

Tom Robertsen

Making New Ambitions Work

The Transformation of Norwegian Special
Operations Forces



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ISSN: 0333-3981

ISBN 978-82-91571-03 4

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abstract

Norwegian Special Operations Forces are traditionally divided according to their service affiliation, i.e. to the Army or Navy respectively. Transforming these forces to be prepared for current and emerging threats has mainly been an issue of organizational redesign, arguably for the benefit of reduced costs, rather than an issue of future roles and missions. This article offers an alternative perspective on transformation in which organizational design is viewed as a function of the way Special Operations Forces generally conduct missions.

Special operations missions and tasks can broadly be categorised into direct and indirect action capabilities. Direct action capabilities are those that bring force directly into contact with the enemy. According to national and NATO doctrine, these are special reconnaissance and direct action missions and tasks. Indirect action capabilities are those that bring force to the enemy indirectly through a surrogate force, whether this is a guerrilla/insurgent force or a security force, a task doctrinally referred to as military assistance.

With respect to the future transformation of Norwegian Special Operations Forces, this article claims that the current organizational structure, i.e., maintaining two separate units, should be maintained if indirect action capabilities are to be emphasized and developed as a primary capability, which is not the case today. If special operations capabilities continue to focus on direct action capabilities, current organizational design is not necessarily optimal, and a merger option is therefore relevant.

Introduction¹

Since 2001, the Norwegian Armed Forces have been undergoing one of the most extensive transformational processes in the modern Norwegian history.² The latest defense review as concluded in Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003-2004), *Den Videre Moderniseringen av Forsvaret* [Continuing Modernization of the Norwegian Armed Forces], notes that transformation initiated by the previous defense review is proceeding as planned.³ The overarching goal has been to change the Armed Forces from their threat-based organizational structure developed during the Cold War to a capability-based structure which can meet diffuse challenges in a new security environment. Changed economic realities are also a major factor, though this is outside the scope of this study. Transformation thus pervades the entire military organization. The current challenge is first to develop a relevant military structure within existing economic constraints,⁴ thus challenging existing missions and roles as well as organizational structure.

The purpose of this study is to discuss some transformational issues pertaining to Norwegian Special Operations Forces (NORSOF).⁵ I hypothesize that the existing organizational structure of NORSOF is inconsistent with emerging roles and missions. There is no doubt that since the mid 1990s NORSOF have been strengthened, both in terms of personnel and equipment. However, the question to be examined here is the degree

1 This article is largely based on the author's MA thesis from the Naval Postgraduate School, Department of Defense Analysis, in Monterey, California. Statements in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the view of the Norwegian Ministry of Defense.

2 Forsvarsdepartementet, *Den videre moderniseringen av Forsvaret i perioden 2005–2008* [Modernizing the Armed Forces 2005–2008], Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003-2004), *Odin* (Ministry of Defense [online 20 Aug, 2005]), p. 9.

3 Ibid., 9.

4 Sverre Diesen, "Moderniseringen av Forsvaret – status og utfordringer" [Modernizing the Armed Forces – status and challenges], *Forsvarstnett*, 2005 (Norwegian Defense [online 10 Feb 2006]).

5 In this study NORSOF is used exclusively as a common term for the two tactical units *Marinejegerkommandoen* (MJK) and *Hærens Jegerkommando* (HJK). MJK is a naval SOF unit while HJK is an army SOF unit. The term NORSOF has no organizational meaning beyond this. The Air Force is currently tasked to stand up a SOF-capable helicopter unit, 137 Special Operations Air Wing. This unit is not included in the following discussion.

to which the existing NORSOFF organizational structure is consistent with emerging roles and missions. More specifically, should the Cold War structure, which includes a Navy and an Army special operations component, be retained in the new defense structure? An unclassified study on this topic seems appropriate because the latest defense reviews emphasize the importance of special operations capabilities without necessarily explaining why.

The Problem

The *defense review* is the process that creates the basis for a subsequent long-term plan (3–5 years perspective) for the Norwegian Armed Forces. The long-term plan is a proposal from the Government to the Parliament in the form of a *Stortingsproposisjon* (Parliamentary Bill). Parliamentary Bill no. 45 (2000–2001) was the basis for the long-term plan for the period 2002–2005, while Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003–2004) covers 2005–2008, the current period.

