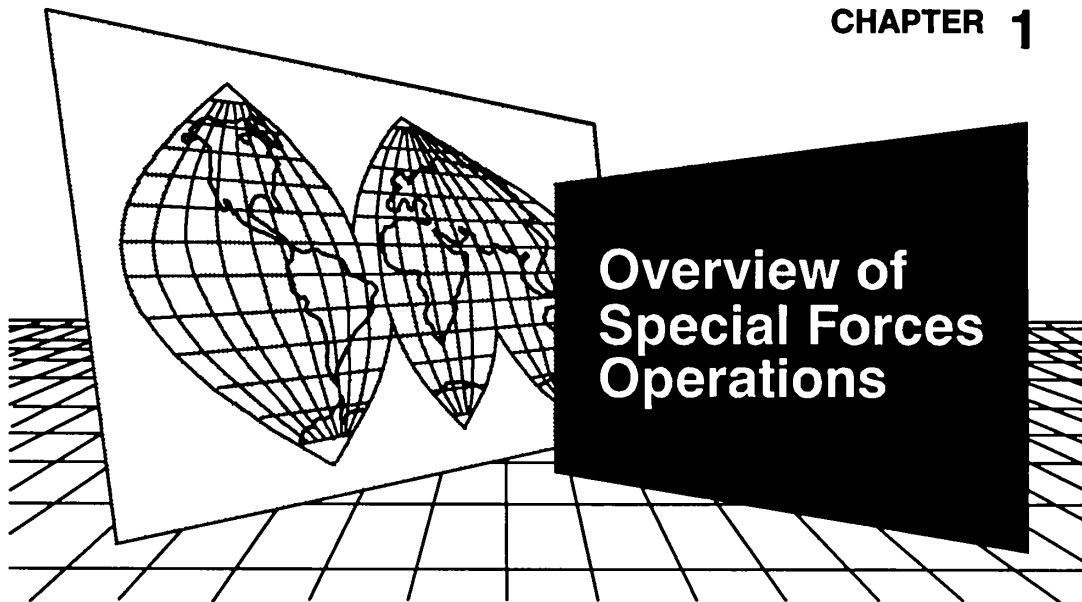


CHAPTER 1



SF operations occur across the operational continuum and at all levels of war. They are an integral part of the broader category, special operations (SO). This chapter provides an overview of the strategic environment in which SF operations occur. It defines and describes the nature of SO. It discusses the principles that govern the design and execution of SO. It defines SF and discusses its roles in peace, conflict, and war. By placing SF operations in contemporary perspective, this chapter provides the foundation for all SF doctrine.

Strategic Environment

The threats to US national interests and objectives are more diverse now than ever before. The US national security policy and strategy are designed to protect US national interests from these threats. The President's annual report, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, and the annual *Secretary of Defense's Defense Planning Guidance* outline US national interests, major threats to those interests,

and major US national security objectives, policy, and strategy. Key US national interests include—

- The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its basic values intact and its institutions and people secure.
- A healthy and growing US economy that provides individual opportunity for prosperity and a resource base for US national endeavors.
- A stable world without major threats to US interests.
- The growth of human freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout

the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system.

- Healthy and vigorous alliance relationships.

The Soviet Union still poses the main threat to US interests worldwide. Its military power and active diplomacy continue to threaten our interests in many parts of the world. However, the United States also faces other serious threats. These threats include—

- Regional conflicts.
- Proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) and high-technology weapons.
- International terrorism.
- International drug trafficking.
- Radical politico-religious movements.
- Instability in countries that are important to the United States and its friends and allies.

National security strategy is the art and science of developing and synchronizing the political, military, economic, and informational elements of national power to secure national security objectives. The National Security Council (NSC) assists the President in formulating national security strategy. US national security strategy appears in classified national security directives (NSDs) and other classified NSC documents. In general, the goal of US peacetime strategy is to deter aggression and acts of intimidation against the United States and its allies. The goal of US national security strategy in conflict is to protect US and allied interests while precluding or limiting the direct employment of US combat forces. In war, the US strategic goal is to rapidly end

war on favorable terms at the lowest possible level of hostilities. National security objectives include—

- Securing the interests of the United States and its allies.
- Encouraging and assisting US allies and friends to defend themselves against aggression, coercion, subversion, insurgency, and terrorism.
- Ensuring US access to critical resources, markets, the oceans, and aerospace.
- Defending and advancing the cause of democracy, freedom, and human rights throughout the world.
- Resolving peacefully those regional disputes that affect US interests.
- Building effective and friendly relationships with all nations with whom there is a basis of shared concerns.

National military strategy is the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure national security policy objectives by the threat or application of force. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) formulate national military strategy for the Secretary of Defense. National military strategy appears in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) and other joint strategic planning documents. It supports the goals of national security strategy. National military strategic objectives include—

- Deterring Soviet direct and indirect expansionism worldwide.
- Defending North America and the Western Hemisphere.
- Promoting the collective security of Western Europe.
- Promoting regional stability in Latin America, East Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa.

Contemporary Perspective

Historically, US national security strategy, national military strategy, and military force development

have stressed deterrence through preparation for war with the Soviet Union and its allies and surrogates. The effectiveness of US nuclear and conventional deterrence has made the likelihood of such a war improbable. Nevertheless, the risks remain disproportionately high.

While the United States has successfully deterred war with the Soviet Union, conflicts short of war have become pervasive. These conflicts can directly affect each of the national security objectives stated above.

The contemporary strategic environment dictates that the US armed forces think in terms of an operational continuum made up of three conditions: peace, conflict, and war (Figure 1-1).

