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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

***UNDERSTANDING USSOCOM AND US MARINE CORPS ROLES IN CRISIS
RESPONSE AND LIMITED CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS***

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: ***UNDERSTANDING USSOCOM AND US MARINE CORPS ROLES IN CRISIS RESPONSE AND LIMITED CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS***

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Thesis: Special Operations Forces (SOF) and U.S. Marine Forces have complimentary roles in crisis response and limited contingency operations.

Discussion: If history is any indicator (and it is the best one we have), then the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the U.S. Marine Corps will likely have a role in crisis response and limited contingency operations in the future as they have in the past. What should be the relationship between those roles? In what operational environments and mission types are SOF and Marine Forces likely to work together? Should they overlap or conversely where should the seam between them lay? The answers to those questions presumably would have great importance to the future force generation and training of both organizations and are even more pressing in a fiscally challenged environment. Without the ability to see the future, the best answers (although always incomplete) come from understanding the history. To begin to guess at what the future roles of SOF and Marine Forces in crisis response and limited contingency operations should be we must first understand what their roles have been. Specifically for the purposes of this study the history of interest is between 1987 (USSOCOM inception) and 2007.

Conclusion: Between 1987 and 2007 for crisis response and limited contingency operations USSOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps had virtual parity of role in terms of likelihood of employment regardless of operational environment or operational mission type. Additionally, the limited capacity of the SOF units was one of the key factors that determined the employment of the larger Marine Forces.

SOF and Marine Forces have been employed with virtually equivalent regularity in hostile, uncertain or permissive operational environments. Despite differences in size, composition and training of deployed SOF and Marine Force units they had comparatively equal likelihood to be confronted by the varying threats present in all three operational environment types (hostile, uncertain, or permissive). Additionally, 44% of the operations saw both SOF and Marine Force employment during the same operation. If it is reasonable to assume that these trends will continue then force planners should plan to train their deployed forces to deal with the threats across the operational environment spectrum and expect that around half the time SOF and Marine Forces will share space on those battlefields.

Of the nine operational mission types analyzed only three showed a comparative preference for either SOF or Marine Forces. The majority of mission types showed similar parity in the regularity of SOF or Marine Force employment. Offensive Air Support (OAS) showed a preference for Marine Force employment over SOF which is likely due to the capabilities of the Marine Air Wing's strike aircraft. Limited objective raids and peace enforcement operations showed a preference for SOF over Marine Force employment. In the case of limited objective raids that is likely due to the level of training and in the case of peace enforcement it is likely due to the regional focus of SOF units. Neither service had a monopoly on any mission type. There was no operational mission types analyzed that were exclusive to only one service. If it is reasonable to assume that these trends will continue then force planners should recognize an imperative to train Marine and Special Operations Forces together or at least using similar standards for crisis response and limited contingency operations as the likelihood that either service will be called upon to perform the mission is high. Additionally, there is a significant

chance (historically 49%) that both SOF and Marine Forces will work together on the same operation.

Despite the significant overlap in employment of the two services in the operations analyzed, the roles were not redundant but instead crossed a seam defined by the limited capacity of the SOF units involved. Capacity here is any metric that extends beyond the SOF unit's ability to provide organically. In the operations discussed here it is demonstrated primarily in the form of mass (friendly force ability to provide mass, i.e. more troops for security or throughput for Foreign Internal Defense [FID] missions) or logistics (long term sustainability for NEOs and HA/DR missions), but could also apply to mobility and coordination to name a few others. This is perhaps the most useful conclusion for planners as it establishes a frame with which to inform what low capacity high-training intensive skills should be maintained in SOF and what higher capacity lower-training skills should be maintained in Marine Forces. Through SOF and Marine Force integrated training, planners can determine the best strategies for augmentation, division and optimization. Additionally, contingency planners can use those metrics to determine crisis response and limited contingency force compositions between SOF and Marine Forces to sufficiently and efficiently address various crisis or limited contingency situations.

The concept of a contingency force that through the use of integrated training is able to blend highly trained specialized skills (SOF) with a "medium weight" capacity (Marine Forces) has a high potential operational effectiveness by being both precise and flexible. Framing the formation of such organizations as a function of capacity instead of mission type might be effective in bypassing parochial turf war resistance.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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Preface

I chose this topic out of an interest in the special operations culture from a Marine infantry and reconnaissance background. As an infantry officer I was always disappointed with what I felt was the divide between what infantry Marines were capable of and what they were trusted to do. I saw in the special operations community a model for empowering and trusting our Marines to not only meet their potential but have the service and nation benefit from their exploits. Subsequently, I became interested in what makes someone special operations and what separates them from Marine infantry. By extension I was also interested in what separates USSOCOM and the Marine Corps. So that is where the project began, but I had no idea where it was going to end up. This paper was inductive in nature as I first consolidated the information into a table and then analyzed the table to see what trends I could identify. I was genuinely surprised to see the trends that emerged and the conclusions drew themselves. My primary concern with the integrity of the research is in the sample size and completeness of Appendix A. The best improvement I would make would be to attempt to catalog and classify as many historical operations as possible (classified and unclassified) and reevaluate. With that in mind I think the best use of this research is as a primer that shows a historical study methodology to help define what the Marine Corps role really has been so we can make informed choices about what it should be.

In terms of acknowledgements, I must start by thanking Tara, Sean, Brody and Cameron simply for putting up with me. Next, I would like to thank Dr. Benjamin Jensen Ph.D., LTC Michael Lewis USA, and LtCol Brian Collins USMC, for getting me started and guidance along the way. Lastly, I owe Majors Ian Fletcher and J. D. Thornburg USMC for keeping me from renting a chipper shredder for some serious “editing”. Thanks, JR

Introduction

If history is any indicator (and it is the best one we have), then the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the U.S. Marine Corps will likely have a role in crisis response and limited contingency operations in the future as they have in the past. What should be the relationship between those roles? In what operational environments and mission types are SOF and Marine Forces likely to work together? Should they overlap or conversely where should the seam between them lay? The answers to those questions presumably would have great importance to the future force generation and training of both organizations and are even more pressing in a fiscally challenged environment. Without the ability to see the future, the best answers (although always incomplete) come from understanding the history. To begin to guess at what the future roles of SOF and Marine Forces in crisis response and limited contingency operations should be we must first understand what their roles have been. Specifically for the purposes of this study the history of interest is between 1987 (USSOCOM inception) and 2007.

The scope of this paper is USSOCOM and U.S. Marine Corps involvement in crisis response and limited contingency operations between 1987 and 2007. During that period and employed in those operations USSOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps had virtual parity of role in terms of likelihood of employment regardless of operational environment or operational mission type. Additionally, the inherent limited capacity of the special operations units was one of the key factors that determined if the larger Marine Forces would be employed. Crisis response and limited contingency operations is a category in the range of military operations that falls between military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence activities and major operations and campaigns as described in joint doctrine. There are 20 years of history and 50 operations identified. Each of these operations was classified by its overall operational mission type and the

operational environment in which the operation took place. All of the major SOF and/or Marine Corps units that could be identified in the literature search as participating in the operation are listed. Additionally, in operations where both SOF and Marine Forces were present the overall characterization of their organizational relationship to one another is categorized.

By analyzing the information it is clear that in most operation mission types and operational environments SOF and U.S. Marine Forces are equally likely to see employment. Through some representative case studies it is demonstrated that the critical factor in determining SOF and Marine Force employment in overlapping mission types is capacity.

With capacity as the frame, planners can more effectively integrate and optimize SOF and Marine Force integration. Force generation planners can more effectively train and prescribe what low-capacity high-training intensive skills should be maintained in SOF and what higher-capacity lower-training skills should be maintained in Marine Forces. Through SOF and Marine Force integrated training the best strategies for augmentation and division can be determined and optimized. Additionally, contingency planners can use those metrics to determine crisis response and limited contingency force compositions between SOF and Marine Forces to sufficiently and efficiently address various crisis or limited contingency situations.

