

# Special Operations



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*This document complements related discussion found in Joint Publications (JP) 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*; JP 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*; and JP 3-30, *Command and Control for Joint Air Operations*.*

## SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

**This document is revised substantially.** It updates key Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) doctrine concepts and terms throughout the publication. As America continues to engage in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), AFSOF have had to shift from a platform-based to a capabilities-based model that can accommodate a GWOT-oriented campaign. This publication is a sign of the change in paradigms. It includes a revised discussion of modern AFSOF and the application of certain enduring principles and guiding truths (pages 3-7). It also places more emphasis on the AFSOF core tasks and missions as defined by United States Special Operations Command directives (pages 8-15). It updates and clarifies command, control, and organizational relationships (pages 16-22). Finally, it refines AFSOF planning and support considerations (pages 23-31).

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## FOREWORD

Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2–7, *Special Operations*, guides the preparation and employment of Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF). It builds upon its capstone publication, AFDD 2, *Operations and Organization*, in presenting the fundamentals of what Airmen have learned as the best way to organize and fight at the operational level of war.

Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) provide unique capabilities to the warfighting combatant commander. AFDD 2–7, *Special Operations*, describes the support AFSOF provides to Joint Force Commander (JFC) and reiterates the command relationships that allow the JFC to leverage AFSOF capabilities as part of a greater campaign plan. This operational doctrine document guides how we employ AFSOF to meet today's threats.

Although proud of our Air Force's successes during Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, history has shown us that we cannot afford to become complacent. With this in mind, AFDD 2-7 utilizes lessons learned from recent experiences, adjusts AFSOF's doctrinal sightline, and outlines the foundational concepts that shape how we prepare to deal with future challenges.

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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

This document has been prepared under the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. It establishes doctrinal guidance for the employment of Air Force special operations forces across the range of military operations. As the Air Force's keystone document on special operations, it underpins commanders' planning and execution of AFSOF missions and forms the basis for organizing those forces.

## APPLICATION

This AFDD applies to the Total Force: all Air Force military and civilian personnel, including active, Air Force Reserve Command, and Air National Guard units and members.

The doctrine in this document is authoritative, but not directive. Therefore, commanders need to consider the contents of this AFDD and the particular situation when accomplishing their missions. Airmen should read it, discuss it, and practice it.

## SCOPE

This publication provides the overarching doctrinal guidance for the conduct of Air Force special operations across the full range of military operations. It describes the characteristics, capabilities, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) core tasks, Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) core missions, typical organization, and command and control of AFSOF. Furthermore, this publication summarizes support requirements necessary to conduct special operations missions and defines training and education goals of the United States Air Force Special Operations Forces.

## **COMAFFOR / JFACC / CFACC**

### **A note on terminology**

One of the cornerstones of Air Force doctrine is that “the US Air Force prefers - and in fact, plans and trains - to employ through a commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR) who is also dual-hatted as a joint force air and space component commander (JFACC).” (AFDD 1)

To simplify the use of nomenclature, Air Force doctrine documents will assume the COMAFFOR is dual-hatted as the JFACC unless specifically stated otherwise. The term “COMAFFOR” refers to the Air Force Service component commander while the term “JFACC” refers to the joint component-level operational commander.

While both joint and Air Force doctrine state that one individual will normally be dual-hatted as COMAFFOR and JFACC, the two responsibilities are different, and should be executed through different staffs.

Normally, the COMAFFOR function executes operational control/administrative control of assigned and attached Air Force forces through a Service A-staff while the JFACC function executes tactical control of joint air and space component forces through an air and space operations center (AOC).

When multinational operations are involved, the JFACC becomes a combined force air and space component commander (CFACC). Likewise, the air and space operations center, though commonly referred to as an AOC, in joint or combined operations is correctly known as a JAOC or CAOC.

## FOUNDATIONAL DOCTRINE STATEMENTS

Foundational doctrine statements are the basic principles and beliefs upon which AFDDs are built. Other information in the AFDDs expands on or supports these statements.

- ★ Although special operations may be conducted as a single-Service operation, they almost always require joint support and coordination. In other words, the special operations forces (SOF) community is inherently joint. (Page 1)
- ★ The most important element of the Air Force's special warfare capabilities resides in its aircrews, special tactics teams, combat aviation advisory teams, and support personnel specially trained to conduct a wide array of missions across the range of military operations. (Page 3)
- ★ Air Force special operations forces prefer—and in fact, plan and train—to employ forces through a commander, Air Force special operations forces (COMAFSOF) that is normally dual-hatted as a joint special operations air component commander (JSOACC). (Page 6)
- ★ All AFSOF based in the continental United States are assigned to USSOCOM and are therefore under the combatant command authority of the commander, USSOCOM. (Pages 16)
- ★ The geographic combatant commander normally exercises COCOM of all assigned AFSOF and operational control (OPCON) of all attached AFSOF through the commander of the Theater Special Operations Component (TSOC). (Page 16)
- ★ The TSOC is the primary mechanism by which a geographic combatant commander exercises command and control over SOF. (Page 17)
- ★ The JSOACC is the commander, within a joint special operations component or task force, responsible for planning and executing joint special operations air activities. (Page 18)
- ★ AFSOF should fall under a single joint special operations air component in theater in order to preserve unity of command and make most effective use of limited special operations assets. (Page 19)
- ★ All AFSOF Airmen work for the COMAFSOF, and the COMAFSOF works for the Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC). (Page 20)
- ★ The Special Operation Liaison Element is a team that represents the JFSOCC to the JFACC (if designated) or appropriate Service component air C2 organization, to coordinate, deconflict, and integrate special operations air, space, surface, and subsurface operations with conventional air, space, and information operations. (Page 20)

- Special operations usually require rehearsal because of the inherent complexity and high risk associated with these missions. (Page 23)

# CHAPTER ONE

## OVERVIEW OF AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES (AFSOF)

*Some people live in the present, oblivious of the past and blind to the future. Some dwell in the past. A very few have the knack of applying the past to the present in ways that show them the future. Great leaders have this knack.*

—President Richard M. Nixon

### INTRODUCTION

The clandestine nature of Air Force special operations forces and the worldwide scope of their activities make it difficult to document their heritage, best practices, lessons learned, and warfighting principles. This document seeks to capture the fundamental principles by which AFSOF guide their actions in support of national objectives.

Specifically, this document has three objectives: first, to describe Air Force guidance on the proper use of Air Force special operations forces in military operations; second, to explain AFSOF's role in the planning and execution of joint special operations; finally, to analyze AFSOF's unique command relationships that, left unexplained, can introduce confusion and friction in the proper employment of this unique Air Force function. **Although special operations may be conducted as a single-Service operation, they almost always require joint support and coordination. In other words, the special operations forces (SOF) community is inherently joint.**

As a joint force, SOF are organized, trained and equipped to accomplish nine core tasks: counter proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), counterterrorism, special reconnaissance, direct action, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, civil affairs operations, information operations, and psychological operations. This publication provides an overview of the Airman's perspective of these core tasks while other AFDDs discuss some of these tasks in greater detail.<sup>1</sup>

Ultimately, this document reflects best practices, lessons learned, and a conceptual framework that represents the essence of Air Force special operations culture. But this AFDD is by no means all-inclusive. Instead, it is meant to guide and

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Foreign Internal Defense see AFDD 2-3.1; for Information Operations see AFDD 2-5; for Counterproliferation issues see AFDD 2-1.5 (*Nuclear Operations*) and AFDD 2-1.8 (*Counter CBRNE Operations*). Specific special operations operational guidelines are provided in Joint Publication (JP) 3-05.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*; JP 3-05.2, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Operations Targeting and Mission Planning*; and JP 3-07.1 *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense*.

provide a foundation for a commander's professional judgment. With AFSOF doctrine as their point of departure, commanders can adapt to dynamic strategic environments that demand AFSOF involvement in unilateral, joint, multinational, interagency, and cross-cultural operations.

### **The Air Force Special Operations Forces Legacy**

In preparation for Operation OVERLORD, the cross-channel invasion of France, small numbers of special operations forces began infiltrating Europe as early as 1942. Eventually, the special operators needed their own clandestine air insertion capability. In August 1943, General Carl A. Spaatz, at the time the commander of North African Air Forces, allocated three B-17 bombers to support Office of Strategic Services (OSS) activities. This marked the start of the ever-expanding special air activities in the European theater by specially trained aircrews who came to be known as "Carpetbaggers."

Concurrently, General Henry "Hap" Arnold, commander, Army Air Forces, approved the activation of an American special air unit in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater of operations. The First Air Commando Group's primary task involved support for Lord Louis Mountbatten's British commando forces in the CBI.

Together, the Carpetbaggers and Air Commandos represent the earliest manifestations of AFSOF. Since World War II, Air Commandos have fought in near-countless conflicts and contingencies. Whether in the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, or Panama, AFSOF have supported United States national objectives honorably and with distinction.

America has always recognized AFSOF value and unique contributions, but in the face of shrinking budgets, America's specialized air power struggled to remain healthy and viable through peacetime. The American military's inability to adequately respond to the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis highlighted this deficiency within America's SOF community. Although the ill-fated rescue attempt did not make it past its initial landing site--code named DESERT ONE--it ushered in a new era for AFSOF.

Following this failed mission, congressional persistence and support from key leaders within the DOD establishment led to the creation of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and its Air Force component, the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC).

## MODERN AFSOF DEFINED

According to Joint Publication (JP) 1–02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, special operations are “conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations may require covert, clandestine, or low-visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations.”

Simply put, the term “special operations” is often associated with two types of concepts; special mission areas, and capabilities. Special operations differ from conventional operations in the operational techniques and small size of the friendly force (compared to the enemy), degree of physical and political risk, relative independence from friendly support, mode of employment, reliance on detailed and perishable intelligence, extensive use of indigenous assets, and preference toward detailed planning and rehearsals.

Special operations forces, however, must complement, not compete with nor be a substitute for, conventional forces. The need for an opportunity to attack or engage strategic or operational targets with small units drives the formation of special units with specialized, highly focused capabilities. Although not always decisive on their own, special operations can be designed and conducted to create conditions favorable to US strategic aims and objectives. Often, these operations may require clandestine or low visibility capabilities and are applicable across the range of military operations.