Part of the defense review comprises the Chief of Defense's previous recommendations to the Ministry of Defense. *Defense Study 2000* [Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2000] outlined the military recommendations for the long-term plan for 2002–2005. *Defense Study 2003* [Militærfaglig utredning 2003] likewise consisted of the recommendations for the current long-term plan. The Chief of Defense is currently processing the next study, which covers the period 2008–2011.

Describing NORSOFF, Defense Study 2000 stated that “some units are due to their nature or special role directly subordinate to the joint headquarters. In the proposed structure this applies to the Special Operations Forces.”⁶ The Chief of Defense here underscored that NORSOFF will continue to be operationally controlled by the joint level as had been the norm more or less since 1971.⁷

The study also recommended NORSOFF be “reorganized and expanded by merging Forsvarets Spesialkommando [Norwegian Defense Special Command]⁸, Hærens Jegerkommando [Norwegian Army Special Operations Command], and the Marinejegerkommando [Norwegian Naval Special Operations Command]. Hærens Jegerkommando, including Forsvarets Spesialkommando, and the Marinejegerkommando will hereafter be abbreviated as HJK and MJK respectively.

6 *Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2000* [Defense Study 2000], *Forsvarnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 4 Dec 2006]), p. 15.

7 See Kjell Inge Bjerga, *Enhet som våpen* [Unity as a weapon] (Bergen: Eide Forlag, 2002), pp. 107–112, and Forsvarets overkommando [Headquarters Defence Command], *Forslag om samordning av norske spesialstyrker* [coordinating Norwegian Special Operations Forces], ref 24609/97/FO/SST/5ÅR (document automatically downgraded in 2002).

8 Author's translation. Forsvarets Spesialkommando has since its origin been an integral part of Hærens Jegerkommando.

The merge implies that force production is divided between Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Army Operations respectively [...] The merged special operations command will, however, be located at Rena (Army element) and Ramsund (maritime element) respectively. The location of a joint command element will be determined at a later stage.⁹

Forsvarets Spesialkommando and Hærens Jegerkommando represent the same unit, as will be shown later. Rena and Ramsund are where HJK and MJK were located before Defense Study 2000 was initiated.

The subsequent political process did not follow the Chief of Defense's recommendations. Parliamentary Bill no. 45 (2000-2001) stated that Norwegian Special Operations Forces should "continue to be located with their Army element at Rena and the maritime element at Ramsund."¹⁰ However, the Parliamentary Bill did not comment on the more ambitious issue of merging the units or the proposed joint command element.

Defense Study 2003 went further than the previous study on several points. It stated that

NORSOF are strategic assets offering a flexible capability to meet shifting challenges concerning territorial defense, upholding national sovereignty, preventing or combating terrorism, and as participants in Allied or other peace-support or peace-enforcing operations. NORSOF can also support national police during their operations to prevent or combat terrorism.¹¹

The study also argued for strengthening NORSOF to adapt to NATO and national requirements, "primarily to expand the national freedom of action, flexibility, and sustainability. Increasing this capability will ensure a more robust professional environment, better interoperability, and ability to sustain operations over time."¹²

On the organizational issue, the study recommended a new joint commander be established, acting as "Chief of Defense's advisor in special operation issues, directly subordinate to the Chief of Defense."¹³ Subordinating NORSOF to the military strategic level was new in the organizational structure and signaled a break with existing traditions.

9 *Forsvarssjefens Forsvarsstudie 2000*, p. 15.

10 Forsvarsdepartementet, *Omleggingen av Forsvaret i perioden 2002–2005* [Changing the Armed Forces 2002–2005], Parliamentary Bill no. 45 (2000-2001), para 5.3.4 (Ministry of Defense [online 11 Dec 2006]).

11 Forsvaret, "Forsvarssjefens Militærfaglige Utredning 2003" [Defense Study 2003], *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 26 Aug 2005]), p. 11.

12 *Forsvarssjefens militærfaglige utredning 2003*, p. 11.

