

STATIONING OF THE 75TH RANGER REGIMENT

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by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

STATIONING OF THE 75TH RANGER REGIMENT, by MAJ Gregory S. Harkins, 82 pages.

The 75th Ranger Regiment is currently developing a new operational and organizational plan (O&O) in order to adapt to future threats and operational environments. To maximize the potential of its Rangers in the Army's Future Force. One of the major changes proposed by the O&O is the forward basing of Ranger units around the globe and consolidating the entire 75th Ranger Regiment at one single location.

The first three chapters of this thesis focus on the future operational environments, threats, and changes the Army and the 75th Ranger Regiment are currently considering. The next two chapters are a theoretical analysis of potential forward-basing strategies, followed by an analysis of the consolidation concept.

In the final chapter, this thesis concludes that forward basing and consolidation of the 75th Ranger Regiment should be pursued in order to provide the Department of Defense a more deployable and lethal force prepared to conduct special operations in support of national policies and directives.

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ACRONYMS

AOR	Area of Responsibility
C2	Command and Control
COE	Contemporary Operational Environment
COCOM	Combatant Command
DA	Direct Action
DoD	Department of Defense
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leader Development Personnel, and Facilities
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HSOC	Home Station Operation Center
O&O	Operational and Organizational
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
ROG	Ranger Operational Group
SF	Special Forces
SOF	Special Operation Forces
TSCP	Theater Security and Cooperation Plan
UA	Unit of Action
US	United States
WMD/E	Weapons of Mass Destruction and, or Effects

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 23 October 2001, elements of the 75th Ranger Regiment, along with other United States special operations forces (SOF), began a large-scale direct action raid inside Afghanistan. For the American public it was the first images of “boots on the ground” in the coming Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). For the Taliban and other potential adversaries it sent a strong message about the global reach, capabilities, and resolve of the United States. As they have in the past, the Rangers were once again called upon to “lead the way.”

Problem Statement

The 75th Ranger Regiment is currently developing a new operational and organizational plan (O&O) in order to adapt and maximize the potential of its Rangers in the Army's Future Force. It has based many of the changes in this document on its recent experiences during the GWOT, the new paradigms of the contemporary operating environment (COE), and the characteristics of the Future Force. The draft O&O for the 75th Ranger Regiment proposes several concepts that have yet to be fully researched.

One proposed change is a dramatic shift in the stationing of the future Ranger force. This would consist of two major changes: forward basing Ranger units around the globe and consolidating the 75th Ranger Regiment at one single location. The current basing of the 75th Ranger Regiment separates Ranger units by over 3000 miles and three time zones. The logic of the current basing should be reevaluated with realities of the GWOT and ongoing initiatives. There are clear advantages and disadvantages to the

home stationing inherited from the formation of the 75th Ranger Regiment. It may make sense, however, to consolidate the 75th Ranger Regiment and forward deploy elements in order to better meet the requirements of the GWOT and the Future Force.

Significance of the Study

The Ranger O&O covers numerous changes and modifications to the future Ranger force. The stationing concepts discussed in this document are dramatic leaps from the historical paradigms that have dominated the 75th Ranger Regiment the past thirty years. One question posed in the O&O, but left unanswered, was the stationing of the 75th Ranger Regiment. Current operations have put answering this question low on the priority list. If the 75th Ranger Regiment forward bases some elements and consolidates the remainder at one base, it may require a significant shift in resources to meet the requirements of the Army in 2020. A forward-basing posture may require certain Ranger units to be geographically focused in order to maximize their ability to conduct successful operations in politically sensitive environments. A consolidation base should be selected that can provide an adequate home training base and rapid deployment platform for the future Ranger force. This is a major shift in the 75th Ranger Regiment's wartime posture, which should be examined further.

Thesis Question

As the 75th Ranger Regiment transforms to meet the requirements of the threat and operational environment in 2020, can changes to the stationing locations and methods of its units increase its strategic responsiveness and provide a more lethal and

capable force. How should the 75th Ranger Regiment be postured for the complexities of the world in 2020?

Subordinate Questions

1. What will be required of the US military in 2020? In order to answer this question three additional questions should be answered. What is the future operational environment? What kind of threats will the US military threat face? How will the US Army adapt to successfully accomplish its mission in 2020?

2. What will the 75th Ranger Regiment look like in 2020? To fully understand the problem facing the Rangers it is critical to review the 75th Ranger Regiment's current organization, its functions, stationing, recent adaptations to the GWOT, and the impact of changes proposed by the draft O&O.

3. Should Rangers be forward based into combatant commanders' areas of responsibility (AORs)? The Ranger O&O goes beyond stationing in the US, and includes forward deployment as well. This would be a dramatic shift in the historical posture of Ranger units and should be examined in detail. Potential options include permanent forward basing similar to Special Forces (SF) battalions, semi-permanent forward basing in direct support of GWOT operations, and short duration deployments with geographically aligned Ranger units.

4. Should the 75th Ranger Regiment consolidate in one location? Considering the changes the 75th Ranger Regiment is already making, what are the advantages and disadvantages of consolidating in one location? If the 75th Ranger Regiment does consolidate, what criteria should be used to evaluate potential locations?

Assumptions

This thesis is a study of the 75th Ranger Regiment and the potential options for its basing in 2020. In order to explore this topic, several key assumptions will be made. The threat and operational environment the US military will face over the next two decades will be dangerous and volatile. This study will describe the projected environment in which the 75th Ranger Regiment will be organized and trained to operate. The instruments of national power will be relatively unchanged. In 2020, the US will still play a major role diplomatically across the world and have tremendous influence through its informational, military, and economic resources. The US will continue to enjoy moderate to high levels of economic prosperity to support current military force levels and provide technological advances on par with any other nation. The US will not face the most dangerous threats that could alter its existence, such as global nuclear war, conventional invasion, or revolution from within. Another assumption is that the US military will continue to be structured in a similar manner, with geographic combatant commanders responsible for the majority of the war-fighting tasks, and the 75th Ranger Regiment acting as a subordinate unit of the United States Special Operation Command.

The term “Future Force” is a new term to describe the Objective Force concept that former Chief of Staff of the Army General Shinseki developed. It is assumed that literature dealing with the Objective Force is valid for a study of the Future Force unless specified differences have been identified in updated Future Force documents. The Future Force will have many of the same attributes of the current force, such as ability to conduct full-spectrum operations using heavy, medium, light, and special operations

forces. It will continue to be the premier fighting force on the planet with unmatched technological and firepower capabilities.

The Army and the 75th Ranger Regiment will continue to conduct their transformation while engaged globally as part of the GWOT. This study will assume that the US policies in support of GWOT operations will continue to use an offensive military capability when opportunities or crises present themselves. By 2020, the 75th Ranger Regiment's draft O&O will be fully implemented as part of this transformation. The new Ranger force will continue to provide combatant commanders a small-, medium-, and large-scale direct action force ideally suited for raids and forced entry operations. The Ranger force will have increased its capability to work unilaterally or in conjunction with other special operations or conventional units. Assumptions about potential consolidation bases and forward bases will be discussed in a later chapter. Finally, it is assumed that the military will support this change and that the fiscal means and political willpower will exist to execute it.

Limitations and Delimitations

This topic has the potential to be too broad to discuss in this thesis alone. It is critical then to discuss the limitations and delimitations that will help to narrow the scope of this thesis into a manageable size.

This study will be unclassified. Many details about recent combat actions of the 75th Ranger Regiment, its command relationships, and missions cannot be fully disclosed. It is still feasible, nevertheless, to gain materials and discuss the employment, organization, and capabilities on the unclassified level. In some areas this may result in a lack of specificity and details; however, this will not negatively impact the answering of

the key questions related to the topic. This thesis will not attempt to talk around classified aspects of the 75th Ranger Regiment or its transformation. Only declassified and open source reports of Rangers in recent combat operations will be included in this thesis.

In order to narrow the scope of this topic the following delimitations are set. Historical data used in this study will come from the modern 75th Ranger Regiment since its formation in 1973. The focus year for research will be 2020. Actual dollar costs for moving Rangers to a consolidated base will not be obtained for this study. Instead, the focus will be on the logic and ripple effects of such a move. Potential locations will be discussed, however, this thesis is theoretical and will not constitute a complete analysis of all potential options and the factors that may weigh into the final basing decision.

The technological advances that are possible in the next thirty years are limitless. Unforeseen advances could so drastically reshape the world environment that it is impractical to explore or imagine each possibility. Therefore, this study will only address recent advances and proposed concepts, such as land warrior and the family of combat vehicles. Current base reallocation and closing plans will be considered for this thesis; however, future closings are difficult to project and may have significant impact on potential options for consolidation.

Methodology

The opening step is developing a common basis of understanding for the problem at hand. First, the future strategic and operational environment should be fully understood. To determine forward employment considerations of the Rangers necessitates an evaluation of the potential operating environment and threats the Ranger force may be called on to assure, deter, or defeat. This requires an analysis of the current

national strategic policy, Future Force initiatives, and the impact of the GWOT on the current force. The next step to understanding the problem is developing an appreciation for the current mission, organization, and employment of the 75th Ranger Regiment, and the potential impacts of changes proposed in the draft O&O.

The final step is an analysis of the stationing options available to the 75th Ranger Regiment. In order to evaluate forward-basing options, this study will use the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability test. After evaluating forward basing, this study will examine the concept of consolidating the 75th Ranger Regiment at one location in the US. Evaluating consolidation will be based partially on the framework the Army uses to conduct force management, known as doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader development, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF). This thesis will propose some potential locations for consolidating the 75th Ranger Regiment that may be researched further by a team of experts. The criteria for evaluating potential locations will be based on the recent base reallocation and closing criteria; they are mission, jointness, training, facilities, and intangibles.

Literature Review

This thesis deals with three main research categories: COE, the Future Force, and the 75th Ranger Regiment. Most of the works used in this study were written at various levels of the US military. All were useful in examining the role of the 75th Ranger Regiment in the current force and possible improvements that it might make to be more effective in 2020. Not much information regarding the future basing of the 75th Ranger Regiment has been published beyond the concepts discussed in Future Force documents and the basing vision discussed briefly in the Ranger O&O.

This thesis used several sources to help describe the operational environment and potential threats that the US military will face in 2020. The Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of the Army authored the key documents used in this area of research in order to help its planners determine future force structure and potential force employment strategies. It is logical to base this portion of the thesis on these documents since military planners use them to derive the overall strategy and force structure for the DoD. *Joint Operating Environment: Into the Future (Draft)* and *The Operational Environment and Threat: A View of the World to 2020 and Beyond (Draft)* were the two key works used in this portion of the study. These conceptual documents, compiled by the US military, are updated frequently to reflect emerging concepts, threats, and variables and are currently in draft form. Contributions to these works include many military and civilian experts and provide an extensively researched vision of the probable COE for the US military in 2020.

The next category for research was the Army's Future Force. The US military was the key author of the transformation and Future Force documents cited in this portion of the thesis. The key works used in this portion of the study were *Joint Vision 2020*, *The Army in 2020: The Future Force*, and *Our Army at War: The Way Ahead*. Each of the publications nests its main points with the concepts described by its higher headquarters. Though the Future Force concept is relatively new, it has built on much of the previous work of the Army Objective Force and is in line with joint and national visions for land-based operations.