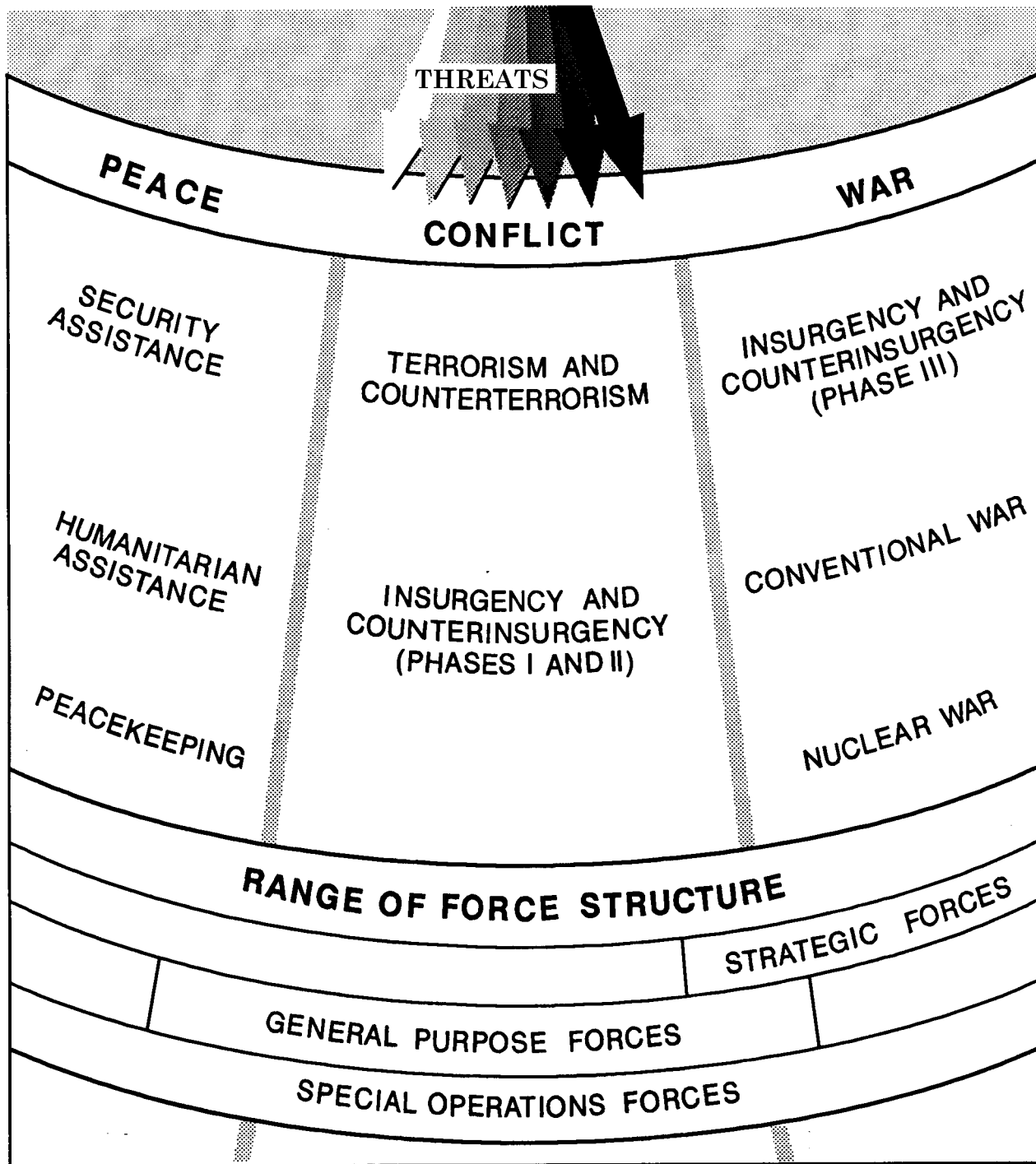


Figure 1-1. Operational Continuum.

Peace is defined as nonmilitary competition between states and other organized parties. Competition among foreign powers is inevitable in peace. Peaceful competition may promote conditions that lead to conflict or war. The military element of national power supports the three nonmilitary elements by preventing and deterring conflict and war.

Conflict is defined as a politico-military struggle short of conventional armed hostility between states or other organized parties. It is often protracted and generally confined to a geographic region, but may have global implications. The parties to a conflict often use military power in a strategically indirect manner to support or counter subversion, sabotage, terrorism, and insurgency. However, they can also use military power directly in short-duration, limited-objective contingency operations by conventional military forces and special operations forces (SOF). The term **low-intensity conflict (LIC)** represents the US perspective of a conflict. The term suggests that the conflict does not directly threaten US vital national interests. Another party to the same conflict may consider it a struggle for national

survival. From the US perspective, LIC includes the active support of parties to a conflict.

War, declared or undeclared, is defined as conventional, unconventional, or nuclear armed action between states or other organized parties. It may include any of the actions described in conflict, above. War may be general, involving the national survival and the total resources of nations. However, it is more commonly limited, with restraints on resources and objectives. The same war may be general for one party and limited for another party. War may include any of the actions included in the description of conflict.

The United States must have credible and competent military options to protect its national interests across the operational continuum. Strategic success requires a balanced force structure of strategic (nuclear) forces, general purpose forces, and SOF. These forces must deal with the full range of global threats—from the certainty of peacetime competition and conflict to the unlikely but potentially devastating threat of strategic nuclear war.

Nature of Special Operations

SO 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. Politico-military considerations frequently shape SO, requiring clandestine, covert or low-visibility techniques, and oversight at the national level. SO usually differ from conventional operations in their degree of risk, operational

techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence upon operational intelligence and indigenous assets.

Public law (10 USC 167) states that SO activities include the following as far as they relate to SO:

- Direct action (DA).
- Strategic reconnaissance, which the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has incorporated into a broader activity called special reconnaissance (SR).
- Unconventional warfare (UW).
- Foreign internal defense (FID).
- Civil affairs (CA).
- Psychological operations (PSYOP).
- Counterterrorism (CT).
- Humanitarian assistance (HA).

- Theater search and rescue (SAR).
- Such other activities as may be specified by the National Command Authorities (NCA).

SOF are those forces specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct SO activities or provide direct support (DS) to other SOF. They provide a versatile military capability to defend US national interests. They are an integral part of the total

defense posture of the United States and a strategic instrument of national policy. These forces serve as force multipliers. They can function in an economy of force role to provide substantial leverage at a reasonable cost and effort. SOF thus provide military options for national response that can stabilize an international situation with minimum risk to US interests (Figure 1-2).