13 *Ibid.*

Addressing the tactical units HJK and MJK, Defense Study 2003 recommended NORSOFF be organized as a joint formation called Forsvarets Jegerkommando. This formation was to be “based on joint basic training adapted for a more flexible and cross-trained unit in a longer perspective, where the subunits can rotate on tasks and readiness, as well as represent complementary capabilities in large-scale operations.”¹⁴ On the location issue, the study concluded that “operational aspects support maintaining [...] FSK/HJK [...] at Rena [...] The maritime element (MJK) will until further notice be located at Ramsund.”¹⁵

Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2005-2008) concurred with Defense Study 2003 on most points, restating NORSOFF’s strategic relevance, the necessity of adapting to NATO and national requirements, while emphasizing jointness in a national and international setting. The Parliamentary Bill did not explicitly follow up the joint commander initiative, only stating that

[i]t is necessary to strengthen capabilities at the Chief of Defense level. It is also necessary to increase Special Operations Forces (SOF) manning at the National Joint Headquarters (NJHQ), in order to improve Chief NJHQ’s ability to command special operation units when he assumes command authority.¹⁶

On jointness, the Parliamentary Bill stated that NORSOFF “must be able to work as a single unit. The units [HJK and MJK] are subordinate to their respective services with regard to force production, and force production is supposed to be coordinated when feasible and cost-effective.”¹⁷ On the location issue, the Parliamentary Bill was identical to Defense Study 2003 with the exception that the wording *until further notice* had been removed. Whether this is semantics or politics can certainly be argued. Within the forces themselves, semantics certainly matter.

The two defense studies did, however, indicate that there were political and military differences on the future development of NORSOFF. Defense Study 2000 explicitly used the word *merge* to describe its view of the future organization of the tactical units MJK and HJK. The study did not take a firm stance with regard to how to reorganize the command structure. However, it did recommend that Norwegian Special Operations Forces be subordinate to the operational level headquarters to be established in Stavanger. The subsequent Parliamentary Bill no. 45 did not express anything about reorganizing the organizational structure, thus implying no change to the command structure.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Forsvarsdepartementet, *Den videre moderniseringen ...*, p. 56, author’s translation.

17 Ibid.

Defense Study 2003 did not use the word *merge*; rather, the term *joint formation* was employed to describe the proposed, new NORSOFF organization. It recommended establishing a joint commander for the *joint formation*, subordinate to the Chief of Defense; i.e., the new formation should be subordinate to the military strategic level. It also highlighted which capabilities or potential roles NORSOFF should uphold as a collective entity. Both defense studies recommended a continuation of force production within the Army and Navy respectively. Parliamentary Bill no. 42 did not follow suit on the joint commander issue. It stated that the tactical level should remain organized as it already was, i.e., as separate units. Today, both units continue to be organized as they were before Defense Study 2000 recommended a change.

Recapturing the Transformation Process

At the tactical level within NORSOFF as an organization, the merge/not merge issue has, regardless of the interpretation of official documents, been a core issue for years. For MJK, being the smaller of the two units defined here as NORSOFF, the two latest defense reviews were perceived as a question of *to be or not to be*.¹⁸ Whether this is a rational perception is irrelevant. A study into organizational behavior and transformation might give some answers, though this is not the purpose of this study. Rather, I would claim that the current transformational process started off at the wrong end, and without a consistent or relevant framework to guide the process. The above seems to show clearly that the transformation of Norwegian Special Operations Forces has focused more on organizational issues than on what is arguably the more challenging task, which is to define future roles and missions. The easy way around this issue has comprised proposing dual capabilities for both units without specifying tasks beyond the doctrinal level. This method violates the principles of transformation as shall be discussed in the final part of this study.

One framework with which to address future transformation of special operations forces is proposed by Christopher Lamb, former director of US Policy Planning at the Office for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict.¹⁹ According to Lamb, the following criteria should be used when discussing Special Operations Forces' roles and missions in the aftermath of the Cold War:

