CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
CSC 29 / CCEM 29

EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

By /par Maj P.L. Simpson

ABSTRACT/RESUME

The events of 11 September, 2001 have enlivened the debate on the requirement for the Canadian Army to establish a Special Operations Capability, in order to allow it to better meet the demands of asymmetric threats in the post Cold War era. The debate over which Special Force capabilities Canada should develop, usually looks to the United States for examples upon which to base the analysis of the Canadian requirement. While analysis of US Special Forces mission tasks may provide a basis for discussion, many of their tasks are unique to the US and are not applicable in the Canadian context. Canada's joint Special Operations Force, Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2) already performs the tasks that are required by the Canadian Forces, and further duplication of these capabilities at the Army level would be redundant and a misuse of scarce Army manpower and resources.

At 8:45 am on 11 September 2002, a Boeing 737 aircraft, under the control of highjackers slammed into the north tower of the World Trade Centre in New York City. Twenty minutes later, a second hijacked airliner struck the World Trade Centre's south tower. Within two hours both towers had collapsed and the United States was stunned by both the nature of the attack and the enormity of the damage it caused. It was this heinous act more than any other in recent memory that has served to focus popular attention on the asymmetric character of the threat to national security in the post cold war era. Asymmetric threats are those threats, which seek to attack a nation by avoiding strengths and exploiting vulnerabilities, and employ unexpected or unusual techniques.[1] In the days and weeks that followed the attack on the World Trade Centre, it became clear that Islamic terrorists based in Afghanistan were responsible.

It was discovered that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan had harboured and aided the Al-Qaeda terrorist network responsible for the attacks. This discovery led to a ground swell of public support in the west for the use of military force to remove them from power and thereby deny Al-Qaeda their support base. As a coalition of nations assigned and prepared military forces for a campaign to over throw the Taliban, many nations, including Canada, found that some of their current military structures and capabilities were largely unsuited to the task of dealing with the Taliban. Conventional military forces are often unsuitable for dealing with asymmetric threats, as their training, organization and equipment are not optimized to countering threats like those posed by unconventional military forces and/or terrorist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

---

[1] Department of National Defence, *Advancing With Purpose: The Army Strategy* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), p 32.

The American military, with its well-developed and diverse Special Operations Forces, supported by national intelligence assets and other government agencies, was well positioned to respond to the threat posed by Al-Qaeda and their Afghani hosts. The United States was able to rapidly deploy Army and Air Force Special Operations Forces to work with the Afghan opposition groups, collectively known in the west as the Northern

beyond that envisioned within a LAV-based Army,"[4] and tasked it to examine the requirement for a Canadian Army Special Operations capability. Special Operations are,

> military activities conducted by specially designated, organized, trained and equipped forces using operational techniques and modes of employment not standard to conventional forces. These activities are conducted across the broad spectrum of military operations, independently or in co-ordination with operations of conventional forces to achieve military, political, economic and psychological objectives. Political-military considerations may require clandestine, covert or discreet techniques and the acceptance of a degree of physical and political risk not associated with conventional operations.[5]

While the Army's desire to broaden its capability to respond to the new security environment is laudable, its pursuit of an Army Special Operations capability is misguided. The Canadian Armed Forces should retain its Special Operations capability at the joint level and forgo the pursuit of an Army capability.

In order to understand the factors that mitigate against the Army's acquisition of a Special Operations capability, it is important to understand the new international security environment and why Special Operations Forces will play a prominent role in combating future threats. Further, as discussions about a Canadian Army Special Operations capability usually look to the US Army for organizational and task models,[6] it is essential that we examine the organization, roles and tasks of U.S. Army Special Operations Forces. Finally, these roles and tasks must be placed into the Canadian

---

[4] *Ibid*, p 1.
[5] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, AAP-6 *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions* (Brussels: NATO, 2002), p 2-S-6.
[6] One example of this reference to U.S. organizations and tasks is the Special Operations Brief given to students of the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College. This brief details mission tasks and organizations that are uniquely American and which do not accurately reflect the current Canadian reality with regard to Special Operations capabilities. A further example may be found in the task list given to the Special Operations Working Group for consideration.

context in order to accurately assess the requirement for and the viability of embracing them as part of a Canadian Army Special Operations capability. First and foremost however we must seek to understand the nature of the new security environment in order to determine what forces will be required in order to best position the Army to respond to the challenges it presents.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the break up of the Soviet Union and the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact, the world has been plunged into "a period of transition, away from the rigid bipolar overlay of the Cold War era towards a new yet uncertain order."[7] The end of the Cold War has combined such diverse factors as globalization, population and environmental pressures, population migration as well as the emergence of an increasing number of failed or rogue states to increase the degree of uncertainty as to the nature of future conflict.[8] Added to this is the emergence of non-state actors who range from ethnic or religious groups to international businesses or drug cartels.

