The growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare with specific reference to the United States of America.

by

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To my study leader for his guidance and to my family for their support and for giving me the opportunity to further my studies.

DEDICATION.

This study is dedicated to my wife, Amanda for all her support and love during the past five years,

And

to the men and woman of the US Special Operations Forces who "allow us to sleep safely at night as they stand ready to visit violence on those who would do us harm." Your sacrifice for our freedom is never forgotten nor taken for granted.

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List of abbreviations.

AFO:	Advanced Force Operations
AFSOC:	Air Force Special Operations Command
ANG:	Army National Guard
APC:	Armoured Personnel Carrier
BUD/S:	Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL
CA:	Civil Affairs
CENTCOM:	US Central Command
CIA:	Central Intelligence Agency
CP:	Counter-proliferation
CQB:	Close Quarters Battle
CSAR:	Combat Search and Rescue
CT:	Counter-terrorism
DA:	Direct Action
DevGru:	Naval Special Warfare Development Group
DOD:	US Department of Defence
FATA:	Pakistani Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FAV:	Fast Attack Vehicle
FID:	Foreign Internal Defence
FOG:	Field Observation Group
4GW:	Fourth Generation Warfare
FSUO:	Full Spectrum Unconventional Operations
HIC:	High-Intensity Conflict
HUMINT:	Human Intelligence
HVT:	High Value Target
ICC:	International Criminal Court
IFOR:	NATO Implementation Forces
INSCOM:	Intelligence and Security Command
ISA:	Intelligence Support Activity
IW:	Information Warfare
JCS:	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JSOC:	Joint Special Operations Command
JSOTF-N:	Joint Special Operations Task Force-North
JTAC:	Joint Terminal Air Controller
LIC:	Low Intensity Conflict
MARSOC:	Marine Corps Special Operations Command
MIC:	Mid-Intensity Conflict
MOB-Six:	Mobility Platoon-Six
MTW:	Major Theatre War
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NSA:	National Security Agency
NSWC:	Naval Special Warfare Command
ODA:	Operational Detachment Alpha
OSS:	Office of Strategic Services
NCDU:	Naval Combat Demolition Unit
PJ:	Air Force Para-Jumper
PsyOps:	Psychological Operations
QRF:	Quick Reaction Force
RPG:	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SAD:	CIA Special Activities Division
SAS:	UK Special Air Service
SBS:	UK Special Boat Service
SBU:	Navy Special Boat Unit/Team
SDV:	Navy SEAL Delivery Vehicle
SEAL:	Navy Sea, Air, Land
SIGINT:	Signals Intelligence
SMU:	Special Mission Unit
SOAR:	Special Operations Aviation Regiment
SR:	Special Reconnaissance
STS:	Special Tactics Squadrons
TEL:	Transport-Erector-Launcher
UDT:	Underwater Demolition Team
UN:	United Nations
UNOSOM:	United Nations Operations in Somalia
USAF:	United States Air Force
USASOC:	United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM:	United States Special Operations Command
UK:	United Kingdom
US:	United States
UW:	Unconventional Warfare
WMD:	Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.

1. Identification of the research theme.

The role of Special Forces in the conduct of warfare is not a new concept but one that actually dates back centuries, specifically in the case of the United States of America (US). US Special Forces have a long and prestigious operational history within the US military and can be traced back to both the American War of Revolution (1775-1783) and the Civil War (1861-1865) where the use of militiamen and "Rangers" became both prominent and highly successful tools at the disposal of generals on both sides (Southworth & Tanner, 2002: 3-5). Although the concept "Special Forces" is not a new concept with regard to the US military, the concept "Special Mission Units" or SMUs within Special Forces is. SMUs in general do not have the long lineage that "regular" (Tier II and III) Special Forces can claim because they were "activated" fairly recently (1960's and 1970's) compared to the other Special Forces units (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 59-60; Maloney, 2007: 43; Naylor, 2005: 109-110).

The proliferation of warfare in the 19th Century saw the growth and reduction of Special Forces with each and every conflict. As each conflict erupted Special Forces units would become "necessary" once again and hence grow, however as soon as the conflict drew to a close these same Special Forces units would no longer be necessary (Adams, 2001: 154-157). Nowhere was this more ubiquitous than during World War II (1939-1945) and the Vietnam War (1963-1975).

The primary reason for the repeated escalation and de-escalation of these forces can be attributed to the "subordination of Special Forces to conventional forces and command" and by what has become known as "Delta envy" whereby conventional commanders are often said to be envious of the freedom and resources dedicated to Special Forces units (Jones & Rehorn, 2003: 3). The subordination of Special Forces to conventional forces deals with the problematic issues of where exactly do Special Forces fit into modern military forces, who exactly should command and control them, what purpose do they serve and should they even exist? (Finlan, 2003: 99; Gray, 1999: 4; Marquis, 1997: 264; Simons & Tucker, 2003: 87). Given the tremendous results that US Special Forces achieved in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan these questions might seem inconsequential, although they persist.

The persistence of these questions can be attributed to the history of the US military with regard to conventional forces, especially with regard to Cold War doctrine (Adams, 2001: 1; Gray, 1999: 3; Jogerst, 2002: 1). Force composition within the US military with its emphasis on conventional forces can be understood given the conventional "victories" of two World Wars, Vietnam and the 1991 Gulf War. These "victories" however all contributed to the biases against Special Forces as military leaders, from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to 2nd lieutenants, believed that the only credible threat to US military supremacy came from conventional, land massed forces and that issues such as unconventional warfare were minor problems which could easily be ignored (Adams, 2001: 18; Bredenkamp, 2003: 3).

What is important to point out is that a large portion of these biases are actually self-inflicted by the US Special Forces community because of the inherent secrecy these units operate under as well as their rigid belief in non-disclosure of methods, techniques and tactics. Compounded to these beliefs and traditions is the fact that a large percentage of the officers commanding US Special Forces and SMUs have traditionally been drawn from the conventional forces and have very little Special Forces training and experience. The result of such biases and beliefs directly lead to the sidelining of Special Forces and specifically SMUs within the US military when conflicts involving US military forces erupted (the Gulf War being a prime example of this whereby SMUs where given the "embarrassing" task of "Scud hunting" while conventional forces "carried out the war") (Jogerst, 2002: 1; Stevenson, 2006: 73).

With the cessation of hostilities in the Gulf in 1991 and with the emergence of unconventional conflicts that had little use for heavily armed conventional units (Somalia and Bosnia being two cases in point) the US military leadership began to employ both the Special Forces and the SMUs in a more productive and accurate manner leading to a much higher mission success rate and hence belief in these units (Gray, 1999: 3; Jogerst, 2002: 1). Special Forces and SMU operations in the 1990's proved to be a fertile training ground for these units with many operators from both groups stating that experiences gained during these years directly contributed to their successes in Afghanistan in 2001.

This "shift" in the mindset of the US military leadership could not have come at a better time for the US military given the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent need for the US military to respond to crises in a more unconventional manner, one that conventional forces are

still struggling with (Findlay, Green & Braganca, 2003: 11; Simons & Tucker, 2003: 87). The role of both the Special Forces and SMUs in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan was unparalleled in US military history, especially in terms of the "trust" that both the US political and military leadership placed in the capabilities of these forces to conduct the conflict in a nearly autonomous manner (Finlan, 2003: 96; Jones & Rehorn, 2003: 3; Ramirez, 2004: 1). What this "freedom" highlights is that both the US military and the US political leadership are starting to place a much larger emphasis on the role of Special Forces in modern warfare both as highly capable and efficient force multipliers and as "answers" to the current and foreseeable future conflicts that are plaguing the international arena (Robinson, 2004: 364).

The main aim of this study is to show how the growing role of the US Special Forces and specifically the SMUs in modern warfare started to shift by the end of the 1991 Gulf War through the conflicts in Somalia (1992-1993) and the Balkans (1995-2001) and directly contributed to the successes witnessed in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, a model which could eventually end up representing the future of modern warfare. In addressing this objective, the study will allude to the fact that should current trends continue, US Special Forces have the possibility of moving from a historically "supporting command" to a "supported command" in terms of US military command hierarchy. The shift could have tremendous effect on how the US conducts warfare in the future as well as how future enemies respond to US forces.

2. Literature review.

Confusion between the terms Special Forces and Special Operations Forces has led to difficulty regarding definition and demarcation of both their roles and missions. This lack of clarity is apparent in both official documents such as the US Army's Special Operations Forces Field Manual (2006) and Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare Field Manual (2008) as well as various secondary sources such as Adams (2001) and Robinson (2004). Special Operations Forces are defined by the US Army as not only the Special Forces carrying out missions of a Special Forces nature but also all auxiliary units involved too (aviation, intelligence, logistics and so on) (Rothstein 2006: 18). Adams (2001: xxv) and Robinson (2004: xii-xiii) however disagree with such a definition and argue that the term Special Forces should only encompass those forces that "conduct special operations in the full range of the Special Operations Force principle mission" and not the auxiliary units. The lack of clarity regarding the term Special Forces is a cause for confusion and needs to be addressed further.

A further issue arises when a distinction between the hierarchical three "Tiers" of US Special Forces is required and often leads to the overlapping of both the roles and missions of the respective forces involved. This becomes extremely problematic, as "military forces need clearly defined roles and missions in order to determine how they should be trained and equipped" in order to prevent misuse and this does not often occur (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 144). With regard to roles and missions with the exception of Tier One Special Forces or SMUs who are defined as "narrowly focused organisations equipped and trained for missions" deemed "politically sensitive and highly classified", all US Special Forces units conduct nine basic missions as well as various other "collateral" missions (Adams, 2001: 6, 14-15; Jones & Rehorn, 2003: 3; Marquis, 1997: 2-3; Thomas, 2005: 4; USDA, 2001: 1-15-19; USDA, 2006: 2-1-6; USDA, 2008: 3-18).

The questioning of the role of Special Forces in modern warfare is the result of the changing nature of modern warfare as well as the force requirements needed to address these changes (Bredenkamp, 2003: 3). Richards (2006), Robinson (2004), Thomas (2005) and van Creveld (2004) reinforce this view by stating that "wide-open, rural battlefields" are a thing of the past and that modern conflicts are rather a mixture of "urban landscapes that deal with both the local populations and military forces." This has resulted in conventional forces no longer being seen as the "answer" to modern conflict and that more specialised units are needed to address these issues (Finlan, 2003: 92; Groover, 2004: 1; Robinson, 2004: 361).

Given the economic and political strain that modern conventional conflicts bring with them as well as the fact that weaker nations and forces are now also actively employing unconventional warfare (UW) methods with both greater incidence and effect, should have led to greater deployments of Special Forces. However this has not occurred. Finlan (2003: 103), Robinson (2004: xvii) and Stevenson (2006: 78) believe the use of small, mobile Special Forces units might be the answer to this shift. Armies centred on conventional units, such as the US are often not willing to accept this.

Gray (1999: 3) and Simons & Tucker (2003: 87) believe that the reluctance to place these forces at the forefront of UW highlights the "primacy" still given to conventional forces over Special Forces, an issue which has still not adequately been addressed by the US military. Carty (2004)

reinforces this belief by stating that the US military still see conventional forces as both "more important" and "more valuable."

The 1991 Gulf War was a prime example of this as Special Forces units once again played a small and almost insignificant role in the conflict. The conflicts in Somalia (1992-1993) and in the Balkan regions (1995-2001) however brought with them new forms of conflict that was anathema to the traditional manner in which the US conducted warfare, and hence required "new" responses (Adams 2001: 1; Jogerst 2002: 1). Don (2003), Simons & Tucker (2003), Thomas (2005) and Ziegler (2003) all agree that these new forms of warfare reaffirm the importance of and need for Special Forces especially since policy makers have started to prefer the "scalpel" offered by Special Forces to that of the conventional "sword."

US leaders are starting to see that the "ongoing and specialised activities" of Special Forces "provide a nation with an array of deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable and sustainable" capabilities that is in many ways more "useful" and applicable than those offered by conventional forces (Basehart 2003: 3; Jogerst 2002: 5-6; USDA 2006: 1-1). Ramirez (2004), Richards (2006) and Roth (2005) believe that the shifting of these beliefs will ensure that Special Forces move from a traditionally "supporting command" to that of a "supported command." There is little doubt that the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan placed the focus on Special Forces, especially the SMUs primarily because the military effort was distinguished by their central role in the conduct of the invasion, with the almost complete absence of conventional forces (Doty 2003: 11; Finlan 2003: 96; Jones & Rehorn 2003: 3; Peltier 2005: 1 - 2; Stevenson 2006: 73).

From the above sources it becomes apparent that certain issues regarding the roles and missions of Special Forces need further clarification, including their progressive importance since the end of the Cold War. The extent to which priority to the role of Special Forces in the US specifically, has been accorded, also requires further research. As such the rationale for this study is to assess the growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare using the 1991 Gulf War as a point of departure. The study will seek to show that warfare by nature is moving away from traditional conventional conflict to that of a more unconventional nature. Bearing this in mind the study will also show that Special Forces both by nature and composition are the force that should be the primary response to military conflicts of the future.

3. Identification and demarcation of the research problem.

The central research problem of this study concerns the issue of the growing role of Special Forces units in modern warfare with specific reference to the US Special Forces and SMUs. The main question that the study seeks to address is what are the implications of the growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare? The study also however seeks to ascertain why exactly this growth is occurring and whether or not this will have a bearing on the future?

In order to address these questions the study is based on the following assumptions:

- The role of Special Forces in modern warfare seems to be increasing due to unconventional warfare seeming to have usurped conventional warfare as the new and popular form of warfare
- Special Forces are the solution to the new forms of modern warfare
- Shifting Special Forces from a supporting component to that of a supported component has the possibility of changing future US military strategy tremendously

The study's time line will commence with the "conventional example" of the 1991 Gulf War and then shift to unconventional examples, namely Somalia (1992-1993), the Balkans (1995-2001) and lastly the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. The reason for specifically choosing Somalia and the Balkans as case studies is to highlight the growing role of Special Forces and SMUs in modern warfare compared to previous conflicts as well as the doctrinal shift that modern warfare witnessed in terms of conflicts that started to emerge. These two conflicts will then be used to show how these shifts both in terms of roles and doctrines led to the successes witnessed in Afghanistan in 2001 and what this may hold for the future of modern warfare. The current status and role of Special Forces in the US specifically will however be assessed up to 2010, but not including the Second Gulf War (2003) as a specific case study.

4. Methodology.

The study will be descriptive, analytical and comparative. It will be based on a review and interpretation of relevant literature based on primary and secondary sources regarding conventional and unconventional warfare and forces, US Special Forces and SMUs, operations in Somalia (1992-1993), the Balkans (1995-2001) as well as the overall conduct of operations in

Afghanistan in 2001. The use of current and historical examples is pertinent to the study because it facilitates a certain level of prediction with regard to the future of modern warfare.

In order to define and differentiate between conventional and unconventional warfare both as "models" of warfare and as fighting forces, works by Marquis (1997), Bredenkamp (2003), Ziegler (2003), Basilici & Simmons (2004); van Creveld (2004), Haas (2005), Record (2005), Rothstein (2006), Tucker & Lamb (2007) and Tuck (2008) will be used as these offer a comprehensive overview not only of the concepts and models of each but also the difficulty of deploying forces able to respond appropriately.

In order to describe the conceptual aspects of Special Forces the study will make use of US Army Field Manuals relating to Special Forces (2001, 2006 and 2008) as well as other primary and secondary sources by both current and recently retired members of all branches of the US military.

In terms of sources relating to Somalia and the Balkans, works by Marquis (1997), Adams (2001), Dunnigan (2004), Ramirez (2004), Smith (2006) and Tucker & Lamb (2007) will be used amongst others as these offer a comprehensive overview of operations conducted by Special Forces with regard to Somalia and the Balkans.

With regard to Afghanistan sources that will be used include Biddle (2002), Simons & Tucker (2003), Rothstein (2006), Maloney (2007) and Tucker & Lamb (2007) as these deal with the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the challenges inherent in the manner of warfare being fought there. Various other primary and secondary sources will be used to supplement these sources.

5. Structure of the research.

Chapter 1: Introduction.

The first chapter serves to introduce the research topic, outline the objectives of the research, demarcate the study and formulate the assumptions that the research is based on.

Chapter 2: Conventional and unconventional warfare and forces: a conceptual framework.

The second chapter deals with conventional and unconventional warfare both as "models" of warfare and as fighting forces. The chapter begins by offering a definition of both conventional and unconventional warfare and lists both their similarities and their differences. The chapter then shifts from a warfare focus to a military branch focus that deals first with the definitions and composition of conventional and unconventional forces and then analyses, whether or not a differentiation is actually needed. A brief historical analysis of the US approach to warfare from its inception during the American Revolution to the end of the Cold War is also dealt with in order to provide context to the chapters that follow.

Chapter 3: The missions and roles of Special Forces.

The third chapter deals with the definition, role, missions and composition of Special Forces with the emphasis on the US' Tier One Special Forces or SMUs. Issues such as what exactly is meant by the term "Special Forces" with differentiation between what are "Special Forces" and what are "Special Operations Forces" are analysed.

The section on missions of Special Forces discusses the traditional missions of US Special Forces units namely Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Unconventional Warfare, Combating Terrorism, Counter-Proliferation, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and lastly Information Warfare. The "collateral" missions of Special Forces will also be briefly touched upon. Composition will seek to highlight current troop levels of each force so as to emphasise the difficulties that Special Forces encounter when being deployed too liberally.

Chapter 4: The role of the United States Special Forces in modern warfare pre – September 11, 2001.

The fourth chapter analyses the role of US Special Forces and SMUs in modern warfare prior to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. The primary reason for a separate analysis of the role of Special Forces and SMUs prior and subsequent to this date relates to changes in US military doctrine with reference to Special Forces in the mid – 1990's with the change becoming

most “evident” in the post – 9/11 period. The chapter shows that the US military after the 1991 Gulf War started to shift their warfighting doctrine to deal with conflicts in a more unconventional way as opposed to a conventional way, primarily through the deployment of Special Forces and SMUs to conflict zones as opposed to conventional military forces. Specific reference is made to the role of the US SMUs in Somalia (1992 – 1993) and the Balkans (1995 - 2001).

Chapter 5: The role of United States Special Forces in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

Chapter five analyses the role of the US Special Forces and specifically the SMUs in the invasion of Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US. The chapter indicates how a small number of Special Forces units (numbering a few hundred) were able, in collaboration with members of the Northern Alliance, to topple the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It will also be shown that although the first phases of the war were fought in a conventional manner, however by unconventional Special Forces, the war was primarily a Special Forces war and not one conducted by primarily conventional forces. The chapter also discusses how the shift in the 1990’s from large-scale conventional interventions to the small-scale use of Special Forces facilitated the rapid toppling of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan yet at the same time resulted in certain problems and failures.

Chapter 6: Evaluation.

Chapter six consists of a summary of the research and evaluates the assumptions formulated in the introductory chapter. A brief comparison is also made between the four case studies to illustrate the growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare. The chapter also offers a number of conclusions regarding future deployments of Special Forces as well as factors that may influence these deployments.

CHAPTER 2: CONVENTIONAL AND UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND FORCES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

1. Introduction.

Conventional and unconventional warfare are two approaches to warfare that date back centuries, with each approach having its own distinct and unique influence on modern warfare as currently seen today. Although conventional warfare has a longer "lineage" than unconventional warfare, it cannot be denied that both approaches are equally important to analyse when engaging on debate over how to prosecute a military campaign in a foreign country. This chapter will begin by exploring the theoretical aspects of conventional and unconventional warfare and the inherent difficulties in defining and differentiating the two concepts as theories of modern warfare. Once definitions of the two terms have been given, an analysis of the forces required to conduct the various forms of conventional and unconventional warfare will be looked at. The chapter will show that the belief that a nation's military should be able to conduct *all* forms of warfare irrespective of whether it be conventional or unconventional by nature is not always realistic. The chapter will indicate that conventional and unconventional warfare require forces of different compositions and hence place a different emphasis on what goals they seek to achieve, their force structure and their general approach to modern warfare.

A comparison between conventional and unconventional warfare will then be undertaken, followed by an analysis of the US approach to warfare since the time of the American Revolution. This is necessary to place the US approach as a broad background for the next chapter, which deals with contemporary warfare.

2. Conventional warfare and forces.

The following section will analyse conventional warfare both as a method of traditional and modern warfare, as well as the forces that are responsible for the prosecution of conventional war. Emphasis will once again be placed on the military forces of the US as this forms the essence of the case study chapters.

2.1. Conventional warfare as a method of warfare.

Theoretically conventional warfare can be defined as "war fought by the *formally* constituted armed forces of a *state* with the *immediate* purpose of bringing about the *direct physical destruction or incapacitation* of the *formally* constituted armed forces of another *state*" (Adams, 2001: 20; USDA, 2008: 1-4, emphasis added). Conventional warfare thus places emphasis on armed violence on a large scale that is executed by specialised agents of a state against the specialised agents of another state (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 105; USDA, 2008: 3-17). This emphasis is no doubt the result of the massive armies that were mobilised during the two world wars, Korea, Vietnam and the first and second Gulf Wars. Questions have however arisen as to whether modern conventional warfare should still be framed around these emphases? In order to address this question a brief history of conventional warfare is required.

In the centuries prior to the massive conflicts witnessed during the 20th century, nations were unable to muster forces numbering hundreds of thousands of men and women in order to prosecute an armed campaign against another state for a prolonged period of time (Nagao, 2001: 169). During these years, wars were often seen as a "game" played among rival kings or empires in order to prove the strength of one's nation over another (Nagao, 2001: 169). As a result warfare was often little more than a violent game of chess played out in reality where forces numbering in the hundreds of thousands were simply seen as a waste by both the opposing and the defending monarch or empire (Nagao, 2001: 169; Record, 2005: 37). Traditional wars during this time also seemed to inherently respect the divide between the public and the private sphere of government and this had an effect on the conduct of warfare as a whole (Nagao, 2001: 170).

The effect that this had on warfare during this time was that civilians were exempt from targeting during a campaign against another nation, with the result being that civilians were also free to "interact" with the rivals or enemies of the nations to which they belonged (Nagao, 2001: 170; USDA, 2008: 1-5, 3-17). This often translated into bizarre exchanges of goods and tradable items between the civilians of two nations at "war" with each other simply based on the premise that war was a private endeavour and thus the public were exempt from warfare and free to conduct business as they saw fit (Nagao, 2001: 170). Although this distinction remained a common practice for centuries, it was swiftly curtailed by the events of the French Revolution in the late 1700's (Nagao, 2001: 170). During the Reign of Terror from 1793 onwards, the classic

distinction between public and private warfare became blurred and resulted in violence not only encompassing the domestic citizenry of France, but also an interesting "willingness" of the French public to become involved in all matters relating to warfare, something completely contrary to traditional conventional warfare (Nagao, 2001: 170; Simons & Tucker, 2003: 78). This form of warfare "of the people, by the people and for the people" would remain relevant right through to modern warfare fought today in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Modern warfare in general can be broken down into three "levels of intensity," namely low intensity, mid-intensity and high intensity conflict (Paschall, 1990: 7-8). Low intensity conflict (LIC) can be defined as "armed conflict for political purposes short of conflict between regulars" and is most often associated with revolutions, insurgencies and even unconventional warfare methods (Paschall, 1990: 7). Mid-intensity conflict or MIC is often characterised by "armed conflict between regularly (conventionally) organised military forces" (Paschall, 1990: 8). MIC forces often represent most nations' armed forces with MIC conflict usually appearing in the form of "two or more conventional forces" opposing each other on the battlefield (Adams, 2001: xviii; Paschall, 1990: 8). LIC however differs from MIC in that both forces do not have to be the forces of nations, with one of the forces being that of a non-state actor (Adams, 2001: xviii; Paschall, 1990: 8). MIC is the most ubiquitous form of warfare of the three and is usually how most conventional warfare presents itself. The US military also classify MIC as major theatre warfare or MTW and define MTW as "war fought along traditional, primarily conventional lines where success will depend on the use of high-technology weaponry" (Herd, 2002: 1, 10; USDA, 2008: 3-12).

The last of three "intensities" is that of high intensity warfare or HIC. HIC is defined as "armed conflict involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD)" and involves both LIC and MIC, however the emphasis is firmly on the use of WMD (Paschall, 1990: 8). According to Paschall (1990: 8) HIC has only occurred twice and this was during World War Two and related to the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The Cold War was premised on the theory of HIC or mutually assured destruction should conflict in Western Europe escalate to a level that tactical nuclear deployment would be deemed the only measure available to ensure survival (Paschall, 1990: 68-69). It becomes apparent when looking at the above theory that conventional warfare doctrine is *heavily* steeped in Cold War doctrines such as major inter-state

war (Hoffman, 2005: 914; Tuck, 2008: 102). However, this form of warfare is facing numerous challenges to its existence

Conventional warfare as a model of warfare is based on the assumption that should a competent political authority (namely a ruling government) declare war on another state, it becomes the 'business' of the military branch of the said nation to execute a military strategy that would repeatedly 'attack' an enemy until they have lost their ability to resist these attacks (Campbell, O'Hanlon & Shapiro, 2009: 16; Rothstein, 2006: 25). Gray reinforces this emphasis by stating that "the inherent strength of land warfare is that it carries the promise of achieving decision" and hence decisive victory (Tuck, 2008: 66). As such the conventional 'image' of warfare is abstracted from experience gained of violence between nations usually of equal size and force structure (Janos, 1963: 637; USDA, 2008: 3-17). As a result of the emphasis on ground warfare between two nations of almost equal strength, the control of territory is central to all conventional operations (Tuck, 2008: 67). In military jargon this is simply know as the centre of gravity. Prime examples of this type of warfare and its emphasis were ubiquitously seen during the two world wars that were fought in the previous century (Chin, 2003: 59; Nagao, 2001: 168).

Conventional warfare and hence conventional theory has been challenged by evidence that the outbreak or "use" of conventional warfare, in the traditional sense or definition, has dramatically decreased since 1945, with statisticians estimating that in the roughly sixty years since the end of World War II (1945-2004) only 19 conventional wars have actually 'broken' out or been fought (Tuck, 2008: 116; van Creveld, 2004: 1-2). There are various explanations or reasons for this decrease and these range from the belief that nuclear proliferation or deterrence 'worked' to evidence that has shown that warfare fought between 1989-2001 has been conducted primarily by massive coalitions (Desert Storm and Kosovo being two cases in point) against weak enemies and this has not 'benefitted' conventional doctrine (Gray, 2004: 7; van Creveld, 2004: 3, 12).

Conventional warfare itself is proving to be a problematic concept given the decline of conventional conflict, the increase in unconventional conflict and the fact that no two wars are ever conducted in a similar manner and this makes conventional theory difficult to "iron out" (Flournoy & Schultz, 2007: 16; Tuck, 2008: 75). Although conventional warfare is facing various challenges that may seem insurmountable, MTW is still a threat and one that needs to be

remembered given the current global climate with regards to both state and non-state actors (Herd, 2002: 2;).

2.2. Conventional armed forces: composition and structure.

Conventional forces are centred and rely on large numbers (usually measured in thousands or tens of thousands) of infantry, armour and usually artillery when deploying to the field (Janos, 1963: 645; Tuck, 2008: 69). The focus of a conventional force is also direct and blunt; they usually seek to directly eliminate enemy forces with extreme prejudice in order to facilitate either the capitulation of the enemy or their total destruction (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 163; USDA, 2008: 1-5). As such the focus of conventional operations is *not* to win over the enemy, and the apprehension of enemy forces is usually seen as a secondary objective to the main objective of their targeting and destruction (Adams, 2001: 19; Rothstein, 2006: 25).

Prior to the dramatic increases in conventional force strength seen during the 20th century, the composition and structure of conventional armies was vastly different to those of today. Indeed, professional armies only started to emerge in the 17th century and these armies were usually not composed of the large divisions or corps seen today simply because they were too expensive (Nagao, 2001: 170; van Creveld, 2004: 5). This changed dramatically with the outbreak of World War I which saw armies numbering in the *millions* engaging each other over hundreds of kilometres of ground thereby reducing the traditional forms of warfare to mere “conflicts” (Hoffman, 2005: 915; Price, 2008: 1). By the end of World War II the two superpowers decided to maintain massive standing armies bracing themselves for the eventuality that war would once again break out in Europe (Hoffman, 2005: 915; Price, 2008: 1). The decision to retain such large armies would transform both US and Soviet/Russian conventional military culture beyond even the Cold War (Hoffman, 2005: 915; Price, 2008: 1). This culture of massive conventional force coupled with technological innovations and developments has allowed countries such as the US to project *massive* firepower or force onto the battlefield as never seen before (Erckenbrack, 2002: 5; van Creveld, 2004: 7).

Most modern land forces employ three types of combat forces, namely heavy forces, light forces and Special Forces (USDA, 1998: 2-3). Most nations’ militaries are proficient enough in the first two forces (heavy and light), however very few nations are proficient in the deployment of Special Forces, once again the US proves to be the exception to the rule here (USDA, 1998: 2-3).

One aspect that is proving interesting with regard to conventional land forces, is that given the difficulty of transporting these massive conventional forces over often inhospitable terrain, conventional forces are increasingly starting to rely on air power (Tuck, 2008: 68, 109; van Creveld, 2004: 14).

Conventional forces are also struggling to address the mounting costs that are coupled with the large-scale deployment of these forces to the battlefield and this places increasing strain on both conventional force commanders as well as states who seek to retain large numbers of conventional forces (Record, 2005: 34; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 160). One of the main benefits of maintaining large conventional forces is their ability to project power on a massive scale anytime, anywhere. Power projection is an extremely important ability for conventional forces and can be defined as "the ability to apply all the necessary elements of national power at the place and time necessary to achieve national security objectives" (Ziegler, 2003: 1). Power projection relies on the premise that a force must be able to project "massive force" anywhere in the battlefield arena and yet still maintain the capability to be flexible (Tuck, 2008: 70; Ziegler, 2003: 2). Very few nations, barring the US are capable of successfully prosecuting such a strategy.

