



### Army Special Operations Forces—An Essential Tool in the Fight Against Terrorism



U.S. Special Operations troops are showing their mettle in the war on terrorism. A relatively small force of highly trained men and women is showing that when given the right tools and mission, Special Operations troops can have the impact of a force many times their size. Within the Special Operations Command, U.S. Army Special Operations forces are playing a major role. According to General James L. Jones, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, in an August 2002 interview, "The United States turned the tide of battle against the Taliban by inserting Army Green Berets, who quickly organized guerilla units and identified ground targets for U.S. fighters and bombers."

#### Army Special Operations Forces (SOF)—Who They Are

U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, trains and equips roughly 25,000 Special Operations soldiers—about two-thirds of the total U.S. Special Operations force. The men and women of these units are the elite of the elite, chosen for their special skills, dedication and motivation. They are organized in several types of units:

##### Special Forces

U.S. Army Special Forces are organized into seven groups (five active duty and two National Guard), each focused on a particular region of the world. For example, the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (active component) is deployed in the Republic of Georgia, and elements of the 19<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (National Guard) are operating in Afghanistan.

##### Rangers

The three battalions of U.S. Army Rangers making up the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment are among the most highly lethal and well-trained light infantry in the world.

##### Special Operations Aviators

Special Operations pilots provide transport and fire support in addition to conducting their own raiding missions deep behind enemy lines. They are organized into the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR).

##### Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs

Psychological Operations (PSYOP) forces include one active duty Army PSYOP group consisting of six battalions, and two U.S. Army Reserve PSYOP groups. Civil Affairs forces include one active duty Army Civil Affairs battalion and several Civil Affairs commands, brigades and battalions in the U.S. Army Reserve.

##### Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM)

SOSCOM provides logistics, communications and other support to Special Operations forces worldwide.

##### John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School

The JFK Center and School trains United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Joint and Army Special Operations forces through development and evaluation of special operations concepts, doctrines and training.

**The U.S. Army provides more than 60 percent of the total Special Operations force.** The Army National Guard and Army Reserve play important roles in Army Special Operations:

Army SOF Total: 24,700

- Active Duty 13,700
- Army National Guard 2,200
- Army Reserve 8,800



ISSUE 5: The U.S. Army's Role in Special Operations





# The U.S. Army's Role in Special Operations (continued)

## Army Special Operations Forces—Missions

Army Special Operations brings a wide array of capabilities to the counterterrorism fight:

**Unconventional Warfare.** Operating in 12-man "A-Teams," Army Special Forces soldiers work with indigenous military personnel. In peacetime, they conduct confidence-building exercises with friendly local forces, building key personal relationships along the way. In wartime, they provide training, fire support, advice and supplies to friendly local troops.

**Direct-Action Attacks.** Army Special Operations forces like the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment can execute a variety of missions such as airfield seizures, ambushes and intelligence raids. Army Special Operations units can also conduct hostage rescue missions or raids to attack or capture enemy leaders.

**Civil Affairs Operations.** Civil Affairs units are also part of the Army Special Operations team. By working with local civil authorities, Civil Affairs soldiers lay the groundwork for postconflict recovery efforts as well as helping maintain support for U.S. troops during the conflict.

**Psychological Operations.** Psychological Operations is the art of influencing others to do things that support U.S. objectives. U.S. Army PSYOP forces speak foreign languages, understand customs and cultures, and develop and distribute materials such as leaflets, posters, radio and TV programs, and loudspeaker broadcasts.

**Other missions include special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense and information operations.**



## Army Special Operations Forces—Techniques

Army Special Operations forces have shown that they can have the impact of forces many times their size. They do this through a "force multiplier" effect that is felt in several ways:

### Special Operations Success Story: Uzbekistan

It is not a coincidence that Uzbekistan was one of the first nations to allow the United States to deploy troops on its soil to fight the war on terrorism. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Army Special Operations soldiers conducted a series of training missions and exchange programs with the Uzbek armed forces. Over time, these missions helped develop the trust and personal relationships needed to act quickly in a crisis. When a crisis finally struck, these personal and professional links to the Uzbek military proved invaluable. In addition, the strategic intelligence gained over the years by Army Special Forces missions to Uzbekistan helped pave the way for operations in Afghanistan.

**Building Relationships.** Long before conflicts occur, Special Operations soldiers are on the ground building personal relationships with local forces friendly to U.S. interests. When a conflict begins, these one-on-one relationships are invaluable tools to pave the way for coalition building and American military action.

**Assuring Access.** Army Special Operations forces are a key element in assuring future access. Before a conflict, their work with regional forces improves wartime coordination and improves the chances for U.S. access to friendly nations. During a conflict, their small unit size, low profile and stealthy techniques allow them to gain access to remote and hostile areas where U.S. interests are at risk.

**Assisting Local Forces.** Through unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense missions with local troops, Army Special Operations soldiers enhance the effectiveness of indigenous forces.

**Focusing Firepower.** Having eyes and ears on the ground greatly magnifies the impact of U.S. long-range firepower. This is accomplished through intelligence available only to troops on the ground who have sophisticated communications and targeting equipment.

**Strategic Reconnaissance.** During peacetime, Special Operations forces conduct strategic reconnaissance through engagement missions in many nations. When Special Operations forces deploy, they gain invaluable "on-the-ground" insight into the attitudes, beliefs and intentions of the local population. This is one kind of "human intelligence" that the United States needs to win the war against terrorism.

*U.S. Army Special Operations Forces—Leading the Way in the War on Terrorism*