> These combatants seem increasingly to differ widely, not only in size, capability and sophistication, but also in perceptions, values and motivation. All this is likely to increase the relative frequency of unfamiliar and less traditional forms of conflict – that is warfare between the forces of the state and the forces of the non-state, and between forces of states with differing capabilities and motivation.[9]

NATO, in an attempt to provide focus and definition to the new security environment, has postulated two views of future conflict, known simplistically enough

---

[7] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Defence Beyond 2010 – The Way Ahead* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 1999), p 1.
[8] Department of National Defence, Directorate Land Strategic Concepts Report # 99-2. *The Future Security Environment* (Kingston: DND Canada, 1999), p 10 – 13.
[9] *Ibid,* p 58.

as View One and View Two.[10] View One envisions "warfare between two modern, well equipped, well trained mechanized forces."[11] These conflicts will be characterized by joint and combined operations conducted by like forces employing complex technologies. In View One conflicts, military operations will be conducted over a wide area with relatively few forces, but will not necessarily be of short duration.[12] Conversely, View Two conflicts are seen as quite different.

In View Two conflicts, modern, professional armies will face a more asymmetric threat. View Two conflict envisions modern, high tech armies being opposed by armed forces who are "directed by social entities that are not necessarily states, conducted by organizations that are not necessarily armies and fought by people who are not necessarily soldiers in the conventional sense of the term."[13] Attacks in this type of conflict will not be limited to a specific area of operations, but will extend back along the lines of communication to home bases and will include attacks on civilian as well as military targets. As very few developing countries can match the conventional military strength of western nations, it is increasingly likely that potential adversaries will resort to asymmetric warfare as envisioned by NATO View Two. It is because of this fact that "asymmetric dangers are expected to constitute an ever growing challenge to traditional security interests of both countries."[14] If it is accepted that the west will be faced with a growing number of View Two type conflicts in the

[10] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Technical Report #8 *Land Operations in the Year 2020* (Brussels: RTO-TR-8 AC/323 (SAS) TP/5, 1999), p 46-50.
[11] Department of National Defence, Directorate Land Strategic Concepts Report # 99-2 *The Future Security Environment* (Kingston: DND Canada, 1999), p 59.
[12] *Ibid*, p 61.
[13] *Ibid*, p 61.
[14] Lieutenant-Colonel Donald A. Le Carte, "Asymmetric Warfare and the use of Special Operations Forces in North American Law Enforcement," *Canadian Military Journal*, (winter, 2001-2002), p 25.

future, then any consideration of future army capabilities and organizations should cater at least in part to the demands of this new security reality.[15]

The Canadian Army, through its establishment of the Special Operations Capability Working Group has recognized that Special Operations Forces represent a potent capability in the fight against asymmetric threats. Special Operations Forces are "strategic assets that typically posses enhanced capabilities in training and equipment that readily permit their employment across the full spectrum of operations."[16] As many of these View Two conflicts will be conducted in the gray zone between peace and open war,[17] Special Operations Forces provide a government with a force that is capable of dealing with national security threats, in either an overt or covert fashion.

> Special Operations Forces bring a unique suite of sophisticated skills to the battlespace, while retaining a low profile. They can be a most versatile force, particularly under conditions where wisdom might preclude the deployment of conventional military units, given political sensitivities.[18]

Special Operations Forces can deploy rapidly to any location on the globe in order to provide a rapid initial response to an impending crisis, deal with a potential threat or demonstrate a nation's resolve to support its allies. Special Operations Forces can attenuate the profile of their mission in order to accomplish their tasks with the requisite degree of political visibility or invisibility. This ability makes them an effective and useful tool in the prevention of conflict abroad, without the cost and

