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SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES: FINISHING THE JOB OF RECONSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Persian Gulf war was the first major test of America's Special Operations Command — or SOCOM. This command was created by Congress in 1987 to coordinate all United States special operations warfare, including counter-terrorism, sabotage and other clandestine missions. In the Gulf, SOCOM passed the test; it rescued downed American pilots, sabotaged enemy command centers and stole enemy military equipment, proving again that elite, well-equipped special operations forces help win wars.

But SOCOM still has problems: inadequate airlift and sealift, inefficient development and procurement of specialized weapons, and still too much emphasis on such direct action missions as coastal raids at the expense of counter-insurgency, or guerrilla-style warfare.

Third World Threats. To correct these problems, SOCOM needs more money — \$686 million added to last year's \$2.3 billion appropriation. The Pentagon wisely is seeking about \$3 billion for SOCOM for fiscal 1992. This boost for SOCOM is possible even as the overall defense budget continues to drop because of the receding threat of a costly East-West war in Europe. At the same time, as the crisis in the Persian Gulf confirmed, the threats emanating from the Third World, where SOCOM troops most often operate, are rising. A 30 percent increase in the SOCOM budget will pay for new programs, training and equipment, and will cover the cost of assuming new accounts that were formerly paid for by the Army and Air Force. The increase is warranted.

While the press during the Gulf war understandably focused mainly on dazzling high-tech weapons and superb generalship, America's special operations forces were operating quietly and effectively, conducting some of the most critical and dangerous missions of the war, often behind enemy lines. Though out of the public

eye, these Gulf missions, including rescue operations and psychological warfare, contributed to the Iraqi collapse and saved many American lives.

SOCOM's success in the Gulf was the direct result of the patient special operations rebuilding effort that began with the humiliating failure of the Desert One operation on April 24, 1980, which attempted to rescue Americans held hostage by Iran. Since then, the special operations forces of the Air Force, Army and Navy have been brought together under a unified command, bolstering their effectiveness through improved interservice training and teamwork. Even before Desert Storm, these improvements enabled SOCOM to conduct missions more effectively, including hostage rescues during Operation Just Cause in Panama in December 1989, and to increase the training of U.S.-backed armed forces in the Third World.

Improved funding has been part of America's effort to expand special operations forces capabilities. Since 1988, spending on procurement alone totals almost \$4 billion. This contrasts with a total special operations forces budget of \$440 million in 1981. But even with these increases, SOCOM remains just over one percent of the Pentagon's budget. America now must finish rebuilding its special operations forces. To ensure this, George Bush should back strongly the full SOCOM budget request of nearly \$3 billion. Moreover, he should:

◆ ◆ **Improve special operations forces aviation by buying at least 26 MH-47E aircraft, reviving the CV-22 Osprey aircraft killed by the Pentagon in 1989, keeping Air Force C-130s flying, and buying up to ten aircraft commonly used in the Third World.** Air transportation is critical to special operations forces, which routinely must travel to and from targets deep behind enemy lines.

◆ ◆ **Boost SOCOM sea transportation capabilities.** Navy Sea, Air and Land Forces (SEALs) rely mainly on ships and other watercraft to infiltrate hostile coasts and carry out missions at sea. The SEALs need a new coastal patrol boat, preferably the Israeli-built *Shaldag*, and a new mini-submersible to transport them from offshore boats and submarines to their targets.

◆ ◆ **Increase the number of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations troops on active duty.** Two key elements of special operations warfare are the Civil Affairs troops who work with local governments to control refugees and help govern occupied areas, and the psychological operations troops who induce enemy troops to surrender or flee the battlefield through the use of propaganda and other techniques. More than 90 percent of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations troops are in the reserves, leaving them undertrained and slow to mobilize.

