a decisive moment of engagement, assumes different characteristics during other phases of an operation. Assets, short on supply, but not contributing to the engagement's decisive moment are not considered finite. Infiltration/exfiltration assets and communications equipment, considered critical and not always available in desired quantities, are not finite resources.

The allocation of finite resources at the engagement's decisive moment is a critical component of the Military Decision-Making Process. The massing of the unit's combat power at the engagement's decisive moment energized with available finite resources can provide a decisive advantage to a unit confronting a numerically superior foe. Confusion often exists at the Special Forces battalion/group level regarding the differentiation between finite resources and limited resources.

Special Forces doctrinal writers overlooking the subtle SF operational differences and failing to validate them in doctrinal publications create another organizational issue. Following the nondoctrinal guidance provided by JRTC's SOTD, a handful of Special Forces units are strictly applying the MDMP doctrine, designed for conventional forces with interdependent subordinate units, while planning their SF operations. This void in the USAJFKSWC's doctrinal guidance, is especially clear when Special Forces battalion/group staffs reach step three in the MDMP, course of action development.

Allocation of aviation platforms used during infiltration/exfiltration of SFOD-As is commonly an issue argued by battalion/group staffs supporting course of action development at the SFOD-A level. Infiltration/exfiltration platforms are limited resources not finite resources used at an engagement's decisive moment.

Aviation planning doctrine mandates a ground tactical plan be developed prior to the integration of rotary wing assets. "The foundation of a successful air operation is the ground tactical plan. All other air planning stages are based on the ground tactical plan."[2] In other words the aviation infiltration and exfiltration support is a derivation of the scheme of maneuver developed by the executing unit or SFOD-A.

Air assault operations involving one or two aircraft and personnel do not require much planning time. These missions require approximately six hours planning time for the supporting aviation unit .[3] Air movement operations, with one or two aircraft, will probably not plan fire support. However, aircrews will understand how to contact fire support and recovery assets if necessary.[4] Aviation assets are critical and always constrained, but good asset management and staff procedures can offset most resource shortages.

Communications are important throughout the operation, like trained personnel. Without such assets, employment of a capability would not be possible. The primary means of long-range communications for the SFOD-A is the high frequency (HF), single, side band radio and the ultra high frequency (UHF) single-channel tactical satellite (TACSAT) radio. They provide amplitude modulated-single, side band (AM-SSB) and frequency modulated (FM) capabilities over the frequency range from two to eighty MHz.[5]

TACSAT provides reliable, highly portable communications for use over extended ranges without regard to terrain interference. The system operates in the UHF band between two hundred twenty five MHz and four hundred MHz. The ground terminals use UHF satellite

systems (fleet satellite (FLTSAT) and Air Force satellite (AFSAT) space segments).[6] SFOD-As operate the UHF and HF systems in a data burst mode using data burst devices.[7]

TACSAT radios require strategic apportionment of limited satellite channels. Satellite usage is controlled by the Communications-Electronics Directorate J-6 supporting a theater commander. Unfortunately, SFOD-As are typically apportioned a small percentage of the available satellite time in a theater.

The superlative advantage of TACSAT employed with SFOD-As is the real-time voice, communications capability providing the battalion/group commander with timely intelligence during deep operations. Planners too commonly assume this capability will be readily available for employment with a SFOD-A. As a result, tactical satellite distribution among employed SFOD-As is an organizational rationalization argued by staffs supporting SFOD-A course of action development at the battalion/group level. Unfortunately, the Communications-Electronics Directorate supporting a theater commander typically views the allocation of TACSAT channels to command and control nodes as a priority superceding the efforts of employed SFOD-As.

Special Forces staffs expend an inordinate amount of time deliberating an initial allocation of TACSAT channels, that are later retracted by the Communications-Electronics Directorate. Staffs expending time developing SFOD-A COAs contingent on tactical satellite support is a frequently wasted endeavor.

SFOD-As are highly adaptable forces requiring little support during short term special reconnaissance and direct action missions.[8] Staff work requiring synchronization among SFOD-As to achieve a synergistic effect is an anomaly. Coordination is required for infiltration/exfiltration phases and as well as contingencies, but rarely at the decisive moment of the SFOD-A's mission execution. This is because of the SFOD-A's mutually exclusive nature relative to other employed Special Forces units. The success of one SFOD-A is not in any way linked to the success or failure of another employed SFOD-A. Given that the rationale for course

of action development is to synergize, subordinate, interdependent units, why does Special Forces doctrinal proponents like JRTC's SOTD, continue to mandate this process given the absence of interdependence among SFOD-As?

SF MDMP Doctrine

The Special Operations Training Detachment (SOTD) at JRTC is a non-doctrinal proponent of the Military Decision-Making Process within Special Forces. SOTD has filled the void in the absence of MDMP specific doctrine produced by USAJFKSWC. SOTD is a staunch advocate of Special Forces battalions developing and analyzing course(s) of action for their non-interdependent subordinate SFOD-As. The SOTD doctrinal bulletins addressing the nuances of Special Forces operations and their "fit" within the Military Decision-Making Process unintentionally amplify the complexities of Special Forces missions. The average non-Special Forces reader of these bulletins is impressed by the amount of detailed staff planning claimed to be doctrinally executed in such a short amount of time. These testaments imply the planning, employment and subsequent execution of these missions is a complex endeavor.

On the contrary, the simplicity involved with planning an Special Forces special reconnaissance mission is analogous with an infantry squad reconnaissance led by a captain. The squad is additionally augmented with a warrant officer, master sergeant and nine senior non-commissioned officers. The basic tasks of a SF mission profile are akin to what an infantry battalion commander expects his junior non-commissioned officers to execute with a squad of unseasoned enlisted personnel. Clearly, the personnel within the SFOD-A are capable of developing and analyzing three distinct COAs including all relative branches and sequels that need consideration during planning.