---

[15] The Army has recognized this requirement in part through its establishment of the Special Operations Capability Working Group, and by the establishment of new Psychological Operations and Civil Military Co operations organizations.
[16] Lieutenant-Colonel Donald A. Le Carte, "Asymmetric Warfare and the use of Special Operations Forces in North American Law Enforcement," *Canadian Military Journal*, (winter, 2001-2002), p 29.
[17] John M. Collins, "Special Operations Forces in Peacetime," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No 21 (Spring, 1999), p. 56.
[18] Lieutenant-Colonel Donald A. Le Carte, "Asymmetric Warfare and the use of Special Operations Forces in North American Law Enforcement," *Canadian Military Journal*, (winter, 2001-2002), p 29.

political baggage that comes with the deployment of conventional forces. Therefore, as the frequency of View Two conflicts increases, the utility of Special Operations Forces can also be expected to rise in concert. It was this logic that led the Canadian Army to establish the Special Operations Working Group. With the nature of future conflict defined and the increasing role of Special Operations Forces in these conflicts identified, we must now turn our examination to the type of Special Operations Capability that the Canadian Army requires.

Special Operations capabilities and forces differ from country to country and service to service. In Canada, discussions of Special Operations forces most often look to the United States for models and examples.[19] It is due to this fact that our discussions on future Canadian Special Operations capabilities will focus on comparisons to United States Special Operations forces. While this type of analysis may be useful in some respects, it can also lead to false conclusions if the roles, missions and tasks of United States Special Operations forces are misunderstood or ignored. This is particularly true in the case of the US Army Special Forces. In order to understand why fallacious conclusions might be drawn from such analysis, we must first examine, not only the roles and tasks of US Army Special Forces as laid out in US doctrine, but more importantly we must understand how they are used as military and foreign policy tools.

Numerous Canadian documents discussing Canadian Army Special Operations capabilities, list verbatim, doctrinal US Army Special Forces tasks as a basis for the

[19] For example, the Special Operations brief given to students at the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College is drawn from United States models and doctrine.

examination of what capabilities Canada should look to develop,[20] without putting these tasks within the context of how the United States actually employs their Special Operations Forces. Further, there is no reference to the fact that some of the tasks assigned to US Army Special Forces are uniquely American and fall directly out of the American approach to achieving foreign policy goals.[21] Of particular note in this regard are the tasks of Foreign Internal Defence (FID) and Unconventional Warfare (UW).

FID operations "support a friendly government facing a threat to its internal stability and security."[22] While FID is an interagency activity of the US Government, the role assigned to Special Operations Forces is "to train, advise and otherwise assist host nation military and paramilitary forces with the goal of the host nation being able, unilaterally, to assume responsibility to eliminate internal instability."[23] When used in the FID role, US Army Special Operations Forces are instruments of US foreign policy, a role that has increasingly become the *raison d' etre* for Special Forces, and in particular Army Special Forces;

> The increasing importance of special operations forces in the field has coincided with the decline in civilian foreign aid and U.S. diplomatic presence in some regions and the military's withdrawal from many permanent overseas bases. Increasingly, American soldiers have taken on jobs that once belonged almost exclusively

[20] BGen V. Kennedy, *Staff Planning Directive – Special Operations Capability Working Group* (National Defence Headquarters: file 3185-1 (DLSC 3), Nov 2001. This document lists a number of possible Special Operations Tasks for consideration by Canada. All of these tasks are contained in US Army and US Joint Special Operations doctrine manuals. This document also lists a number of tasks that are not primary missions for US Army Special Forces but which are collateral tasks and/or sub sets of the US Army Special Forces primary tasks of Unconventional Warfare (UW), Foreign Internal Defence (FID), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Direct Action (DA) and Counter Terrorism (CT).
[21] NATO nations adhere to the NATO definition of special operations tasks as defined in NATO Allied Joint Doctrine publication AJP-1 (A), September 1998, which are, Direct Action (DA), Special Reconnaissance (SR), and Military Assistance (MA).
[22] United States, Joint Chiefs of Doctrine for Special Operations, US JP 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington: US DOD, 1992), chapter 2 p, 5.
[23] *Ibid*, p 5.