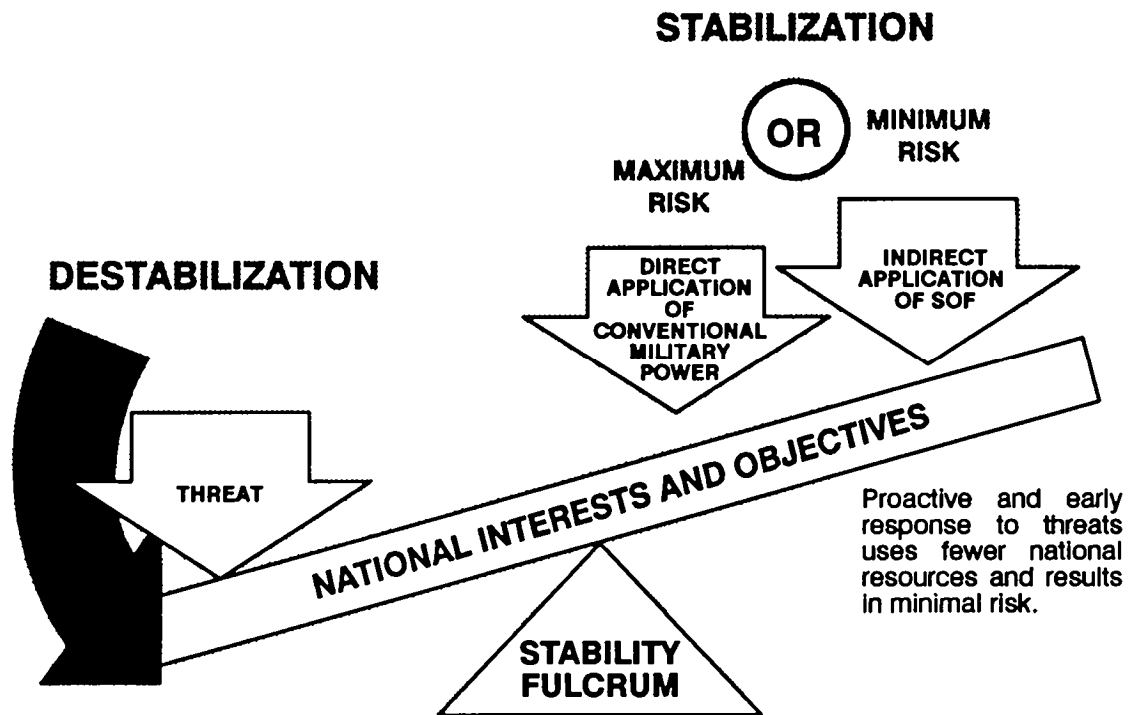


Figure 1-2. National Response.

SO Principles

When conducting tactical combat operations, SOF conduct their operations in accordance with the fundamentals of AirLand battle (ALB). AirLand

battle, the US Army's keystone warfighting doctrine, explains how Army forces plan and conduct major operations battles, and engagements in conjunction with other services and allied forces. It does not address military strategy or the formulation of strategic guidance. However, it does favor a strategy

that quickly and decisively attains the military strategic objectives of the war. (For a detailed discussion on AirLand battle, see FM 100-5.)

At the tactical level, SO often share many of the characteristics of light infantry combined arms operations. However, the fundamentals of AirLand battle doctrine focus primarily on conventional war fighting. The traditional objective of military power in war has been to generate maximum combat power at the decisive time and place to defeat hostile military forces. The traditional dynamics of military power are inappropriate in a conflict environment where—

- Nonmilitary aspects of the situation dominate military operations, or where

- No clearly defined enemy or battlefield exists.

In such an environment, the focus of military operations is different (Figure 1-3). Consequently, the contemporary dynamics of military power are more subtle. Commanders must influence (rather than dominate) their operational environment to create favorable politico-military conditions for achieving specific national security objectives. Because SO normally occur in such an environment, SOF commanders must adapt the fundamentals of AirLand battle to account for the politico-military implications of SO (Figure 1-4). They must learn to apply military power indirectly through the military and paramilitary forces of a foreign government or other political group or directly through the surgical use of combat power.

Application of the Principles of War

SOF commanders must apply the principles of war differently than conventional commanders. SOF commanders must recognize the effect of their operational environment and force capabilities on their application of the principles of war (Figure 1-5).

Objective

Objectives assigned SOF may often be as political, economic, or psychological as they are military. In war and protracted conflict, SO objectives usually focus on hostile military vulnerabilities. In other situations, SOF may be assigned objectives that lead directly to accomplishing national or theater political, economic, or psychological objectives.

Offensive

SO are inherently offensive actions. SOF may be employed as part of a strategic defensive, and hostile activities may force SOF to assume a tactical

defensive posture. Nevertheless, at the operational level, SOF are an offensive capability.

Mass

In contrast to conventional forces, SOF cannot hope to bring overwhelming combat power against a target except at the lowest tactical level. They do not normally seek dominance in size of force or firepower. Instead, SOF focus on selecting and applying sufficient military power to accomplish the mission without adverse collateral effects. The application of minimum force is dangerous, but SOF commanders must sometimes accept the higher risk associated with not massing in the conventional sense. They may have to compensate for their lack of combat power through the use of such combat multipliers as surprise, superior training, and unconventional tactics. Nonetheless, SOF commanders must concentrate their combat power, albeit subtly and indirectly, so that the effects of their actions are felt at decisive times and places. SOF must not be at the margin of their operational capabilities at critical points of mission execution. Care must be taken not to fragment the efforts of SOF by committing them

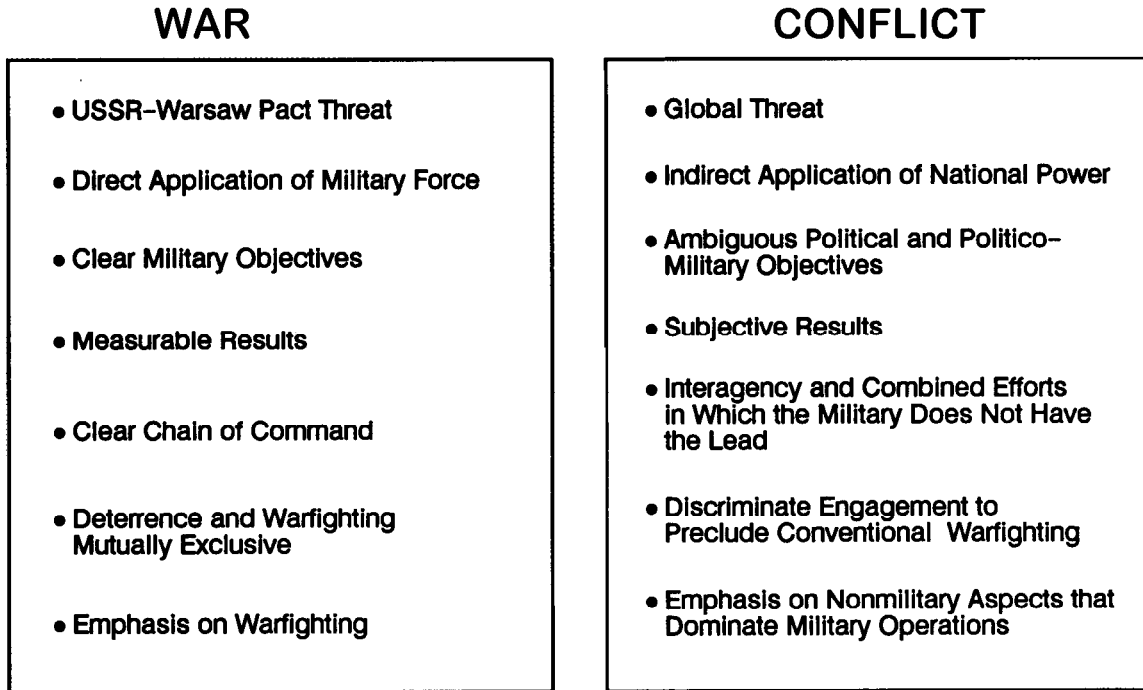


Figure 1-3. Differences in Focus.