◆ ◆ **Improve acquisition of special operations equipment.** SOCOM's Special Operations Research, Development and Acquisition Center (SORDAC) was created to develop and acquire specially-tailored equipment for SOCOM. But SORDAC spends too much money on programs that piggyback on projects initiated by the military services, and not enough on more basic exploratory research. Also hurting SORDAC is poorly worded congressional report language that hinders needed cooperation between SOCOM and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

◆ ◆ **Prepare SOCOM for unconventional, or guerrilla-style warfare.** The Persian Gulf war focused attention on SOCOM's role in supporting conventional warfare between heavily armed forces facing off across a clear front line; SOCOM has an equally important role in guerrilla-style, counter-insurgency warfare. Both missions should be reflected in SOCOM planning, training and weapons procurement, and in the coming Joint Mission Analysis, a study of SOCOM mission requirements being prepared by SOCOM and due out later this year.

AMERICA'S SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

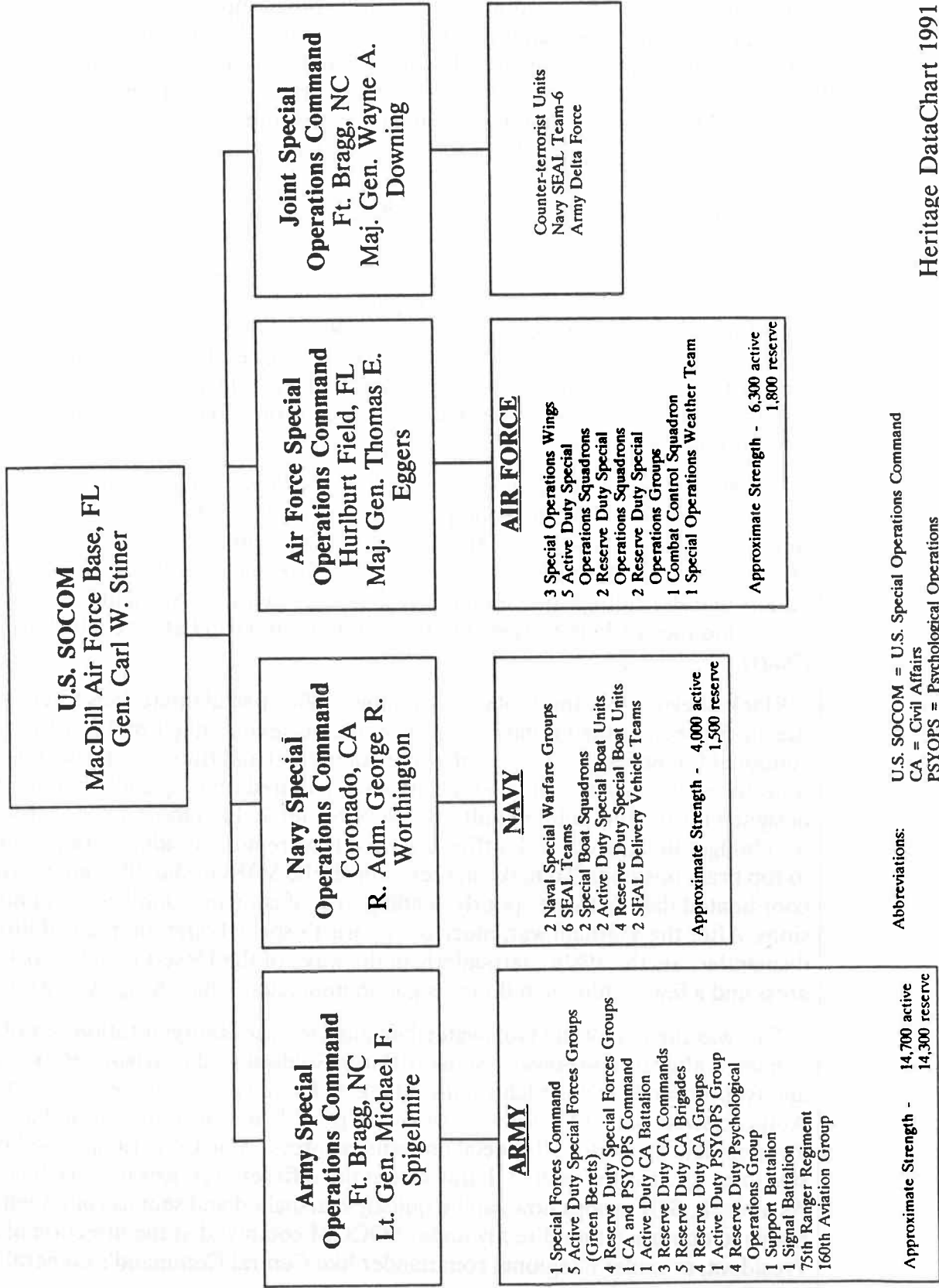
Special operations forces (SOF) formally have been part of the American military since the 1950s, when the Army activated its Green Berets and the Navy created Underwater Demolition Teams (predecessors of today's SEAL – Sea-Air-Land – forces). Since then, SOF have seen extensive service around the world. During the Vietnam war, for example, they conducted deep reconnaissance and sabotage missions in North Vietnam and helped raise and train anti-communist armies throughout Southeast Asia.