Several other documents were used as background material and provided key references for this thesis. Theses written on special operations by Major Aidis Zunde,

“Rangers and the Strategic Requirement for Direct Action Forces,” and Major John Prairie, “Organization of Special Forces in the Objective Force,” provided additional insight to potential uses and employment considerations of SOF in the Future Force.

The next area of study is the 75th Ranger Regiment. One of the most important documents referenced in this portion is written by the US Army Special Operations Command and the 75th Ranger Regiment, titled *Ranger Objective Force, Operational and Organizational Plan (Draft)*. The Ranger O&O outlines the bold changes and adaptations the 75th Ranger Regiment is planning on implementing in order to increase its responsiveness, lethality, and employment in the Army's Future Force. A clear understanding of the concepts outlined in the O&O is essential to answering the thesis question. The key authors of the Ranger O&O, Mr. Thomas Carlin, US Army Special Operations Command, and MAJ Ralph Kauzlarich, the 75th Ranger Regiment transformation officer, provided vital background information and insight into the development of this document and provided critical feedback during the writing of this study. Their input allowed this thesis to close gaps in research caused by the lack of literature published on the future basing of the 75th Ranger Regiment and dramatically narrow the scope of this study.

Key Terms

The following key terms are defined in order to provide clear definitions of several key terms used throughout this thesis:

Asymmetric Warfare: denotes warfare where one side uses innovative and possibly unexpected strategies, tactics, or technologies to exploit the vulnerabilities and avoid the strengths of its opponent. (Ranger O&O 2003, 36)

Clandestine Operation: an operation sponsored or conducted by governmental

departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities. (JP 1-02 2003)

Direct Action: short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives; also called DA. (JP 1-02 2003)

Low Visibility Operations: sensitive operations wherein the political-military restrictions inherent in covert and clandestine operations are either not necessary or not feasible; actions are taken as required to limit exposure of those involved and/or their activities. Execution of these operations is undertaken with the knowledge that the action and/or sponsorship of the operation may preclude plausible denial by the initiating power. (JP 1-02 2003)

Non-State Actors: groups and organizations within a country that are not integrated into the political system but impact on intrastate and international relationships. Examples include criminal organizations, drug cartels, militias and other paramilitary groups, mercenaries, and insurgents who link together for mutual support, facilitation of business, protection, and who have significant visibility in international affairs. (Ranger O&O 2003, 37)

Operational Environment: a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of military forces and bear on the decisions of the unit commander. (JP 1-02 2003)

Reachback: the process of obtaining products, services, and applications, or forces, or equipment, or material from organizations that are not forward deployed. (JP 1-02 2003)

Security Cooperation: part of the defense strategy to promote security cooperation with allies and friendly nations to help them create favorable balances of military power in critical areas of the world to deter aggression or coercion, linking DoD strategic direction with those of US allies and friends. A particular aim of security cooperation is to ensure access, interoperability, and intelligence cooperation, while expanding the range of pre-conflict operations available to counter coercive

threats, deter aggression, or favorably prosecute wars on US terms. (Ranger O&O 2003, 37)

Special Operations: Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.(JP 1-02 2003)

Strategically Responsiveness: responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable. Ability to rapidly project and sustain the right mix of mission tailored, lethal, survivable, and mobile forces and capabilities, including logistical sustainment, to any point on the globe to achieve decisive results as part of joint and/or multinational operations. (Ranger O&O 2003, 38)

Unilateral Operations: overt, covert, or clandestine operations conducted by the US Government without the involvement of allies, coalition partners, host nation military or indigenous assets. (Ranger O&O 2003, 38)

CHAPTER 2

THE WORLD IN 2020

In order to discuss the stationing required of the 75th Ranger Regiment in 2020 it is critical to define the projected operational environment. Joint doctrine defines operational environment as “a composite of conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect employment of military forces and bear on the decisions of the unit commander.” (JP1-02 2003). Countless documents, studies, and books have been published in the last few years attempting to define the future environment and threats facing the US over the next fifteen to twenty years. It is important to describe, for the purposes of this thesis, the operational environment and potential adversaries that the Rangers of the future must be prepared to deter or defeat in the coming decades. Equally important is a clear understanding of the future operational structure and design of the US Army and US special operations forces in the coming years. Understanding the strategic, operational, and tactical role of the 75th Ranger Regiment in the Future Force is essential to examining the potential staging requirements of the Ranger force.

Future Environment

The disintegration of the Soviet Union marked the collapse of the bipolar world, leaving the US as the only remaining superpower. The bipolar world meant that two main forces influenced global events and politics. As the world has already seen in the last ten years, a far greater number of influences will impact events and politics, making the world more volatile and less predictable. “Armed conflict will continue to be the primary option for those actors who do not feel they can compete or perhaps survive with cultures

or interests intact.” (JOE 2003, 117). Globalization and information technology have brought the world closer together, reducing geographic and historic buffers to outer-regional instability. Regional conflicts and events that would have been defused or ignored in the bipolar world now have the potential to rapidly involve the US military. Impoverished and overpopulated areas will continue to increase, providing the environment for social upheaval and expanding radical ideas. Cultural and religious struggles that have existed for generations will once again flare up. The ability of transnational terror and crime syndicates to proliferate will increase dramatically (COE 2002, 2).

In 2020 the US will have to defend its interests both at home and abroad and be prepared to intervene globally. The center of gravity for America will continue to be its national will. The asymmetric capabilities of America's adversaries will allow them to avoid US strengths and potentially strike directly at the US homeland as demonstrated on 11 September 2001. Their determination to attack US national interests at home and abroad will require the US military to fight a preemptive campaign across the globe in order to seek and destroy its enemies before they can attack US interests and threaten its national will (Bush 2002, 13). To defend its center of gravity, the US requires the capability to rapidly strike an adversary before he is able to muster an attack on US interests that could potentially undermine US will. Ideally, the military will conduct future operations in a manner that will bring about rapid resolution of the conflict in order to preserve US resolve. The 75th Ranger Regiment, as part of the joint force, must be rapidly deployable to meet these threats and capable of operating globally without additional training or equipment globally.

The future operating environment may be defined by eleven variables listed in figure 1. These variables are interconnected and may be dependant on one another (COE 2002, 2-28).

“Variables” in the Environment

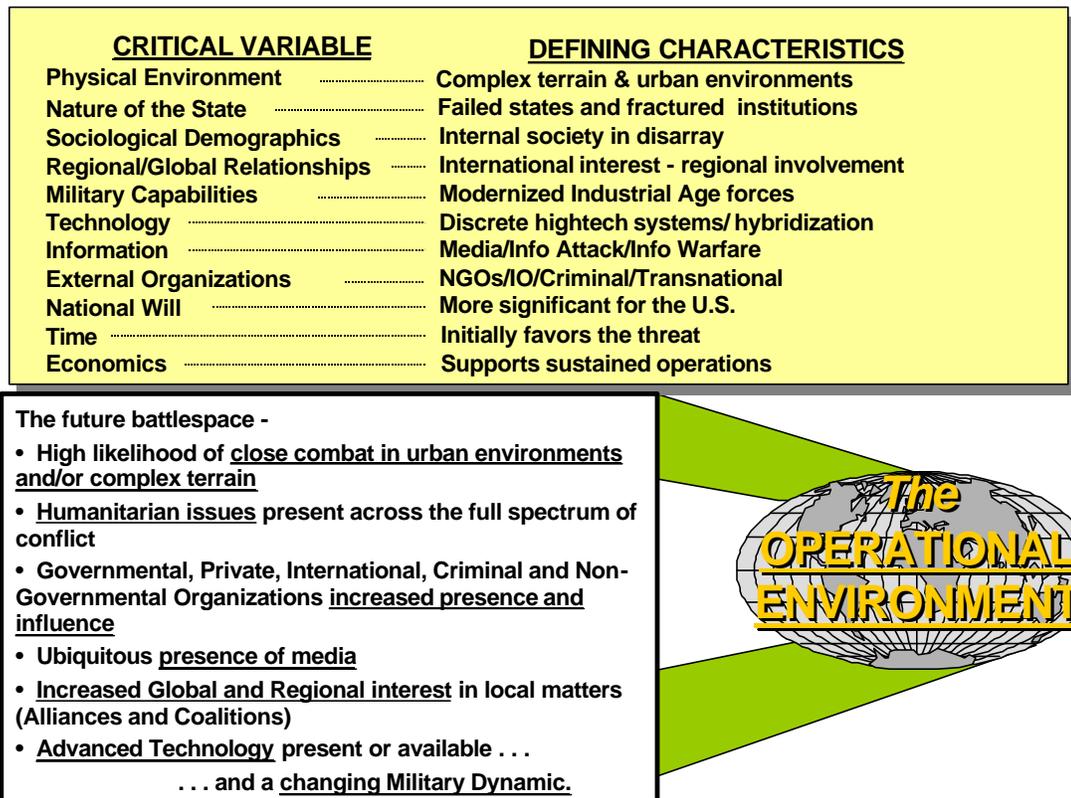


Figure 1. Variables in the Operational Environment

Together these variables can be used to define a region's physical, political, economic, social, scientific, and military landscape. They are the physical environment, nature and stability of the state, sociological demographics, regional and global relationships, military capabilities, information, technology, external organizations, national will, time, and future threats. In order for the US military and the 75th Ranger

Regiment to successfully accomplish their missions they must first be able to function in the environment created by these eleven variables (COE 2002, 3).

Future Threats

In 2004, the US enjoys an immense advantage in technology and advanced weapon systems. This imbalance, however, is not permanent, and the US can expect its adversaries to adapt to its strengths. The power of globalization will allow its adversaries to skip generations of technological development and compete with, or in some cases surpass US military capabilities with commercially acquired equipment. Using this skip-method they will develop similar capabilities or countermeasures to advanced US technology. In areas where US technological advantage is overwhelming, they will develop and use asymmetric tactics to avoid US strengths and exploit perceived weaknesses. US forces will face a combination of these tactics as its enemies attempt to delay, deter, discredit, or counter its elements of national power (Joint Vision 2000, 3).

The ability of global adversaries to bypass US military strength and strike directly at its center of gravity using a variety of means is perhaps the greatest threat to US national interests. An attack on the homeland may achieve the desired psychological results well out of proportion to the physical damage actually inflicted.

An adversary may pursue an asymmetric advantage on the tactical, operational, or strategic level by identifying key vulnerabilities and devising asymmetric concepts and capabilities to strike or exploit them. To complicate matters, our adversaries may pursue a combination of asymmetries, or the United States may face a number of adversaries who, in combination, create an asymmetric threat. These asymmetric threats are dynamic and subject to change, and the US Armed Forces must maintain the capabilities necessary to deter, defend against, and defeat any adversary who chooses such an approach. To meet the challenges of the strategic environment in 2020, the joint force must be able to achieve full-spectrum dominance. (Joint Vision 2000, 3)

No doubt future US opponents have watched its recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq closely. They will learn from the successes and mistakes of the Iraqis, the Taliban, and Al Qaeda. Future adversaries will attempt to conduct operations “under the radar screen” to prevent US involvement, send mixed signals to create uncertainty, and strike perceived vulnerabilities when available. They will attempt to create alliances, leverage regional partners and the United Nations, and exploit media opportunities in order to discredit, delay, and deter US forces. They will seek to interdict US power projection lines of communication and deny or delay its access to the region concerned. Once the US military is in the region, adversaries will allow no sanctuary, using terrorist type methods. They will find and attack “critical links, nodes, seams, and vulnerabilities that may level the playing field” (JOE 2003, 94). Finally they will attempt to deny the US a rapid victory, creating a prolonged conflict with high casualties on both sides that may erode US national will (JOE 2003, 82-95).