After the 1980 failed attempt to rescue US hostages held in Iran, the Air Force organized, trained, and equipped a portion of its force specifically for special operations. As such, AFSOF is an umbrella term for those active and Reserve Component Air Force forces, designated by Title 10, United States Code, Section 167 or those units or forces that have since been designated as SOF by the Secretary of Defense.

Ultimately, **the most important element of the Air Force’s special warfare capabilities resides in its aircrews, special tactics teams, combat aviation advisory teams, and support personnel specially trained to conduct a wide array of missions across the range of military operations.** SOF are area-oriented and usually have personnel experienced and conversant in the cultures and languages found in an operational area. SOF units can provide liaison to facilitate multinational and interagency interoperability.

Recent successes in toppling the Taliban during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, and unconventional warfare operations in western and northwestern Iraq during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM highlight the complementary nature of conventional and special operations forces. Although, often the nature of AFSOF operations demands different tactics than conventional forces, the employment of AFSOF follows the guiding truths that define all air operations, regardless of the functional specialty – the principles of war and the tenets of air and space power.

## AFSOF APPLICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

These principles apply to special operations in the same way they apply to conventional operations.

- ★ **Objective.** Special operations are best employed in support of a joint force commander's (JFC's) strategic or operational objectives. Many missions are characterized as limited, surgical, physically challenging, low profile, and sometimes separate from the immediate battlefield.
- ★ **Offensive.** The lethal application of special operations is inherently offensive in nature because it seeks to strike or engage an adversary to compel or deter his actions. The unique manner of application of SOF offensive capabilities assists JFCs in achieving results that may be unattainable by larger conventional forces.
- ★ **Mass.** Special operations concentrate combat power at critical times and in discriminate places to achieve decisive results. Massing combat power while avoiding concentration of forces can enable numerically inferior SOF to achieve decisive results while minimizing both human loss and the wasting of resources. SOF's ability to strike at key nodes may create results equivalent to those achievable by large force concentrations.
- ★ **Economy of Force.** Economy of force is critical to the successful conduct of special operations given the small size and lack of redundant capabilities inherent in special operations tactical units. One way of ensuring economy of force is via an evaluation of proper operational mission criteria. The employment of SOF in support of the joint force campaign or operation plan is facilitated by five basic criteria. These criteria provide guidelines for both conventional and SOF commanders and planners to use when considering the employment of SOF.
  - 1) Is this an appropriate AFSOF mission?
  - 2) Does the mission support the JFC's campaign or operation plan?
  - 3) Is the mission operationally feasible?
  - 4) Are required resources available to execute the mission?
  - 5) Does the expected outcome of the mission justify the risk?
- ★ **Maneuver.** AFSOF's capability to maneuver allows them to strike adversaries where and when they are most vulnerable and to avoid their strengths.
- ★ **Unity of Command.** Unity of command fosters unity of effort and allows the JFC to integrate and synchronize special operations with every aspect of the campaign. SOF command and control (C2) architecture is often tailored for each mission to achieve this end.

- ★ **Security.** Special operations planning and execution require high levels of security integrated fully with operations security (OPSEC) and force protection to protect the nature of these missions.

In addition to the Principles of War stated in AFDD 1, the political considerations and the nature of many stability operations require an underpinning of several additional principles:

- ★ **Restraint.** Restraint is the application of military force appropriate to the situation. Operating in austere environments, with a small footprint, AFSOF depend on a thorough study of their operating environment to develop a comprehensive understanding of the local culture, the nature of the conflict, and the probable response of the populace. Armed with this understanding, they recognize the likely impact of the use of force and tailor the application of force to the context of the mission.
- ★ **Perseverance.** In order to improve the probability of success, special operations, like most conventional capabilities, must be prepared to pursue national goals and objectives patiently, resolutely, and persistently, for as long as necessary to achieve them. For example, AFSOF combat aviation advisors spend years to cultivate the desired relationships with allied countries. AFSOF foreign internal defense capabilities, as personified by its combat aviation advisory teams (CAATs), exemplify the protracted application of military capabilities in support of strategic aims.
- ★ **Legitimacy.** Generating support at home and among allies is primarily the responsibility of civilian leaders, though military actions must be in line with legitimate goals.

## **AFSOF APPLICATIONS OF THE TENETS OF AIR AND SPACE POWER**

Every Airman must understand the fundamental guiding truths of air and space power employment - better known as tenets. The tenets of air and space power complement the principles of war. The tenets provide more specific considerations for air and space forces, including AFSOF. As with the principles of war, the tenets require informed judgment in application.

The application of the principles and tenets are left to commanders' judgment as they strive to craft the most effective employment of air and space power for a given situation. The basics of these tenets—centralized control and decentralized execution, flexibility and versatility, synergistic effects, persistence, concentration, priority, and balance—are explained in AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*. The following is a discussion of how they are applied to AFSOF.

## Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution

According to AFDD 1, “The Air Force prefers—and in fact, plans and trains—to employ forces through a COMAFFOR who is also dual-hatted as a joint force air and space component commander (JFACC).” Similarly, **AFSOF prefer – and in fact, plan and train – to employ forces through a commander, Air Force special operations forces (COMAFSOF) that is normally dual-hatted as a joint special operations air component commander (JSOACC).** The JSOACC; subordinate to the joint forces special operations component commander (JFSOCC), is the senior Airman responsible for planning, executing, and monitoring joint SOF aviation missions and requirements when they are performing SOF-unique missions.

The concept of *decentralized execution* is just as central to the proper application of airpower as centralized control. Delegation of execution authority to responsible, capable lower level commanders is necessary for effective span of control and to foster initiative, situational responsiveness, and tactical flexibility.

Regardless of assigned missions and C2 arrangements, it is critical that AFSOF are integrated into the air tasking order (ATO) and properly adhere to the airspace control order (ACO) to ensure operations are integrated and to prevent fratricide. Real-time coordination between COMAFSOF/JSOACC, COMAFFOR/JFACC, and any other forces operating in the deep battlespace is vital.

## Flexibility and Versatility

AFSOF exemplify the concept of flexibility by being organized, trained, and equipped to achieve a wide variety of missions. For example, during Operation DESERT STORM, AFSOF MH-53J helicopters were part of Task Force Normandy. MH-53s were the pathfinders for Army AH-64 Apache helicopters, ultimately guiding the Apaches to key Iraqi early warning sites. The destruction of these sites enabled the first wave of coalition aircraft to strike targets deep in Iraqi territory, in the first minutes of DESERT STORM. Immediately after they met their objective, the MH-53 crews assumed combat search and rescue duties for the remainder of their mission.

AFSOF versatility is underscored by the fact Air Commandos can be employed equally effectively at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. During Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, AFSOF assets assisted in securing Iraqi critical infrastructure, seizing airfields in support of operational campaign objectives, and providing close air support for coalition ground forces, thus producing parallel effects, exemplifying the versatility of air and space power.

## Synergistic Effects

The proper application of a coordinated force can produce effects that exceed the contributions of forces employed individually. For instance, AFSOF special tactics teams operating with joint and coalition SOF teams provided terminal attack control and weather support for combat air forces (CAF) during Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM.

## Persistence

Persistence suggests continued efforts. One example of how AFSOF maintains a global persistent presence during peacetime and during pre-crisis activities is the employment of combat aviation advisory teams working through and with allied nations to provide coalition interoperability and develop their air and space power.

## Concentration

The principles of mass and economy of force deal directly with concentrating the appropriate power at the right time and the right place (or places) to achieve the desired effects. For instance, AFSOF fire support and the infiltration of ground forces were able to concentrate combat power to achieve decisive effects during Operation JUST CAUSE.

## Priority

The use of AFSOF assets must account for their limited nature (less than two percent of AF personnel) and the requirement to conserve them for future operations. Demand for AFSOF assets will likely exceed their availability unless commanders establish appropriate priorities.

## Balance

Commanders should balance combat opportunity, necessity, effectiveness, efficiency, and the impact on accomplishing assigned objectives against the associated risk to friendly air and space forces. For example, daylight AFSOF operations may offer an attractive alternative to joint force commanders, but the benefit must be balanced with the risk; depending on the threat, such actions may not be appropriate.

*In no other professions are the penalties for employing untrained personnel so appalling or irrevocable as in the military.*

**—General Douglas MacArthur**

## CHAPTER TWO

### CORE TASKS AND MISSIONS

*Frederick liked to say that three men behind the enemy were worth fifty in front of him.*

—Ardant Du Picq

#### USSOCOM CORE TASKS

USSOCOM conducts nine special operations core tasks. These tasks are explained in detail in Joint Pub 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. Specifics about these core tasks are further explained in specific classified concept plans (CONPLAN) or operational plans (OPLAN). As the air component to USSOCOM, the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is responsible to organize, train, and equip AFSOF to provide the necessary air capabilities to conduct these tasks.

**Counterproliferation (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):** CP refers to actions taken to locate, seize, destroy, render safe, capture, or recover WMD. Major objectives of CP are to prevent the acquisition of WMD and their delivery systems; roll back proliferation where it has occurred; deter the use of WMD and their delivery systems; and adapt US military forces and planning to operate against the threats posed by WMD and their delivery systems. The continued spread of WMD technology can foster regional unrest and provide terrorist organizations with new and potent weapons. The core capabilities of CP include counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management. SOF focus on counterforce tasks and conduct CP missions as special operations by clandestine, or low visibility means.

**Counterterrorism (CT):** Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism.

**Special Reconnaissance (SR):** Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces. These actions provide an additive capability for commanders and supplement other conventional reconnaissance and surveillance actions.

**Direct Action (DA):** Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives.

**Unconventional Warfare (UW):** A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.

**Foreign Internal Defense (FID):** Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency (JP 1-02).

**Information Operations (IO):** Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems.

### **Information Operations (IO) in Recent Conflicts**

AFSOF were heavily involved in the IO mission prior to and during the war in Iraq. Getting an early start on the PSYOP campaign, Air National Guard EC-130 COMMANDO SOLOs began airing "Voice of America" into the Kuwaiti theater of operations on 22 November 1990.

During Operation DESERT STORM the EC-130s targeted defectors by broadcasting "Voice of America" along with prayers from the Koran and testimony from well-treated prisoners. To convince Iraqi troops to surrender, MC-130 COMBAT TALONS and HC-130 COMBAT SHADOWs dropped some 17 million leaflets over Iraqi defensive positions. The leaflets urged Iraqi soldiers to give up and warned what would happen if they did not. The promise was kept when their positions were either bombed by B-52s or struck by MC-130s dropping BLU-82 (15,000 pound) bombs. This was a model PSYOP campaign, combining information and strike operations. It was extremely effective and caused thousands of Iraqis to flee or surrender.

In Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, COMMANDO SOLO aircraft broadcast hundreds of hours of PSYOP messages. Along with millions of leaflets, dropped mostly by MC-130s, AFSOF were an integral part of the DOD's campaign to shape perceptions. Just as in previous campaigns, these PSYOP messages were tailored to specific audiences. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld describes, "We're working to make clear to the Afghan people that we support them, and we're working to free them from the Taliban and their foreign terrorist allies." In all of these operations, AFSOF forces contributed to the commander's objectives through the broadcast and dissemination of PSYOP messages.

**Civil Affairs (CA) Operations:** Operations conducted by civil affairs, the designated Active and Reserve Component forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct civil affairs activities and to provide specialized support to commanders responsible for civil-military operations.

**Psychological Operations (PSYOP):** Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.

## **CORE MISSION AREAS**

In order to fulfill the USSOCOM directed tasks, explained above, and meet any other tasking as directed by the Secretary of Defense, AFSOF is organized, trained, and equipped to support the following core missions.

**Air to Surface Interface (ASI):** Provide terminal control and collect information via special reconnaissance of targets enhancing the air to surface interface. Provide battlefield trauma care, nonpermissive and semi-permissive weather operations, and environmental predictions. This mission covers a wide range of duties from collecting information, to operating tactical sensors, including unmanned systems. Additional inherent capabilities act as enablers for other mission areas. Nested within this mission area lies the emerging and transformational capabilities provided by unmanned systems. While associated with this mission area, unmanned systems are not only inherent within the Air to Surface Interface nor found only under the auspices of combat control weapon systems, but rather unmanned systems cut across all mission areas.

**Agile Combat Support (ACS):** Provide precise and responsive combat support to Air Force Special Operations Command forces across the range of military operations. ACS forces must be prepared to deploy globally and prepare, sustain, and protect AFSOC units to ensure mission success. Mission tasks are to provide combat support to ready and prepare forces effectively for quick response and sustainment of operational activity efficiently with the right resource, at the right place, at the right time, and for the right length of time. This core mission includes civil engineering; communications and information; intelligence; logistics; medical; operations; security forces; space operations; and weather.

**Combat Aviation Advisory (CAA) Operations:** A special operation specifically tailored to assess, train, advise, and assist foreign aviation forces in air operations employment and sustainability. CAA operations support theater combatant commanders throughout the operational continuum, primarily by facilitating the availability, reliability, safety, interoperability, and integration of friendly and allied aviation forces supporting joint and combined operations. These operations also address airpower employment--including air combat tactics, techniques, and procedures--as well as such airpower sustainment

specialties as mission planning, aircraft maintenance, logistics, air base defense, aircrew survival, medical support, command and control, and air-ground coordination procedures. The scope of CAA operations includes airpower planning, sustainment, and employment at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

Specifically, AFSOF CAA operations are tailored to assess, train, advise, and assist foreign aviation forces in air operations employment and sustainability. CAA operations support theater combatant commanders across the range of military operations primarily by facilitating the availability, reliability, safety and interoperability, and integration of friendly and allied aviation forces supporting joint, combined and multinational forces. CAA operations provide assistance in the interrelated areas of FID, coalition support (CS), UW, worldwide humanitarian relief/assistance, and disaster relief. CAA operations also include a liaison role in coalition support. This core mission is expanding. The AFSOF vision is for the coalition support mission to include the current CAA operations mission, as well as, emerging responsibilities within the realm of humanitarian relief /assistance and disaster relief. Here are some of the key duties that CAA are expected to perform:

- ★ Conduct local or regional assessments of foreign aviation forces' capabilities to employ and sustain aviation resources.
- ★ Working through the SOLE, CAAs make recommendations to the JFACC regarding capability of foreign aviation units to support combined air operations plan objectives.
- ★ Promote safety and interoperability between US forces and coalition partners.
- ★ Act as an air and space power force multiplier by developing and executing tailored training programs to increase the tactical effectiveness of HN aviation resources in support of the combatant commander's objectives.
- ★ Facilitate area air defense coordination and airspace deconfliction via the AOC.
- ★ Provide assistance to aviation forces in direct participation of FID, coalition support (CS), unconventional warfare (UW), humanitarian relief/assistance, and disaster relief.
- ★ Provide liaison to JFACC, through the SOLE, to coordinate, harmonize and integrate foreign aviation forces supporting multinational air operations.

For more information on FID and combat aviation advisory teams, see AFDD 2-3.1, Foreign Internal Defense.

**Information Operations (IO):** Offensive and defensive actions taken to disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision-making while protecting our own. Includes elements of influence operations, electronic warfare (EW), and computer

network operations (CNO). Combined with elements of ACS, IO helps achieve information superiority, enabling other AFSOC missions.

Information operations conducted at the operational and tactical levels may be capable of creating effects at the strategic level and may require coordination with other national agencies. While the AFSOF community often has to compartmentalize actions due to the nature of its missions, in particular with regards to IO, AFSOF must ensure that its IO initiatives support the JFC's campaign plan. AFSOF may leverage any of the three IO capabilities—influence operations, electronic warfare operations, and network warfare operations. The following are some examples of how AFSOF can achieve IO effects.

- ✦ AFSOF may deliver IO messages (i.e., via leaflets), or deliver the SOF operators who will convey the IO message (i.e., infiltration of land/sea SOF) in order to influence a variety of audiences
- ✦ By using electronic warfare to degrade or disrupt enemy communications and weapon systems, thereby enhancing survivability.
- ✦ By leveraging deception via network warfare operations in order to hide intention from enemy collection systems.

**Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR):** ISR capabilities produce actionable intelligence across all command echelons, from pre-planning to post-execution; from unit-level to force level, tailored for operators. The ISR core mission is to integrate with the ISR Tasking, Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination process to provide actionable intelligence across all command echelons, from unit-level to force-level. Provide intelligence tailored for the pursuit of predictive battlespace awareness (PBA). Includes the personnel, equipment, and training required to provide the operator mission-tailored intelligence and analysis required for mission execution. This extends from pre-planning to post-execution.

**Personnel Recovery / Recovery Operations (PR/RO):** Conducting operations necessary to report; locate; support; recover; and debrief & reintegrate isolated personnel across the spectrum of operating environments. Dedicated PR/RO forces utilize manned and unmanned aerial systems to conduct PR operations as part of a small organic recovery force or as part of a larger joint recovery task force. The term Recovery Operations expands the definition to include locating and securing sensitive equipment or material.

Each joint force component is responsible for performing PR in support of component operations. As such, AFSOF regularly performs PR functions in support of JFSOC missions. When specifically tasked by the JFC, AFSOF may perform PR for other functional or service components. For example, AFSOF may conduct PR in support of the JFACC as directed by the JFC.

**Precision Fires (PF):** Use of responsive, persistent, and precision weapons to provide lethal or less than lethal effects on a target. The AFSOF precision employment/strike mission area includes precise and responsive firepower and support. AFSOF precision employment/strike ground elements and airborne platforms provide adverse weather weapons delivery and support (target designation, air traffic control, and drop zone [DZ] and landing zone [LZ] operations) across the full range of military operations. The ability of AFSOF to deploy globally and strike precisely provides force multiplication and minimizes collateral damage. Additionally, it allows the discriminate employment of asymmetric force and permits freedom of maneuver for supported forces. AFSOF's contribution to these capabilities, supported by their leading edge technologies and specialized skills, greatly expand the reach and combat capability of the JFC's forces.

**Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Dissemination:** PSYOP are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. AFSOF conducts PSYOP via two primary methods: airborne broadcasts and ground dissemination. Broadcasting radio and television PSYOP and counter propaganda messages to selected audiences helps achieve tactical, operational, or strategic effects. Leaflet drops support PSYOP efforts by delivering information to displaced personnel, enemy fielded forces, enemy populations, etc. Additionally, AFSOF may deliver PSYOP messages via unconventional means, such as the aerial delivery of specialized munitions.

**Specialized Air Mobility (SAM):** The conduct of rapid, global, specialized airlift of personnel, equipment, and supplies. Methods include infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply. These missions may be clandestine or overt and often are through hostile, denied, or politically sensitive airspace.

The AFSOF mobility mission area includes the rapid global airlift of personnel and equipment through hostile airspace to conduct operations and to enable air mobility across the spectrum of conflict. AFSOF are an integral part of the Air Force team and provide unique capability to the JFC, JFACC, and JFSOCC. AFSOF deployment readiness and unique training contribute to their constant readiness status and to their ability to quickly respond. They often are the first forces to deploy on a global scale. AFSOF capabilities accommodate all operational and physical environments—especially conditions of adverse weather, darkness, and denied territory. Operations may be conducted with a single aircraft or as part of a larger force package.

AFSOF's contribution to rapid global mobility is not limited to aircraft but includes the key ground role played by Special Tactics Teams (STTs). While not a formal element of the Global Air Mobility Support System (GAMSS), STTs play an integral part in rapid global mobility. They are the dynamic link between the surface forces and the air assets that deliver, sustain, and recover them. An Air Force objective performed by AFSOF is to rapidly respond to developing situations, obtain an early assessment and

prevent escalation by presence or support to the rapid deployment of right-sized follow on forces.

STTs are uniquely trained and equipped to rapidly deploy and conduct airfield assessment and airfield surveys in austere and hostile environments. STTs are the Air Force's initial provider of tactical airfield navigational/approach systems and terminal air traffic control (ATC) services. To this end, STTs maintain the capability to perform airfield selection, evaluation, survey, and establishment, including en route and terminal navigation aids (for example, mobile microwave landing system (MMLS) and portable tactical air navigation (TACAN)), ATC, and terminal control of close air support for air base defense.

In addition to "first there" ATC and airfield management, STTs also perform these functions for LZs and DZs. As the airhead matures, STTs hand off these tasks for sustained operations to other elements. STT make it possible for theater forces, air and space expeditionary task forces (AETFs), and lead mobility wings to seamlessly deploy and employ.

