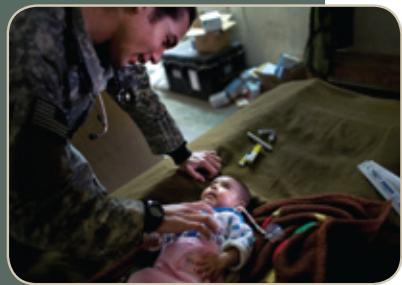
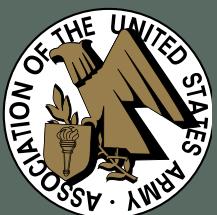


Torchbearer
National Security Report



***U.S. Army Special Operations Forces:
Integral to the Army and the Joint Force***



An AUSA Torchbearer Issue
March 2010





1 March 2010

The ability to control and influence people establishes the strategic underpinnings of not only this nation's security but also its land forces. Landpower—lethal, engaging, enduring—remains a keystone in the overarching integration of all elements of national power. While there appears to be wide consensus that land forces must grow, there is less clarity on the size, force mix, roles and missions and capabilities. In the emerging national security environment, what are the roles for U.S. land forces and what are the associated requirements in terms of capabilities and endstrength?

The U.S. defense strategy reinforces the principle of balance: in the response to the current conflict while preparing for future ones; in preparing for full-spectrum operations; and between the cultural advantages that have provided security and the cultural changes needed to preserve it. Land forces are now playing and will continue to play a prominent role in America's national security. Army special operations forces, a key element of landpower, are an integral part of the Army and the joint force and provide the nation with unique, sophisticated and tailored capabilities. They are most effective when operating as part of and with the support of the joint and interagency team.

This latest installment of AUSA's signature Torchbearer series discusses how Army special operations forces, teamed with general purpose forces, achieve strategic effects through tactical- and operational-level excellence on the battlefield and in lesser-known areas around the world. We also identify what support is necessary to sustain this enduring capability. We hope that you will find this report a useful resource and that you will continue to look to AUSA for thoughtful, credible analysis of contemporary national security issues.

GORDON R. SULLIVAN

General, USA Retired

President, AUSA

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	5
Background	7
Lessons Learned and Ongoing Initiatives.....	13
What is Needed	19
What Must Be Done	21
Torchbearer Message.....	23



Executive Summary

The United States will continue to increase the capacity of its special operations forces and will enhance their capabilities through the growth of organic enablers and key support assets in the general purpose forces.

*Quadrennial Defense Review,
1 February 2010, p. 40*

The United States faces a complex strategic landscape with an extraordinary array of diverse and simultaneous security challenges. At present, the U.S. Army is fighting two wars, assisting other nations as they build their own security capacity, supporting civil authorities at home and abroad and standing ready to deter and defeat new threats. Within this setting, the American Soldier is the nation's most visible and enduring symbol of commitment in an era of persistent conflict. **Army special operations forces (ARSOF)—an integral part of the Army and the joint force—provide the nation with unique, sophisticated and tailored capabilities.**

ARSOF Soldiers are exceptional men and women, specially selected, trained and equipped, and possessing unique individual and collective capabilities that connect U.S. government intent and actions to operational and strategic effects. Ultimately, ARSOF is able to achieve strategic effects through tactical and operational excellence on the battlefield and in lesser-known areas around the world because it operates in a joint, interagency and combined environment as a matter of course, and it brings Soldiers who are trained and educated to solve, or assist in solving, complex political-military challenges and to operate in ambiguous and high-risk environments. However, **in keeping with a once forgotten truth, ARSOF rarely succeeds when operating unilaterally and at critical times requires essential enabler support and sustainment (ESS) such as intelligence, communications, aviation lift and logistics.**

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)—the Army component of the joint U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)—is among the most diverse organizations in the U.S. military, bringing a broad range of competencies and disciplines to support geographic combatant commanders (GCCs) and ambassadors worldwide. The fundamental mission of USASOC is two-fold: to organize, train and equip ARSOF units and Soldiers; and to deploy them worldwide to meet the requirements of war plans, GCCs' Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCPs) and ambassadors' Mission Strategic Plans (MSPs). USASOC consists of seven unclassified component subordinate commands (CSCs) and component subordinate units (CSUs). **USASOC—exercising its Title 10 responsibilities—recruits, assesses, selects, organizes, trains, equips and provides forces and capabilities along three lines of effort: investment in people; persistent engagement; and operations.** These lines provide the framework to prepare ARSOF Soldiers and units for deployment and provide, to GCCs and ambassadors around the world, options for countering the full spectrum of threats.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) recommended and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010–2015 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) implemented significant growth in Army special operations forces. This included additional companies in each Ranger battalion, five additional Special Forces battalions, growth from a single active duty Civil Affairs battalion to a brigade, additional Psychological Operations companies, and an additional Special Operations Aviation battalion. However, the total growth of ARSOF will not be realized until Fiscal Year 2013, when the last Special Forces battalion becomes fully operationally capable. Even with this growth, ARSOF continues to have a deployment tempo among the highest in the military—1:0.83. (The 2011 goal for the active component is 1:2; for the reserve component it is 1:4).



The portion of ARSOF that feels the impact most acutely is the ESS force. Likewise, Soldiers with these skills are in high demand across the Army, meaning Army shortages translate into ARSOF shortages. The 2010 QDR directs the addition of one MH-47 company to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (SOAR[A]); this increase will significantly improve its ability to support special operations. However, ARSOF will still require support from non-SOF aviation. What is needed is the creation, by FY 2013, of an aviation command patterned closely after current USASOC subordinate commands. This command should oversee not only manned aircraft but also unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and return the focus of the 160th SOAR(A) to its primary mission.

Another critical ESS enabler is intelligence and, in particular, the full range of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Not only SOF but all military forces have benefited from the increase in ISR capabilities, most notably UAS. But platforms alone are not sufficient. To be effective, information obtained from the “unblinking eye” must be processed, exploited and disseminated, which requires intelligence analysts and communications systems (a dedicated, multi-disciplined, all-source intelligence effort), including sufficient bandwidth, to disseminate the intelligence. The ability to fuse, assess and analyze information and disseminate it to the right organization in a timely manner has allowed SOF and general purpose forces to capture or kill high-value targets; it is the intelligence capability that underpins successful operations around the world. An example of support to ARSOF is the Army’s decision to deploy the Land Warrior system with a Special Forces battalion in combat. This will provide an unprecedented capability for the Special Forces Soldier to transmit and receive information, allowing access to timely intelligence and unparalleled situational awareness and improving future interoperability between SOF and the general purpose forces.

The Secretary of Defense announced in July 2009 a decision to temporarily increase the active-duty endstrength of the Army by as much as 22,000. For FY 2011, the President’s Budget submission reflects an active component endstrength of 547,400 in the base budget and a temporary increase of 22,000 for the active component which is funded in the overseas contingency operations (OCO) portion of the request. Within this guidance, the senior Army leadership continues to rebalance its endstrength force structure and skill sets commensurate with requirements. USSOCOM, the Army and USASOC are diligently working to ensure that ARSOF receives required ESS forces.

Yet the force still faces challenges in meeting the operational demands of the combatant commanders as well as accomplishing its Title 10 duties and responsibilities. The Army currently has approximately 700,000 Soldiers—both active and reserve component—on active duty. As of 16 February 2010, more than 250,000 Soldiers were deployed in 80 countries. To maintain that level of engagement, for every Soldier deployed in theater the Army needs two more Soldiers: one who is training and getting ready to deploy, and one who has just returned and needs to reset. Adding to that is the critical role played by the institutional portion of the Army—the generating force—in supporting the operational force.