Today, the special operations forces of the Air Force, Army and Navy are organized under SOCOM and headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. In all, SOCOM has about 38,000 active and reserve soldiers, sailors and airmen under its command. These include: the Army's Green Berets, Rangers and Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations troops; the Navy's SEALs and Special Boat Units; and the Air Force's specially-trained pilots and combat air controllers (See Chart).

Black Sheep. From the 1950s through the 1980s, special operations forces were the black sheep of the military services. While nuclear strategic and front-line conventional forces received top-of-the-line equipment and training, special operations forces were expected to get by mainly on limited funding and equipment designed for regular military units. The services tended to ignore them, particularly at budget time, while SOF officers generally were not considered for promotion to top brass positions. To make matters worse, the SOFs of the different services coordinated their activities poorly, leading to confusion and duplication of missions. After the Vietnam war, much of America's special operations capability was dismantled. By the 1980s, particularly in the wake of the Desert One fiasco, Congress and a few within the military began to understand that change was needed.

This was the aim of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 – named after its co-sponsors Senator Barry Goldwater, the Arizona Republican, and Representative Bill Nichols, the Alabama Democrat – and the 1987 Defense Authorization Act. SOCOM was created to provide uniform training and develop a common doctrine for all special operations forces. SOCOM also initiated intensive joint training to teach SOF units from the different services to work together. As a result, SOF troops now can be quickly marshalled and sent as combined teams to operate either directly under SOCOM command at the direction of the President, or under a regional commander like Central Command's General Norman Schwartzkopf.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCE STRUCTURE



Abbreviations: U.S. SOCOM = U.S. Special Operations Command
CA = Civil Affairs
PSYOPS = Psychological Operations

Congress' revamping of special operations forces also removed SOF, as of fiscal 1992, from the budgets of their parent services and created a separate budget for SOCOM within the overall Pentagon budget. Thus this year, for the first time, Congress is considering a budget request submitted by SOCOM for all the forces under its command.

Unique Equipment. Congress also directed that SOCOM be permitted to develop and acquire its own unique equipment. This led to the creation last year of the Special Operations Research, Development and Acquisition Center (SOR-DAC). Until now, special operations forces had to rely on the military services to fund specially-tailored equipment, such as silenced pistols and suitcase-sized satellite communications gear. The services, however, have been more interested in major procurement programs and by and large ignored the development and procurement of SOF equipment. As a result, SOF usually had to make do with jury-rigged modifications of equipment designed for conventional warfare. In correcting this, however, Congress has inadvertently created a bureaucratic mess. Last year, in a report on the Department of Defense Appropriation Bill for 1991, Congress took money that had been earmarked for SOF equipment out of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) budget, saying that the funds should have gone to SORDAC. Reacting with bureaucratic petulance, DARPA declared that it now no longer is responsible for any special operations projects. SORDAC, however, simply is not equipped to do advanced research like that conducted by DARPA.

Congress gave SOCOM ten missions. These are: 1) direct action; 2) strategic reconnaissance; 3) unconventional warfare; 4) foreign internal defense; 5) civil affairs; 6) psychological operations; 7) counterterrorism; 8) humanitarian assistance; 9) theater search and rescue; and 10) such other activities as may be specified by the President or the Secretary of Defense.