Key to AFSOF mobility is the ability of rigorously trained AFSOF aircrews to successfully penetrate hostile airspace using specially designed aircraft. With penetrating capability, however, comes the limitation of the size of the force and/or materiel that AFSOF aircraft can deliver. Select conventional airlift forces who habitually train w/ SOF can augment the joint special operations air component, and integrate with AFSOF to provide a more robust specialized mobility capability. The following are examples of how AFSOF support rapid global mobility and global attack expressed in terms of air and space power functions:

- ✦ Providing limited self-deployment.
- ✦ Tailoring deployment and employment support of forces to, from, and in the battlespace.
- ✦ Providing long-range infiltration, exfiltration, and resupply of forces in hostile and denied territory.
- ✦ Supporting AETF deployment with airlift aircraft and crews trained and equipped for self-protection.
- ✦ Supporting AETF deployment with STTs.
- ✦ Selecting, evaluating, surveying, and establishing airfields including en route and terminal navigation aids (MMLS and TACAN) for COMAFFOR/JFACC forces.

**Specialized Refueling (SREF):** The conduct of rapid, global, specialized refueling operations. This includes vertical lift aerial refueling as well as ground refueling during forward arming and refueling point (FARP) operations. Refueling operations may be conducted in permissive or nonpermissive environments - clandestine or overt.

Additionally, select conventional air refueling forces who habitually train w/ AFSOF may augment the JSOACC assigned forces in order to provide greater capability. Air refueling of AFSOF aircraft provides great mobility and flexibility:

- ✦ By providing air refuelable vertical lift and fixed-wing aircraft, thereby greatly increasing flexibility and range.
- ✦ By providing forward arming refueling points which have the ability to refuel and arm vertical lift and fixed-wing assets at unimproved airfields.
- ✦ By augmenting conventional rescue units with refueling assets.

## CHAPTER THREE

### COMMAND, CONTROL, AND ORGANIZATION

*Special operators fight a different kind of war. A war that often involves more training of other forces than fighting. A war that frequently requires observation rather than attack. A war that pits a handful of special operators against large conventional forces. A war that is most likely to take place during “peacetime,” before and after military conflict, in an attempt to prevent crises or put things back together if war is unavoidable.*

—Susan Marquis

*Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*

### COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

#### Assignment of Air Force Special Operations Forces

**In the United States:** Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, all AFSOF based in the continental United States are assigned to USSOCOM and are therefore under the combatant command authority (COCOM) of the commander, USSOCOM (CDRUSSOCOM). USSOCOM is a unique command in the Department of Defense in that it has the responsibilities of a functional combatant command, has Service-like responsibilities in areas unique to special operations and, when established as a supported command, plans and conducts certain special operations missions worldwide. CDRUSSOCOM exercises COCOM over assigned SOF through the commanders of its Service components or its subordinate unified command.

**In Theater:** AFSOF assigned to a geographic combatant command are under the COCOM of the respective geographic combatant commander. **The geographic combatant commander normally exercises COCOM of all assigned AFSOF and operational control (OPCON) of all attached AFSOF through the commander of the Theater Special Operations Component (TSOC).** For conventional missions, the JFACC may receive OPCON or TACON of AFSOF assets when directed by the JFC.

AFSOC, the parent command and lead proponent for AFSOF, normally retains administrative control (ADCON) of all deployed active duty AFSOF personnel. Under less than full mobilization, AFSOC shares ADCON with AFRC of all deployed reserve AFSOF personnel. AFSOC, however, may elect to share ADCON with other Air Force Major Commands. For example, via current memorandum of agreements, AFSOC shares ADCON with Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE).

Regardless of the arranged command relationship, commanders should:

- ✦ Provide for a clear and unambiguous chain of command, normally through the COMAFSOF.
- ✦ Avoid frequent transfer of AFSOF between commanders.
- ✦ Provide for sufficient staff experience and expertise to plan, conduct, and support the operations.
- ✦ Integrate AFSOF in the planning process.
- ✦ Match unit capabilities with mission requirements.

## COMMAND, CONTROL, AND ORGANIZATION

### Presentation of Forces

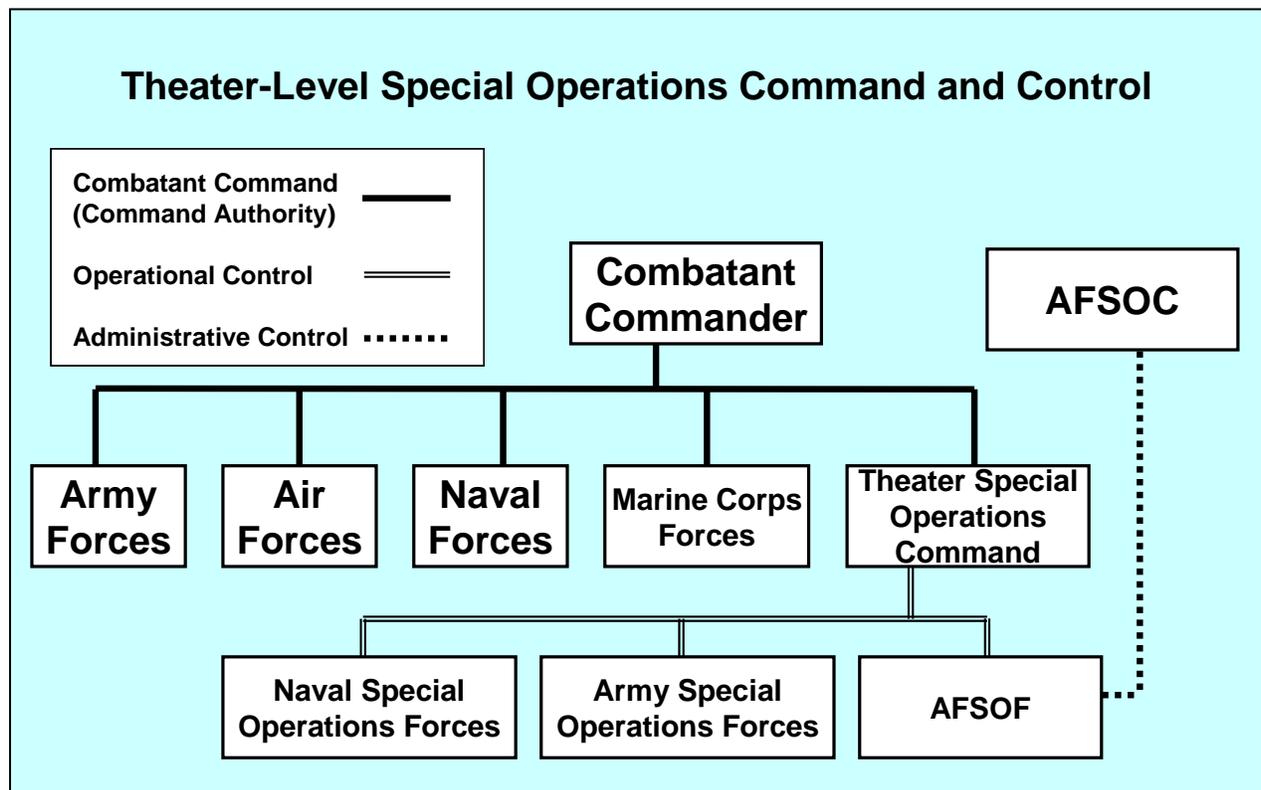
Like other Air Force units, AFSOF are presented at the direction of Secretary of Defense via the component commander responsible for COCOM authority. Although AFSOF habitually serve two masters with regards to force management—the Air Force and USSOCOM—AFSOF assets are presented to the JFC via SOF channels. Therefore, whether through USSOCOM or the TSOC, requests for forces (RFFs) are sourced through special operations and not Air Force channels.

### Command and Control of AFSOF in Theater

**Theater Special Operations Command.** To provide the necessary unity of command, each geographic combatant commander (except for US Northern Command) has established a TSOC as a subunified command within the geographic combatant command. **The TSOC is the primary mechanism by which a geographic combatant commander exercises command and control over SOF** (see Fig. 3.1 Theater-Level Special Operations Command and Control).

**Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF).** A JSOTF is a JTF composed of special operations units from more than one Service, formed to carry out specific special operations or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. A JSOTF may have conventional non-special operations units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions. A notional depiction of JSOTF elements is shown in Figure 3.2. The JSOTF is an interim entity, designed to perform a specific mission. According to JP 3-05.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*, “once it is established and a commander, joint special operations task force (COMJSOTF) is designated, a decision process occurs to organize and tailor the JSOTF to accomplish the mission.”