> to civilian diplomats, spreading U.S. influence, discreetly forging new alliances and cultivating contacts among foreign leaders.[24]

US Army Special Forces have, since the end of the Vietnam War, been increasingly occupied on FID operations.[25] "No type of training is in greater demand around the world today than instruction in "foreign internal defense," a concept refined in successive battles against communism that has survived the end of the superpower struggle. It remains "our bread and butter."[26]

It is the United States' distinctive approach to foreign policy and its willingness to use military forces proactively and unilaterally to counter threats, perceived or actual, that has driven the development of FID as a uniquely American role for the US military and its Special Operations Forces. The formalization of FID as a foreign policy tool can be traced back to the late 1950's and the findings of the President's Committee to Study the U.S. Military Assistance program, the so-called Draper Committee. This committee "played a major part in forging a global policy view that military assistance should be provided to allied forces both to counter "external aggression" and, possibly coining the expression, "internal aggression."[27] The use of military forces in pursuit of national objectives in both war and peace continues to be a cornerstone of US foreign policy.

---

[24] *Ibid*, p A01.
[25] Roger M. Pezzelle, "Military Capabilities and Special Operations in the 1980's," in *Special Operations in US Strategy* ed by Frank R. Barnett, Hugh B. Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz (Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1984), p 142.
[26] Dana Priest, "US Military Trains Foreign Troops," [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/overseas/overseas1b.htm], July 12, 1998, p A01.
[27] Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counter terrorism, 1940 – 1990* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), p 155 156. This report was also partly responsible for later US Government policies that gave primary roles to military establishments in Third World "development." The report urged the military to "use the armed forces of underdeveloped countries as a major transmission belt of socioeconomic reform and development."

The United States State Department's International Affairs Mission Statement clearly identifies the Department of Defense as having a leading role in implementing the strategies outlined for attaining stated foreign policy aims.[28] It is this formal recognition of the military's role in foreign policy that has fostered and nurtured the development of FID as a Special Forces task. As Gen (ret) Wayne A. Downing, commander of US Special Operations Command from 1993 to 1996 has said, "They [US Special Operations Forces] are a direct instrument of U.S. foreign policy. They may be the most direct and most involved, tangible, physical part of U.S. foreign policy in certain countries."[29] Given the political nature of FID in the American context, is it a task that Canada should consider when defining its own requirements for a Special Operations Capability? In order to answer that question one must first examine the nature of Canadian foreign policy in order to determine if the development of such a capability is in keeping with the nations approach to achieving its foreign policy objectives.

While American foreign policy clearly expresses a willingness to act unilaterally[30], Canadian foreign policy rests firmly on the foundation of multi-literalism. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) foreign policy statement emphasizes this fact by stating "Canada's history as a non-colonizing power, champion of constructive multilateralism and effective international mediator, underpins an important and distinctive role among nations as they seek to build a new

[28] United States Department State, *US Strategic Plan for International Affairs* (Washington D.C.:US Department of State Office of Management and Policy Planning, 2000), p 2.
[29] Dana Priest, "US Military Trains Foreign Troops," [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/overseas/overseas1b.htm], July 12, 1998.
[30] United States Department State, *US Strategic Plan for International Affairs* (Washington D.C.:US Department of State Office of Management and Policy Planning, 2000), p 16.

and better order."[31] DFAIT's methodology for achieving this new and better order is also decidedly different from the US approach. While the US sees the protection and furtherance of democracy as a foreign policy goal through which American security and prosperity can be assured,[32] the government of Canada does not see the promotion of a specific political ideology as a foreign policy objective. Its focus is on the economic development of third world countries and the pursuit of a human security agenda. The primary means to achieve these aims is through Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Program, the purpose of which "is to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and *contribute to a more secure*, equitable and prosperous world."(emphasis added)[33] What role then does DFAIT see for the Canadian military in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives?

The only mention of Canadian military involvement in foreign affairs is in the context of alliances, in particular the United Nations;

> The UN continues to be the key vehicle for pursuing Canada's global security objectives. Canada can best move forward its global security priorities by working with other member states. The success of the UN is fundamental, therefore, to Canada's future security.[34]

DFAIT policy goes on to state that, "our military personnel will continue, within our means, to be available at international headquarters and in the field to support and

---

[31] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada in the World* (Ottawa: DFAIT Canada, 1995), p i.
[32] United States Department State, *US Strategic Plan for International Affairs* (Washington D.C.:US Department of State Office of Management and Policy Planning, 2000), p 61.
[33] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada in the World* (Ottawa: DFAIT Canada, 1995), p 42.
[34] *Ibid*, p 27.

direct multilateral peace operations."[35] Given these statements it is clear that the Government of Canada does not see a role akin to FID for Special Forces or conventional forces as part of Canadian foreign policy. While the Canadian Forces have conducted training and assistance missions in the past, and can be expected to continue to do so in the future, these activities have always been conducted under the auspices of multilateral coalitions by conventional forces, a methodology that is consistent with our foreign policy and should continue.[36] Short of a change in Canadian foreign policy, the Army's pursuit of a FID capability would be inconsistent with foreign policy and therefore ill advised. As FID is not a viable task, we will now turn our attention to the task of UW to see if this mission task would be suitable for Canadian Army Special Operations Forces.