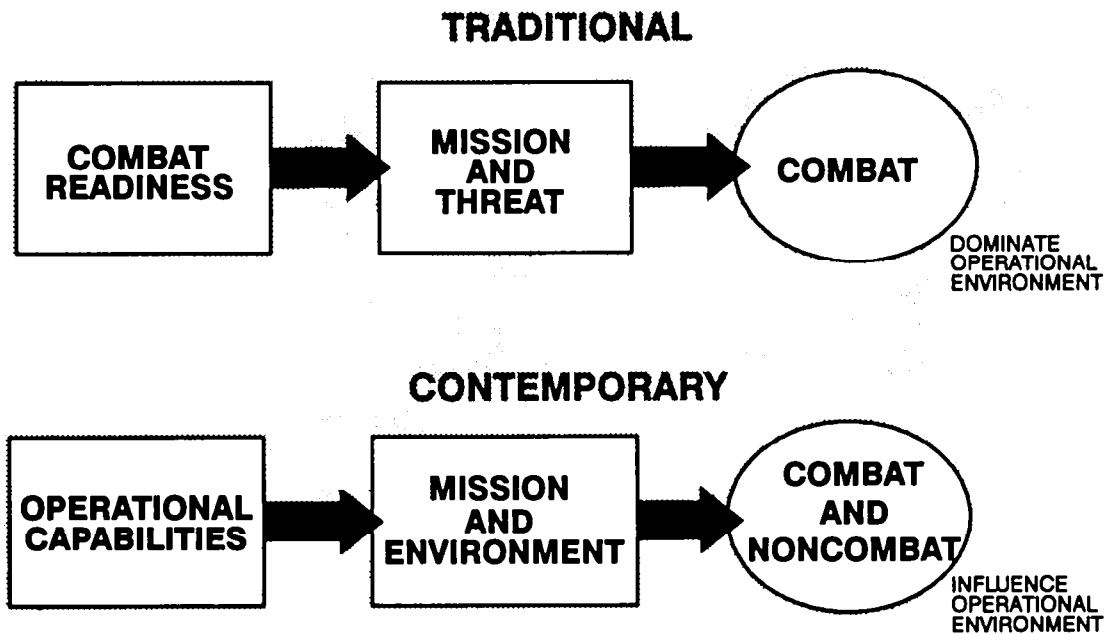


Figure 1-4. Dynamics of Power.

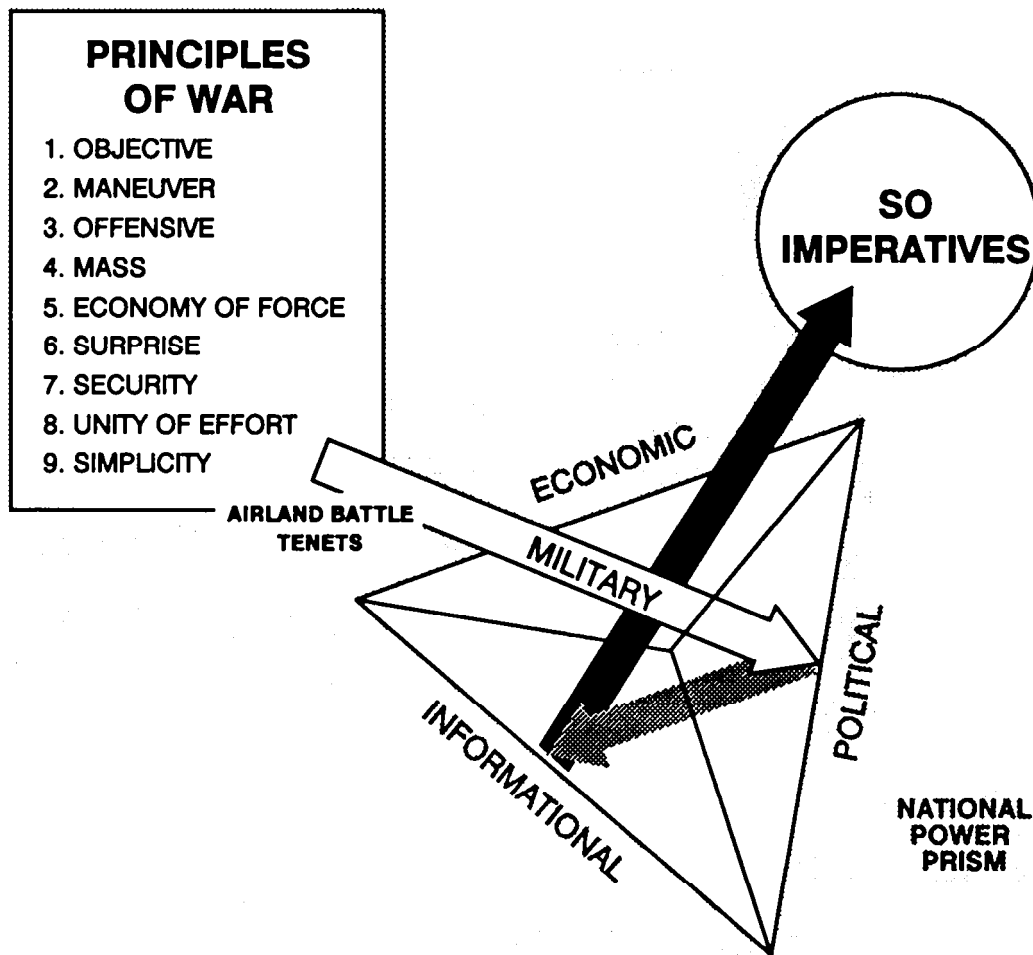


Figure 1-5. Application of Principles of War.

against targets that are tactically attractive, but operationally or strategically irrelevant.

Economy of Force

SOF are often employed as a strategic economy of force measure to allow the concentration of other forces elsewhere. Many SO are specifically designed to divert hostile forces into secondary theaters, preventing hostile concentration against the friendly main effort. SOF are particularly effective when employed in combination with indigenous or surrogate forces to create a force multiplier effect.

Maneuver

SOF do not maneuver against an enemy in the classic sense. Once committed, SOF often lack the tactical

mobility and reinforcement capability of the hostile forces opposing them. With respect to SO, maneuver implies the ability to infiltrate and exfiltrate denied areas so as to gain a positional advantage from which SOF can attack hostile vulnerabilities. They must anticipate hostile reactions and pre-position combat power to counter those reactions. This characteristic of SO dictates that SOF commanders accept calculated high risks to achieve decisive results. Indecision and hesitation may result in a lost opportunity, mission failure, or needless loss of life.