The SOTD further presupposes "battalion staffs visualize the battle from the SFOD-As perspective because the more information and resources the staff can provide to the SFOD-A, the better."[9] The primary implied rationale concluded by this research for course of action

development is to synchronize interdependent subordinate units not to provide information. SFOD-As are normally non-interdependent and therefore rarely require true doctrinal synchronization. Special Forces battalion/group staffs often waste significant planning time developing unnecessary SFOD-A COAs. This critical process is immediately repeated again by the tasked SFOD-A(s). As a result two organizations perform identical actions sequentially. This unnecessary redundancy in the staff processing of Special Forces mission tasking orders wastes valuable planning/rehearsal time and is the impetus for this research.

SF Doctrinal Consequences

The Special Forces doctrinal fixation on staff's developing COAs at the SFOD-A level is a result of Special Forces battalion/group staffs attempting to identify their respective role in Military Decision-Making Process. Multiple, simultaneous, and non-interdependent Special Forces missions run contrary to conventional missions and the ambient factors from which the Military Decision-Making Process emerged. The non-interdependent nature of Special Forces operations leaves battalion commanders and staffs without a "doctrinal" basis to conduct their mission planning. The Special Forces battalion/group staff's quest for a significant role in the Military Decision-Making Process, stems from the significant role conventional battalion/brigade staffs play during the Military Decision-Making Process.

Manipulating and posturing large interdependent, military formations with bold maneuvers against an adversary is the typical vision of what a conventional forces' staff devotes itself to during the Military Decision-Making Process. This significant role the conventional staff assumes stems from their unit's organizational requirement to achieve synergy among symbiotic, interdependent subordinate units.

The "shadow warfare" of Special Forces operations contradict organizational norms associated with conventional operations. The significant organizational expectation of roles conventional staff members shoulder in the process generates confusion for Special Forces staffs

defining their own role in the process. The conventional organizational expectation to synergize symbiotic, interdependent, subordinate units coupled with the autonomous nature of SFOD-A employment frequently leaves Special Forces commanders and staffs struggling to find a weighty part in the process. As a result, Special Forces non-doctrinal publications intellectualize unnecessary processes due to the larger Army's cultural expectation of the conventional staff responsibilities in the Military Decision-Making Process.

In response to SOTD's recommendation for Special Forces staffs to develop COAs for SFOD-As, battalion/group staffing procedures are often drafted to focus the staff on macro details of their respective COAs. Ironically, this non-doctrinal recommendation directing a staff to develop these COA(s) overlooks the simplistic tactics required in SFOD-A employment and mission execution. The simplicity of these mission profiles often induces staffs to gravitate toward the tactical details of mission execution. This is an unintentional response by Special Forces leaders and staffs, but it satisfies their penchant for a useful purpose in the misunderstood process. A staff's unintentional inclination to gravitate toward tactical details of an SFOD-A's concept, often non-doctrinally rationalized in an effort to allow SFOD-As more rehearsal time, has several negative side effects.

After strategizing SFOD-A concepts, Special Forces battalion commanders and staffs often attempt to inculcate the specifics of their analysis to subordinate SFOD-As in the form of "how" to execute the mission. Unfortunately, the battalion/group commander is many times tainted with pre-conceived conceptual notions from his primary staff's preceding course of action analysis. *"COA Blinders,"* created by his staff's best intentions, predictably canalize the tasked SFOD-A's course of action development in the direction of the higher commander and staff's perspective.

Higher commanders often become fixated with one course of action, the execution of which is everything regardless of whether or not the enemy cooperates. Special Forces

battalion/group commanders fixated on a specific course of action frequently adjust poorly to other innovative and "out of the box" ideas an executing SFOD-A commander may develop during his own analysis. This command/staff quirk stifles subordinate initiative and usurps critical thinking.

The consequences of this kind of senior/subordinate interaction is obvious. Subordinates are continually frustrated and feel no ownership from a plan that is described in specifics on '*how*' to execute. Individuals feel stifled working under these conditions and take no satisfaction in work because of a commander's inability to empower subordinates. The mission has a greater propensity for success if subordinates are allowed to assume some ownership in the concept's development.

Additionally, this Special Forces headquarters' idiosyncrasy undermines the decision-making authority of subordinates, trained to plan and conduct the mission. This exemplifies the behavior Greg Foster so eloquently illustrated in his Joint Force Quarterly article, "This is precisely the type of orthodoxy and pervasive doctrine that drives out originality and suppresses critical thinking within the military."[10] Originality and critical thinking are the same non-analytical skills necessary to exploit dynamic and unpredictable events on the battlefield. This Special Forces staff/leader idiosyncrasy is also poor leadership as it inhibits leader development of subordinates.

The organizational confusion about the Military Decision-Making Process, created by the lack of doctrinal guidance, is further exacerbated by other challenges when Special Forces staffs attempt to plan multiple and simultaneous operations. The first challenge complicating the Special Forces staff effort is the cyclic nature of the SF mission tasking process. The second challenge is to maintain a large enough staff to contend simultaneously with numerous non-interdependent Special Forces mission taskings. And the third is SOTD's recommendation for battalion/group staffs to develop SFOD-A courses of action. This unnecessary synchronization

increases the work load of the staff exponentially. And in a time constrained environment characterized by twenty-four hour operations, the final unnecessary requirement to develop distinct COAs for each of the multitude of employed SFOD-As almost seems unattainable by a normal staff.