Background

The context for the paper involves framing the organizational roles and their importance, describing the research methodology and defining the terms used. James Wilson's book "*Bureaucracy*"¹ describes a relationship between an organization's role or mission and tasks with its identity (or culture). This is particularly important to military organizations that rely on relevance to compete for Congressional funding. The research methodology for this paper is

inductive. The analysis is both quantitative and qualitative to determine trends and observations. The terms used in the paper that are defined in Joint Publication 1-02 (JP 1-02) are used consistent with that definition. Where no doctrinally defined term accurately captured the thought to be conveyed then the definition is defined below.

The role of USSOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps for the purposes of this paper refers to the U.S. Code title 10 responsibilities of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the U.S. Marine Corps to train, man, and equip their forces². Specifically, as USSOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps provide forces to the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC), how have those forces been used in the operating environment and what implications does that have to the organization's role and relevance. In that context SOF will represent USSOCOM and Marine Forces or the MAGTF will represent the U.S. Marine Corps. Marine Forces are defined as any Marine Corps organization that is deployed for operations listed (U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations units [MARSOC] are not addressed in this study). SOF forces are defined as any force that has been designated by the Secretary of Defense as articulated in the Title 10, United States Code (USC), Section 167 and discussed in *Joint Publication 3-05, Special Operations* (JP 3-05)³. This includes: U.S. Army Special Forces, Rangers, Special Operations Aviation, Military Information Support Operations units (referred to here as it is in historical literature by its previous title PSYOPs) and Civil Affairs (CA), U.S. Navy Special Warfare Groups including SEAL (Sea-Air-Land) Platoons and Special Boat Units (SBU), and U.S. Air Force Special Operations Wings, Special Tactics Groups and Special Operations Groups. Additionally, for the purposes of this paper USSOCOM is treated as a service because of its service-like responsibilities. When the term *Military Service* or *Services* is used here it refers to

the U.S. Marine Corps and the USSOCOM as well as U.S. Navy, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force although to a lesser degree since they are not directly the subject of the research.

USSOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps seek to define their role in the future operating environment (as do all the services). The organization's role will establish its relevance, shape its funding, training priorities, structure and identity. Relevance is the key. The services (and USSOCOM) in theory should exist not for their own sake, but instead to serve a national security interest of the U. S. Government. The U.S. government senior decision makers' assessment of the operating environment seeks to identify the threats and interests of the U.S. Government, in particular with respect to national security. Generally, each service (and USSOCOM) stakes out its role to counter those threats or achieve policy goals consistent with its tradition, culture⁴ and identity. To the extent that a service's role can be seen as relevant to those threats or interests it receives a proportional amount of the overall defense budget. This is an over simplification of a complicated process, but it is useful here to point out that the services (and USSOCOM) have an interest in remaining relevant as a counter to threats or as achievers of policy goals for national security in both a theoretical as well as practical way.

To illustrate that point we can look to the Cold War where nuclear weapon delivery and defense were thought to be the dominate form of future war. Accordingly, the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy secured significant funding to provide the three legs of the "nuclear triad". Today, global terrorism is a significant national security concern and consistent with USSOCOM's central role in combating this threat it is expanding with the accompanying funding to support.

USSOCOM's role in crisis response and limited contingency operations is not clearly delineated in doctrine. The JP 3-05⁵ touches on special operations in crisis response and limited

contingency operations, but focuses mostly on what SOF can do before a crisis emerges and less on what role SOF has during the crisis. JP 3-05 excerpt below:

“[Special Operations] SO are most effective during crisis when SOF has had enough time (months to years) to conduct pre-crisis activities, build relationships, and build HN/PN SOF capacity as part of shaping operations (Phase 0) of theater campaign and contingency plans. Longer term preparations for SO provide options for decision makers in times of crisis that would otherwise not be available. Also, pre-crisis SO preparations may provide situational awareness that permits identification of a potential crisis prior to requiring a US military response, thus allowing a whole-of-government solution be applied to de-escalate the situation by dissuading, deterring, or disrupting the parties involved or through mediation.”⁶

The JP 3-05 also states, “SOF, whether employed independently or complementing [conventional forces], participate in many of the missions associated with crisis response and limited contingencies, such as [Civil Military Operations], [Foreign Internal Defense], and [Security Force Assistance].”⁷ Taken together these statements don’t tell GCCs much about the role of SOF in crisis response and limited contingency operations. The doctrine indicates that if SOF did not already have a presence pre-crisis that their utility would be less than optimal. If the GCC did decide to employ SOF, doctrine only offers that SOF does “participate” either independently or with conventional (General Purpose) forces.

The Marine Corps’ role is perhaps even less clear or referenced in doctrine. In a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense with the subject line titled “Role of the Marine Corps” dated Sept 2011, Marine Commandant General Amos describes the U.S. Marine Corps as a “middleweight force” that is “lighter than the Army, and heavier than SOF.” Here the Marine Corps attempts to draw a distinction between itself, the U.S. Army, and SOF. Rather than

definitively articulating what the Marine Corps' role is, the discussion contained in the memorandum instead defines it by describing what it is not, the U.S. Army or SOF. It does assert that the Marine Corps is a force that *contributes to* and *complements* the U.S. Army and SOF operations. The Commandant goes on to describe the Marine Corps as “an expeditionary force focused on coming from the sea with integrated aviation and logistics capabilities.”⁸ This however does more to describe the character of Marine Corps operations than the purpose for Marine Force employment. Of particular relevance to this paper, the Commandant attempts to draw a distinction between SOF and the Marine Corps when he comments that SOF contributes in a number of “specialized ways, but they are not a substitute for conventional (general purpose) forces with a broader range of capability and sustainability”⁹. This paper will explore a segment of SOF and Marine Corps history to see how the limited capacity (sustainability) of SOFs influenced the employment of the Marine Force broader capabilities.

USSOCOM and U.S. Marine Corps roles as presented in doctrine leave a lot of ambiguity in defining the employment of the respective forces in crisis response and limited contingency operations, and perhaps that was purposeful in the interest of flexibility. However, without a clear delineation of roles between SOF and Marine Forces the choice of force is subjective although not arbitrary. This is the core of the analysis in this paper. What has been the role of SOF and Marine Forces in major crisis response and limited contingency operations between 1987 (USSOCOM inception) and 2007? Did the environments (hostile, uncertain, permissive) or operation mission types demonstrate a preference by national security decision makers for SOF or Marine Forces? When SOF or Marine Forces were employed, which units were used? When SOF and Marine units were employed together what was the nature of their relationship? Lastly, what insights can be learned from those observations? Armed with the actual historical role each

service played in crisis response and limited contingency operations service planners can make the best possible assessment (although always incomplete) of what the future force should be.

To answer these questions, unclassified operational data was drawn primarily from two publications. *United States Special Operations Command History: 6th Edition* published by the USSOCOM History and Research Office was used to trace USSOCOM involvement in major operations from 1987 through 2007¹⁰. U.S. Marine Corps involvement in crisis response and limited contingency operations during the same time period was identified using *The United States Marine Corps: a chronology, 1775 to the present*¹¹ by John Fredriksen.¹² In order to mitigate sample bias, an effort was made to use all the crisis response and limited contingency operations from the literature. However, some operations were either removed or clarified when failure to do so would be misleading or the information too vague to be categorized. For example, Operation PRIME CHANCE I was the title given to the operation to send Task Force 160th units to participate in the larger Operation EARNEST WILL. Although Operation PRIME CHANCE I is referenced in *United States Special Operations Command History: 6th Edition* it was a sub element of Operation EARNEST WILL and so was removed because the units, mission type, and operational environment were already represented through the Operation EARNEST WILL data.