Despite ARSOF growth in structure and capabilities, it cannot succeed on its own. ARSOF is both inextricably linked to the Army as a whole—integral to the Army’s role—and dependent upon continued support from the Army in personnel policies and manning, equipment and, most critical, ESS forces. The 2010 QDR recommends additional authorizations for special operations units and enablers. What is needed is: growth in ARSOF and Army endstrength and force structure; new investment strategies; innovative tools that help locate, learn about and distribute data regarding various battlefield targets; and adjustments in ARSOF training methods. Investment in a well-trained and technologically enhanced ARSOF allows the nation to continue responding quickly to a broad spectrum of conflicts and enhances global stability.



U.S. Army Special Operations Forces: Integral to the Army and the Joint Force

To successfully deter and confront the global insurgency threatening the world and our nation today, the U.S. military must be able to employ a balanced approach to warfare, carefully blending the full spectrum of military, para-military and civil action to achieve success. It is an approach I refer to as “balanced warfare.” It is the manner in which our nation’s special operations forces are combating terrorism today, and it is the guiding principle behind the Department of Defense’s campaign plan to combat global terrorism.

Admiral Eric T. Olson
Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command¹

Introduction

In the years ahead, the United States will confront complex, dynamic and unanticipated challenges to its national security and the collective security of its friends and allies. These challenges will occur in many forms and will be waged across the spectrum of conflict—from peaceful competition to general war—and in all domains: land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. To succeed in this environment, four roles for land forces emerge:

- to prevail in protracted counterinsurgency campaigns;
- to engage to help other nations build capacity and assure friends and allies;
- to support civil authorities at home and abroad; and
- to deter and defeat hybrid threats and hostile state actors.

In fulfilling these roles, the Army must continuously adapt to a versatile mix of tailorable and networked organizations, operating on a rotational cycle, to provide a sustained flow of trained and ready forces for full-spectrum operations and to hedge against unexpected contingencies—at a tempo that is predictable and sustainable for the all-volunteer force.



Army special operations forces (ARSOF)—an integral part of the Army and the joint force—provide the nation with unique, sophisticated and tailored capabilities. ARSOF Soldiers are exceptional men and women, specially selected, trained and equipped, and possessing unique individual and collective capabilities that connect U.S. government intent and actions to operational and strategic effects. Ultimately, ARSOF is able to achieve strategic effects through tactical and operational excellence on the battlefield and in lesser-known areas around the world because it operates in a joint, interagency and combined environment as a matter of course, and brings Soldiers who are trained and educated to solve, or assist in solving, complex political-military challenges and to operate in ambiguous and high-risk environments.

¹ Admiral Eric T. Olson, “A Balanced Approach to Irregular Warfare,” *Journal of International Security Affairs*, Spring 2009, Number 16, <http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2009/16/olson.php>.



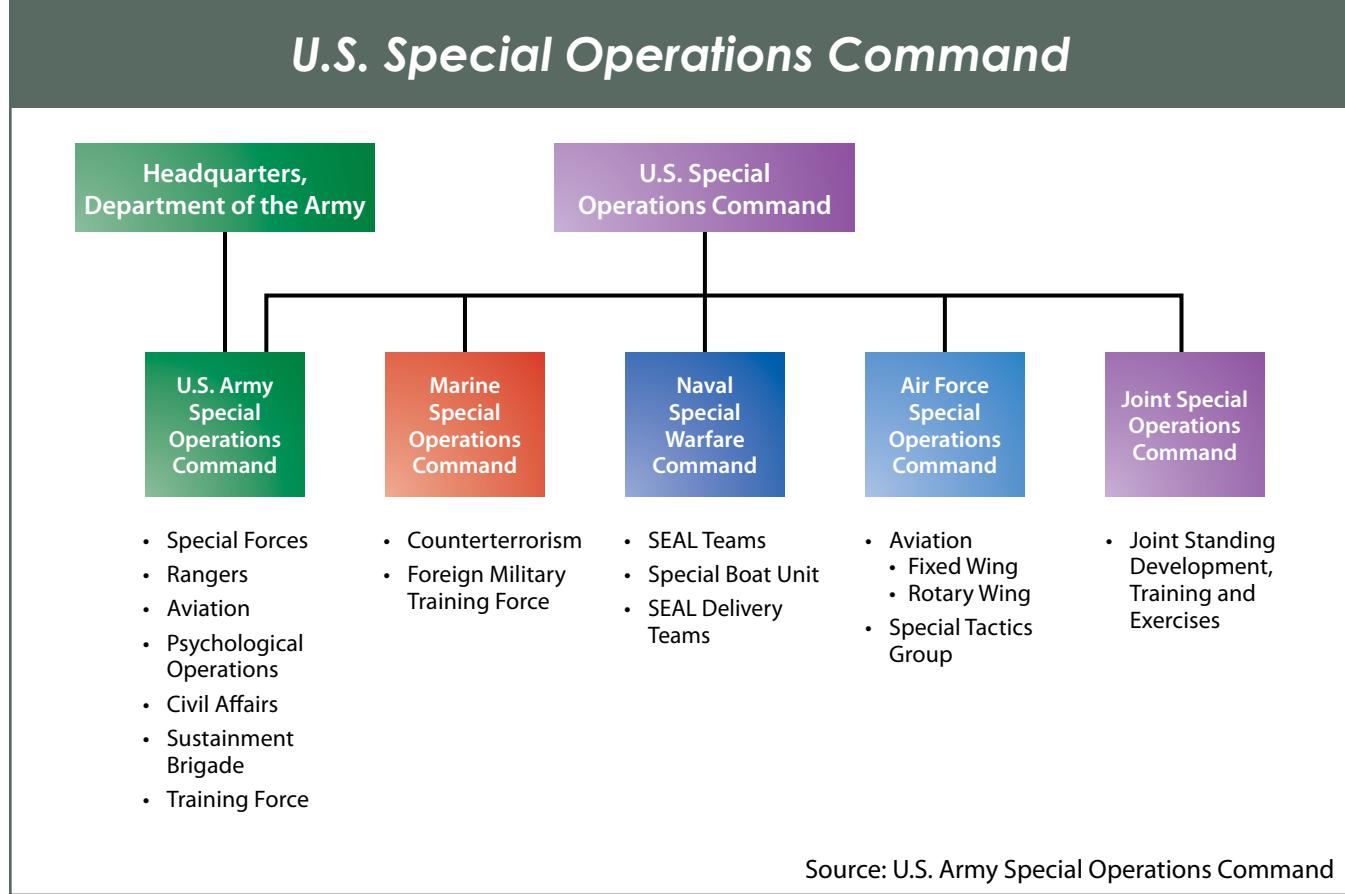
The essence of ARSOF is embodied in the Special Operations Forces (SOF) Truths:

- *Humans* are more important than *hardware*.
- *Quality* is better than *quantity*.
- Special operations forces cannot be mass produced.
- Competent special operations forces cannot be created *after* emergencies occur.
- The once forgotten fifth Truth, relearned from the past eight years of war: **Most special operations require non-SOF assistance.**

Colonel John Collins, U.S. Army, Retired, conceived this fifth SOF Truth, along with the

well-known first four, and Congressman Earl Hutto (D-FL) inserted it into the Congressional Record in 1987. Regrettably, it had been forgotten until 2009, when the current United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) commander directed it be re-added to the existing SOF Truths.² Today, the services and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) have recognized the critical requirements for enabler support and sustainment (ESS), sometimes referred to as SOF enablers. For ARSOF to effectively support geographic combatant commanders (GCCs) and ambassadors worldwide, it requires access to and support from ESS, in particular, intelligence, communications, aviation lift and logistics. This concept is so important that language in the National

U.S. Special Operations Command



Source: U.S. Army Special Operations Command

² Congressional Research Service, *United States and Soviet Special Operations*, 28 April 1987, with Foreword by Congressman Earl Hutto. See also John M. Collins, "Special Operations – Personal Opinions," 11 December 2008, www.smallwarsjournal.com. See also Admiral Eric T. Olson, Memo for HQ USSOCOM, subj: 5th SOF Truth, 19 June 2009.



Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 directs the services and USSOCOM to report on the status of ESS and identify future requirements.³ This demonstrates the long-held recognition that no force can be successful operating independently; like any other military capability that supports the GCC's Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) and the ambassador's Mission Strategic Plan (MSP), ARSOF can rarely do so unilaterally, and at critical times requires essential enabling support. **ARSOF is most effective when operating as part of and with the support of the joint and interagency team.**

Background

General. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)—the Army component of the joint USSOCOM—is among the most diverse organizations in the U.S. military, bringing a broad range of competencies and disciplines to support GCCs and ambassadors worldwide. The fundamental mission of USASOC is two-fold: to organize, train and equip ARSOF units and Soldiers, and to deploy them worldwide to meet the requirements of war plans, GCCs' TSCPs and ambassadors' MSPs. As USASOC carries out its mission, sufficient intelligence, aviation lift and logistic capabilities, among others, are critical to its success.

USASOC consists of seven unclassified component subordinate commands (CSCs) and component subordinate units (CSUs):

- U.S. Army Special Forces Command;
- U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School;
- 75th Ranger Regiment;
- 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne);
- 95th Civil Affairs Brigade;
- 528th Sustainment Brigade; and
- 4th Psychological Operations Group.

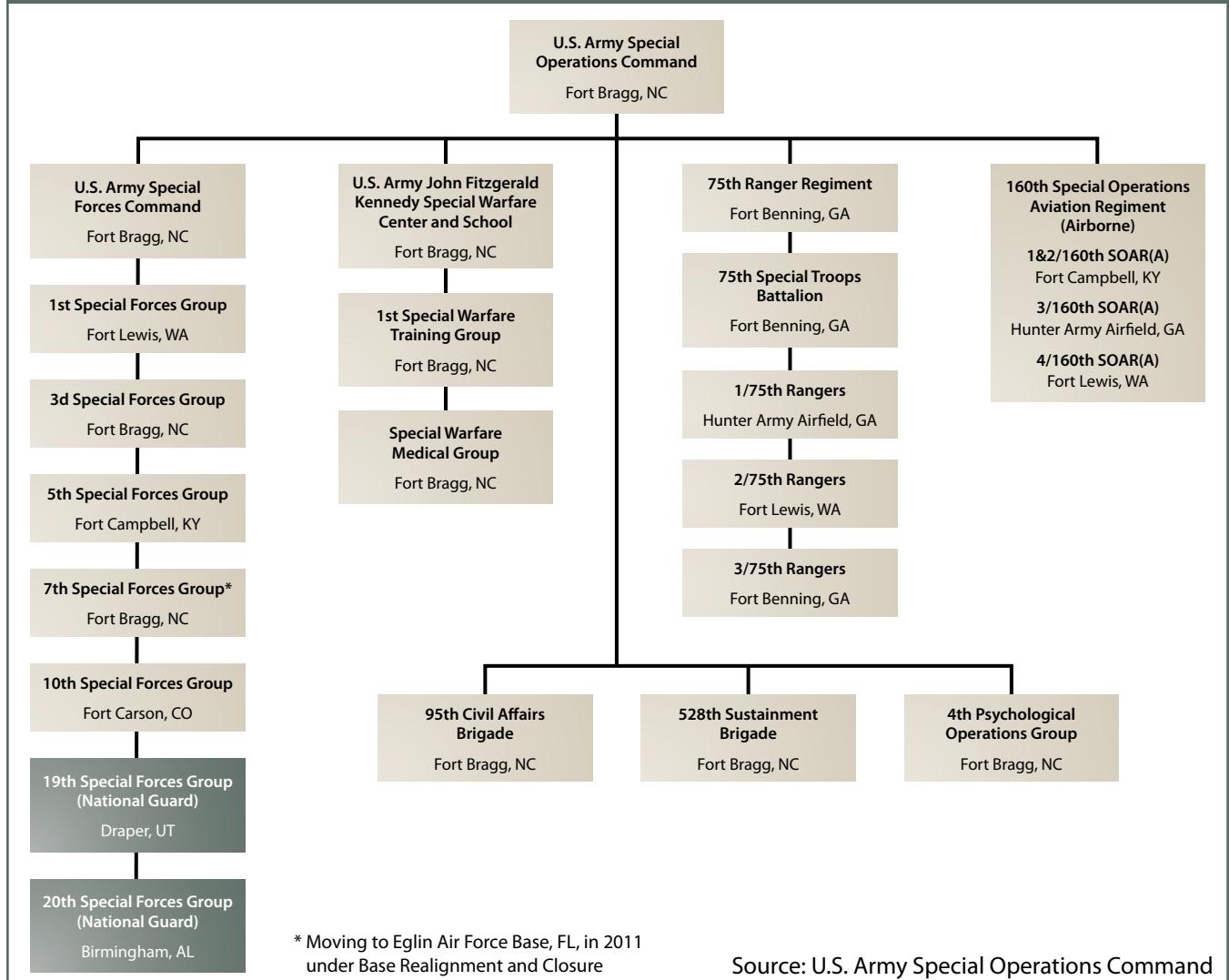
When viewed collectively, the CSC/CSUs provide the full range of ARSOF unilateral and combined capabilities across *the spectrum of lethality and influence* in support of U.S. government and partner objectives. This force is uniquely suited to conduct, support and, if called upon, lead operations in an era of persistent conflict (protracted hostility among any combination of state, non-state and individual actors). Above and beyond current and future readiness, however, USASOC continues to evolve by developing new tactics, techniques and procedures; finding best practices in training and education; and



³ National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2010, section 1060, http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ084.111.pdf.



U.S. Army Special Operations Command



equipping all forces with cutting-edge technology to enhance capabilities.

USASOC—exercising its Title 10 responsibilities—recruits, assesses, selects, organizes, trains, equips and provides forces and capabilities along three lines of effort: investment in people; persistent engagement; and operations. These lines provide the framework to prepare ARSOF Soldiers and units for deployment and provide GCCs and ambassadors around the world with options for countering the full spectrum of threats.

Investment—People with Purpose. Through focused recruiting, a comprehensive assessment and selection process and training from special operations qualification courses, USASOC is able to place the right Soldiers into the ranks of ARSOF. It provides those Soldiers with career-long advanced training and education, thereby maximizing the ARSOF Soldiers' effectiveness in complex and ambiguous environments. The command is fortunate to be able to recruit personnel from the best Soldiers in the world—the U.S. Army. Building upon this



Army Special Operations

Strategic Effects Through Tactical and Operational Excellence;
Inherently Joint, Interagency and Combined; Superb Problem Solvers

ARSOF provides the nation with unique, sophisticated and tailored capabilities to operate in ambiguous, high-risk environments around the world.

INVESTMENT: PEOPLE WITH PURPOSE

- Specially assessed, selected, educated and trained
- Regionally focused expertise:
 - true area expertise
 - cultural and language skills
 - relationship development
 - indigenous support
- Joint/Interagency
 - Enduring area assessments

SUPPORT TO COMMANDER'S APPRECIATION AND CAMPAIGN DESIGN

COMPLEX, IRREGULAR AND HYBRID THREATS

PEOPLE
PASSION

GOVERNMENT
REASON

CHANCE

MILITARY

CONVENTIONAL THREATS

OPERATIONS

- Full range of special operations forces unilateral and combined capabilities available across the spectrum of lethality and influence in support of U.S. and partner nation objectives
- Operational design informed by relevant and resident area and regional expertise
- Strategic options relevant across the spectrum of conflict

PERSISTENT ENGAGEMENT

- Individual assignment and unit deployment components
- Reinforcement of preventative strategic approaches and U.S. Mission efforts
- Partner capacity/capability building
- Senior leaders with enduring situational understanding and cultural awareness
- Preparation of the environment

SUPPORT TO JOINT / INTERAGENCY FORCES

Source: U.S. Army Special Operations Command

foundation, the essence of the ARSOF Soldier is what the USSOCOM commander has termed “the 3-D operator”—capable of working across the spectrum of defense, diplomacy and development. Despite the focus of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom on one region, USASOC remains committed to developing regionally-focused expertise across all regions. This includes basic and advanced language and cultural education and experience, and development of long-term relationships with key indigenous personnel. This expertise is developed not only through ARSOF qualification courses and

advanced training and education in the United States but also through frequent and extended deployments and stationing in key locations around the world.