Direct Action. The most important missions are direct action and unconventional warfare. Direct action usually refers to a quick-strike mission with a clearly defined objective, such as destroying an enemy command post or communications center, or taking out a key bridge or railroad depot used by enemy troops. Direct action frequently is carried out by small teams of saboteurs armed with explosives, or equipped with lasers to mark targets for Air Force laser-guided bombs. Direct action missions usually take place behind enemy lines and are focused on getting SOF to and from their targets quickly and quietly, by air, land or sea. Unconventional warfare encompasses a broad range of activities that include organizing, training and equipping for guerrilla warfare the military forces of friendly governments or sometimes anti-communist insurgent movements.

SPECIAL FORCES IN OPERATION DESERT STORM

Over 9,000 special operations troops took part in Operation Desert Storm,¹ most of them in direct action roles. Army Special Forces infiltrated into Baghdad and other strategic sites inside Iraq, where they guided Air Force pilots to key targets by pointing laser beams at them or planting radio-emitting homing beacons directly on them. Other special forces units roamed the desert in high-speed dune buggies, monitoring Iraqi troop movements and sabotaging communications and supply depots.²

Arabic-speaking Army Special Forces trained Kuwaiti resistance fighters and acted as liaisons with allied Arab armies. Other special operations forces rescued downed pilots and stole Iraqi military equipment and carried it back across friendly lines. One SOF unit is even thought to have stolen a *Scud* missile system. SEAL units, meanwhile, were deactivating underwater mines and raiding enemy coastal positions at night.

Psychological Operations troops, known as PSYOPS, saturated Iraqi soldiers with anti-Saddam leaflets, radio broadcasts and safe conduct passes across the front lines. As American main forces swept into Kuwait and Iraq, they were accompanied by SOCOM Civil Affairs troops, which cared for refugees and kept them from interfering with U.S. military operations.³ Today, Army Green Berets are deployed in southern Turkey and northern Iraq to assist Kurdish refugees and establish safe havens for them.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Despite SOCOM's proven effectiveness, problems remain. SOCOM still lacks adequate, modern aircraft, particularly those used to transport troops into and out of target areas. Sea transportation also is a problem; in particular, a new patrol boat capable of operating close to shore and in rivers is needed. SOCOM also is seeking greater funding for making use of leading edge technologies, such as stealth, for use in its air, land and naval craft.

SOF aircraft generally are variants of existing aircraft modified to be refueled in mid-air, equipped with special secure communications, and capable of day or night navigation in all weather conditions. There has been some improvement in the SOCOM air transport fleet with the purchase of 41 MH-53J *Pave Low* transport helicopters, used for the clandestine delivery of troops and equipment.

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- 1 *Defense Daily*, March 15, 1991, "Special Ops Forces to Submit Joint Mission Analysis This Summer," Phillips Publishing, Washington, D.C., p. 399.
 - 2 *Newsweek*, March 18, 1991, "Special Ops: The Top Secret War," p. 32.
 - 3 John Kifner, "U.S. Army Doing the Work," *The New York Times*, April 5, 1991, p. A10.

Yet other programs have been cut back. Example: Procurement of specially equipped MH-47E transport helicopters has been cut from 51 to 26 through fiscal 1992. Example: SOCOM needs a transport aircraft with a combat radius of over 1000 miles that can take off and land clandestinely. This need would have been filled by an extended-range CV-22 *Osprey*, which takes off like a helicopter but flies like a plane. But the *Osprey's* future remains uncertain: every year since 1989, the Pentagon has tried to kill the program and Congress has resurrected it with continued funding for research and development. SOCOM is a bit player in the struggle over the *Osprey*, which is being fought by the military services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Congress. If the *Osprey* is produced, the Marines, the Navy, and perhaps the Army, would be its big customers. As with many issues, SOCOM will have to improvise while it awaits the resolution of a clash between heavyweights.

Shrinking Pool. Another decision with direct impact on SOCOM is Congress' order to put the Air Force's entire fleet of C-130 transport aircraft in the reserves by this September. This will restrict SOCOM's access to these aircraft and shrink the pool of C-130 pilots, from which SOCOM often picks pilots for its own, specially-tailored C-130 fleet.

Sea transportation capabilities for the SEALs have been improved by the planned acquisition of thirteen new 170-foot patrol boats. They generally will operate well offshore, transporting SEALs, supporting and supplying SEAL operations and providing light naval gunfire.