Unity of Command

To achieve unity of command, SOF organize jointly with clean, uncluttered chains of command that minimize the layering of headquarters. However, SO

are often conducted as interagency activities of the US government. In such cases the Department of Defense (DOD) will often play only a supporting role, and interagency cooperation will be the only means of achieving unity of effort. SOF commanders must synchronize their activities with nonmilitary members of the Country Team. During combined operations with indigenous military forces, SOF commanders must stress the requirement for cooperation between indigenous military and civilian organizations.

Security

In SO, security is often a dominant consideration, rather than a supporting consideration as is often the case in conventional operations. Because of the nature of many SO, a breach in security can affect national credibility and legitimacy as well as mission success. SOF commanders must emphasize security throughout mission planning, during execution, and possibly for many years after the mission incomplete. As a result, SO may require compartmentation and/or deception measures. Active and passive counterintelligence (CI) efforts must minimize the potential for hostile penetration or accidental disclosure of sensitive information.

Surprise

SOF achieve surprise by exploiting indirect approaches and doing the unexpected. SO often require bold, imaginative, and audacious actions, particularly when applying combat power directly and with surgical precision. In other SO, however, surprise can take on a more subtle meaning. SOF often conceal not only their capabilities and intentions, but also their activities. Indirect SO exploit the hostile power's inadaptability or misunderstanding of the operational environment. These operations can create unsettling conditions within a hostile power's environment without revealing the source. The effects of surprise are maximized when the hostile power cannot define the means of the disruption and, therefore, cannot implement effective countermeasures.

Simplicity

Although SOF often use sophisticated and unorthodox methods and equipment, their plans and procedures must be simple and direct. A complex and inflexible plan that relies on precise timing is less likely to withstand changing situations and the stress and confusion that accompany its execution.

SO Imperatives

While the principles of war *characterize* successful SO, the SO imperatives discussed below *prescribe* key operational requirements. SOF commanders must incorporate these imperatives into their mission planning and execution if they are to use their forces effectively (Figure 1-6).

Understand the Operational Environment

SOF commanders cannot dominate their environment. They must assess and understand all aspects of

the environment-political, economic, sociological, psychological, geographic, and military-before acting to influence it. The conditions of conflict can change based on military successor defeat, a change in hostile strategy or tactics, or fluctuating levels of US support. They must know who the friendly and hostile decision makers are, what their objectives and strategies are, and how they interact. They must influence friendly decision makers to ensure they understand the implications of SO mission requirements and the consequences of not adequately supporting them. SOF commanders must remain flexible and adapt their operations to changing realities. They must anticipate these changes in their environment to exploit fleeting opportunities. They

- **Recognize political implications.**
- **Facilitate interagency activities.**
- **Engage the threat discriminately.**
- **Consider long-term effects.**
- **Ensure legitimacy and credibility of SO.**
- **Anticipate and control psychological effects.**
- **Apply capabilities indirectly.**
- **Develop multiple options.**
- **Ensure long-term sustainment.**
- **Provide sufficient intelligence.**
- **Balance security and synchronization.**

Figure 1-6. SO Imperatives.

must also assist their supported indigenous military forces to adjust their strategy and tactics.

Recognize Political Implications

SOF commanders must not anticipate a conventional battlefield environment where military concerns dominate. The role of SOF infrequently a supporting one that creates the conditions for decisive non-military activities to occur. Whether conducting SO independently or in coordination with conventional military operations, SOF commanders must consider the political effects of their military activities.

Facilitate Interagency Activities

When participating in an interagency and often combined effort such as SO, commanders must strive for unity of effort (synchronization), but recognize the difficulty of achieving it. They must anticipate ambiguous missions conflicting interests and objectives, compartmentation of activity, and disunity of command. Lacking unity of command, SOF commanders must facilitate unity of effort by—

- Requesting clear mission statements and the decision makers' intent.

- Actively and continuously coordinating their activities with all relevant parties (US and non-US, military and nonmilitary).

Engage the Threat Discriminately

SOF commanders have limited resources they cannot easily replace. Their missions often have sensitive political implications. Therefore, SOF commanders must carefully select when, where, and how to employ SOF (Figure 1-7).

Consider Long-Term Effects

SOF commanders must place each discrete problem in its broader political, military, and psychological context. They must then develop a long-term approach to solving the problem. They must accept legal and political constraints (such as less than optimal rules of engagement [ROE]) to avoid strategic failure while achieving tactical success. SOF commanders must not jeopardize the success of national and theater long-term objectives by their desire for immediate or short-term effects. SO policies, plans, and operations must be consistent with the national and theater priorities and objectives

they support. Inconsistency can lead to a loss of legitimacy and credibility at the national level.

Ensure Legitimacy and Credibility of SO

There are significant legal and policy considerations to many SO, particularly in conflict situations short of war. In modern conflict, legitimacy is the most crucial factor in developing and maintaining internal and international support. Without this support the United States cannot sustain its assistance to a foreign power. The concept of legitimacy is broader than the strict legal definition contained in international law. The concept also includes the moral and political legitimacy of a government or resistance organization. Its legitimacy is determined by the people of the nation and by the international community based on their collective perception of the credibility of its cause and methods. Without legitimacy and credibility, SO will not receive the

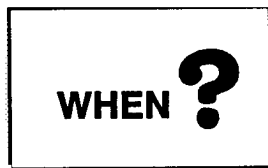
support of foreign indigenous elements, the US population, or the international community. SOF commanders must ensure their legal advisors review all sensitive aspects of SO mission planning and execution.

Anticipate and Control Psychological Effects

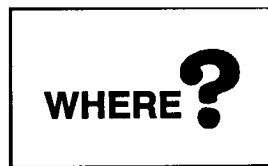
All SO have significant psychological effects. Some may be conducted specifically to produce a desired psychological effect. SOF commanders must integrate PSYOP into all their activities to control these effects.

Apply Capabilities Indirectly

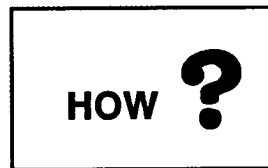
Whenever participating in combined operations, the primary role of SOF is to advise, train, and assist indigenous military and paramilitary forces. The supported non-US forces then serve as force multipliers in the pursuit of US national security



Employ SOF when nonmilitary options are insufficient and other military (conventional) options are inappropriate or infeasible.



Employ SOF where results required are beyond the area of influence of conventional military forces.



Employ SOF—

- With surgical precision to minimize collateral effects.
- In a concealed or covered manner so that only the effects are detectable.
- Indirectly through the military forces of a foreign government or political group.

Figure 1-7. SOF Employment Criteria.

objectives with minimum US visibility, risk, and cost. SOF commanders must avoid taking charge when supporting a foreign government or group. The foreign government or group must assume primary authority and responsibility for the success or failure of the combined effort. All US efforts must reinforce and enhance the legitimacy and credibility of the supported foreign government or group.

Develop Multiple Options

SOF commanders must maintain their operational flexibility by developing a broad range of options and contingency plans. They must be able to shift from one option to another before and during mission execution.