Each operation from the references was individually researched to identify or clarify units involved, the operation's overarching mission/purpose, inclusive dates, location, and environment (permissive, uncertain, or hostile). Additionally, SOF and U.S. Marine Corps forces' relationships in terms of missions, coordinated or integrated, were identified when possible. Units involved and the inclusive dates of operations appear in the table as referenced without substantive change.

The purpose of collecting and analyzing the data is to identify differences operationally in the employment of SOF and Marine Forces in order to determine overlap and seams in the two services roles. It is assumed that deployed SOFs are generally a smaller force organizationally than deployed Marine organizations like a MAGTF. It follows then that due to their smaller character that they have less organic fire power than the compared Marine Force. For this reason operational environment is a possible distinguishing characteristic for employment. Larger Marine Forces might be expected to be employed in more hostile environments because of their organic combat power to address hostile threats. The second assumption is that SOF and Marine Forces would have different capabilities due to their separate training continuums and standards. It follows then that they would be more or less suited for different missions based on those capabilities. Accordingly there might be an expectation that some mission type operations would be heavily favored for one organization over another. Lastly, qualitatively studying the data revealed a third criterion of distinction - capacity. Two case studies of operations from Appendix A demonstrate that the differing capacity requirements and the subsequent organization choice had an impact on the force choice.

The environments were classified by the author using the strict doctrinal definitions of “permissive environment” and “uncertain environment” from the Joint Publication 1-02 (JP 1-02) (amended 15 Dec 2011).¹³ The term “hostile environment” as it is used here is defined as “operational environment in which hostile forces have control and the intent and capability to effectively oppose or react to the operations a unit intends to conduct”. This definition was previously contained in the JP 1-02, but has been removed.

The mission types were designated based on an approximation of the overall mission of the operation. Other mission types often occurred inside of the larger operational mission, but

were deemed insufficient to alter the overall character of the operation. For example the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) in Operation JOINT GUARDIAN performed HA/DR missions¹⁴, but it was in support of the larger Peace Enforcement mission. In the titling of mission types the most descriptively accurate mission type was chosen even if that mission type was not explicitly defined doctrinally (for example “Invasion” accurately describes Operation JUST CAUSE, but is not defined in JP 1-02). Where the mission type is defined the use herein is consistent with the prescribed definition (for example Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement).

Analysis: Operational Environment

The operational environment has not been a determining factor in the employment of SOF or the MAGTF. Of the fifty total operations identified in Appendix A the operational environments (permissive, uncertain, and hostile) break evenly between SOF and Marine Forces. See Table 1.

Operational Environment	Total	SOF (% of total)	USMC(% of total)	Both (% of total)
Hostile	8	6 (75%)	7(88%)	5 (63%)
Uncertain	26	19 (73%)	19 (73%)	12 (46%)
Permissive	15	10 (67%)	10 (67%)	5 (33%)
Unknown*	1	1	0	--
Total	50	36 (72%)	36 (72%)	22 (44%)

* The operational environment could not be determined from the literature but the information is included here for completeness as other elements of the operation are utilized in the study.

TABLE 1

With the exception of Offensive Air Support (OAS), Deep Air Support (DAS) mission types, which did not directly identify SOF use, both the MAGTF and SOF had a role to play against all of the hostile threats in the operations identified in Appendix A. The operations classified as *Hostile* from Table 1 can be grouped into three categories, OAS against Iraqi Armed Forces and the former Yugoslavia regular and irregular forces, operations against the Iranian armed forces in the Persian Gulf, and the invasions of Panama and Afghanistan. In each of these cases the hostiles were military or paramilitary forces under the control of their respective governments who were opposed to the U.S./Allied operations. Susceptibility to the threats from the hostile force should be an important consideration in deciding which forces to commit in that environment. OAS missions comprise three out of the total eight operations and were supported by Marine Corps aircraft. In each case the U. S. military had overwhelming air power advantage against a primarily Bosnian/Serbian or Iraqi anti-air threat. There are three identified operations against the hostile Iranian armed forces all in connection to the “Tanker Wars” in the Persian Gulf between 1987 and 1988. The Iranian armed forces used naval mines and surface to surface missiles during the conflict, but the most direct threat to the Marines and SOF during the operations was the Iranian small boat surface fleet. During the invasions of Panama and Afghanistan¹⁵ the most prevalent threat to SOF and MAGTF assets were those nation’s ground forces. In terms of employment in a hostile environment the only distinction presented between the MAGTF and SOF roles is in the Air Combat Element (ACE) of the MAGTF and its application against an enemy anti-air or air to air threat. This is likely because there is no equivalent capability to the ACE in the SOF community.

There are two important observations to draw from the *uncertain* operational environments data sets in Table 1. First, there is parity in terms of quantity between the Marines

and SOF units employed. Neither organization appears to be dominant or be excluded because the environment is uncertain. In an uncertain operational environment the threat is ambiguous and difficult to categorize. Forces employed in *uncertain* environments will likely be expected to identify and react to emerging or unclear threats. In the operations with an operational environment classified as *uncertain* from Appendix A the threats are generally transitional government organizations or dissidents. The second observation is that operations classified as *uncertain* are over half the total number of operations. If this trend continues then future crisis response and limited contingency operations have a better than even chance of happening in an *uncertain* operational environment. It is beyond the scope of this research to identify in detail the underlying factors that created the *uncertain* environments of each operation. However, if these factors have not abated in the future then a reasonable assumption would be that the majority of future crisis response and limited contingency operations would also occur in *uncertain* environments.

Threats to the force become a lesser consideration in employing forces in *permissive* environments. Threats still exist in *permissive* environments, but with a functioning local national military and law enforcement that is friendly to the operation it is generally assumed that the threats will be managed by the local authorities. Even with the shift away from force protection concerns there are an equal number of operations classified as being conducted in a *permissive* operational environment between SOF and Marine Forces from Table 1.

In summarizing the findings of Marine Corps and SOF roles as it pertains to operational environments there are no distinguishing employment trends. In some ways this seems counter intuitive if the expectation is that Marine units are typically larger and carry more organic combat power. It might logically follow that as an environment tends towards *hostile* that there

would be a tendency to utilize larger formations like those provided by the Marine Corps (or reciprocally that Marine Corps forces would have less utility in a *permissive* environment). However, this is not supported by the information in Table 1. Recognizing that the employment of forces is not an arbitrary decision there is likely other reasons than pure combat power that influence the use of SOF in hostile environments. The parity of use of SOF in a *hostile* environment despite generally having less organic combat power could possibly be explained by a higher tolerance of risk by SOF; other ways to mitigate the risks to force; or perhaps when planners considered the use of SOF there were other determinate factors that outweighed the risk to force calculations.

Analysis: Mission Type

In a large majority of mission types both SOF and Marine Forces had a near equal role in terms of employment in those operations. In only three mission types -- OAS, Limited Objective Raids, and Peace Enforcement -- does there trend towards a dominant employment of either SOF or Marine Forces. According to the Table 2 analysis, operations with the mission types of Invasion, Stability Operations, HA/DR, Peacekeeping, Embassy Reinforcement, and Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) are virtually equally likely to see the utilization of SOF and Marine Corps forces.

NEOs initially appear to be more likely to utilize Marine Forces than SOF, but the difference is slight at two out of ten total operations. Furthermore, if the NEO mission type quantities are combined with Embassy Reinforcement the difference disappears. This is justifiable because of the connected nature of NEOs and Embassy Reinforcements. Virtually all NEOs begin as an Embassy Reinforcement and then progress to a NEO if the situation fails to

stabilize. At the time of assignment to the operation however, unit commanders would likely commit forces to Embassy Reinforcement but be prepared for either contingency. It is only after the fact that we can classify which category the mission fell into. The decision to employ SOF and/or Marine Forces is the core of the analysis, and therefore recognizing the pre-context in which the decision was made is relevant and justifies the combination of the mission types (NEO and Embassy Reinforcement) for analysis.