Nations, such as the US, that are capable of making use of such immense power projection are also able to transform their forces into a "deterrent force" (Holmes, 2009: 6; Krepinevich, 2007: 5). Most nations avoid challenging these forces and this has its own inherent strategic value but can also be counter-productive, as adversaries who do seek to challenge these states often begin to develop methods to counter the conventional primacy of their forces (Holmes, 2009: 6; Krepinevich, 2007: 5). Threats of the circumvention of conventional forces has forced conventional commanders to begin approaching conflicts in a more *unconventional* manner that focuses less on attrition, destruction and the control of territory and more on the operational environment of the battlefield (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 176; USDA, 2008: 3-12). This is where the realm of conventional warfare begins to fade away and the realm of unconventional warfare begins to appear.

3. Unconventional warfare and forces.

The following section will analyse unconventional warfare (UW) both as an approach to warfare that was often developed to counter the conventional primacy of states as well as the forces that

are responsible for the prosecution of an unconventional warfare campaign. Emphasis will once again be placed on the unconventional forces of the US military.

3.1. Unconventional warfare as a method of warfare.

The relative decline in conventional warfare as a method of warfare has meant that the most likely threat to arise today comes not from the conventional armies of enemy states, but rather from groups that have no state allegiance and who seek to wage warfare from the "shadows" (Robinson, 2004: xvi; Rothstein, 2006: 159). These actors usually pursue a single course of action when seeking to engage the conventional forces of another, usually more powerful nation, namely unconventional warfare and this can make these forces near impossible to "detect" and deter (Robinson, 2004: xvii). The large frontal assaults against well entrenched enemies that often led to thousands of deaths that characterised World War I had a massive influence on the development of UW as a method of warfare and facilitated the steady decline of frontal set-piece battles in favour of skirmishes conducted by irregulars often hiding among the civilian population (Robinson, 2004: 110; USDA, 2008: 1-1).

As such UW is often described as a method of warfare that occurs in between the "gray area of violence deemed serious enough for intervention but not at the level of conventional warfare" and this has resulted in UW remaining one of the most "misunderstood forms of warfare" (Bunker, 1999: 137; Rothstein, 2006: 24). UW is a unique concept and is often confused with irregular warfare, asymmetric warfare, unrestricted warfare and even fourth generation warfare (4GW) and although UW *does* make use of all of these characteristics at one stage or another they are *not* synonymous with UW (USDA, 2008: 1-3, J-3). UW is currently defined as "a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organised, trained, equipped, supported and directed in varying degrees by an external source. Unconventional warfare encompasses guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive, low visibility, covert or clandestine operations as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities and evasion and escape" (Kershner, 2001: 2; USDA, 2008: J-1).

From the above definition it immediately becomes apparent how divergent views on UW are when compared to the definition of conventional warfare. UW is based on principles such as protraction, manoeuvre and camouflage and can be conducted in what the US term permissive

and non-permissive environments (Record, 2005: 35; USDA, 2008: 1-1). Permissive and non-permissive environments are differentiated by means of the requirement for host nation authorisation in order to conduct operations within a foreign country (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 44). Permissive operations generally have host nation authorisation and can be conducted by both conventional and unconventional forces whereas non-permissive operations are operations that are not sanctioned by a host nation and are either covert or clandestine (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 44).

Conventional forces are forbidden under US military law to conduct covert or clandestine operations. However US Law Titles 10 and 50 provide the legal framework for UW (Special Forces) units of the US to conduct covert and clandestine operations in foreign countries (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 44; Robinson, 2004: xviii). The US also make use of the term Full Spectrum Unconventional Operations (FSUO) and define these operations as "Special Forces operations conducted primarily through, with and by indigenous or surrogate forces to achieve US objectives in peace, contingencies and war. FSUO is composed of unconventional warfare, foreign internal defence and unilateral action" (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 43; USDA, 2008: 1-3).

Most UW theory can be traced back to the writings of Sun Tzu in the fourth BC however the *analysis* of UW was first recorded during the 19th century Napoleonic wars (Bunker, 1999: 137; Janos, 1963: 638). Modern UW and infiltration techniques originated in World War One when German soldiers sought to make use of UW methods to counter trench warfare (Tuck, 2008: 86; USDA, 2008: 1-2). However a concrete definition of the term would only first arise in 1950 and even then it was simply known as *partisan warfare* and seen as secondary in importance to conventional warfare (Metzgar, 2001: 18; Tuck, 2008: 86). Indeed the first definition of UW as a concept and not as something akin to partisan warfare, which only arose in 1959, attempted to deal with the "entire phenomenon" that is UW and this did prove to be marginally successful (Metzgar, 2001: 19; Robinson, 2004: 363). The 1959 definition and all subsequent definitions thereafter place emphasis on the fact that the larger lesson that UW articulates is that UW is *not* just a military endeavour but that political and psychological aspects are often more pronounced and profound than their military counterparts (Hoffman, 2005: 928, 639; Rothstein, 2006: 155). This is often borne witness in campaigns when military forces, having destroyed the army in combat and possibly even removed the regime they targeted, realise victory remains elusive

because of their failure to secure the political and psychological objectives of the campaign (Adams, 2001: 13; Robinson, 2004: 358).

UW is primarily a tool of dissidents of various causes and motives and as such the two main elements of UW are the roots of the cause and the people that are carrying it out (Lindsay, 1962: 264; Robinson, 2004: xiv). The relationship between a state and its people as well as the state and the security forces, whether they be internal or external forces, usually defines the limits of UW and very often whether or not it will be successful (Rothstein, 2006: 124; USDA, 2008: 1-5). This needs to be borne in mind because UW does not usually focus on the attainment or retention of land as conventional doctrine does, but rather on successfully winning over the domestic population of a country (USDA, 2008: 1-4). As such UW commanders must seek to address both the strategic and the tactical objectives of UW in order to be successful (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 41; USDA, 2008: 1-3). The strategic objectives of UW are usually to either depose an enemy regime or to strength a friendly one, whereas the tactical objectives are simply to create a secure local environment for the target population to feel safe in (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 41; USDA, 2008: 1-3). If both the strategic and the tactical objectives are not met then defeat usually follows and this is what places a strain on conventional forces.

The accomplishment of these objectives requires a military force to conduct operations that are anathema for conventional forces (Hoffman, 2005: 923; Robinson, 2004: 110-111). To attain the above requires soldiers to dismount their armoured and mechanised units, to conduct foot patrols, to interact with the population (who may be the enemy), to scarcely use artillery or air support when under attack and to adapt their tactics to be more “population friendly” and conventional units struggle to do this effectively (Hoffman, 2005: 923; Robinson, 2004: 110-111). Long-term operations to “win over” the population are never favoured by conventional commanders or demanding domestic bases who want to see their troops home as soon as possible (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 58; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 174). However these operations are what constitute UW and what UW forces specialise in (Hoffman, 2005: 918; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 174). Given the above it is not difficult to see why many conventional commanders still see UW as a separate doctrine and not something that concerns conventional forces (Adams, 2001: 60).

Added to the above belief of the subordination of UW to conventional doctrine is the often difficult task of justifying UW to decision-makers within government. Military decision-makers are well aware of the strategic value of tanks, bombers and even aircraft carriers, however UW commanders often struggle to justify a Special Forces team training locals in Kenya or South Ossetia to these same decision-makers and this often complicates the execution of and funding for UW (Marquis, 1997: 4; Thomas, 2005: 2). This justification proves difficult even when presented with evidence that shows that at the turn of the century (1999-2000) there were over fifty UW incidents caused by dissidents globally (Kershner, 2001: 3). There can be little doubt that there is a significant increase in the number of UW incidents occurring globally and that the threats posed by failed states or non-state actors are replacing threats from traditional great powers (Record, 2005: 34; USDA, 2008: 1-1).

The US currently provides three explanations or justifications for the current proliferation of UW and these include the unparalleled conventional supremacy of states such as the US and Russia; the lack of resources or manpower for conventional operations available to UW proponents; and lastly the belief that states with vast conventional forces such as the US and Russia struggle to deal with UW threats and/or forces (Krepinevich, 2007: 6). Although these reasons may be accurate it should be borne in mind that the introduction of unorthodox methods or new concepts onto the battlefield does not necessarily indicate UW is being waged (Rothstein, 2006: 154; USDA, 2008: 1-3).

3.2. Unconventional armed forces: composition and structure.

The composition and structure of forces that seek to counter UW proponents were only initially set out by the US in 1961 and controversy has surrounded their composition and structure ever since (Metzgar, 2001: 20). It is not surprising that given the difference doctrinally between conventional and UW, that UW forces would also prosecute warfare differently (Marquis, 1997: 6). In terms of the branches of a nation's military, each branch has its own priority and centre of gravity. Armies seek to take and control land, Air Forces seek air dominance and navies seek control of the seas (Marquis, 1997: 6; Metzgar, 2001: 18). However UW forces seek or do none of these and this is what makes UW forces unique. Occasionally military action is unavoidable while at the same time the deployment of massive conventional forces is either too costly or too

risky (the gray area mentioned in the theory section) and this is the optimal opportunity to deploy UW forces (Rothstein, 2006: 154; USDA, 2008: 3-14).

As such, the UW forces of a state are often said to operate in areas that are simply either too inhospitable or too risky for conventional forces and herein lies their strategic value (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 177; USDA, 2008: 2-11, 3-14). Taking the above into consideration, own state UW forces are based on small, mobile units (usually Special Forces units) that rely on a *substantial* amount of freedom of action within which to operate and make use of *Auftragstatik* or "mission-oriented" command systems when making battlefield decisions (Richter 2005: 25; Rothstein 2006: 48). Operations such as these are beyond the realm of operations conducted by conventional forces and often require the use or deployment of élite forces (Rothstein, 2006: 124; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 146). Traditionally, irregular or militia forces were responsible for conducting such operations however these militia units found it difficult to face regular, conventional forces in battle and this often led to a high level of mission failure (Paschall, 1990: 94; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 70). To make matters worse for these units, once their "special missions" were completed they were simply 'thrown' back among conventional units, and given their light firepower this often put them at a disadvantage (Stevenson, 2006: 73; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 79). In order to address this problem *separate élite* units would need to be developed and trained and this led to the birth of UW forces.

The purposes of armies vary according to the missions and objectives of that specific military force or branch, and some units are simply not equipped or trained to execute major combat operations (Paschall, 1990: 8; Tuck, 2008: 105). What differentiates conventional forces from élite forces is their ability to perform traditional tasks or missions but with greater proficiency than conventional forces (Rothstein, 2006: 146; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 146). Élite forces are not however *Special Forces*. Without entering into too long a differentiation between conventional, élite and Special Forces as this is the focus of Chapter three of this study, a brief differentiation is needed in order to understand own state UW force composition and structure. Special Forces have special purposes and capabilities and these transcend not only conventional force operations but élite force operations as well (Jogerst, 2002: 98; Robinson, 2004: 366).

Special Forces are *not* élite but *special* because they are able to execute missions that conventional forces are unable to prosecute or at least not at acceptable levels of risk and/or cost

(Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 146; Ziegler, 2003: 3). As such Special Forces are usually distinguished from élite forces by degrees of skill rather than a sharp qualitative distinction (Erckenbrack, 2002: 2; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 146). This degree is usually seen with regard to the unique training, capabilities and skills of Special Forces units that allow them to successfully operate in the inhospitable environments mentioned above (Adams 2001: 309; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 147). A typical example of these capabilities and skills were the deployment of Special Forces in Vietnam (Robinson, 2004: xv). Vietnam was a "classic UW mould" for the Special Forces as it saw them set up camps in the Vietnam highlands, recruit and train locals and then conduct raids in North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, missions that are all trademarks of Special Forces and UW (Lindsay, 1962: 266; Robinson, 2004: xv).

Every enemy, especially a conventional enemy has a vulnerability that if exploited would most likely form their 'Achilles heel' and UW forces are experts at exploiting these vulnerabilities (Krepinevich, 2007: 7; Rothstein, 2006: 124). Conventional forces favour structure, discipline and sometimes even predictability. However UW forces do not, and actively seek to keep an enemy "off balance" by striking where they do not expect it (Rothstein, 2006: 170). Because Special Forces are trained and equipped to prosecute warfare in this manner they take on a greater strategic significance or value and generally perform more effectively and efficiently than conventional forces do when involved in UW operations (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 160). It is this ability as well as their ability to counter both conventional and unconventional threats that "places" Special Forces units "ahead" of conventional units in UW operations (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 177; USDA, 2008: 1-5). This is evidenced by the fact that historically insurgent UW forces have defeated conventional forces on a more regular basis than conventional forces have defeated UW forces, the prime examples of this being the Vietnam conflict in the 1960's and 1970's and the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan in the 1980's (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 25).

It is for this reason that the 2001 US Department of Defence's Quadrennial Defence Review stated that "an assessment of the global security environment involves a great deal of uncertainty about the potential sources of military threats, the conduct of war in the future and the form that threats and attacks against the [US] nation will take" (DOD, 2001: 3; Holmes, 2009: 1). This does not however suggest that conventional forces have no place in UW. Conventional support and assistance is often vital to the success of a UW operation especially with regard to "mopping up" after UW forces have "moved through a battlefield," however it is not contingent to the

entire outcome (Marquis, 1997: 123; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 162). A comparison between conventional and unconventional warfare that seeks to analyse the two approaches more directly may offer further evidence of just how different the two are, both in terms of theory and responses.

4. A comparison between conventional and unconventional warfare.

When looking at the dynamics of modern warfare it is important to begin with a proper assessment of the threat that own forces face and then once this has been identified, to conduct a thorough examination of own forces and capabilities in order to determine how to react to the abovementioned threat (Rothstein, 2006: 153). If either the enemy assessment or the own force capability assessment results in a 'faulty' diagnosis of either the threat or the proper means to address the threat, the consequences could be fatal (Campbell, O'Hanlon & Shapiro, 2009: 16; Rothstein, 2006: 152). When military forces conduct assessments of these types they seek to determine whether an opposing force displays conventional or unconventional capabilities or tendencies and then seek to respond to the threat in the most appropriate manner (Campbell, O'Hanlon & Shapiro, 2009: 16; Rothstein, 2006: 152). Military units engaged in modern warfare generally specialise in one of two major arenas, namely attrition warfare or manoeuvre warfare (Rothstein, 2006: 2).

Units or forces that focus on attrition as an approach generally make use of large, well (usually heavily) armoured forces that seek to overwhelm the enemy either through the use of technological superiority or through simply destroying the opposing forces of an enemy (Rothstein, 2006: 2). As such these forces tend to have a more "inward focus" that is "less responsive to the outside environment" and are hence heavily conventional (Jogerst, 2002: 99; Rothstein, 2006: 2). Manoeuvre forces or units on the other hand are generally small, mobile (often Special Forces) that seek to outmanoeuvre their opponent and make use of unconventional tactics to strike at their enemies vulnerabilities and weak points (Herd, 2002: 6; Rothstein, 2006: 2). Unsurprisingly manoeuvre forces tend to focus more on the external environment so as to adapt to their enemies weaknesses and this is why manoeuvre forces are unconventional by nature and the specific realm of Special Forces (Jogerst, 2002: 99; Tuck, 2008: 76-77).

The decision of whether to develop forces in the mould of either an attrition or manoeuvre is usually determined by cost and risk (Rothstein, 2006: 3; Tuck, 2008: 77). Forces based on

attrition are most often high cost but low risk, whereas manoeuvre forces are usually low cost but high risk as they are usually smaller and less armed and armoured, and this is more often than not the reason why most nations choose forces based on attrition rather than manoeuvre (Rothstein, 2006: 3; Tuck, 2008: 77). This 'bias' for attrition forces can become counter-productive as attrition forces require a large amount of funding, maintenance and 'storage space' in order to remain effective (a reason why most competent, powerful attrition forces reside in wealthy nations) whereas manoeuvre forces often require little or none of these expenses (Rothstein, 2006: 3; Tuck, 2008: 77). The optimal solution for this dilemma would be to have forces that are a balance of both attrition and manoeuvre or to ideally be able to retain forces qualified in both areas (Rothstein, 2006: 3; Tuck, 2008: 77). However this is often not fiscally possible.

Another factor, besides cost and risk that has influenced the preference for either attrition or manoeuvre forces has been the advent of what is being termed Fourth Generation Warfare or 4GW (Lind, 2004: 12). Although 4GW is not "accepted" as official doctrine by many states such as the US, there can be little doubt that it has had a tremendous affect on views of modern warfare (USDA, 2008: J-4). 4GW proponents argue that warfare has now entered its fourth "generation" and as a result of this the nature and required responses of military forces to 4GW threats has changed (Jogerst, 2002: 100; Lind, 2004: 13). The first three 'generations" can be summarised as follows: first generation line and column tactics seen from around 1648-1860, second generation World War I tactics of mass firepower, and third generation *blitzkrieg* tactics from World War II onwards (Lind, 2004: 12-13; USDA, 2008: J-4). Each generation has placed emphasis on the conventional primacy of armed force, whether by means of line and column, massed firepower or *blitzkrieg* tactics (Lind, 2004: 12-13; USDA, 2008: J-4).

However the decentralised nature of the modern battlefield of current wars often involve states fighting non-state actors by means of UW as opposed to the conventional doctrine and this has 'swept aside' the previous three generations of warfare and has ushered in a fourth generation based on these 'tactics' (Lind, 2004: 12-13; USDA, 2008: J-4). 4GW proponents argue that there were basically two options available to commanders who sought to overcome the previous "three generations." The first being to "up-armour" soldiers by placing them in armoured vehicles and thereby reduce their vulnerability to enemy firepower while at the same time *increasing* their own firepower (Herd, 2002: 6; Rothstein, 2006: 47). Should commanders not wish to adopt this

'protective posture' or be unable to adopt it, the second option at their disposal was to adopt infiltration techniques or phrased differently UW (Rothstein, 2006: 3; Tuck, 2008: 77).

Upon reflection it becomes clear that conventional commanders have in more cases than not opted for option one (the "up-armouring" of their forces) and UW commanders have opted for option two (infiltration techniques) (Rothstein, 2006: 3; Tuck, 2008: 77). The problem with adopting the 'up-armour' option is that attrition and hence conventional warfare begins to 'breakdown' as enemy targets become "less defined and more dispersed" as is currently being witnessed in Afghanistan (Lind, 2004: 15; Rothstein, 2006: 95). As such attrition forces seek to resolve this through the use of large scale firepower (Adams, 2001: 23; Rothstein, 2006: 95). However this firepower usually proves to be counter-productive as the dispersed nature of 4GW threats negates the advantage that firepower brings to the table (Record, 2005: 36; Rothstein, 2006: 95). The increased lethality of weapons such as precision guided munitions (PGM's) has actually placed tremendous strain on conventional forces and has made it more difficult for them to prosecute war against less technologically inclined enemies such as rebels or insurgents (Paschall, 1990: 59; van Creveld, 2004: 8).

In conventional attrition warfare, success can more easily be measured as they relate to number of soldiers killed, armour destroyed and land captured from the enemy (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 37). In UW this is inconsequential. In UW operations conventional forces have to be cognisant of not only the terrain (which is usually urban) and enemy forces but also collateral damage (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 37). The reason for this being that "in conventional warfare a stray bomb is simply a wasted bomb but in UW a stray bomb [that kills civilians] could lose you the war" (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 37). The complexity of such operations not only disguises the nature of the conflict but can also prove to become too "challenging" for conventional forces that are often unskilled in UW (Bredenkamp, 2003: 2; Rothstein, 2006: 153). It is generally assumed that modern well trained, competently led forces are simply able to 'transit' between conventional and unconventional operations, however the reality proves otherwise (Haas, 2005: 10; Rothstein, 2006: 3).

The utility of conventional force primacy is limited in UW for numerous reasons (as has been shown above) and these reasons are not easily circumvented (Record, 2005: 36; Simons & Tucker, 2003: 85). Conventional forces are specifically designed for battlefields that are

populated by the professional soldiers and hardware of two opposing nations that engage each other in high pitched battles to the death (attrition), not for battlefields populated by civilians fighting in urban areas (Adams, 2001: 22; USDA, 2008: 2-10). Manoeuvre (UW) forces on the other hand seek to avoid high pitched battles against conventional forces and aim to strike in an irregular manner (Janos, 1963: 643). UW forces seek to strike their enemy intermittently whereas conventional forces focus on a single centre of gravity at a time and concentrate all their forces on that centre and then move onto the next one (Kershner, 2001: 6; USDA, 2008: 3-13). These two divergent doctrines cannot easily be merged. Furthermore two conventional forces on a battlefield often "mimic" each other in terms of hardware or manpower (Adams, 2001: 23). UW forces are however characterised by asymmetry and as such no force is likely to look like the next (Adams, 2001: 23). In UW, the UW forces are strategically on the defensive, yet tactically always on the offensive whereas in conventional warfare the conventional forces are usually always on the offensive both strategically and tactically (Hoffman, 2005: 929; Janos, 1963: 643).

Conventional warfare also presupposes state on state conflict or warfare between two or more *states* whereas UW often sees states fighting non-state actors and state actors at the same time as was the case in Vietnam (Herd, 2002: 5; USDA, 2008: 1-4, 2-19). The limited interest inherent in most conventional commanders' minds as well as the domestic constituencies they represent back home, often results in these commanders having limited interest in addressing such conflicts (Record, 2005: 37). UW forces in contrast, place tremendous emphasis on the political outcome of all UW operations, whereas conventional commanders often do not, as they see this as the role of "other branches" such as State Departments and the like (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 54). Consequently the nature of these organisations (conventional and unconventional) can often either inhibit or enable success in various military operations, and although UW forces are able to operate in both conventional and UW operations, conventional forces cannot claim to be able to do the same (Hoffman, 2005: 921; Rothstein, 2006: 165).

During World War II, UW demonstrated its ability to act as a comparable force to conventional forces, especially when the deployment of conventional forces would be either unfeasible or too "embarrassing" and this reinforces the adage that "early intervention by UW forces can negate conventional force deployment" (Robinson, 2004: xiv; Wilson, 2001: 26). The same cannot however be said for conventional forces and this can be witnessed when looking at the US approach to warfare both historically and currently. Although subsequent chapters will deal with

the US approach to modern warfare, specifically in the 1990's leading up to and beyond the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, a brief historical analysis of the US approach to warfare is needed in order to provide context for later chapters.

5. The United States' approach to warfare.

The following section will analyse the US' approach to warfare since the inception of the US military during the American Revolution right up to and including the 1980's and the end of the Cold War. This section is of crucial importance in order to understand why the conventionalisation of the US military occurred as well as why the US has struggled to address UW not only currently, but historically as well.

5.1. A revolution, two world wars and the conventionalisation of the US military.

By the end of the 18th century the US had fought for independence from Britain in a war that had made use of not only conventional forces but also specialised units that operated either with, or independently of conventional armed forces (Price, 2008: 1; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 70). As a result of this it was assumed that the US would utilize both conventional and unconventional units in future conflicts. However tensions between the two branches started to arise and required resolution (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 70). Consequently the military that emerged from the American Civil War nearly 100 years later pursued professional, conventional forces that were modelled on German forces of the time with the result being that by the end of the 19th century the US military could firmly be called a conventional fighting force (Adams, 2001: 27; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 71).

Although the US did not *completely* abandon specialised units there was little doubt that the conventional primacy and eventually supremacy over these specialised units, would occur and this view was cemented by the events of World War II (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 78). During World War II the US found itself fighting a two front war (in Western Europe and the Pacific) and this required enormous numbers of conventional armed forces to successfully execute (Marquis, 1997: 4; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 78). As a result of this massive need for conventional forces, specialised units were seen as a "distraction and a waste" as they "stole the best troops" from various military branches and yet accomplished "little" (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 64; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 78). This perception only exacerbated the "dislike" for specialised units

and reinforced the belief held by conventional commanders that UW forces should always remain subordinate to conventional forces (Metzgar, 2001: 21; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 159).

The nuclear posture of mass retaliation adopted by the Eisenhower Administration in 1953, placed further strain on US UW forces who "moved" from second in line behind conventional forces to third in line behind nuclear *and* conventional forces (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 64; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 88). Interestingly, even though the US military was emphasising massive retaliation in the 1950's the then Army Chief of Staff Maxwell Taylor stated that he believed nuclear weapons to be "counter-productive" and that "unconventional warfare was the future" (Adams, 2001: 64; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 89).

5.2. The 1960's, 1970's and the repercussions of the Vietnam conflict.

As it would later transpire, it would be Eisenhower's successor John F. Kennedy that would heed the call of Taylor and seek to emphasise UW (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 89-90). During his brief presidency in the 1960's, Kennedy argued that the US military should focus more on UW and counter - insurgency than on conventional or nuclear warfare, stating in a 1962 letter to the Army that "the mission of our Armed Forces – and especially the Army today – is to master these [UW] skills and techniques to be able to help those who have the will to help themselves. *Purely military skill is not enough. A full spectrum of military, paramilitary and civil action must be blended to produce results*" (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 66, emphasis added). Kennedy's letter was however rejected by the Army who still favoured conventional armed forces and three years later the US would commit themselves conventionally to an unconventional war in Vietnam that would reinforce just how their conventional primacy could be their worst enemy (Adams, 2001: 24, 64; Record, 2005: 33).

US determination to address the Vietnam conflict as primarily a conventional war that could be won by conventional forces was undoubtedly one of the primary causes for the US "defeat" in Vietnam (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 70; Marquis, 1997: 34). UW efforts in Vietnam conducted primarily by US Special Forces however were a shining success, yet were derided by conventional commanders as being "un-American" (Marquis, 1997: 34; Robinson, 2004: xv, 366). This consequently ensured that once withdrawal from Vietnam had finally been achieved in 1975 the "loss" of the war was firmly positioned on UW as a whole, with the Special Forces being specifically targeted for their role or perceived lack thereof by conventional commander's

(Marquis, 1997: 34; Robinson, 2004: xv, 366). Indeed by the end of the 1970's it appeared that the "embarrassment" of Vietnam had resulted in the almost complete loss of all lessons learned, especially UW lessons during the conflict (Marquis, 1997: 34; Record, 2005: 35).

The risk averse nature of the military leadership at the time approached conflict under the guise of "no more Vietnam's" and as such did not seek to accept UW or see that Vietnam may be the future of modern warfare but preferred to build their military strategies around lower 'risk' conventional forces (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 159-160). Most military commanders' views are shaped by the branch of military they serve in and this often resulted in them "not being versed" in UW or choosing to ignore UW, even if they were aware of UW forces and their capabilities (Marquis, 1997: 122; Rothstein, 2006: 46). This becomes problematic for a force, such as the US Army because the lack of 'good targets' available for bombing runs and tanks charges that are so rare in UW, present problems to attrition forces and force them to conduct manoeuvre operations, something they struggle to perform (Jogerst, 2002: 102; Rothstein, 2006: 6).

The US military's style and operational control are well suited for major campaigns or operations such as MTW (Hoffman, 2005: 918; Record, 2005: 35). However, when the 'scale' is reduced, as during UW operations, this immense and powerful force begins to "breakdown" (Rothstein, 2006: 94-95, 169). This is why it is often argued that the US' focus on attrition and conventional operations that was so successful and emphasised during the two world wars, consequently led to "a stalemate in Korea and a loss in Vietnam" (Rothstein, 2006: 94-95, 169). The "failure" of conventional primacy to address conflicts such as Korea and Vietnam should have led to a 'rethink' of US military doctrine so as to include UW (Adams, 2001: 163). However the opposite occurred and ensured that by the end of the 1970's the US' ability to conduct UW was almost "non-existent" (Adams, 2001: 163). Lieutenant General (Retired) William Yarborough in a 1990 speech believed this to be the case because "the cautious conservatism inherent in traditional military organisational concepts [such as the US Army] continues to work against the promulgation within regular military structures of the type of unusual and non-regulation formations that might work in UW situations" (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 10).

5.3. The 1980's and the resurgence of unconventional warfare.

Although former US President Ronald Reagan started to place increasing emphasis on UW and Special Forces in the 1980's it has only been in the past three decades that warfare and specifically US military doctrine has started to change to favour UW and the need for the deployment of "smaller, more mobile and lethal forces" increased (Robinson, 2004: 18; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xiii-xiv). One of the primary factors that has influenced this change can be attributed to decision-makers' reluctance to mobilise massive resources and manpower when seeking to prosecute wars that were so imprudently expended during conflicts such as Vietnam in the past (Record, 2005: 34; van Creveld, 2004: 5). Although this willingness has decreased there can be little doubt that the proliferation of missions requiring intervention has dramatically increased, forcing commanders to address a growing number of conflicts while only being able to deploy smaller forces as opposed to massive conventional, manpower intensive forces (Holmes, 2009: 2; Ziegler, 2003: 10). The massive logistics that are now such a ubiquitous problem for most nations' conventional forces acutely effects the US Army, an army that is extremely armour heavy and manpower intensive and this has led to a tremendous "spike" in the demand for UW and Special Forces since the end of the Cold War in 1990 (Tuck, 2008: 71; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 192).

Although this spike did occur it was still vociferously resisted by the conventional army. Lieutenant General (Retired) Wayne Downing explained this reluctance in a 1992 speech when he stated that "Special Operations Forces are cast in the light of unconventional warfare which often carried with it the view that they [Special Operations Forces] are outside the mainstream army" (Adams, 2001: 10). This reluctance to accept UW as well as the reluctance of the army to accept that conventional warfare is on the decline has meant that the US military of today is orientated around the kind of challenges they *want* to engage in as opposed to the ones they are most like to encounter (Herd, 2002: 10; Krepinevich, 2007: 10). Conventional commanders as well as their political masters are often tempted to see one conflict (usually the most recent one) as the future of all warfare, conflicts or operations, and although this must be resisted there is often some credence to such an outlook (Adams, 2001: 24; Gray, 2004: 2). The National Military Centres within the US that are entrusted with the education of future US military leaders are still heavily focused, even biased, in favour of major conventional operations such as MTW and this only began to change after the 1993 events in Somalia, which by then was too late (Robinson,

2004: 110; Rothstein, 2006: 24). As such it seems that it is the *enemies* of the United States who learnt the greatest lessons with regard to conventionally challenging the world's only remaining superpower, and that lesson is to challenge the US *unconventionally* (Haas, 2005: 2; Kershner, 2001: 3).