1. The nature of the security threat and the anticipated nature of the future security environment

18 Participant observation.

19 Christopher Lamb, "Perspectives on Emerging SOF Roles and Missions", *Special Warfare* (July 1995): 2–9.

2. The security strategy adopted to deal with the changed environment
3. The nature of the forces themselves

Although Lamb proposes this framework as a means to develop US Special Operations Forces units, there are no apparent impediments to using the same framework as a starting point from which to discuss NORSOFF's future roles and missions. Although other frameworks could certainly be applied, such as NATO requirements or correspondence with comparable European nations, Lamb's suggestion has several advantages. First, defense planning is a question of national needs and requirements. For a small nation, the Alliance's requirements certainly apply, as exemplified by commitments made by NATO's members in Prague in 2002.²⁰ But defense planning by international consensus has not so far significantly transcended national requirements. Standardization of forces, whether in terms of size or capability, is arguably still one of NATO's greatest challenges. Norway's newly commissioned Nansen-class Frigates illustrate the purchasing of a combat platform whose primary role, anti-submarine warfare, is not in demand in NATO. Likewise, purchasing new airplanes to replace an ageing fleet of F-16s is not a NATO project. At best, it is a joint effort by a few nations, arguably for the benefit of reduced costs rather than any operational effect. It is unlikely, therefore, that the transformation of strategic assets such as special operations forces will be a joint effort within NATO.

An extensive comparison with other nations is arguably most feasible for tactical reasons. Standardizing techniques, tactics, and procedures of special forces in NATO could certainly be improved. This study, however, will not deal with standardization at the tactical level, although it is of importance to the transformation of NORSOFF, as will be discussed below. The questions raised in this study will instead focus on Norwegian Special Operations Forces' potential and utility as a national asset. Norway's national requirements for strategic special operations can hardly be compared for instance with British ones. Tactically, Norwegian units can certainly operate in the same physical environment as their British counterparts, but strategically this is not so, because of the national differences in foreign policy agendas, military traditions, and in the integration of the military as an instrument of statecraft.

20 For information on the current transformation of NATO, including the Prague Capabilities Commitment, see NATO's website.

Questions and Scope

Based on Lamb's framework, this study has been organized to address four questions:

1. What are the traditional roles and missions of NORSOFF?
2. What is the nature of the security environment and perceived future threats?
3. Which are the most interesting national strategic alternatives in the new environment?
4. What should be the future roles and mission of NORSOFF?

Of particular importance, in Lamb's view, is the nature of the mission:

If Special Operations Forces are asked to conduct missions contrary to their current nature, they eventually will evolve into different types of forces. The risks inherent in such change is that SOF might duplicate capabilities that already exist in other forces and that they would be unable to effectively conduct traditional special-operations missions.²¹

The second chapter will start with a rather comprehensive discussion of the topic *special operations* to provide the study with a conceptual framework and establishing a common system of concepts. Current doctrines, national as well as Allied and US, will be examined along with existing literature on the subject. In the second part of the chapter the first question will be addressed specifically, i.e., what are the traditional roles and missions of NORSOFF. I shall commence this analysis by examining national special operations traditions that were established during World War II and the Cold War. Finally, I shall capture the essence of what has occurred within this field since 1990.

In chapter 3 current and future threats will be focused on to define the types of conflicts or threats that may generate roles and missions in the future. National strategies to deal with future threats will also be discussed in this chapter. Although no coherent military strategy exists, historical and existing practice, along with recent political statements, indicate the military's role as an instrument of state power. In chapter 3 the second and third questions will be answered: What is the nature of the security environment and perceived future threats, and which are the most interesting national strategic alternatives in the new environment?

In chapter 4 the last question will be addressed: What should be the future roles and missions of NORSOFF? New roles and missions will be suggested. The discussion is confined to the operational and strategic level; tactical level missions are by and large not discussed, as whether HJK

²¹ Lamb, "Perspectives ...": 2.

should have rubber boats or which vehicles MJK ought to have is not important here. More crucial is a conceptual clarification of roles in accordance with doctrinal terms. The chapter concludes with recommendations on the future transformation of NORSOFF.

On Literature

The principal method used to answer these questions consists of reviewing existing doctrine, literature, and practice. National and NATO doctrines, Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine and Allied Joint Publication 1 are an essential part in this examination. Apart from during World War II, references to current NORSOFF history are but sparse. Erling Krange, a former Navy frogman, has published a book on Norwegian Naval diving which includes a partial description of the early history of MJK. To my knowledge, no similar publication is available on HJK apart from what may be found on the Norwegian Armed Forces' web pages.