MISSION TYPE *	TOTAL	SOF(% of total)	USMC(% of total)	Both (% of total)
Invasion	2	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Stability Operations	3	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	2 (67%)
HA/DR	11	8 (73%)	9 (82%)	6 (55%)
Peacekeeping	4	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	2 (50%)
Embassy Reinforcement	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
NEO	10	6 (60%)	8 (80%)	4 (40%)
Peace Enforcement	3	3 (100%)	1 (33%)	1 (33%)
Limited Objective Raid	3	3 (100%)	1 (33%)	1 (33%)
Offensive Air Support (DAS)	3	1 (33%)	3 (100%)	1 (33%)
Total*	41	31 (76%)	30 (73%)	20 (49%)

* Mission types: Naval Escort, TRAP, Humanitarian Demining, Security Augmentation, No-fly Zone Enforcement, Refugee Processing, Amphibious Withdrawal, Embargo, and *USS COLE* Recovery were excluded because each only occurred once and a minimum of two occurrences was required for trend analysis.

TABLE 2

NEOs and HA/DRs comprise the preponderance of mission types executed. This number increases when NEOs and Embassy Reinforcement mission types are combined. There is no

adequate way to predict if this trend will continue into the future, but it should be taken into consideration when prioritizing future training and planning. This is reinforced if there is a reasonable expectation that the underlying causes – political instability, natural disasters and limited resources – are likely to continue in the future.

The OAS-DAS mission type shows a preference towards Marine Force employment. This is reasonably obvious considering the relatively large Marine Corps aviation component including fixed wing strike aircraft which are the appropriate asset for these types of missions. Additionally, being part of a MAGTF or carrier wing, Marine fixed wing aircraft are often in proximity to the operation location increasing their likelihood of supporting these mission types. The SOF aviation component conversely is much smaller and focuses around supporting SOF ground units instead of deep strike offensive air support.

The mission types Peace Enforcement and Limited Objective Raid favor SOF employment according to Table 2. Although the data sets are small the trend is reinforced by some analysis of the mission types themselves.

Peace Enforcement during this period was a long term mission. Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR lasted for a year (Dec 95- Dec 96) and Operation JOINT FORGE lasted for over 6 years (Jun 98- Dec 04). Operation JOINT GUARDIAN continues through 2012, although with a significantly reduced U. S. presence. Marine Forces role in Peace Enforcement is likely restricted by the comparatively transitory nature of the MAGTF deployment cycle. Instead, missions in the former Yugoslavia were performed primarily by the longer rotational Army task force with the Marine Corps playing supporting role for surge capacity as required. Predictably the SOF contribution in the Peace Enforcement missions from Appendix A are primarily in the form of

U.S. Army Civil Affairs, U.S. Army Military Information Support Operations units (MISO formerly PSYOPS), and U.S. Army Special Forces.

Limited Objective Raids are another mission type that leans towards SOF employment and probably to a much greater degree than indicated in Table 2. Two of the Limited Objective Raids from the table are punitive raids against Iranian Gas and Oil Separation Platforms (GOSP) in the Persian Gulf. The first raid was conducted by Navy SEALs against two Iranian GOSPs supported by a U.S. Navy Surface Action Group (SAG). The second raid used two SAGs for near simultaneous attacks on two more Iranian GOSPs. The first SAGs used a Navy SEAL assault team and the second SAG used a Marine assault team. In this second round of GOSP attacks (Operation PRAYING MANTIS) we see both SOF and Marine Forces performing similar mission profiles for the raids. This is the only identified operation with an apparent equality between SOF and Marine assault teams and missions. The last limited objective raid operation (Operation GOTHIC SERPENT) from Appendix A was a SOF lead manhunt operation in Somalia to capture a warlord named Mohamed Farrah Aidid that took the form of a series of limited objective raids. Of the mission types identified, limited objective raids offers the most distinction from a purely mission type criteria in terms of SOF versus Marine Force employment and role.¹⁶

In summarizing the findings of Marine Corps and SOF roles as it pertains to mission types only OAS-DAS, Peace Enforcement and especially limited objective raids offer a preference in employment roles between SOF and Marine Forces. In other words according to the research that populated Appendix A, an HA/DR mission during this period was basically as likely to see a SOF response as it was to see a Marine Force response and 44% (Table 2) of the time you would see a response from both. Again, much like the operational environment

analysis, this was counter intuitive. Marine Forces and SOF are very different organizations in terms of relative size, equipment, and training. Yet both organizations were essentially equally relevant against most of the mission types identified except Peace Enforcement, Limited Objective Raids, and OAS-DAS.

Analysis: Other Observations

A qualitative analysis of Appendix A reveals several other observations from the operations and the units that conducted them. First, none of the operations, with the exception of Operation GOTHIC SERPENT were catastrophic or highly visible failures like Operation EAGLE CLAW in 1980. This is worth noting because it indicates that if there are major changes in the role of USSOCOM or the U.S. Marine Corps that they are likely to be driven by those organizations themselves instead of legislated by Congress as in the case of the formation of USSOCOM. It may be a stretch to assume that the services can come to an agreement on roles or changes in the wake of history like the Key West Agreement and the competitive cultures, but no agreement is essentially a continuation of the status quo and does not further the discussion. Second, there are several examples of the same MEU being involved in multiple successive operations. This trend is unique to the MEUs and reinforces their regional rather than local forward deployed presence role. The last qualitative observation is the varied capabilities and services that formed the SOF units and task forces over this period. The inherent “jointness” of USSOCOM is apparent at the lowest tactical level which contrasts starkly against the Marine Forces which are uniformly un-joint.

The defining of U.S. Marine Corps and USSOCOM roles in the future operating environment will likely not be mandated by Congress. If any changes are made they will instead

need to be negotiated by peer services under the direction and guidance of the Department of Defense. USSOCOM was formed in the wake of the special operations failures in Operation EAGLE CLAW and Grenada. Because the armed services were either unable or unwilling to address the special operations failures to Congress's satisfaction it legislated a solution in the form of the 1987 Nunn-Cohen amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols act establishing USSOCOM. Without an EAGLE CLAW equivalent today, it may be safe to speculate that there will be no legislative effort to clarify roles. As discussed earlier each service and USSOCOM has a theoretical and practical reason to maintain its relevance to protect the national interests and maintain their funding. Therefore future roles that infringe upon current established roles are likely to be resisted by the infringed organization without mutual agreement. It follows that adapting roles into areas where there is a gap or along seams is likely to be better received than replacing existing capability.

There are two primary examples of MAGTFs performing multiple operations from Appendix A. The first is the 26th MEU in 1997 and 1999. In 1997 the 26th MEU participated in Operation SILVER WAKE, a NEO out of Albania. Two years later the same MEU was involved in Operation SHINING HOPE (Apr – Jul 99) and Operation JOINT GUARDIAN (Jun 99). With a 2-3 year manpower assignment policy in the Marine Corps it is very likely that some of the staff that participated in the operation in 1997 also participated in the operations in 1999. This resident expertise both regionally and operationally likely benefited the MEU. Additionally, the MEU was ready to contribute to both a HA/DR mission (SHINING HOPE) and a Peace Enforcement mission (JOINT GUARDIAN) with the same MAGTF demonstrating operational flexibility. The second example is the 22nd MEU that conducted four NEOs in African countries between April of 1996 and April of 1997. There is a reasonable expectation that the MEU would

have successively benefited from the lessons learned during each operation to better execute the next. This is in contrast to SOF units from Appendix A that do not have the benefit of a single unit learning from multiple operations. Both of these examples show how the GCC were able to capitalize on both the versatility and the continuity from these two MEUs across multiple operations.