In 2020, the US will be able to divide its adversaries into four general categories. There may be emerging powers, failed or failing states, rogue states, and nonstate adversaries. By 2020 some of these opponents may have access to weapons of mass destruction/effects (WMD/E), developed asymmetric tactics to exploit US vulnerabilities, and will certainly use information operations, rules of engagement, and other political constraints against US forces at any opportunity.

The first threat, an emerging or near superpower, does not exist yet. The most likely countries or groups of countries to emerge as superpowers that could have capabilities to rival the US are China and the European Union. That does not mean that some other nation or nations may not rise unexpectedly to levels of national power that

could threaten the US interests. This threat will have sufficient diplomatic, informational, economic, and military capability to counter US interests when desired. It will have the capability to dominate its region and globally using all the instruments of national power to promote its interests. Its military capabilities will be comparable to the US with an ability to fight both symmetrically and asymmetrically. An example of this type of threat was the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact Alliance, which had the capability to directly and indirectly threaten the US homeland. Conflict between the US and an emerging power may be overt or covert and conducted using any one or combination of the instruments of national power. This could mean many of the conflicts with such an opponent will be fought without the militaries ever engaging in direct combat. Though this adversary may be capable and dangerous, it will have much to lose during a war with the US. It is unlikely that such an adversary would choose a course of action that could lead to an overt high-intensity clash. At the same time, the US military would need the capability to face this threat in full spectrum operations around the globe (JOE 2003, 125).

The rogue state is a dangerous adversary especially when armed with WMD/E capability and ballistic missiles. This state is unable to function among the norms of nation states due to ideological or political conflicts and typically suffers economic hardships because of its failure to work within the global structure. The rogue state typically has a strong central government that can control most media and political thought. It may have a strong and advanced military along with a blindly obedient population. An example of this type of adversary is North Korea. The instruments of national power may be effective against this type of enemy, but only to a point, since the regime will completely control most aspects of national power. The leader of this nation

will have a large and potentially powerful military. He will adapt these military capabilities to avoid US strengths and strike at perceived vulnerabilities. This type of state may have large numbers of special purpose forces able to conduct operations both inside and outside of the nation. Using these forces and other asymmetric means, a rogue state can strike to interdict safe havens and limit US access to the region. Military conflict with a rogue nation could result in large-scale WMD/E attacks on the homeland with the use of ballistic missiles and terrorist type techniques. The people of the rogue state may be indoctrinated to idolize the regime or the rogue leader and may fight to a man to defend the regime when it is threatened with military force.

The next threat is the failing or failed state. This state has collapsed due a number of factors and is normally in political, economic, and military disarray. The former state has fractured, with multiple groups filling the political, military, and economic power vacuum in an attempt to expand or solidify their own sphere of influence. Civil war along tribal, religious, or ethnic lines will be quite common. An example of this type of threat is Yugoslavia or Somalia. This state may or may not have access to WMD/E. The most likely scenario involving this threat includes a rapid deployment followed by sustained combat presence to seize and control key facilities and terrain. Threat forces may consist of several groups and neighbors battling for power, and each may even control some WMD/E. It may also be a haven for transnational terrorist groups and crime syndicates. All of these opponents may fight to stop or limit American intrusion in the area. The most adaptive of these groups may have a standing army capable of blending in with the local population and exploiting the advantages offered by urban and close terrain. The different groups in a failed or failing state may also conduct information operations campaigns

aimed at discrediting US forces and creating a humanitarian crisis (JOE 2003, 128-129).

This threat requires a rapidly deployable force that is able to quickly transition across the full-spectrum of operations.

The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along ballistic missile technology-when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons.

President Bush 1 June 2002. (Bush 2002, 13)

The final threat category is nonstate actors. These may be “groups or organizations within a country or region that are not integrated into the political system but impact on intrastate and international relationships” (JP 1-02 2003). They have transnational capabilities and can have influence both within their region and across the globe. Examples of nonstate adversaries include terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, criminal organizations like the Russian mafia, drug cartels like the narcotics traffickers in Columbia, “militias and other paramilitary groups, mercenaries, and insurgents who link together for mutual support, facilitation of business, protection, and who have significant visibility in international affairs” (JP 1-02 2003).

Nonstate adversaries will primarily use intimidation, disinformation, and other criminal activities to achieve their goals. They may also conduct limited covert, clandestine, or overt offensive operations using asymmetric techniques in order to retaliate, threaten, or otherwise achieve their group's goals. A wide range of media and nongovernmental organizations may be present in the conflict area, and nonstate actors will manipulate these groups to maximize their advantage. When the nonstate actor does strike, targets may be civilian or military and may be timed and designed to produce the

greatest impact, as demonstrated recently when terrorists blew up a passenger train in Spain on 11 March 2004.

Militarily, nonstate adversaries pose a significant challenge to US forces. The center of gravity of such groups or organizations maybe difficult to target and even more difficult destroy. Nonstate actors should not be underestimated as bandits or criminals, and globalization will provide them the opportunity to obtain the most current technology for and countermeasures to US equipment. They will use money, ideology, religion, intimidation, and fear to drive people to their cause. Should they posses WMD/E, they may sell them to the highest bidder, use them to inti midate those operating within the political system, or potentially use them against the governments they see as a threat to their cause or business. Nonstate actors may have transnational capabilities, making them even more difficult to deter, dissuade or defeat. There maybe only fleeting opportunities against this type of threat, and when they are presented the US military must have the capability to strike with devastating effect (JOE 2003, 127-8).

In order to preserve US national interests and national will the US military should be able to defeat any or all of these four categories of adversaries. Some conflicts with these enemies may be conducted simultaneously in various parts of the globe. The current structure of the military is not designed for this operational environment or to meet these types of threats. The US military is in the process of conducting a wholesale change or transformation to successfully deter and, when required, defeat the adversaries of the new century.

Future Force

The Army's Future Force will provide a strategically mobile and operationally lethal ground force to combatant commanders as part of the joint team. Today's Army force will transform and retain the best of its current capabilities, while increasing and developing its ability to assure allies and dissuade, deter or, when required, defeat adversaries in the future operational environment (Our Army at War 2003, 1). It will provide combatant commanders a modular force that can be deployed as capabilities-based force packages in order to improve the overall strategic responsiveness of the joint force (Our Army at War 2003, 9). The Future Force will be prepared for full spectrum operations and have the ability to “operate decisively in an uncertain environment against an unpredictable threat that will make every effort to avoid our strengths” (Our Army at War 2003, 2). It will be part of a joint force that is able to “close the gaps between decision, deployment, employment and sustainment of forces” (Our Army at War 2003, 6).

To counter the adaptations US enemies are making and will make, the Army's Future Force will be able to see first, understand first, act, and then finish decisively at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. A major attribute of Future Force units will be their ability to conduct operational maneuver from strategic distances and arrive at multiple points of entry. They will be able to conduct forcible entry into both improved and unimproved areas, thwarting enemy antiaccess strategies. Immediately upon arrival, they will have the ability to conduct sustained combat operations in open, close, complex, and all other types of terrain, day or night. Figure 2 illustrates the major characteristics of the Future Force and their role in achieving full spectrum dominance.

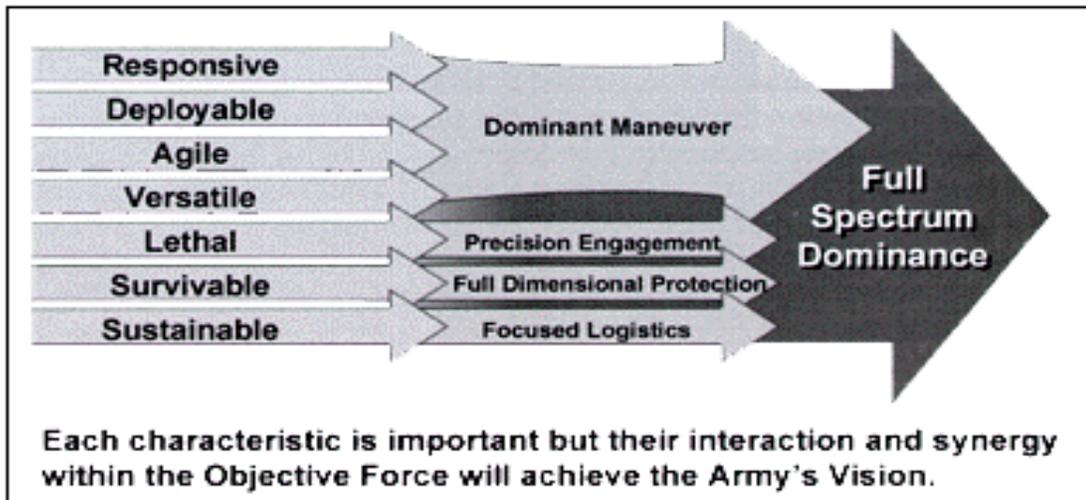


Figure 2. Army Vision 2020 supports the Joint Vision 2020

These units will have “dominant situational understanding” provided by advanced informational capabilities and will be able to develop situations out of contact. Future Force units will have an unmatched capability to engage enemy forces beyond the range of their weapons and destroy them with maneuver and precision fires. These capabilities will allow them to maneuver to positions of advantage and tactically assault enemy capabilities or locations at the times and places of their choosing (Ranger O&O 2003, 8-9).

The Army will be made up of two types of echelons, the unit of action (UA) and the unit of employment. A unit of employment will be a higher headquarters for a group of UAs and have the capabilities to serve as a combined force land component command or joint force land component command if required. It will have the capability to control multiple organizations, including interagency, multinational, and special operations (Army in 2020 2003, 10). A UA will be a tailored combined arms task force that is capable of delivering decisive effects across the full spectrum of military operations and

defeating any enemy. It will be capable of sustained operations for three to seven days without resupply, significantly decreasing lift requirements and a logistics footprint in the theater of operations (Army in 2020 2003, 10).

The Future Force will provide the US military with a land component force that is responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable (Objective Force 1999, 1). It will be capable of rapid strategic movement to quickly meet emerging contingency operations and have the flexibility to operate from one end of the operational spectrum to the other, while adapting to ambiguous situations, preventing armed conflict, and maintaining force protection in a continuous operation until the mission is complete (Prairie 2003, 9).

The US Army will strategically deploy from either its continental US home stations or forward bases and provide trained and ready forces that are configured for rapid responsive deployment and ready at a moment's notice for sustained operations. At the operational level, increased naval and aviation capabilities will allow the Army to arrive at multiple austere points of entry via air and sealift. Tactically, soldiers will provide land dominance using an array of new or modernized equipment and procedures providing the lethality, survivability, and sustainability needed to defeat adversaries in all conditions and environments (Army in 2020 2003, 6).