In a effort to meet SOTD's recommendations as well as the operational attributes, Special Forces battalion/groups create staff planning cells to cope with these divergent planning detractors. Staff members and their assistants are semi-compartmentalized in an effort to complete the recommended staff processing work. Staff primaries and their subordinate assistants are dispersed among numerous autonomous planning cells. The innovative approach to the unnecessary requirements is effective, but detracts from staff unity of effort. Staffs not mutually embracing the same issues may detrimentally impact the battalion/group commander's visualization.

A key component of commander's visualization in TRADOC PAM 525-200-1 is the shared awareness of a common relevant picture. The common relevant picture shared only among the Special Forces battalion/group staff is the tool facilitating the horizontal nesting of the SFOD-A's efforts. Special Forces staff members semi-compartmentalized into planning cells to develop SFOD-A COAs will have a distinct common relevant picture (CRP) for each subordinate SFOD-A. Each SFOD-A CRP will be mutually exclusive of the other SFOD-As in the battalion/group. The natural tendency for each staff planning cell is to focus on their respective SFOD-A tasking. This tendency detracts the primary effort of the battalion/group staff away from their commander's overall common relevant picture for his unit as a whole.

With the disconnects between the Military Decision-Making Process and Special Forces operations further complicated by SOTD's recommendations to do course of action development, one may ask, what is the origin of this Special Forces organizational fixation on unnecessary synchronization?

Conclusion

Firstly, there is little scholarly work done on the application of the Military Decision-Making Process for Special Forces operations. This is a function of first understanding the Military Decision-Making Process, and applying it appropriately to the distinct characteristics associated with Special Forces operations. Thus the paradox and title of this thesis, The Military Decision-Making Process and Special Forces Mission Planning: *"A Square Peg for a Round Hole?"* Pervasive Special Forces organizational norms viewing persons capable of non-analytical thought and reasoning as "pinheads" also inadvertently contributes to the lack of scholarly work in these critically needed areas.

Secondly, the problem is not with the Military Decision-Making Process as a conceptual process, but rather in the failure of Special Forces personnel to truly understand the process. Furthermore, understanding the process is an educational dilemma and only part of the problem. The root of the Special Forces organizational fixation on unnecessary synchronization is more significantly an organizational culture problem.

The Special Forces organizational culture in peacetime is a function of the Army's larger organizational culture. The Army's system has not always nurtured the actual delegation of authority or real individual initiative.[11] Today's Army praises directive control, but in reality practices detailed control.[12] The characteristics associated with detailed control and in turn rewarded by the Army's peacetime organizational culture are symptomatic of the *analytical leader*.

The Army appears to reward in peacetime individuals who embody analytical leadership attributes. These include individuals exhibiting a technical orientation, who always want more details. These individuals believe in detailed study of an issue, loath to be wrong and therefore are unhurried to answer or make decisions.[13]

Without the obvious success and failures of combat, peacetime success starts to depend on statistical excellence.[14] In peacetime, the *analytical leaders* fare better in promotions from their ability to conceptualize, report, and document their statistical achievements. More importantly, their managerial persona appears to fit better in the peacetime complexities of higher command.[15] These characteristics leading the *analytical leader* to peacetime success frequently causes *analytical leaders* to over control their subordinates.[16]

Complicating the situation is the Army's organizational environment subtly suppressing innovation and "out of the box" solutions. Individual officers questioning procedures viewed organizationally as fundamental ruffle mainstream military thought and are categorized as mavericks.[17]

All these organizational influences of the larger Army culture trickle down into the Special Forces community. Belief systems of members within organizations can influence the internal goals/policies later translating into an organizational culture.[18] In essence, the Special Forces organizational fixation on unnecessary synchronization may be a disguise of a cultural penchant for detailed control.[19]

Military Decision-Making Process is an adequate tool for use at the SFOD-A level. However, the use of the Military Decision-Making Process by Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level for discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations requires further discussion.

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[1]"Synchronization is arranging activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point," US Department of the Army. *FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 1993), 2-8.

[2]US Department of the Army. *FM 1-113 Utility and Cargo Helicopter Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, September 1997), 3-12.

[3]Ibid., 3-21.

[4]Ibid., 4-7.

[5]US Department of the Army. *FM 11-32 Combat Net Radio Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, October 1990), 2-1.

[6]Ibid.,10-1.

[7]Ibid., 10-8.

[8]Andrew Harris, "Presidents, Generals, and Green Berets: Explaining Cyclical support of US Special Operations Forces" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland College Park, 1993), 7.

[9]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Special Operations Training Bulletin* (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Directorate, December 1996), 17.

[10]Gregory Foster, "Research, Writing, and the Mind of the Strategist," *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 1996): 111.

[11]Micahel D. Maher, "The Overcontrolling Leader: The Issue Is Systems," *Army*, September 1997, 9.

[12]David J. Lemelin, "Misunderstanding Synchronization: An Army Perspective," *Marine Corps Gazette*. (November 1994): 26.

[13]Micahel D. Maher, "The Overcontrolling Leader: The Issue Is Systems," *Army*, September 1997, 9.

[14]Ibid., 10.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 9.

[18]James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy-What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1989), 101.

[19]David J. Lemelin, "Misunderstanding Synchronization: An Army Perspective," *Marine Corps Gazette*. (November 1994): 26.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose

This chapter first summarizes the conclusions formulated in the previous chapters of the thesis. The chapter then finalizes the research question and follows with an examination of some recommendations for writers of Military Decision-Making Process and Special Forces doctrine. It concludes with recommendations to Special Forces battalion/group staffs and leadership applying the Military Decision-Making Process to SF operations.