Theoretically USSOCOM's inherent "jointness" provides SOF with more depth, greater flexibility and better adaptability than a single service force with the same capability. Although difficult to prove empirically it is easy to understand from a common sense perspective. Each of the SOF members from separate services maintains a form of access to his or her larger service. This allows SOF to benefit from the economies of scale of the larger services at a tactical level. Contrast that to a single service model like the Marine Corps that attempts to take a capability and duplicate it with Marines. The Marine tank battalions are an example. The U.S. Army tank community is larger than its Marine counterpart and so it can take advantages of economies of scale for training, career advancement and advocacy. The Marine tank community will comparatively struggle since its mission is not a core mission to the Marine Corps culture.¹⁷ A second advantage to SOF "jointness" is that when partnering with general purpose forces they benefit from a familiarity with the larger services' culture and processes. With a Marine Corps model most of the integration with other services outside of operations is through education mediums which puts Marine Forces at a disadvantage for coordination since they must overcome cultural barriers. Lastly, joint organizations have access and understanding of a much larger array of multi-domain capabilities and proficiencies across the greater joint force than a single service.

Case Studies

Near equivalent employment with respect to operational environment and mission type appears to show redundant capability between USSOCOM and U.S. Marine Corps. In fact although both services may share like capability they differ with respect to level of training and capacity. To support this claim the following case studies are presented from Appendix A.

Operation PROVIDE COMFORT:

In 1991 Kurdish rebels attempted to “rid themselves of the yoke of Saddam’s regime”¹⁸ through a rebellion in northern Iraq. Despite their defeat during Desert Storm the Iraqi military had reconstituted and subsequently was able to mobilize and crush the Kurdish rebels. The conflict displaced hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees along the mountains of the northern Iraqi border. Sub-freezing temperatures, hunger, and disease created an expanding humanitarian disaster with reported 1,500 refugee deaths each day.¹⁹

On 5 April, 1991 President Bush ordered a military led response. The Operation was titled EXPRESS CARE and was primarily composed of special operations forces from the 39th Special Operations Wing and the 10th Special Forces Group. Under the direction of Joint Task Force (JTF) Express Care, Special Forces teams inserted into refugee camps and coordinated the air delivery of relief supplies. However, shortly after forming, the expanding size, scope, and duration of the mission overwhelmed JTF-Express Care (primarily SOF) necessitating its change into JTF Provide Comfort (which included a MAGTF among other forces).

The refugee situation was beyond the capacity of the air delivered supplies and would require a land based logistics train to bring in the quantities of relief supplies to mitigate the

crisis. Special Forces teams on the ground identified 12 major camps with at least 40,000 refugees each suffering from severe shortages of food and medical care. JTF Express Care was able to deliver 284.6 tons of supplies per day in support of the operation, but it was not enough to manage the crisis. Once the expanded JTF incorporated the Logistic Combat Element (LCE) of the MAGTF it was able to link with theater logistics, off load relief supplies in Turkey and operate distribution bases that sequentially moved supplies overland into northern Iraq, increasing the supply throughput. Additionally the LCE provided water purification services, tent construction, and ordinance disposal to the relief efforts.

The operations' scope shifted from a 10-day emergency aid mission to a 30-day (later 90-day) sustainment mission significantly increasing the overall operation size and duration. As the international and U.S. domestic community became more aware of the disaster there was a swell of public support for a response. Providing for the immediate relief was only a short term solution. A long term solution would require reintegrating the refugees back into their communities and that would take time prompting the JTF's expanded mission.

The coordination effort to effectively respond dramatically increased as 12 separate countries responded with military forces and the international community sent dozens of civilian aid organizations. Multiple organizations operating multiple missions across northern Iraq presented a unique challenge. Although the organizations were there for generally the same purpose of providing relief to the Kurdish refugees, there was no established working relationship. Some civilian aid organizations were especially wary of working with military organizations. To overcome these challenges heavy coordination was required to optimize the relief efforts of all the organizations. The new JTF Provide Comfort expanded to eventually include "more than 20,000 allied troops"²⁰ and provided relief to over 750,000 refugees.

JTF Express Care was assigned and capable of performing a HA/DR mission with a special operations force. It was only when size, scope and duration of the mission exceeded the SOF capacity did the role expand to include the MAGTF. Operation PROVIDE COMFORT demonstrates a seam of capacity that became the decisive factor in using the MAGTF and SOF.

Operations SILVER ANVIL and NOBLE OBELISK

From Appendix A there are two NEOs from Sierra Leone identified, Operation SILVER ANVIL and Operation NOBLE OBELISK. These NEOs in particular are informative for this paper because in a similar mission type and location the two NEOs were conducted as a SOF operation in the case of SILVER ANVIL and a joint SOF and MAGTF operation in the case of NOBLE OBELISK. Both operations were conducted in uncertain environments and were similar in duration. The primary difference came in the number of personnel to be evacuated. SILVER ANVIL evacuated over 400 American citizens and third-country nationals over the course of two days. NOBLE OBELISK evacuated 2,509 personnel over five days.

NEOs require the processing of the evacuees in coordination with the U.S. Embassy staff and loading on transport from a secure location. In SILVER ANVIL SOF relied on their rapport with the local military to maintain security in order to facilitate the embassy staff processing the evacuees. In NOBLE OBELISK the MAGTF used Marines to secure multiple locations over the course of the operation to shuttle evacuees to the *USS Kearsarge* for follow on processing and movement. Unlike with SILVER ANVIL, the U.S. military aircraft during NOBLE OBELISK flew in defiance of a flight ban imposed by belligerents (local military) in the ongoing coup.

The difference between the operations came down to capacity. The SOFs did not have the capacity to evacuate a large number of personnel from multiple sites while carrying enough combat power to defy a flight ban without challenge, but the MAGTF did.

Conclusions

Between 1987 and 2007 for crisis response and limited contingency operations USSOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps had virtual parity of role in terms of likelihood of employment regardless of operational environment or operational mission type. Additionally, the limited capacity of the SOF units was one of the key factors that determined the employment of the larger Marine Forces.

SOF and Marine Forces have been employed with virtually equivalent regularity in hostile, uncertain or permissive operational environments. Despite differences in size, composition and training of deployed SOF and Marine Force units they had comparatively equal likelihood to be confronted by the varying threats present in all three operational environment types (hostile, uncertain, or permissive). Additionally, 44% of the operations saw both SOF and Marine Force employment during the same operation. If it is reasonable to assume that these trends will continue then force planners should plan to train their deployed forces to deal with the threats across the operational environment spectrum and expect that around half the time SOF and Marine Forces will share space on those battlefields.

Of the nine operational mission types analyzed only three showed a comparative preference for either SOF or Marine Forces. The majority of mission types showed similar parity in the regularity of SOF or Marine Force employment. Offensive Air Support (OAS) showed a presence for Marine Force employment over SOF which is likely due to the capabilities of the

Marine Air Wing's strike aircraft. Limited objective raids and peace enforcement operations showed a preference for SOF over Marine Force employment. In the case of limited objective raids that is likely due to the level of training and in the case of peace enforcement it is likely due to the regional focus of SOF units. Neither service had a monopoly on any mission type. There was no operational mission types analyzed that were exclusive to only one service. If it is reasonable to assume that these trends will continue, then force planners should recognize an imperative to train Marine and Special Operations Forces together or at least using similar standards for crisis response and limited contingency operations as the likelihood that either service will be called upon to perform the mission is high. Additionally, there is a significant chance (historically 49%) that both SOF and Marine Forces will work together on the same operation.