History has proven that the US military are more than capable of engaging in not only one but two MTW's simultaneously; it is in UW campaigns that they struggle (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 10; Record, 2005: 33). Proficiency in all forms of warfare, both conventional and unconventional is the challenge posed to all nations' military, irrespective of branch, and this requires military forces to constantly 'adapt' in order to remain 'relevant' and the US military have struggled to successfully accomplish this (Olson, 2008: 5; Rothstein, 2006: 171). In all military operations the ground commanders involved want to play a role in order to prove their worth to both other branch commanders as well as politicians who often hold the keys to their future and this can prove to be dangerous as it can jeopardise a mission or even an entire campaign (Holmes, 2009: 2; Rothstein, 2006: 168).

It has been argued that "no army needs to be perfect, just better than their opponent on that day" however this is not only inaccurate, but a dangerous outlook to harbour (Gray, 2004: 8). With the increasing view among the domestic populations of democratic countries that war is morally unacceptable as well as the growing preference of recent US Presidents for the deployment of Special Forces, there can be little doubt that the tide is slowly starting to turn in favour of UW (Gray, 2004: 16; Thomas, 2005: 2). The conflicts that were fought in the 1990's and beyond, bore testament to this change in the outlook and perception that both domestic populations and policy-makers had of modern warfare. However conventional commanders both inside and outside the US military still continued to argue that the outbreak of UW conflicts in the 1980's was a phase and that the primacy of conventional forces should be maintained and even expanded (Herd, 2002: 1; Record, 2005: 34). Although it would be a mistake to reduce or even begin to neglect the US conventional arsenal as it provides a tremendous deterrent capability and would prove pivotal when traditional conventional war broke out with nations that possessed substantial conventional forces (such as Iraq in 1990), it cannot be denied that unconventional warfare is the "flavour of the month" and seems as such the focus of all militaries today (Robinson, 2004: 361; Rothstein, 2006: 24).

6. Conclusion.

Conventional and unconventional warfare are two approaches to warfare that date back centuries with each approach having its own distinct and unique influence on modern warfare as seen today. Although conventional warfare has a longer lineage than unconventional warfare, the importance of either approach cannot be denied when engaging in a debate over how to prosecute a contemporary military campaign. This chapter sought to address the approaches from a theoretical perspective so as to highlight their theoretical similarities and differences in order to facilitate better understanding of the two concepts and hence how modern warfare is approached or executed. The chapter began by providing definitions and explanations of both the doctrinal and force composition as well as the structure of conventional and unconventional warfare as a whole. The chapter showed that although both conventional and unconventional warfare do draw on some aspects of doctrine that may seem similar, they are intrinsically two different approaches to warfare and should be dealt with as such.

The chapter then assessed, through comparison, conventional and unconventional warfare to further reinforce this point and analysed the US approach to warfare historically in order to ascertain their preference with regard to the deployment of US military forces. It became apparent that although the US military had firm UW roots, it shifted to a professional conventional force by the end of the 19th century and struggled to become more unconventional in order to address the growing number of UW conflicts that began to arise in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's. Specific reference was also made to Special Forces as the units primarily trained and tasked with UW operations. Chapter three will deal specifically with the definition, missions and roles of the US Special Forces in order to further reinforce this perception.

CHAPTER 3: THE MISSIONS AND ROLES OF SPECIAL FORCES AND COMPOSITION OF US SPECIAL FORCES.

1. Introduction.

The exact missions and roles of Special Forces are two issues that have been debated ever since Special Forces emerged as formal branches of militaries around the globe. Advocates as well as opponents of Special Forces often debate the missions and roles of Special Forces to highlight either their strengths or weaknesses, with many never actually considering what exactly the mission and the role of a Special Forces unit encompasses. The exact missions and roles of Special Forces units have often depended on situational factors such as the outbreak of war (as was the case in World War Two and in Vietnam) and this has often led to poor definition and demarcation of these missions and roles. The almost ubiquitous practise of the building up and then decommissioning of Special Forces units have not helped the situation either and have only complicated an already complex situation. The constant build up and then decommissioning of Special Forces units as needs arose and then dissipated, has also not only affected the missions and roles of Special Forces but has also affected the exact definition of what exactly constitutes a Special Force.

The ramifications of these constant fluctuations have resulted in a myriad of terms being used to describe Special Forces units, with the most common confusion occurring between what are classified as Special Operations Forces as opposed to Special Forces and even élite units. This chapter will seek to firstly differentiate between these terms and will then analyse exactly what constitutes a Special Force as opposed to Special Operations Forces. It will then analyse the missions and roles of Special Forces units, with specific reference to the Special Forces of the United States military and will highlight which Special Force is best suited for which mission and/or role. The chapter will also look at the legislative authority given to Special Forces units with regard to which units are authorised to execute which missions, and will also give a brief description and analysis of the role that the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) plays in ensuring that Special Forces operate within their specific mandates. The focus of the chapter will then shift to the ‘Tier One’ Special Forces of the US military. These units are also referred to as Special Mission Units (SMUs) and they will form the basis on which the roles and missions of Special Forces will be discussed both in this chapter and in all subsequent chapters.

2. The concept of Special Forces.

It can be safely stated that it was the exploits of a few hundred men on horseback using laser designators to destroy the Taliban regime with precision guided munitions in Afghanistan in 2001 that brought the capabilities of the Special Forces to the world's attention (Jones & Rehorn, 2003: 3; Robinson, 2004: xi). It was these images that led people to question who were or what are Special Forces? The term Special Forces is often confused with terms such as Special Operations Forces and élite units and although this confusion is understandable given the general lack of knowledge surrounding Special Forces units, an exact definition is needed in order to better comprehend the roles and missions of Special Forces units as stated. The two most commonly confused terms are those of Special Forces and Special Operations Forces.

The US Department of Defense (DOD) make the distinction by defining Special *Operations* Forces as "those active and reserve *component* forces of the military services designated by the Secretary of Defense and that are specifically organised, trained and equipped to conduct and support Special Operations" in their entirety (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xv; US Congress, 2004: 89; USDA, 2008: 3-14, emphasis added). Special Forces on the other hand are defined as those forces "organised, trained and equipped specifically to conduct Special Operations in the full range of the Special Operations Force principle mission areas less Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations" (Adams, 2001: xxv; USDA, 2006: 3-2).

As can be seen from the above, especially in the case of the US military, Special Operations Forces are generally considered to encompass *all* Special Forces units whether they are from the army, navy or air force whereas Special Forces generally only relate to the US Army Special Forces (Adams, 2001: xxv; USDA, 2006: 3-2). For the purpose of this study the term Special Forces will be used to refer to the US Army and Navy Special Forces, commonly referred to as the Green Berets and Navy SEALs respectively, with special emphasis being placed on the SMUs of the US military. Special Operations can further be defined as "operations conducted in hostile, denied or politically sensitive environment's to achieve military, political, informational and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement" and hence require the talents and skills of a Special Forces unit (Rothstein, 2006: 18; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xv). Furthermore conventional forces are said to be unable to respond effectively in these operations because of the "degree of physical and political

risk" inherent in these operations as well as the "operational techniques, modes of employment, independence from friendly support and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets" that Special Forces are used to operating either with or without (Adams, 2001: xxv; Best & Feickert, 2005: 2).

Special Forces units are a full-spectrum, multi-mission forces whose distinction from other conventional and even élite forces is based upon the "purpose for which these units were created, prepared and employed" (Schoomaker, 1998: 4; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 145). Special Forces usually comprise specific units that are trained for specific missions at specific times and although at certain stages some of these missions may overlap (see missions below), the main purpose of these units are to execute these missions with the highest level of proficiency (Flournoy & Schultz, 2007: 32; Simons & Tucker, 2003: 80). The execution of these missions often requires forces that are proficient in land, air and sea operations and Special Forces are specifically trained and equipped to conduct these missions (Brailey, 2005: 33; USDA, 2008: 3-15). There can be little doubt that in order to effectively train and equip a military force such as a Special Forces unit, clearly defined and demarcated roles and missions are needed and it is in this area that Special Forces have met most of their challenges (Brailey, 2005: 10; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 144; US Congress, 2004: 89).

3. The roles and missions of Special Forces.

Throughout the history of Special Forces and Special Operations, Special Forces units have "gone to war" and have been "misused" because of poorly defined or lack of doctrine (Marquis, 1997: 122; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 79). Although a great deal of this misuse or poor use has been the result of a lack of understanding with regard to how and when Special Forces units should be employed and when they should not be employed, a great deal of this misuse has also been self-inflicted (Dunnigan, 2004: xvi; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 101). One of the main reasons for this "self-infliction" can be attributed to the excellent reputation that Special Forces possess globally (Brailey, 2005: 18; Rothstein, 2006: 155). This reputation has often come at a disadvantage to Special Forces units especially the SMUs as it has often led to them being deployed in unrealistic settings and for near impossible missions (Gray, 1999: 7; Rothstein, 2006: 155). What needs to be borne in mind is that Special Forces are not a solution to fix all problems but are rather

specialised forces that are trained for certain missions and also have their limits (Fitzsimmons, 2003: 204).

Although Special Forces are trained and equipped to strike quickly, deep behind enemy lines often with extreme precision they are *not* intended to serve as regular infantry in conventional battles (Johnson, 2006: 275; Robinson, 2004: 115; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 159). Special Forces are generally trained and equipped to execute nine primary missions and seven collateral missions and these will be highlighted below.

3.1. Direct Action.

Direct Action (DA) can be defined as the execution of "short duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions that are conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied or politically sensitive environments" (Simons & Tucker, 2003: 81; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xviii). These operations may be conducted either unilaterally or as part of a combined operation and are most commonly associated with Special Forces and specifically SMUs (Fitzsimmons, 2003: 209; USDA, 2006: 2-3). Although most military forces are capable of conducting DA, Special Forces are specialised in DA operations and hence provide a higher level of proficiency in their execution (Fitzsimmons, 2003: 206; Wilson, 2001: 25).

While DA is one mission on which Special Forces and specifically SMUs place a major emphasis, it is also where they receive the most criticism from conventional commanders (Jogerst, 2002: 2; Stevenson, 2006: 78). Conventional commanders often argue that Special Forces DA operations only make a tactical contribution to a battle and not a strategic one, and hence they either hasten victory or retard defeat but do not define or determine the entire outcome of a battle (Rothstein, 2006: 155; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 159). In certain respects this may be true; however it is views such as these that generate animosity between the conventional and Special Forces.

3.2. Special Reconnaissance.

Special Reconnaissance (SR) is defined as "reconnaissance or surveillance actions conducted as *Special Operations* in hostile, denied or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operations significance *employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces*" (Dunnigan, 2004: 254; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xviii, emphasis

added). As with Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance is often conducted by conventional forces who seek to reconnoitre a battlefield before a battle. Again it is the emphasis on Special Operations and the use of capabilities not found in conventional forces that separate Special Forces SR from conventional force SR (Rothstein, 2006: 22).

SR also assists in the development of the "battlefield picture" commanders often request before the commencement of operations (Coty, Bluestein & Thompson, 2005: 19; USASOC, 1997: 8). This is commonly referred to as Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) and can prove to be a major advantage for commanders during combat (Coty, Bluestein & Thompson, 2005: 19; Don, 2003: 6). Recent advances in technology such as the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) and satellite communications have taken SR to another level and provided Special Forces units with extremely advanced technologies, a capability that most nations are unable to comprehend (Haas, 2005: 3). This again reinforced the higher level of proficiency Special Forces units are able to provide commanders (Haas, 2005: 3).

3.3. Foreign Internal Defence.

Foreign Internal Defence (FID) is defined as "actions [taken by] a foreign government to curb subversion, lawlessness and insurgency" within another country (Adams, 2001: 14; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xix). Special Forces contributions to FID usually centre on the "organis[ing], train[ing], advis[ing] and assist[ing] of host-nation military and paramilitary forces" (Olson, 2008: 7; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xix). FID is one of the primary missions of both Special Forces and the SMUs and has seen countless exchanges taking place between various nations that seek to prevent the outbreak of subversion, lawlessness and insurgency (Olson, 2008: 7; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xix). FID operations are usually extremely complicated operations and can often take years to successfully accomplish. US Special Forces operations within countries such as El Salvador are an excellent example of this (Richelson, 1999: 182).

3.4. Unconventional Warfare.

UW as a Special Forces mission is defined as a "broad spectrum of military operations normally of a long duration; predominantly conducted by, with or through indigenous or surrogate forces" (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xviii; USDA, 2008: 1-2). UW operations conducted by Special Forces units are usually executed as a means of economy of force that seeks to reduce or dissipate an

enemy's potential to attack either the host state or a sponsoring nation (Metzgar, 2001: 21). There can be little doubt, as was elucidated in chapter two, that unconventional warfare is becoming increasingly prominent in modern conflict and as such, UW proficiency for Special Forces units is seen as extremely imperative and is one of their main appeals to both the conventional military and their domestic political base (Haas, 2005: 3).

UW is one of the primary missions of the US Special Forces and is the mission in which they seek to attain almost unrivalled proficiency when compared to other forces (Skinner, 2002: 17-18; Wilson, 2001: 24). This proficiency can however, also lead to tension between conventional and Special Forces commanders, as can be seen in the case of the US military. In a legalistic sense, USSOCOM and hence the US Special Forces are the only national military command within the US military that is sanctioned to conduct UW as a primary mission (Wilson, 2001: 25). This authorisation coupled with the desire from conventional forces to sideline UW because of its inherently complex nature, has also further cemented UW as a Special Forces role, one that has also been traditionally under threat due to the overemphasis that political and military leaders, as well as other Special Forces units, have placed on Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance and Counter-terrorism (Nagao, 2001: 175; Naylor, 2007: 1, 3).

3.5. Counter-terrorism.

Counter-terrorism (CT) operations are defined as "offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to terrorism" and terrorism related activities (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xvii; USDA, 2006: 2-4). CT operations gained prominence in the 1970's with the advent of terrorism against mainly Western states, and have been reinforced by the events of September 11, 2001 (Brown, 2006: 38; Marquis, 1997: 63). In many countries, such as the US and the UK, that are often targeted by terrorist groups, Special Forces units carry an immense burden with regards to responding to terrorist threats. In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001 the US Presidency tasked USSOCOM with synchronising the "global counter-terrorism campaign" with specific emphasis on reducing the probability of future terrorist attacks occurring within the continental United States (CONUS) ever occurring again (Groover, 2004: 12; Wiley, 2006: 6). This tasking has placed tremendous pressure on US Special Forces units, especially given the difficult and complicated nature of terrorism and terrorist threats. Doctrinally, even though CT

operations fall under the remit of Special Forces in general, they are usually exclusively conducted by the SMUs (Dunnigan, 2004: 258; Marquis, 1997: 63).

3.6. Counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Counter-proliferation (CP) operations are "actions taken to prevent, limit and/or maximise the development, possession and employment of weapons of mass destruction" (Dunnigan, 2004: 254; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xviii). CP operations gained prominence with the demise of the Soviet Union in the 1990's when fears that the proliferation of Soviet nuclear material and/or weapons would threaten Western countries (Johnson, 2006: 284). Given the complexity and sensitivity of CP operations, these operations are also one of the primary missions of the SMUs (Fitzsimmons, 2003: 209; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 100).

3.7. Civil Affairs.

Civil Affairs (CA) operations are "activities [when Special Forces] are involved in either establishing and conducting military-governmental or civil administration until civil authority or government can be restored or minimising civil interference with military operations and limiting the adverse impact of military operations on a civilian population and resources" (Rothstein, 2006: 22; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xix). As is the case in most countries, CA units are usually separated from "traditional" Special Forces units with specially designated CA groups within USSOCOM being responsible for all CA efforts. Although this does not remove CA as a primary mission of Special Forces units, it does suggest that CA should become a collateral mission and not a primary mission, as has been advocated by many Special Forces operators and commanders.

3.8. Psychological Operations.

Psychological Operations (PsyOps) are defined as "operations that convey truthful information to foreign audiences in an effort to influence their behaviour and the behaviour of foreign governments, organisations, groups and individuals" (Dunnigan, 2004: 255; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xix). As with Civil Affairs, PsyOps are the specific remit of the PsyOps units of many countries.

3.9. Support to Information Warfare

Information Warfare (IW) operations are the "newest" mission to be allocated to Special Forces units with IW operations only becoming prominent in the late 1990's. IW operations are defined as "actions taken to influence, affect or defend information, information systems and decision-making" apparatuses of a military force or command (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xix; Ziegler, 2003: 7). IW operations are often pivotal for commanders seeking dominant manoeuvre during combat and Special Forces through their unique training and in conjunction with SR tactics and techniques are able to provide this information (Kershner, 2001: 5; USASOC, 1997: 7).

The seven collateral missions of Special Forces are listed as Coalition Support, Combat Search and Rescue, Counter-drug Operations, Counter-mine Operations, Humanitarian Assistance, Special Activities and Security Assistance (Dunnigan, 2004: 255; Ziegler, 2003: 3). Although the seven collateral activities of the Special Forces will not be dealt with in detail as the primary missions were, Special Activities as a collateral mission actually form one of the primary missions of the SMUs and will hence be covered in the SMU section later on in this chapter. Both the primary and the collateral missions listed above can be conducted as either "dependent" or "independent" missions.

Dependent operations are operations where Special Forces units are subordinate to, or support conventional forces in the achievement of conventional force objectives whereas missions where Special Forces operate as the primary force in the operation, are referred to as independent Special Forces operations (Metzgar, 2001: 21; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 157). Independent operations are independent primarily because the entire operation is organised according to Special Forces principles and preferences with conventional forces merely supporting the Special Forces effort (Nagao, 2001: 175: Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 157). This distinction becomes important when deciding which forces are to be considered when executing a specific operation.

Although all Special Forces units are proficient in both conventional and unconventional warfare, certain units specialise more in certain areas or missions than other units, and this has forced many countries such as the US and the UK to rank their Special Forces units according to three "tiers" (Finlan, 2003: 95; Malvesti, 2009: 1). Among the US Special Forces community, Tier One Special Forces are identified as the SMUs and specialise in DA and SR operations that specifically target "high value targets" (HVT's) as well as CT and CP operations (Adams, 2001:

16; Maloney, 2007: 43). Tier Two Special Forces also conduct DA but are more focused on UW and FID operations, with the US Special Forces (Green Berets) and Navy SEALs being classified as Tier Two Special Forces within the US military (Adams, 2001: 16; Maloney, 2007: 43). Tier Three Special Forces are defined as "light infantry raiding forces that operate at a battalion level" with the US Army Rangers being listed as the main Tier Three Special Force of the US military (Adams, 2001: 16; Maloney, 2007: 43). Although a great deal of overlap often occurs between the "tiers," specifically in terms of operations such as DA and SR, it is imperative that the distinction still be made (Maloney, 2007: 43).

There can be little doubt that given the small size, yet massive firepower that Special Forces can muster, they provide an excellent economy of force option open to both military and political leaders (Gray, 1999: 2; Johnson, 2006: 274). Special Forces soldiers pride themselves on their ability to take the initiative and to strike at enemies vulnerabilities often before an enemy even realises the presence of this vulnerability, and this ability should not be hastily forgotten, especially given the fluid environment in which modern military commanders find themselves in on the battlefield today (Dailey & Webb, 2006: 46; Rothstein, 2006: 106). The ability of military forces to exploit the vulnerabilities of an enemy often requires that military forces operate clandestinely deep behind enemy lines and Special Forces soldiers and in particular the SMUs are specifically trained to accomplish this (Brown, 2006: 38: O'Connell, 2006: 4). Many of these operations are undertaken "outside the context of warfare" and conventional forces are most often not trained or equipped to undertake these operations (Brailey, 2005: 5). Conventional forces are generally designed for large, open battlefields and not the ubiquitous urban areas within which Special Operations are undertaken and where Special Forces operate, and given that these two battlefields are seldom interchangeable, this gives Special Forces the upper hand in responding to crises (Finlan, 2003: 94; Jogerst, 2002: 99).

This is seen as one of the primary reasons for the assertion that the early intervention of Special Forces in crises situations can negate the need for the deployment of large-scale conventional forces later on (Wilson, 2001: 25). Given that without clearly defined roles and missions Special Forces would most likely struggle to justify their political importance and resource needs, has meant that clearly defined roles and missions have become imperative to the survival of units like Special Forces, who have often borne witness to vacillating calls for either expansion or termination (Gray, 1999: 4; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 144). Clearly defined roles and missions

however are often not enough to ensure either continued survival or funding; often force composition becomes just as important and hence needs exploration.

4. The composition of the US Special Operations Forces.

The following section will deal with the composition of the US Special Operations Forces and Special Mission Units. The US military currently identify more than a dozen units that comprise US Special Operations Forces. Analysis of all these forces is beyond the scope of this study and as such only specific Tier One (SMUs) and Tier Two (the Green Berets and the US Navy SEALs) units will be dealt with. Marine Special Forces (MARSOC) as well as the US Army's 75th Ranger Regiment, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Battalions and most of the US Air Force's Special Operations Units, will not be dealt with. All Special Operations Forces within the US, no matter to which branch they are responsible, currently fall under the command of the US Special Operations Command.

4.1. Structure of the US Special Operations Command.

The Green Berets and SMUs form the largest and most frequently deployed component of the USSOCOM (Naylor, 2006: 2; Robinson, 2004: xii). In the aftermath of the failed Special Forces operation to rescue captured American civilians being held hostage in the US Embassy in Tehran in 1980, Senators Barry Goldwater and William Nichols lobbied for the creation of a separate command that all Special Operations Forces would fall under and this became what is today known as USSOCOM (Brown, 2006: 39; Risher, 2006: 49; Stone, 2003: 6). USSOCOM was established by what would eventually become known as the Goldwater-Nichols Defence Reorganisation Act in 1986 (Brailey, 2005: 34; Dunnigan, 2004: 249-250). Section 167 of Title 10 of the US Code for Armed Forces established USSOCOM legally and headquartered USSOCOM at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa Bay, Florida (Best & Feickert, 2005: 2; Feickert, 2006: 1; US Congress, 2004: 87). Although estimates vary as the exact number of US Special Operations Forces is classified, it is estimated that USSOCOM is assigned over 46,000 soldiers and civilians, of whom one quarter, roughly 12,000 are actual "operators" (with the rest being assigned to support) (Dunnigan, 2004: 8; Olson, 2008: 16).

USSOCOM has five subordinate commands that are responsible for each branch of US Special Operations Forces namely Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, and then the Joint Special

Operations Command who is responsible for all the SMUs (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xvii). The US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) is responsible for all Special Operations Forces in relation to the US Army (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; Marquis, 1997: 155). As such all Special Forces (Green Beret) groups, the 75th Ranger Regiment, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations fall under USASOC (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; USDA, 2006: 3-1).

USASOC is headquartered at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and has roughly 26,000 soldiers and civilians attached to it (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; USDA, 2006: 3-1). Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) is responsible for all US Navy Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) teams as well as the Special Boat Teams and the SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams who transport the SEALs (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xvii). NSWC has roughly 5,400 personal and is headquartered in Coronado, California (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xvii).

US Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is responsible for all Air Force Special Operations and is located at Hurlburt Field, Florida (Groover, 2004: 8). AFSOC operate both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and provide transport for all Special Operations personal (Groover, 2004: 8). US Air Force Para-rescue men and woman (commonly referred to as PJ's) also report to AFSOC as do various other Air Force Special Operations Groups (Groover, 2004: 8). The Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) is the latest command to join USSOCOM and was only commissioned in November 2005 (Feickert, 2006: 3; O'Connell, 2006: 4). Throughout their history the US Marine Corps have preferred to retain control of their own Special Operations Forces (previously known as Force Reconnaissance Marines), thereby remaining distinct from the rest of the Special Forces fraternity (Feickert, 2006: 3; O'Connell, 2006: 4). In 2005 this position changed with MARSOC being integrated into USSOCOM (Feickert, 2006: 3; O'Connell, 2006: 4). The old Force Reconnaissance Marines were merged into three battalions of Marine Special Operations Forces in 2005, comprising roughly 2,600 Marines and are headquartered at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina (Feickert, 2006: 3; O'Connell, 2006: 4). The composition and forces of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) will be dealt with in the SMU section of this chapter.

With regard to strategy, doctrine and training, USSOCOM is responsible for devising and implementing all three of these aspects relating to US Special Operations Forces (Feickert, 2006: 1; US Congress, 2004: 87). Legalistically all operations conducted by USSOCOM are executed

under Title 10 of the US Code for Armed Forces which requires operational authorisation from the National Command Authority or more specifically the President of the United States or the Secretary of Defence (Robinson, 2004: xviii; USDA, 2006: 2-1). Two of the most contentious yet ubiquitous missions for US Special Forces, namely those of UW and FID, are sanctioned by Section 2011 of Title 10 and it is this sanctioning that separates Special Forces from their conventional counterparts (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; US Congress, 2004: 833). In order to better understand the reason for such extraordinary sanctioning an analysis of the US Special Forces (Green Berets), the US Navy SEALs and the SMUs needs to be conducted.

4.2. The Green Berets.

The US Green Berets are the largest of the Special Operations Forces within the US military, comprising roughly 9,500 soldiers and civilians (Feickert, 2006: 2; USDA, 2006: 3-3). The Green Berets were established in 1952 in the aftermath of World War Two and were based on the Office of Strategic Studies (OSS) and the First Special Service Forces (Johnson, 2006: 274; Robinson, 2004: xiii). The history of the Green Berets is marked by extremes of massive build-up "when needed" and then near elimination (usually at the end of a conflict) when no longer needed (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 66; Marquis, 1997: 4). Cold War emphasis on nuclear warfare as well as the negative perceptions surrounding Special Forces in the aftermath of the Vietnam War placed tremendous strain on Green Beret units and soldiers (Johnson, 2006: 278; Marquis, 1997: 34). These negative perceptions saw 66 percent of Special Forces units disbanded after the Vietnam War, leaving only three active units in the US Army for most of the 1970's (Marquis, 1997: 4; Robinson, 2004: 18). It took most of the 1980's to resurrect the Green Berets and this culminated in 1987 with US Special Forces being officially designated a military branch (Dunnigan, 2004: 267; Nagao, 2001: 175; Robinson, 2004: 19). It is only now that the Green Berets are starting to return the high force levels that they had attained during the Vietnam War.

Currently the Green Berets are organised around a twelve man team known as an Operational Detachment Alpha or ODA's (Dunnigan, 2004: 166; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xv). ODA's are described as the most important organisational unit in the Special Forces, with each member in an ODA being classified as either a weapons, engineering, medicine, communications and intelligence specialist (Dunnigan, 2004: 166; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xv). Six ODA's comprise a

company, three companies a battalion and three battalions a Special Forces group and this has formed the basic composition of all Special Forces groups, not only the Green Berets since their inception (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xv; USDA, 2006: 3-4). There are currently five active and two National Guard groups that constitute the US Green Berets, each with a geographical focus area (see Table 1) (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xiii).

Table 1: US Special Forces (Green Beret) Groups, geographical focus and headquarters.

Group	Geographical Focus	Headquartered
First Special Forces Group	Asia	Fort Lewis, Washington
Third Special Forces Group	Africa	Fort Bragg, North Carolina
Fifth Special Forces Group	Central and South-West Asia and the Middle East	Fort Campbell, Kentucky
Seventh Special Forces Group	Latin America	Fort Bragg, North Carolina
Tenth Special Forces Group	Europe	Fort Carson, Colorado
Nineteenth Special Forces Group (ANG)	Asia and Europe	Draper, Utah
Twentieth Special Forces Group (ANG)	Latin America	Birmingham, Alabama

Sources: Adams, 2001: 3; Naylor, 2006: 3; Robinson, 2004: xiii, 14; USDA, 2008: G-14.

The Green Berets place an immense amount of emphasis on training primarily because of their belief that the "individual soldier is the key factor in a fire fight" (Coty, Bluestein & Thompson, 2005: 18; Robinson, 2004: 114). As such training lasts between one and two years and is heavily focused on their primary missions, namely UW (Dunnigan, 2004: 270; USDA, 2008: 2-11). Although all Special Forces groups are cross-qualified in land, airborne and naval warfare tactics and techniques, each branch of the military seeks to maintain their own unit specialised in their specific area of responsibility and with regard to naval operations, these are the Navy SEALs.

4.3.The US Navy SEALs.

Just like their army counterparts, the US Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) Teams can trace their lineage back to World War Two (Dunnigan, 2004: 87). The need for a naval unit that was able to reconnoitre and clear beachheads prior to invasion, and that was capable of destroying ships in

harbour, led to the establishment of Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDU's) and the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs) during the 1930's and the 1940's (Dunnigan, 2004: 87; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xvi). These units, which proved to be highly successful during the Second World War, were the progenitors of the US Navy SEALs. The UDTs were one of the few Special Forces units that "survived" the massive "culling of Special Forces" at the end of the Second World War, with sailors being trained as UDTs right up until 1983 when the UDTs were combined with the SEALs (Marquis, 1997: 67).

The US Navy SEALs as a unit were commissioned in January 1962 and received massive support from then President John F. Kennedy (Dunnigan, 2004: 185; Johnson, 2006: 277; Marquis, 1997: 26). The initial emphasis of the Navy SEALs was on Direct Action and Special Reconnaissance, with specific emphasis being placed on the SEALs ability to strike against the Warsaw Pact countries during the Cold War from the perceived safety that the oceans offer a country (Marquis, 1997: 67). The first Navy SEAL Team was deployed in April-May 1962 when a six man team (the standard size of a SEAL unit) were sent to reconnoitre Cuban beaches in preparation for a US intervention in Cuba (Marquis, 1997: 26). Although US intervention in Cuba never occurred in the form of beach landings, the missions of the SEALs were regarded as highly successful (Marquis, 1997: 26). However it was not the Cuban beach reconnaissance that the SEALs conducted that would gain them notoriety, but rather a conflict that was intensifying in South – East Asia.

The US Navy SEALs saw extensive service in the Vietnam conflict and were one of the most successful units or groups to ever operate during the conflict (Dunnigan, 2004: 185; Marquis, 1997: 26-27). SEAL Team operations in Vietnam were mainly restricted to the riverine areas of Vietnam such as operations in the Mekong Delta, for which the SEALs had extensive training (Dunnigan, 2004: 185; Marquis, 1997: 26-27). The marine proficiency of the SEALs did not imply that they were unable to operate effectively on land. This was evidenced by the fact that nearly half (48 percent) of all prison rescues and/or extractions of prisoners during the Vietnam War, were carried out by the Navy SEAL Teams (Marquis, 1997: 28). Even though the SEAL Teams proved to be a tremendous success during the Vietnam War, they, like their Special Forces counterparts, were nearly decommissioned during the 1970's, with the Navy even considering removing all SEAL Teams from active duty and placing them in the Naval reserves (Marquis, 1997: 66).