Due to recent international deployments beginning in the mid-1990s, MJK and HJK have become increasingly visible in the national media. Much of the information that is released today would have been classified ten years ago. Tactical information on the units themselves is still protected from public access, and rightly so. However, no reference exists to NORSOFF as part of a national strategy except as a relevant and competent niche capability for NATO which may seem odd from a strategic perspective.²²

Internationally, literature on special operations forces is more extensive. Most of it concerns historical anecdotes from tactical battles or the story of the tactical units themselves. Interestingly, tactical information on MJK and HJK has become more widely available thanks to international literature.²³ Less has been published on special operations forces' strategic utility. Eliot Cohen and Colin Gray, both noted strategists and defense analysts, are cited in this study due to their contributions on special operations forces and strategy. Lucien Vandenbroucke is cited for his evaluation of special operations forces as an instrument of US foreign policy in a book he wrote while working for the US State Department. Much of the relevant literature is fairly new, as before 1990 special operations forces in general had a mixed reputation. After all, conventional strategy, based on doctrines of attrition, dominated the Cold War. This is a strategy unfavorable to the nature of special operations forces. The mixed reputation especially applies to US Special Operations Forces after Vietnam,

22 Forsvarsdepartementet, "Relevant Force: Strategic Concept for the Norwegian Armed Forces", *Odin*, 2005 (Ministry of Defense [online 21 Aug 2005]), p. 73–74.

23 For example, see Leroy Thompson, *The Rescuers: The World's Top Anti-Terrorist Units* (Boulder, Co: Paladin Press, 1986), pp. 90–91, and Ross S. Kelly, *Special Operations and National Purpose*, Issues in Low-Intensity Conflict Series (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1989), p. 66–69.

documented for instance by Thomas K. Adams while serving as Director of Intelligence and Special Operations in the US Army Peacekeeping Institute. The British experience is arguably different, as the British successfully utilized their special operations forces in post-colonial conflicts throughout the Cold War era.²⁴ However, less has been written about the British Special Operations Forces' strategic utility compared to the US tradition. Overall, the bulk of the literature describing special operations forces' role in a strategic context is influenced by US traditions and experiences.

The end of the Cold War witnessed an upsurge of interest in special operations forces and their applicability in "small wars." This has resulted in increased interest in the strategic use of special operations forces and a corresponding increase in articles on the subject. Although tactical stories still constitute the majority of published books, increasing numbers of relevant articles are being published in military journals and by research institutes. Again, the articles are heavily influenced by US experiences and the lessons learned.

The dominance of literature showing US influence might initially seem to make a scholarly approach, and hence its conclusions, less relevant to a small nation like Norway. The US Special Operations Forces community constitutes more than twice the number of the Norwegian Armed Forces in total. However, as the Norwegian Armed Forces increasingly focus on international operations, certain common principles, whether tactical or strategic, still apply. NATO doctrine resembles US doctrine in many ways, especially with regard to special operations forces. The small nation's dilemma, however, is how to utilize these lessons for national purposes.

²⁴ There are numerous accounts of UK SOF's tactical employments after World War II. See, for example, Robin Neillands, *In the Combat Zone: Special Forces Since 1945* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).

NORSOF: Traditional Roles and Mission

The first part of this chapter explores special operations and special operations forces (SOF) in a national context. Existing doctrine is reviewed to create a basis with which to understand special operations in general. Existing literature on the subject is used to broaden and highlight alternative perspectives. The last part of the chapter explores the national tradition with regard to special operations and special operations forces.

Doctrine: A Theoretical Framework

Doctrine consists of fundamental principles pertaining to the development and use of military forces. Its central task is to describe the basis for military activity, provide normative guidelines, and describe the capabilities needed to execute the doctrine. Doctrinal guidelines are not absolute, but rather strong recommendations. It is essential that doctrine change as required by security and defense policy and technological evolution. Accordingly, doctrine is only useful as a tool to the degree the future correlates with the past.²⁵

Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine is the central doctrinal document of the Norwegian military and is divided into parts A and B. Operational principles, including special operations, are described in part B. Part A contains broad strategic considerations. There is no separate national doctrine for special operations forces.

National doctrine is harmonized with NATO's doctrine.²⁶ Central to NATO's doctrine is *Allied Joint Publications-1*, or AJP-01. Both the national doctrine and NATO doctrine have various subordinated service-

25 Forsvarets overkommando, *Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine Del A – Grunnlag* [Joint Doctrine Part A – General] (Oslo, 2000), p. 13–15.