One of the most important capabilities that this expertise brings to the GCCs and ambassadors is to provide enduring area assessments that allow commanders and staffs to gain situational awareness and understanding of the complex conditions that exist in areas that may require the use of various elements of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, economic, financial, intelligence and law enforcement). This critical ARSOF



The deployment of the Civil Military Support Element (CMSE) of the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade in Bangladesh is an example of the U.S. commitment to assisting friends, partners and allies countering violent extremist organizations (VEOs). Such groups often take advantage of natural disasters and the failings of civil institutions, exploiting popular discontent and providing alternatives to legitimate governments.

Based on the recurring threat of cyclones in Bangladesh, the CMSE conducted civil reconnaissance as part of an interagency assessment team to assess the effects of cyclones, determine immediate impact on humanitarian assistance (HA) projects and develop plans for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the cyclone-affected areas. The CMSE assisted the government of Bangladesh in the execution of HA to bring relief to their people, thus enhancing the government's legitimacy and assisting in preventing the local VEOs from exploiting the disaster to increase recruitment of anti-government elements.

The CMSE assessments provided an understanding of the areas most vulnerable to VEOs and led to a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Pacific Command project focused on enhancing the Bangladesh Community Policing and Security Framework to Combat Extremism. This \$8 million project is designed to deepen the country's nascent community-based policing approach to enhance stability and strengthen the national security framework. This effort has increased the government's capability to patrol, monitor and provide adequate security in insufficiently governed and formerly ungoverned spaces within Bangladesh.

Additionally, the CMSE assisted USAID in a \$4 million project to provide multipurpose cyclone shelters in the most cyclone-affected provinces to support future relief operations when cyclones strike these areas. CMSE team members continue to assist in determining the proper location for structures throughout the provinces to provide shelter for displaced persons and for use by government agencies to coordinate relief efforts. This project allows the government of Bangladesh the capability to provide local relief and demonstrate that it is able to restore essential services and good governance in disaster-stricken areas.



capability already exists, but it is further developed by increasing opportunities for Soldiers to live, study and work overseas, including serving with the Military Groups (MILGRPs) and Joint U.S. Military Advisory Groups (JUSMAGs) or supporting the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC); and/or taking advantage of existing U.S. government educational opportunities such as Olmstead Scholarships and

attendance at foreign military schools. USASOC also seeks to develop new educational opportunities such as the recent formal partnership established between USASOC and the University of North Carolina system.⁴ The result is Soldiers who possess macro (and in some cases micro) regional expertise in overseas locations around the world. They will be able to provide not only situational awareness but

⁴ On 12 November 2009, Lieutenant General John F. Mulholland, Jr., Commander, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and Erskine Bowles, President, University of North Carolina, signed a memorandum of agreement formalizing the partnership between USASOC and UNC.



also *situational understanding* to the GCCs, joint task force (JTF) commanders and staffs, the ambassadors and country teams.

Persistent engagement. USASOC provides forces to the GCCs and ambassadors to support TSCPs, MSPs and other requirements identified by GCCs and ambassadors. **This line of effort is both preventative and preparatory.**

Preventatively, ARSOF is uniquely suited to reinforce efforts of U.S. Missions to aid and assist host nations in developing capability and capacity to defend combat lawlessness, subversion and insurgency and bring stability to under-governed or ungoverned areas that can provide sanctuary to threat groups. ARSOF provides the ability to train and advise host nation forces in such endeavors as: counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, stability operations and other combat skills; assistance in civil-military operations, to include humanitarian assistance; and support to public diplomacy with military information support teams. With assistance from U.S. military and civilian agencies, friends, partners and allies of the United States are better able to defend their nations, protect their populations and eliminate the conditions that give rise to terrorism and insurgency. By minimizing instability and preventing conflict escalation, the United States



approaches security problems indirectly and makes more efficient use of resources.

Persistent engagement is also preparatory in nature. Should conflict or instability escalate and require the introduction of a larger U.S. footprint in a conflict or unstable area, ARSOF situational understanding—called Operational Design—provides a significant contribution that forms the foundation for emerging joint and Army forces planning in a complex environment. In essence, Operational Design is a methodology well suited to aiding the understanding of complex problems. It is based on: framing the problem; assessing the environment to ensure understanding of the problem; and using the “6C Construct”—*context, consultation, collaboration, coordination, control and unity of command*. It is not a uniquely military process; it is joint and interagency and includes coalition partners.⁵



Traditional ARSOF planning methodologies—such as Area Study and Area Assessment, Target Audience Analysis and Civil Information Management—are well suited to support Operational Design. These methodologies, combined with the regional expertise, allow ARSOF to provide support to commanders and ambassadors as they develop plans and campaigns to deal with complex conditions and, when necessary, conduct operations.

⁵ General James N. Mattis, USMC, Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, Memorandum, subj: Vision for a Joint Approach to Operational Design, 6 October 2009, http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2009/aod_2009.pdf.



U.S. Army special operations forces' enduring engagement alongside America's Colombian allies has contributed to countering irregular threats in South America, as well as to the Colombian military's recent participation in multinational efforts in Afghanistan. For more than 50 years ARSOF has assisted in the development of the Colombian military's capability and capacity to counter internal insurgency movements and narcotics trafficking. To date this commitment has resulted in the Colombian government's successfully defeating insurgent movements ranging from the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) to the now defunct M-19 organization.



Through an engagement strategy managed by the U.S. Ambassador and U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command has provided Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces, who have conducted foreign internal defense missions to train, advise and assist the Colombian military. Through programs such as Joint Combined Exchanges for Training to Joint Planning and Assistance Teams, ARSOF gains cultural understanding and develops crucial personal relationships while improving an ally's military capability and effectiveness.

This "with and through" approach to improve a partner nation's capability was demonstrated in the successful, very sophisticated hostage rescue conducted by the Colombian military, resulting in the 2008 return of three U.S. citizens who had been held by the FARC-EP since February 2003.

Additionally, the announcement of the Colombian intent to deploy Colombian military forces in support of multinational counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan is an example of the strategic effect of ARSOF persistent engagement. Ultimately, the successful development of a competent Colombian military force aids in the long-term security and stability of a partner nation and ally, able to protect its interests and contribute to multinational efforts worldwide.

Operations. This line of effort is the introduction of the full suite of special operations unilateral and combined capabilities. The core activities listed below provide GCCs and ambassadors with strategic options that are relevant across the spectrum of conflict from irregular and hybrid to conventional state-on-state war:

- Unconventional Warfare (UW);
- Foreign Internal Defense (FID);
- Civil Affairs (CA);
- Psychological Operations (PSYOP);

- Counterterrorism (CT);
- Direct Action (DA);
- Special Reconnaissance (SR);
- Counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (CPWMD); and
- Information Operations (IO).

Any combination of the special operations core activities may be conducted in support of specifically named operations.⁶

As discussed above, relevant and resident area and regional expertise from ARSOF shape and

⁶ For more information about Army special operations forces, see *Soldiers*, vol. 64, issue 11, November 2009, <http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e1/soldiers/archives/pdfs/nov09all.pdf>.



contribute to Operational Design planning by the GCCs and JTF commanders.