In US doctrine, UW "includes guerrilla warfare and other low visibility, covert or clandestine operations as well as subversion, sabotage, intelligence collection and escape and evasion."[37] UW in the American context is, to a large degree, nothing more than FID that involves active combat conducted by those forces being trained and advised by the United States. For the United States,

> UW may be the conduct of indirect or proxy warfare against a hostile power for the purpose of achieving US national interests in peacetime; UW may be employed when conventional military involvement is impractical or undesirable; or UW may be a compliment to conventional operations in war. The focus of UW is primarily on existing or potential insurgent, secessionist, or other resistance movements.[38]

---

[35] *Ibid*, p 28.
[36] The Canadian Forces currently contributes eleven Canadian Forces personnel to the UK lead International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT) in Sierra Leone. These CF member assist in providing training and advice to the Sierra Leonian military. The CF participation in IMATT is known as OP SCULPTURE.
[37] United States, Joint Chiefs of Doctrine for Special Operations, US JP 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington: US DOD, 1992), chapter 2 p 3.
[38] *Ibid*, p 3.

While UW may be conducted by any US Special Operations assets, it is conducted primarily by Army Special Forces, a focus which is reflected in their motto, De Oppresso Liber (to liberated the oppressed). Since the end of the cold war, US Army Special Forces have conducted UW operations in support of insurgencies from Guatemala (1954) to Nicaragua (1980's) to Afghanistan (2001/2002).[39] In essence, UW is a tool the United States government uses to fight conflicts by providing support to forces that are ideologically acceptable to the US, and/or are perceived to be more willing to support US foreign policy objectives. The foundation for UW as a military task resides, like that for FID, in US foreign policy. While the US sees active involvement in the armed over-throw of "hostile" regimes, as a legitimate foreign policy tool, Canada's approach to securing a safer, more prosperous world is much different;

> There is a consensus [in DFAIT] that such a broader orientation [to a new security regime] can best be achieved-at least cost, and to best effect – through approaches that broaden the response to security issues beyond military options and focus on promoting international cooperation, building stability and on preventing conflict.[40]

Thus, as in the case of FID, UW lacks the foreign policy basis that would allow it to become a viable task for the Canadian Forces, in either the conventional or Special Forces arena. Furthermore, none of the Strategic vision documents produced by the Department of National Defence, or the Army before 11 September identify the need

[39] Terry White, *Swords of Lightning: Special Forces and the Changing Face of Warfare* (London: Brasseys, 1992), p 106.
[40] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Canada in the World* (Ottawa: DFAIT Canada, 1995), p 13.

for forces, Special Operations or otherwise, to conduct UW or FID.[41] Clearly, FID and UW are at best inconsistent with, and at worst at odds with, both Canadian foreign policy and the Army's future vision of itself. There are two tasks however that the Army clearly identifies as requirements for the future, these are Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) and Civil Military Affairs (CIMIC).

The Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts report entitled Future Army Capabilities, identifies the importance of PSYOPS and CIMIC operations across the broad spectrum of conflict, but erroneously places these capabilities in the Special Operations arena,[42] as does the Staff Planning Directive for the Special Operations Capability Working Group. As the United States is the only military in the world that categorize their PSYOPS and CIMIC elements as Special Operations Forces, one can only assume that it was reference to the American practice that has caused this same categorization to occur in Canada.