Ensure Long-Term Sustainment

SOF are currently engaged in protracted conflict around the world. They must prepare to continue this effort for the foreseeable future. The US response to conflict varies from case to case. Resourcing of any particular US support effort may also vary. SOF commanders must recognize the need for persistence, patience, and continuity of effort. They should not begin programs that are beyond the economic or technological capacity of the host nation (HN) to maintain without US assistance. US funded programs can be counterproductive if the population becomes dependent on them and funding is lost. SO policy,

strategy, and programs must therefore be durable, consistent, and sustainable.

Provide Sufficient Intelligence

SOF normally cannot infiltrate denied territory and develop an ambiguous situation. They do not have the combat power or the reinforcement and support capabilities of conventional forces to deal with unanticipated hostile reactions. The success of SO missions often depends on the executors receiving detailed, near-real-time, all-source intelligence products. This need for national and theater intelligence at the tactical level is unique to SOF. SOF intelligence requirements (IR) impose great demands on supporting intelligence capabilities. SOF commanders must identify their IR in priority. They must note which are mission essential and which are just nice to have. Without realistic priorities to guide it, the intelligence community can quickly become overcommitted attempting to satisfy SOF IR.

Balance Security and Synchronization

Security concerns often dominate SO, but compartmentation can exclude key personnel from the planning cycle. SOF commanders must resolve these conflicting demands on mission planning and execution. Insufficient security may compromise a mission, but excessive security will almost always cause the mission to fail because of inadequate coordination.

Special Forces

As a component of Army SOF (ARSOF), SF plans, conducts, and supports SO in all operational environments in peace, conflict, and war. SF operations are normally joint and may be combined and/or part of an interagency activity. They may support or be

supported by conventional forces. The role of SF varies with the environment and the level of activity.

SF is an unconventional combat arm. It combines at the lowest tactical level the functions performed by several conventional branches of the Army. In effect it is a **combined arms** branch. As a result, neither SF nor the conventional Army has thought

of SF operations as being combined arms operations. At best, SF commanders have employed the tactics of supplementary or reinforcing combined arms. They have used PSYOP, lift assets, and other resources to increase the effectiveness of independent SF operations. The old H-series table of organization and equipment (TOE) supported this concept of employment by consolidating all combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets at group level. Battalion commanders dealt only with **operational matters**. Their CS and CSS assets were provided from external sources when required.

The L-series TOE and the concept of SF employment in this publication recognize the complementary combined arms nature of SF operations. They also shift the level of combined arms integration from group to battalion. SF commanders must now integrate and synchronize their organic capabilities with those of other SOF and theater assets. By doing so, they generate sufficient military power to influence their operational environment. They apply this military power through indirect means or through the direct application of combat power in a specific, usually surgical, economy of force operation.

The Army uses seven battlefield operating systems (BOS) to analyze and integrate its activities (Figure 1-8). These BOS represent a new way of thinking about war because they orient on functions rather than the units that perform them. The BOS focus on

battlefield functions performed in a combat zone by Army units at corps level and below. In contrast, SF units normally focus on functions performed in a theater of operations by joint and combined forces at echelons above corps (EAC). Therefore, SF commanders must apply the BOS differently than conventional Army commanders do (see Appendix A).

The centerpiece of SF operations is the SF operational detachment (SFOD) A, also known as the A detachment. The SFOD A is a simple but versatile combined arms organization. Its activities do not revolve around a single weapon system (like a tank crew) or a single battlefield function (like a rifle squad). They cut across all BOS functions. Detachment members are generalists with expertise in at least one specialty, not functional specialists. Each member performs multiple functions during mission planning and execution.

Like the conventional Army, SF task organizes its elements into teams to execute a specific mission. An **SF team** is any size operational element composed mainly of SF members and led by a member of an SF chain of command. An SF team may be organized according to modification table(s) of organization and equipment (MTOE). It may be an SFOD A a composite team of hand-picked individuals or a combined arms team organized for a specific mission. It may also be as small as a two-man team or as large as a reinforced SF company.

Role of Special Forces in War

In a limited or general war, SF can perform its missions at the strategic, operational, or tactical level to influence, deep, close, or rear operations. However, the primary role of SF is to conduct and support deep operations beyond the forward limits of conventional military forces. Such operations may extend into a hostile power's homeland or into the territory

of hostile states that threaten lines of communication (LOC) in the friendly strategic rear. The impact of these operations may be felt throughout the theater of war.

During war, the strategic role of SF focuses on the hostile power's long-term capacity to continue hostilities. This role has two aspects.

The NCA, through the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), may direct a unified commander to conduct SO in pursuit of national strategic objectives.