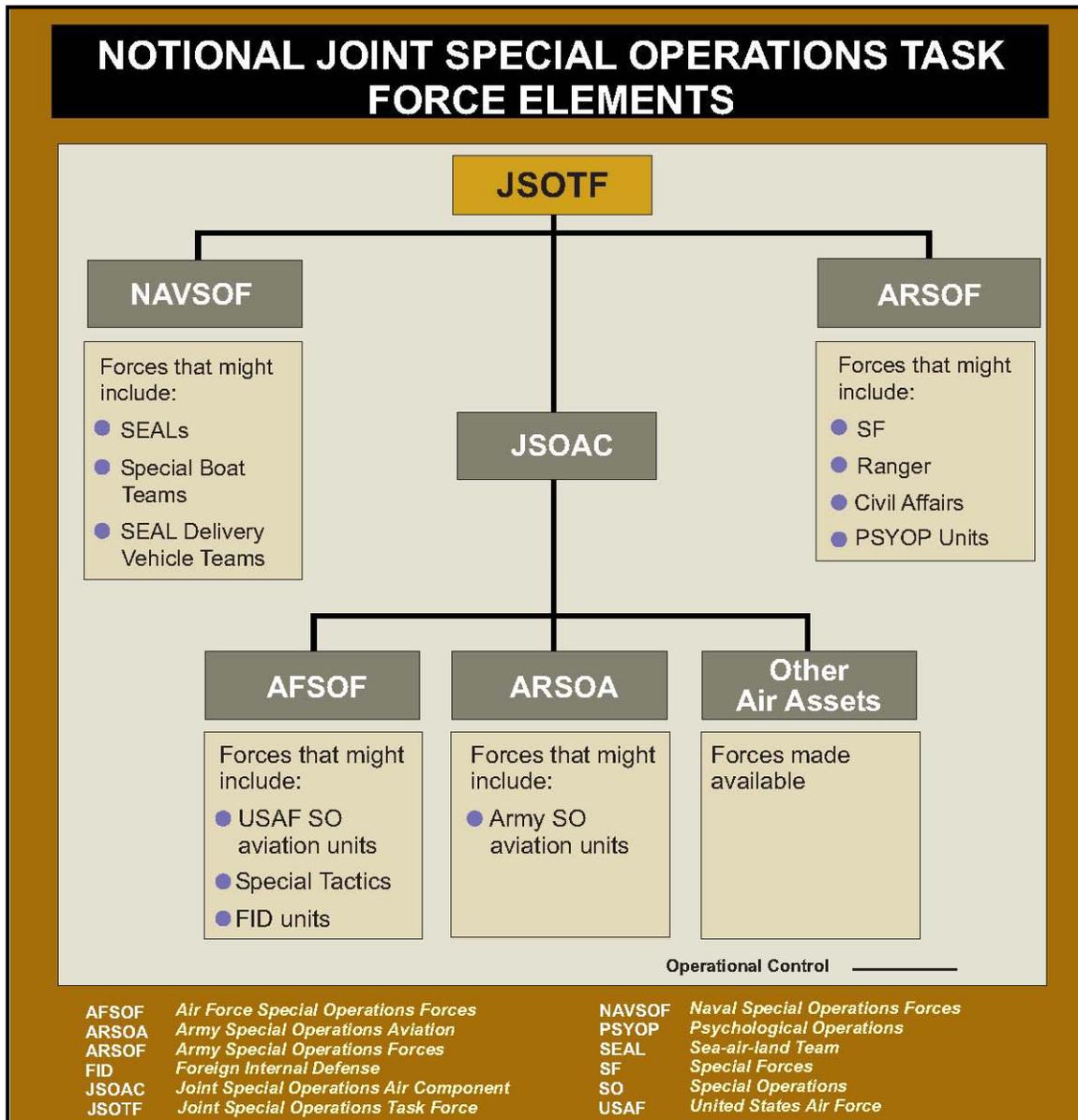
**Joint Forces Special Operations Component Commander (JFSOCC).** The JFSOCC is the commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or JTF responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking SOF and assets; planning and coordinating special operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. This is a more permanent arrangement than the JSOTF. In fact, the TSOC commander will normally be established as a JFSOCC if there is more than one JSOTF to command (see Figure 3.1.). If only one JSOTF is established (e.g., within a JTF), the CDRJSOTF will be dual-hatted as the JFSOCC. Normally, the JFC exercises OPCON of AFSOF through the JFSOCC.



**Figure 3.1. Theater-Level Special Operations Forces Command and Control**

**Joint Special Operations Air Component (JSOAC).** A JFSOCC or CDRJSOTF may establish a JSOAC. JSOAC refers to the special operations air component of a subordinate unified command, JFSOC, or JSOTF. The JSOAC is established as a functional component within a joint special operations force to control special operations aviation assets. **The Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander (JSOACC) is the commander, within a joint special operations component or task force, responsible for planning and executing joint special operations air activities.** This includes the responsibility to coordinate, allocate, task, control, and support the assigned joint special operations aviation assets and other assets tasked to support special operations. *The JFSOCC or CDRJSOTF normally delegates OPCON of joint special operations aviation to the JSOACC.*

The JSOAC, established by the JFSOCC, may support a single JSOTF or multiple JSOTFs within the theater. In other words, regardless of the number of supported elements, the ability of specialized airpower to range on a theater and global scale imposes theater and global responsibilities that can be discharged only through the integrating function of centralized control under an Airman. In essence, **AFSOF** should fall under a **single joint special operations air component (JSOAC)** in theater in order to preserve unity of command and make most effective use of limited special operations assets.



**Figure 3.2. Notional Joint Special Operations Task Force Elements**

## Commander Air Force Special Operations Forces (COMAFSOF)

The COMAFSOF is the senior AFSOF Airman on the JFSOCC or Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) chain of command. Within this construct, there is only one person clearly in charge; for the superior commander, there is only one person to deal with on matters regarding AFSOF issues.

While the COMAFFOR is the senior Airman in theater, the axiom that *“Airmen work for Airmen, and the senior Airman works for the JFC”* holds just as true for AFSOF. **All AFSOF Airmen work for the COMAFSOF, and the COMAFSOF works for the JFSOCC.** This arrangement not only preserves the principle of unity of command, it also embodies the principle of simplicity. Again, the Air Force prefers – and in fact, plans and trains – to employ forces through a COMAFSOF who is normally dual-hatted as the JSOACC.

## Special Operations Liaison Element (SOLE)

SOF are most effective when fully integrated into the overall campaign plan. Liaison between all components of the joint force and SOF, wherever assigned, is vital for effective employment of SOF as well as the prevention of fratricide. The element that performs this function at the combined air and space operations center (CAOC) is the special operations liaison element (SOLE). The mission of the SOLE is to act as a liaison to the JFACC or appropriate Service component air C2 facilities.

**The SOLE is a team that represents the JFSOCC to the JFACC (if designated) or appropriate Service component air C2 organization, to coordinate, deconflict, and integrate special operations air, space, surface, and subsurface operations with conventional air, space, and information operations.** The SOLE director works directly for the JFSOCC and provides a SOF presence in the CAOC, is aware of SOF activities in the field, and provides visibility of SOF operations in the air tasking order and the airspace control order. Additionally the SOLE coordinates appropriate fire support coordinating measures to help avoid fratricide. Although not an all-inclusive list, the SOLE provides the following functions:

- ✦ Harmonizes JFSOCC strategy and targets with JFACC’s intent and vision via liaison with strategy division.
- ✦ Injects all SOF requirements (to include Army and Naval SOF contingent) within the JFACC’s Master Air Attack Plan via close coordination with the JFACC’s combat plans division.
- ✦ With coordination with the combat plans division, the SOLE facilitates all JFSOCC inputs into the Air Control Order (ACO), Air Tasking Order (ATO), and Special Instructions (SPINS). In essence, the SOLE provides for sufficient staff experience and expertise to plan, monitor, and support the operations.
- ✦ Provides updates for situational awareness to JFACC combat operations division in order to coordinate JFACC close air support and/or request immediate support for time-sensitive targets.

- ✦ Monitors and deconflicts SOF activities and locations to prevent fratricide.
- ✦ Coordinates real-time Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) requirements for JFSOCC.
- ✦ Synchronizes AFSOF personnel recovery activities with Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC).
- ✦ Coordinates SOF component space requirements with the JFACC when the JFACC is designated the Space Coordinating Authority (SCA).
- ✦ Coordinates and monitors AFSOF support of conventional units and operations (i.e. non-SOF units utilizing AC-130 Gunships for close air support).
- ✦ Provides additional deconfliction between SOF aircraft and UAVs during theater air operations.

### **JFACC Support to AFSOF**

AFSOF missions routinely require JFACC support. For example, the JFACC enables AFSOF mission success by providing air superiority in the joint special operating area (JSOA). By gaining and maintaining freedom of movement/freedom from attack, the JFACC provides an umbrella of protection that facilitates and enables the success of AFSOF missions. This support requires detailed integration and is normally coordinated by the SOLE. Creating and maintaining habitual relationships with conventional CAF best facilitate this integration. When conventional forces are tasked to support AFSOF performing JFSOCC missions, C2 of conventional forces requiring detailed integration and/or participation in SOF missions should be exercised by the JSOACC if he has the C2 capability. Otherwise, the COMAFFOR/JFACC will exercise C2 of conventional forces and coordinate with the COMAFSOF/JFSOCC.

Another notable example of support to AFSOF, regardless of the enemy air threat, is the JFACC's close air support (CAS) to ground AFSOF elements. Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM are peppered with examples of JFACC-provided CAS to special tactics and special forces teams engaged in firefights with Taliban, Al Qaeda, and/or Iraqi forces.

### **AFSOF Support to the JFACC**

Reciprocating for JFACC support to AFSOF missions, the special operations component may have to support/enable conventional CAF tasking/priorities. Historical documentation of AFSOF exploits during Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM offer a more detailed example of AFSOF support to the JFACC.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, AFSOF special tactics teams leveraged air and space power by providing accurate targeting and weather data that enabled the dismantling of the Taliban and Saddam Hussein war machines.

During Operation Enduring Freedom, AFSOF Special Tactics Team (STT) members assisted Anti-Taliban Forces in Afghanistan. STTs and Joint Tactical Air Controllers (JTAC) coordinated Close Air Support that enabled the fall of the Taliban with a minimum commitment of US and coalition ground forces.



#### **AFSOC Historical Data**

### **Organization of Expeditionary Air Force Special Operations Forces**

AFSOF, like all Air Force units, fit under the AETF construct. Due to its unique relationship with USSOCOM, AFSOF deployed unit designations differ slightly from the conventional Air Force model. Although the names differ, AFSOF organizational patterns are quite similar to conventional unit orientation and functionality.

**Expeditionary Special Operations Wing (ESOW).** An ESOW normally is composed of the wing command element and several groups. ESOWs will carry the numerical designation of the wing providing the command element. Deployed assigned or attached groups and squadrons will retain their numerical designation and acquire the “expeditionary” designation. AFSOF forces presented as an ESOW will normally report to the COMAFSOF for OPCON and through the COMAFSOF to the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command for ADCON.

**Expeditionary Special Operations Group (ESOG).** An ESOG is composed of a slice of the wing command element and some squadrons. Since Air Force groups are organized without significant staff support, a wing slice is needed to provide the command and control for ESOGs smaller than the normal wing. AFSOF ESOGs will normally report to the COMAFSOF for OPCON and through the COMAFSOF to the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command for ADCON.

**Expeditionary Special Operations Squadron (ESOS).** The squadron is the basic fighting unit of the Air Force. An individual squadron or element should not be presented by itself without provision for appropriate support and command elements.

**Expeditionary Elements below Squadron Level.** In addition to expeditionary wings, groups, and squadrons, the Air Force can deploy elements below the squadron level for specific, limited functions. These include individuals and specialty teams such as STTS, CAAT, and combat support. They may deploy independently of other Air Force units, often to remote locations, and may operate directly with other Services. For ADCON purposes, these elements should normally be retained by AFSOC or delegated to the forward deployed COMAFSOF. Examples of such deployed elements might augment a joint psychological operations task force (JPOTF) or an STT supporting a contingency response group (CRG).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AFSOF PLANNING AND SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS

*...special operations forces succeed, in spite of their numerical inferiority, when they are able to gain relative superiority through the use of a simple plan, carefully concealed, repeatedly and realistically rehearsed, and executed with surprise, speed, and purpose.*

—William H. McRaven

**Spec Op: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare**

#### GENERAL

Historically, AFSOF tasking has ranged from missions that called specifically for the unique capabilities that AFSOF provides the combatant commander to undertakings that were tasked because AFSOF was the only force that could accommodate the tasking due to time constraints or mission location. Regardless of how or why the tasking reached the AFSOF doorstep, past, present, and future air commandos must provide a candid assessment of AFSOF capabilities, limitations, and risks associated with the mission to the tasking commander.