Rather than a large permanently forward deployed Army as seen during the cold war, the US military will play a significant role in assuring its allies by executing integrated theater security cooperation plans. The Future Force will achieve this by rotating US based forces forward in order to provide forward positioned capabilities and support peacetime security initiatives. Beyond assurance and access surety, these

forward-rotated forces will provide combatant commanders a responsive option that can dissuade or deter potential adversaries. The forward positioning of the right type of forces may allow these commanders a chance to rapidly respond when fleeting opportunities present themselves.

As US forces become more joint and interdependent, home station basing will reflect this change. The purpose of these joint home stations will be to provide a power projection platform, with combat preparation and training facilities, and continued support of the units and families (Army in 2020 2003, 13). The joint home station concept will facilitate the use of reachback for logistics and operational support. Reachback support will provide focused logistics to forward deployed units with a reduced forward logistics footprint. This will be made possible through a real-time information system linking the operator and logistician across services and support agencies. Using reachback capabilities will allow sustainment support to be provided from joint home stations, ensuring the right equipment, supplies, and personnel are in the right place, in the right quantity, and in the right time, across the full range of military operations (Joint Vision 2000, 30).

Command and control will be executed using operational reachback from the home base location through the use of a home station operations center (HSOC). This key node will provide real time intelligence, operational awareness, and future planning normally conducted by a forward deployed headquarters. The HSOC will reduce command and control (C2) presence forward by allowing the home station to effectively operate within the battlespace, extending the reach of deployed forces, and facilitating overall situational understanding. From a relatively secure facility, the HSOC will

conduct sustained operational support and planning throughout the deployment and provide appropriate information to the deployed commanders (Army in 2020 2003, 13).

The world in 2020 will be an unpredictable mix of fragmented societies tied closely together by increased globalization. As the US Army transforms to successfully operate in this environment and meet emerging threats, the 75th Ranger Regiment should also draw on its recent lessons learned and project what it must do to provide the US military the most lethal and responsive direct action special operations force possible.

CHAPTER 3

THE 75TH RANGER REGIMENT

Dawn of the Modern Ranger Regiment

General Creighton Abrams brought the US Army out of the Vietnam War and identified a need for significant change, particularly to the Army's strategic mobility and postwar culture. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, American interests in that theater were threatened; however, no unit in the Army had the readiness posture or capability to immediately deploy into the theater to secure those interests. It was evident that the US Army needed to increase the ability of its force to secure national interests abroad. Soldiers returning from Vietnam were bitter and in many areas undisciplined. Most Army units did not have consistent training standards and were ravaged by drugs, racial tension, and the side effects of a draft Army. The need for change was clearly evident. In 1974, General Abrams made one of his key decisions to address both of these problems by activating the 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions (Wood 2003, 1-3).

Abrams' intent was to establish these elite units as the standard bearers for the new all-volunteer Army. The charter he provided to these units included the mission to be the best light infantry unit in the world and to demonstrate this both in garrison and in the field. They would set the standard for all units in the Army. Each battalion would be placed on separate coasts in order to maximize their strategic mobility and their effect on conventional Army units. He ordered 1st Ranger Battalion to be stationed outside of Fort Stewart, Georgia, at Hunter Army Airfield, and 2nd Ranger Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington.

The 75th Ranger Regiment has played an integral part in nearly every American conflict since General Abrams formed the first battalions. The 75th Ranger Regiment has proven its reputation as the direct action force of choice during combat operations in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, and most recently in Afghanistan and Iraq (USSOCOM 2000, 3-51). Based on the author's recent experience as a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment, a current view of recent operations follows.

Since October 2001, elements of the 75th Ranger Regiment have been continuously deployed in combat operations in support of the GWOT. The size of the force has varied from one reinforced company to the entire 75th Ranger Regiment, based upon the requirements of the operation at hand. The missions the 75th Ranger Regiment has accomplished have been just as varied. It has conducted several airborne and air assault forced entry operations in support of both SOF and conventional forces. Rangers have also conducted countless direct action raids both unilaterally and in support of other SOF units. Small- and medium-scale operations have included seizing crucial facilities, detaining or killing key enemy personnel, and destroying threat base camps. Large-scale operations have included personnel rescue and shaping operations in support of conventional and other SOF forces. Rangers have been active in counterinsurgency operations, including search and attack, mounted and dismounted patrols, ambushes, and blocking positions, and have provided key skills such as reconnaissance, combat search and rescue, and personnel and site security. From the battlefields of Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the performance of the 75th Ranger Regiment has been exceptional.

75th Ranger Regiment Today

Today the 75th Ranger Regiment is composed of three Ranger battalions: 1st Ranger Battalion stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, 2nd Ranger Battalion stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, and 3rd Ranger Battalion, along with the 75th Ranger Regimental Headquarters, at Fort Benning, Georgia. Each Ranger battalion is authorized 660 personnel assigned to three rifle companies and a headquarters company (Command Brief 2004, 5-7).

Every member of the regiment is a specially selected volunteer. All Rangers from the newest private to the regimental commander must meet demanding physical and mental standards to enter into and remain in the 75th Ranger Regiment. More than fifty percent of the typical Ranger company is composed of graduates of the US Army Ranger School, with all leaders from fire-team leader to company commander Ranger-qualified. Ranger units maintain institutional knowledge through their noncommissioned officers, who remain in the unit for several years. This blended with officers who are selected to serve only after demonstrating outstanding performance in the conventional Army, results in a highly motivated, efficient, and lethal force (Command Brief 2004, 22-26).

Ranger battalions are currently organized as light infantry battalions and have enough organic mobility to move two rifle companies mounted. This includes special operations vehicles, ground mobility vehicles, motorcycles, and four-wheel all terrain vehicles. Ranger battalions have most typical light infantry weapon systems and equipment, to include the M4, M249, M240, 60-millimeter and 81-millimeter mortars, MK-19 40-millimeter grenade launchers, and M2 .50-caliber machine gun. They also have the 84-millimeter Ranger antiarmor weapon system, the 120-millimeter mortar, and the

XM109 Sniper .50-caliber sniper system. All Rangers have night vision devices, infrared lasers, and optics for their weapon systems (Command Brief 2004, 14-15).

Rangers typically train and operate as platoons or companies. These highly trained Ranger units routinely conduct battalion level exercises as part of a larger joint special operations task force. Their proficiency in the employment of light infantry tactics and skills makes them an ideal strike force for direct action operations. As with most SOF elements, training is well resourced, with minimal distractions, allowing the Rangers to achieve a very high degree of proficiency and skill in completing critical tasks.

The 75th Ranger Regiment, as the largest special operations unit in the US military, provides a unique capability to the US Special Operations Command. (Command Brief 2004, 3) The organization and training focus of the Rangers is ideally suited for medium- and large-scale direct action and forced entry operations. They are trained to conduct insertions by land, sea, or air and to strike with precision and accuracy. The experience, maturity, and competence of Rangers and their leaders provide combatant commands (COCOMs) an agile and lethal force able to excel in politically sensitive environments. The ability of Ranger units to rapidly mass firepower and maneuver is unmatched and provides COCOMs an ideal force to strike at critical targets.

Ranger units have the ideal training environment to ensure their readiness when they do deploy to combat. Each battalion is given an additional fifteen percent in personnel in order to account for unavailable personnel who are nondeployable due to injuries and those attending various schools, such as noncommissioned officer education, Ranger School, and sniper, scuba, and emergency medical technician courses. This, coupled with a training regime that allows the unit to train forty-eight weeks a year with

no distracters, and an ammunition allocation that is nearly triple that of similar sized conventional units, gives the special operations community a Ranger force that is fully trained and manned when deployed on no-notice missions (Command Brief 2004, 22-26).

Ranger units deploy frequently throughout the year, testing rapid deployment procedures and forced entry capabilities. The 75th Ranger Regiment routinely trains at the Joint Readiness Training Center, conducts bilateral and multilateral training with other SOF throughout the country, and habitually supports theater commanders in multinational exercises, such as Cobra Gold in Thailand, Flintlock in Europe and Africa, and Bright Star in the Middle East. Overseas deployments of the 75th Ranger Regiment also support theater security and cooperation plans (TSCP), providing valuable interoperability training and measurable assurance to US allies. The 75th Ranger Regiment's rapid deployability gives COCOMs a credible immediate response in support of contingency plans and no-notice emergencies.

The 75th Ranger Regiment is the ideal organization for direct action and forced entry operations. They specialize in raids on strategic and operational objectives executed with precision at the tactical level. The 75th Ranger Regiment provides the US military an unmatched capability to defeat threat antiaccess and denial strategies through early entry raids to control key terrain such as port or airfield facilities and allow their use by other special operations elements or follow-on conventional forces. They are also the ideal force to conduct preemptive or early entry raids against complex, high-value targets, such as command, control and communications (C3), and WMD/E facilities in order to counter area denial tactics, to protect the deployed force, and to defend the homeland (Ranger O&O 2003, 19).

Ranger units are also used in raids to shape the operational battlefield by striking objectives when the target information is incomplete, requires limited collateral damage, or simply requires boots on the ground. Based on the threat, these raids may target facilities, equipment, personnel, lines of communication, or other high-value targets. The Rangers also have a great deal of skill in clandestine tactical reconnaissance both at the platoon level and within the Ranger Reconnaissance Detachment. The high skill level and proficiency of the Rangers also make them the ideal unit to provide support or security to other SOF elements.

The 75th Ranger Regiment is one of the most adaptive organizations in the Army. Its high priority mission, technical and tactical skill, and comparatively small size have allowed it to rapidly integrate lessons learned and new equipment. After the first elements returned from Afghanistan, the 75th Ranger Regiment determined that it needed a better mobility platform to fight future battles in the GWOT. A year later each battalion had a compliment desert vehicles and used them extensively during combat operations in Iraq. The 75th Ranger Regiment has also identified and procured equipment required to increase its communications capabilities and lethality. The extensive use of the regimental reconnaissance detachment for both tactical and special reconnaissance has caused the 75th Ranger Regiment to double the size of the reconnaissance teams to six in less than a year. The 75th Ranger Regiment has already established an HSOC at Fort Benning, Georgia, in order to provide command, control, and support to elements that are now continuously forward deployed in support of the GWOT. In short, the 75th Ranger Regiment has already begun to transform to adapt to the current operational and threat environment.

Key Changes Proposed

The draft O&O dated June 2003 is the most comprehensive and dramatic change that the 75th Ranger Regiment has seen in its thirty years of existence. It captures the changes the regiment will make in order to provide a relevant force capable of successful contributions in the future operational and threat environment. This study will outline some of the key changes proposed in the O&O in order to put the analysis of the future stationing into context.

In 2020, the 75th Ranger Regiment will still have the broad mission to plan and conduct special operations missions in support of US policy and objectives. It will continue to provide an unmatched capability for precision direct action missions against strategic and operational targets. The goal of the O&O is to provide the US military a Ranger force that is “fundamentally more responsive in the conduct of multiple, dispersed, preemptive, unilateral, low visibility or clandestine strike operations supporting our national interests” (Ranger O&O 2003, 6).

Their mission profile, described below, captures not only their current and future methods of operation, but also their role in the operational environment as discussed in chapter 3.

Rangers will conduct unilateral, low visibility or clandestine, direct action... missions in politically sensitive, uncertain or hostile environments. These are short-duration, precision strikes and other small-scale, offensive actions directed against targets, target complexes or target systems with minimal collateral damage or effect upon the civilian population and conducted by the US Government (USG) without the involvement of allies, coalition partners, host nation military or indigenous assets. (Ranger O&O 2003, 6)

Figure 3 is a diagram based on the draft O&O and will help to visualize some of the changes in organizational structure.