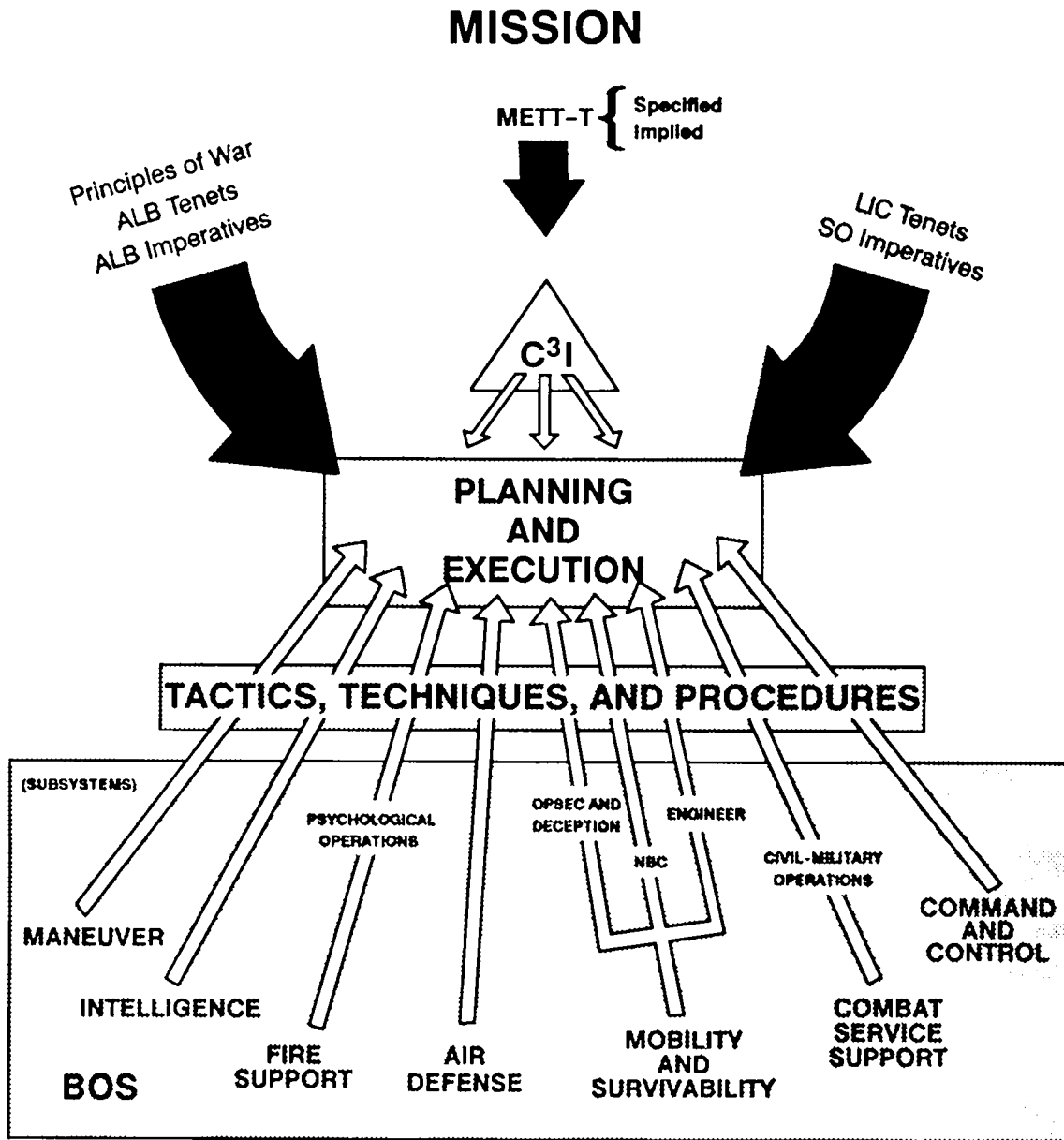


Figure 1-8. Battlefield Operating Systems.

For example, SF teams may deploy into denied territory to—

- Collect and report information of national strategic importance.
- Develop and support insurgencies in the hostile power's strategic rear.
- Disrupt the economy.
- Protect friendly strategic LOC threatened by hostile regimes in the theater's strategic rear.
- Accomplish other missions with decisive strategic implications but with no *near-term* effect on conventional military operations.

MYTH: SF operates at the strategic level and is not part of the AirLand battle.

FACT: In war, SF conducts SO to support, complement, and extend conventional military operations. The employment of SF depends on the mission, not the environment in which it operates or its location on the battlefield. SF can be committed anywhere on the battlefield—deep, close, or rear (Figure 1-9).

SF also supports the unified commander's theater campaign plan by conducting deep operations in pursuit of theater strategic military objectives. The unified commander may employ SF teams to interdict the advance of hostile forces to gain more time for employing conventional forces. SF teams may perform SR tasks at the theater strategic level to identify hostile capabilities, intentions, and activities of importance to the unified commander. SF teams may also delay, disrupt, or harass the hostile power's strategic second-echelon forces (or divert them to secondary theaters of operations) to—

- Alter the momentum and tempo of hostile operations.
- Prevent the hostile power from conducting continuous theater strategic operations.

SF also conducts SO as strategic economy of force operations in secondary theaters. These operations may include FID missions in the strategic rear of the theater of war.

At the operational level, SF deep operations support the theater of operations commander and his subordinate land, air, and naval force commanders. At this level, SF operations have a **near-term** effect on **current** theater operations. By attacking hostile operational follow-on forces, SF disrupts their combined-arms operations and breaks their momentum, creating opportunities for friendly decisive action. SF operations can also—

- Collect and report military information of operational significance.
- Screen an operational land force commander's open flank.

- Attack or secure (for limited periods) critical facilities of operational significance.
- Divert hostile forces from the main effort.

At the tactical level, SF supports (and is supported by) conventional military forces whenever their operational areas converge. SF units lack the firepower, tactical mobility, real-time communications, and CSS capabilities to conduct sustained close combat operations. SF teams gain mobility and protection advantages through stealth and the use of restrictive terrain. They gain firepower advantage through surprise and superior training. SF missions generally rely on detailed pre-mission preparation that is unsuitable for fluid close operations. An SF team may conduct a DA or SR mission of strategic or operational significance in the corps main battle area. However, the priority of the mission and the nature of the target must justify the diversion of SF assets to a mission more suitable for conventional forces.

During a limited or general war, SF units may conduct operations in friendly rear areas. Friendly rear security forces may be nonexistent, particularly when US forces are operating in liberated or occupied territory. Available HN rear security forces may need advisory assistance or other support similar to the support SF provides in a FID mission. SF rear operations are proactive rather than reactive. SF teams do not defend base clusters or perform military police (MP) functions. They organize, train, and support (or direct) indigenous tactical combat forces to actively locate and destroy hostile insurgent and/or SO forces in contested areas. SF teams only conduct unilateral rear operations as an extreme measure.

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Once hostilities end, SF plays an important role in US posthostility consolidation activities. SF teams facilitate the early redeployment of US conventional combat forces by performing security assistance and FID missions that enhance the military capabilities of US allies in the region.