Lessons Learned and Ongoing Initiatives

Since September 2001, ARSOF continues to change and improve while posturing itself to fulfill a vital role as an integral part of the Army and the joint force. USASOC together with the Army's Center for Lessons Learned (CALL) and the Department of Defense's (DoD's) Center for Complex Operations (CCO) are at the forefront of codifying lessons learned from more than eight years of war to better prepare the force for current conflicts. They are also setting the conditions for the future through innovative solutions and creative adaptations. Yet challenges remain, centered on ARSOF force structure and in particular enabler support and sustainment (ESS) forces.

In the fall of 2008, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) tasked Special Forces elements to conduct a supporting effort as the government of Afghanistan sought to improve electricity distribution in the Kandahar and Helmand Provinces. Through the installation of wind turbines, electricity would improve the lives of local Afghans and gain the support of a population under pressure from Taliban extremists. Operation Aram Tander III was formed to ensure the secure delivery and installation of the turbines.

A combined force of coalition SOF, Afghan SOF and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) with embedded U.S. Special Forces were given two major tasks. First, they would provide the turbine convoy with supporting fire at crucial choke points primarily in the vicinity of Kajaki Sofla. Second, they would block all Taliban movement in the area to maintain the convoy's freedom of movement.

For six days, coalition and Afghan forces with embedded U.S. Special Forces engaged large numbers of enemy fighters, repelling numerous attempts to disrupt the delivery of the turbines and undermine the Afghan government. The operation resulted in significant numbers of Taliban fighters eliminated, logistical capability depleted and the safe delivery and installation of the turbines. The actions of Afghan forces with embedded U.S. Special Forces and coalition forces during the conduct of Aram Tander III reinforced the legitimacy of the government by providing services to the population and crippling the Taliban's control of the Upper Sangin Valley.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review recommended and the Fiscal Year 2008–2013 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) authorized significant growth in Army special operations forces. This included additional companies in each Ranger battalion, five additional Special Forces battalions, growth from a single active duty Civil Affairs battalion to a brigade, additional PSYOP companies, and an additional battalion of Special Operations Aviation (SOA). However, the total growth of ARSOF will not be realized until FY 2013, when the last Special Forces battalion becomes fully operationally capable.⁷ Even with this growth, ARSOF continues to have a ratio of deployment ("boots on the ground," or BOG) to time at home station ("dwell") that is among the highest in the military—1:0.83. (The 2011 BOG/dwell goal for the active component is 1:2; for the reserve component it is 1:4. The



⁷ This is one example of the SOF Truth "Special operations forces cannot be mass produced."



end-state goals are 1:3 and 1:5, respectively, as stated in POM 2012–2017.) The portion of ARSOF that feels the impact of this high BOG/dwell ratio most acutely is the ESS force. These Soldiers are in the high- demand, low-density skills such as intelligence and logistics, including (but not limited to) such skills as signal intercept operators and intelligence analysts, supply specialists, maintainers, communicators, aviation crewmen and parachute riggers. Likewise, Soldiers with these skills are in high demand across the Army, meaning Army shortages translate into ARSOF shortages.

USSOCOM, the Army and USASOC are diligently working to ensure that ARSOF receives required ESS forces. While ARSOF cannot be put into

the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process and managed and resourced in the same way as brigade combat teams (BCTs), ARSOF requirements are still identified in the ARFORGEN system and creatively managed to ensure ARSOF receives the right ESS at the right time to support its missions. This effort extends to the Global Force Management process to ensure deployed forces have the requisite enablers while they support GCC requirements.

Rotary-wing aviation is a key capability in an irregular warfare or counterinsurgency environment. USASOC's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (SOAR[A]) is unique. No other organization is responsible for recruiting, assessing and selecting candidates, and then conducting its

Routinely working together and emphasizing a combined arms approach in both training and combat, the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (SOAR[A]) bring ground force and aviation expertise essential for mission success in this era of persistent conflict.

This level of cooperation and effectiveness was on display in May 2007 when combat-seasoned Rangers and 160th SOAR(A) personnel conducted a raid to capture or kill members of a prominent terrorist cell affiliated with a series of kidnappings in Iraq's Anbar province. The assault force conducted a helicopter infiltration into a remote landing zone and proceeded to the objective on foot to maintain the element of surprise.

After taking fire from enemy personnel, the Ranger force cleared and secured the target buildings, killing nine enemy combatants and freeing 12 Iraqi national hostages. No civilians were harmed in the course of the precision assault. The close coordination and communication between the Rangers and aerial fires provided by the 160th SOAR(A) resulted in killing four enemy combatants as they attempted to maneuver on the Ranger assault force. The target buildings yielded large amounts of weapons, explosives (including suicide vests) and valuable intelligence that led to successful follow-on missions.

The coordinated efforts of the Rangers and the 160th SOAR(A) enabled them to dismantle a known terrorist network and assisted in bringing security and stability to the local population. Raids performed by these organizations played an instrumental role in defeating enemy networks that led the insurgency in Anbar and throughout Iraq. The direct-action missions of the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 160th SOAR(A) remain essential to the irregular-warfare environment found in Iraq and Afghanistan.





own qualification course with organic assets to develop special operations aviators and crewmen. This unit is responsible for providing *joint* special operations forces with the most advanced infiltration and exfiltration capabilities together with precision fires. The majority of operations are conducted at night, in limited visibility and, in places such as Afghanistan, often at very high altitudes. While it is fully engaged in OEF and OIF, the regiment is also undergoing aircraft transition from ten variants of three types of aircraft to a single variant for each of the three aircraft (MH-47G Chinook, MH-60M Blackhawk and AH/MH-6M “Little Bird”); continuing to build a fourth battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington; and sustaining the regiment’s ability to conduct worldwide operations in support of emerging contingency missions in any theater.

Eight years of war have demonstrated that this critical SOA capability is stretched. It cannot support *all* ground SOF that require rotary lift. Though it supports many, it cannot support all the combined operations conducted by ground SOF with host nation combat forces. It cannot conduct routine administrative resupply operations to remote locations where ground SOF are operating. As an example of the complexity of logistics support to remote bases, in one six-month period in Afghanistan the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) conducted more than 850 containerized delivery system (CDS) airdrops totaling nearly 1.5 million pounds of material. Possibly, much of this material could be more efficiently delivered by rotary-wing aircraft than by airdrop from fixed-wing platforms. (This also puts additional strain on other logistical elements such as riggers.) But when 160th SOAR(A) aircraft are conducting combat resupply missions, pilots and

crews are removed from the combat mission cycle for on-call or preplanned missions. However, not all rotary-wing lift requirements need to be met exclusively by SOA. CJSOTFs in Afghanistan and Iraq have been supported by the Army’s combat aviation brigades (CABs) for both logistic support and combat assault lift in addition to precision fires (from Apaches), particularly in support of SOF advising indigenous troops on operations.⁸ Unfortunately, the Army’s CABs are stretched just as much as 160th SOAR(A), and there continue to be more requirements than resources. The 2010 QDR directs the addition of one MH-47 company to the 160th SOAR(A); this increase will improve its ability to support special operations. Nevertheless, ARSOF will still require support from non-SOF aviation as outlined above.