Although the exact numbers of personal attached to the US Navy SEALs is classified, it is estimated that there are roughly 5,400 active personnel attached to the US Navy Special Warfare Command (NSWC), including an estimated 2,400 men that constitute the SEAL Teams (Dockery, 2003: 407; Feickert, 2006: 3). There are currently eight Navy SEAL Teams, three Special Boat Teams and two SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams within NSWC (see Table 2) (Dockery, 2003: 407; Feickert, 2006: 3).

Table 2: US Navy SEAL, SEAL Delivery Vehicle and Special Boat Team Unit Teams, geographical focus and headquarters

Group	Team	Focus	Headquartered
Naval Special Warfare Group 1	SEAL Team One	South-East Asia	Coronado, California
	SEAL Team Three	South-West Asia	Coronado, California
	SEAL Team Five	North Pacific	Coronado, California
	SEAL Team Seven	Unspecified	Coronado, California
Naval Special Warfare Group 2	SEAL Team Two	Europe	Little Creek, Virginia
	SEAL Team Four	Central & South America	Little Creek, Virginia
	SEAL Team Eight	Africa	Little Creek, Virginia
	SEAL Team Ten	Unspecified	Little Creek, Virginia
Naval Special Warfare Group 3	SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team One	Support to SEAL Teams	Pearl Harbour, Hawaii
	SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team Two	Support to SEAL Teams	Little Creek, Virginia
Naval Special Warfare Group 4	Special Boat Team Twelve	Support to SEAL Teams	Coronado, California
	Special Boat Team Twenty	Support to SEAL Teams	Little Creek, Virginia
	Special Boat Team Twenty-Two	Support to SEAL Teams	Bay St Louis, Mississippi

Sources: Dockery, 2003: 407; Dunnigan, 2004: 275-276; Feickert, 2006: 3.

US Navy SEAL training is considered to be the toughest and most rigorous training that a prospective Special Forces soldier can go through (with the exception of SMU training), with dropout rates often being recorded as high as 80-90 percent (Marquis, 1997: 48). In recognition of their history, prospective SEAL candidates have to complete six-18 months of training known as BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL) (Marquis, 1997: 48). BUD/S training historically also included the UDTs and the NCDU's for service, with the terms BUD/S and "frogmen" enduring and still being synonymous with the US Navy SEALs.

4.4. The top of the Tier: Special Mission Units.

Even within the élite that constitute US Special Operations Forces, there are further élite soldiers namely the Tier One Special Forces units, commonly known as the SMUs (Dunnigan, 2004: 251; Vistica, 2004: A01). The following section will seek to define the concept SMU and will profile the three main SMUs of the US Military namely the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (Delta Force), the Naval Special Warfare Development Group (DevGru) and the Intelligence Support Activity (ISA).

4.4.1 Special Mission Units: definition and structure.

The US Department of Defense states that SMUs are a "generic term [used] to represent a group of operators and personnel from designated organisations that [are] task organised to perform highly classified [Special] Activities" (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 332; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 242). Special Activities in turn are defined as "action abroad in support of US policies that are planned and executed so that the role of the US government is *not apparent or acknowledged publically*" (US Congress, 1981: 21, emphasis added). Special Activities are usually not only classified activities but are also covert (Adams, 2001: xxv). Executive Order 12333 provides authorisation for the execution of these activities by the SMUs and was signed by former President Reagan in 1981 (Stone, 2003: 7; US Congress, 1981: 9).

All Special Activities are exclusively conducted by the Joint Special Operation Command (JSOC), which falls under the command of SOCOM (Marquis, 1997: 280). All units that are responsible for executing Special Activity operations are referred to as "sensitive units" by the US Armed Forces Code (US Congress, 2004: 54). Section 130B, Title 10, of the US Armed Forces Code states that sensitive units are classified as units that "conduct special activities or classified missions" and that the "disclosure of these units or personnel may be withheld [from the public] in the interests of [US] National Security" (US Congress, 2004: 54). There are currently five units assigned to JSOC and they are the 1st Special Operations Detachment-Delta (also known as Delta Force); the Naval Special Warfare Development Group (commonly referred to as DevGru); the Intelligence Support Activity (ISA), the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) (Kibbe, 2004: 110;

Marquis, 1997: 89). All of these units operate under various levels of secrecy and assume innumerable cover names and/or task force codes to maintain the highest level of secrecy and deniability. Most of these covers are maintained and perpetuated by JSOC which is headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (Adams, 2001: 9; Emerson, 1988: 68). Denial of existence also serves two other purposes besides the maintenance of secrecy. Firstly, SMU denial keeps potential enemies off guard as they are unable to track the movement of the SMUs, and secondly denial protects the lives and families of the SMU operators (Dyhouse, 2002: 1).

When compared with the other tiered Special Forces (namely Tier Two and Three Special Forces) SMUs enjoy considerably more funding and receive the latest technology and weaponry before all other units, even other Special Forces units (Flournoy & Schultz, 2007: 30). In order to maintain proficiency the SMUs also conduct regular joint operations whether as practice or in the field and it is not unheard of to find the composition of a task force being made up of small groups of soldiers from the various SMUs (Naylor, 2005: 37; Richelson, 1999: 180). These joint operations are designed to bring together and maximise the potential of the SMUs to construct the most efficient combat unit possible (Naylor, 2005: 37; Richelson, 1999: 180). Joint operations are not only conducted among the SMUs but also within units from both military and civilian agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Special Activity Division (SAD), many of whom are former SMU members (Kibbe, 2004: 102-103; Stone, 2003: 20).

SMUs are trained and equipped specifically to execute Direct Action, Counter-terrorism and Special Reconnaissance missions and the history of the execution of such missions by the SMUs can be traced back to Vietnam (Naylor, 2007: 1; Rothstein, 2006: 177). It is their ability to execute these operations at the highest level that has often led to their employment in Advanced Force Operations (AFO). AFOs are defined as "operations conducted by *selected, uniquely capable elements* which precede the main [military] forces into the area of operations to further refine the location of the enemy/target and further develop the battle space" (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 50, emphasis added). It is in these operations that the SMUs would achieve their notoriety especially during the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. However before an analysis of these operations can be conducted, a brief overview of the units that constitute the US Special Missions Units must be provided.

4.4.2 The 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta.

4.4.2.1 Genesis of Delta Force.

Officially the US Department of Defense does not confirm or deny the existence of Delta Force however popular culture both in books and cinema has made Delta Force one of the most recognised and intriguing units within JSOC (Fury, 2008: 33; Marquis, 1997: 280). Delta Force was established on November 19, 1977 by Colonel Charlie Beckwith and was spawned out of the US military's need to have a unit capable of responding to the growing threat being posed by terrorism (Adams, 2001: 161; Dyhouse, 2002: 1). When Delta Force was established in 1977 there was no other US military unit tasked with counter-terrorism and this forced Delta and Beckwith to look at other international military forces for training methods, composition and the like (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 112). As part of an ongoing exchange programme between the US and the UK, Beckwith had previously spent a number of months with Britain's Special Air Service (SAS), a unit renowned for their proficiency in counter-terrorism and this led him to model Delta on the SAS (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 334; Marquis, 1997: 63).

4.4.2.2. Mandate of Delta Force.

As such, Delta's missions would be unconventional in nature, with the focus being on counter-terrorism with specific emphasis on hostage rescue (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 334; Dunnigan 2004: 277). In the years following the establishment of Delta, Delta operators focused on operations such as DA and Special Reconnaissance to supplement their proficiency in counter-terrorism, and this proved to be highly beneficial not only to the Delta operators themselves, but to the US military as a whole (Robinson, 2004: 363; Rothstein, 2006: 102, 203; Vistica, 2004: A01). Central to this practice was the emphasis being placed on stealth and the ability of Delta operators to enter an area, execute their mission and leave without their existence ever being known (Dyhouse, 2002: 1; Fitzsimmons, 2003: 205). Delta Force units have also been involved in the escorting of high level personal in various countries such as Lebanon in the 1980's and Iraq in 1991 (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 335-336). However, it would be events in 1979 in Tehran that would offer Delta their first opportunity to put into practice all they had trained for.

In 1979, 66 American citizens were captured when the US Embassy in Tehran was seized by militant Islamic students backed by Ayatollah Khomeini (Adams, 2001: 164; Marquis, 1997: 1-

2). After negotiations had stalled, the then US President Jimmy Carter, put Delta Force on alert and ordered Beckwith to begin planning a rescue operation (Adams, 2001: 164; Dunnigan, 2004: 279; Marquis, 1997: 1-2). The operation, codenamed Eagle Claw was launched in 1980 and was a spectacular failure (Dunnigan, 2004: 279; Marquis, 1997: 1-2). It was stated that the mission had failed for two reasons. The first reason was labelled as technical difficulties; with the second reason being the crash of one of the RH-53D helicopters into a fuel laden EC-130E Hercules transport aircraft killing eight members of the task force (Adams, 2001: 164; Marquis, 1997: 1-2). Although none of these problems could have been attributed to Delta or Beckwith, Delta bore the brunt of a significant amount of the fallout with critics claiming the money being spent on Delta was being wasted (Adams, 2001: 164; Dunnigan, 2004: 279). Delta however managed to survive the criticism of 'Desert One' and has grown in strength since the events of 1980.

4.4.2.3. Recruitment and training.

Delta Force is currently headquartered at Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina (Dunnigan, 2004: 277; Feickert, 2006: 4). Although exact numbers and composition are classified, it is reported that Delta Force is made up of six squadrons (three "fighters" or operators, one support squadron, one signal and intelligence squadron and one aviation squadron) with the main squadron of operators numbering less than 400 (Dunnigan, 2004: 278; Dyhouse, 2002: 1). Delta Force teams when deployed are usually based on the four-man team developed by the SAS (although two man teams have become more popular) with each operator within the team being cross-trained in various disciplines such as weapons, explosives, intelligence and sniper tactics (Beckwith & Knox, 2000: 112). Entrance into and service with Delta Force demands immense physical fitness and mental strength from operators and given these demands, most recruits that enter into Delta are drawn from either the Special Forces or the Ranger Regiment, primarily because of perceived similar training methods and requirements (Dyhouse, 2002: 1; Fury, 2008: 10). Within Delta Force, operators are authorised to customise their own weaponry and uniforms to suit the operations they seek to carry out and this has led to significant tension and jealously (so called 'Delta envy') being shown to Delta operators from other branches of the armed services, even from the Special Forces (Adams, 2001: 162; Marquis, 1997: 64).

This hostility has often led to Delta being sidelined historically, especially during the Gulf War in 1991 although given the events of September 11, 2001 and the invasion of Afghanistan in the following months, these issues seem to have been relegated to the past (Brailey, 2005: 42; Record, 2005: 45). According to the latest reports Delta Force has changed its name to the Combat Applications Group in order to maintain secrecy, and when on deployment is referred to as "Task Force Green" (Naylor, 2005: 36). Just as with the Special Forces units, Delta is cross-trained in land, air and naval operations. However the US Navy also currently maintains an SMU, namely the Naval Special Warfare Development Group.

4.4.3. The Naval Special Warfare Development Group.

4.4.3.1. Genesis and mandate.

The Naval Special Warfare Development Group or DevGru, was formed in 1980 as the naval response to the Army's Delta Force and was previously known as Navy SEAL Team Six, with the name change to DevGru only occurring in the 1990's (Dunnigan, 2004: 277; Smith, 2006: 7). With the advent of the increase in terrorism, the US Navy became well aware of the need for a naval counter-terrorist unit along the lines of the Army's Delta Force and this led to the creation of SEAL Team Six (Dockery, 2003: 22-23). In response to this need, the Navy tasked two of their already active SEAL Teams, Teams One and Two, to develop counter-terrorist units or cells within their Teams that could be tasked with counter-terrorism on the seas (Dockery, 2003: 22-23). Both Teams responded to the challenge with SEAL Team One forming what became known as Echo Platoon and SEAL Team Two forming Mobility Platoon Six or MOB-Six (Dockery, 2003: 22-23). Both units became highly versed in counter-terrorism tactics, however they still operated within the confines of their respective SEAL Teams with counter-terrorism only being one of many skills they were tasked with (Dockery, 2003: 22-23).

In the aftermath of the failed 1980 Desert One rescue mission and the subsequent reorganisation of large sections of the US Armed Forces, it was decided by the US Navy that the retention of two separate counter-terrorist trained SEAL platoons on opposite sides of the US was not an optimal solution (Dockery, 2003: 24; Naylor, 2005: 36). As such the Navy decided that the optimal solution would be to merge the two platoons and to form a new SEAL Team and this

proved to be the genesis of Navy SEAL Team Six (Dockery, 2003: 24; Naylor, 2005: 36). Just as with Delta Force, very little is known of the origins and organisation of SEAL Team Six, excepting that it was focused on, and tasked with, similar missions to its Army counterparts in Delta, namely Counter-terrorism and Direct Action and is based in Dam Neck, Virginia (Dunnigan, 2004: 277; Emerson, 1988: 68). In its formative years SEAL Team Six was led by legendary Navy SEAL Lieutenant Commander Richard Marcinko (Dockery, 2003: 24). It was Marcinko who proposed naming the new counter-terrorist unit as SEAL Team Six as he believed that it would confuse US adversaries who would wonder where SEAL Teams Three and Five were located (SEAL Teams Three and Five had not yet been constituted at that time) (Dockery, 2003: 24-25).

4.4.3.2. Recruitment and training.

Marcinko was also responsible for the development of most of the tactics used by SEAL Team Six and although most SEAL Team Six recruits came from the other SEAL Teams, Marcinko also advocated recruitment from outside the Navy (Dockery, 2003: 25). Training for SEAL Team Six is said to be one of the toughest in the US Armed Forces with Marcinko himself acknowledging that he tried to "get 408 days of training into 365 days" (Dockery, 2003: 25). Marcinko and SEAL Team Six are still credited with the development of a large portion of the tactics and training methods employed by all Navy SEAL Teams especially in the realm of Close Quarters Battle (CQB) (Dockery, 2003: 25). During the 1980's and 1990's, the reputation of both SEAL Team Six and its commander, Marcinko, were immensely damaged by allegations of financial misconduct that led to the conviction of numerous members of SEAL Team Six with Marcinko being remanded into custody for a number of years (Dunnigan, 2004: 277). As a result of these investigations and the subsequent focus that was placed on SEAL Team Six, it was decided in the 1990's in the interests of secrecy and security, to rename SEAL Team Six as the Naval Special Warfare Development Group or DevGru (Naylor, 2005: 37).

In the aftermath of these investigations, SEAL Team Six operations and recruitment were severely curtailed and this still affects DevGru today (Naylor, 2005: 36). DevGru operators still maintain that they lack the extensive support that other units such as Delta and ISA can command and that this is why they struggle to deploy as often and in such large numbers as the other SMUs do (Naylor, 2005: 36). Both Delta Force and DevGru operate almost exclusively as

Direct Action and Counter-terrorism focused SMUs and these units often require the provision of extremely accurate intelligence in order to be successful and the acquisition of this intelligence is the speciality of the Intelligence Support Activity.

4.4.4. The Intelligence Support Activity.

4.4.4.1 Establishment.

Most Special Forces units are well aware that Special Operations missions are more likely to fail in the absence of pinpoint intelligence than if the intelligence is available (Don, 2003: 4; Gray, 1999: 14; USDA, 2006: 7-1). One of the main causes of failure attributed to the failed 1980 Desert One operation, was the severe lack of intelligence on the ground in Tehran (Richelson, 1999: 169; USDA, 1983: 4). The Department of Defense responded to these allegations of intelligence failure by establishing a commission led by Admiral James L. Holloway III, the then Chief of Naval Operations, to investigate these failures (Smith, 2006: 22). In a report, that became known as the Holloway Commission it was stated that "certain elements of the intelligence community" were to be blamed for this lack of intelligence and that the lack of a unit within the Army that dealt with classified intelligence, especially signals intelligence (SIGINT) was apparent and needed redress (Smith, 2006: 22). The Commission subsequently recommended that a specialised Army intelligence team be established to prevent future failures and this led to the genesis of the ISA (Smith, 2006: 22). In response to the abovementioned need, the Army established the Field Observations Group (FOG) with Colonel Jerry King as its commander (Richelson, 1999: 168-169; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 2; USDA, 1983: 4). What was initially an organisation established solely to provide intelligence to the other SMUs for a planned second rescue attempt of the American hostages in Iran, eventually morphed into a permanent SMU, the Intelligence Support Activity, with the ISA being officially launched on 29 January 1981 (Richelson, 1999: 170; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 2). The ISA was also given what would prove to be the first of several cover names in its history, namely the Tactical Concept Activity in order to keep the existence of the unit a secret (Richelson, 1999: 171; Smith, 2006: 35).

4.4.4.2. Mandate.

The ISA was initially tasked with "conducting intelligence activities as directed by the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army," with the ISA's Charter listing three missions specifically (USDA, 1983: 3, 6). The Charter specifies that the ISA was tasked with "military support for the Army; Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) collection and support for the Army and HUMINT and SIGINT collection in response to high priority or quick reaction Army, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) or Department of Defense (DOD) requirements" (Richelson, 1999: 175). It was understood by the Army that in order to achieve these missions, the ISA would need to conduct Special Activities and as such the ISA was authorised to execute these missions under Executive Order 12333 (USDA, 1983: 6). Although the Charter of the ISA only lists three missions as the core missions of the Activity, the mandate of the ISA was subsequently expanded to include intelligence collection of various kinds; pathfinder missions; foreign leadership protection; security and intelligence assessment; pre-strike reconnaissance; operational support; the training of foreign personnel; hostage rescue and finally the acquisition of foreign weapons systems (Richelson, 1999: 181). By increasing the mandate of the ISA, the Army has allowed the unit to better and more adequately provide intelligence support to all the SMUs (Emerson, 1988: 68; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 6).

An aspect that also makes the ISA unique as an SMU, is that the unit was tasked not only with the gathering of intelligence, but also with the development of a 'shooter option' that would allow ISA operatives to carry out DA and SR operations independent of the other SMUs (Smith, 2006: 40-41). In order to achieve this, ISA operations are coordinated through three directorates namely Personnel and Administration; Support, and Operations and Intelligence, with the last directorate being further subdivided into three smaller squadrons (those being SIGINT, Communications and Operations) (Richelson, 1999: 177-178; Smith, 2006: 113).

Funding for all ISA Special Activities is highly classified and is coordinated through what are known as "Special Access Programmes" that are given code names such as Royal Cape, Capacity Gear and Titrant Ranger to conceal their final destination (Smith, 2006: 35, 158). In accordance with these Special Access Programmes the ISA is also authorised to establish "business fronts" from which to operate out of, with the proviso that the fronts not be used to generate any income whatsoever (Kibbe, 2004: 110; Richelson, 1999: 183). These fronts have

been extremely successful and have proven to be tremendously beneficial to ISA operations. An example of one of these fronts is the ISA's maintenance of a small fleet of aircraft at the Baltimore-Washington Airport that can be used for SIGINT collection from the air (Scarborough, 2004: 1).

4.4.4.3. Recruitment and training.

Training for ISA is said to be the toughest in the US military with even the SMUs recognising the rigorous requirements needed to successfully complete training and be successfully accepted into ISA (USDA, 1983: 1). Recruitment for ISA is often from within the Special Forces community as well as the military and civilian intelligence agencies, and ISA has even been rumoured to have lured active members of both Delta and DevGru into their ranks (Naylor, 2005: 109; Richelson, 1999: 178). One aspect of recruitment unique to ISA, is the recruitment of women into their ranks (Smith, 2006: 37). ISA founder Jerry King actively campaigned for the recruitment of woman into the ISA believing that they do not draw as much attention to themselves as men do and hence provide a 'trump card' that most other SMUs lack (Smith, 2006: 37). Just as with the other SMUs, the exact number of ISA operators is classified (Naylor, 2005: 109; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 7). However ISA is recognised as the "smallest" of the SMUs with personnel numbers believed to be in the low hundreds (Naylor, 2005: 109; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 7). Even though their numbers may be small, ISA has been credited with successful operations in Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Central and South America, with some of these operations such as in El Salvador (Operation Queen's Hunter) even lasting years (Richelson, 1999: 181-182; USDA, 1985: 1; USDA, 1986: 8).

4.4.4.4. Controversy and the need for a new beginning.

ISA, just like the other SMUs, has also had its fair share of controversies. Not only has the ISA struggled to work with Army Intelligence (who it claims is jealous of the resources, training and freedom given to ISA) but ISA has also been alleged to have been involved in political assassinations which are explicitly banned by Executive Order 12333 (Emerson, 1988: 68; Richelson, 1999: 190). It has been alleged that an ISA unit codenamed Centra Spike, took part in the assassination of Columbian drug-lord Pablo Escobar in 1993, although these allegations have yet to be proven (Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 6). The presence of an ISA team who was working with Columbian police to track down Escobar, does however raise suspicion and makes the

refutation of these allegations difficult (Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 6). Just as with DevGru, ISA was also embroiled in a financial misconduct scandal that led to calls for the disbandment of the unit by the then Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger, although this call was later rescinded (Richelson, 1999: 174; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 3). It was however during this same time period that the ISA assumed a new cover name and relocated to a new location, fuelling speculation that Weinberger's call for termination was merely a cover to place the ISA under deeper cover (Richelson, 1999: 174; Sumner & Tomich, 2004: 3).

The decision to place ISA under deeper cover was repeated in 1989 by General Stanley Hyman, the then commander of the Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM), the command to which ISA reported (Smith, 2006: 158). ISA was not initially included within JSOC because its mandate was seen as more diverse than those of the other SMUs and this warranted a separate command (Smith, 2006: 29). In 1989 Hyman initiated an order to "terminate" the ISA with immediate effect, yet this order was merely a smoke screen used to once again rename and relocate the ISA (Smith, 2006: 158). From 1989 onwards ISA was officially known as the Tactical Coordination Detachment and was based at Fort Belvior in Virginia (Scarborough, 2004: 1; Smith, 2006: 158-159). When operating as an independent SMU, ISA has previously assumed cover names such as Quiet Falcon, Torn Victor and Grey Fox, with the codename Task Force Orange being used when conducting joint operations in conjunction with other SMUs (Naylor, 2005: 109-110; Smith, 2006: 234). The last known cover name is thought to be the Security Coordination Detachment, with its Strategic Access Programme going by the name Titrant Ranger (Naylor, 2005: 109-110; Smith, 2006: 234).

5. Conclusion.

One of the most frequently asked questions of Special Forces units is what is so special about Special Forces and why a nation should spend such vast sums of money on a "handful of heroes on desperate ventures?" (Gray, 1999: 2). The point is that when a country needs soldiers trained and equipped to the highest level to conduct either classified or covert operations in hostile or denied territory, there is no force globally that can provide the needed level of efficiency and economy of force that a Special Forces unit does. This chapter sought to analyse the roles and missions of Special Forces units, using the composition of the Special Forces units of the US as the primary case study. Given the nine primary and seven collateral missions of Special Forces,

no other forces seem better trained or equipped to carry out these missions at the same level of proficiency and effectiveness as Special Forces do.

Even among Special Forces, there are élite units and these are for instance the Special Mission Units of the US Special Forces. SMUs are tasked with the most difficult and most complex missions that Special Forces undertake, yet they are expected to not only complete these missions with utmost proficiency and speed, but also with the smallest number of personnel. Although the US Special Forces can be said to be without equal in terms of training and resource allocation, training and equipment only represent one dimension. It is only in armed combat that military units are defined, especially Special Forces units, and armed combat has seen the rise and fall of many a Special Forces unit. The subsequent chapter will look at the involvement of the US Special Forces and specifically the SMUs, in three major conflicts namely the Gulf War, Somalia and the Balkans, all of which took place in the 1990's. These conflicts and the pivotal role that the US Special Forces and SMUs played in them, have to be analysed in order to understand why the Special Forces and SMUs were chosen as the main response 'weapon' in the post-September 11 period.

CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES' SPECIAL FORCES IN MODERN WARFARE PRE-SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.

1. Introduction.

The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan provided the world with an in-depth view of the capabilities of the US Special Forces and specifically the SMUs, and although this proved to be the first time that many people not only comprehended the capabilities of these units but also discovered that they actually existed, it was during the 1990's that their capabilities were initially comprehensively tested. During the 1990's the US Special Forces and specifically the SMUs were involved in three main conflicts namely the Gulf War (1991), Somalia (1992-1993) and the Balkan conflict (1995-2001). These conflicts not only defined the manner in which the Special Forces and the SMUs responded to conflict situations around the globe but also how the US as a country responded to conflict. The reluctance of US policy-makers and military leaders to become involved in 'far off conflicts' after Vietnam as well as the complicated nature of conflict during the Cold War, often constrained US policy and responses to conflict. This heavily affected the deployment and use of the US Special Forces. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent conclusion of the Cold War it was believed that major conventional warfare had been confined to the past and that should conflicts arise, that they would not be as complicated as they were during the Cold War.

The previous two chapters of this study defined and demarcated not only the differences between conventional and unconventional warfare and forces, but also what the roles and missions of Special Forces and SMUs are. This chapter will seek to analyse three conflicts that involved the US Special Forces and SMUs during the 1990's namely the Gulf War (1991), Somalia (1992-1993) and the Balkan conflict (1995-2001). Each section will begin by providing a brief background to the conflict as well as the circumstances that led to the deployment of US Special Forces and SMUs, and will then analyse the role/involvement of the US Special Forces and SMUs in that conflict. An analysis of the repercussions of the deployment of these units, will then be made in order to not only illustrate the significant or pertinent contribution that these units made to the conflict, but also to illustrate how US responses to post-Cold War conflict started to shift from conventional responses to a more 'Special Forces,' unconventional response.

2. The Gulf War.

The demise of the Soviet Union was heralded as the end of major conflict between nations and the dawning of a new age of global peace where cooperation would triumph conflict. The reality however was far different and the demise of the Soviet Union would actually provide not only the US Special Forces and SMUs with expanded mandates, but also the US military in general (Marquis, 1997: 262; Robinson, 2004: xvi). The following section will analyse the first of these opportunities, namely the 1991 Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm).

2.1.Background to the conflict.

From 1980-1988, Iran and Iraq fought a devastating war that saw two of the Middle East's strongest nations confronting each other in armed and unrestricted combat (Marquis, 1997: 228). After eight years, this resulted in Iraq eventually declaring itself the victor in 1988 (Marquis, 1997: 228). In the aftermath of this conflict Iraq emerged with one of the most powerful, well-equipped and well-trained militaries in the world (Marquis, 1997: 228; Tuck, 2008: 108). Although militarily powerful, the Iraqi economy was almost completely shattered and in need of serious and extensive investment in order to recover (Dockery, 2003: 210). The then President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein believed that this economic 'investment' could be secured through the invasion and annexation of Kuwait and began to turn his attention to the small neighbouring country (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 83). On August 2, 1990 the Iraqi Army (then estimated to be the fourth largest in the world) attacked Kuwait with a force of over 100,000 troops, tanks and aircraft (Dockery, 2003: 210; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 83). The sheer speed, ferocity and tactical superiority of the Iraqi Army compared to their Kuwaiti counterparts saw Kuwait captured within one day and annexed to become the 19th province of Iraq (Dockery, 2003: 210; USSOCOM, 2007: 45).

International condemnation of Iraq's actions was almost immediate and the matter was presented to the UN Security Council (Dockery, 2003: 210). In response to this condemnation the UN authorised the formation of a Coalition tasked to liberate Kuwait and expel all Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory (Tuck, 2008: 108). When repeated diplomatic efforts to expel the Iraqi's from Kuwait failed, the Coalition (now comprising both Arab and non-Arab countries) launched Operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991 (Tuck, 2008: 108). The 38-day air campaign that was to follow would see the near total destruction of the Iraqi Army and Air Force, with the land

campaign (only scheduled to start on February 24, 1991) requiring only four days to ensure the defeat of the remnants of the Army and Air Force (Tuck, 2008: 108). Operation Desert Storm would eventually become the largest military operation to be conducted by a coalition since World War Two and the US Special Forces and SMUs would play a fundamental, yet small role in its execution (Adams, 2001: 232).

2.2. Command and Control of US Special Forces during the Gulf War.

With over 7,000 US Special Forces personnel deployed to the Persian Gulf during the 1990-1991 build-up and execution of Operation Desert Storm, these would become the largest deployment of US Special Forces to one region in their history (Adams, 2001: 232; Marquis, 1997: 228). Prior to the Gulf War, military leaders had preferred Special Forces units to support conventional forces in all operations and this would be a pattern that would be reinforced during the preparations for the liberation of Kuwait in 1990 and 1991 (Cordesman, 1994: 836; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 159). There were various ways in which this subordination was achieved but the most influential one proved to be the commander of all ground forces in Iraq, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 74; Marquis, 1997: 230). Schwarzkopf as a military commander deeply distrusted Special Forces units and thought their application was a ‘waste of time and resources’ (Adams, 2001: 232; Smith, 2006: 172).

Not only was there tension between Schwarzkopf’s perceptions of Special Forces but there was also tension between him and the then head of the USSOCOM, General Carl Stiner (Marquis, 1997: 231). This tension became apparent almost immediately when Schwarzkopf rejected Stiner’s initial “aggressive Special Forces UW campaign” to liberate Kuwait, arguing that the plan was flawed and that Desert Storm was a conventional war (Marquis, 1997: 231). Allegations and assumptions such as these were heavily steeped in traditional, conventional US military doctrine and highlighted the lack of transformation that had occurred within the US military, even after the Goldwater-Nichols Defence Reorganisation Act of 1986 (Marquis, 1997: 231). Schwarzkopf ensured that the conduct of military operations during the conflict were difficult for Special Forces when he ordered that all Special Forces missions had to receive personal sanction from him prior to launch (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 74; Marquis, 1997: 231). Needless to say, given the small window of opportunity available to Special Forces with regard to the execution of missions, many of these missions ended either being scrapped or resulted in

mission failure (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 74; Marquis, 1997: 231). All US Special Forces during the conflict were also under the operational command of a colonel and as such their command had little bargaining power with a general like Schwarzkopf (Marquis, 1997: 230; USASOC, 1992: 3).