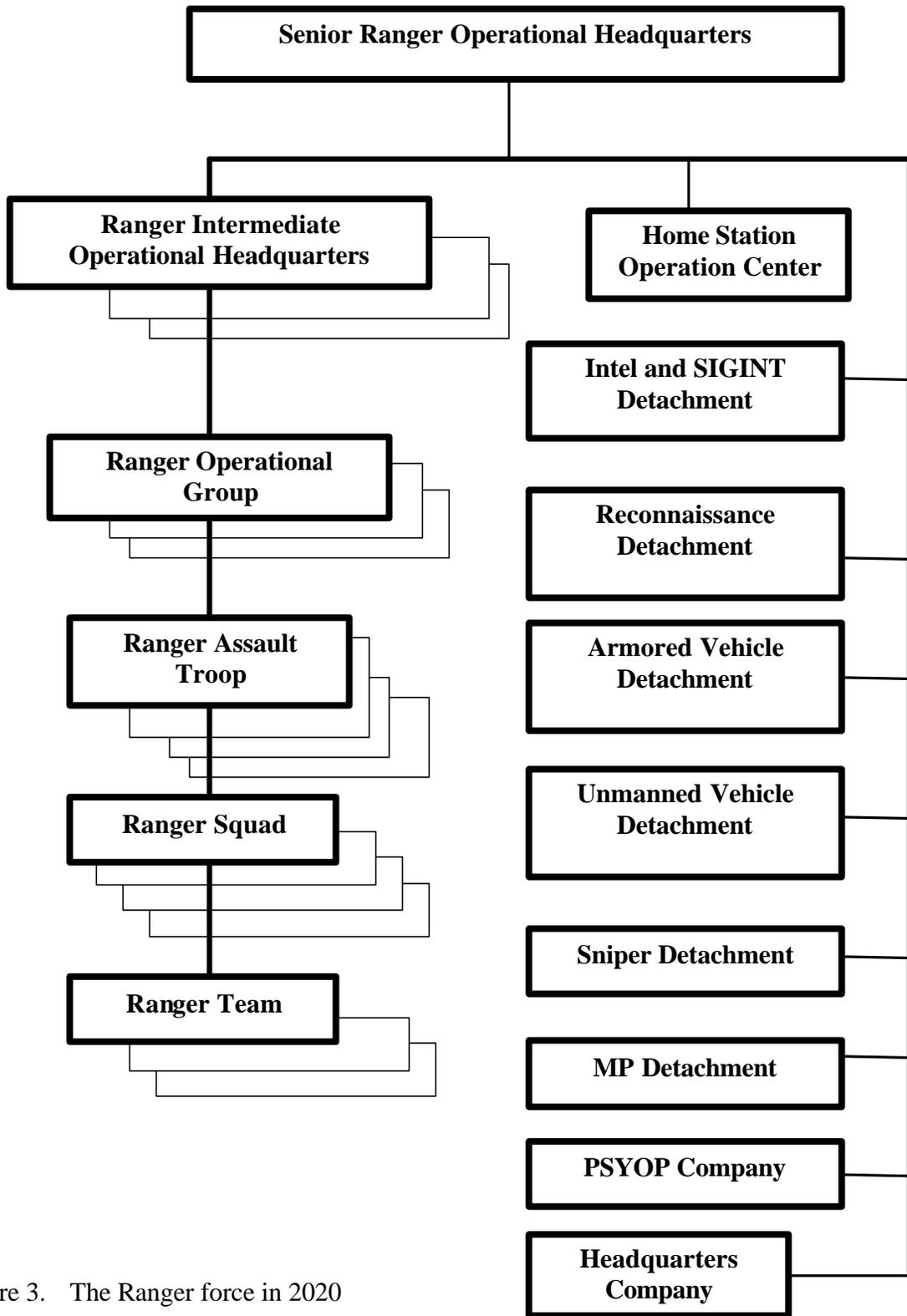


Figure 3. The Ranger force in 2020

The 75th Ranger Regiment will make fundamental changes to its organizational structure. It will shed the light infantry battalion organization and reorganize into units of action called Ranger operational groups (ROGs). The new organizational structure will parallel the current structure in many ways. All Rangers will still be specially selected and capable of insertion by land, sea, or air. At the lowest level there will be an assault team. The assault team will consist of four Rangers led by a sergeant. The squad will have thirteen men instead of nine, that is, three assault teams and a staff sergeant squad leader.

Above the squad will be the assault troop. There will be four squads in a Ranger assault troop. A branch-qualified captain will command each assault troop. The Ranger assault troop will be trained and equipped to conduct independent direct action operations or to function in concert with other SOF elements under the control of a SOF commander. Its structure will parallel the organization of the current Ranger rifle platoon.

Above the Ranger assault troop will be the ROG. The ROG will have four Ranger assault troops and will be capable of semi-autonomous operations. It will be commanded by a major and have a small staff of officers and noncommissioned officers. It will function as a tailored SOF unit of action with its own fires, reconnaissance and snipers as well as an enhanced medical capability. As required by the situation, higher echelons can attach ground mobility, additional fires and reconnaissance, psychological operations, unmanned aerial vehicle, and logistics capabilities. These added capabilities plus access to reachback support will allow the ROG to function more like a battalion (-) than a reinforced company.

The ROG will be capable of independent direct action on a small-scale target (multiple squads to company size objective). ROGs will also be trained to act as part of a larger SOF element that is assaulting multiple small-scale targets, or a subordinate element during an assault on a medium- (multiple platoons to battalion) or large-scale (multiple companies or battalions) target (Ranger O&O 2003, 21-24). These changes will make the Ranger force more capable of multiple independent operations.

ROGs will provide COCOMs the ideal element “when the intent is not to destroy the target but rather to retrieve people and/or critical items. They are also the force of choice to minimize collateral damage and/or its effects upon the civilian population but deny facilities or infrastructure to the enemy for a specified period of time” (Ranger O&O 2003, 7). The Ranger force will provide an outstanding capability to conduct low-profile direct action missions. It will provide expertise and special capabilities applicable in full spectrum operations involving counterterrorism, counterproliferation, counterdrug, personnel recovery, noncombatant evacuation, and counterinsurgency. They will continue to be the ideal Army special operations forces direct action element capable of unparalleled support to forcible entry operations (Ranger O&O 2003, 6).

Above a ROG will be the intermediate and senior Ranger operational headquarters. There will be three intermediate Ranger operational headquarters each will be commanded by a lieutenant colonel with a junior lieutenant colonel as its deputy commanding officer. It will have more combat power, agility, versatility, lethality, survivability, and sustainability than today's Ranger battalion can provide. The intermediate Ranger operational headquarters will have the capability to deploy up to two separate C2 elements for a total of six lieutenant-colonel-led C2 elements. These

elements provide centralized control of medium-scale strike operations normally involving two or more ROGs or multiple SOF elements. The executive officer will remain at the HSOC in the continental US and will be responsible for leveraging incoming intelligence, sustaining the deployed forces, and planning emerging missions with reachback capability (Ranger O&O 2003, 20).

Beyond a robust staff capable of split based and virtual planning, each intermediate Ranger operational headquarters will have its own reconnaissance, sniper, future armored vehicle, and non-line-of-sight fires detachments. It will also have habitual relationships with psychological operations, chemical reconnaissance, communications, intelligence and signals intelligence, unmanned vehicles, engineer, and Air Force tactical air control elements. These combat multipliers will come from detachment commands at senior Ranger operational headquarters level, along with other maneuver support detachments such as military police and information operations.

Thus, the intermediate-level commander in training is primarily focused on training his Rangers and integrating required capabilities, and the senior headquarters level is responsible for the training of maneuver support elements, sustainment, and base support. The senior Ranger operational headquarters will be not only be a C2 node, but a trainer and provider for maneuver support and maneuver service support. Combining these broad capabilities with the improved construct for the ROG will allow the Ranger force to provide a more deployable, agile, and lethal direct action option for COCOMs.

The redesigned Ranger force will make changes to improve its strategic mobility. ROGs will be forward deployed into each COCOM's theater as required to provide an in theater emergency response capability. The Ranger force will also continue to provide a

ROG that is prepared for strategic deployment within nine hours. It will have improved enroute-planning capabilities that will ensure that it is ready to fight immediately when it arrives in theater. To maximize the synergistic effect of the HSOC, the O&O also proposes locating the entire Ranger force in one single location, ideally with special operations fixed wing and rotary wing aviation capabilities. This will give Rangers the capability to conduct low visibility rapid deployments and facilitate joint training strategies.

CHAPTER 4

FORWARD BASING

The mission of the US military, described in the Department of Defense planning guidance, is to assure allies and friends, dissuade future military competition, deter threats and coercion, and defeat adversaries (Ranger O&O 2003, 7). As part of transformation, the US military is currently reevaluating its forward-stationed posture and developing a rapidly responsive force based in the United States. As Rear Admiral Hunt, Joint Chiefs of Staff deputy strategy and policy director, discussed recently, regional COCOMs are likely to move to a 'global sourcing' policy that will provide forces forward to combatant commanders as required. As part of this policy significant force reductions will occur in overseas theaters such as Europe and Asia. All theaters will have access to forces in order to create a global effect on the terrorism problem and undermine the environments that create it (Butler 2003, 1).

The draft O&O for the 75th Ranger Regiment supports the 'global sourcing' concept by structuring the Ranger force to support forward basing of ROGs. The goal is to provide Ranger units that can make significant contributions to COCOMs in their mission to assure allies and dissuade, deter, and defeat adversaries in their regions (Ranger O&O 2003, 7). Forward deployed ROGs will be designed to provide the COCOMs with “an extremely responsive force that is deployable, agile, versatile, and exceptionally lethal for the conduct of no-notice, unilateral direct action (DA) responses to smaller-scale contingencies” (Ranger O&O 2003, 19). The forward-basing concept described in the O&O expands from the current operations of the Ranger Regiment in the

Central Command Theater in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. As discussed earlier, at least a company-sized Ranger element has been continuously engaged in this theater and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

As discussed in the previous chapter, forward deployed ROGs would be modular units with the ability to tailor their force package based on requirements and capable of conducting decentralized, independent operations as required in theater. Designated ROGs would routinely deploy from their home station base and rotate into a COCOM's AOR for extended deployments (Ranger O&O 2003, 19). Based on recent history, these deployments could last from 30 to 180 days. Habitual forward deployment will allow the Ranger force to develop a force that has enhanced environmental expertise and regional and cultural awareness.

In order to analyze a forward-basing strategy this study will use the feasible, acceptable, and suitable (FAS) test to determine whether the Ranger force as designed can support forward basing and evaluate potential second- and third-order effects of this basing strategy. The feasibility test is also called the logistic implications test and determines whether or not a plan is within the capacity of the resources that can be made available. Acceptability is also known as the cost-benefit analysis. The suitability test determines whether the scope and concept of a plan are sufficient to accomplish the task assigned (JP 1-02 2003).