Summary of Research

Initially the thesis identified the research problem: Non-adherence to the doctrinal Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) impedes the Special Forces (SF) battalion/group staff from discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

Non-adherence to doctrinal decision-making hampers staff product transitions from higher to lower echelons. Information flow is affected and organizational responsibilities are not fulfilled by inconsistent application of the Military Decision-Making Process. Neglected or duplicated coordination measures from non-adherence. These consequential effects disrupt efficient unit staff operations and collectively impede the planning of operations. The use of approved processes facilitate the rapid and consistent assessment of the situation by minimizing confusion.[1] More significantly, the nonapplication of doctrine wastes the most valuable resource, time.

The thesis initially described that non-adherence of the Military Decision-Making Process mandates is in part due to a significant population of field grade commissioned officers viewing the process as inadequate. The probability sampling theory induced that this inadequacy is also perceived by the Special Forces sub-population of field grade commissioned officers. From this conclusion emerged the primary research question: Is the Military Decision-Making

Process adequate to meet the needs of staffs at the Special Forces battalion/group level when planning multiple and simultaneous operations?

The thesis continued with an analysis of applicable literature on the Military Decision-Making Process's two schools of thought regarding its adequacy. The *Traditionalist* is a proponent of Field Manual 101-5's strict interpretation of the analytical process. Traditionalist view the Military Decision-Making Process as adequate and not subject to innovation. The *Liberalist,* views the Military Decision-Making Process as inadequate, especially in time constrained situations. Liberalists believe the time intensive Military Decision-Making Process has failed to evolve into a process that can be used in a environment characterized by explosive speeds, immense distances, and precise munitions. The *Liberalist* school of thought is followed by the sub-population of Special Forces field grade commissioned officers viewing the Military Decision-Making Process as inadequate.

The critical implied rationale outlined in chapter three was the explanation for step three in the process, course of action development. COA development's implied rationale is defined as a deliberate attempt to design unpredictable synergistic methods using interdependent efforts while simultaneously leveraging finite resources. The thesis further defined finite resources as combat multipliers injected at the decisive moment of an engagement.

The seven steps of the Military Decision-Making Process can be further categorized into four sub-components: receipt of mission; mission analysis; *options processing*; and orders production. By grouping course of action development with its subsequent steps in the process, analysis, evaluation, comparison, decision, the *options processing* sub-component is founded.

All the steps in the *options processing* sub-component of the Military Decision-Making Process are linked directly to the unit's requirement to achieve synergy among its subordinate, interdependent units in conjunction with the finite resources supporting the mission. Chapter

three concluded mission taskings void of a requirement for synergy among interdependent subordinate units may allow for expeditious orders processing by the higher staffs.

Chapter four outlined the major Special Forces operational differences from conventional combined arms branches. Special Forces operational differences exist in span of control, subordinate unit interdependence, and functions of the headquarters. Functions of the Special Forces headquarters differ from conventional units in their geographic location and staff processing. The key component of this chapter is the normal lack of interdependence between subordinate SFOD-As. Additionally, SFOD-As are not normally massed at an engagement's decisive time and place. SFOD-As are non-interdependent and mutually exclusive of each other. The success of one SFOD-As is not dependent on the success of another SFOD-A. In other words, there is no operational synergy normally required among subordinate SFOD-As.

Chapter five outlined the conflicts between the Military Decision-Making Process rationale and the Special Forces operational differences. A major conflict between the two chapters emerged between the rationale for course of action development and the lack of interdependence typically present among Special Forces battalion/group subordinate units. Non-interdependent SFOD-As do not require a synergistic output. Without a requirement for synergy among subordinate SFOD-As, coupled with an employment criteria void of the need to mass SFOD-As at the decisive time and place, synchronization may not be necessary. Thus Special Forces mission taskings void of a requirement for synergy among their subordinate interdependent units may allow/permit expeditious orders processing by the higher staffs.

Recommendations

During the initial stages of its development, as a professional combat arms branch in 1987, the standing Special Forces training and doctrine institution may have overlooked these subtle organizational differences. Fully implementing the conventional Military Decision-Making Process criteria for use in Special Forces units may be a function of an inability to

succinctly articulate these operational differences and how they contradict the specific rationales of the Military Decision-Making Process criteria.

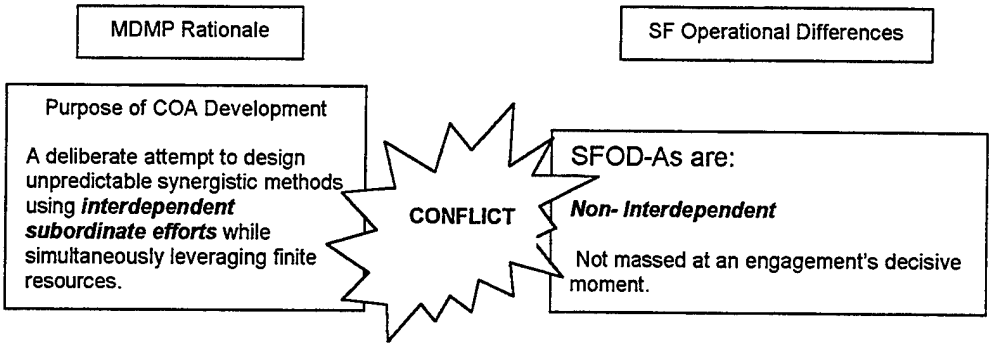

Figure 13. MDMP Rationale Conflicts with SF Operational Differences.