During the Gulf War, Schwarzkopf restricted US Special Forces to four primary missions namely Coalition Warfare Support or Liaison, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence and, Combat Search and Rescue (Adams, 2001: 234, Marquis, 1997: 238). Special Forces units were also attached at various stages to conventional forces to act as Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC's) to assist in the deliverance of guided munitions on target (Marquis, 1997: 233; USASOC, 1992: 3). Their main mission however would eventually become FID for the duration of the conflict (Cordesman, 1994: 833; Marquis, 1997: 232). Ironically, even though Schwarzkopf chose to sideline Special Forces, it would be Special Operations Aviators from the 20th Special Operations Wing in two MH-53 Pave Low helicopters that would safely guide eight AH-64A Apaches to their targets in order for them to destroy Iraqi communications and radar facilities that would "open" the Gulf War on January 17, 1991 (Marquis, 1997: 236; USSOCOM, 2007: 49).

2.3. US Green Beret and Navy SEAL involvement during the Gulf War

During Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, USASOC deployed elements of the 3rd, 5th and 10th Special Forces Groups to the Persian Gulf, with 5th Group being the most 'involved' (see Table 3) (Adams, 2001: 231). 5th Group arrived in Saudi Arabia in August 1990 and were the first Army Special Forces to arrive in theatre (Robinson, 2004: 58; USASOC, 1992: 3). They were split into three smaller battalions which were each subsequently tasked with specific missions but all falling in with the emphasis Schwarzkopf had placed on FID. Elements of 5th Group were also tasked with conducting reconnaissance missions in Iraq in order to provide commanders with intelligence regarding the movement of Iraqi forces on the Coalition flanks (Cordesman, 1994: 834; Robinson, 2004: 63; USSOCOM, 2007: 48).

Operators from 5th Group would eventually conduct twelve reconnaissance missions during the conflict with one mission gaining substantial notoriety (Adams, 2001: 239; USSOCOM, 2007: 47). On January 21, 1991 four members of 5th Group were conducting a reconnaissance mission near one of the Main Supply Routes in Iraq when they were discovered and ambushed by the

Iraqi Army (Robinson, 2004: 67; USSOCOM, 2007: 239). Before being extracted four hours later, the four Green Berets successfully held off over 150 men and vehicles without sustaining a single casualty, reinforcing the immense ability of these forces when called into action (Robinson, 2004: 67; USASOC, 1992: 4). Although missions such as the above highlight the immense capabilities of Special Forces soldiers, they were few and far between. As stated above, emphasis was placed on Foreign Internal Defence and 5th Group were heavily involved in Foreign Internal Defence operations especially with Kuwaiti forces.

Table 3: Green Beret and Navy SEAL composition and focus during the Gulf War.

Composition	Squadron Deployed	Focus
Green Beret Groups	3rd, 5th and 10th	Direct Action, Coalition Warfare Support, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Combat Search and Rescue, Joint Terminal Air Controllers
Navy SEAL Teams	1 and 2	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Joint Terminal Air Controllers, Counter-mining Operations
Navy SEAL SDV Team	1	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Joint Terminal Air Controllers, Counter-mining Operations
Navy SEAL SBU Team	12	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Joint Terminal Air Controllers, Counter-mining Operations

Source: Adams, 2001: 231, 242; Dockery, 2003: 250.

5th Group played a major role in reconstituting Kuwaiti forces and were tasked with training these forces to sufficient levels in order for them to be able to retake Kuwait City after the Iraqi's had been defeated by Coalition forces (USASOC, 1992: 2-3; USSOCOM, 2007: 46). Upon deployment to the region, the men of 5th Group established immediate contact with the Kuwaiti resistance and were responsible for providing 92 percent of all human intelligence to Coalition commanders with regard to troop disposition and movement (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 74). 5th Group and their Kuwaiti allies were also given the task of clearing Kuwait City of all Iraqi soldiers and weapons and were the first units to report active engagement between themselves and Palestinian troops, who had been rumoured to be developing an insurgency within Kuwait City (USASOC, 1992: 4; USSOCOM, 2007: 51). It is estimated that during their time on

deployment, 5th Group trained 30,000 troops in 44 subject areas and that this training was not only provided to Arab partners as originally envisaged, but also to other coalition partners such as France (Adams, 2001: 238).

Although operators from 10th Group arrived in the Persian Gulf on August 31, 1990 their legacy would be established after the cessation of hostilities in 1991 (Adams, 2001: 232). 10th Group played a major role in the rarely acknowledged Operation Provide Comfort. Operation Provide Comfort sought to protect and feed the minority Kurdish population that were fleeing persecution and massacre by the Iraqi Republican Guard in 1991 (Adams, 2001: 244-245). 10th Group was tasked with this undertaking and successfully fed and protected the Kurds until the operation was handed over to the UN in July 1991 (Adams, 2001: 245).

As with the Green Berets, Navy SEALs began to arrive in the Persian Gulf in mid-August with the first teams arriving on August 12, 1990 (Dockery, 2003: 211; Marquis, 1997: 229). NSWC would eventually deploy SEAL Teams One and Two, SDV Team One, SBU Team Twelve and DevGru to the Persian Gulf (Adams, 2001: 231). Deployment within these Teams included four Direct Action platoons, a fast attack vehicle (FAV) detachment, a high-speed boat unit and communications and support detachments to augment all forces in theatre (Dockery, 2003: 214). The first SEAL Teams to arrive in Saudi Arabia were immediately deployed to the Saudi-Kuwait border on Special Reconnaissance missions to ensure that Iraqi forces did not attempt to infiltrate Saudi Arabian territory (Cordesman, 1994: 834; Dockery, 2003: 212). These units were to act at JTAC's and would be tasked with calling in air support to halt an Iraqi advance on the Saudi border, should one commence (Dockery, 2003: 212, 217; USSOCOM, 2007: 45). The SEALs were eventually replaced by 5th Special Forces Group when they arrived in the war theatre at the end of August (Dockery, 2003: 212; USASOC, 1992: 4).

The SEALs were also tasked with training the Saudi Arabian Army and Navy to counter any Iraqi incursions into Saudi Arabia, and they carried out these missions until they were once again relieved by troops from 5th Group (Dockery, 2003: 213; Marquis, 1997: 229). In line with SEAL tradition, units from the various SEAL Teams also conducted 15 hydrographic reconnaissance missions of beachheads that could possibly serve as amphibious landing zones (Cordesman, 1994: 834; Dockery, 2003: 218). SEAL Teams and SBU Teams were also responsible for all counter-mining operations conducted by Coalition forces as well as all visit, board, search and

seizure operations (another traditionally Navy SEAL mission) (Cordesman, 1994: 834-835; Dockery, 2003: 212, 222; Marquis, 1997: 237). It was during one of these visit, board, search and seizure missions on January 24, 1991 that the Navy SEALs became the first Coalition units to capture enemy prisoners of war when they boarded an oil rig that had fired on them (Marquis, 1997: 236; USSOCOM, 2007: 51).

During their Combat Search and Rescue operations SEALs and members of the SBU Teams also rescued various downed airman from the Persian Gulf ensuring that not a single airman drowned in the Persian Gulf during the conflict (Cordesman, 1994: 834; Dockery, 2003: 216). During 1991 Navy SEAL Teams participated in what would become the largest deception operation of the Gulf War when SEALs along with SBU operators 'convinced' Iraqi forces of a Coalition amphibious landing thereby tying down several Iraqi divisions and freeing up Coalition forces for the main assault on Iraq (Adams, 2001: 234; Marquis, 1997: 237).

2.4. Special Mission Unit involvement during the Gulf War.

As can be seen from the above, Green Beret and Navy SEAL sidelining during the Gulf War was profound however it was nothing compared to the sidelining that the SMUs experienced during the conflict. If relations between Schwarzkopf and USSOCOM were not cordial, the poor relationship between Schwarzkopf and General Wayne Downing, Commander of JSOC, ensured that the SMUs were even more sidelined than their Green Beret and Navy SEAL counterparts (Smith, 2006: 173). The poor relations between these two men ensured that even though some units, such as Delta Force, had generated plans that could have end the war far sooner than it did, they were either not acted upon or ignored by Schwarzkopf (Adams, 2001: 236). Even before the commencement of hostilities, Delta Force had generated a plan to either snatch Saddam Hussein from Baghdad or to assassinate him, but these plans were never acted on by senior American military leaders (Adams, 2001: 236). However, when hostilities commenced between Coalition and Iraqi forces in January 1991, SMUs were some of the first units in action, even though their numbers were limited (see Table 4) (Smith, 2006: 171).

ISA operatives were the first SMU to conduct military operations against Iraq when they were part of a joint US-UK operation on January 22, 1991 (Smith, 2006: 171; USSOCOM, 2007: 51). Four ISA operators along with sixteen British Special Boat Service (the British equivalent of the Navy SEALs) launched a helicopter assault on the Amariya communications centre on January

22, 1991 (Smith, 2006: 171; USSOCOM, 2007: 51). The operators were attempting to obtain a secret fibre optic cable that the Iraqi's were using to coordinate command and control between the centres and their mobile SCUD launchers (Smith, 2006: 171; USSOCOM, 2007: 51). ISA operatives were tasked with this operation by the US National Security Agency, who needed the cable to decipher the Iraqi communications code and determine the whereabouts of mobile SCUD launchers (Smith, 2006: 171; USSOCOM, 2007: 51).

Table 4: Special Mission Unit composition and focus during the Gulf War

Composition	Squadron Deployed	Focus
Delta Force	2 Squadrons	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, VIP Protection
DevGru	Unknown	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
ISA	Unknown	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment	Third Battalion	Support to SMUs

Source: Adams, 2001: 231, 242; Dockery, 2003: 250.

The operation was a tremendous success, and the ISA operatives acquired such a large section of the cable that the NSA was not only able to decipher the Iraqi codes during the conflict but were also able to monitor Iraqi communications well beyond the Gulf War and into the late 1990's (Smith, 2006: 171; USSOCOM, 2007: 51). Once the cable had been acquired the operatives destroyed the centre to cover up the theft of the cable, thereby confusing the Iraqi's as to the real target of the mission (Smith, 2006: 172; USSOCOM, 2007: 51). ISA units would continue to provide a small but crucial contribution to the war effort through their infiltration of ISA operators into Kuwait, in order to provide US commanders and the Green Beret forces with actionable intelligence (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 85; Smith, 2006: 172).

Of all the SMU units in the war, it would be operators from Delta Force that would make the most substantial contribution to the war effort. Operators from Delta were initially deployed in the theatre to act as bodyguards for high ranking political and military commanders such as Schwarzkopf (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 86). However their mission soon changed and become one of the most important missions of the conflict, namely SCUD hunting (Griswold &

Giangreco, 2005: 86). SCUD missiles are Soviet-made surface-to-surface missiles that are characteristically launched from mobile launchers known as transport-erector launchers (TEL's) (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 86). These launchers are highly mobile missile platforms that are capable of delivering both conventional and chemical weapons (Clearwater, 1999: 26; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 87-88). Iraqi forces were known to be in possession of a large number these missiles as well as two domestically produced variants (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 87; Marquis, 1997: 228). Before the outbreak of hostilities in February 1991, Coalition intelligence believed that Iraq possessed only eighteen TEL launchers and that the majority of Iraq's SCUD arsenal was ground based (Clearwater, 1999: 28; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 88). However, in 1991 it would be discovered that the Iraqi's possessed over 225 TEL launchers and hundreds of SCUD missiles (Clearwater, 1999: 28; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 88).

Even though Delta operators had been carrying out selective Direct Action missions, they were not specifically trained for SCUD hunting; as missions of this type generally fell to the 'regular' Special Forces such as the Green Berets or the Rangers (Adams, 2001: 242-243). Nevertheless with Israel, after having being attacked numerous times with SCUD missiles, threatening to enter the war and split the Coalition, US commanders were forced to address the "SCUD problem" and with the Green Berets so heavily involved in Foreign Internal Defence, the missions fell to the SMUs (Clearwater, 1999: 27; USSOCOM, 2007: 52). Delta's mission, in conjunction with operators from Britain's SAS, was to track the TEL's in the desert, positively identify them and then call in air strikes to eliminate the launchers before they could launch their payloads (Adams, 2001: 242-243; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 89). Delta eventually identified and targeted so many launchers that the USAF was forced to dedicate three squadrons of the new F-15E Eagle strike bombers in order to meet all the airstrike demands (Adams, 2001: 242; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 91).

2.5. Analysis of US Special Forces involvement during Operation Desert Storm.

Although all the Special Forces units that operated within the Persian Gulf during the Gulf War whether they were Green Berets, Navy SEALs or Delta, operated with the highest level of proficiency and accomplished all their objectives, the war highlighted the fact that the US military still did not believe that unconventional warfare could play a decisive outcome in a modern conflict (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 9, 79; Rothstein, 2006: 25). As such, Special

Forces operations during the Gulf War were heavily sidelined and very little emphasis was placed both on them and the forces that carried them out (Adams, 2001: 11, 232). The increased proficiency with which conventional forces operated at, especially the armoured units, also seemed to have posed a threat to the continued existence of Special Forces units with conventional commanders arguing more than ever that the results from the war once again showed that conventional forces could win through to absolute victory, regardless of the opponent or the terrain (Scarborough, 2004: 2; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 164). Although this may have been true to a certain extent, it should be borne in mind that even though the Iraqi Army was the fourth largest army in the world, compared to the Coalition and specifically US forces, they were weak and poorly armed (Tuck, 2008: 108).

What also needs to be considered is that the effectiveness of Special Forces should not and cannot be measured in the same manner that conventional victories are, namely in terms of kills or territory captured, but should rather be measured by the number of operations conducted and the success achieved during these operations (Marquis, 1997: 248). There can be little doubt that when considering the missions tasked to the Special Forces units during the war, especially the Delta SCUD hunt, no force within the Coalition produced a higher level of economy of force or a greater mission success rate than the Special Forces and SMUs and this is how their contribution should be measured (Rothstein, 2006: 154; Ziegler, 2003: 3).

Even though conventional commanders severely sidelined and constrained US Special Forces during the war, the pertinent role played by these units reinforces their felixibility and the potential they possess (Marquis, 1997: 248; Ziegler, 2003: 3). Unlike their conventional counterparts, who left the Persian Gulf arena as soon as combat operations ceased, Special Forces units played a major role after the cessation of hostilities with Iraq and were still involved in the training of the Iraqi military six years after the war, in 1997 (Adams, 2001: 238; Marquis, 1997: 249; Robinson, 2004: 87). During the Gulf War the US Special Forces lost 21 operators in combat, a figure far less than their conventional counterparts, yet they executed more operations in more hostile and complicated terrain (Adams, 2001: 244). This alone should have proven to commanders the economy of force that Special Forces provide. However it would take events in Africa in 1992-1993 to reinforce this.

Although operations in Somalia would also eventually highlight some of the major weaknesses present when employing Special Forces units with little conventional support, operations during 1992-1993 would be the first time since Vietnam that US policy-makers responded to a crisis by deploying Special Forces instead of their conventional counterparts.

3. Somalia.

Although US Special Forces deployments to Somalia began in early 1992, the US effort in Somalia was especially characterised by the October 3, 1993 'Black Hawk Down' incident when eighteen US SMU personal were killed during a raid in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. The following section will analyse the initial (1992) Special Forces involvement in Somalia as well as the operations carried out by the SMUs in 1993.

3.1.Background to the conflict.

In 1991 the North-eastern Africa country of Somalia was collapsing into a brutal civil war, fought between rival clans/factions and although this did not directly affect US interests or foreign policy, public pressure forced the then US President George H.W Bush into action (Day, 1997: 1; Delaney, 2004: 29). After UN intervention in 1992, a temporary ceasefire was adopted in March and in April under UN Security Council Resolution 751, the UN Mission to Somalia (UNOSOM I) was created (UNSC, 1992: 58). Nineteen nations contributed forces to UNOSOM I. However, these forces were severely understaffed and under-equipped given the mission they were tasked with accomplishing, namely humanitarian assistance (Akers & Singleton, 2000: 3; Day, 1997: 2; Delaney, 2004: 29). These deficiencies saw clan violence erupt one again in 1992 and after several UN peacekeepers were attacked by Somali forces, the UN adopted Security Council Resolution 794 that authorised the use of deadly force to protect all UN humanitarian assistance convoys and personnel (Celeski, 2002: 18; Delaney, 2004: 32).

In December 1992, the UN under Operation Restore Hope attempted to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali people through any means necessary (Robinson, 2004: 104; Smith, 2006: 181). However they still lacked both the numbers and the resources to successfully accomplish their objectives (Robinson, 2004: 104; Smith, 2006: 181). Aware that their efforts were failing, the UN sought to take greater and more forceful control of the situation in 1993 through the 'upgrading' of UNOSOM I to UNOSOM II, an operation far more extensive in

scope and commitment (Celeski, 2002: 17; Day, 1997: 3; Robinson, 2004: 104). UNOSOM II had increased its mission focus to also include disarming the rival clans, rehabilitating Somali political institutions, and the building of a secure environment within Somalia for the Somali people (Day, 1997: 3; US Senate 1995: 5). The US military contribution to UNOSOM II would come in the form of US Marines and soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division, many of whom would act as a quick reaction force for UN troops (Marquis, 1997: 251-252; US Senate, 1995: 5; USSOCOM, 2007: 55).

The increased commitment to Somalia saw peace once again restored and food and humanitarian aid distributed to the Somali people (Adams, 2001: 260). However the clans were well aware that the UN commitment to Somalia was temporary and began to rearm (Adams, 2001: 260). With both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell and the Commander of Central Command (CENTCOM), General Joseph Hoar both being opposed to US troop involvement in Somalia, as soon as order was restored they ordered the return of the majority of the US commitment to UNOSOM II back to the US (Adams, 2001: 260). As soon as troop levels decreased, the Somali clans began to attack UN convoys and personnel and with not wanting to commit US conventional forces to Somalia again, US political leaders and military commanders turned to the US Special Forces (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 107).

3.2. US Green Beret and Navy SEAL involvement in Somalia.

US Special Forces commitments to Somalia began in 1991 when operators assisted in the evacuation of US Embassy personnel who were being threatened when Somalia began to slide into civil war (Celeski, 2002: 16). Since 1991, the Green Berets operated in Somalia on a frequent basis and by 1993 the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 10th Groups had all rotated through the country on various types of missions (Celeski, 2002: 16). Of all four groups to have operated in Somalia, no group operated more extensively in the area than 5th Group (Robinson, 2004: 88). 5th Group began extensive operations in Somalia in 1992 and primarily acted as a quick reaction force for UN forces should they come under attack while distributing food and humanitarian aid (Dockery, 2003: 276; Robinson, 2004: 88-89). 5th Group were also tasked with providing cover to all UN convoys and personnel (Adams, 2001: 258; Robinson, 2004: 88-89).

From 1992-1993, Green Beret units assisted UN force in gauging the mood of clan leaders in order to determine which leaders were friendly to UN and US forces and which leaders were

hostile (Robinson, 2004: 92; USSOCOM, 2007: 56). These units frequently met with clan leaders and rival warlords in an effort to discuss their grievances and to reach an agreement to end hostilities toward UN personnel (Robinson, 2004: 99). Although the Green Berets met the warlords on numerous occasions and made certain inroads considering the hostile environment in which they were operating, they were nevertheless unsuccessful in their attempts to either completely disarm the warlords or to get them to agree to cease attacks on UN personnel (Robinson, 2004: 99). When the SMUs entered Somalia in 1993, the Green Berets provided them with intelligence on the location of various clan leaders and also assisted them in calling in air strikes on various warlords' weapons and communications sites and stockpiles (Adams, 2001: 260).

Navy SEAL involvement in Somalia was not as extensive as in the case of their Army counterparts, however they did have a significant role to play. Navy SEAL and SBU Teams began to arrive in Somalia in December 1992 and conducted operations almost immediately (Dockery, 2003: 276; Marquis, 1997: 251). On December 6, 1992 operators from SEAL Team One conducted hydrographic reconnaissance operations along Somali coastlines in anticipation of an amphibious landing by either US or UN forces, and although an invasion never took place, the operation was said to have been extremely successful (Dockery, 2003: 276; USSOCOM, 2007: 55). The following day, December 7, SEALs from SEAL Team One swam into Mogadishu harbour on a reconnaissance mission to determine the depth of the water in the harbour as well as strong and weak points that could be susceptible to attack (Dockery, 2003: 277). SEAL Team One was also tasked with providing personal security to then US President George Bush who visited Somalia in 1992 and assisted in the training of Indian Naval commandos before they were relieved by elements of SEAL Team Two in February 1993 (Dockery, 2003: 279; USSOCOM, 2007: 55). Although both the Green Beret and Navy SEAL Teams played a significant role in Somalia in both 1992 and 1993, their role was nevertheless small and would be eclipsed by events in 1993, with the arrival of the SMUs and the formation of Task Force Ranger.

3.3. Special Mission Unit involvement in Somalia.

In June 1993, rebels allied to Mohammed Farah Aidid, one of the most powerful Somali warlords and leader of the Somali National Alliance, ambushed and killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers that were part of UNOSOM II (Bowden, 1999: 145; Smith, 2006: 181). Not only were the troops killed by Aidid's rebels, but their bodies were mutilated and dragged through the streets of Mogadishu which, needless to say, caused international outrage and condemnation of Aidid and his followers (Bowden, 1999: 145; Smith, 2006: 181). Prior to the June 1993 attacks, the UN Administrator in Somalia, Admiral Jonathan Howe, had petitioned the then US President William J. Clinton, to send SMUs into Somalia in order to capture Aidid and his followers (Smith, 2006: 179; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 120). These calls were repeatedly rejected by both Clinton and high ranking members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who did not want to see the US commitment to Somalia increase in any way (Adams, 2001: 260). However, after the public outrage that followed the attacks, Clinton had little choice but to respond and his response would come in the form of Task Force Ranger (Smith, 2006: 179; USSOCOM, 2007: 57).

3.3.1. Task Force Ranger: composition and mandate.

The composition of Task Force Ranger would become one of the most comprehensive SMU deployments, in terms of units fielded, that JSOC had ever deployed up until that time (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 115; Smith, 2006: 181). Task Force Ranger was composed of over 400 men and women (see Table 5) from every SMUs that JSOC had control over, each with their own specific mission (Delaney, 2004: 36; Smith, 2006: 182). Task Force Ranger was commanded by the then Commander of JSOC, Major-General William F. Garrison (Day, 1997: 6; Ecklund, 2004a: 38: Smith, 2006: 178). The Task Force arrived in Somalia on August 23, 1993 under immense secrecy and began operations shortly thereafter (Smith, 2006: 183; US Senate, 1995: 6).

With regard to command and control, Task force Ranger was deliberately excluded from the command structure of UNOSOM with Garrison reporting directly to the Commander of CENTCOM, General Joseph Hoar (Adams, 2001: 262). Given the reason for the request and deployment of the Task Force, it is not surprising that their mission was also more specialised

than the missions of UNOSOM. Officially Task Force Ranger's mission was defined as the "initiat[ion of] military operations in Somalia to capture General Mohammed Farah Aidid, to include the capture of his principal lieutenants and the targeting of his Tier One [support] infrastructure" (Ecklund 2004b: 51). In order to accomplish this mission, Task Force Ranger devised a three phased plan for the capture of Aidid and the dismantling of his infrastructure (Bowden, 1999: 145; Smith, 2006: 184). Phase one of the plan would see the Task Force arrive in Somalia and become acclimated to the environment in which they would operate (Smith, 2006: 184; USSOCOM, 2007: 57). The hunt for Aidid would signal the beginning of phase two with the proviso that should phase two prove either too complicated or too time consuming, the Task Force would move into phase three, the dismantling of Aidid's communications and weapons networks as well as the arrest and detention of his allies and supporters (Bowden, 1999: 145; Smith, 2006: 184).

Table 5: Task Force Ranger composition and focus.

Composition	Number/squadron Deployed	Focus
Delta Force	C Squadron (130 operators)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance
DevGru	Four operators	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance
ISA	Unknown	Special Reconnaissance
24th Special Tactics Squad	Unknown	Support to SMUs
75th Ranger Regiment	B Company, Third Battalion	Support to SMUs
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment	First Battalion	Support to SMUs

Source: Bowden, 1999: 18; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 115; Smith, 2006: 181

Ironically, even before the October 3 1993 raid, Delta had drawn up a plan to snatch Aidid in June that required only 20 men and two helicopters (Bowden, 1999: 145). The idea was however rejected and the operation was given to a Marine detachment already in Somalia (Bowden, 1999: 145). Lacking appropriate training and equipment, the Marine raid was not only a dismal failure but it also alerted Aidid to the danger of being seen in the open and forced him into hiding (Bowden, 1999: 143; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 120). In desperation, Admiral Howe then placed a

$25,000 reward on information leading to the capture of Aidid (US Senate, 1995: 6). However, this only forced Aidid further into hiding (Akers & Singleton, 2000: 5; US Senate, 1995: 6). When Garrison and the Task Force became aware of this they decided to fully initiate phase three of their original plan (Smith, 2006: 185).

Phase three operations began at the end of August with the first SMU raid taking place on August 30, 1993 (Smith, 2006: 185). ISA operatives who had arrived in Somalia in August, fresh from operations in Columbia began tracing the radio signals of rebels almost immediately (Day, 1997: 6; Smith, 2006: 179-180, 184). At the time Somalia had no dedicated telephone network and as such rebels and warlords were forced to communicate with each other through radio-telephones, and these systems were highly susceptible to ISA interception operators (Smith, 2006: 179). The August raid was carried out on the Lig-Ligato compound in Mogadishu after intelligence from ISA confirmed the presence of high-level rebel operatives in the compound (Smith, 2006: 185). When the Delta led raid swooped in on the compound and arrested the occupants it was discovered that they were UN contractors, highlighting the difficulty of operating in Somalia (Smith, 2006: 185). Although the UN and the international media lambasted Task Force Ranger for the raid, ISA operatives had pinpointed the operatives to the compound through sophisticated signals intelligence tracking devices, not knowing however that the UN contractors were “UN workers by day and rebels by night” (Smith, 2006: 185).

The capture of Osmon Atto by Delta and DevGru operators in August, once again highlighted the difficult operational environment in which Task Force Ranger was operating (Smith, 2006: 187). The Task Force had identified Atto as one of the chief weapons and monetary suppliers to Aidid and his troops, yet he was also one of the leading reconstruction contractors contracted by the UN (Smith, 2006: 187). Phase three operations would culminate in the October 3, 1993 Operation Gothic Serpent mission.

3.3.2. The October 3, 1993 raid.

The search for either Aidid or his lieutenants was conducted in an extremely hostile environment, usually the militia infested Bakara Market, and this led to Garrison stipulating that “concrete evidence” would be needed before any operation could be launched to snatch either Aidid or any of his lieutenants (Smith, 2006: 180; US Senate, 1995: 38). The requirement for “concrete evidence” placed tremendous pressure on the operators of Task Force Ranger and

especially the ISA, who were tasked specifically with the gathering of all intelligence for the Task Force (Smith, 2006: 179). Intelligence was collected through two majors "sources" in Somalia namely SIGINT and HUMINT (Smith, 2006: 179). Given the technical proficiency of ISA operatives, SIGINT collection proved to be extremely easy however it was often unreliable, as warlords would often change plans with little warning or communication (Smith, 2006: 179; US Senate, 1995: 38). For HUMINT collection ISA operatives had to rely on Somali agents recruited by the CIA and these sources proved to be extremely unreliable and often contradictory (Day, 1997: 16-17; Smith, 2006: 179).

On October 3, 1993 ISA received intelligence from *both* HUMINT and SIGINT sources reporting that a number of Tier One personalities were meeting in a building north of the Olympic Hotel in the Bakara Market (Day, 1997: 7; Smith, 2006: 178). The fact that the meeting was confirmed by both forms of intelligence provided Garrison with the concrete evidence he required to launch an operation to snatch the Tier One's (Day, 1997: 7; Smith, 2006: 178). The mission template employed by Garrison and Task Force Ranger was a tried and tested method that they had employed on six previous missions (Smith, 2006: 187; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 126). The plan required a security team of Rangers to be inserted by MH-60 Black Hawk's to provide a four cordon perimeter around the target building while operators from Delta landed on AH-6J Little Bird helicopters and assaulted the building (Bowden, 1999: 29; Smith, 2006: 179). Once the Delta operators had assaulted the building and captured the Tier One's, a ground convoy of Humvee's and trucks would drive up to the target building, load up the Tier Ones, Rangers and Delta operators and would exfiltrate the area back to base (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 115; Smith, 2006: 179). Garrison believed that the time from mission insertion to extraction would be no longer than thirty minutes (Bowden, 1999: 29)

The mission would involve 180 personnel, 14 vehicles and 20 helicopters and would be based on speed, surprise and violence of action to achieve its goals (Akers & Singleton, 2000: 6; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 116). The Task Force originally put in a request for AC-130 Gunships and armour in order to provide the force with maximum protection and various alternatives however the request was turned down (US Senate, 1995: 28). At 15:30 on October 3, 1993 the mission was cleared and the Task Force departed their base for the Bakara Market, arriving over their target at 15:40 (Smith, 2006: 189; USSOCOM, 2007: 58). The mission was executed perfectly by the SMUs however at 16:10, in the process of extracting the Tier One's, one of the Night

Stalker helicopters (Super Six One) was hit by an Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) that destroyed its tail rotor and forced the helicopter down 300 yards east of the target building (Day, 1997: 8; Smith, 2006: 180, 190). Although the downing of Super Six One came as a tremendous surprise to the Task Force, with hindsight it should have been expected.

Prior to October 3, Task Force Ranger had conducted six operations using the same mission template as they were using on October 3 and the Somalis were aware of this (Smith, 2006: 187; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 126). The Somalis knew that the Black Hawks were the Task Forces symbol of power and that the best way to inflict damage on both the Task Force and the international media was to down one of these helicopters (Bowden, 1999: 166). In order to achieve this, the Somalis had smuggled Al-Qaeda terrorists into Somalia to train their militia to shoot down helicopters with RPG's and had grown rather proficient in their use of the primitive system (Blaber, 2008: 66; Ecklund, 2004b: 56). The Somalis also knew, from witnessing previous Task Force Ranger missions, that as soon as a helicopter was downed, Task Force Ranger's mission would shift from capturing the Tier One's to recovering their casualties (Ecklund, 2004a: 38; US Senate, 1995: 37).