Despite the significant overlap in employment of the two services in the operations analyzed, the roles were not redundant but instead crossed a seam defined by the limited capacity of the SOF units involved. Capacity here is any metric that extends beyond the SOF unit's ability to provide organically. In the operations discussed here it is demonstrated primarily in the form of mass (friendly force ability to provide mass, i.e. more troops for security or throughput for Foreign Internal Defense [FID] missions) or logistics (long term sustainability for NEOs and HA/DR missions), but could also apply to mobility and coordination to name a few others. This is perhaps the most useful conclusion for planners as it establishes a frame with which to inform what low capacity high-training intensive skills should be maintained in SOF and what higher capacity lower-training skills should be maintained in Marine Forces. Through SOF and Marine Force integrated training, planners can determine the best strategies for augmentation, division and optimization. Additionally, contingency planners can use those metrics to determine crisis

response and limited contingency force compositions between SOF and Marine Forces to sufficiently and efficiently address various crisis or limited contingency situations.

The concept of a contingency force that through the use of integrated training is able to blend highly trained specialized skills (SOF) with a “medium weight” capacity (Marine Forces) has a high potential operational effectiveness by being both precise and flexible. Framing the formation of such organizations as a function of capacity instead of mission type might be effective in bypassing parochial turf war resistance.

Implications and Recommendations

Armed with the conclusions of the study and applying them to today’s (2013) environment the following implications and recommendations emerge. First, the Marine Corps does not have a monopoly on any missions in the crisis response and limited contingency sphere. Instead, the role of the Marine Corps is one of capacity over smaller SOF units and deployability (or presence) over larger U.S. Army units in this area of the range of military operations. Because capacity is a relative and dynamic metric the Marine Corps will need to adapt to the evolving environment to maintain its relevance. Second, the regionally mobile and forward deployed nature of the MEU had a positive effect on the relevance of the Marine Corps role with single MEUs being involved in multiple operations in geographically separated areas. Third, the joint nature of USSOCOM down to the tactical level provides the organization with significant advantages in capability and should be a lesson for the Marine Corps.

The weight class for middle weight fighters shrinks when welter weights get heavier and heavy weights get lighter. USSOCOM is getting more capable and the U.S. Army is getting

smaller and hence more globally mobile effectively expanding their roles which will likely come at the expense of the traditional U.S. Marine Corps role.

If capacity remains a determining factor into the future as it was between 1987 and 2007, then the growth of USSOCOM and the expected expanded capacity that growth will bring is important to understanding where the capacity seams or overlaps with the U.S. Marine Corps have changed or will change. In FY 07 USSOCOM had a reported strength of 47,911 with a budget of approximately \$6.2 billion²¹. In FY 13 USSOCOM planned to grow to 66,594 personnel with a budget of \$10.4 billion. That is close to a 40% growth in personnel and a 67% growth in budget²². How much change in capacity this increase has on SOF is not determined, but it may impact the choice to employ Marine Forces in the future.²³

An additional consideration although outside of this strict scope of this project is the role of the Marine Corps as it relates the role of the U.S. Army. Over the course of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan the U.S. Army has converted to a modular Brigade-centric force from its previous Division-centric force. According to the U.S. Army's 2012 posture statement the Army intends to provide "Our institutional Army—the part of the Army that trains, educates and supports Army forces worldwide—will become more flexible by improving our ability to quickly adapt to changing environments, missions and priorities."²⁴ Conceptually this strategy will make U.S. Army forces more capable to be deployed in a crisis response and limited contingency role.

There are two recommendations for the Marine Corps to address the possibly narrowing of its role in crisis response and limited contingency operations. First, the Marine Corps should get serious about partnering with USSOCOM using capacity as the frame work. This partnering should include the typical MEU missions as well as extend to look at other USSOCOM missions

that the Marine Corps could provide capacity. For example, FID may not be a mission well suited to MEU operations and their inherently transitory nature, but it is a capability the Marine Corps has demonstrated successfully in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of dumping this capability in lieu of returning the Marine Corps to its naval roots there may be opportunities to explore an expanded role under the old Marine Special Operations Advisory Group (MSOAG) model in coordination with USSOCOM. Second, the Marine Corps should look to define itself as different from the U.S. Army in more ways than just being “from the seas with integrated aviation and logistics”. There may be opportunity here to return to the Marine Corps ‘Banana Wars’ roots and focus on the ‘irregular warfare’ discipline as a distinction from a ‘regular warfare’ U.S. Army. Each organization would need to operate in both irregular and regular warfare environments since both are present to varying degrees in any conflict but there can be a distinction in terms of which service is the duty expert and maintains the lead on developing theory and doctrine.

Utilizing the sea as a maneuver space has reinforced the Marine Corps role during the period covered in the study. This is a capability the Marine Corps should sustain. However, in line with efforts to partner with USSOCOM the Marine Corps should explore ways to further disaggregate the MEU. The smaller the portions of the MEU that can be employed in various capacities the more relevant they become. This allows the GCC to quickly task organize the force required even if it breaks up the traditional MAGTF model from time to time. Additionally, the MEU should explore other ship configurations that make for smaller unit employments that retain the ability to re-aggregate when larger concentrations of forces are required. For example exploring MAGTF deployments on Littoral Combat Ships or building GCE, LCE, and ACE units that support company level (rather than battalion) operations.

The Marine Corps should explore options to duplicate the 'joint' advantages that USSOCOM has exploited over the years. Marine tank battalions could be replaced with U.S. Army tank battalions allowing the Marine Corps to benefit from the deeper pool of U.S. Army tank force structure and maintenance support. Additionally, U.S. Air Force Air Support Squadron Liaisons as permanent members of the operational or tactical MAGTF staff would allow for better integrated planning between Marine Forces and the theater Air and Space Operations Center under the GCC. Each of these 'joint' members of the MAGTF would need to participate in 'work up' training to maintain a cohesive command when deployed, but they would provide a joint dimensionality similar to the one enjoyed by SOF.

Looking at the past does not predict the future, but it sometimes informs it. If the trends that emerged between 1987 and 2007 for crisis response and limited contingency operations continue into the future coupled with the more modular U.S. Army and capable USSOCOM, GCCs will likely have more options available to employ against problems. This could mean fewer missions and a reduced role for the MEU especially the GCE. On the other hand opportunities exist for the Marine Corps to expand its partnership with USSOCOM and potentially establish a role in other areas like refining irregular warfare theory and doctrine. Additionally, the Marine Corps should look to shift from its single service model to take advantages of the 'joint' capabilities of the other services and integrate them into future Marine operations.