All battlefields require commanders to make and execute decisions faster than the enemy. Therefore the commander must always strive to optimize time available. He must not allow a process to become inordinately time consuming.[2] The high tempo operations of the modern battlefield require rapid, "close enough" acceptable decisions that allow the command to decide, move and execute in the limited time available.[3] To avoid loss of time during planning commanders and staff must ensure they accurately understand the process.[4]

The potential impact of an inappropriate linkage between a doctrinal process, developed for a specific conventional organizational requirement, and usage of that process for a significantly different organization can be significant. Given the tempo of current Army deployments to support contingencies, specifically Special Forces battalions/groups, SF staffs must optimize time by not applying unnecessary processes to non-applicable circumstances. Optimizing available time by higher Special Forces staffs provides maximum allocations of time for the SFOD-As to plan and rehearse their forthcoming missions. Simply answering the primary research question, "Is the Military Decision-Making Process adequate to meet the needs of staffs

at the Special Forces battalion/group level when planning multiple and simultaneous operations ?" is only part of the solution.

The Military Decision-Making Process is adequate for Special Forces battalion/group staffs when subordinate SFOD-As are interdependent and require a synergistic output. When SFOD-As are massed with other SFOD-As or are mutually supporting each other's effort at their higher's mission decisive point, these units need synchronization.

Field Manual 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations

An informal observation can be deduced from much of the research conducted during this thesis. "Synchronization" is one of the most extensively misunderstood and subsequently misused terms used by field grade commissioned officers. The term "synchronization" is often mistakenly substituted for simple coordination. *Field Manual 100-5 Operations* states, "Synchronization is arranging the activities in time and space to mass at the decisive point."

Activities executed, but not directly supporting the massed effects of combat power at the decisive moment of an engagement are often incorrectly referred to as synchronization. As Field Manual 100-5 implies in the above definition, these activities may be more doctrinally appropriate using another term. Therefore, further clarification of the context and use of "synchronization" is needed. The implied rationale of the Military Decision-Making Process, specifically course of action development, fits with "synchronization" when appropriately used in accordance with Field Manual 100-5's one sentence definition.

Including the Military Decision-Making Process rationales might improve the organizational awareness of this process and its application in using the process in future scenarios. The Field Manual 101-5 text is void of rationales for most of the steps within the Military Decision-Making Process. The key to intellectually understanding this process is by including the "why" for each step.

The doctrine must also recognize and empower commanders with more flexibility in abbreviating the process. As the thesis suggests, subtle conflicts potentially exist when applying the Military Decision-Making Process to Special Forces operations. These conflicts further suggest the Military Decision-Making Process may be appropriately abbreviated by modifying or eliminating steps in the process. To offset the difficulties in applying the Military Decision-Making Process to Special Forces operations the doctrinal field manual for the Military Decision-Making Process, Field Manual 101-5, might include with the rationales, caveats for Special Forces units specifically addressing the conflicts inherent with their unique operational differences.

Field Manual 31-20 Doctrine for Special Forces Operations

Discussions with Special Forces officers at CGSC confirmed some interesting trends. These Special Forces officers were acutely aware of the absence of MDMP doctrine and SOTD recommendations for SFOD-A course of action development by Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level. However, these officers' higher Special Forces headquarters elected to disregard SOTD's guidance and issue their mission tasking orders to subordinate SFOD-As after only an abbreviated macro-mission analysis.

These same Special Forces officers suggested the lack of specific guidance in *Field Manual 31-20 Doctrine For Special Forces Operations* on use of the Military Decision-Making Process by SF battalion/group staffs is an intentional effort to leave its interpretation and application to the Special Forces commander. These suggestions from Special Forces and other SOF officers in CGSC reinforce the trends concluded by the ARI's research on the application of the Military Decision-Making Process doctrine. The adherence hypothesis deduced in the initial chapters of this thesis is also informally confirmed by these comments. The Military Decision-Making Process doctrine currently directs only one process and omitting the steps in the process is not an option available to any commander.

These CGSC Special Forces officers also demonstrate the need for SF specific caveats in Field Manual 101-5 and specific doctrinal guidance in SF specific manuals (Field Manual 31-30). The void in Special Forces specific manuals on the application of the Military Decision-Making Process by Special Forces battalion/group staffs is further confused by JRTC's Special Operations Training Detachment (SOTD) bulletins.

SOTD's intellectualized rationale for Special Forces battalion/group staffs executing course of action development for SFOD-As is to *provide more information* to the SFOD-A. In the absence of any doctrinal rationales outlined in Field Manual 101-5, this research concluded the implied rationale for course of action development, step 3 in the Military Decision-Making Process is "a deliberate attempt to design unpredictable synergistic methods using interdependent subordinate efforts while simultaneously leveraging finite resources." SOTD's rationale contrasts significantly with the implied rationale developed in this thesis. Clarification of the Military Decision-Making Process application criteria for Special Forces operations within the SF doctrinal manual may minimize the significant contrasting interpolations emerging between some operational staffs in the Special Forces battalions/groups and information provided to fill the doctrinal void by SOTD.

SF Staffs and Leadership

Staff expediency takes many forms, but typically a decision-making process should strive to link the discrete requirements of the mission with the specific rationales of each step within the Military Decision-Making Process. For example, if synergy among subordinate SFOD-As is not required and the detachments are not massed requiring synchronization, a commander might advise his staff to abbreviate the Military Decision-Making Process and delegate SFOD-A course of action development to his detachment commanders. This will free the Special Forces staff to concentrate on other macro-details of the operation. And more importantly it will, provide increased amounts of time for subordinates to do their respective troop leading procedures.