At Super Six One's crash site, AH-6J Little Birds landed to extract surviving crew members and a quick reaction force Black Hawk assisted in fast-roping in members of the 24th STS to assist crew members trapped in the helicopter (Day, 1997: 8; US Senate, 1995: 37). Later in the afternoon another Black Hawk (Super Six Four) was also brought down by an RPG and having already deployed their QRF force to secure Super Six One's crash site, meant Garrison had no available units to secure Super Six Four's crash site (Day, 1997: 9; USSOCOM, 2007: 58). When Garrison tried to re-route the extraction ground convoy to the crash sites, they struggled to reach the sites because of obstacles and barricades that the Somalis had built and this resulted in horrific casualties to members of the ground convoy (Day, 1997: 8; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 116). In desperation Garrison turned to the UN forces based in Mogadishu and requested assistance in the form of tanks and armoured personnel carriers (APCs) to assist in the extraction of the Task Force Ranger operatives (Day, 1997: 10).

Even with up-armoured tanks and APCs, it took the relief convoy two and a half hours to reach the survivors of Task Force Ranger, who had congregated at the crash site of Super Six One, a distance of only a few miles (Day, 1997: 10). The convoy arrived at the crash site at 01:55 on

October 4th; nearly eight hours after the mission had been launched (US Senate, 1995: 37; USSOCOM, 2007: 59). By the time Task Force Ranger had returned to base they had been in the field for nearly a full day and had lost 18 men killed in action, with 84 wounded (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 117; Marquis, 1997: 253). Although still contested, it is believed that the Somali death toll stood at between 800-1000 killed; with thousands more injured (Adams, 2001: 264; Marquis, 1997: 253).

3.4. Analysis of US Special Forces involvement in Somalia.

Given the events of October 3, 1993 it is clear that the US military did not comprehend the massive undertaking that Somalia would prove to be (Robinson, 2004: 93; US Senate, 1995: 8). Somalia would prove to the be the first but not the last time the US military were confronted with a type of warfare that they had not experienced since the 1960's and 1970's, namely unconventional warfare (Robinson, 2004: 93; US Senate, 1995: 8). The conflict in Somalia had morphed in 1993 into an unconventional conflict and one that was anathema to the traditional manner in which the US fought wars and this concerned the senior officials in the Pentagon (Robinson, 2004: 93; US Senate, 1995: 8). The main tragedy of Operation Gothic Serpent was that even though it was a tactical success, given the environment in which Task Force Ranger was operating as well as the fact that they secured all their Tier One's, the operation was still seen as a failure and even an embarrassment in the US (Ecklund, 2004a: 44; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 129).

The aftermath of the operations revealed two major aspects regarding US operations in Somalia. Firstly, even though the US had deployed forces skilled in UW, namely the SMUs, they still failed to acknowledge that Somalia was an unconventional conflict (Bowden, 1999: 41). Secondly, it was clear that Washington's commitment to Somalia simply "did not include casualties" (Bowden, 1999: 41). The US also failed to recognise that losses to Aidid on October 3 were so severe that he was unable to exert the level of control over Mogadishu that he had previously been able to, and that had Task Force Ranger continued to operate in the region they may well have captured him (Adams, 2001: 265; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 117). The aftermath of Operation Gothic Serpent and the subsequent enquiries by the US Senate into the US commitment in Somalia, highlighted aspects that can be argued to have led to the failure of Task Force Ranger even before they had deployed. Firstly, pressure from the Joint Chiefs of

Staff to "keep numbers down" placed both JSOC and Task Force Ranger in an extremely difficult situation (US Senate, 1995: 29). JSOC was unable to deploy the number of forces it needed in theatre in order to operate effectively and this, according to the then JSOC commander General Downing, forced them to "take numbers of people, not whole units...we [JSOC] had to break up units" (US Senate, 1995: 29). Although units such as Delta and ISA are extremely capable of operating with only one or two operators at a time, given the scale of the October 3 mission, these "break-ups" proved costly to the Task Force (US Senate, 1995: 29).

Secondly, both JSOC and Task Force Ranger failed to appreciate the training of the Somali militia, especially with regard to RPG tactics, and failed to adapt their tactics accordingly (Ecklund, 2004b: 57; US Senate, 1995: 7). Garrison and Task Force Ranger had no indication that the Somalis had recruited Al-Qaeda terrorist to train them to bring down helicopters with RPG launchers, and they did seek to address tactical constraints with regard to the infiltration and exfiltration of the SMUs by helicopter (Ecklund, 2004b: 56-57; US Senate, 1995: 7). However the Task Force still did not fully appreciate the level of risk to which they were operating (Ecklund, 2004b: 56-57; US Senate, 1995: 7). On September 25, eight days before the launch of Operation Gothic Serpent, Somali rebels had downed one of the 10th Mountain Divisions Black Hawk helicopters and Task Force Ranger was aware of this, yet did not adapt tactics accordingly (Ecklund, 2004b: 57). This failure could have been prevented or at least countered had the US had better intelligence on the ground in Somalia. The close knit society that was characteristic of Mogadishu and Somalia, should have been taken into account not only by the JSOC and ISA but also by the CIA, who recruited most of the agents that ISA ran (Ecklund, 2004b: 55; US Senate, 1995: 42).

Lastly, it has been argued that Washington and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were "courting disaster [in Somalia] by denying [the Task Force AC-130] gunships and armour" (Robinson, 2004: 104). This criticism is one of the most controversial criticisms of Task Force Ranger and was vehemently denied by politicians as well as Task Force Ranger operatives, including Garrison at the time (US Senate, 1995: 33). In evidence before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1995, Garrison stated that he did not "know why the AC-130's were disapproved but I thought the mission was doable without them. It is *highly* debatable that the AC-130's would have made a difference" (US Senate, 1995: 30, emphasis added). He further stated he "never considered it useful to integrate armour into a raid" and that he "would not know what to do with them" if they

were available at the time (US Senate, 1995: 33). However, not all commanders or military leaders agreed with Garrison's assessment. Colonel Jerry Boykin, the Delta Force ground commander on October 3 stated that, "essentially tanks and armour would have been great...their absence was clearly a bad mistake" (US Senate, 1995: 33). It is contradictory views such as these that called into question many of the decisions made on that day by both Garrison and other political and military leaders (US Senate, 1995: 33). However, it should be borne in mind that although tanks as well as other armoured vehicles were well protected and commanded massive amounts of firepower, in the small and narrow streets of Mogadishu they would have made easy targets for RPG teams and other militia (Akers & Singleton, 2000: 22; US Senate, 1995: 33).

Although criticism of Task Force Ranger and specifically Garrison was fierce, and continues to remain fierce, the defence and minimal loses inflicted on it on October 3 when compared to their Somali counterparts (a ratio of 40-50:1 in terms of troops killed in action) is testament to the training of Task Force Ranger and the US SMUs (Adams, 2001: 258; Ecklund, 2004b: 47). It is highly questionable whether conventional forces, backed up by gunships and armour would have sustained lesser casualties in such a sustained fire fight (Adams, 2001: 258; Ecklund, 2004b: 47). The Battle of the Black Sea, as October 3 became known, was also the first occasion since the Vietnam War that Medals of Honour were bestowed on soldiers posthumously (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 116). Although Task Force Ranger had requested to remain in Somalia after October 3 to continue their primary mission to capture Aidid, declining public support in the US as well as Congressional pressure to withdraw US troops from Somalia, eventually led to Task Force Ranger being recalled to the US at the end of 1993 (Delaney, 2004: 28).

By March, 1995 all US troops had been withdrawn from Somalia with most political and military leaders seeking to "bury the Somali episode" (Celeski, 2002: 26; Dockery, 2003: 282). In 1995 the US military would once again turn to their Special Forces units when tensions started to rise in the former Soviet countries and specifically in the Balkan region. After the 1992 civil war, the UN responded and this response would once again see the US deploy their Special Forces, for the third time in five years to assist in the resolution of another major crisis. The crisis in the Balkans would require the US Special Forces and especially the SMUs to exercise near complete UW tactics, and would test the units more than expected, often with surprising results.

4. The Balkans.

In the aftermath of the Somali intervention, the US military believed they would be able to regroup their forces and evaluate and implement the lessons learned from the intervention into Somalia. This proved to not be the case, as the Special Forces were once again deployed to respond to the crisis that was spiralling out of control in the Balkan region. The following section will analyse the role that the US Special Forces played as part of the UN mandated force dispatched to assist in bringing order back to the Balkans. Analysis of the involvement of the SMUs will focus exclusively on the hunt for what the ICC termed "persons indicted for war crimes."

4.1. Background to the conflict.

Although the end of the Cold War was heralded as the dawning of a new, peaceful era where countries, specifically in Eastern Europe, would be able to govern themselves free from external interference, the reality was far different (USSOCOM, 2007: 64). Yugoslavia was a country made up of rival ethnic 'states' and in the 1990's these 'states' started to declare independence and sought to break away from Yugoslavia (USSOCOM, 2007: 64). Although conflict started to become synonymous with the region by the 1990's, in 1992 the conflict had developed into a fully fledged civil war that required international intervention in order to prevent an international disaster (Robinson, 2004: 136; USSOCOM, 2007: 64).

International efforts to resolve the conflict culminated in the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995 (Dockery, 2003: 288; Robinson, 2004: 136; USSOCOM, 2007: 64). However by that stage the ethnic cleansing that had become prominent in the region was nearly completed (Dockery, 2003: 288; Robinson, 2004: 136). One of the provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords stipulated that the country be divided in three sectors, each being patrolled and monitored by an international UN peacekeeping force, known as Implementation Force (IFOR) (Blaber, 2008: 42). Each of the three sectors (north-west, north-east and south) was under the command of British, American and French military commanders respectively (Blaber, 2008: 42). Nineteen country countries participated in IFOR but it was the US, the UK and France that would play the most prominent role in assisting in rebuilding the country and keeping the peace (Blaber, 2008: 42). For the Special Forces and specifically the SMUs, the Balkans and Kosovo would become their near exclusive area of operations for more than seven years.

4.2. Green Beret and Navy SEAL involvement in the Balkans.

In line with the Dayton Peace Accords, the initial US commitment to the Balkans came in the form of 10th Special Forces Group led by Colonel Geoffrey Lambert (Fury, 2008: 52; Ramirez, 2004: 5; Robinson, 2004: 137). The US commitment to the Balkans relied on the US Special Forces who arrived in Italy on December 8, 1995 and entered the Balkan theatre shortly thereafter (Ramirez, 2004: 5; Robinson, 2004: 137). When first deployed, the 10th Group were tasked with "acting as liaison elements among member countries and as observers pointing out trouble" (Ramirez, 2004: 5; Robinson, 2004: 137). One of the most complex challenges facing not only IFOR but also the Balkan people, was sniper fire within cities and the Green Berets were also eventually tasked with ascertaining the positions of these snipers and eliminating them (Robinson, 2004: 139). 1st and 5th Groups joined 10th Group in 1995 and were heavily involved in Foreign Internal Defence operations in the region (see Table 6) (Robinson, 2004: 141). The language ability of the two groups assisted them in their mission of providing skills training to the Malaysian, Pakistani and various other Arab nations involved in IFOR (Ramirez, 2004: 9; Robinson, 2004: 139). The extreme level of proficiency of the three Green Beret Groups eventually saw them train not only the Malaysians, Pakistani and Arab nations but also the Romanian, Russian, Turkish, Polish and Czech Republic contingents to IFOR as well (Butler, 1997: 33; Ramirez, 2004: 10).

Table 6: Green Beret and Navy SEAL composition and focus in the Balkans.

Composition	Squadron Deployed	Focus
Green Beret Groups	1st, 5th, 7th, 10th	Direct Action, Coalition Warfare Support, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Combat Search and Rescue
Navy SEAL Teams	1 and 2	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Combat Search and Rescue

Source: Dockery, 2003: 288; Ramirez, 2004: 14; Robinson, 2004: 137, 141.

In the war theatre, just as was the case in Somalia three years earlier, the Green Berets were tasked with gauging reaction to, and perceptions of the local inhabitants regarding IFOR troops and then passing on this information to their conventional counterparts (Ramirez, 2004: 12). The

Green Berets achieved this through a simple but ingenious method, one that would be re-enacted in Afghanistan six years later. Green Beret units moved into various villages believed to be prime spots for intelligence gathering, rented local housing and lived among the local population on a daily basis, often assisting the locals with their needs (Ramirez, 2004: 12; Robinson, 2004: 141). Navy SEAL Teams who were also heavily involved in this area contributed to the overall collection of intelligence both by means of conducting hydrographic reconnaissance of various riverine regions such as the Sava River in Croatia, as well as through HUMINT collection (Dockery, 2003: 288). Green Beret and Navy SEAL operations continued in the Balkan region right up until, and including Operation Allied Force in Kosovo in 1999 (Ramirez, 2004: 5).

When violence and ethnic cleansing started to emerge in the Kosovar region in 1998 and 1999, the US military realising the unconventional nature of both the forces and terrain in the region once again turned to the Special Forces (USSOCOM, 2007: 68). Once again it would be Green Berets from 10th Group, under the codename Task Force Falcon, who would lead the way in Kosovo and would carry out most of the significant operations in the region (Butler, 1997: 33; Ramirez, 2004: 8). In 1999 it would be Green Berets from 10th Group who, after conducting extensive SR operations, would be responsible for calling in a large number of the air strikes on Serbian forces in the region (Ramirez, 2004: 15). The air strikes destroyed vital Serbian military forces and armaments that were most likely scheduled to be used in the ethnic cleansings that had become ubiquitous in the region (Ramirez, 2004: 15). It was also on missions such as these that the men of 10th Group targeted and destroyed Serbian railway lines thereby hindering Serbian troop movements into various areas across the Kosovar region (USSOCOM, 2007: 68).

In 1999, 10th Group would make history by becoming the first American unit since World War Two to call in artillery support for Russian troops under attack by a common enemy (Schaefer & Davis, 2002: 53). 10th Group's counterparts, 7th Group, who had arrived in theatre earlier that year along with Navy SEAL Team Two, also revived another Cold War mission when they conducted Special Reconnaissance operations on Russian forces suspected of smuggling vehicles and weapons into Kosovo (Ramirez, 2004: 14). The US and its NATO allies suspected that the Russian Army's 13th Tactical Group was smuggling forces into Kosovo under the IFOR/KFOR banner and this suspicion was confirmed by the joint Green Beret-SEAL Team when they photographed Russian soldiers repainting vehicles and weaponry along the Drina River that borders Bosnia and Serbia (Ramirez, 2004: 14). These images were quickly relayed to NATO

commanders who took relevant action against the Russian forces who it was believed were targeting the airfield in Pristina (Ramirez, 2004: 14).

Green Beret and Navy SEAL units were once again also tasked with CSAR operations, just like they had been in the Gulf War, with the Green Berets executing two high profile rescues, that of F-16 pilot Captain Scott O'Grady and F-117 pilot Lieutenant-Colonel Dale Zelko, the pilot of the only Stealth Fighter to ever be lost in combat (USSOCOM, 2007: 68). Green Beret and Navy SEAL operations during the Balkan crises from 1995-2001 were, just as they had been in Somalia, extensive. However it would be the missions of the SMUs that would once again eclipse all their efforts.

4.3. Special Mission Unit involvement in the Balkans.

In 1997 the US along with the UK, Germany, France and Holland created a joint Task Force under the codename Amber Star whose sole mission was the identification and capture of 74 alleged war criminals (Brailey, 2005: 22; Robinson, 2004: 141; Smith, 2006: 193). In the aftermath of the Bosnia genocide the ICC had identified 74 persons believed to have perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity and the ICC sought their capture and extradition (Brailey, 2005: 22; Robinson, 2004: 141). Given the sensitive nature of these operations it was decided by the various militaries of the five nations listed above that the missions were to be conducted by the various SMUs of each nation (Newman, 1998: 46). In response to these requests JSOC deployed an estimated 300 operators from Delta, DevGru and the ISA to assist in the identification and arrest of the alleged criminals (see Table 7) (Brailey, 2005: 22; Newman, 1998: 45).

ISA operators under the cover name Torn Victor, were the first SMU to enter Bosnia when they deployed to the region in 1996 in order to "get a feel for what was happening on the ground" and prepare for the arrival of the other SMUs (Smith, 2006: 196). Serbian police at the time were considered hostile by the ISA operators and ISA was warned before deployment that the police would actively hamper its efforts to arrest the alleged criminals if they discovered the existence of ISA operatives in the region (Blaber, 2008: 47). This complicated matters significantly for the ISA, who requested assistance from Delta in order to more efficiently cover their bases (Fury, 2008: 50). The Delta unit that arrived in Bosnia later that year comprised roughly 30 members, both men and women, and was tasked solely with "conducting routine reconnaissance [of the

region] for future missions" (Blaber, 2008: 42; Fury, 2008: 50). In order to maintain operational security the operators, using civilian airlines, flew into Bosnia from different locations globally, with only a few operators arriving at a time and then congregating at a safe house in Tuzla (Blaber, 2008: 42; Newman, 1998: 45). When conducting reconnaissance operations Delta and ISA operators made use of a variety of disguises to conceal their identities, often appearing as local fisherman and even Bosnian Serb police officers when operating in the south of Bosnia (Blaber, 2008: 43; Smith, 2006: 192).

Table 7: Special Mission Unit composition and focus in the Balkans.

Composition	Number Deployed	Focus
Delta Force	20-30 Members	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance
DevGru	60 Members	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance
ISA	Unknown	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment	Unknown	Support to SMUs

Source: Blaber, 2008: 42-43; Smith, 2006: 201.

Operators from DevGru arrived in Bosnia in December 1997 and just as their Delta and ISA counterparts, were smuggled into the country (Newman, 1998: 45). Once they had arrived in theatre they also travelled to the safe house in Tuzla and began carrying out operations almost immediately (Newman, 1998: 45). Although both DevGru and the ISA were also tasked with snatching alleged war criminals, the mission primarily fell to Delta, with ISA being responsible for the gathering of intelligence and DevGru only arriving six month after the first snatch operation took place in July 1997 (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 113; Smith, 2006: 198). Operation Tango was launched on July 10, 1997 and was a joint US-UK operation to capture Simo Drljaca (Smith, 2006: 198). Although Drljaca was gunned down by SAS operators when he opened fire on their Black Hawk, the mission was billed as a success and would serve as an example of how future missions would be conducted (Smith, 2006: 198). DevGru would have numerous successes in snatching war criminals during their Balkan deployments (Newman, 1998: 48; Smith, 2006: 201-202).

Although Delta would be called away from the Balkan war criminal search in 1998 in order to collect intelligence on Serbian command centres and armoured units in Kosovo, they would still provide massive support to operations in the Balkans, often with surprising results (Blaber, 2008: 43; Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 114). In 1998, Delta operators would conduct an operation that would be hailed as a major, yet unorthodox success both within Delta and the other SMUs (Blaber, 2008: 53). During these operations, Delta perfected the use of breaching tools and developed various methods to intercept the war criminals travelling in convoy that would eventually become standard practice both inside and outside the military for years to come (Blaber, 2008: 44-59). Weapons such as vehicle breaching charges and tyre puncturing mats, that would become standard issue to both military and police forces years later, were pioneered and tested by Delta Force operatives during their searches in the Balkans (Blaber, 2008: 54-56).

Even though Delta and the ISA would be the SMUs primarily responsible for snatching war criminals in Bosnia during the 1990's, it would be DevGru who would "catch the biggest prize" when they arrested General Radislav Krstic, the man responsible for the killing of 7,000 Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995 (Smith, 2006: 203). Although a great deal is known regarding US SMU involvement in the Balkans, most of the operations conducted during the Balkan episode still however remain classified, and as such the exact nature and extent of US SMU involvement in the region will not fully be known until further records have been declassified (Dockery, 2003: 289; Smith, 2006: 204).

4.4. Analysis of US Special Forces involvement in the Balkans.

The Balkan conflict from 1995-2001 provided the US military with important knowledge regarding the results that conventional and Special Forces could achieve together, should sufficient knowledge of each branches capabilities be known (Ramirez, 2004: 23). When US conventional and Special Forces entered the Balkan theatre they entered with two divergent attitudes. Conventional commanders were fresh from their victory in Iraq whereas the Special Forces units and specifically the SMUs were fresh from their perceived defeat in Somalia. Even though this was the case and it seemed that conventional commanders would make this point known to their Special Forces counterparts, the reality is that it only drew them closer. The Balkan conflict would prove to be the first time that conventional commanders would place emphasis on Special Forces, and would recognise the important role that Special Forces could

play in the maximisation of conventional force capabilities and a reduction of their weaknesses (Ramirez, 2004: 22-23).

Conventional commanders started to realise the contribution that Special Forces units could provide them and Special Forces commanders started to acknowledge that conventional forces could assist them when more firepower was needed (Dunlap, 2001: 122; Ramirez, 2004: 29). This realisation would eventually see conventional commanders requesting more Special Forces assistance than was available in theatre, and this boded well for the future of conventional-Special Forces relations (Ramirez, 2004: 29). Ziegler (2003: 3) states that, "force projection is the demonstrated ability to alert, mobilise and rapidly deploy [to a battlefield]" and Special Forces are able to do this both effectively and efficiently. There is a definite growing congruence between the demands being placed on the US military with regard to responding to crisis situations and the military capability of Special Forces units (Fitzsimmons, 2003: 203). At the same time, Special Forces units are also acutely aware that there are limitations both in terms of the number of crises to which they can respond to as well as the type of operations to which they are suited. Certain operations favour conventional forces and certain operations favour Special Forces, and the Balkans not only taught the US military this but also reinforced that conventional and Special Forces could conduct operations that could and would be mutually beneficial.

5. Conclusion.

With the demise of the Soviet Union in the 1990's, it was assumed that peace and not war would dominate the 1990's. This however proved not to be the case. By the end of the decade the US military had responded to three conflicts globally, each with its own intricacies and each in a different geographical area (the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe). These three conflicts were not only different with regard to geographical location, they were also different in terms of the military response needed to address them. The Gulf War of 1991 was a war that was conventional in every manner, especially according to Coalition commander General Schwarzkopf. As such the response of the US military was a conventional one and one that had little time or inclination for the involvement of Special Forces units. Consequently, Special Forces units during the Gulf War played a limited and often frustrated role. Conventional and Special Forces command and perceptions of each other, as a result of this, were tense and distrusting. When the US intervened in Somalia two years later this would begin to change.

US military commanders on the ground in Somalia from 1992 onwards, quickly began to realise that Somalia was no Iraq and that their responses would have to be different. Somalia was inherently an unconventional conflict and this placed the US in a difficult situation, given its proclivity to respond to all armed conflict in a conventional manner. Their response to the situation was to rely on the Special Forces and the SMUs when seeking to either capture Aidid or to restore order to the region. It was also in Somalia that the US began to realise that the nature of warfare was changing and that they had to adapt to this change or suffer the consequences. Just as two years had separated the conventional Gulf War from the more unconventional Somali conflict, it would be two more years that would separate the Somali conflict from the unconventional Balkan conflict. In the Balkans the US military were confronted with an almost complete unconventional conflict with sniper fire replacing armoured formations as the main threat to troops in the field. What was different in terms of the reaction by US military commanders when comparing Somalia and the Balkans, was that the US conventional commanders, being now well aware of their capabilities, wanted to make use of Special Forces and SMUs and actively sought engagement with Special Forces units.

For conventional commanders, it was during the Balkan conflict where the shift occurred between being forced to rely on Special Forces, as was the case in Somalia, to *wanting* to rely on Special Forces, as was the case in the Balkans. The US had finally realised that the greatest challenge to their military primacy and superiority came not from Russian or Chinese armoured formations, even though these still posed a threat, but rather from small bands of rebels, terrorists or opportunists who themselves had realised that the best means by which to attack the US would be through unconventional 'hit-and-run' tactics and not traditional military means. Given the superiority of the US military it is hardly surprising that both the US and their enemies would come to these conclusions. However, few would have predicted the effect that it would have not only on the US but on the global order. It would require the September 11, 2001 Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the US homeland to reinforce this. The ensuing chapter will deal with the repercussions of these attacks not only for the US military but more importantly, for the US Special Forces. The most visible repercussion of these attacks was the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, an invasion carried out nearly exclusively by the US Special Forces, and this will form the basis of the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF US SPECIAL FORCES IN THE 2001 INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN.

1. Introduction.

The 2001 terrorist attacks on the US were significant for numerous reasons, not only because of their audacity and indiscriminate nature. They also signified a more definite shift in the traditional approach that most states adopt when it comes to warfare and how to address warfare, namely war's conventional nature and the threat that states face from other states. The 2001 terror attacks were carried out by non-state actors and were conducted not in their country of origin (Afghanistan in the case of Al-Qaeda) but in the US. As a result of the attacks, US political and military leaders became well aware that the traditional means of response, whether by cruise missile attacks or conventional invasion, would most likely be difficult and thus turned to their only other alternative, US Special Forces operations coupled with strategic bombing. The decision to turn to the US Special Forces and large scale precision bombing to execute retaliatory strikes in Afghanistan, would have tremendous consequences, both positive and negative, for the units and their command. Both of these consequences will be dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter four analysed the role that the US Special Forces had played in the execution of military campaigns in the pre-9/11 period. This chapter will elucidate how the increased reliance on Special Forces since the end of the Cold War in the 1990's, ensured that the US Special Forces and USSOCOM would be expertly prepared and the logical choice as responders to the 9/11 attacks. The chapter will begin by analysing the background to the conflict, namely the 9/11 attacks on the US and will then assess the responses available to the US political and military leaders at the time. It will be shown that the Afghanistan conflict, commonly referred to by its campaign designation, Operation Enduring Freedom, was executed as a 'two-phase' war and would become one that would challenged not only the US Special Forces and USSOCOM, but the entire US military establishment. Specific reference will be made to the major campaigns fought by the Green Berets and Navy SEALs in Afghanistan, such as Mazar-e Sharif, as well as the involvement of the SMUs in Afghanistan and specifically in operations in the Tora Bora mountains. An analysis of the consequences of relying on the US Special Forces and USSOCOM to execute the Afghan campaign will then be examined in order to elucidate not only how the US

military have viewed unconventional warfare, but also how unconventional warfare in Afghanistan has been seen by some as one of the main forms of warfare in the future.

2. Background to Operation Enduring Freedom.

In the early and late 1990's bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan were listed as minor priorities of the US government, intelligence agencies and the military (Blaber, 2008: 65). At the time, US political and military leaders were confronted with other global challenges such as growing tensions in Iraq, Bosnia, Serbia and even Columbia and thus bin Laden and Afghanistan were often neglected or seen as minor 'nuisances' (Blaber, 2008: 65). On September 11, 2001 this viewpoint was radically altered when American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Centre (Dockery, 2003: 209). Although initially reported as a catastrophic accident, when United Airlines Flight 175 struck the South Tower eleven minutes later, all illusions that the North Tower crash might have been an accident, disappeared (Dockery, 2003: 209). Subsequently, American Airlines Flight 77 slammed into the western side of the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a field in Pennsylvania (Dockery, 2003: 209). In the aftermath of the attack, 2,995 people including 19 hijackers lay dead and the US had suffered its first foreign attack on American soil since Pearl Harbour (Finlan, 2003: 92; Kiper, 2002: 3).

Al-Qaeda given sanctuary in Afghanistan, claimed responsibility with bin Laden said to have planned the attacks since the late 1990's (USSOCOM, 2007: 87). The US response to the 9/11 attacks was swift with the then US President George W. Bush calling on the US Senate to authorise immediate action against Al-Qaeda and Afghanistan for their role in the 9/11 attacks (Kiper, 2002: 3). Authorisation was received on September 15th and this allowed US political and military leaders time to begin planning for a full-scale retaliation on both Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan (Khan, 2009: 3; Kiper, 2002: 3). The US military were given explicit instructions on what their objectives in Afghanistan were to be, namely to kill or capture bin Laden; to destroy Al-Qaeda as an entity; to ensure that Afghanistan was liberated from the Taliban; and lastly, to ensure that Afghanistan would never again become a 'haven for terrorists' (Chin, 2003: 62; Khan, 2009: 3). It would be these goals and objectives that not only shaped the US response to Afghanistan but also cemented the role of the US Special Forces in future conflicts.

3. Afghanistan: A two-phase war.

When US military leaders began planning Operation Enduring Freedom they began to realise that military operations in Afghanistan were going to be extremely complicated and difficult to execute for various reasons. Politically, Afghanistan was classified as a failed state, with all political decisions made by the Taliban in strict accordance with their own interpretation of Islamic extremism (Chin, 2003: 61; Kiper, 2002: 3). This made political dialogue with the Taliban nearly impossible. Even if the US had been able to engage politically with the Taliban, over two decades of civil war had ensured that warlords or leaders within the Taliban were constantly replaced and this would have questioned the validity of all deals with the US (Chin, 2003: 61; Maloney, 2007: 28). Militarily, Afghanistan had no standing army but was 'defended' by Taliban *mujahedeen* and although they were in possession of limited numbers of armour and artillery, captured from the Soviets in the 1980's, most of the *mujahadeen* were nothing more than rebels and farmers armed with light attack weapons and rocket propelled grenades (Chin, 2003: 61). This complication made the targeting of Afghanistan extremely difficult for US planners and forced them to diverge away from the standard response of cruise missile attacks (Blaber, 2008: 74).

Geographically, two-thirds of Afghanistan is mountainous and there are few roads and very little support infrastructure. This severely complicates the deployment of conventional forces, most of whom are centred on armoured units (Findlay, Green & Braganca, 2003: 8; Kiper, 2002: 3). Tensions between locals with regard to language and religion also complicates Unconventional Warfare and Foreign Internal Defence operations, as questions of who to trust and who not to trust can be nearly impossible to determine (Findlay, Green & Braganca, 2003: 8; Kiper, 2002: 3). American planners were also keenly aware from Soviet experience in Afghanistan during the 1980's that a superior, often conventional force, would not automatically ensure victory in Afghanistan as it had during the Gulf War in 1991 (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 20; Chin, 2003: 62). These complications in effect meant that in operational and tactical terms, the political, geographic and social constraints present in Afghanistan would make the 'quick victories' to which the US military were accustomed to, highly unlikely (Chin, 2003: 63; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 7). The geographical constraints in Afghanistan alone meant that not only would the large-scale deployment of conventional troops become almost impossible, but that should these

deployments occur, massive casualties (as where inflicted on the Soviets in the 1980's) would almost surely result (Chin, 2003: 63; Robinson, 2004: 156).