Another critical enabler within ESS is intelligence and, in particular, the full range of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition (RSTA) capabilities. Not only SOF but all military forces have benefited from the increase in ISR/RSTA capabilities, most notably unmanned aerial systems (UAS).⁹ But platforms alone are not sufficient. To be effective, information obtained from the “unblinking eye” must be processed, exploited and disseminated (PED), which requires intelligence analysts and communications systems (a dedicated, multi-disciplined, all-source intelligence effort), including sufficient bandwidth, disseminating the intelligence.¹⁰ The ability to fuse, assess and analyze information and disseminate it to the right organization in a timely manner has allowed special operations forces and general purpose forces to capture or kill high-value targets such as Saddam Hussein and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq, to name just two of

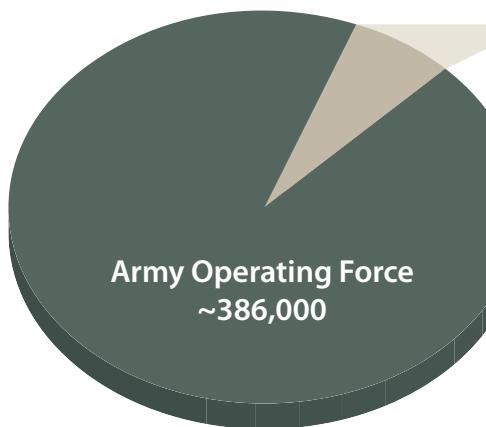
⁸ This illustrates and reinforces the SOF Truth “Most special operations require non-SOF assistance.”

⁹ See AUSA National Security Report “U.S. Army Aviation: Balancing Current and Future Demands,” January 2008, p. 11, http://www.ausa.org/programs/torchbearer/nsr/National%20Security%20Reports/TNSR_01-08.pdf.

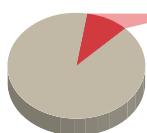
¹⁰ The intelligence collaboration between SOF and general purpose forces again shows the importance of the SOF Truth “Most special operations require non-SOF assistance”; this is an example of the two-way street and the effectiveness of established fusion cells that share information and intelligence on the battlefield.



Operating Force



Army Aviation Operating Force
~27,000 (7% of Army Operating Force)



160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)
~3,000 (11% of Army Aviation Operating Force)

- Army Operating Force
- Army Aviation Operating Force
- 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)

Source: U.S. Army Special Operations Command

the most notable actions. It is the intelligence capability that underpins successful operations around the world. The Army's decision to deploy the Land Warrior system with a Special Forces battalion in combat is an example of support to ARSOF that will provide an unprecedented capability for the Special Forces Soldier to transmit and receive information, allowing access to timely intelligence and unparalleled situational awareness and improving future interoperability between SOF and the general purpose forces. In FYs 2014 and 2015, 160th SOAR(A) will receive two Warrior UAS companies with 12 air vehicles each.

The Army is also fielding a "quick reaction capability" (QRC) platoon of MQ-1C Enhanced Range Multipurpose UASs to support deployed ARSOF in FY 2010 that will provide an armed, persistent ISR platform. This QRC platoon will be replaced by two companies beginning in FY 2014; however, this will provide only 40 percent of the medium-altitude UAS platforms required by USSOCOM to support ARSOF global operations in 2015. Additionally, USASOC has validated requirements for a versatile vertical-takeoff-and-landing (VTOL) UAS platform that could perform a range of missions (resupply,

ISR, PSYOP). Smaller UAS platforms will also improve ARSOF's organic ISR capabilities at the tactical level. Examples include team-level, hand-launched systems such as the Wasp-III Micro, the Pointer Upgraded Mission Ability (PUMA) and the Raven-B with loiter times of 20–90 minutes, as well as the larger catapult-launched RQ-11B Shadow (one platoon per SF Group), which can loiter four to five hours with day/night sensors feeding directly to the Soldier via handheld receivers.

Multi-disciplined ARSOF intelligence capabilities from the Special Forces Group's Military Intelligence company are often task organized and placed under the operational control of an Operational Detachment A (ODA) or Special Forces company headquarters in support. The requirement to "power down" intelligence support to tactical operations leaves ARSOF's battalion and group commanders with depleted intelligence sections that have limited capacity to support the full spectrum of operations that ARSOF conducts. Additional intelligence capabilities, modeled after the company intelligence support team (CoIST) concept described in the Army MI rebalance strategy, would provide the flexibility, after mission analysis, to dedicate support to



During Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines, assistance from ARSOF elements was instrumental to the success of efforts by the armed forces of the Philippines (AFP) to eliminate a key high-value target, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader Abu Solaiman. This operation demonstrated the importance of persistent engagement: success required nearly a year of intense Psychological Operations (PSYOP), intelligence work and advice and assistance.

Members of the 4th PSYOP Group assisted their Philippine military counterparts in developing a dissent and discord program to separate low-level ASG members from their leadership. In March 2006, the ASG bombed a Muslim food coop in Jolo City, resulting in the deaths of five Muslim citizens and the wounding of 26. The PSYOP element intensified its influence campaign, which included support to the State Department’s “Rewards for Justice” program. One of the rank-and-file ASG members became disillusioned by the killing of fellow Muslims and, more important, his wife was influenced by the extensive Civic Action programs conducted by the Philippine military and advised and assisted by the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade. She questioned her husband’s loyalty to the ASG, saying that there was a \$5 million reward for Abu Solaiman while she was unable to put food on the table for her children.



The ASG member became an informant, providing detailed information that allowed intelligence organizations to track and locate Abu Solaiman. In January 2007, one of these intelligence organizations developed actionable intelligence and provided it to the Joint Special Operations Task Force intelligence officer (JSOTF J2). The J2 immediately informed the U.S. Special Forces advising and assisting the Philippines Special Forces, who were preparing to conduct an operation in the vicinity. The Filipinos quickly revised their mission and, with the help of a target intelligence package from the JSOTF, infiltrated deep into the jungle, located Abu Solaiman’s guerrilla camp and, in the ensuing firefight, killed Abu Solaiman. The U.S. State Department paid the reward to the informant, and the Philippine government relocated him and his family.

identified Special Forces ODAs and significantly enhance ARSOF intelligence capability.¹¹

USASOC Soldiers and units have benefited from and contributed to numerous innovations and adaptations with the Army and the joint force as a result of more than eight years of sustained combat operations. The following list of innovative technology, capabilities and tactics, techniques and procedures are not all-inclusive but illustrate what can be done

by Soldiers and civilians in the Army and the joint force in partnership with other government agencies, industry and academia:

- The partnership between industry and USSOCOM has resulted in biometrics and sensitive-site exploitation capabilities that have led to the capture of numerous high-value targets. These capabilities have assisted the joint special operations forces to pioneer the

¹¹ The Army MI rebalance strategy proposes building three-Soldier CoISTs—two Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 35F intelligence analysts and one 35M human intelligence (HUMINT) collector—into each maneuver company in brigade combat teams. The CoISTs purpose is to focus intelligence analysis, ISR planning, HUMINT and exploitation functions in support of tactical-level operations. ARSOF requires the capability to provide these intelligence functions to identified priority mission SF ODAs while preserving intelligence capability at the battalion and group levels to support planning for future ARSOF missions in each theater SOC area of responsibility.



process known as F3EA—find, fix, finish, exploit and analyze.¹²

- In Afghanistan, ARSOF Soldiers have assisted in or inspired innovative programs such as Tribal Engagement, the Afghanistan Public Protection Program (AP3), the Community Defense Initiative (CDI) and the Local Defense Initiative (LDI). These programs grew out of core Special Forces operations and are focused on enhancing the ability of indigenous security elements and the local populace to defend their families and villages from insurgents.
- Communications Soldiers from the 112th Signal Battalion of USASOC's 528th Sustainment Brigade developed the Interim Hub Node in U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) from commercial off-the-shelf and existing Army and joint communications systems to significantly increase the ability to transmit critical intelligence information to the lowest tactical levels of ARSOF. Soldiers understood the requirement and developed an innovative solution that has significantly enhanced tactical operations.
- The development of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protection (MRAP) vehicle by DoD has saved numerous lives in Iraq, and ARSOF has benefited significantly from this industry-military cooperation. The MRAP All Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV) is expected to significantly improve ground mobility in Afghanistan for all military forces to include ARSOF.
- The Rangers and Special Forces have pioneered the use of multipurpose canines to detect explosives and track and detain enemy personnel beyond the normal capabilities of the Military Working Dog. Ranger and Special Forces dogs have saved numerous lives and contributed to many successes on the battlefield.