Special Forces staffs should focus on acquiring relevant information. Jon Fallesen's research indicates an early decision method enhances a staff's success.[5] Relevant information is better attained by staffs focusing on situational data. Monitoring and translating data into usable information through deductive reasoning is the greatest contribution a staff can provide to its subordinate units.

The real challenge for Special Forces battalion/group commanders and staffs is accurately determining if synchronization is required by a SFOD-A's higher staff. The critical component of whether synchronization is required is determining if subordinate SFOD-As are interdependent. Interdependent SFOD-As require synchronization.

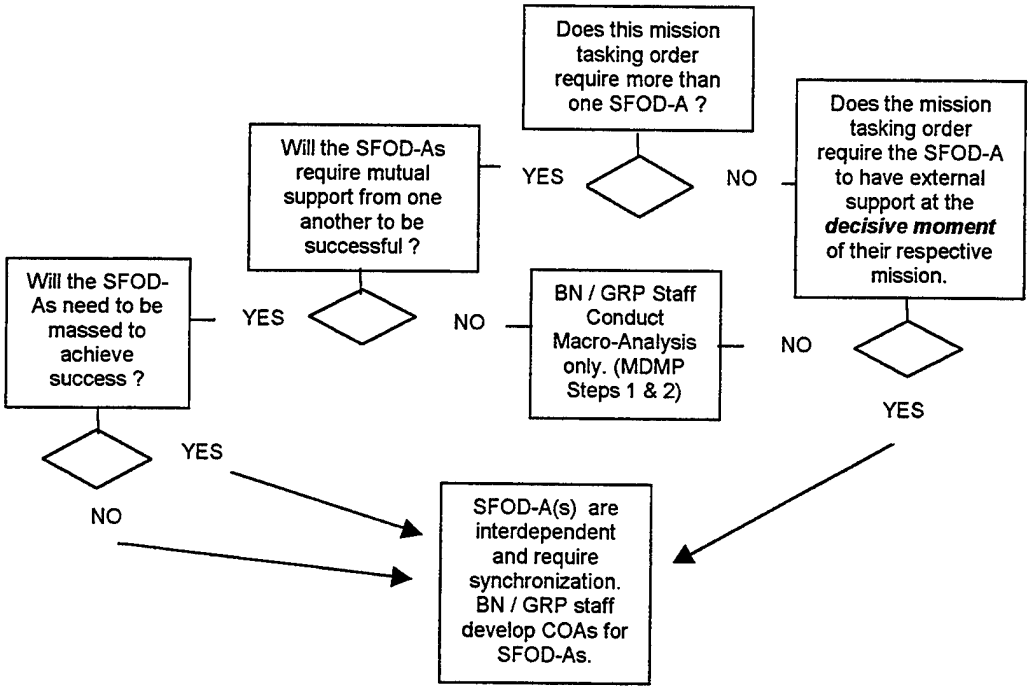

Figure 14. SF Mission Tasking Order Screening Criteria.

An early decision method for Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level might include incorporating screening criteria during their initial staff analysis. See Figure 14.

Screening criteria enables a Special Forces staff to quickly decipher whether SFOD-As are interdependent and thus require synchronization. The requirement of synchronization mandates the development of COAs for subordinate SFOD-As.

By using the recommended SF Mission Tasking Order Screening Criteria, Special Forces battalion/group staffs are able to succinctly decide whether detailed SFOD-A course of action development is required. More importantly, Special Forces battalion/group commanders and staffs are better equipped to optimize available time on the battlefield.

The lack of Special Forces doctrine addressing the use of the MDMP by battalion/group staffs creates two basic problems. Some segments of the Special Forces field grade population view the current MDMP doctrine as inadequate due to the operational differences among conventional and Special Forces missions. Their non-adherence can be blamed on the MDMP's strict doctrinal requirements prohibiting modification of the process steps. Non-adherence to doctrinal procedures creates confusion among a organizational members because the administrative staff expectations are not uniform.

The second problem created by the lack of Special Forces doctrine is the strict adherence to MDMP doctrinal guidelines designed for use in conventional operations. The thesis has shown that in the absence of Special Forces specific doctrine interpolation can create undesirable consequences. Without taking into account the purpose of course of action development, i.e. synchronization of subordinate interdependent units, redundant staff efforts occur wasting valuable time. The obvious solution to the problem is definitive guidance in Special Forces specific manuals on the application of the MDMP for use by battalion/group staffs while planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

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[1]US Department of the Army, *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations*, (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-1

[2]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Estimate of the Situation*, AAR slide presentation (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Training Detachment, October 1995), 3.

[3]US Army Command and General Staff College, *The Tactical Decision-Making Process*, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: GPO, July 1993), 1-4.

[4]US Army Joint Readiness Training Center, *Estimate of the Situation*, AAR slide presentation (Ft. Polk, LA: Special Operations Training Detachment, October 1995), 4.

[5]Jon J. Fallesen, "Overview of Army Tactical Planning Performance Research" (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Research Institute, September 1993), viii.

APPENDIX A

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

Purpose

The purpose of this appendix is to outline the environmental influences impeding the Special Forces (SF) battalion/group staffs from discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

Environmental Influences

Change is the theme of the nineties. Change is in every aspect of life and permeates every institution. In the US culture the mindset of change is everywhere regardless of how one see it, good, bad or indifferent. Change has also come to the Army and can be attributed to many influences and dynamics.

The society of the US has recently undergone a political paradigm shift. Emphasis is changing from foreign policy issues in the fifties and sixties to domestic issues of the nineties. This has had a significant impact on Army members. Many of the cause and effect attributes of this change are readily recognizable. Others are not so clear and require a complicated understanding of historical, social, and organizational forces. This change in focus, from foreign affairs to domestic issues, has indirectly contributed to the organizational chaos the Army is currently enduring.