The SEALs now need a new boat that can operate in shallow water, near beaches and on rivers. The Mk III 65-foot patrol boat now used for shallow water missions is a Vietnam-era craft that is no longer reliable and lacks the firepower or storage space for SEAL missions. The SEALs want to replace the Mk III with the 82-foot Israeli-built *Shaldag*, but SOCOM is resisting until it is sure that it will receive adequate operations and maintenance funds for the 170-foot boats.⁴

Frigid Waters. The SEALs also lack an effective, dry interior, mini-submarine, or "SEAL delivery vehicle" (SDV) to transport SEAL divers who must remain underwater for extended periods. The current Mk VII SDV, something of a sluggish, propeller-driven underwater moped, leaves SEALs exposed to frigid waters which over long periods can sap their strength.

Whatever the fate of SOCOM's fiscal 1992 budget, SOCOM's overall effectiveness is being compromised by its emphasis on the direct action mission and neglect of unconventional warfare. Policy makers and the military remain uncomfortable with the idea of sending SOCOM troops for sustained periods to train and assist friendly governments in combating insurgencies, providing humanitarian assistance, and improving local economies by building roads, bridges and medical clinics. Sometimes this discomfort results in overt action as with Congress' limiting to 55 the number of U.S. military advisors in El Salvador.

4 Author's discussion with high-level SEAL commander.

Sometimes it shows itself more subtly, with the emphasis in SOCOM's budget on acquiring new technology, often at high cost, while cutting corners on spending for key unconventional warfare skills. The proposed fiscal 1992 SOCOM budget, for instance, cuts funds for language training by \$370,000, despite a 30 percent overall SOCOM budget increase. SOCOM's budget for language training was \$1.9 million in 1991.⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

SOCOM has asked Congress for \$3 billion in fiscal 1992, an increase of \$686 million over this year. About 40 percent of the increase is to finance a transfer to SOCOM of several programs run by the Army and Air Force. Roughly another 40 percent is to complete key procurement programs, including the purchase of a new satellite communications system, munitions to fill war reserve stocks and classified programs that are reaching their peak funding years. Money for the operation and maintenance of aircraft also is up — by about \$67 million — to service and train pilots for nine new SOF aircraft purchased last year.⁶ As SOCOM completes its aircraft modernization program over the next few years, its budget will begin to decline dramatically. But for now, SOCOM needs the extra funds to finish the rebuilding of America's special operations forces begun in the 1980s.

To ensure that this is done, Bush should back strongly the full SOCOM budget request and then press the Pentagon to ensure that SOCOM's most pressing needs are met. Bush should work with Congress and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney to:

◆ ◆ **Improve special operations forces aviation by buying 26 MH-47E aircraft, reviving the CV-22 *Osprey*, keeping Air Force C-130s flying, and buying up to ten aircraft commonly used in the Third World.** Air transportation is critical to special operations forces, who routinely must travel to and from targets deep behind enemy lines. SOCOM still relies on many outdated aircraft, such as the *Chinook* CH-47 transport helicopter, and has had to cut procurement of newer systems, like the MH-47E, an updated version of the *Chinook*. SOCOM now plans to procure 26 of the 51 MH-47Es that it needs to provide transportation for special operations forces. SOCOM has requested \$207.8 million in fiscal 1992 to finish buying these 26 aircraft. This is the minimum needed by SOCOM for its most pressing transportation requirements.⁷

Even if SOCOM were to buy 51 MH-47Es, it still would not have an adequate long-range aircraft for the clandestine transport of troops to and from their tar-

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- 5 United States Special Operations Command, FY 1992/FY 1993 Budget Estimates: Justification Data, February 1991, Operations and Maintenance, p.158.
 - 6 Statement of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, James R. Locher III, before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Readiness, March 14, 1991, p.7-9.
 - 7 United States Special Operations Command FY 1992/FY 1993 Budget Estimates, February 1991, Procurement, p.46.

gets. For this it needs an extended-range CV-22 *Osprey*, which takes off like a helicopter and flies like a plane. But the *Osprey* was cancelled by Cheney in 1989, although \$238 million would keep the program alive through fiscal year 1991. SOCOM needs 55 *Ospreys*, but only can afford to purchase them if the Navy and Marines buy the aircraft in much larger numbers, driving down the price. Cheney should reverse his decision on the *Osprey* and revive the program for the Navy, Marines and SOCOM.