Feasibility

In order to assess the feasibility of forward basing ROGs, this study will outline the feasibility of forward basing Ranger units and the positive and negative logistic implications and of this strategy. There are essentially three options for a forward-basing

strategy of the future Ranger force: permanent, alignment, and threat-based. The permanent option, the least likely, would involve a permanently deployed ROG forward into each theater, similar to the forward deployed SF battalions of today. The alignment option would develop ROGs that are geographically oriented and aligned to specific regions. The third option is operations based, which is what the 75th Ranger Regiment is conducting today. This consists of the forward deployment of ROGs as part of habitual exercises and a rotational system for those regions that have active GWOT operations.

Any of the above options would have major organizational implications on the forward basing of the Ranger force. Given five major regional areas (East Asia, West Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America) and only nine ROGs in the current structure, the Ranger force could find it has more missions than forces available to meet the requirements. Attempting to support each of these theaters with permanent or aligned units could impact the ability of the Ranger force to balance a forward-deployed strategy and the training required to maintain a capable and lethal force prepared to execute its primary classified missions.

There are viable solutions that would allow the Ranger force to fully implement a coherent forward-based strategy. The first would be to increase the number of Rangers to support a total of twelve ROGs. This could be done in the framework of the current force structure. Today there are four Ranger companies per battalion, including headquarters company. Converting each to a ROG would be a possible solution, since consolidation (to be discussed later) will eliminate the need for a headquarters company at the battalion level. This would provide enough forces to manage a preparation, execute, and recover

methodology that can be sustained indefinitely while supporting each COCOM with as required, aligned, or even permanently stationed ROGs (Ranger O&O 2003, 19).

If increasing manpower is not an option, then the size of a ROG could be reduced to three Ranger assault troops. This will provide nine additional assault troops, which could be used to form the required three ROGs. The reduced size of the ROG, however, will make this unit less effective and therefore should be avoided. Lastly, the Ranger force could partially support COCOMs with a forward-based ROG. This could be accomplished by splitting one ROG among multiple theaters, only rotating forces forward to theaters that have ongoing GWOT operations, or abandoning a forward-basing strategy and only rotating forward as required by special operations command.

Based on the current structure of the Ranger force as described in the O&O, the only option that is feasible to support is a threat-based forward-basing option. This strategy, however, will only remain feasible as long as GWOT operations remain confined to fewer than three theaters. If GWOT operations expand significantly in 2020 as predicted, then the Ranger force will need to implement one of the above restructuring strategies to generate the required ROGs to support ongoing operations, provide a trained force, and maintain its role in critical contingency plans.

Acceptability

The next step in the FAS test is the acceptability test, also called cost versus benefit analysis. There are some costs and potential drawbacks to forward basing ROGs. Each theater will have to build a permanent or semi permanent staging area for ROGs to conduct extended operations. These base camps will entail logistical investment and may require significant force protection requirements as well. There would also be significant

logistical costs to rotate and sustain forward-deployed ROGs. ROGs will require dedicated intertheater lift to provide minimum response time and extended operational reach.

The benefits to forward basing ROGs are evident. As discussed in chapters two and three, one of the key benefits to a forward-based strategy is decreased response time. Due to the threat environment and the fleeting opportunities they will present, there is an inherent need for rapid operational responsiveness. Its high level of training and skill in integrating joint lift and fires will allow forward-deployed ROGs to potentially respond faster than any other Army or DOD element to an imminent threat or crisis. ROGs will provide a trained and experienced force that can immediately counter threats, conduct preemptive strikes, begin setting conditions for follow-on operations, or dissuade and deter potential adversaries (Ranger O&O 2003, 7). Despite other forward-based capabilities, a ROG will provide the COCOM with the best trained and dedicated DA force capable of conducting small-to-large-scale unilateral DA missions in coordination with joint lift and fires assets.

Recent lessons learned from GWOT in the CENTCOM AOR have validated many of the initiatives captured in the 75th Ranger Regiment's current transformation. Forward-basing strategy will have benefits for the Ranger force as well. ROGs will be able to focus their training on specific environmental and cultural landscapes, developing increased skill prior to deployments and retaining institutional knowledge for subsequent deployments. They will be better suited for low-visibility operations and more adept at operating in a given theater (Ranger O&O 2003, 19). Forward-deployed elements will help to keep all Rangers aware of new threat tactics, techniques, and procedures, allowing

for rapid dissemination to the rest of the Ranger force, SOF, and conventional community.

Suitability

The final part of the FAS test is the suitability test. The question to be answered is whether a ROG is the right force to assist a COCOM in accomplishing its potential unilateral DA objectives. Though a ROG does have its limitations, it is an ideal force to maintain forward-deployed presence for immediate unilateral DA response to fleeting opportunities when they do occur.

Forward basing of a ROG may be a redundant measure, considering other forces already forward deployed in theater, such as a Marine expeditionary unit (special operations capable), and forward-deployed SOF such as SF, and Navy special warfare (NSW) units. The rotation of conventional units forward, such as Marine and regular Army units, provides an overt and a clear signal of US commitment and intentions. Some of these units do have the capability to conduct forced entry operations and seize operational objectives. However, these units are not special operations as defined by joint doctrine and do not have the same capabilities or skills that may be required to operate in politically sensitive and logistically austere environments. Marines are also limited by the location of their vessel, and their ability to conduct operations beyond the littorals is limited. A forward-deployed ROG can provide a COCOM an immediate and credible response to emerging targets or critical objectives.

Other forward-deployed SOF can conduct DA operations; however, they are not organized and trained to conduct DA on medium- or large-scale targets. Each COCOM has a forward-deployed SF battalion. Though DA is one of the many missions for which

SF are trained, they typically operate in a dispersed nature as twelve-man teams that are ideally suited for unconventional warfare, strategic reconnaissance, and foreign internal defense. They are highly capable of small-scale DA either unilaterally or with coalition partners, but to apply the amount of firepower and maneuver provided by a ROG on a unilateral medium-scale objective would require up to sixteen SF A-teams. Massing SF in this manner is not practical and negates many of the strengths of this type of SOF. Additionally, the staff of a typical SF company or battalion rarely trains synchronizing multiple maneuver teams with the joint lift and fires assets that Rangers habitually train with (Zunde 1998, 92). The organization, dispersed nature of their missions and lack of training at the multi-team level makes employment of SF in a unilateral DA mission less than ideal, particularly for medium- and large-scale targets.

Each COCOM may also have a forward-based NSW platoon that on paper has similar land-based capabilities as a Ranger assault troop. The ability of NSW to operate beyond their sixteen-man platoon is limited and rarely trained. A NSW platoon is an ideal unit for ocean interdiction missions; however, its ability to coordinate and conduct medium-scale DA is limited by its small size (Zunde1998, 92).

With the right intelligence, a ROG can have decisive strategic and operational effects on a few key targets; however, this may not be enough for the required situation. No unilateral operation will be conducted in a vacuum. Combining the effects of a forward-deployed ROG with effects created by other forward-deployed elements from SOF, Marines, and the conventional Army may be essential to generating the maximum results and preventing, preempting, or dominating an emerging crisis anywhere around the globe. If the enemy threat requires large-scale DA or multiple medium-scale DA

operations, the forward-deployed ROG can set the conditions for employment of additional ROGs. The unique training of the Ranger force will provide units that are trained to work together on medium- and large-scale operations and in conjunction with other SOF.

As transportation technology and the ability to gain situational understanding from home station increases, the need for forward-deployed presence may decrease as well. It may be possible that some theaters will not need a forward-based Ranger presence. The travel distances, threat, and environmental differences in SOUTHCOM, for instance, may not require a forward-based ROG. Current operations in the CENTCOM AOR, however, have shown that a ROG is ideally suited for forward basing in this type of environment against this type of threat and have solidified the need for Rangers forward deployed in this theater for the foreseeable future.

In conclusion, forward basing as briefly discussed in the Ranger O&O passes the FAS test. However, some adjustment to the organizational structure of the Ranger force may be required to make forward basing more feasible. The immediate response capability of a forward-based ROG, and its ability to remain dedicated to small- and medium-scale unilateral DA operations, make forward basing both acceptable and suitable. The Ranger force should rotate ROGs forward to meet COCOM objectives as required, whether through habitual support to TSCP exercise programs or dedicated ROGs to support GWOT operations.

CHAPTER 5

CONSOLIDATION

The last step to the stationing question is an analysis of home station basing. The proposal in the draft O&O is consolidation of the 75th Ranger Regiment at one location. This chapter will determine whether consolidation is a concept the 75th Ranger Regiment should pursue. Consolidation represents a change to the past thirty years of operation for the modern Ranger battalions. To evaluate this concept, this thesis will discuss consolidation of the Ranger force as a concept unconstrained by fiscal requirements or physical locations. No doubt the expenditure in resources will be significant to bring all Ranger units to one location while simultaneously providing ideal conditions; this aspect of research is beyond the scope this thesis.

Previous chapters have explained in detail the operational environment, the concepts of the Army's Future Force, and changes the 75th Ranger Regiment is planning to make. The redesigned Ranger force will make a number of changes to improve its strategic mobility. The Rangers will continue to have the capability to conduct low visibility rapid deployments and facilitate TSCPs. ROGs will be forward deployed into each regional COCOM theater to provide an immediate response capability. The Ranger force will continue to provide a ROG prepared for strategic deployment within nine hours; improved en route-planning capabilities will ensure that it is ready to fight immediately when it arrives in theater.

Current basing strategy will evolve for unit stationing both in the US and overseas. As US forces become more joint interdependent, home station basing will

reflect this change. By 2020, most home station bases will be joint home stations capable of providing a power projection platform, with combat preparation and training facilities and continued support of the units and families (Army in 2020 2003, 13). The 75th Ranger Regiment has already created an HSOC at its headquarters in Fort Benning, Georgia, in order to provide operational and logistical support to units currently deployed forward in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

By 2020, units will rotate forward from their home station, receiving much of their command, control, and reachback support from an HSOC. These C2 nodes will provide sustained operational planning and support throughout the deployment and appropriate information to the deployed commanders from a secure site. The HSOC concept will effectively allow the home stations to operate within the battle space as power projection platforms, extending the reach of deployed forces, decreasing the footprint in theater, and facilitating situational understanding (Army in 2020 2003, 13)

Prior to analyzing the consolidation concept, this study will briefly describe the current basing structure of the 75th Ranger Regiment. As discussed earlier, the strategic requirements in 1974 and 1984 determined the locations the Ranger Battalions currently have today. Since that time, the 75th Ranger Regiment has evolved into an integral special operations unit that requires immediate strategic mobility and premier training facilities.

The 1st Ranger Battalion is stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, located in downtown Savannah, Georgia. The airfield can handle any Air Force aircraft; however, the closest strategic lift assets are stationed in Charleston, South Carolina, and must be flown into Savannah in order to deploy the unit on a strategic contingency. Hunter Army

Airfield is a small post and has virtually no maneuver area or training facilities. The installation does have a battalion from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and a small range area; however, 1st Ranger Battalion typically conducts the vast majority of its training off the airfield at Fort Stewart or elsewhere. The battalion has an outstanding relationship with the local community and its location provides a high quality of life for the Rangers and their families.