The association of PSYOPS with Special Operations in the United States military dates back to the Second World War and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of today's US Special Operations Forces. At that time, Major General Bill Donovan, chief of the OSS and "spiritual Father" of US Special Operations Forces, set out to establish a US capability for intelligence collection and unorthodox warfare which according to Donovan included PSYOPS.[43] It is ironic to note that only the PSYOPS functions of the OSS survived the end of the Second World

[41] See - Department of National Defense, Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts *Future Army Capabilities* (Ottawa: DND Canada, January 2001), and Department of National Defence, Directorate Land Strategic Concepts Report # 99-2 *The Future Security Environment* (Kingston: DND Canada, 1999).
[42] Department of National Defense, Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts *Future Army Capabilities* (Ottawa: DND Canada, January 2001), p 28.
[43] Alfred H. Paddock, "Psychological Operations, Special Operations, and US Strategy," in *Special Operations in US Strategy,* ed by Frank R. Barnett, Hugh B. Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz (Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1984), p 241 242.

War and that it was this branch which, in an effort to establish "a guerrilla capability in Europe to help "retard" a Soviet invasion, should it ever occur,"[44] initiated the planning for unconventional warfare and the creation of Special Forces. It is for these reasons that the US has included PSYOPS and CIMIC with Special Operations Forces, an inclusion that some observers see as an aberration. Retired Lieutenant General Samuel Wilson, former Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency echoes the concerns of many in the US Special Operations community when he states, "I deliberately exclude psychological operations and civil affairs operations from the list (of Special Operations tasks). The association of special operations and psychological operations is an historical happenstance, and for us today is an organizational convenience."[45] It is evident that there is no consensus, even in the United States, on the propriety of including PSYOPS and CIMIC as Special Operations functions or tasks, so why then has the Canadian Army chosen to identify these two areas as Special Operations?

The fact of the matter is that there seems to be as much discord on this issue in Canada as in the US. While a number of key Army documents identify PYSOPS and CIMIC as Special Operations functions,[46] the Army has begun to develop these areas as part of the conventional Army, more specifically in the reserve component.[47] There is an obvious disconnect between the doctrine writers and Army Headquarters on this issue and while some may believe PSYOPS and CIMIC to be Special Operations functions

---

[44] *Ibid*, p 242.
[45] Hugh B. Tovar, "Intelligence Assets and Special Operations," in *Special Operations in US Strategy,* ed by Frank R. Barnett, Hugh B. Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz (Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1984), p 191.
[46] Department of National Defence, Directorate Land Strategic Concepts

worthy of consideration by the Special Operations Capabilities Working Group, the decision to exclude them from any future Canadian Special Operations community appears to have already been made. By excluding PYSOPS and CIMIC from its Special Forces community Canada places itself in closer alignment with all other NATO countries who adhere to the NATO definition of Special Operations task which include only Direct Action (DA), Special Reconnaissance (SR) and Military Assistance (MA). It is on the first two of these tasks, DA and SR that we will now focus our attention.

> During the conduct of DA units,
>
> > may employ raid, ambush, or direct assault tactics; place munitions and other devices; conduct stand off attacks by fire from maritime, ground or air platforms; provide terminal guidance for precision-guided munitions; and conduct independent sabotage. DA operations are normally limited in scope and duration, and usually incorporate a planned withdrawal from the immediate objective area. Special Operations Forces may conduct these operations unilaterally or in support of conventional operations; these forces are designed to achieve specific, well-defined, and often time-sensitive results of strategic, operational, or critical tactical significance.[48]

Although DA is listed as a primary mission for US Army Special Forces, very little DA is actually conducted by US Army Special Forces.[49] While the actual details of many operations remain classified, one senior Special Forces Commander summed up the nature of US Army Special Forces involvement in DA operations when he observed that so much time is spent on FID that Special Forces DA is a myth.[50] The reality is that the majority of DA missions are conducted by Special Mission Units, (SMU) who

[48] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, AJP-01 (A) *Allied Joint Doctrine* (Brussels: NATO, 1998), p 8-2.
[49] United States Special Operations Command, "SOF Reference Manual," Version 2.1, Academic Year 99/00, Army Command and General Staff College, [http://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/socom/sof-ref-2-1/index.html], May 03, Chapter 3, p 4.
[50] Conversation between the author and COMD, SFOR CJSOTF, Sarajevo Bosnia, Oct, 2000.

operate at the joint level under the direction of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and report to the National Command Authority (NCA).[51] The NCA,

> directed establishment and maintenance of selected units specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct a range of highly classified and usually compartmentalized Special Operations (SO) missions across the operational continuum. They are under the direct supervision of the highest command levels, often the NCA. These units are prepared and trained to execute a variety of covert and/or clandestine SO missions while maintaining absolute minimum individual and organizational visibility during day-to-day operations.[52]

Spurred on by the rise in international terrorism in the 1970's, SMUs were initially established as single service organizations that were organized, trained and equipped to combat terrorism or what we know today as asymmetric threat.[53] In the 1980's these units were drawn together into a joint organization (JSOC) after the failed attempt to rescue US hostages in Iran known as Operation Rice Bowl. This step was taken in recognition of the fact that the failure of Operation Rice Bowl was due in large part to the lack of a Joint Special Operations capability.[54] The Canadian equivalent of these SMU's is Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2).