APPENDIX A

OPERATION DETAILS					UNITS AND RELATIONSHIP		
<u>Operation</u>	<u>Start to End</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Mission Type</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Special Operations Forces</u>	<u>Marine Corps Forces</u>	<u>Organizational Relationship</u>
EARNEST WILL	24-Jul-87 to 26-Sep-88	Persian Gulf	Naval Escort -Escorting Oil Tankers through the Persian Gulf under threat from Iranian attack	Hostile	Special task force: ⁽⁴⁾ -Special Boat Unit 20 -SEAL Team Two -Intelligence Support Activity (US Army)	24 MAU (Det) ⁽⁴⁾ -Marine Radio Recon Tm -Marine Helicopter Det -Security Element (Anti- Air Defense) MAGTF 1-88, MAGTF 2-88 ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED- Marine Forces provided protection and augmented capabilities of SOF
NIMBLE ARCHER	19-Oct-87 to 19-Oct-87	Persian Gulf	Limited Obj RAID - GOSP -Retribution for Silkworm (missile) attack on Kuwait	Hostile	SEAL Team ⁽⁴⁾		None identified
MOUNT HOPE	1-Jun-88 to 1-Jun-88	Chad	TRAP -Mi24 Hind Helicopter Recovery	Unknown	Co E, 160th SOAR ⁽³⁾		None identified
SAFE PASSAGE	1-Nov-88 to 14-Jan-91	Conducted in Pakistan ISO Afghanistan	Humanitarian demining -Train the trainer	Permissive	5th SFG ⁽¹⁾ 4th POG ⁽⁶⁾		None identified
PRAYING MANTIS	18-Apr-88 to 18-Apr-88	Persian Gulf	Limited Obj RAID - GOSP and Iranian Frigates -Retribution for mine strike on <i>USS Roberts</i>	Hostile	SEAL Team Two ⁽⁴⁾	MAGTF 2-88 ⁽²⁾ -Marine assault team off the <i>USS Trenton</i> ⁽⁴⁾ -Marine Prisoner-handling team ⁽⁴⁾ -Marine Attack Helicopter Squadron off <i>USS Trenton</i> ⁽⁴⁾	COORDINATED - Marine Forces and SOF conducted coordinated raids that were not mutually supporting. [Overlapping Mission Types]
NIMROD DANCER	13-May-89 to 18-May-89	Panama	Security Augmentation	Permissive		Co A, 2d LAR, 2 MarDiv, II MEF ⁽⁷⁾	None identified
JUST CAUSE	20-Dec-89 to 31-Jan-90	Panama	Invasion in response to the President of Panama invalidating the election results in 1989	Hostile	23rd & 24th Special Tactics Sqn ⁽¹⁰⁾ Delta Force ⁽¹⁰⁾ SEAL Team Six ⁽¹⁰⁾ 75th Ranger Regt ⁽¹⁰⁾ 160th SOAR ⁽¹⁰⁾ 3rd Bn, 7th SFG ⁽¹⁰⁾ 1st Special Operations Wing ⁽¹⁰⁾	3 rd Bn 6 th Marines ⁽⁹⁾ 2 nd LAI Bn (-) ⁽⁹⁾ 1 st FAST Co ⁽⁹⁾	COORDIANATED -Marine Forces and SOF conducted coordinated operations that were generally not mutually supporting

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OPERATION DETAILS					UNITS AND RELATIONSHIP		
PROMOTE LIBERTY	12-Jan-90 to 1-Jan-91	Panama	Stability Operations	Permissive	3 rd BN, 7 th SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾ NSW ⁽¹⁾	3 rd Bn 6 th Marines ⁽⁹⁾ 2 nd LAI Bn (-) ⁽⁹⁾ 1 st FAST Co ⁽⁹⁾	COORDINATED - Marine Forces and SOF conducted coordinated Civil Military operations generally in areas that were not mutually supporting. [Overlapping Mission Types]
SHARP EDGE	5-Aug-90 to 9-Jan-91	Liberia	NEO*	Uncertain		22nd MAU, 26th MAU, FAST Co ⁽²⁾	None identified
EASTERN EXIT	2-Jan-91 to 11-Jan-91	Somalia	NEO*	Uncertain	NSW, AC-130 ⁽¹⁾	4th MEB ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - SEAL operations were in embedded in the Amphibious Readiness Group
PROVIDE COMFORT I	Mar-91 to 24-Jul-91	Iraq	HA/DR	Uncertain	10th SFG ⁽¹¹⁾ 112th Signal Battalion ⁽¹¹⁾ 432d Civil Affairs Company (-) ⁽¹¹⁾ 6th PSYOPs Group ⁽¹¹⁾ 39th Special Ops Wing (+) ⁽¹¹⁾ SEAL Team 3 ⁽¹¹⁾ Special Boat Units (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾	24th MEU(SOC) ⁽¹¹⁾ 4th Civil Affairs Group (Det) ⁽¹¹⁾	INTEGRATED- Marine Forces and SOF operated closely jointly supporting missions. [Overlapping Mission Types]
SEA ANGEL	15-May-91 to 18-May-91	Bangladesh	HA/DR	Permissive		5th MEB ⁽²⁾	None identified
FIERY VIGIL	Jun-91 to Jun-91	Philippines	HA/DR	Permissive		III MEF (-) ⁽²⁾ -MAGTF 4-90 ⁽¹⁵⁾ -15th MEU ⁽¹⁵⁾ -MAGTF 2-91 ⁽¹⁵⁾	None identified
SILVER ANVIL	29-Apr-92 to 1-May-92	Sierra Leone	NEO*	Uncertain	Co C, 1 st Bn, 10 th SFG ⁽¹⁾ 39 th SOW (-) ⁽¹⁾ 7 th SOS (-) ⁽¹⁾ 67 th SOS (-) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
RESTORE HOPE	9-Dec-92 to 4-May-93	Somalia	HA/DR	Uncertain	Special Boat Unit (Tripoli ARG) ⁽¹²⁾ Seal Platoon (Tripoli ARG) ⁽¹²⁾	SPMAGTF (15th MEU, I MEF (-)) ⁽¹²⁾	INTEGRATED - SEAL operations were embedded in the Amphibious Readiness Group

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OPERATION DETAILS					UNITS AND RELATIONSHIP		
GOTHIC SERPENT	22-Aug-93 to 13-Oct-93	Somalia	Limited Obj RAID – Manhunt	Uncertain	160th SOAR ⁽³⁾ Delta Force ⁽¹³⁾ US Army Rangers ⁽¹³⁾ Seal Tm 6 members ⁽¹³⁾		None identified
UNOSOM II (CONTINUE HOPE)	4-May-93 To Mar-95	Somalia	Peacekeeping	Uncertain	TF Ranger ⁽¹⁾	24th MEU, 13th MEU, 22nd MEU ⁽²⁾	COORDIANATED -Marine Forces and SOF conducted coordinated operations that were generally not mutually supporting
DENY FLIGHT	12-Apr-93 to 20-Dec-95	Balkans	No-fly zone enforcement	Uncertain		VMFA (AW)-533 ⁽²⁾	None identified
DISTANT RUNNER	7-Apr-94 to 8-Apr-94	Burundi, Rwanda	NEO*	Uncertain		11th MEU ⁽²⁾	None identified
SUPPORT HOPE	22-Jul-94 to 27-Sep-94	Rwanda	HA/DR	Uncertain		15th MEU ⁽²⁾	None identified
SEA SIGNAL	Aug-94 to Feb-96	Caribbean	Refugee processing	Permissive		GITMO security elements ⁽²⁾	None identified
UNITED SHIELD	9-Jan-95 to 3-Mar-95	Somalia	Amphibious Withdrawal - Evacuation of Somalia	Uncertain	SEAL TM 5 ⁽¹⁾	13th MEU ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - SEAL operations were in embedded in the Amphibious Readiness Group
SUPPORT DEMOCRACY	1-Nov-93 to Aug-94	Haiti	Embargo -UN lead	Uncertain	<i>USS Cyclone</i> (USSOCOM) ⁽¹⁾ <i>USS Tempest</i> (USSOCOM) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
UPHOLD DEMOCRACY	1-Oct-94 to 31-Mar-95	Haiti	Peacekeeping (Invasion)	Permissive	JTF RALEIGH(JSOTF) ⁽¹⁾ -3rd SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾ -SEAL Team(Unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ -4th POG ⁽¹⁾ -193rd Special Operations Wing ⁽¹⁾ -Rangers (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ -96th CA BN ⁽¹⁾	SPMAGTF-Carib ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - SEAL operations were in embedded in the SPMAGTF ISO landing operations