These brief examples illustrate that ARSOF contributes significantly to innovative new military capabilities while also deriving benefits from ongoing service and industry innovation. As the enemy adapts and evolves, future success of the Army and ARSOF depends upon this continuing innovation.

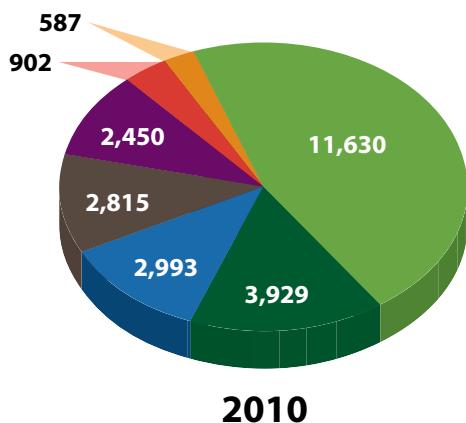
Senior ARSOF leadership is also working on a number of initiatives to improve the ability to provide trained, ready and relevant forces to commanders on the battlefield and to ambassadors around the world. USASOC has the second-largest language school (after the Defense Language Institute) in the Department of Defense. Introductory language is a basic requirement for all qualification course graduates in Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations. This provides a functional language capability to conduct basic military operations and training. The U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School provides Soldiers who have demonstrated aptitude to receive advanced language training either immediately following completion of the qualifications or when returning from operational units. The recently established partnership between USASOC and the University of North Carolina system has the potential to provide significant benefits in this area for ARSOF Soldiers.

For the past several years, the Army has worked to restore balance to a force that has experienced the cumulative effects of more than eight years of conflict. At the same time, it is setting the conditions for the future to fulfill its strategic role as an integral part of the joint force. Senior ARSOF leadership recognizes that it is most effective when operating as part of, and with the support of, the joint and interagency team. This means implementing lessons learned from previous conflicts while simultaneously leveraging innovative and creative solutions to forge an even stronger bond with conventional forces.

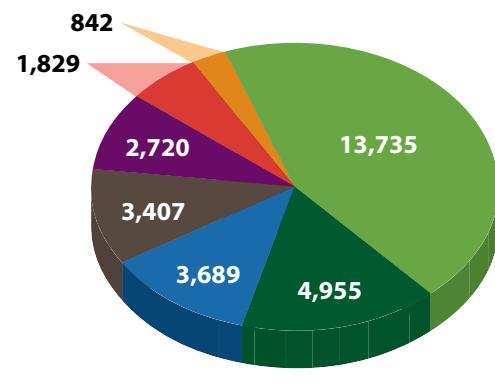
¹² Michael T. Flynn, Rich Jurgeuns, Thomas L. Cantrell, "Employing ISR – SOF Best Practices," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 50, 3rd Quarter 2008.



Army Special Operations Forces Projected Growth



2010



2017

23%
Overall Increase

Special Forces – Active Component	+2,105 (18%)
Special Forces – National Guard	+1,026 (26%)
Special Operations Aviation	+696 (23%)
Rangers	+592 (21%)
Psychological Operations	+270 (11%)
Civil Affairs	+927 (102%)
Special Operations Sustainment Brigade	+255 (43%)
Overall Change	+5,871 (23%)

Source: U.S. Army Special Operations Command

What is Needed

[The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review] pays particular attention to the enablers that are so critical to giving the force the flexibility it needs to succeed, and that have been in critical short supply in places like Afghanistan.

Michèle Flournoy,
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy¹³

The Department of Defense and the Army's senior leadership continues to respond to the strategic environment, and the national security strategy that flows from it, by building the necessary expeditionary- and

campaign-quality Army. The Secretary of Defense announced in July 2009 a decision to temporarily increase the active-duty endstrength of the Army by as much as 22,000. For FY 2011, the President's Budget submission reflects an active component endstrength of 547,400 in the base budget and a temporary increase of 22,000 for the active component (funded in the overseas contingency operations portion of the request). Within this guidance, the senior Army leadership continues to rebalance within its endstrength force structure and skill sets commensurate with requirements. Yet the force still faces challenges in meeting the operational demands of the

¹³ Quoted in Jim Garamone, "Review Aims to Rebalance Forces, Puts People First," American Forces Press Service, 1 February 2010, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=57810>.



combatant commanders as well as accomplishing its Title 10 duties and responsibilities.

The Army's responsibilities, as outlined in U.S. Code Title 10, are to conduct both prompt and sustained combat on land. The new security environment has triggered a renewed emphasis on the "prompt"—an Army that is agile, quick to respond, adaptable and capable of early conflict resolution—without neglecting the "sustaining," not only of the Army but also of others (e.g., sister services, combatant commanders, other government agencies and nongovernmental organizations). The Army currently has approximately 700,000 Soldiers—both active and reserve component—on active duty. As of 16 February 2010, more than 250,000 Soldiers were deployed in 80 countries. Approximately 85,000 reserve component Soldiers were mobilized and on active duty. To maintain that level of engagement, for every Soldier deployed in theater the Army needs two more Soldiers: one who is training and getting ready to deploy, and one who has just returned and needs to reset.¹⁴ Adding to that is the critical role played by the institutional portion of the Army—the generating force—in supporting the operating force. The Army requires a robust institutional base from which it can sustain the operating force for the duration of a campaign or multiple campaigns. In this regard, ARSOF is a microcosm of the Army.

The current demands from combatant commanders and the corresponding BOG/dwell ratio have impacted high-demand, low-density skill sets such as intelligence and logistics as well as Army and ARSOF aviation. These ESS forces are in high demand not only in ARSOF but also across the entire Army. To keep pace, the endstrength of both must grow, and especially that of ESS, since ARSOF recruits from the conventional forces.

Additionally, an aviation command, patterned closely after current USASOC subordinate commands, should be created by FY 2013. This command would oversee not only manned aircraft but also UAS and return the focus of the 160th SOAR(A) to its operational mission. The 2010 QDR recommends additional authorizations for special operations units and enablers that will enhance ARSOF ability to improve support to GCCs and ambassadors around the world.

ARSOF will soon receive the Army's latest version of Land Warrior equipment. This wearable command and control kit allows combat leaders to track the location of their Soldiers and view maps and alter information through a tiny, helmet-mounted computer screen. The latest version features satellite communications to supplement the system's current digital radio network. ARSOF needs an over-the-horizon variant (and its capability) to enhance operations over extended distances and complex terrain.

More than eight years of combat experience has proven that a dedicated all-source PED effort of trained experts is critical to developing the expertise and target-area knowledge necessary to successfully support both kinetic and non-kinetic operations. ARSOF must be able to access sufficient bandwidth and possess organic long-haul communications to move the sensor data to exploitation centers in the USSOCOM enterprise as well as investing in MI training and growth to man those nodes. In addition,

¹⁴ The Army's model to coordinate cycles of readiness and training is called Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN). For more information about ARFORGEN, see AUSA Torchbearer National Security Report "2006 and Beyond: What the U.S. Army is Doing" (March 2006), http://www.ausa.org/PDFdocs/TBSecRpt/TBear_March_06_optimized.pdf.



sensor capabilities must expand beyond traditional electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) to include the ability to penetrate foliage. Additional requirements include improved Synthetic Aperture Radar/Ground Moving Target Indicator (SAR/GMTI), Multi-Spectral and advanced signal intelligence (SIGINT) payloads that can rapidly and precisely locate targets and are interoperable with ground systems. Future non-ISR payloads should also include communications relays to improve data access to the ODA teams as well as leaflet delivery for PSYOP missions.