JTF 2 is a standing Joint Task Force, reporting directly to the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff whose mandate while primarily focused on counter terrorism (CT), includes the possibility that the unit may be employed on other high value tasks.[55]

---

[51] While the US Government does not actively publicize operations conducted by SMUs, it is well known that these units have conducted numerous operations including the attempted rescue to American hostages in Iran, the rescue of American detainees in Panama, operations to capture clan leaders in Somalia and most recently operations to recover American prisoners of war in Iraq.
[52] United States, Joint Chiefs of Doctrine for Special Operations, US JP 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington: US DOD, 1992), Appendix A, p 4.
[53] Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), p 61-63.
[54] *Ibid*, p 69.
[55] Col W.E. Morton, *Canadian Forces Organization Order – Joint Task Force Two* (National Defence Headquarters: file 1901-3048 (DGFD), 15 November 1993. CT is included as a subset of DA due to the

Given that Canada already possesses a joint force, optimized for the conduct of CT, a subset of DA, it would be redundant and inefficient for the Army to commit manpower and resources to the establishment of a similar capability within an Army Special Operations unit. Furthermore, given the manpower and resource shortages the Army faces today, it is highly doubtful that the Army could man and equip such a capability without substantial reductions in other areas.[56] While the Army might choose to reduce its capabilities in some areas to free up resources for a DA capable Special Operations unit, the fact remains that it would be a needless duplication of effort. The situation with regards to the establishment of a Special Forces SR capability is much the same.

Special Operations Forces conduct a wide variety of information gathering activities of strategic or operational significance. These activities are known as SR.

> SR compliments national and theatre intelligence collection systems by obtaining specific, well-defined, and time sensitive information when other systems are constrained by weather, terrain masking, hostile counter measures, or conflicting priorities.[57]

SR activities can be conducted as stand-alone missions or as preliminary activities prior to the conduct of a DA or other activities. Targets that warrant prosecution by Special Operations Forces are normally very specific, high value, and time sensitive in nature. Due to these factors Special Operations Forces require the most accurate and up to date

---

fact that CT operations most often utilize raid, ambush or direct attack tactics that define DA in the broadest sense. Other DA subsets include Counter Proliferation of WMD (CP), Hostage Rescue (HR), and Anti Terrorism (AT).

[56] The Army is not expected to reach its authorized manning levels until 2006 at the earliest. Further more, in the next two to three years it is anticipated that the Army will see its highest rate of personnel deployed on operations since the early 90s, with upwards of 5500 Army personnel deployed on operations. These factors would make it difficult for the Army to man a new Special Forces capability within the foreseeable future. *Source* CLS Brief to Canadian Forces College Course 29, Kingston Ontario, April 2003.

[57] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, AJP-01 (A) *Allied Joint Doctrine* (Brussels: NATO, 1998), p 8-2.

target intelligence possible.[58] While many national and theatre systems can be utilized to provide this intelligence, there still exists the requirement to get human eyes on the target, in order to verify information provided by other systems and to provide real time information prior to a DA occurring. Given the unique tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) employed by Special Operations Forces and the requirement to compartmentalize operations to protect operational security, it is impractical for a unit to be assigned SR responsibilities for a DA that is to be executed by another unit. Therefore a Special Operations unit's ability to conduct SR goes hand in glove with their capability to conduct DA. JTF 2, like US SMUs possesses an integral capability to conduct SR. As the capability to conduct SR already exists within the Canadian Forces, the establishment of an SR capability within the Canadian Army would be a needless duplication of effort and a misuse of limited manpower and resources.