AFSOF missions are often high-risk operations, have limited windows of execution, and require first-time success. Given the limited size and sustainability of AFSOF, adequate support is vital to the success of the mission and must be properly planned. Additionally, mission rehearsal is often a key critical element of mission preparation. This chapter offers some planning considerations when preparing for the employment of AFSOF elements in combat.

#### MISSION PREPARATION CONSIDERATIONS

##### Mission Rehearsal

Rehearsal of special operations is critical. Often, repeated rehearsal of certain mission elements is necessary. This is because both personnel and essential tasks differ from mission to mission and because of the possible strategic implications of these missions. Because special operations are unique, each operation may bring together a group of specialists who have worked together infrequently or



**Repeated and realistic dress rehearsals make success more certain.**

never at all. In addition, the specific tasks required for success may not have been practiced together or integrated in the required sequence. Through rehearsal, a plan's flaws are discovered, and its options are tested. Rehearsals provide the forum to overcome potentially dangerous scenarios in the field. **Special operations usually require rehearsal because of the inherent complexity and high risk associated with these missions.** The requirement for a rehearsal can present challenges when operating with the JFACC's forces. Ordinarily, the JFACC operates on a 72-hour ATO planning cycle.

### **MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT**

On 12 May 1975, the USS *Mayaguez*, an American-owned freighter, was boarded and seized by Cambodian forces while in international waters off the coast of Cambodia. The next day, the ship was taken to Koh Tang Island while the ship's crew was taken to another island for interrogation. The operation to take back the ship and rescue the crew highlights what can happen if reaction time is short, force selection is ad hoc, previous joint training is not done, and mission rehearsal cannot occur in the time available.

The plan called for 11 Air Force helicopters (six HH-53 Air Rescue Service and five CH-53 special operations helicopters) to support Marines in an assault on Koh Tang Island and to board and retake the *Mayaguez* itself. It was assumed that the ship's crew was being held on Koh Tang Island and the rescue force was told to expect only a handful of lightly armed Khmer Rouge soldiers.

The operation began on the morning of 15 May 1975. Retaking the *Mayaguez* went smoothly. The operation at Koh Tang Island, however, soon deteriorated into what one helicopter pilot described as "absolute and utter chaos." As it turned out, there were about 300 Khmer Rouge dug in on the island with heavy weaponry. By the time the first assault was completed, all but one of the original assault helicopters had been destroyed or damaged. Ironically, about three hours into the first assault, the Cambodians gave the entire crew of the *Mayaguez* back to forces from the USS *Holt*; the original problem had been solved. The Marines on Koh Tang Island, however, had to be reinforced and then extracted. These operations lasted through the night. In the end, US casualties were 15 killed in action, three missing in action, and about 49 wounded in action.

**—A Very Short War, John F. Guilmartin**

Note: This rescue special operation highlights points made elsewhere in this document. Intelligence is key to special operations--all source intelligence must be readily available and regularly exercised by special operations planners. Joint teams conducting special operations must train together regularly and do detailed mission rehearsals to be effective. When deciding how quickly to act, planners must weigh the advantages of further preparation against the advantages of a quick reaction. Finally, operations against foes of uncertain strength must include armed escort in the force package.

## OPERATIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Security

Operations security (OPSEC), communications security (COMSEC) and physical security are vitally important to AFSOF. From initial planning stages to the force recovery stages of a special operation, mission-critical information and OPSEC indicators should be tightly controlled to prevent the adversary from deriving or collecting information that would compromise the mission success. AFSOF habitually operates from secure training sites and employment bases, in order to shield the small, tailored AFSOF from the attention of hostile intelligence collectors. Since AFSOF have little organic base defense capability, they depend almost exclusively on conventional Air Force units or sister Service support for perimeter security.

Additionally, AFSOF pay particular attention to COMSEC, in order to control inadvertent release of mission critical information and OPSEC indicators. For example, AFSOF maximize secure communications that ensure communication discipline (emissions control) and discretion (low probabilities of detection and intercept). Effective planning and coordinating can ensure information is adequately controlled, while ensuring access to information, equipment, and activities necessary for flexible yet compartmented operations.

### Intelligence

AFSOF planning and execution are intelligence-intensive, timely, and detailed. Tailored, all-source intelligence is vital in support of AFSOF. All-source intelligence should be broad in scope, yet adequately detailed. Due to the nature of special operations tasking, AFSOF intelligence specialists must be prepared to provide information on a broad spectrum of target sets associated with the nine specific core tasks explained in Chapter 2.

In essence, intelligence requirements for AFSOF are similar to those of other air components, though the degree of detail is frequently greater. Also, the nature of the objective may require different, tailored support. For instance, AFSOF may need intelligence to avoid enemy forces, where other forces may wish to engage those forces. AFSOF normally attempts to avoid detection for two reasons: it is a requirement on clandestine missions, and it is a method to avoid engagement on any mission. Therefore, detailed intelligence and mission planning are key elements of AFSOF adequate preparation. Some of the products often associated with AFSOF mission planning are:

- ★ SOF mission folders.
- ★ Mission planning orders validated through rehearsal(s).
- ★ Evasion Plan of Action for all missions.

- ✦ Combat tactics and concepts of employment based on expected threat scenarios.
- ✦ Target materials.
- ✦ Annotated Imagery.
- ✦ Specialized Geospatial products.

Release of post-mission reports with organically collected intelligence, target area analysis, and intelligence assessments may be constrained by the sensitivity of many types of SOF missions. Depending on the sensitivity of the mission, commanders should report data either through special access or routine intelligence reporting channels, as appropriate.

## **Communications**

AFSOF communications consists of three broad categories; command and control (C2), mission support, and tactical communications. Communications for C2 deal with operational planning and execution, which require immediate and responsive communications connectivity from the JFC and JFSOCC through the JSOAC to the most forward deployed SOF forces. Command and control communications must enable AFSOF operators to rapidly deploy and dynamically operate on a global scale with assured connectivity and security in all environments. Tactical communications are carried by SOF airborne and supporting or supported ground forces to communicate with command stations and other SOF elements in operational missions to locate, capture, strike, or kill enemy forces. Interoperability between tactical communications and C2 networks is critical. Low probability of detection (LPD) and low probability of interception (LPI) are critical requirements for SOF tactical communications means. AFSOF requires integral communications resources that are characterized by high reliability, flexibility, lightweight, and a small footprint. SOF initial and on-the-move communications must be rapidly and continuously available to operate in a variety of threat environments. Man-packable equipment must be operational within minutes versus hours or days. AFSOF communications forces contain, and normally require, organic communications specialists and equipment to provide these rapidly deployable communications capabilities. SOF combat support communications provides deployed network infrastructure, secure telecommunications services, and access to the Global Information Grid (GIG). Access to the GIG enables planning, intelligence, logistics, and other functions at austere deployed operating locations. Mission support communications infrastructure may be provided on a limited basis by SOF unit deployable communications teams or by host base operating support. SOF deployable communications teams are trained and equipped to provide specialized and general communications services for initial AFSOF beddown support. They are intended to move forward to austere operating locations with AFSOF aviation units.

## **Operational Risk Management**

By minimizing unnecessary loss of personnel, equipment, and materiel in mishaps, commanders preserve combat capability. Safety staffs identify, evaluate, and recommend corrective actions for hazards associated with employing weapon systems and satisfying operational and training requirements. “First-in, last-out” safety professional presence fosters a hazard identification/risk management mindset can assist commanders, functional managers, supervisors, and operators in the reduction of risks and hazards. This approach is consistent with mission requirements and the principles of operational risk management (ORM):

- ✦ Accept no unnecessary risk
- ✦ Make risk decisions at the appropriate level
- ✦ Accept risk when benefits outweigh the costs
- ✦ Integrate ORM into operations and planning at all levels

For more on this, refer to AFI 90-901, Operational Risk Management.

## **Space Operations**

AFSOF relies on space capabilities and assets to enable combat operations. To accomplish this, AFSOF requires timely, accurate, and current space products and support during all phases of special operations from initial planning through deployment and execution. To ensure the proper integration of space capabilities, space personnel are assigned to the AFSOF units and are task organized into the AFSOC Space Support Team (SST) to support contingency operations. The AFSOC deploys SSTs as part of the SOLE and other AFSOF C2-nodes to include the JSOAC, JSOAD, and AFSOD as required. As the AFSOF space experts, these teams plan and coordinate the necessary SOF space requirements through the Space Coordinating Authority (SCA), normally the JFACC, in order to ensure cross-component space tasking consolidation, prioritization, and deconfliction.

## **Military Deception**

Commanders and operations planners should consider incorporating military deception into battle plans and individual missions at the beginning of the planning process to support combat objectives and to enhance the overall probability of mission success. Early implementation is the key to deception success. In many cases the groundwork can be started before SOF arrive in theater. Military deception helps a commander maintain operational security and achieve surprise by causing an adversary to misallocate combat, combat support, or intelligence resources in time, place, or quantity. Military deception planning processes parallel and complement the normal sequence of operations planning actions, therefore military deception planners should be involved in all phases of execution planning.



*We need a greater ability to deal with guerilla forces, insurrection, and subversion...We must be ready now to deal with any size force, including small externally supported bands of men; and we must help train local forces to be equally effective.*

**—President John F. Kennedy  
Message to Congress, 1961**

## **Training**

AFSOF place extraordinary demands on personnel. Demanding tasks require knowledgeable, trained individuals. Most AFSOF weapon systems and their associated training requirements are unique within the Air Force. To ensure combat readiness, AFSOF are trained to meet their most demanding standards. To complement training, often AFSOF use mission planning and rehearsal devices to enhance survivability and mission effectiveness.