To continue investing in people, USASOC, in coordination with USSOCOM and the Army, is analyzing nontraditional career management paths for selected Soldiers, who may be stationed for long periods of time overseas to develop regional expertise, advanced language capabilities, and long-term relationships with indigenous personnel. These Soldiers, sometimes called “Lawrences,”¹⁵ must be properly rewarded for these important skills and remain competitive for future promotion despite not executing traditional professional development requirements. In addition, USASOC seeks to take advantage of existing foreign education programs to enhance ARSOF Soldiers’ opportunities to develop language, cultural and regional expertise.

In general, what is needed is growth in ARSOF and Army endstrength and force structure; new investment strategies; new types of tools that help locate, learn about and distribute data regarding various battlefield targets; and adjustments in ARSOF training methods.

What Must Be Done

At present, the U.S. Army is fighting two wars; assisting other nations as they build their own security capability; supporting civil authorities at home and abroad; and standing ready to deter and defeat



new threats. The rise of hybrid threats—diverse and dynamic combinations of conventional, irregular, terrorist and criminal capabilities employed asymmetrically to counter America’s advantages—will require multifaceted solutions and interagency efforts to synchronize all elements of power. ARSOF plays a critical role in supporting GCCs and ambassadors with unique capabilities that are not resident in other Army or Joint Forces. Despite ARSOF growth in structure and capabilities, it cannot succeed on its own. It is both inextricably linked to the Army as a whole—integral to the Army’s role—and dependent upon continued support from the Army in personnel policies and manning, equipment and, most critical, ESS forces.

To maintain the capability to execute its range of missions, ARSOF must have a robust force structure; realistic training; light-weight equipment designed with special operations capabilities; dedicated combat service support; and long-range, high-speed infiltration, exfiltration and fire support platforms. Investment in a well-trained and technologically enhanced ARSOF will allow the nation to continue responding quickly to a broad spectrum of conflicts and enhance global stability. Specifically, Congress and DoD must:

¹⁵ “Lawrence” is a shorthand reference to T. E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”) as an example for special operations personnel who are able to spend long periods of time in foreign countries developing exceptional language skills, cultural understanding and personal relationships that will facilitate effective special operations missions.



- increase the Army share of the DoD base budget to at least 28 percent (from AUSA Resolution 10-07);
- increase the base defense budget funding to at least 5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) (from AUSA Resolution 10-07);
- authorize and fund an active Army endstrength increase as soon as possible to at least 700,000 Soldiers for the active Army; to at least 371,000 for the Army National Guard and to at least 215,000 for the Army Reserve (all within the Army base budget), to include all associated costs (from AUSA Resolutions 10-07 and 10-08);
- fund timely, non-offsetting overseas contingency operations (OCO) concurrent with the execution of the Army's global missions and other unprogrammed contingencies to prevent diversion of other programmed funds (from AUSA Resolution 10-07);
- fully fund the Army's equipment and technology initiatives (from AUSA Resolution 10-07);
- provide timely funding for equipment reset throughout the current conflicts, and for several years thereafter, to restore units to levels of readiness required to successfully execute programmed operational deployments, future contingencies and homeland defense missions (from AUSA Resolution 10-09);
- fund continued participation in joint and combined exercises that are essential to the readiness of joint forces (from AUSA Resolution 10-10);
- fund initiatives to expand multinational institute courses and manning to increase interoperability between U.S. and allied military leaders (from AUSA Resolution 10-10);
- fund a robust special operations force structure of highly motivated, uniquely trained and well-equipped professionals supported by dedicated combat support and combat service support elements (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);



- fund research, development and procurement for special operations forces' unique equipment: advanced weapons, munitions, long-range high-speed infiltration/exfiltration platforms, and survival enhancements (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);
- fund full inclusion of ARSOF in information warfare programs, technologies and systems (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);
- fund realistic joint and combined exercises, to include deployments for training (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);
- fund the Foreign Military Financing Program (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);
- fund ARSOF aviation requirements, including additional MH-47G and MH-60 helicopters (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);
- fund U.S. Special Operations Command initiatives to ensure ARSOF is supported adequately by Air Force special operations infiltration/exfiltration, fire support and air refueling platforms (from AUSA Resolution 10-12);
- fund lighter, smaller, state-of-the-art communications equipment with: low probability of intercept; low probability of detection capability; and automated command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence systems to enhance ARSOF ability to support conventional force commanders (from AUSA Resolution 10-12).



Torchbearer Message

For the near future, persistent conflict—protracted confrontation among state, non-state and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to achieve their political and ideological ends—will characterize the global security environment. Security crises will arise unpredictably. Natural disasters and humanitarian assistance will add to frequent and continuous commitments. In this dynamic environment, the U.S. Army—general purpose and special operations forces—will conduct operations that span the entire spectrum of conflict, sometimes sequentially but often simultaneously.

As a result, the Army has built versatility into its force by developing an array of capabilities that allows it to address the broadest range of current and future requirements. This versatility provides operational commanders a balanced mix of types of forces—heavy, Stryker, light, special operations forces (ARSOF) and enablers—each connected to the others and integral to the Army as a whole. ARSOF provides the nation with unique, sophisticated and tailored capabilities. It brings Soldiers who are trained and educated to solve, or assist in solving, complex political-military challenges and to operate in ambiguous and high-risk environments. Teamed with general purpose forces, ARSOF achieves strategic effects through tactical- and operational-level excellence on the battlefield and in lesser known areas around the world. It is most effective when operating as part of and with the support of the joint and interagency team.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)—exercising its Title 10 U.S. Code responsibilities—recruits, assesses, selects, organizes, trains, equips and provides forces and capabilities along three lines of effort: investment in people; persistent engagement; and operations. It is at the forefront of codifying lessons learned from more than eight years of war to better prepare the force for current conflicts. It is also setting conditions for the future through innovative solutions and creative adaptations. Nevertheless, challenges exist in ARSOF force structure and enabler support and sustainment (ESS). The current demands from combatant commanders and the corresponding BOG/dwell ratio have impacted high-demand, low-density skill sets such as intelligence and logistics as well as Army and ARSOF aviation. These ESS forces are in high demand not only for ARSOF but also across the entire Army. Additionally, an aviation command, patterned closely after current USASOC subordinate commands, should be created by FY 2013. This command would oversee not only manned aircraft but also unmanned aerial systems and return the focus of the 160th SOAR(A) to its operational mission.

ARSOF plays a critical role in supporting geographic combatant commanders and ambassadors with unique capabilities that are not resident in other Army or joint forces. Despite its growth, it cannot, however, succeed on its own. It is dependent upon continued support from the Army as a whole in manning, equipping and critical enablers. In sum, what is needed is growth in ARSOF and Army endstrength and force structure (since ARSOF recruits from the conventional forces); new investment strategies; innovative tools that help locate, learn about and distribute data regarding various battlefield targets; and adjustments in ARSOF training methods.

The Army has been progressively adapting since the end of the Cold War. It is taking advantage of lessons learned from current operations, leveraging emerging technology and building a balanced force to better meet the demands of 21st century conflict. The Army's goal is a versatile mix of tailorable and networked organizations, operating on a rotational cycle, to provide a sustained flow of trained and ready forces for full-spectrum operations and to hedge against unexpected contingencies—at a tempo that is predictable and sustainable for the all-volunteer force. ARSOF, at the heart of this versatile mix, is integral to the Army and the joint force.

[Special operations forces of all services], along with all their comrades in arms across the globe, will continue to inspire in the hearts of our countrymen a deep sense of pride and patriotism—just as they inspire in the hearts of our enemies an abiding sense of fear and unease.

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates,
Special Operations Forces International Conference,
Tampa, Florida, 21 May 2008



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