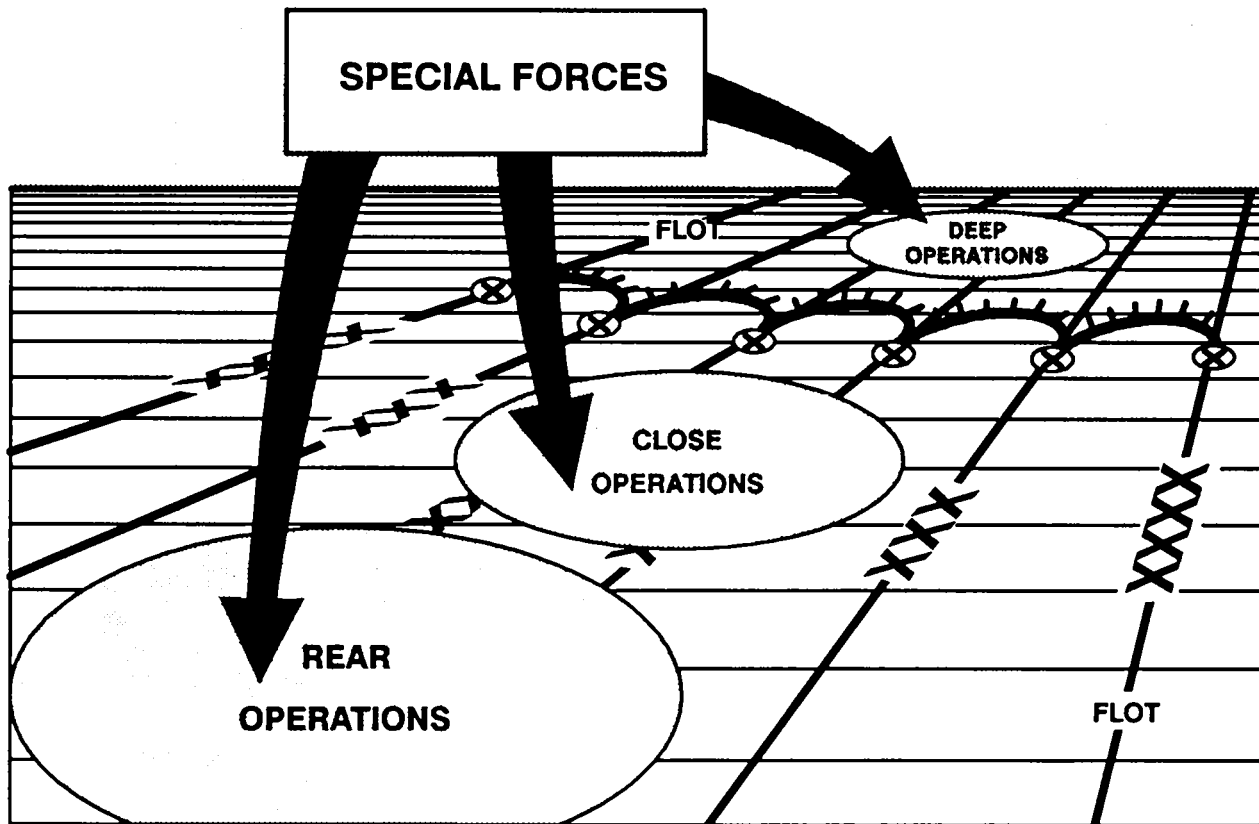
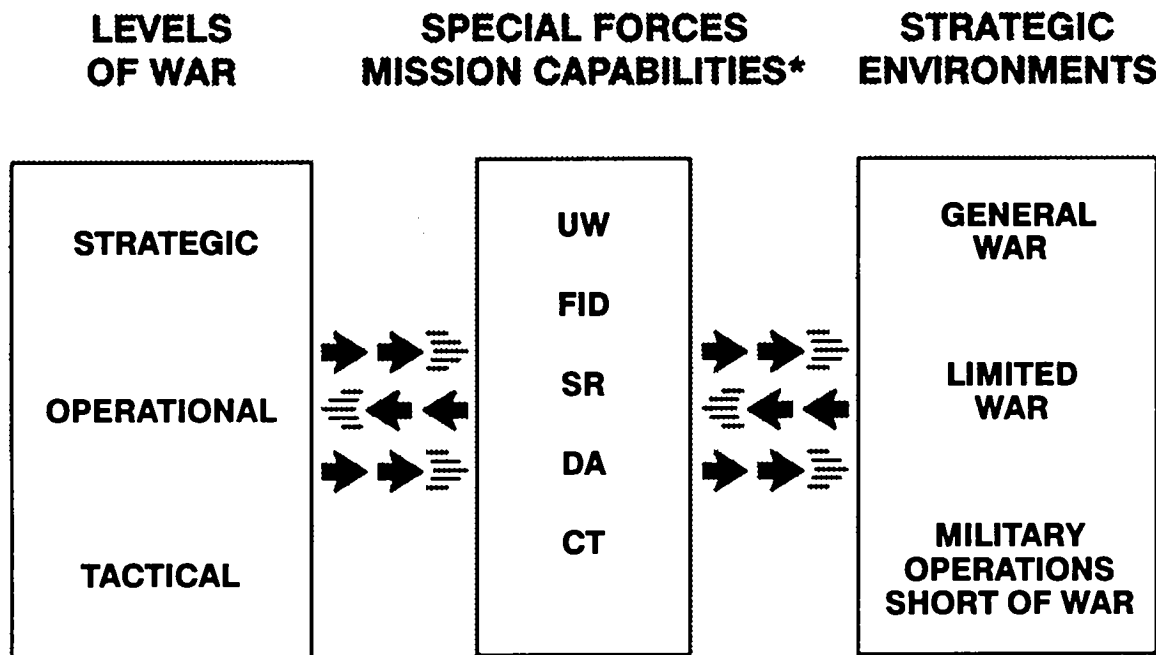


Figure 1-9. Role of SF in AirLand Battle.

Role of Special Forces in Conflict

In conflict situations short of war, the commitment of conventional combat forces may be premature, inappropriate, or infeasible. It may also increase the risk of further escalation to an unacceptable level. In these situations, when nonmilitary instruments of national power are inadequate to respond to a

conflict, SF provides the NCA with options for discriminate engagement that preclude or limit the need to employ conventional combat forces. The low visibility of SF operations helps the United States and its allies to maintain diplomatic flexibility. SF operations also allow other powers (friendly, neutral, and hostile) to accept the outcome of an operation because they avoid the publicity of a more obvious use of military force. Some operations, such as overt DA and CT missions, may have high visibility and affect the prestige of the nation.



* In DEEP, CLOSE, and REAR operations.

Figure 1-10. SF Operations Across the Operational Continuum.

MYTH: SF is primarily a LIC force.

FACT: SF has great utility in conflict short of war. However, it can perform any of its five primary missions across the operational continuum—during peace, conflict, or war (Figure 1-10). (For a detailed discussion of LIC, see FM 100-20.)

SF can conduct a FID mission to support a friendly government against an insurgent threat. The SF organization and its capabilities and operational methods make it ideally suited to conduct or support FID programs in a counterinsurgency environment. The primary SF mission in FID is to advise, train, and assist HN military and paramilitary forces.

SF can conduct a UW mission to support an insurgent or other armed resistance organization. The

United States may undertake long-term operations in support of selected resistance organizations that seek to oppose or overthrow foreign powers hostile to vital US interests. When directed, SF units advise, train, and assist indigenous resistance organizations. These units use the same TTP they employ to conduct a wartime UW mission. Direct US military involvement is rare and subject to legal and policy constraints. Indirect support from friendly territory will be the norm.

SF can conduct a DA or SR mission in support of a contingency operation. Contingency operations are politically sensitive military operations normally characterized by the short-term, rapid projection or employment of military forces in conditions short of war. Such employment can also require a large, highly visible buildup of military forces over extended periods. SF units task organize to participate in contingency operations either unilaterally or in conjunction with other military forces or government agencies.

Role of Special Forces in Peace

SF has both preventive and deterrent roles in peace. In its preventive role, SF participates in foreign internal development efforts and other programs designed to improve Third World conditions. In its deterrent role, SF maintains strategic capabilities that help convince hostile powers to respect US

national interests and refrain from acts of international aggression and coercion.

In peacetime, many SF training activities also have operational *real world* significance. For example, they may provide US presence in a troubled region, demonstrate US commitment, or otherwise contribute to collective security. The strategic value and political sensitivity of SF units make them inappropriate for employment in peacekeeping operations.