## **COMBAT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS**

Combat Support consists of those functions necessary to support and sustain operations at a base. The majority of these functions are not organic to AFSOF and therefore must be provided by the COMAFFOR. The COMAFFOR, through an air expeditionary wing (AEW) or air expeditionary group (AEG) commander, is normally responsible for providing the combat support and Service common logistics support required by deployed AFSOF. At forward operating locations where the preponderance of forces are AFSOF and the AFSOF commander serves as the AEW or AEG commander, the AFSOF commander is responsible for ensuring combat support and Service common logistics support are provided at that location.

The AFSOF commander should coordinate support requirements directly through the COMAFFOR's A-staff which is responsible for directing theater Service support. Because AFSOF must often deploy and be operational early in the initial phase of any operation, sufficient combat support capability must be planned and deployed on a rapid enough timeline to achieve sustained operational capability, with minimal risk, commensurate with the geographic combatant commander's operational objectives.

## **Logistics**

AFSOF should provide sustainment requirements to the Air Force component logisticians during both deliberate and crisis action planning. Coordination of the AFSOF logistics support concept with the Air Force component logisticians and early identification of requirements are key to responsive sustainment support. Provision of

Service common logistics support and SOF unique logistics support should be seamless to deployed AFSOF utilizing a single Air Force supply chain and the joint theater distribution system.

AFSOF must be able to execute time sensitive, discrete deployments. A reduced deployed logistics footprint can enhance both the timely response and the security of an operation. The system used to mobilize and deploy AFSOF should be able to function in an environment where OPSEC precludes normal predeployment coordination. However, planners must balance the need for OPSEC against the need for adequate logistics support and the size of the logistics footprint to ensure timely deployment and, ultimately, mission success. Lack of adequate logistics support can put the mission as much at risk as the failure to maintain appropriate OPSEC.



Because AFSOF generally operate small numbers of highly specialized aircraft, they should be adequately supported by readiness spares packages (RSP). The RSPs should be maintained at sufficient levels to ensure a quick response and sustained operating capability for short duration contingencies.

## **Combat Weather**

AFSOF weather teams provide environmental data collection operations and indigenous personnel weather liaison/training in the deep battle space as well as tailored environmental effects for unique worldwide missions of both conventional and special operations forces. The JFSOCC in coordination with the JFSOCC staff weather officer, determines the correct mix of weather resources required on the ground to support JFC objectives. AFSOF units, such as Special Tactics Teams, perform best when accompanied by an organic weather capability in the form of a special operations weather team (SOWT). Team composition is scenario dependent and generally consists of forward observing, planning and mission execution forecasting, and staff weather services. SOWT members are able to independently operate in permissive and semi-permissive environments and as an attachment to SOF teams in hostile areas. SOWT are the only force in the DOD organized, trained and equipped to perform Environmental Reconnaissance operations in support of the JFC. While other forces have the ability to provide basic weather reporting, SOWTs can immediately apply their collection efforts to the JFC's mission, and enable his operations directly. SOWTs perform these tasks while employed tactically on or near the target, along flight routes and from forward staging areas. The JFSOCC staff weather officer coordinates with AFSOF weather forces to ensure mission weather requirements are fulfilled and develops an environmental sensing strategy that supports the theater sensing strategy by utilizing AFSOF's unique forces. Deployed special operations weather forces are

normally TACON to a JSOTF and ADCON to a JSOACC. SOWTs contain specially skilled airborne-qualified forecasters that deploy globally for diverse SOF missions to collect and furnish weather information in data-sparse and enemy-denied areas. SOWTs record and transmit timely, accurate, and operationally focused forward-area weather observations for a variety of functions used beyond SOF missions, such as targeting operations by conventional forces. The collection and application of environmental information by SOWTs in data sparse regions should be rapidly fed back to higher-echelon weather agencies for inclusion in operational decision making cycles and in global and theater computer forecast models.

## **Legal**

Planning and execution of Air Force and joint special operations will raise many significant legal issues, including law of armed conflict (LOAC), use of force, fiscal law, environmental law, international agreements, and other legal considerations. The key to avoiding legal obstacles to mission accomplishment is early identification and resolution of potential legal issues before they become "show stoppers." Active involvement by SOF-knowledgeable judge advocates, providing legal advice to commanders, planners, and operators, must be sought and utilized from the earliest stages of planning throughout mission execution. AFSOF commanders must ensure that qualified legal support is integrated into mission planning, rules of engagement (ROE) development and publication, aircrew and operator training, and actual mission execution across the full range of military operations.

## **Medical**

AFSOF medical support requirements depend on the number of supported personnel, their location, the military situation, and access to existing medical facilities. AFSOF missions often test the limits of personal endurance. AFSOF personnel often operate from areas where the lack of preventive medicine measures during mission planning and early phases of execution could result in mission degradation. In addition to rendering routine or emergency medical care to deployed personnel, AFSOF medical personnel should be able to ensure applicable elementary field sanitation and hygiene, disease prevention and control, and environmental risk factor assessment and control.

AFSOF medical personnel provide detailed analysis for planning and intelligence functions. They should be aware of potential health hazards, endemic diseases, and other related data associated with the destination country. Plans and procedures also ensure medical personnel comply with the combatant commander's directed deployment surveillance criteria.

Recovery of hostages or survivors normally presents unique medical considerations for those who have been subjected to traumatic events. Hostages or survivors may be confused, apprehensive, physically incapacitated, or act in a manner that can impede their rescue. SOF personnel conducting personnel recovery missions should also be prepared to use indigenous medical facilities to support hostage recovery operations.

AFSOF medical personnel establish the SOF casualty care continuum. They are responsible for planning and conducting medical care from the point of injury back to forward resuscitative surgical care. AFSOF medical and pararescue personnel are charged with providing initial stabilization in CSAR and mass casualty incidents.

AFSOF provide organic evacuation to points where conventional airlift and aeromedical evacuation (AE) are located. To support this requirement, selected AFSOF medical personnel train on SOF fixed and rotary wing aircraft to provide casualty evacuation from the point of injury back to a conventional interface point. AFSOF medical planning should address ground-air evacuation interface, organic resources to provide pre-evacuation stabilization, transload tactics, and hand-off procedures with conventional medical and AE forces.

***At the Very Heart of Warfare Lies Doctrine. . .***

## SUGGESTED READINGS

**Air Force Publications** (Note: All Air Force doctrine documents are available on the Air Force Doctrine Center web page at <https://www.doctrine.af.mil>)

### Joint Publications

JP 3–0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*

JP 3–05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*

JP 3–05.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*

Joint Pub 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*

JP 3–30, *Command and Control for Joint Air Operations*

United States Special Operations Command, *USSOCOM SOF Reference Manual*

### Other Publications

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# GLOSSARY

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ACO</b>	airspace control order
<b>ACS</b>	agile combat support
<b>ADCON</b>	administrative command
<b>AE</b>	aeromedical evacuation
<b>AEG</b>	Air Expeditionary Group
<b>AETF</b>	air and space expeditionary task forces
<b>AEW</b>	Air Expeditionary Wing
<b>AFDD</b>	Air Force doctrine document
<b>AFSOC</b>	Air Force Special Operations Command
<b>AFSOF</b>	Air Force special operations forces
<b>AOC</b>	air and space operations center
<b>ASI</b>	air and space surface interface
<b>ATC</b>	air traffic control
<b>ATO</b>	air tasking order
<b>C2</b>	command and control
<b>CA</b>	civil affairs
<b>CAA</b>	combat aviation advisory
<b>CAAT</b>	combat aviation advisory team
<b>CAF</b>	combat air forces
<b>CAOC</b>	combined air and space operations center
<b>CAS</b>	close air support
<b>CDRJSOTF</b>	commander, joint special operations task force
<b>CDRUSSOCOM</b>	Commander, United States Special Operations Command
<b>CFACC</b>	combined forces air component commander
<b>COCOM</b>	combatant command (command authority)
<b>COMAFFOR</b>	commander, Air Force forces
<b>COMAFSOF</b>	commander Air Force special operations forces
<b>COMJSOTF</b>	commander, joint special operations task force
<b>COMSEC</b>	communications security
<b>CONPLAN</b>	concept plan
<b>CP</b>	counterproliferation
<b>CRG</b>	contingency response group
<b>CS</b>	coalition support
<b>CSAR</b>	combat search and rescue
<b>CT</b>	counterterrorism
<b>DA</b>	direct action
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>DZ</b>	drop zone

<b>ESOG</b>	expeditionary special operations group
<b>ESOS</b>	expeditionary special operations squadron
<b>ESOW</b>	expeditionary special operations wing
<b>FARP</b>	forward arming and refueling point
<b>FID</b>	foreign internal defense
<b>GAMSS</b>	Global Air Mobility Support System
<b>GWOT</b>	Global War on Terrorism
<b>HN</b>	host nation
<b>IO</b>	information operations
<b>ISR</b>	intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
<b>JAOC</b>	joint air operations center
<b>JFACC</b>	joint force air component commander (JP 1-02); joint force air and space component commander {USAF}
<b>JFC</b>	joint force commander
<b>JFSOCC</b>	joint force special operations component commander
<b>JP</b>	joint publication
<b>JPOTF</b>	joint psychological operations task force
<b>JPRC</b>	joint personnel recovery center
<b>JSOA</b>	joint special operations area
<b>JSOAC</b>	joint special operations air component
<b>JSOACC</b>	joint special operations air component commander
<b>JSOTF</b>	joint special operations task force
<b>JTF</b>	joint task force
<b>LOAC</b>	law of armed conflict
<b>LZ</b>	landing zone
<b>MMLS</b>	mobile microwave landing system
<b>OPCON</b>	operational control
<b>OPSEC</b>	operations security
<b>OPLAN</b>	operational plans
<b>ORM</b>	operational risk management
<b>OSS</b>	Office of Strategic Services
<b>PF</b>	precision fires
<b>PR</b>	personnel recovery
<b>PRO</b>	personnel recovery operations

<b>PSYOP</b>	psychological operations
<b>ROE</b>	rules of engagement
<b>RSP</b>	readiness spares package
<b>SAM</b>	specialized air mobility
<b>SCA</b>	space coordinating authority
<b>SOF</b>	special operations forces
<b>SOLE</b>	special operations liaison element
<b>SOWT</b>	special operations weather team
<b>SPINS</b>	special instructions
<b>SR</b>	special reconnaissance
<b>SST</b>	space support team
<b>STT</b>	special tactic team
<b>TACAN</b>	tactical air navigation
<b>TACON</b>	tactical control
<b>TSOC</b>	theater special operations component
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USAF</b>	United States Air Force
<b>USSOCOM</b>	United States Special Operations Command
<b>UW</b>	unconventional warfare
<b>WMD</b>	weapons of mass destruction