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the US, the US military had no clear contingency plan for intervention in Afghanistan and given the severe lack of intelligence on, and intelligence agents in Afghanistan, it meant that an immediate response to the attacks might have taken longer than what was acceptable (Findlay, Green & Braganca, 2003: 9; Robinson, 2004: 155). As a result of tremendous political pressure from Washington to act quickly, the US military initially proposed three options to Bush (Blaber, 2008: 74; Smith, 2006: 214). The first option was termed the "Clinton-era option" and would entail a US response by means of cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan (Blaber, 2008: 74; Smith, 2006: 214). A second alternative was to make use of both cruise missile attacks and a small but sustained smart bombing campaign, and the third option would be to combine option one and two as well as to deploy conventional forces to Afghanistan to 'mop up' after the initial air attacks (Kiper, 2002: 4; Smith, 2006: 214). As can be seen from the above, all three options made no provision for Special Forces units.

The 1998 cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan as a result of the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania had achieved little in Afghanistan other than "to rearrange the rubble" in the country and this lead to options one and two being rejected (Blaber, 2008: 74; Smith, 2006: 214). Central Command (CENTCOM), in whose area of operations Afghanistan fell, initially proposed waiting for the northern passes in Afghanistan to thaw (they were frozen from the winter at the time) so that armoured units could move into Afghanistan and engage the Taliban conventionally (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 3, 75). Given Soviet experience in Afghanistan in the 1980s this plan was seen as both too risky and too time consuming, even though it received Joint Chief of Staff approval (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 3, 75; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 7). Given the above geographical complications that Afghanistan presented as well as recognition that a conventional military response would take too long to implement, Bush turned to the CIA for options and they in turn recommended that USSOCOM be consulted (Peltier, 2005: 14; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 102). As will be discussed later on in this chapter, the US military eventually selected option three (strategic bombing and limited numbers of troops on the ground) and decided that it would be executed by the US Special Forces working with local forces in Afghanistan, specifically the Northern Alliance (Rothstein, 2006: 99).

By the end of 2001, operations in Afghanistan would eventually be classified in terms of two phases, namely October-December 2001 and end December 2001 onwards (Rothstein, 2006: 99). The primary goal of phase one (October-December 2001) operations was the total defeat of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 8, 47; Rothstein, 2006: 99). Fighting during these months was conducted almost exclusively by the Special Forces units of the US military; however the fighting often resembled conventional war because of the tactics initially used by the Taliban (Chin, 2003: 64; Rothstein, 2006: 99). Phase one operations were characterised as "SF-centric," whereby Special Forces units operated with a high level of autonomy in a dynamic environment and employed extensive precision bombing (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 8, 47; Rothstein, 2006: 99).

Phase two operations saw Al-Qaeda and the Taliban adopt unconventional warfare tactics, both in terms of weaponry employed (such as ambush and 'hit and run' tactics) and in terms of their dispersal among the local population in Afghanistan (Chin, 2003: 64; Rothstein, 2006: 99). The adoption of these tactics and the dispersal of the Al-Qaeda-Taliban among the population severely complicated the prosecution of the conflict (Chin, 2003: 64; Rothstein, 2006: 99). This period also saw the US military inject thousands of conventional forces into Afghanistan (especially at the end of the Tora Bora campaign) in an effort to address the growing proficiency of Al-Qaeda-Taliban and this lead to a significant conventionalisation of the Afghan campaign (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 8, 47; Chin, 2003: 64; Rothstein, 2006: 99). It was during this phase that Special Forces operations were significantly curtailed by conventional commanders.

It is interesting to note that even though the Special Forces executed their Unconventional Warfare missions perfectly, once the Taliban had fallen in November 2001, the majority of Special Forces operations were switched from Special Reconnaissance and Unconventional Warfare to Direct Action (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 75; Jones, 2003: 22). Although a great deal of this conventionalisation can be attributed to the fact that a conventional military general was placed in overall command of Afghanistan in November 2001, and that upon closer inspection it can be said that initial Al-Qaeda-Taliban tactics were heavily conventional, it does not detract from the fact that up until that point (November 2001) Special Forces units successfully conducted a Unconventional Warfare campaign and should have maintained that momentum (Rothstein, 2006: 12, 128; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 103). When the Special Forces executed their

UW campaign from September 2001, they were often engaged by Taliban tanks and artillery, yet they successfully defeated them, often in open combat (Priest, 2002: A01; Rothstein, 2006: 12).

As such, the need to conventionalise the conflict by the end of 2001 was unnecessary and would challenge former Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's assumption that the US strategy in Afghanistan would remain a "UW one" (Johnson, 2006: 273; Rothstein, 2006: 96; Simons & Tucker, 2003: 77). Although the decision to conventionalise the war by November 2001 is a debatable one, it does not detract from the success of the Special Forces units during the initial invasion of Afghanistan and it is this initial phase that requires additional scrutiny.

4. US Green Beret and Navy SEAL involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom.

It can safely be stated that the events of September 11, 2001 gave US Special Forces a prominence that they had not experienced since the Vietnam War in the 1960's and 1970's (Rothstein, 2006: 179; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 102). After analysing US military tactics, bin Laden knew the US favoured a mass, conventional response when directly confronted and given the success that he and the *mujahedeen* had against the Soviets, he was relishing the thought of engaging the last remaining global superpower (Fury, 2008: 79; Hastert, 2005: 12). The US military were also acutely aware of this and as such the deployment of Special Forces units must have come as a massive surprise to bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda-Taliban terrorists in Afghanistan. The following section will analyse the composition and focus of the Green Beret and Navy SEAL force sent to Afghanistan in 2001 as well as the major battles in which they were involved.

4.1. Green Beret and Navy SEAL composition and focus in Afghanistan, 2001.

Midway through September 2001, the CIA deployed a small group of agents from the Special Activities Division whose goal was to provide liaison between Northern Alliance commanders and the on-route Special Forces units (Dunnigan, 2004: 213; Smith, 2006: 216). By end September the first Green Berets from 5th Group landed at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airfield in Uzbekistan and from there successfully infiltrated into the Panjshir Valley in Afghanistan to link up with their Northern Alliance partners (Peltier, 2005: 15; Robinson, 2004: 156).

Once in the Valley, 5th Group linked up with General Fahim Khan of the Northern Alliance and began to prosecute the war from there (Robinson, 2004: 156). By the end of the year, three more Green Beret Groups would be in Afghanistan (see Table 8) (Robinson, 2004: 185). In the beginning of October there were roughly 78 Green Beret operators in Afghanistan and they were in charge of executing the largest US military intervention since the Gulf War, twenty years previously (Priest, 2002: A01; Williams, 2004: 6). At the time, Al-Qaeda-Taliban had an estimated force of between 11,000-33,000 troops in Afghanistan and this made the conducting of operations for the Special Forces units extremely complicated, especially given the small amount of operators present within the country (Chin, 2003: 66).

Table 8: Green Beret and Navy SEAL composition and focus in Afghanistan, 2001.

Composition	Squadron Deployed	Focus
Green Beret Groups	3rd, 5th,7th, 19th,	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Unconventional Warfare, Joint Terminal Air Controllers
Navy SEAL Teams	2, 3, 8	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Joint Terminal Air Controllers, Unconventional Warfare
Navy SEAL SDV Team	1	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defence, Joint Terminal Air Controllers, Unconventional Warfare

Sources: Peltier, 2005: 15-16; Robinson, 2004: 156, 185.

By the end of October the situation had changed significantly for the Special Forces with USSOCOM reinforcing 5th Group and reorganising the group into the Joint Special Operations Task Force-North (JSOTF-N), commonly referred to as Task Force Dagger (Doty, 2003: 10; Peltier, 2005: 15-16). USSOCOM not only deployed more Special Forces soldiers but also other elements of USSOCOM to assist the Special Forces units in their execution of Operation Enduring Freedom (see Table 9) (Peltier, 2005: 15-16; USSOCOM, 2007: 88). 5th Special Forces Group was selected to lead the Task Force not only because Afghanistan fell within their area of operations, but also because many of the troops who deployed with 5th Group had previous experience with the *mujahedeen* dating back to the 1980s (Robinson, 2004: 155).

By the beginning of November 2001, teams of Green Berets, often only numbering four to eight men, were successfully conducting Unconventional Warfare operations in Afghanistan in conjunction with their Northern Alliance partners (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xiii; USDA, 2008: I-3). It would eventually take these forces only forty-nine days to topple the Taliban regime and by the end of November, the Green Berets were able to claim that they had successfully liberated six major provinces in Afghanistan (Priest, 2002: A01; USSOCOM, 2007: 92). At the beginning of December 2001, the Green Berets, along with their Navy SEAL counterparts then began the extremely dangerous and time consuming task of searching cave complexes in the Afghan mountains for Al-Qaeda-Taliban terrorists (Robinson, 2004: 175). Between December 2001 and January 2002, operators from 5th Group searched more than 200 cave complexes and captured numerous Al-Qaeda-Taliban members, documents and weapons caches (Robinson, 2004: 175).

Table 9: Composition of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-North (JSOTF-N).

Composition	Squadron Deployed
Green Beret Groups	5th Group
Special Operations Support Battalions	528th Group
Signals Battalions	112th Group
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment	B Company, 2nd Battalion
Psychological Operations Group	4th Group
Civil Affairs Battalions	96th Group
Special Tactics Squadrons	23rd Group
Special Operations Wing	16th Group

Sources: Doty, 2003: 10; Peltier, 2005: 15-16; USSOCOM, 2007: 88

During operations between October and December 2001, the Green Beret units became well aware that the capture or killing of bin Laden would not automatically signal the end of conflict in Afghanistan and that the US military would most likely be involved in Afghanistan for years after the toppling of the Taliban (Blaber, 2008: 178; Chin, 2003: 63). Bearing this in mind, once the Taliban were defeated in November, the Green Berets continued to work with the Afghan army and *mujahedeen* forces conducting Foreign Internal Defence and Unconventional Warfare

operations and not abandoning them as had occurred in the 1980s when the Soviets withdrew (Bruner, Bolkcom & O'Rourke, 2001: 2; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 102). There can be little doubt that Al-Qaeda-Taliban resistance had proven to be more resilient than was expected (Dunnigan, 2004: 210; Lind, 2004: 14). However the combination of Green Berets and air power was so effective that even this resilience crumbled and the Taliban fell (Dunnigan, 2004: 210; Lind, 2004: 14).

Navy SEAL involvement in Afghanistan throughout 2001 was not as extensive as that of their Green Beret counterparts, with the SEALs only becoming majorly involved in Operation Enduring Freedom in December 2001 during operations in the Tora Bora Mountains (Dockery, 2003: 293). Navy SEALs, operating under the military designation Task Force K-Bar, conducted various raids in and around the Paktika Province in southern Afghanistan (Dockery, 2003: 293-294; Smith, 2006: 226). Task Force K-Bar was tasked with raiding suspected Al-Qaeda-Taliban hide sites in and around the province, with specific attention to cave complexes and by the end of 2001 had conducted over 42 SR missions in respect of this tasking (CBC, 2004: 1; Dockery, 2003: 293). Although Navy SEAL deployments in the initial stages of Operation Enduring Freedom were far fewer than those of their Army counterparts, the SEALs made an invaluable contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom and from 2002 onwards were heavily involved in combat operations in Afghanistan.

4.2. Major battles fought by the Green Berets and Navy SEALs in 2001.

In October 2001, operators from 5th Group began to descend on Afghanistan's second largest city, Mazar-e Sharif (USASOC, 2002: 34). Mazar-e Sharif was of strategic importance for the US for two reasons. Firstly, it was the second largest city within Afghanistan and secondly a strategically significant airfield was located near the city and the US military required the use of this airfield to fly in supplies for US Special Forces on the ground (Peltier, 2005: 19). Mazar-e Sharif would prove to be the first significant challenge that the Green Berets would face with regard to conducting joint operations with the Northern Alliance (USASOC, 2002: 39). The Northern Alliance suffered from four major setbacks in 2001, namely poor training, poor organisational skills, extremely poor logistical support and morale that often fluctuated, depending on the success of a battle (Peltier, 2005: 21; USASOC, 2002: 39). Added to these setbacks was the treacherous terrain that characterised Mazar-e Sharif, making airborne and

specifically helicopter support extremely difficult (USASOC, 2002: 41). Operationally the Green Berets were also hampered by Afghan reluctance to allow them to engage the enemy directly, for fear that American casualties would force a US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the abandonment of the Northern Alliance (Sepp, 2002a: 11).

On October 20, 2001 despite all the challenges facing the Green Berets, they infiltrated the Darya-e Suf Valley, 110 kilometres south of Mazar-e Sharif (USASOC, 2002: 35; USSOCOM, 2007: 89). After establishing observation posts near Mazar-e Sharif, the Green Berets began to call in continuous air strikes on enemy fortifications and by the end of October had completely decimated the majority of the enemy's defences around Mazar-e Sharif (Dunnigan, 2004: 212; Finlan, 2003: 100). Even though the enemy's defences were completely decimated by the end of October, a full-scale invasion of Mazar-e Sharif by Green Beret and Northern Alliance forces had to be postponed because of the lack of supplies available to the Northern Alliance fighters (USASOC, 2002: 36). It would eventually take nearly two weeks to resupply the Northern Alliance fighters, with the main assault of Mazar-e Sharif taking place on November 5th (USASOC, 2002: 37). After intense fighting, with Green Beret positions nearly being overrun on numerous occasions, the city was captured on November 9th (Smith, 2006: 225; USASOC, 2002: 34).

Subsequently, enemy efforts to retreat to the Tangi Gap were thwarted by continuous US air strikes and by November 10th, Mazar-e Sharif was declared as 'safe and secured' by US forces (USASOC, 2002: 38). The incredible speed at which the Green Berets and Northern Alliance were able to rout Al-Qaeda-Taliban forces from the second largest city in Afghanistan surprised not only the US military command structure, but the Green Berets and even the enemy (Peltier, 2005: 37). One of the unintended consequences of the fall of Mazar-e Sharif was the massive surrender of Al-Qaeda-Taliban forces both during the battle and throughout November 2001 (Sepp, 2002b: 16). After combat operations on November 24, over 300 Al-Qaeda-Taliban members surrendered to Northern Alliance forces and were taken to an old fort named Qala-i Jangi (Sepp, 2002b: 16). Despite repeated warnings from the Green Berets attached to the Northern Alliance forces, the prisoners were not searched and were able to smuggle hand grenades and various other weapons into the fort complex (USSOCOM, 2007: 91).

The next day, November 25, the prisoners detonated the grenades, overpowered the guards guarding them (in the process killing a CIA operative) and raided the ammunition dump next to the prison in an effort to retake the prison from their captors (Finlan, 2003: 101-102; Sepp, 2002b: 17). 5th Group who were in the area, along with a group of British SBS operators, responded to the uprising and after making use of tank fire and air strikes, were able to retake the prison from the enemy after four days of battle (USSOCOM, 2007: 92). On November 29th after the prison was recaptured it was estimated that over 214 of the 300 prisoners initially captured on November 24, were killed with numerous Northern Alliance soldiers killed (Sepp, 2002b: 18; USSOCOM, 2007: 91).

The fall of Mazar-e Sharif in November was a massive setback for the Al-Qaeda-Taliban forces, with most of the major cities in Afghanistan falling to Green Beret and Northern Alliance forces shortly after November (USASOC, 2002: 34). Three days after the fall of Mazar-e Sharif, Green Beret and Northern Alliance forces liberated Kabul, calling in over 25 air strikes that killed an estimated 2,200 Al-Qaeda-Taliban and destroyed 29 tanks and armoured vehicles (Priest, 2002: A01; USSOCOM, 2007: 90). On November 26, Kabul, the main objective of the Green Berets when they entered Afghanistan, fell and on December 6, the strategically and politically significant city of Kandahar was taken by Green Beret and Northern Alliance Forces, thereby signalling the collapse of the Taliban and the retreat of bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda-Taliban into the Tora Bora Mountains (Dunnigan, 2004: 218-219; USSOCOM, 2007: 92). It was in these mountains that the next battles to liberate Afghanistan from Al-Qaeda-Taliban forces would be fought and it is in these battles that the SMUs would become heavily involved.

5. Special Mission Unit involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The majority of SMU operations carried out in Afghanistan in 2001 revolved around the Advanced Force Operations concept (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 50). As stated in chapter three, Advanced Force Operations are defined as “operations conducted by *selected, uniquely capable elements* which precede the main [military] forces into the area of operations to further refine the location of the enemy/target and further develop the battle space” (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 50, emphasis added). On September 17, 2001 Bush signed a Memorandum of Notification legalising the targeting and assassination of bin Laden and the dismantling of the Al-Qaeda-Taliban network (Fury, 2008: 1, 81; Smith, 2006: 216). The execution of this Memorandum fell

to the SMUs and the operators involved in Advanced Force Operations. Throughout 2001, Advanced Force Operations, under the command of then Lieutenant-Colonel Pete Blaber, comprised elements of Delta Force, DevGru, ISA and STS and were allocated Direct Action and Special Reconnaissance missions targeting bin Laden and Al-Qaeda-Taliban (see Table 10) (Blaber, 2008: 203, 205; Fury, 2008: 198; Smith, 2006: 227). The entire Advanced Force Operations force numbered less than 50 operators (Blaber, 2008: 203, 205).

Table 10: Composition and focus of Advanced Force Operations operators.

Composition	Squadron Deployed	Focus
Delta Force	Unknown	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
DevGru	Unknown	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
ISA	Unknown	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
Special Tactics Squadron	24th Squadron	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Joint Terminal Air Controllers

Source: Blaber, 2008: 203, 205; Fury, 2008: 198; Smith, 2006: 227

Within days of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, SMUs were already on the ground conducting AFO missions in Afghanistan (Dunnigan, 2004: 211). Delta Force reconnaissance teams began arriving in Afghanistan on September 13, 2001 with ISA and DevGru following soon after (Dunnigan, 2004: 213; Fury, 2008: 73; Smith, 2006: 220). Given that the CIA had initially provided the operational plan for the execution of Operation Enduring Freedom, it was assumed that the CIA's Special Activities Division would be the main force executing the hunt for bin Laden and senior high level Al-Qaeda-Taliban members (Smith, 2006: 215). This, however proved to not be the case, as the President tasked the SMUs as the primary force involved in the hunt (Smith, 2006: 215). CIA operatives did however maintain an excellent and invaluable relationship with the SMUs involved in Tora Bora (Smith, 2006: 215).

Although extensive SMU operations only began in Afghanistan by the end of September, SMU involvement in the hunt for bin Laden began four years earlier in 1997 when they were tasked to develop a plan to capture and exfiltrate bin Laden from Afghanistan (Blaber, 2008: 63, 66-67; Smith, 2006: 207-209). During the presidency of Clinton in the 1990's, Delta Force were tasked

on 13 different occasions to kill or capture bin Laden, with each operation eventually being cancelled as a result of political pressure (Blaber, 2008: 63, 66-67; Smith, 2006: 207-209). In 1998 operations were rehearsed that involved Delta Force and ISA operators infiltrating into Afghanistan to capture or kill bin Laden at his hideout in Tarnak Farms (Smith, 2006: 207-209). However the plan was eventually cancelled after political interference (Blaber, 2008: 63, 66-67; Smith, 2006: 207-209). Two months later, Al-Qaeda detonated bombs outside the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing hundreds of civilians (Smith, 2006: 207-209).

5.1. Task Force Sword and the beginning of major Special Mission Unit operations in Afghanistan.

With the arrival of Coalition SMUs from the United Kingdom in September 2001, Major-General Dell Dailey, the then commander of JSOC, activated the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Sword (see Table 11) (Dunnigan, 2004: 226; Smith, 2006: 223-224). Task Force Sword comprised over 2,000 operators from Delta Force, DevGru, ISA, 24th STS, Britain's SBS and 22nd SAS and were tasked with 'hunting' high-value targets, primarily bin Laden and with cutting off the enemy's retreat into Pakistan (Dunnigan, 2004: 226; Smith, 2006: 223-224). SMU deployment in these operations was not 'tension-free' with Green Beret and Navy SEAL commanders claiming that they were more than capable of executing these operations and that SMU deployment was unnecessary (Rothstein, 2006: 151). November 2001, saw SMU operations begin in earnest with ISA operators being deployed to Southern Afghanistan in an effort to 'cultivate sources' in the region, as US presence in Southern Afghanistan was almost non-existent (Dunnigan, 2004: 218-219; Smith, 2006: 206).

In November, a reinforced Delta Force squadron codenamed Task Force Gecko, assaulted a compound near Kandahar believed to be housing Al-Qaeda second in command Mullah Omar at the time (Blaber, 2008: 172; Smith, 2006: 222-223). Once on the ground, the Delta Force element discovered that Omar was not present at the compound and came under heavy attack from Al-Qaeda-Taliban forces, eventually repulsing them (Blaber, 2008: 172; Smith, 2006: 222-223). Although Task Force Sword and Advanced Force Operations began conducting operations in early November, it would be operations in the Tora Bora Mountains in December, 2001 with which they would remain synonymous.

Table 11: Composition and focus of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Sword.

Composition	Focus
Delta Force (US)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
DevGru (US)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
ISA (US)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
24th STS (US)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Joint Terminal Air Controllers
22nd Special Air Service (UK)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
Special Boat Service (UK)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities
18 (UKSF) Signals Regiment (UK)	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Special Activities

Source: Doty, 2003: 11; Dunnigan, 2004: 226; Evans, 2008: 1; Smith, 2006: 223-224

5.2.Tora Bora and the hunt for Usama Bin Laden.

Tora Bora is a cave complex that is situated in the 12,000 foot peaks of the White Mountains in Eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province, 15 kilometres from the Pakistani border (USSOCOM, 2007: 93). These mountains are characterised by their densely packed, well constructed and fortified bunkers that were built to repulse Soviet forces in the 1980's (Fury, 2008: 75; USSOCOM, 2007: 93). The mountains and by extension, the cave complexes within the mountains, are almost impassable to armoured vehicles because of their sheer cliff faces and are inaccessible to helicopter forces as a result of densely packed anti-aircraft artillery on many of the mountains peaks (Fury, 2008: 75-76). On November 14, 2001 signals interceptions reported that bin Laden had left his refuge in Jalalabad for the Tora Bora cave complexes and when this was confirmed by ISA and British 18(UKSF) Signals Regiment operators the same day, the SMUs deployed to the mountains (Fury, 2008: 76; Smith, 2006: 225)

By the end of November it was reported that bin Laden was surrounded by an estimated 1,500-3,000 Al-Qaeda-Taliban members and this posed various problems for the SMU units (Fury, 2008: 84; USSOCOM, 2007: 93). US and UK forces in the region at the time suffered from poor intelligence as a result of a lack of numbers; terrain that favoured enemy forces who were familiar with it; unreliable allies in the Northern Alliance; and technological limits because of a lack of helicopter support and the primitive use of weaponry displayed by the enemy (Robinson,

2004: 176). These challenges would eventually prove to be the main factors that led to the escape of bin Laden by the end of December 2001 and could have been rectified had US military commanders taken the advice of their soldiers on the ground at the time (Fury, 2008: 76; Smith, 2006: 276). Delta Force operators requested in December before the battle began, to infiltrate the caves through Pakistan however their requests were denied by CENTCOM commanders because of the potential political fallout should any of their soldiers be captured (Fury, 2008: 76; Hastert, 2005: 14). It was assumed, incorrectly at the time by the CENTCOM commanders that weather conditions would prevent bin Laden and his supporters from making the journey in the mountains into Pakistan (Fury, 2008: 76). At the same time that this miscalculation was being made, CENTCOM denied SMU requests for additional troops to seal the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and forced the SMUs to rely on their Afghan allies (Hastert, 2005: 14; Smith, 2006: 226). This error would effectively allow the non-existent border between these two countries to remain open and become a perfect retreat option for bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda-Taliban followers (Hastert, 2005: 14; Smith, 2006: 226).

Aware of all these hindrances and command failures, the Advanced Force Operations commanders realised that establishing relationships and building alliances with their Afghan allies was of paramount importance if the mission was to proceed (Blaber, 2008: 206). Afghan General Hazret Ali, the commander of the Eastern Alliance was one of the first approached by the SMUs to garner allied support among the Afghans (Fury, 2008: 84). Once Ali's support had been secured through the payment of millions of dollars of 'allegiance incentives,' the SMUs in conjunction with their Green Beret allies began to formulate a plan of attack on the Tora Bora Mountains (Blaber, 2008: 205; Robinson, 2004: 162). After careful consideration it was decided that 5th Group would be tasked with supporting all Northern Alliance movements and attacks in the Tora Bora Mountains and that the SMUs would exclusively focus on the hunt and capture of bin Laden and other high ranking officials (Fury, 2008: 82). Throughout the Tora Bora operations in December 2001, the Green Berets and SMUs would operate in an almost symbiotic relationship (Blaber, 2008: 206). This relationship would become immensely important once operations began early on in December, especially as Northern Alliance reliability and allegiances began to be questioned and more importantly to waver (Fury, 2008: 293; Robinson, 2004: 176).

On December 8, 2001 major combat operations began in the Tora Bora Mountains (Fury, 2008: 82; Hastert, 2005: 13). Immediately after this, the Green Berets and SMUs began to realise that the enemy had adapted their tactics and were much more proficient than ever before (Blaber, 2008: 256; Fury, 2008: 75). Al-Qaeda-Taliban units, aware of the capabilities of the SMUs and specifically the ISA, shunned the use of advanced technologies such as satellite telephones, made use of camouflaged hide sites to attack US forces and became completely unconventional in their attacks (Blaber, 2008: 256; Fury, 2008: 75). Early on in the battle, the unreliability of the Afghan forces supporting the SMUs became apparent when a four man element of Delta, ISA and STS operatives was abandoned on one of Tora Bora's mountains after the Afghans were engaged by enemy forces (Fury, 2008: 174). Afghan unreliability and the initial reluctance of the commander of 5th Group to commit his troops to Direct Action missions, meant that the operation almost failed during its first week (Fury, 2008: 164).

Just as had occurred in previous battles in October and November, SMUs and their Afghan allies struggled to reach agreement on issues such as map coordinates, as many of the Afghan's were unable to read and knew the mountains by sight and not their exact coordinates (Fury, 2008: 201, 208). This failure often complicated matters as it delayed the employment of combat air support and made fratricide a constant concern (Fury, 2008: 201, 208). By December 10th, after a great deal of negotiation and bargaining with the Northern Alliance Generals, many of these problems began to subside and with the SMUs assuming control of all air support from their Green Beret counterparts, the battle began to turn (USSOCOM, 2007: 96). Continuous fire from Coalition air support also began to take its toll on the enemy, with SMUs calling in over 17 hours of continuous air strikes on certain strategic mountaintops (USSOCOM, 2007: 96). Throughout the battle, ISA SIGINT operators continuously monitored all radio traffic for signs of bin Laden and on December 11th, Advanced Force Operations teams began to call in massive air bombardments on Al-Qaeda-Taliban positions where bin Laden was suspected to be hiding (Fury, 2008: 198, 201, Hastert, 2005: 20).

The following day, December 12, a reinforced Delta Force unit along with their Afghan allies captured Hill 2685, an extremely significant and strategically important hilltop that provided excellent observation points to call in air support on the surrounding hills (Fury, 2008: 210). With the capture of Hill 2685 and under continuous air bombardment, enemy morale plummeted and mass surrenders started to occur (Fury, 2008: 210-211). On December 12th, Al-Qaeda-

Taliban commanders issued a statement that they were willing to surrender to Northern Alliance forces on condition that the SMUs halted all Coalition air strikes (Fury, 2008: 210-211). When brought the offer of surrender, the Advanced Force Operations commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Blaber, believed that the surrender was a stalling tactic by bin Laden, who would try to escape as soon as Coalition bombing subsided and rejected the surrender (Fury, 2008: 210-211). Blaber was however overruled by CENTCOM and was ordered to stand down his troops so that the surrender could be accepted. When elements of Delta Force, still operating in the mountains refused to stand down they were surrounded by Northern Alliance soldiers who threatened to fire on them if they dishonoured the surrender (Fury, 2008: 210-211, 218-219). Highlighting the problems inherent in working with allies of questionable loyalties the Delta units were forced to step down and as predicted by Blaber, the surrender negotiations collapsed later that day and fighting recommenced (Fury, 2008: 218-219).

It was during these negotiations that the Advanced Force Operations commanders received intelligence that bin Laden and his senior Al-Qaeda deputies were in negotiations with locals in the Tora Bora region, including alleged US Afghan allies, to provide him and his entourage with safe passage into the Pakistani Federally Administered Tribal Area's (FATA's) (Fury, 2008: 209). On December 13, ISA intercepts confirmed that bin Laden was on the run and that the intelligence alleging the bribing of locals in the region was accurate (Fury, 2008: 233). Despite SMU efforts to capture him, he managed to escape the cordon by the Northern Alliance fighters and disappeared further into the mountains until ISA operatives began tracking him once again on December 15th (Fury, 2008: 233, 256). By December 15th, all Al-Qaeda-Taliban resistance had crumbled and on December 16th, mass surrenders of enemy forces became commonplace (Fury, 2008: 256-257; USSOCOM, 2007: 97). December 15th would prove to be the last day that the SMUs were able to track bin Laden and by December 18th all trace of bin Laden's whereabouts had disappeared (Fury, 2008: 275). The same day, December 18th, the search for bin Laden was called off by CENTCOM and the SMUs withdrew from the region shortly afterwards (Fury, 2008: 275).

There can be little doubt that the escape of bin Laden into Pakistan in December 2001 was a massive strategic failure for the US military and specifically the SMUs (Chin, 2003: 71). AFO and SMU operations during December 2001 will always be remembered as the period when the

SMUs failed to capture bin Laden and not for the successes that were achieved during both December and the months preceding the search for bin Laden.