The 2nd Ranger Battalion is stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, about twelve miles south of Tacoma. Adjacent to Fort Lewis is McCord Air Force Base, the home of the 62nd Air Wing, one of the two C-17 wings in the Air Force. The battalion, air wing, and installations have developed close relationships, facilitating rapid deployment. Fort Lewis has extensive maneuver space and modern training facilities located directly behind the 2nd Ranger Battalion complex. The 2nd Ranger Battalion also frequently trains at the Yakima Training Center, located in a high desert environment approximately three hours from the installation. Fort Lewis is also the home of the 1st SF Group (Airborne), but has no special operations aviation unit or active duty aviation battalions.

Fort Benning, Georgia, is the home station of 3rd Ranger Battalion and the Regiment's Headquarters. It too has extensive maneuver area, and 3rd Ranger Battalion has easy access to modern training facilities. The Army airfield on Fort Benning can accommodate any aircraft, but the closest strategic lift assets are stationed in Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and have to fly into Fort Benning in order to deploy as a unit on a strategic contingency.

Having described the current basing structure of the 75th Ranger Regiment, the remainder of this chapter will focus on evaluating the possibility of consolidation,

assuming ideal conditions. The base used to consolidate the 75th Ranger Regiment will ideally have the following inherent characteristics or be resourced to provide the Ranger force with these requirements: it will provide a joint power projection platform co-located with or adjacent to strategic lift capability and special operations aviation assets; the installation will be capable of supporting rapid low visibility deployments and reachback logistics; it will have extensive maneuver space and range facilities to provide excellent unilateral and joint interoperability training at home station; ideally it will be positioned close enough to other off-station SOF assets so that joint training could be conducted with minimal overhead; the home station will have the infrastructure to support a robust HSOC, and adequate barracks, housing, and maintenance facilities.

To determine the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation this thesis will use force management criteria to evaluate this concept. These criteria are known as DOTMLPF (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader development, personnel, and facilities).

Doctrine

The first evaluation criterion to consider for consolidation is doctrine. This thesis has described much of the doctrine and concepts that are key tenants of the Army's Future Force. Concepts such as rapid deployability, joint basing, HSOCs, and reachback support are the critical aspects of the Army transformation and the Ranger force concept. When looking at the evolving transformation doctrine as it relates to stationing, the goal is to increase readiness and facilitate rapid deployment and supportability while decreasing the forward footprint. Consolidation may create slight disadvantages when attempting to

deploy the entire Ranger force, but will significantly increase the overall rapid deployability and supportability of the Ranger force.

Consolidation has few disadvantages when considering rapid deployability and supportability doctrine. During a crisis, the consolidated Ranger force may be easier for adversaries to interdict at the home station. Weather could also potentially prevent the entire Ranger force from deploying during an emergency situation. These disadvantages could still be overcome by stationing all three battalions at different joint power projection locations, however, support of forward-deployed elements, additional staff requirements, and other aspects of DOTMLPF to be discussed later make consolidating at one joint power projection location more logical.

Joint basing is a key aspect of transformation for the Department of Defense. This emphasis has been recognized in the recent base reallocation and closure assessment. It is also reflected in the Army's Future Force documents, such as the 2020 operational environment. The goal is for Army units to be stationed on joint power projection platforms by 2020. A joint basing strategy that places the Ranger force adjacent to strategic lift platforms clearly provides advantages over the current situation, with more than two-thirds of the 75th Ranger Regiment on a single service installation.

The Ranger force will give the COCOMs a low-visibility deployment option. In the current configuration, low-visibility deployments are possible but more difficult to conduct at Fort Benning and Hunter Army Airfield because of an unmistakable increase in aircraft activity. For operations involving more than one battalion, such as Operation Just Cause, the separation of the battalions required the 75th Ranger Regiment to deploy

to an intermediate staging base in order to accomplish critical troop leading procedures. This may not be an option when fleeting opportunities present themselves in the future.

Other key doctrinal concepts are the home station operation center and reachback. The 75th Ranger Regiment has already established an HSOC at Fort Benning to assist units it currently has deployed forward in support of GWOT operations. The current configuration requires “out-stations” at each separated installation and the creation of redundant staff requirements to support ongoing operations from the battalion. This situation is compounded when discussing reachback for intelligence and logistics support. Once consolidated at one location, redundant staff and actions can be eliminated, and intelligence and logistics support can be streamlined.

From a doctrinal viewpoint, the consolidation of the Ranger force at a joint power projection platform with inherent strategic mobility clearly outweighs the current legacy basing posture of the 75th Ranger Regiment. A consolidated Ranger force will have increased rapid deployability, streamlined staff, planning, and support requirements, and will facilitate low-visibility deployments.

Organization

The next evaluation criterion is the impact of consolidation on the organizational structure of the Ranger force. Consolidation will have three positive impacts on the organization of the future force: reduced staff requirements; consolidation of headquarters company functions; and facilitation of maneuver support and maneuver sustainment.

Consolidation will allow the Ranger force to significantly reduce its staff. Current Ranger battalions have a robust staff that handles not only operational planning but also

interfacing with the installation and higher headquarters and daily administrative requirements. The senior operational headquarters will assume many of these requirements if the Ranger force consolidates. The reduced intermediate staff will have the responsibility for operational control of ROGs and will be able to plug directly into the HSOC for intelligence and operational support. ROGs will have a small internal staff to support their unit training requirements.

Consolidation will allow the future Ranger force to have only one headquarters company versus the four in its current organization. As discussed above, many of the redundant staff functions will be consolidated at the senior headquarters level. Reconnaissance, fire support, PSYOP, UAV, and armored vehicle elements will still develop habitual relationships with their counterpart ROGs during bilateral training; however, they will fall under the control of their detachment commanders for their own unilateral training.

The consolidated Ranger force will have expanded maneuver support and maneuver sustainment capabilities. The Ranger force will have dedicated armored vehicle, PSYOPs, military police, and engineer capabilities that the current force does not possess. In combination with the increased C2 from the HSOC, intelligence gathering and assessment the Ranger force will provide habitual enablers to forward-deployed elements in order provide the most lethal and aware units on the battlefield. The ability to conduct maneuver sustainment will also be improved by consolidated and dedicated logistics functions co-located in the same base. This area will receive further discussion in the material portion of this chapter.

In conclusion, consolidation will facilitate many of the organizational changes envisioned in the Ranger O&O. The ROG will be the building block for a tailored force package that can be used to provide COCOMs a SOF UA. Co-locating all Ranger units at one base will help to make the Ranger force less staff heavy, more lethal, and more modular.

Training

Besides combat operations, there is nothing as important to the Ranger force as training. Evaluating consolidation with regards to training should account for both home station and off-post training requirements. The current training environment provides battalions with little competition for resources, yet they each must deploy frequently in order to train with other joint special operations forces.

One of the problems with consolidation will be the competition for limited training area and maneuver space. For the purposes of evaluating the concept, this thesis assumes that adequate training areas and facilities will be available. The amount of training a typical Ranger battalion conducts, however, is comparable to a conventional light infantry brigade. Since consolidation will essentially equate to three maneuver brigades, training areas and facilities will be a premium. There are few installations today that have the required resources that do not already have a large number of maneuver units. In order to provide the required areas and facilities the consolidation location will most likely require significant resources to provide the Ranger force with the high quality training environment it requires.

As mentioned earlier, the ideal consolidation base will have other SOF units. The optimum consolidation base will be located with SOF fixed wing and or rotary wing

aviation; this will provide unprecedented opportunities for the Ranger force. For example, current basing normally requires a deployment of one or both of the forces to conduct a bilateral training exercise. This is a costly endeavor; yet so critical to both elements that they are executed no fewer than four times per year. Consolidation of both at a location with joint power projection platforms will also provide increased opportunity for joint training and streamline the employment of SOF in contingency operations.

From a training perspective, consolidation has its advantages and disadvantages. This area is of vital importance to the Ranger force and will be a major factor in a future decision on consolidation. The amount of maneuver space and facilities required to train the Ranger force will eliminate many current army installations as potential locations to consolidate the Ranger force. The unparalleled training opportunities resulting from permanent stationing adjacent to rotary wing and fixed wing SOF aviation units, as well as other SOF, is a significant factor supporting consolidation of the Ranger force.

Materiel

This section will analyze consolidation from the materiel perspective and will assess the ability to support both home station training and forward-deployed elements. The 528th Forward Support Battalion is the only special operations support unit and its location at Fort Bragg and commitments to support other SOF units make it habitually unavailable to support Ranger units. Therefore, each Ranger battalion creates a parasitic relationship with its host installation in order to get the support its needs. A reorganized and consolidated Ranger force with its own support element can provide the required maneuver and maneuver support to its subordinate ROGs. These elements can be trained

to conduct operational mission support as required rather than the ad hoc relationships with which the 75th Ranger Regiment currently operates. Consolidation will also allow other redundant logistical functions currently located at each separate base, such as rigger support, ammunition management, and property management, to be consolidated. The requirement is clear: Rangers need a logistics unit to support their training and combat operations. Consolidation will streamline the requirements of creating this unit.

In addition to this increased capability, consolidation will also provide better material support for forward-deployed elements through reachback and focused sustainment. The structure of the current force depends on Ranger units conducting quick strike operations; therefore, they are not equipped with their own material and logistics structure. Since October 2001, however, the quick strike assumption has been proven erroneous as Ranger units have been continuously deployed and rotated forward in support of GWOT. As one would expect, separate basing of the Ranger battalions has at times created redundancy, inefficiency, and friction for forward-deployed forces. Separate basing at single service installations does not facilitate reachback or focused logistics.

Reachback support is more easily executed from a joint base that has strategic lift capabilities. This allows the required material to stockpile at the home station instead of forward at deployed locations. Using focused sustainment and reachback technology, these supplies can be pushed forward as required. Consolidation will reduce multiple stockpiles, nodes, and personnel to manage materiel and streamline these functions into one location under one manager. Consolidation will provide forward-deployed Rangers

better material support and sustainment. It will also allow the Ranger force to lose its parasitic nature and become capable of sustaining itself during both training and combat.

Leader Development

One criterion of force management on which the 75th Ranger Regiment prides itself is leader development. From a leader development perspective there are few benefits to separate basing, while the large distances create challenges for dissemination and standardization. The 75th Ranger Regiment currently spends a great deal of resources in order to consolidate some key training events and maximize the effect for Rangers from all three battalions.

The current basing situation requires a great deal of effort to disseminate guidance, lessons learned, and command information. Just to meet baseline requirements frequent trips are required by key leaders and personnel to discuss a range of topics and conduct unit assessments. The current force conducts quarterly training briefs to the regimental commander, and commanders' conferences are held as often as possible to discuss key issues facing the 75th Ranger Regiment. Though this keeps leaders in tune, the only time the entire 75th Ranger Regiment is together is for one week every two years as part of the regimental change of command ceremony. Consolidation will allow leaders to tackle administrative, tactical, and operational issues on a daily basis and tap into the synergy of the entire Ranger force.

Separate basing encourages different standard operating procedures (SOPs) and techniques. The 75th Ranger Regiment currently devotes a great deal of effort to ensure that all units are meeting SOPs and have similar techniques. Once consolidated,

standardization of SOPs and techniques will be easier to implement, sustain, and execute with mixed Ranger units.

These SOPs across the 75th Ranger Regiment are critical when conducting operations with more than one battalion on a medium- or large-scale target. The current basing typically requires these units to link up at an intermediate staging base in order to conduct final troop leading procedures and rehearsals. In the rapid deployment environment of 2020, there may be no time for deploying to an intermediate staging base.