## Definitions

**Air Force special operations forces.** Those active and reserve component Air Force forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called **AFSOF**. (JP 1-02)

**antiterrorism.** Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include limited response and containment by local military forces. Also called **AT**. See also terrorism. (JP 1-02)

**clandestine operation.** An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of identity of sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence related activities. (JP 1-02)

**close air support.** Air action by fixed and rotary wing aircraft against hostile targets which are in close proximity to friendly forces and which require detailed

integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces. Also called **CAS**. (JP 1-02)

**coalition force**. A force composed of military elements of nations that have formed a temporary alliance for some specific purpose. (AFDD 2-7)

**combat aviation advisory team**. A special operations team specifically tailored to assess, advise, and train foreign aviation forces in air operations employment and sustainability. Teams support geographic combatant commanders throughout the operational continuum, primarily by facilitating the integration and interoperability of friendly and allied aviation forces supporting joint and multinational operations. Teams are specially trained and equipped to provide advisory assistance in the three interrelated areas of foreign internal defense (FID), coalition support (CS), and unconventional warfare (UW). Also called **CAAT**. (AFDD 2-7)

**Commander Air Force Special Operations Forces**. The senior AF/SOF Airman on the JFSOC or JSOTF chain of command. Also called **COMAFSOF**. (AFDD 2-7)

**conventional forces**. 1. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons. 2. Those forces other than designated special operations forces. (JP 1-02)

**counterterrorism**. Offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorism. Also called **CT**. (JP 1-02)

**covert operation**. An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. A covert operation differs from a clandestine operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the identity of sponsor rather than on concealment of the operation. (JP 1-02)

**deception**. Those measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence to induce him to react in a manner prejudicial to his interests. (JP 1-02)

**direct action**. Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives. Also called **DA**. (JP 1-02)

**evasion and escape**. The procedures and operations whereby military personnel and other selected individuals are enabled to emerge from an enemy-

held or hostile area to areas under friendly control. (JP 1-02)

**foreign internal defense.** Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Also called **FID**. (JP 1-02)

**guerrilla force.** A group of irregular, predominantly indigenous personnel organized along military lines to conduct military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held, hostile, or denied territory. (JP 1-02)

**guerrilla warfare.** Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces. (JP 1-02)

**humanitarian assistance.** Assistance to the local populace provided by predominantly US forces in conjunction with military operations and exercises. This assistance is specifically authorized by title 10, United States Code, section 401, and funded under separate authorities. Assistance provided under these provisions is limited to (1) medical, dental, and veterinary care provided in rural areas of a country; (2) construction of rudimentary surface transportation systems; (3) well drilling and construction of basic sanitation facilities; and (4) rudimentary construction and repair of public facilities. Assistance must fulfill unit-training requirements that incidentally create humanitarian benefit to the local populace. Also called **HA**. (JP 1-02)

**infiltration.** 1. The movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. When used in connection with the enemy, it infers that contact is avoided. 2. In intelligence usage, placing an agent or other person in a target area in hostile territory. Usually involves crossing a frontier or other guarded line. Methods of infiltration are: black (clandestine); gray (through legal crossing point but under false documentation); white (legal). (JP 1-02)

**information operations.** Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. Also called IO. (JP 1-02) [*Information operations are the integrated employment of the core capabilities of influence operations, electronic warfare operations, network warfare operations, in concert with specified integrated control enablers, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.*] (AFDD 2-5) {Italicized words in brackets apply only to the Air Force and are offered for clarity.}

**information superiority.** That degree of dominance in the information domain, which permits the conduct of operations without effective opposition. (JP 1-02)

**information warfare.** Information operations conducted during time of crisis or conflict to achieve or promote specific objectives over a specific adversary or adversaries. Also called **IW.** (JP1-02)

**insurgency.** An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict. (JP 1-02)

**joint force commander.** A general term applied to a combatant commander, subunified commander, or joint task force commander authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a joint force. Also called **JFC.** (JP 1-02)

**joint force special operations component commander.** The commander within a unified command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force responsible to the establishing commander for making recommendations on the proper employment of assigned, attached, and/or made available for tasking special operations forces and assets; planning and coordinating special operations; or accomplishing such operational missions as may be assigned. The joint force special operations component commander is given the authority necessary to accomplish missions and tasks assigned by the establishing commander. Also called **JFSOCC.** (JP 1-02)

**joint special operations air component commander.** The commander within a joint force special operations command responsible for planning and executing joint special operations air activities. Also called **JSOACC.** (JP 1-02)

**joint special operations area.** A restricted area of land, sea, and airspace assigned by a joint force commander to the commander of a joint special operations force to conduct special operations activities. The commander of joint special operations forces may further assign a specific area or sector within the joint special operations area to a subordinate commander for mission execution. The scope and duration of the special operations forces' mission, friendly and hostile situation, and politico-military considerations all influence the number, composition, and sequencing of special operations forces deployed into a joint special operations area. It may be limited in size to accommodate a discrete direct action mission or may be extensive enough to allow a continuing broad range of unconventional warfare operations. Also called **JSOA.** (JP 1-02)

**joint special operations task force.** A joint task force composed of special operations units from more than one Service, formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations. The joint special operations task force may have conventional nonspecial operations units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions. Also called **JSOTF.** (JP 1-02)

**multinational.** Between two or more forces or agencies of two or more nations or coalition partners. (JP 1-02)

**multinational operations.** A collective term to describe military actions conducted by forces of two or more nations, typically organized within the structure of a coalition or alliance. (JP 1-02)

**operational control.** Command authority that may be exercised by commanders at any echelon at or below the level of combatant command. Operational control is inherent in combatant command (command authority) and may be delegated within the command. When forces are transferred between combatant commands, the command relationship the gaining commander will exercise (and the losing commander will relinquish) over these forces must be specified by the Secretary of Defense. Operational control is the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Operational control includes authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations and joint training necessary to accomplish missions assigned to the command. Operational control should be exercised through the commanders of subordinate organizations. Normally this authority is exercised through subordinate joint force commanders and Service and/or functional component commanders. Operational control normally provides full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions; it does not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training. Also called **OPCON**. (JP 1-02)

**operations security.** A process of identifying critical information and subsequently analyzing friendly actions attendant to military operations and other activities to: a. Identify those actions that can be observed by adversary intelligence systems. b. Determine indicators hostile intelligence systems might obtain that could be interpreted or pieced together to derive critical information in time to be useful to adversaries. c. Select and execute measures that eliminate or reduce to an acceptable level the vulnerabilities of friendly actions to adversary exploitation. Also called **OPSEC**. (JP 1-02)

**overt operation.** An operation conducted openly, without concealment. See also clandestine operation; covert operation. (JP 1-02)

**psychological operations.** Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. Also called **PSYOP**. (JP 1-02)

**search and rescue.** The use of aircraft, surface craft, submarines, specialized rescue teams and equipment to search for and rescue personnel in distress on land or at sea. Also called **SAR**. (JP 1-02)

**security assistance.** Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services, by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Also called **SA**. (JP 1-02)

**special forces.** US Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities. Also called **SF**. (JP 1-02)

**special operations.** Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted across the full range of military operations, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, nonspecial operations forces. Political-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques and oversight at the national level. Special operations often differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. Also called **SO**. (JP 1-02)

**special operations command.** A subordinate unified or other joint command established by a joint force commander to plan, coordinate, conduct, and support joint special operations within the joint force commander's assigned area of operations. Also called **SOC**. (JP 1-02)

**special operations expeditionary group.** An independent group, normally the lowest command echelon of forces reporting directly to a COMAFFOR, JSOTF, JSOACC, or JTF. Also called **SOEG**.

**special operations expeditionary squadron.** The squadron is the basic fighting unit of the US Air Force. Squadrons are configured to deploy in support of crisis action requirements. However, an individual squadron is not designed to conduct independent operations; it requires support from other units to obtain the synergy needed for sustainable, effective operations. As such, an individual squadron or squadron element should not be presented by itself without provision for appropriate support and command elements. If a single operational squadron or squadron element is all that is needed to provide the desired operational effect it should deploy with provision for commensurate support and command and

control elements. This squadron is normally subordinate to a special operations expeditionary group or wing. Also called **SOES**.

**special operations expeditionary wing.** Normally composed of a special operations wing or a wing slice. The SOEW is composed of the wing command element and appropriate groups. It is attached to a COMAFFOR, JSOTF, JSOACC, or JTF depending upon size, duration, and nature of the operation. The SOEW may be composed of units from different wings, but where possible, is formed from units of a single wing. Also called **SOEW**.

**special operations forces.** Those active and Reserve component forces of the military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called **SOF**. (JP 1-02)

**special operations liaison element.** A special operations liaison team provided by the JFSOCC to the JFACC (if designated) to coordinate, deconflict, and integrate special operations air and surface operations with conventional air. Also called **SOLE**. (JP 1-02)

**special operations weather team.** A task-organized team of Air Force personnel organized, trained, and equipped to collect critical weather observations from data-sparse areas. These teams are trained to operate independently in permissive or uncertain environments, or as augmentation to other special operations elements in hostile environments, in direct support of special operations. Also called **SOWT**. (JP 1-02)

**special reconnaissance.** Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces. These actions provide an additive capability for commanders and supplement other conventional reconnaissance and surveillance actions. Also called **SR**. (JP 1-02)

**special tactics team.** A task-organized element of special tactics that may include combat control, pararescue, and combat weather personnel. Functions include austere airfield and assault zone reconnaissance, surveillance, establishment, and terminal control; terminal attack control; combat search and rescue; combat casualty care and evacuation staging; and tactical weather observations and forecasting. Also called **STT**. (JP 1-02)

**tactical control.** Command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned. Tactical control is inherent in operational control. Tactical control may be

delegated to, and exercised at any level at or below the level of combatant command. When forces are transferred between combatant commands, the command relationship the gaining commander will exercise (and the losing commander will relinquish) over these forces must be specified by the Secretary of Defense. Tactical control provides sufficient authority for controlling and directing the application of force or tactical use of combat support assets within the assigned mission or task. Also called **TACON**. (JP 1-02)

**terrorism**. The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. (JP 1-02)

**unconventional warfare**. A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery. Also called **UW**. (JP 1-02)