Flying Sensitive Missions. One inexpensive but needed addition to SOCOM's aviation fleet is the purchase of about ten aircraft commonly flown in the Third World, particularly in Central and South America. These include propeller-driven aircraft made by such manufacturers as CASA, de Havilland or Dornier. SOCOM would use aircraft to train Third World air force pilots on the planes that they are most likely to fly. By sometimes using aircraft common in countries where SOCOM operates, moreover, SOCOM pilots can carry out sensitive missions without being conspicuous. These aircraft could be purchased over the next five years at a cost of about \$1.5 million per plane. The money could be taken from research and development funds for advanced SOF aircraft.

Finally, SOCOM will be hurt by Congress' 1990 decision to assign all Air Force C-130s to the reserves. Reserve aircraft will not provide SOCOM with the immediate access it needs to the C-130 fleet, and will limit the number of potential Special Operations Low-Level pilots, who are chosen from the pool of active duty Air Force C-130 pilots.

If these aircraft issues are resolved in SOCOM's favor, the command's aviation requirement largely will be met, for at least a decade.

◆ ◆ **Boost SOCOM sea transportation capabilities.** Navy SEALs rely mainly on ships and other watercraft to infiltrate hostile coasts and carry out missions at sea. Their offshore mission requirements will be better served by the purchase of thirteen 170-foot offshore patrol boats, eight of which will be added to the inventory in the near term.

The SEALs major transportation requirement today is for a new shallow-water patrol boat to replace the Vietnam-era Mk III. For this, the SEALs want to buy the 82-foot Israeli-built *Shaldag*. SOCOM, however, has not asked for money to test the *Shaldag* because SOCOM is focusing on acquiring and operating the new offshore patrol boat. Yet SOCOM should test the *Shaldag* this year, so that SOCOM can begin acquiring the *Shaldag* in 1993. SOCOM should allocate \$4 million this year to conduct full-scale operational testing of the *Shaldag*. Some of the oldest Mk III patrol boats could be retired early to provide the funding. When purchased, the *Shaldag* would cost about \$5 million each, although this price would be lower if the U.S. Coast Guard chooses the *Shaldag* as a replacement for its aging cutters.

The SEALs also need a new swimmer delivery system (SDS), a mini-submarine that will carry SEALs from ships and submarines offshore to their targets. SOCOM has requested about \$6 million in research and development funding for SDS next year.

◆ ◆ **Increase the number of active duty Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations troops.** Two types of forces critical to SOCOM are Civil Affairs troops, who perform such missions as refugee control and administration of occupied territory, and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) troops, who use propaganda to demoralize and influence enemy troops. Today, more than 90 percent of these forces are in the reserves, leaving them undertrained and slow to mobilize. To correct this, SOCOM should move a brigade of roughly 200 troops each from the reserves to active duty over the next two years. This would keep SOCOM's total manpower level at about 38,000. Moving the two brigades from the reserves to active duty would cost approximately \$19 million. The money should be taken from the planned increase in reserve duty budgets for Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations troops in fiscal years 1992 and 1993. The gain in intensively trained, rapidly deployable troops would eliminate the current over-reliance on the reserves for these forces.

◆ ◆ **Improve the acquisition of special operations equipment.**

SOCOM created the Special Operations Research, Development and Acquisition Center (SORDAC) last year with the consent of Congress. SORDAC's job is to develop and acquire equipment designed specifically for special operations forces. So far, instead of funding original research to design new SOF equipment, SORDAC has put its money into programs that piggyback on research and development already underway for the military services. While SOCOM hopes to save money by this approach, it is sacrificing the extra performance that could be gained by designing SOF equipment from the ground up. Only \$3.3 million of SOCOM's \$276 million budget request for research, development and testing will go to exploratory research for new SOF equipment. SOCOM should earmark at least \$20 million of its research budget for exploratory research, shifting the funds from other research, development and testing programs.