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OPERATION DETAILS					UNITS AND RELATIONSHIP		
JOINT ENDEAVOR	1-Dec-95 to 20-Dec-96	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Peace Enforcement	Uncertain	1 st BN, 10 th SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾ Special Tactics personnel (AFSOC) ⁽¹⁾ SEAL Team (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ Civil Affairs (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ PSYOPS (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
DELIBERATE FORCE	30-Aug-95 to 20-Sep-95	Bosnia-Herzegovina	OAS	Hostile		VMFA (AW)-533, VMFA-312 ⁽²⁾	None identified
ASSURED RESPONSE	7-Apr-96	Liberia	NEO*	Uncertain	SEALs ⁽¹⁾ Special Forces ⁽¹⁾ PSYOPS ⁽¹⁾	22nd MEU ⁽²⁾	COORDINATED - 22nd MEU relieves USSOCOM assets for redeployment
QUICK RESPONSE	21-May-96 to 22-Jun-96	Central African Republic	NEO*	Uncertain		22nd MEU ⁽²⁾	None identified
JOINT GUARD	20-Dec-96 to 20-Jun-98	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Stability Operations	Permissive	Civil Affairs (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ PSYOPS (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
SILVER WAKE	13-Mar-97 to 26-Mar-97	Albania	NEO*	Uncertain		26th MEU ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - SF member worked closely with MEU personnel ISO the NEO
GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL	17-Mar-97 to 5-Jun-97	Zaire	NEO*	Uncertain	67th Special Operations SQ ⁽¹⁶⁾ 21st Special Operations SQ ⁽¹⁶⁾	22nd MEU ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - MEU and AF special operations forces integrated to fuel and execute airlift of evacuees
NOBLE OBELISK	Apr-97	Sierra Leone	NEO*	Uncertain	ODA Team, 3rd SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾	22nd MEU ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - 22nd MEU designated JTF and ODA team conducted advance force operations and security ISO NEO
FIRM RESPONSE	10-Jun-97	Congo	NEO*	Uncertain	ESAT ⁽¹⁾ 7th SOS ⁽¹⁾		None identified
JOINT FORGE	20-Jun-98 to 2-Dec-04	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Peace Enforcement	Uncertain	354th Civil Affairs Bde ⁽¹⁷⁾ PSYOPS (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾		None identified

APPENDIX A

OPERATION DETAILS					UNITS AND RELATIONSHIP		
SHADOW EXPRESS	26-Sep-98 to 7-Oct-98	Liberia	Embassy Reinforcement	Uncertain	ESAT Team ⁽¹⁾ USS <i>Chinook</i> (USSOCOM) ⁽¹⁾ USS <i>Firebolt</i> (USSOCOM) ⁽¹⁾ SEAL (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ CCT (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
FUERTE APOYO	Oct-98	Central America	HA/DR	Permissive	SEAL (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ Army SOF (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾ 15th SOS ⁽¹⁾ Civil Affairs (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
DESERT FOX	16-Dec-98 to 19-Dec-98	Iraq	OAS	Hostile		31st MEU, VMFA-312 ⁽²⁾	None identified
ALLIED FORCE	24-Mar-99	Kosovo	OAS	Hostile	PSYOPS ⁽¹⁾ SOF CSAR ⁽¹⁾	24th MEU, VMFA(AW) 332, 533 ⁽²⁾	INTEGRATED - All targeting methods, strike aircraft and recovery was controlled by a central authority.
SHINING HOPE	3-Apr-99 to 1-Jul-99	Balkans	HA/DR	Uncertain	Civil Affairs (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾	26th MEU ⁽²⁾	None identified
JOINT GUARDIAN	9-Jun-99	Kosovo	Peace Enforcement	Uncertain	Special Forces ODA ⁽¹⁾ PSYOPS ⁽¹⁾	26th MEU ⁽¹⁴⁾	None identified
WARDEN	20-Sep-99 to 28-Feb-00	East Timor	Peacekeeping	Uncertain		31st MEU ⁽²⁾	None identified
FUNDAMENTAL RESPONSE	27-Dec-99	Venezuela	HA/DR	Permissive	7 th SF (A) ⁽¹⁾ 160 th SOAR (A) ⁽¹⁾	II MEF ⁽²⁾	None identified
FIERY RELIEF	19-Feb-00 to 4-Mar-00	Philippines	HA/DR	Permissive	1/1 st SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾ 353 rd SOG ⁽¹⁾		None identified
DETERMINED RESPONSE	Oct-00 to Oct-00	Yemen	USS <i>Cole</i> Recovery	Permissive		13th MEU ⁽¹⁸⁾	None identified
FOCUS RELIEF	Aug-00 to Dec-01	Sierra Leone	Peacekeeping	Permissive	3 rd SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾		None identified
ATLAS RESPONSE	2000 to 2000	Mozambique	HA/DR	Permissive	JSOAC ⁽¹⁾ Civil Affairs (unidentified) ⁽¹⁾	Det MARFOREUR	None identified
ENDURING FREEDOM-A (Early conflict)	20-Sep-01 to 7-Dec-01	Afghanistan	Invasion	Hostile	TF Dagger ⁽¹⁾ -5th SFG -160th SOAR -Special Tactics personnel, AFSOC	TF 58 -15th MEU -26th MEU	COORDIANATED -Marine Forces and SOF conducted coordinated operations that were generally not mutually supporting

APPENDIX A

OPERATION DETAILS					UNITS AND RELATIONSHIP		
SHINING EXPRESS	13-Jun-03 to Jul-03	Liberia	Embassy Reinforcement	Uncertain	Civil Affairs (unidentified) ⁽¹⁹⁾	<i>USS Kearsarge</i>	None identified
SHELTERING SKY	1-Jul-03 to Oct-03	Liberia	Stability Operations	Uncertain	1st Bn, 10th SFG (A) ⁽⁸⁾ PYSOPs TM (unidentified) ⁽⁸⁾ SEAL (unidentified) ⁽⁸⁾	26th MEU ⁽⁸⁾ FAST Plt ⁽⁸⁾	INTEGRATED - Units worked together to establish security, provide QRF, and enable UN and local authorities.
UNIFIED ASSISTANCE	28-Dec-04 to 25-Feb-05	Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka	HA/DR	Permissive	Special Boat Team 20 & 22 ⁽¹⁾ 4 th POG (-) ⁽¹⁾ 96 th CA Bn ⁽¹⁾ 1/1 st SFG (A) ⁽¹⁾ 353 rd SOG ⁽¹⁾	III MEF (-)JTF 536] ⁽²⁾	None Identified

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- ⁴ (Wilson 1989) 226-371
- ⁵ (US Joint Staff 18 April 2011)
- ⁶ (US Joint Staff 18 April 2011) I-4
- ⁷ (US Joint Staff 18 April 2011) I-3
- ⁸ General James F. Amos, Commandant. *Role of the Marine Corps*. Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C.: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Sept 2011.
- ⁹ (General James F. Amos Sept 2011)
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- ¹¹ (Fredriksen c2011)
- ¹² Collecting a consolidated and comprehensive list of SOF and or U.S. Marine Corps involved major operations was surprisingly difficult. Inconsistent amounts of open source information available and shifting operation titles complicated the effort. Several operations were subsets of larger operations (Operation PRIME CHANCE as part of EARNEST WILL). Some operations were renamed as a result of a changed mission (Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY following JUST CAUSE) or transfer to multinational/United Nations control (operation RESTORE HOPE becomes UNISOM II).
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- ¹⁵ The early conflict to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan is classified in this document as a crisis response and limited contingency operation due to the impetus to disrupt al Qaeda terrorist networks. After January 2002, OEF became a major operation and campaign.
- ¹⁶ Additionally, there is a general assumption that SOF forces operations are more likely to be classified than larger Marine Corps operations which effectively causes a collection of unclassified data, as contained here, is likely to contain the preponderance of Marine Corps operations, while not necessarily capturing the same preponderance of similar SOF operations.
- ¹⁷ (Wilson 1989)

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²³ These numbers do not necessarily reflect actually deployable forces but instead the overall growth of the organization.

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