As the Canadian Army looks to increase its capability to function on the modern battlefield, it cannot afford to pursue capabilities that already exist, nor should it embrace capabilities that are inconsistent with the objectives of the Government of Canada. The ability to conduct the full spectrum of DA and SR operations currently exist within JTF 2 and therefore should not be duplicated by the Army. Moreover, attempts to establish a FID or UW capability analogous to the US Army's would be inconsistent with the government's current approach to achieving Canadian Foreign Policies objectives and for that reason should not be pursued.

[58] United States Special Operations Command, "SOF Reference Manual," Version 2.1, Academic Year 99/00, Army Command and General Staff College, [http://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/socom/sof-ref-2-1/index.html], May 03, Chapter 1, p 1. The criticality of intelligence to Special Operations is highlighted as both a characteristic of Special Operations and a factor for their success.

It is difficult enough in a continuing climate of fiscal restraint for the Army to finds ways to structure, train and equip itself for operations in the new security environment, without having to develop, and man redundant or superfluous capabilities. Given this fact, it would be imprudent for the Army to attempt to replicate capabilities within the Army that already exist in other parts of the Canadian Forces. The establishment of these types of capabilities within the Army would divert manpower, money and resources away from other key Army projects, at a time when there is not enough of any of these elements to meet current requirements.

Bibliography

Canada, Department of National Defence. *Advancing With Purpose: The Army Strategy.* Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002.

Canada, Department of National Defence. *Canadian Defence Beyond 2010 – The Way Ahead.* Ottawa: DND Canada, 1999.

Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. *Canada in the World.* Ottawa: DFAIT Canada, 1995.

Canada, Department of National Defense, Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts. *Future Army Capabilities.* Ottawa: DND Canada, January 2001.

Canada, Department of National Defence. *Ministerial Organization Order # 92059.* Ottawa: DND Canada, 1995.

Canada, Department of National Defence. Directorate Land Strategic Concepts Report # 99-2 *The Future Security Environment.* Kingston: DND Canada, 1999.

Collins, John M. "Special Operations Forces in Peacetime." *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No 21 (Spring, 1999),pp 56-61.

Dana Priest. "US Military Trains Foreign Troops." Washington Post on The Web. 14 Apr. 2003. 12 July. 1998 [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/overseas/overseas1b.htm]

Kennedy, BGen V., *Staff Planning Directive – Special Operations Capability Working Group.* National Defence Headquarters: file 3185-1 (DLSC 3), Nov 2001.

Le Carte, Lieutenant-Colonel Donald A. "Asymmetric Warfare and the use of Special Operations Forces in North American Law Enforcement." *Canadian Military Journal*, (winter, 2001-2002),pp 23-32.

Marquis, Susan L. *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces.* Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1997.

McClintock, Michael. *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counter terrorism, 1940 – 1990.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1992.

Morton, Colonel W.E., *Canadian Forces Organization Order – Joint Task Force Two.* National Defence Headquarters: file 1901-3048 (DGFD), 15 November 1993.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. AAP-6 (V) Mod 1 *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions.* Brussels: NATO, 2003.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Technical Report #8 *Land Operations in the Year 2020.* Brussels: RTO-TR-8 AC/323 (SAS) TP/5, 1999.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Military Agency for Standardization. AJP-01 (A) *Allied Joint Doctrine.* Brussels: NATO, 1998.

Paddock, Alfred H. "Psychological Operations, Special Operations, and US Strategy." *Special Operations in US Strategy.* Edited by Frank R. Barnett, Hugh B. Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz. Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1984.

Pezzelle, Roger M. "Military Capabilities and Special Operations in the 1980's." *Special Operations in US Strategy.* Edited by Frank R. Barnett, Hugh B. Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz. Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1984.

Tovar, Hugh B. "Intelligence Assets and Special Operations." *Special Operations in US Strategy.* Edited by Frank R. Barnett, Hugh B. Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz. Washington DC: National Defence University Press, 1984.

United States, Joint Chiefs of Doctrine for Special Operations. US JP 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations.* Washington: US DOD, 1992.

United States, United States Special Operations Command. "SOF Reference Manual Version 2.1," Academic Year 99/00, Army Command and General Staff College. May 2003. [http://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/socom/sof-ref-2-1/index.html]

United States, Department State. *US Strategic Plan for International Affairs.* Washington D.C.:US Department of State Office of Management and Policy Planning, 2000.

White, Terry. *Swords of Lightning: Special Forces and the Changing Face of Warfare.* London: Brasseys, 1992.