6. Analysis of US Special Forces involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Bin Laden's escape does not however, negate the successful campaign carried out by the US Special Forces units until that point. The importance of Special Forces involvement cannot be ignored after their efforts at combining their capabilities with air power and surrogate and unconventional warfare between September and December 2001, ensured the collapse of the Taliban (Robinson, 2004: 158, 188; Rothstein, 2006: 13). The 2001 Special Forces invasion of Afghanistan became so successful that specific doctrine is now attached to what the Special Forces achieved in Afghanistan, namely the so-called Afghan Model of conflict (Biddle, 2004: 4). A great deal of the success of the Special Forces and specifically the SMUs, can be attributed to the large measure of freedom that was attached to each of their operations (Findlay, Green & Braganca, 2003: 10; Rothstein, 2006: 127). Throughout 2001, Special Forces and the SMUs were able to conduct operations as they saw fit with very little political or other interference and this allowed them to tailor missions and/or operations to best suit their abilities, thus leading to higher level of proficiency and mission success rate (Rothstein, 2006: 127). This proficiency ensured that their first casualties would only arise on December 4th, and these were the result of friendly fire (Robinson, 2004: 165).

In little over three months of operations in Afghanistan, the Special Forces won a battle that they had been attempting to win for over five decades. They proved to their conventional detractors that they were capable of conducting both DA and UW operations on a conventional and an unconventional battlefield (Rothstein, 2006: 175; Shabad, 2001: 1). Although the Afghan intervention was characterised as unconventional by most analysts since the day it began, closer analysis of the initial months of the US intervention into Afghanistan reveals that the enemy engaged the Special Forces and SMUs in a conventional manner and only began to operate unconventionally in November and December 2001 (Priest, 2002: A01; Rothstein, 2006: 167). The fact that the Special Forces were able to engage Al-Qaeda-Taliban forces in both a conventional and unconventional manner reinforces their capabilities as an exceptionally proficient fighting force and one that is just as, if not more capable than their conventional

counterparts (Rothstein, 2006: 167). At the same time, the ability of the Special Forces units to engage in Foreign Internal Defence and surrogate warfare operations, allowed the US military to deploy far fewer forces, far quicker to the battlefield than if they had to have deployed conventional forces as they did in the 1991 Gulf War (Haas, 2005: 7).

Although Task Force Sword failed to kill or capture bin Laden in December 2001, they were able to drive him from Afghanistan and did provide the Pakistani government with intelligence as to his whereabouts (Smith, 2006: 226). The fact that bin Laden still remains free to this day is more indicative of the complicated nature of working with allies such as the Northern Alliance and Pakistan, than it is of the capability of the US Special Forces (De Young, 2009: 1; Smith, 2006: 226). The strict rules of engagement that confronted US Special Forces and the SMUs often severely hampered US efforts to kill or capture bin Laden and this was proven during the Tora Bora operations (De Young, 2009: 1; Shabad, 2001: 2). Special Forces operations in Afghanistan in 2001 were far from perfect but they did offer an insight into how future wars could be fought. This all changed in 2002.

In 2002, the US focus in Afghanistan shifted to a more conventional level, and thus all Special Forces operations started to be scaled back in favour of conventional operations (Robinson, 2004: 177; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 104). One of the enigmas of US operations in Afghanistan after the 2001 search for bin Laden, relates to how the US response started to become more conventional as the war and the enemy became more unconventional (Rothstein, 2006: 100; Scarborough, 2009: 1). Early in 2002, large numbers of conventional soldiers began to arrive in Afghanistan to support the US shift to conventional operations and this is when major problems in the country began to arise (Simons & Tucker, 2003: 85; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 103). One of the major problems that affected the US war effort in 2002, was the lack of cultural awareness and tolerance that was often found among conventional troops and/or commanders, and this had tremendously negative effects on the Afghan population and often negated what the Special Forces had accomplished in 2001 (Rothstein, 2006: 176; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 103-104). The enemy adapted to the new US tactics and the increasingly negative perceptions that the Afghans had of them (Maloney, 2007: 28; Rothstein, 2006: 100, 169). The US military did not, and by 2005 the US were facing a larger insurgency and greater resistance than they did in September 2001 when they first arrived in the country (Maloney, 2007: 28; Rothstein, 2006: 100, 169). In

2001, the enemy often fought poorly against US forces but by 2002 this was no longer the case (Biddle, 2004: 6).

Even though the idea of the combination of Special Forces, air power and the Northern Alliance, arose from the CIA and not the US Department of Defence, there can be little doubt that its effectiveness has questioned the traditional nature and outlook held by many with regard to military operations (Kiper, 2002: 4; Rothstein, 2006: 176). This is reflected by the fact that in 2007 alone, over 85 percent of Special Forces manpower available to the US military was deployed to CENTCOM's area of responsibility (Flournoy & Schultz, 2007: 3). This alone reinforces how in demand these forces are, with demands for Special Forces now coming from both Special Forces and conventional commanders.

7. Conclusion.

This chapter sought to analyse the changing and constantly evolving nature of modern warfare in order to elucidate just how warfare has evolved since 2001, with Operations in Afghanistan chosen as a case study for a number of reasons. It would be the first time that US Special Forces had conducted such a large scale intervention into another country; it would be the first time that the US conventional divisions would make way for surrogate warfare; and it would also be the first time that the US had intervened in a country in order to remove a non-state actor, namely Al-Qaeda that had attacked them on home soil. To counter unconventional warfare the US Special Forces and by extension the US military, were adopting tactics and techniques that were not necessarily new but rather that were rarely put into practice in the period before 9/11.

Countering unconventional warfare as a doctrine was not new to the US Special Forces, it is one of the main focuses of their training, but it was new to US political and military commanders who had become accustomed to the more conventional battles of the Cold War period. Afghanistan symbolised the evolution of US military doctrine since the end of the Cold War that began with the conventional response to Iraq in 1991; a more unconventional response to both Somalia in 1993 and the Balkans from 1995 onwards; and an almost completely unconventional response to Afghanistan in 2001. During the Gulf War in 1991 it would have been inconceivable to risk leading a military response spearheaded by Special Forces units, but by the end of 2001 such a response had gained international recognition and approval. Although the 2001

intervention in Afghanistan did suffer from numerous tactical and logistical shortfalls, it was able to topple the Taliban in a mere 49 days.

One of the main misconceptions held by proponents of the Afghan Model is their declaration that conventional warfare as a method of intervention is archaic and should be forgotten. The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan does not signal the end of conventional warfare as a whole but rather signifies that unconventional warfare is equal in terms of recognition and utility when compared to conventional warfare. Countering unconventional warfare should not be seen as a replacement for conventional warfare but rather as an alternative when applicable. As such, Special Forces should not be seen as the ideal troops to replace conventional soldiers as each branch has their own speciality and role to play. Indeed, Special Forces soldiers and commanders have been quick to reinforce this point and have more often than not, advocated the retention of conventional units and commanders. Special Forces operations in Afghanistan in 2001 have not completely replaced conventional operations but they have successfully placed Special Forces units and commanders where they need to be.

CHAPTER 6: EVALUATION.

1. SUMMARY.

The main objective of this study was to discuss and analyse the growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare, with specific reference to the Special Forces of the US. In order to address this topic three main assumptions were made in the introductory chapter and were subsequently addressed in the four chapters that followed the Introduction.

Chapter 2 of the study sought to address both the concept of conventional and unconventional warfare as well as the composition of forces responsible for each discipline. Throughout the chapter it was made clear that conventional and unconventional warfare are in fact two separate disciplines and as such should be dealt with by two separate branches within the military. The chapter also highlighted the fact that unconventional warfare both as a strategy and as a tactic, often employed against conventional forces, has dramatically increased since the end of World War Two. The demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent ending of the Cold War witnessed a renewed interest in unconventional warfare as states started to face growing threats from non-state actors. The chapter also provided a brief historical analysis of the US approach to warfare, both historically and currently. This section was important as it provided the background for an analysis of US perceptions and attitudes towards both unconventional warfare and Special Forces.

In Chapter 3 of the study the missions and roles of Special Forces were detailed, with specific reference to the Special Forces units of the US military. In this chapter, definitions of not only Special Forces but also Special Operations, were provided. Attention was then given to the nine primary missions of the US Special Forces and SMUs, and a brief historical overview of both the Special Forces and the SMUs was conducted. The history, mandate, recruitment and training of the US Green Berets, Navy SEALs and three of the main SMUs (Delta Force, DevGru and ISA) were analysed in order to provide perspective as to why these units are classified as special and not merely élite. The chapter sought to indicate that even within the Special Forces there are more specialised units, and these units form the Special Mission Units or Tier One Special Forces of the US military. It was these units that subsequently formed the major focus for the rest of the study.

Chapter 4 of the study analysed the role that the US Special Forces played in modern warfare since the end of the Cold War in the 1990's. The chapter made use of three case studies to highlight this growing role, namely operations in the Gulf War (1991); in Somalia (1992-1993); and in the Balkan region (1995-2001). The primary rationale for adopting these three case studies was to elucidate US military responses to three major conflicts in which they were involved during the 1990's. The chapter showed that the US response to the Gulf War mimicked the Cold War doctrines of the US military in that it was primarily a conventional response to a perceived conventional war. Even though Special Forces deployments to the Gulf were the largest they had been since the Vietnam War, the Special Forces played a miniscule role in the conflict.

The chapter then addressed US responses to the growing tensions in Somalia from 1992-1993 and showed an interesting change from responding conventionally as the US did in the Gulf in 1991, to responding unconventionally in Somalia. Successes and failures in Somalia, especially with regard to SMU operations, would prove to be the catalyst for future US responses globally. This was once again highlighted during the Balkan operations in the 1990's, where the US military once again chose to respond to the conflict in an unconventional manner through the near exclusive execution of the conflict by Special Forces and specifically SMUs. Specific emphasis in all three case studies was placed on US Green Beret, Navy SEAL and specifically SMU operations.

In Chapter 5 of the study the main premise of the study, namely that the role of Special Forces in modern warfare has increased, was analysed through the prism of the 2001 US military response in Afghanistan. Throughout this chapter, the difficulty that the US military experienced in responding to the terrorist attacks in the US on September 2001, was highlighted. The chapter showed that even though the US military had successfully responded to two major crises during the 1990's (Somalia and the Balkans) by making use of Special Forces and SMUs, they still advocated the use of conventional forces over Special Forces. It was only when the conventional response was questioned that US military leaders turned to other alternatives, namely the US Special Forces and SMUs. Through analysis of Special Forces and specifically SMU operations from September-December 2001, it became apparent that not only were Special Forces operations highly successful but that this led to questions over the primacy of conventional warfare and forces have been raised.

2. TESTING THE ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH THE STUDY WAS BASED.

In order to validate the study it is necessary to evaluate the assumptions relating to the growing role of unconventional warfare and of Special Forces in modern warfare as formulated in the Introduction to the study. These assumptions relate to unconventional warfare's growing international prominence; to Special Forces as a solution to this growing prominence; and that placing greater emphasis on Special Forces will allow the US military to more effectively deal with the rise of unconventional warfare.

2.1. The growing prominence of unconventional warfare.

Assumption: The role of Special Forces in modern warfare seems to be increasing due to unconventional warfare seeming to have usurped conventional warfare as the new and popular form of warfare.

With the cessation of hostilities at the end of World War Two, most nations sought to retain massive conventional armies in the belief that a third world war was imminent given the tensions between the East and the West (Hoffman, 2005: 915; Price, 2008: 1). Although this viewpoint was logical in the 1950's and even the 1970's, contemporary militaries can neither afford nor justify such forces. Given the increased lethality of modern weaponry it would appear that the conduct of modern warfare would require far fewer troops and resources as precision guidance negates the need for massive forces (Paschall, 1990: 59; van Creveld, 2004: 8). The reality is often far more complicated. Given the destructive nature of modern weaponry as well as the proclivity of modern warfare to be conducted in urban as opposed to rural areas, the abovementioned merits and strengths of modern technology are often negated (Paschall, 1990: 59; van Creveld, 2004: 8). This negation is complicated by the sharp decline not only in conventional warfare but also by the growing threat posed by non-state actors (Robinson, 2004: xvi; Rothstein, 2006: 159).

It is undeniable that there has been a dramatic decrease in the outbreak of conventional conflict since 1945, and a dramatic increase in unconventional conflict, with over 50 unconventional warfare incidents occurring in 1999-2000 alone (Kershner, 2001: 3; Tuck, 2008: 116). The demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent ending of the Cold War once again saw

unconventional warfare incidents rise even further (Marquis, 1997: 262). This increase in unconventional warfare has not been easy for the US military to accept, especially given that most of the senior US military leadership still harbour thoughts of Vietnam (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 159-160). This struggle to accept change was highlighted during the Gulf War in 1991, most notably through General Schwarzkopf's own biases and prejudices towards Special Forces (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 74). During the Gulf War over 7,000 Special Forces were deployed to the Gulf region, yet their contribution was miniscule (Cordesman, 1994: 832). In fact, the biggest contribution that Special Forces would make during the Gulf operations occurred after the war had ended, when Special Forces assisted in the repatriation of Kurdish citizens who had been displaced (USASOC, 1992: 2-3).

Two years later in Somalia, US military commanders had very little choice but to adopt unconventional warfare tactics and forces when they were confronted by a Somali militia that was completely anathema to what they were conditioned to (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 107; US Senate, 1995: 6). From 1993 onwards, the US military elected to make use of unconventional warfare and Special Forces to deal with the threat posed by Aidid and his militia, and the success witnessed during the period of their deployment was notable (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 107; US Senate, 1995: 6). This reliance on Special Forces was mimicked in the US involvement in the Balkan region from 1995 onwards, once again highlighting the growing role that Special Forces were beginning to play in the US military establishment. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US signalled the final shift to unconventional warfare.

Even though the 2001 attacks seemed to have heralded the likely end of major conventional conflict, the US military still initially sought to address intervention into Afghanistan by conventional means (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 3, 75). It was only after considerable deliberation and the highlighting of Soviet difficulties in addressing Afghanistan conventionally in the 1980s, that the US military sought to make use of Special Forces (Chin, 2003: 62; Shabad, 2001: 1). Even after the 'Special Forces wars' in Somalia and the Balkans, senior military leaders still struggled to accept that in unconventional warfare, as the 2001 Afghan invasion would be, Special Forces are the best forces to make use of (Rothstein, 2006: 159). Unconventional warfare is one of the primary missions that Special Forces are trained in, and given the joint operations often carried out by Special Forces and SMU operators, there can be

little doubt that they were the best forces to execute the campaign (Haas, 2005: 3; Naylor, 2005: 37).

The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan proved to be a defining moment for US Special Forces as it saw the US military not only recognise the importance of unconventional warfare but also the importance of Special Forces. Although the Taliban initially adopted conventional methods against the Special Forces and Northern Alliance, by December they were firmly engaging each other unconventionally (Rothstein, 2006: 99). The ability of the Special Forces and specifically the SMUs to engage with the local Afghan people highlighted the strength of these forces and what they are capable of achieving (Blaber, 2008: 206). Given the success of these forces in 2001, it is unclear why the US chose to "conventionalise" the conflict in 2002 through the deployment of thousand of conventional forces to the battlefield (Rothstein, 2006: 100; Scarborough, 2009: 1). The most likely reason still seems to be that even though the US military recognised that unconventional warfare has usurped conventional warfare as the "new and popular" form of warfare, senior military commanders are still struggling to accept this change.

It appears that even after the 2001 invasion, conventional commanders still view Special Forces with suspicion and this needs to be addressed (Rothstein, 2006: 179). Conventional commanders still favour the use of conventional troops for operations that are tailored for Special Forces operators, and this needs to be discouraged as conventional soldiers are not as adequately trained as their Special Forces counterparts are (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 192-193). The dramatic increase in unconventional warfare has also had another consequence that most commanders could not have predicted, and this relates to the stress that USSOCOM is currently under to deploy as many Special Forces units to the field as possible (Flournoy & Schultz, 2007: 3). In 2007 alone, over 85 percent of US Special Forces were deployed to CENTCOM's area of responsibility and this has placed tremendous strain both on USSOCOM and on the Special Forces operators (Flournoy & Schultz, 2007: 3). It is unclear how this situation will be rectified but it is evidence that both unconventional warfare and Special Forces are the "new and popular" form of warfare and forces in modern warfare and that the abovementioned assumption can therefore be verified.

2.2. Special Forces as the solution to unconventional warfare.

<u>Assumption</u>: Special Forces are the solution to the new forms of modern warfare.

The 2001 Afghan invasion represented and incorporated all the major military strengths that the US could bring to bear when seeking to deal with an unconventional threat (Dunnigan, 2004: 9). The invasion provided the perfect battleground to deploy America's unconventional assets, namely US Special Forces, precision bombing and the CIA's Special Activities Division (Dunnigan, 2004: 9-11). Power projection is an extremely pertinent ability for military forces and the US executed power projection to near perfection in 2001 (Ziegler, 2003: 1). Within two days of the September 11 attacks on the US, SMUs were already on the ground in Afghanistan coordinating efforts and preparing the battlefield for other Special Forces, CIA operatives and SMUs to follow (Dunnigan, 2004: 213; Fury, 2008: 73). One of the primary assets of Special Forces and SMUs is their ability to project force as quickly as possible and as effectively as possible and they proved this in 2001 (Dunnigan, 2004: 213). Recent conflicts that have involved conventional forces have shown that these forces struggle to address the mounting costs and lack of speed that are prevalent when large-scale deployments are requested and this often delays the deployment of these forces (Record, 2005: 34; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 160). Special Forces do not struggle with the same problems and not only deploy faster, but also cost far less to deploy.

The deployment of only 78 Special Forces operators to execute the Afghan war in October 2001 reinforces this point (Priest, 2002: A01; Williams, 2004: 6). US Green Beret units in Afghanistan conducted the war using limited numbers that were usually broken down into teams of four to eight operators, and operated far behind enemy lines, often with little support or reinforcement (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xiii; USDA, 2008: I-3). Conventional forces are simply not trained to engage other forces in such limited numbers or in such a manner and when pressed to do so, often encounter problems or are overwhelmed. It is operations such as these, carried out by a few dozen men that is one of the main attractions of Special Forces and makes them a unique class of soldier (Jones & Rehorn, 2003: 3; Robinson, 2004: xi). Special Forces cannot be used to comprehensively address all global conflicts but they do have the necessary characteristics and capabilities needed to address unconventional warfare (Fitzsimmons, 2003: 204).

Doctrinally, unconventional warfare is based on principles such as protraction, manoeuvre, ambushes and camouflage, and Special Forces such as Navy SEALs and SMUs are *highly* skilled

and trained in these techniques and this gives them an advantage over their conventional counterparts (Record, 2005: 35). Addressing the roots of the conflict and garnering the support of the domestic population are two of the main targets of unconventional warfare and forces, with success in unconventional warfare often being unattainable should they not be achieved or secured (Lindsay, 1962: 264). In order to address both these targets, troops are often required to dismount their vehicles and live among the population in order to secure the loyalty of the population and hence root out their opponents (Hoffman, 2005: 923; Robinson, 2004: 110-111). Not only do Special Forces operators prefer dismounted operations, but they are actively trained to engage with the domestic population in the countries to which they are deployed (Hoffman, 2005: 923; Robinson, 2004: 110-111). During training, Special Forces dedicate months to this end in an exercise known as Robin Sage, whereas for conventional forces, winning the 'hearts and minds' of civilians is often not one of their primary or even secondary concerns (Skinner, 2002: 20). This is not an indictment of conventional forces but rather highlights the different nature and objectives of conventional versus Special Forces.

Special Forces execute missions that conventional forces simply are unable to execute, or at least not at acceptable levels, and this is what makes them special (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 146; Ziegler, 2003: 3). Although conventional forces are also capable of conducting Direct Action and Special Reconnaissance missions, they simply are unable to execute them as efficiently and cost effectively as Special Forces units can (Basilici & Simmons, 2004: 3; Wilson, 2001: 25). Special Forces are able to operate in areas that are either too risky for their conventional counterparts to operate in, especially given their large numbers, and this can be an important asset when military action becomes unavoidable, as it did in 2001 (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 146, 177; USDA, 2008: 2-11, 3-14). Given the financial, logistical and political constraints of deploying thousands of conventional forces across the globe, the deployment of a few hundred Special Forces offers an attractive alternative to both military and political leaders (Holmes, 2009: 2; Record, 2005: 34).

The relatively small, yet effective firepower that Special Forces are also able to muster makes them an attractive option to military and political leaders who want to send a 'show of force' but leave a 'small footprint' at the same time (Gray, 1999: 2; Schoomaker, 1998: 2). Nowhere was this clearer than during the Delta Scud Hunt in the 1991 Gulf War and during SMU operations in the Tora Bora Mountains in 2001 (Griswold & Giangreco, 2005: 86; Rothstein, 2006: 99). In the current war in Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are adopting increasingly more

unconventional tactics when engaging coalition troops and Special Forces are not only able to counter these tactics but they are able to strike back at opposing forces by turning their own tactics against them (Blaber, 2008: 256; Fury, 2008: 75). Their conventional counterparts are not so fortunate. The inability of conventional forces to adequately and speedily adapt to situations was most visible during Operation Anaconda in 2002, where conventional forces once pinned down and under sustained assault, were unable to effectively counter Al-Qaeda/Taliban tactics (Chin, 2003: 66; Lind, 2004: 14). Special Operations are defined as "operations conducted in hostile, denied or politically sensitive environments...for which there is no broad conventional force requirement" and it is this definition that separates Special Forces from their conventional counterparts and allows them to be the solution to the new forms of warfare (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: xv). These differentiations and the abovementioned special capabilities of Special Forces validate the assumption that they are the solution to the new forms of modern warfare currently being witnessed.

2.3. Placing greater emphasis on Special Forces will allow the US military to more effectively deal with the rise of unconventional warfare.

<u>Assumption</u>: Shifting Special Forces from a supporting component to that of a supported component has the possibility of changing future US military strategy tremendously.

The composition of conventional forces is such that they rely on large numbers in order to be successful and these numbers are specifically focused on the direct destruction of the enemy (Janos, 1963: 645; Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 163). Although the likelihood of the emergence of large-scale conventional war is always a possibility, as has been shown above, it is currently unlikely (Adams, 2001: 22). The structure and emphasis of both modern states and militaries has simply made the large-scale battles that characterised not only the two world wars but also Vietnam and even the 1991 Gulf War, both untenable and extremely difficult to justify (Hoffman, 2005: 915; Price, 2008: 1). Military commanders, especially from the conventional forces are often tempted to see one conflict as the model for all future conflicts and although this in itself may seem logical, it is actually dangerous and can lead to the unpreparedness of a nation's military (Adams, 2001: 24; Gray, 2004: 2). Nowhere was this clearer than during combat operations in Somalia and the Balkans. This view of warfare has often lead to the

subordination of Special Forces to their conventional counterparts and this needs to be addressed (Adams, 2001: 24; Gray, 2004: 2).

Even before the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the US military started to become keenly aware that their adversaries, both current and future are increasingly seeking to confront them not on the traditional battlefields but rather in urban areas, using unconventional tactics and forces (Krepinevich, 2007: 6). Although the US initially struggled to accept this viewpoint, they are slowly beginning to realise that the future lies in unconventional warfare and Special Forces. It should be remembered that the first US military, established at the end of the American War of Revolution nearly two hundred years ago, was an unconventional military and only slowly evolved into a conventional force after World War One (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 70). As such, unconventional warfare is not as anathema to the US military as they believe it to be.

The main challenge currently facing the US military is the need to be proficient in and able to achieve victory in all forms of combat, whether they be conventional or unconventional (Rothstein, 2006: 171). This in itself it not small tasking required from the US military but it is one of which they have ample experience and most of this experience lies in the Special Forces units and operators. It is no secret that given that the majority of the US military are conventionally based, unconventional warfare does not favour them and so the challenge is to adapt to address this majority (Rothstein, 2006: 179). Taking the Afghan conflict as an example, when compared to their Special Forces counterparts, conventional forces played a role in the conflict but this role was not as pivotal as the Special Forces role (Rothstein, 2006: 169). When comparing their role in the Afghan conflict to their role in the 1991 Gulf War, it becomes apparent that Special Forces and conventional forces have almost 'switched roles.' In the 1991 Gulf War it was the conventional forces that were sidelining their Special Forces counterparts, yet in the 2001 Afghan conflict it was the Special Forces who were sidelining their conventional counterparts.

There can be little doubt that the events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan reinvigorated the argument of shifting Special Forces from a supporting component to conventional forces and operations, to that of a supported component and the primary executor of US military operations in the post-9/11 world (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 102). Given their training and their focus, Special Forces are able to operate in all environments irrespective of

whether they are conventional or unconventional; conventional forces cannot claim to be able to do the same (Hoffman, 2005: 921; Rothstein, 2006: 165). Military operations over the past twenty years have confirmed this (USDA, 2008: 1-5). The ability of the Special Forces to deal with both conventional and unconventional threats in Afghanistan alone should warrant their shifting to a supported command (Tucker & Lamb, 2007: 177). Historically, Special Forces operations were usually always dependent on conventional forces and their priorities during a campaign, but in the aftermath of the 2001 Afghan invasion that has changed (Metzgar, 2001: 21; Nagao, 2001: 175).

Currently there are less than 15,000 Special Forces operators within the US military and given the dramatic increases in the proliferation of unconventional warfare, means that Special Forces are actually 'too busy' and face being overstretched and over deployed and this is going to force them into increasing operations with their conventional counterparts (Dunnigan, 2004: 8; Feickert, 2006: 2; Rothstein, 2006: 178). Historically, this would have proven problematic for both conventional and Special Forces, however operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan have proven that conventional and Special Forces can not only operate together effectively, but that they are able to mutually support each other's and to minimise their own weaknesses (Ramirez, 2004: 23). The success of the 2001 'Afghan model' is exactly what the US military needed with regard to being able to prove that they could operate in all environments as effectively and efficiently as possible (Biddle, 2004: 4). Shifting Special Forces from a supporting command to that of a supported command will undoubtedly tremendously affect the manner in which the US executes war in the future and the assumption as formulated above, can be verified.

3. CONCLUSION.

The role of Special Forces in modern warfare has been questioned on numerous occasions, both before and after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. Special Forces have suffered from ubiquitous increases and decreases both in numbers, resources and in requirements, and this has often taken a toll not only on Special Forces operators, but their commanders as well. There can be little doubt that the spectre of Vietnam and the role that Special Forces played in the Vietnam War, negatively affected public and military perceptions of Special Forces more than it did to benefit perceptions of them. In the over three decades since the end of the Vietnam War, the Special

Forces have had their good decades and their bad decades. Operations in the post-Cold War world seem to have been more positive than negative, with the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan being the defining moment of Special Forces as a whole.

Similarly, unconventional warfare has suffered the same fate. Perceptions of unconventional warfare, just as Special Forces were coloured by the war in Vietnam, and these perceptions not only remained in the US military up until the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, but were actually exacerbated. Unconventional operations in both Somalia and the Balkans, although successful were still seen as lesser operations when compared to conventional operations. Even when confronted by the major unconventional threat that was Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in 2001, the US military still returned to their bias towards conventional forces and operations. It was only through the intervention of former US President George Bush and the CIA that the Afghan conflict shifted in favour of unconventional warfare and Special Forces. A great deal of this is understandable. Senior military commanders and even policy makers present and advising Bush in 2001, all had vivid memories of the Vietnam War, as many of them 'began' their military careers in the jungles of Vietnam and the memories of that war still lingered. This bias proved extremely difficult for both political and military leaders and/or officers to overcome and many argue that the perceptions still remain.

The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan heralded a new chapter for unconventional warfare and specifically US Special Forces as it re-endeared them to not only the American public, but also the US military and political leadership. Most Special Forces began to be appreciated for what they were, namely highly trained operators capable of executing highly complicated and dangerous missions. However conventional warfare will continue to remain a threat and it would seem premature to argue that Special Forces could in future totally replace conventional forces.

ABSTRACT

Topic: The growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare, with specific reference to the United States of America.

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The objective of this study is to assess the growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare, with specific reference to the United States of America. The main question that the study seeks to address is what are the implications of the growing role of Special Forces in modern warfare? The study also seeks to ascertain why exactly this growth is occurring and whether or not this will have a bearing on the future of not only the manner in which the US conducts conflict but also global conflict as a whole. In order to address these issues the study will look at conventional and unconventional warfare and forces; the roles and missions of Special Forces and the composition of US Special Forces; the role of US Special Forces in modern warfare prior to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks; and the role of the US Special Forces in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

An analysis of conventional and unconventional warfare as concepts, as well as the forces that constitute conventional and unconventional forces was first done in order to provide some perspective into what these concepts and forces are and more specifically, what differentiates them. Specific reference was made here to the United States' approach to warfare from the days of the American Revolution up to and including the end of the Cold War. Emphasis is placed on the growing role of US Special Forces throughout the study and this is achieved through the use of four major case studies, namely the 1991 Gulf War; Somalia (1992-1993); the Balkans (1995-2001); and the 2001 'Special Forces war' in Afghanistan. The case studies that dealt with the 1991 Gulf War, Somalia and the Balkans elucidated the growing role of both unconventional warfare and specifically US Special Forces and Special Mission Units since the end of the Cold War. The case study of the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan provided the culmination of the shift from conventional to unconventional warfare and the execution of the campaign as a 'Special Forces war.'

The study demonstrates that since the end of the Cold War in the 1990's, unconventional warfare has increasingly become more ubiquitous and can be said to be replacing, or at least equalling in stature, conventional warfare. This has the possibility of dramatically affecting how warfare is executed both currently and more importantly, in the future. The study went on to show that unconventional warfare is not akin to conventional warfare, especially with regard to the forces needed to respond to such conflicts and that Special Forces are the forces most applicable and most effective in dealing with unconventional warfare.

The study confirms that Special Forces are the solution to the growing prominence of unconventional warfare and that countries, and specifically the United States can more effectively counter the threat of unconventional warfare and unconventional forces by shifting Special Forces from a supporting component to conventional forces to a supported component. This would require a massive shift in alignment both for the United States as well as other major states' militaries but as the study has shown, this is pertinent given that unconventional warfare and forces will most likely remain the primary threat that states and militaries will now face.

Key Terminology:

Afghanistan

Balkans

Conventional warfare

Delta Force

Green Beret

Gulf War

Intelligence Support Activity

Naval Special Warfare Development Group

Navy SEAL

September 11, 2001

Somalia

Special Forces

Special Missions Units

Unconventional warfare

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