The environmental influences that impede Special Forces staffs from discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations are initially imbedded in the recently emerging US political agenda. The sudden ending of the Cold War in the late 1980's removed the Soviet Union as America's primary external enemy. Numerous changes began to appear as a result of the democratic revolution in the former Soviet Union. Democracies within the former Soviet Bloc emerged wanting freedom, democracy, and peace. These emerging nations also wanted to minimize the threat of war and eliminate poverty.

Allocation of resources for military expenditures clearly imposes a substantial demand on any nation's finite resources in terms of labor, raw materials, capital and intermediate goods. Worldwide, military usage accounted for about six percent of all goods and services produced.[1] Military demands each year were approximately one-third as great as all investment in productive plant and equipment.[2]

World-wide, the resources spent on military hardware has on average decreased by ten percent or more, with developing countries reducing expenditures as much as industrial nations. Leading the trend to lower military expenditures were countries with or experiencing economies in transition or emerging democracies. Other countries downsizing military expenditures included nations that changed their form of government, democracies, and countries at war.[3]

Within the US, political efforts to balance the federal budget without reducing entitlement programs still remains a political priority. This political agenda creates downward pressure on the Department of Defense to cut expenditures. As a result of changes in military expenditures the Department of Defense continues to reduce its organizational size and costs. With a reduction in the perceived threat coupled with a political resistance to reducing public entitlements, its easy to visualize why the military is under such pressure to reduce its operating costs.

Active duty personnel in the Army decreased from 770,000 in 1989 with 402,000 civilians to the current strength total of 495,000 active duty personnel and 249,000 civilian employees.[4] The change in active and DA civilians from 1989 through 1996 represents a collective reduction in personnel of thirty-six percent. However in 1998 and 1999, the civilian structure will endure additional reductions in personnel.

These environmental influences create organizational turmoil for the Army. They generate an imbalance between the operational demand for military units and the limited number of units available. As the DoD reduced its operating budget and trimmed its force structure,

world-wide regional/operational requirements for military forces increased. The pro-military civilian leadership attempted to justify the remaining, but still declining force structure by using the military for increased humanitarian, civic, and peacekeeping operations. The supply of military personnel declined as the demand for military units increased. Secretary Perry summarized the situation best, "Since the end of the Cold War, the increased pace of military operations means military people are, on average, away from home more often."[5]

In the overarching Special Operations Forces (SOF) community, operational tempo has increased substantially in recent years. In 1995, SOF forces conducted 2,675 deployments to 137 countries reflecting an increase from 1994 of twenty-three percent.[6]

Another environmental influence that indirectly impacts Special Forces units and their respective staffs is personnel tempo. The number of available Special Forces personnel declined proportionally with the rest of the active component population. This decline negatively affects the pool of available soldiers and officers available to serve on Special Forces battalion/group staffs. The personnel reductions were further complicated by structure increases in some major commands. In other words, during the military drawdown, the decrease in the total population of personnel has not been balanced with a proportional decrease in the size of the force structure. Force levels have been reduced by one third over the past ten years while the Office of the Secretary of Defense's support staff has increased by forty percent.[7]

Emphasizing this recent DoD trend was a recent General Accounting Office study stating that more than forty-five percent of all active-duty personnel are assigned to "infrastructure" functions.[8] Infrastructure functions include support agencies but more importantly headquarters and major commands. Further supporting this purported trend was another report from the Defense Science Board. In the report, the Defense Science Board reported only twenty percent of all active-duty forces serve in combat assignments.[9] This indicates that the Pentagon's overhead is consuming too many people and resources at a time when combat forces are being cut back.[10]

The recent unbalanced trend between personnel and force structure creates an elevated demand for personnel to serve in critical positions or billets, outside of combat units, for longer periods of time. These critical billets are commonly viewed as less than desirable, by individual servicemembers, due to geographic location or position requirements. Never the less, the demand to backfill the sometimes less desirable, critical positions causes increased turnover of the less critical positions in combat units.

This exponential demand on the decreased Special Forces field grade officer pool is referred to as "personnel tempo." The expertise of Special Forces field grade commissioned officers is inversely proportional to personnel tempo. As personnel tempo increases the expertise level of the Special Forces field grades decreases. This means that personnel available to fill Special Forces staffs at the battalion/group level will be assigned for shorter periods of time. Shorter tours mean less time to master the job and thus more people rotating through a given position. This means that more Special Forces field grade officers with less expertise are serving on battalion/group staffs. This decreased level of expertise in Special Forces field grade officers clearly impedes Special Forces staffs from discretely planning multiple and simultaneous operations.

Another environmental influence that affects Special Forces staffs is operational tempo. Even with the decline of the Soviet Union and its military alliance the Warsaw Pact, the US military has continued to be actively engaged along the full spectrum of potential military operations. While all services have experienced high deployment rates since the Gulf war, the percentages of Army and Air Force personnel deployed have more than doubled.[11]

As more Special Forces field grade officers with less expertise serve on battalion/group staffs the likelihood of these units deploying to support a contingency has increased. Special Forces units have been fully integrated into the unified commands' peacetime engagement and crisis response contingency plans. Special Forces units' adaptability and cultural orientation

provide the unified commands with a large return from a relatively small, low-risk investment. Therefore, the discrete employment of Special Forces units and other SOF units, has increased. Defense Secretary William Perry defined the success of SOF in Haiti, "The role of our Special Operations Forces was a key to our success."[12] Peace Operations, categorized under the heading of Military Operations Other than War (MOOTW), are one of the activities that has seen increased participation by Special Forces units.