In some leader development areas, the 75th Ranger Regiment has already discovered the value of consolidation. Each battalion has its own techniques for leader development, yet all Rangers are sent to Fort Benning for pre-Ranger training prior to attending Ranger school. Additionally, the captain leader development program, Mangudaay, brings all branch-qualified captains from across the 75th Ranger Regiment together for an arduous week of leader development training. Since September 2001, however, ongoing operations and the separation of the battalions have caused this leader development program to be placed temporarily on hold. Consolidation will make leader development in the Ranger force more cost effective and specific leader development programs more frequent.

Personnel

Evaluating the consolidation concept with respect to personnel will include cohesiveness and the personnel system. The 75th Ranger Regiment is one of the most cohesive units in the US military. While consolidation may cause individual battalions to lose some of their 'personality,' the trade-off will mean a more cohesive Ranger force. All Ranger units will be able to train, work, and live together, creating more familiarity

among the members and the units of the Ranger force. Consolidation will also streamline personnel actions among battalions and may even allow all personnel functions to be consolidated at the senior headquarters rather than duplicate systems at each intermediate headquarters level. Consolidation will provide a streamlined and stable personnel system and set the conditions for a more cohesive Ranger force.

Facilities

From a facilities perspective consolidation may have significant initial disadvantages, but if properly resourced could provide the Ranger force with the ideal training and deployment situation. There are also few installations that currently meet the requirements of the ideal base for the Ranger force.

One major disadvantage to consolidation is the cost to execute such a bold move. Forecasting the projected costs to consolidate the Ranger force is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the resources required would no doubt be extensive. This is compounded when considering the Army and US Special Operations Command have already invested a great deal in each of the separate bases to provide the best environment for the Rangers at those stations. Recent expenditures on new barracks and training facilities at Fort Benning and Hunter Army Airfield and upcoming construction at Fort Lewis are factors to consider as well.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, the key facilities the Ranger force would need at its consolidation base include a joint projection platform, proximity to strategic lift, other SOF and other support, extensive and modern training facilities, and material infrastructure, including barracks, HSOC, and housing. There are few bases in the US

that meet these consolidation criteria. Of those installations that come close, none have a vacant barracks complex, C2 infrastructure, and modern training facilities.

Given the above criteria, the location that should be strongly considered is Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. It meets most of the criteria above and maximizes the benefits of consolidation. Eglin Air Force Base is the home of Air Force Special Operations; this includes transport, fire support, and rotary wing aircraft, as well as combat controllers and para-rescue-jumpers. Training areas on the base could be expanded to provide the Ranger force the necessary capabilities for premier training events. The ability to conduct low-visibility deployments and frequent joint training with Air Force SOF and to allow the Ranger force to maximize the HSOC concept make Eglin AFB an ideal location to consolidate.

There are Army installations that meet many of the above criteria, including Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and Fort Lewis, Washington (if the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment stations a battalion there as planned). All of these installations have at least two or more brigades to train and may not be able to provide the training areas and facilities required to train the entire Ranger force. The major disadvantage of Fort Bragg is the number of units currently stationed on the post and the significant competition for training and lift resources. Fort Campbell is less crowded than Fort Bragg but has no strategic lift capability co-located and has little extra training room to support the Ranger force.

Fort Lewis does have strategic lift, but no other SOF besides the 1st SF Group (Airborne). There are plans, however, to station a battalion from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment at this installation in the next few years. Fort Lewis only

has two other maneuver brigades stationed at the post and does have room to build more training facilities at both the installation itself and Yakima Training Center. The major disadvantage of Fort Lewis is its location on the West Coast of the US. The SOF units with which the Ranger force habitually works are all currently stationed in the Southeastern US. Bilateral and multilateral training events would be more difficult and integration during rapid deployment scenarios would have to be executed en route to the target.

In conclusion, the 75th Ranger Regiment should incorporate consolidation as part of its transformation initiatives. Stationing the entire Ranger force at one installation offers clear advantages in doctrine, organization, training, material, leader development, personnel, and potentially facilities. This basing posture will help the Ranger force to provide the most lethal and responsive force possible to meet the challenges the US military will face in 2020.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the answers to the subordinate questions and ultimately the thesis question for this study. It also will provide recommendations for possible solution sets, gaps in this study, and areas for further study.

Subordinate Questions

What will be expected of the US military in 2020? As discussed in chapter 2, the world in 2020 will be a dangerous and unpredictable place. Eleven key variables describe the operating environment in which US forces will work. They are the physical environment, the nature and stability of the state, sociological demographics, regional and global relationships, military capabilities, information, technology, external organizations, national will, time, and future threats. Together they can be used to define a region's physical, political, economic, social, scientific, and military landscape (COE 2002, 2-28).

The threats of the future can be divided into four categories, each with its own dangerous capabilities and limitations. They are nonstate adversaries, failed or failing states, rogue states, and emerging powers. By 2020 each of these opponents may have access to WMD/E, may have adapted to using asymmetric tactics, and will attempt to exploit US rules of engagement at any opportunity.

In this environment and against these threats, the US military is going to require agile and responsive forces that possess rapid deployment and employment capabilities. These forces should be capable of dominating land operations across the full spectrum of

warfare. The US military will consolidate units at joint installations in order to maximize the synergistic effect of joint operations. Increased deployability and the demand for flexibility will reduce the number of units permanently based overseas in favor of an expeditionary approach to meeting US global commitments and crisis. Future Force units will rely on HSOCs and reachback to significantly reduce the footprint required to support forward-deployed units.

What will the 75th Ranger Regiment look like in 2020? The 75th Ranger Regiment has proven its capabilities in countless recent combat operations. It is and will remain the premier special operations force for medium- and large-scale direct action. In order to remain relevant the 75th Ranger Regiment will make significant upgrades to its current organization and capabilities, transforming into the Ranger force. The goal of the Ranger force is to provide the Secretary of Defense and President a unit that is “fundamentally more responsive in the conduct of multiple, dispersed, preemptive, unilateral, low visibility or clandestine strike operations supporting our national interests” (Ranger O&O 2003, 6). The Ranger force will provide the capability to conduct unilateral, clandestine, or low-visibility direct action missions in any environment against strategic and operational objectives. The mission profile will be “short-duration, precision strikes and other small-scale, offensive actions directed against targets, target complexes or target systems with minimal collateral damage or effect upon the civilian population without the involvement of allies, coalition partners, host nation military or indigenous assets” (Ranger O&O 2003, 6).

The primary unit of action in the Ranger force will be the ROG. This reinforced company-sized element will have increased C2 capabilities enabled through reachback

support and its link to the Ranger force HSOC. ROGs will have tailorable force packages that can provide any number of capabilities, including additional reconnaissance, ground mobility, and PSYOP. Combined with combat multipliers the ROG will act much like a Ranger battalion (-) one might see on the battlefield today. ROGs will be capable of independent operations or combined operations with other ROGs or in conjunction with other conventional or other SOF.

Should Rangers be forward based into a COCOM AOR? This study used the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability test to analyze the forward-basing strategy. Based on the current information, the Ranger force should adopt a threat-based approach to determine forward-basing requirements. If there are ongoing GWOT operations, forward-deployed ROGs will provide an outstanding immediate response in theater and the capability to react to fleeting opportunities. Rotational ROGs should be deployed forward in order to provide habitual support to theater security cooperation plans in those regions that do not have active GWOT operations and assist COCOMs in assuring US allies. Given that the GWOT will be an extended and global war for decades to come, the forward placement of rotational ROGs postures the US for success in any emerging GWOT operation even if there are not any active GWOT operations ongoing.

Based on the current vision of the Ranger force, it is not feasible to permanently base or continuously rotate ROGs forward into each regional AOR. Though permanent forward basing would have its own advantages, the Ranger force would be better employed on a rotational rather than permanent basing system. Given the rapid response time and enroute planning capabilities of the Ranger force, emerging contingencies can be met by ROGs based at a single location in the US. Some restructuring of the force may

yet be required to provide the required number of ROGs to support habitual alignment with each COCOM.

Ranger units have been employed as company and smaller units in previous conflicts. In discussing the forward-basing strategy, a historical comparison could be made between the use of Ranger companies in the Korean War, Vietnam War, and during the recent operations in support of the GWOT. Recent history, however, indicates that a single Ranger company may have significant operational effects, as demonstrated in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Though a historical analysis was beyond the scope of this thesis, it may help to evaluate whether a future ROG can meet the mission it is given when forward deployed and potential areas where it may be misused.

How should the 75th Ranger Regiment be based in the US? This study examined the question using a force management model to determine the answer to this question. The current basing of the 75th Ranger Regiment is a legacy from a strategy that was valid in 1974 and should be changed to maximize the efficiency of the 75th Ranger Regiment. The future Ranger force should be stationed at a single location in the US to “enhance responsiveness, low-visibility/ clandestine deployment, agility, versatility, sustainability as well as training, interoperability and force-packaging” (Ranger O&O 2003, 19). Single-location stationing has the advantage of reducing support overhead, enhancing split-base and reachback operations. It also would allow the senior Ranger operational headquarters to configure the continental US base into a single HSOC, with a functional staff structure grouped as an operations and intelligence center, signal center, and support center, and as a standing operational, communication, and logistics base (Ranger O&O 2003, 19).

Thesis Question

How should the 75th Ranger Regiment be postured for the complexities of the world in 2020? To meet the threats and operational environment in 2020, the future Ranger force should be consolidated at a single joint power projection location in the US. From that location, it should conduct routine forward deployments in support of the GWOT and TSCPs.

Other Recommendations

The 75th Ranger Regiment should fully research consolidation as a viable concept. Possible criteria for evaluating potential locations should include joint power projection platforms, proximity to strategic lift capabilities, proximity to other SOF aviation and combat elements, ability of the installation to support training requirements of the Ranger force, infrastructure, to include barracks space, HSOC facilities, housing, and finally projected costs over the short term versus cost savings.

Given the above criteria, the location that should be strongly considered is Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. It meets most of the criteria above and maximizes the benefits of consolidation. Eglin Air Force Base is the home of Air Force Special Operations; this includes transport, fire support, and rotary wing aircraft, as well as combat controllers and para-rescue-jumpers. Training areas on the base could be expanded to provide the Ranger force the necessary capabilities for premier training events. The ability to conduct low-visibility deployments and frequent joint training with Air Force SOF, and to allow the Ranger force to maximize the HSOC concept make Eglin AFB an ideal location to consolidate.

As this thesis examined the stationing question, some gaps in the organization of the Ranger force as outlined in the O&O were identified. If the Ranger force can be consolidated at one single location, the following modifications to the organization should be considered. Under the senior operational headquarters there should be the three intermediate operational headquarters, a maneuver support headquarters, and a sustainment headquarters. The structure of the intermediate operational headquarters and the ROGs has been discussed in detail earlier. The Ranger force should consider adding an engineer capability that will provide rapid runway clearance and repair, an explosive ordnance detachment for handling large caches, improvised explosive devices, and hardened structures, and a support battalion. The support battalion could facilitate operations of forward-deployed ROGs with limited forward presence and reachback. It could also be used to provide the required support to the consolidated Ranger force during training at home station and on deployments (see figure 4).

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