SOCOM's access to advanced technology also is hindered by an October 11, 1990, Congressional Report which effectively prevents the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) or the high-tech Balanced Technology Initiative (BTI) from initiating projects for SOCOM. Congress should permit SOCOM to receive DARPA and BTI support directly. SORDAC lacks the resources to develop all of its own equipment.

◆ ◆ **Continue to stress SOCOM's preparation for unconventional, or guerrilla-style, warfare.**

The Persian Gulf war has focused attention on SOCOM's direct action role in supporting conventional warfare between heavily armed forces facing off across a clear front line; SOCOM has an equally important role in guerrilla-style, counter-insurgency warfare. Both missions should be stressed equally in SOCOM planning, training and weapons procurement.

SOCOM's future direction will be set by the coming Joint Mission Analysis (JMA), a study of SOCOM missions due out later this year. The JMA will identify and evaluate the world's hotspots and potential SOCOM roles in each. While the regional sections of the JMA have been completed, the global analysis is not ex-

pected until this September. It should emphasize the role of special operations forces in training and supporting friendly governments and democratic movements in fighting and winning unconventional, guerrilla-style conflicts. The JMA also should emphasize humanitarian assistance, or the use of SOCOM troops to help local populations raise their living standards. Examples: assisting in road building, well digging and local health care programs to gain support for local governments.

CONCLUSION

Since the creation of the Special Operations Command by Congress in 1987, America has improved vastly its special operations warfare capabilities. Its success in support of Operation Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf demonstrates that a well-trained force of elite troops from all the military services can greatly expand U.S. striking power. The special operations gains confirmed by action in the Gulf, however, are at risk unless SOCOM is able to complete its rebuilding and modernization. For this SOCOM needs about \$3 billion for fiscal 1992 — up \$686 million from the previous year. Some 40 percent of this boost, however, is to cover costs of programs transferred to SOCOM from the Air Force and Army.

Modernization of Craft. SOCOM's first priority is to complete the modernization of its air and naval craft. SOCOM needs at least 26 new MH-47E transport helicopters. The Pentagon also should revive the CV-22 *Osprey* aircraft, buy up to ten aircraft commonly flown in Third World skies, and maintain an active fleet of Air Force C-130 aircraft. The Navy's SEALs need a new coastal patrol boat, like the Israeli-built *Shaldag* favored by the SEALs, and a new mini-submersible to transport SEALs to their targets from offshore ships and submarines.

SOCOM also should activate a reserve brigade, consisting of about 200 soldiers, of Civil Affairs troops and a reserve brigade of Psychological Operations troops.

SOCOM too must learn to make better use of its Special Operations Research Development and Acquisition Center. Too much of SOCOM's \$276 million research and development budget so far has gone to programs that piggyback on projects begun by the military services; not enough of SOCOM's research funds go for exploratory research.

Wide-Ranging Use. Finally, policy makers and SOCOM brass should seek to use special operations forces in all ten of the missions assigned to it by Congress. SOCOM's capabilities now are proven. With political and fiscal support from the President and Congress, America can complete the job it began in the 1980s and fully rebuild its special warfare capabilities. If it does so, it will have available a ready and flexible military force capable of responding quickly to threats to America's interests across the spectrum of military conflict.

Operation Desert Storm was only the latest validation of SOCOM's capabilities. Whether sneaking into Baghdad to spy on enemy installations and marking them for destruction with miniature homing beacons or setting up relief centers for Kurdish refugees in Turkey, the special operations forces have proven their worth. Today, other SOF troops are similarly proving their worth in Bolivia by helping to train the Bolivian narcotics police and in the Philippines teaching counter-insur-

agency techniques. Both are helping to keep major problems from becoming major crises.

For U.S. SOCOM, manpower levels are nearly sufficient; funding is not. More importantly, the U.S. still must recognize the low-cost advantage of employing SOCOM's troops in defense of U.S. interests in wartime and peacetime. Building up SOF forces to a robust size will do little good without the will to use them. In a period when defense capabilities are being drawn down despite growing global challenges to U.S. interests, such as free access to markets and resources, America must stand firm in the most economical way possible. Given the chance, SOCOM should lead in the defense of those interests.

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