The United States has a vested financial interest in supporting peace operations, specifically UN missions. By sharing the financial burden of preserving international peace and security with other nations, the US can further its own internal fiscal and political agendas. In 1996, 70,000 personnel served under the UN flag. The US provided 3,305 personnel or five percent of the UN forces.[13]

Humanitarian and refugee assistance operations have also contributed to the increase in Special Forces operations tempo. During fiscal year 1995, 104 countries benefited from US humanitarian assistance.[14] Some of these countries included Bosnia, Cuba, Haiti, and Iraq.

The Army's imbalance of personnel to operational demand illustrates one of many catalysts for improved staff efficiency. Staff efficiency means maximizing available time by expediting processes and eliminating unnecessary procedures. Thus, further refinement of the current body of decision-making doctrine may be appropriate.

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[1]Wassily Leontif, *Military Spending: Facts and Figures Worldwide Implications and Future Outlook* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1983), 3.

[2]Ibid.

[3]"Military Expenditures: Will the Post-1985 Decline be Sustained?" *Financial Development*, December 1993, 24.

[4]Ibid.

[5]US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the President,* (Washington DC: GPO, March 1996), 27.

[6]Ibid., 202.

[7]Jack Weible. "House Rebukes White For Failure to Deliver Reform." *Army Times*, February 26, 1997, 10.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the President,* (Washington DC: GPO, March 1996), 27.

[12]US Department of Defense, *United States Special Operations US Army Command 1996 Posture Statement*, (Macdill AFB, FL:GPO, 1996), 2.

[13]US Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the President,* (Washington DC: GPO, March 1996), 7.

[14]Ibid., 9.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY

Advanced Operating Bases: A command, control, and support base established and operated by the SF company.[1]

Battle Operating Systems: Includes intelligence, maneuver, fire support, air defense, mobility, and survivability, CSS and C2. They provide a structure for integrating and synchronizing critical combat activities on the battlefield.[2]

Civil Affairs: Those places or activities of a commander which embrace the relationship between the military forces and civil authorities and people in a friendly country or area or occupied country or area when military forces are present.[3]

Joint Special Operations Area: A restrictive area of land, sea, and airspace assigned by a joint force commander to a joint special operations component commander to conduct special operations.[4]

Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP): A single, established, and proven analytical process, created from an adaptation of the Army's analytical approach to problem solving.[5]

Military Operations Other Than War: Military activities during peacetime and conflict that do not necessarily involve armed clashes between organized forces.[6]

Mission Tasking Order: Sometimes referred to as a TASKORD, it is a formal written notification of a unit to begin planning and on order execute specific missions.[7]

Peace Operations: An umbrella term that encompasses three types of activities; activities with predominantly diplomatic lead (preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace building) and two complimentary, predominately military, activities (peacekeeping, and peace-enforcement).[8]

Psychological Operations: Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.[9]

Special Forces: Military units that plan, conduct, and support special operations in all operational environments in peace, conflict, and war.[10]

Special Operations : Special operations are actions conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by nonconventional means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. They are conducted in peace, conflict, and war, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional forces.[11]

Special Operations Command and Control Element: The focal point for coordination and synchronization where prolonged contact between conventional and maneuver forces are required.[12] The SOCCE commander advises the supported conventional commander on the capabilities and limitations of supporting SF teams and provides required communications links.[13]

Special Operations Forces: Those forces specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations or provide direct support to other SOF. They provide a versatile military capability to defend US national interests. Army SOF includes the 75th Ranger Regiment, Civil Affairs units, Psychological Operations Units, Army Special Operations Aviation, and Special Forces units.[14]

Special Operations Team-Alpha: A small section of personnel from a SF battalions MI detachment that can provide signal intelligence and electronic surveillance measures, but is incapable of conducting independent operations in a hostile environment.[15]

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[1]US Department of the Army. *FM 31-20 Doctrine for Special Forces Operations* (Ft. Bragg,, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO, April 1990), 5-9.

[2]US Department of the Army. *FM 100-15 Corps Operations*. (Washington DC: GPO, October 1996), 2-9.

[3]Ibid., glossary-6.

[4]US Department of the Army. *FM 100-25 Doctrine For Army Special Operations Forces* (Ft. Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO, December 1991), glossary-22.

[5]US Department of the Army. *FM 101-5 Staff Organizations and Operations*. (Washington DC: GPO, May 1997), 5-1.

[6]US Department of the Army. *FM 100-5 Operations.*(Washington, DC: GPO, June 1993), glossary-6.

[7]John Thompson, LTC, "USAJFKSWC SOF Joint Doctrine," Slide presentation given to CGSOC SF students (Ft. Bragg, NC: Department of Joint Doctrine, September1997.)

[8]US Department of the Army. *FM 100-23 Peace Operations*. (Washington, DC: GPO, December 1994), 111.

[9]US Department of the Army. *FM 31-20 Doctrine for Special Forces Operations* (Ft. Bragg,, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO, April 1990), glossary-10.

[10]Ibid., 5-1.

[11]Ibid., 1-4.

[12]US Department of the Army. *FM 100-25 Doctrine For Army Special Operations Forces* (Ft. Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO, December 1991), 4-36.

[13]US Department of the Army. *FM 31-20 Doctrine for Special Forces Operations* (Ft. Bragg,, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO), April 1990.

[14]US Department of the Army. *FM 100-25 Doctrine For Army Special Operations Forces* (Ft. Bragg, NC: USAJFKSWC, GPO, December 1991), 2-1.

[15]Ibid., 13-4.

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