26 *Ibid.*, ch. 1.5.1 and 1.5.2.

based doctrines. Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the Norwegian and NATO doctrines.²⁷

National			NATO		
National Joint Doctrine (FFOD part A and B)			Allied Joint Operations Doctrine (AJP-01)		
			Operations (AJP-3)		
Doctrine for Land Operations	Doctrine for Naval Operations	Doctrine for Air Operations	Land Operations	Maritime and Amphibious Operations	Air and Space Operations

Table 1: *Structural resemblance between Norway and NATO's doctrines (after Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine (part A))*

Chapter 15 of the national doctrine, *Spesialoperasjoner* [special operations], is a translation of NATO's AJP-01(B) Chapter 8, *Special Operations*. Hence, on this topic, national doctrine does not reflect national adaptation to any extent.

Special Operations Forces and Special Operations: Definitions

Defining special operations and special operations forces (SOF) are important for functional purposes. Colin Gray asserts that "it is imperative to define special operations, but there is peril in the exercise."²⁸ One definition may, according to Gray, be either "so vague and inclusive as to provide no meaningful guidance or so rigid and focused as to risk inhibiting the imagination of special operations forces themselves and of their political and military clients."²⁹

John Arquilla, senior lecturer at the Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, defines special operations as "that class of military (or paramilitary) actions that fall outside the realm of conventional warfare during their respective time periods."³⁰ Such a broad definition is, according to Arquilla, required to study the history of special operations:

This definition, while capturing the essential spirit of special operations, avoids some of the problems posed by requiring that they be performed by "specially trained, equipped, and organ-

²⁷ Ibid., p. 18, table 1.1.

²⁸ Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 144.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ John Arquilla (ed.), *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1996), p. xv–xvi.

ized” forces, or that they must fall into the category of the one-shot *coup de main*. Instead many special operations are prosecuted by regular forces doing quite exceptional things. Nevertheless, on many occasions, raiders constitute a *de facto* elite attack force, as can be seen by the great warriors chosen to ride in the Trojan Horse, or in the rigorous training and distinctive attire of Rogers Rangers.³¹

Following Arquilla’s definition, a special operation is then a military or paramilitary operation executed outside the realm of what is *conceived* as conventional warfare *at a particular time*.

Christopher Lamb circumvents the problem of defining special operations forces by stating “that they are what conventional forces are not.”³² Conventional forces are normally thought of as forces organized, trained, and equipped to defeat other conventional forces in battles. According to Ross Kelly, former Senior Analyst at the US Defense Intelligence Agency,

[t]he thrust of conventional force training ... is the achievement of consistent performance of routine tasks to the highest attainable standard. By contrast, the emphasis in special operations is on directing individual skills to the accomplishment of functions unique to a given mission, generally a high-risk one. Improvisation and independent thinking are essential.³³

Following Kelly, a significant difference between conventional forces and special operations forces is the latter’s emphasis on individual skills and the ability to perform unique missions. This is the central argument for claiming that the scope of conventional units is specialization, while special operations forces are more general in nature. Kelly claims that special operations “address a spectrum of challenges not normally considered appropriate for regular armed military or national forces.”³⁴ What is appropriate or not can certainly be argued. One traditional distinction is special operations forces’ role as a military component operating independently in enemy controlled territory – behind enemy lines.

NATO does not define the term ‘special operations force’. However, it does define special operations as:

Military activities conducted by specially designated, organised, trained and equipped forces using operational techniques and modes of employment not standard to conventional forces.

31 Ibid.

32 Lamb, “Perspectives ...”: 3.

33 Kelly, *Special Operations ...*, p. xvii.

34 Ibid., xvi.

These activities are conducted across the full range of military operations (peace, crisis and conflict) independently or in coordination with operations of conventional forces to achieve military, political, economic and psychological objectives or a combination thereof. Political-military considerations may require covert or discreet techniques and the acceptance of a degree of physical and political risk not associated with conventional operations.³⁵

AJP-1(B) defines the range of military operations which NATO's Special Operations Forces can undertake. However, NATO's definition might require some clarification. First, it states that special operations forces use operational techniques and modes of employment not standard to conventional forces. To a certain extent this is correct. However, there are few operational techniques unique to special operations forces as such, as Gray points out.³⁶ Where NATO's definition emphasizes the ability to employ unique skills to distinguish special operations from conventional operations, Tugwell and Charter use the term unorthodox.³⁷ Unorthodox in this context must be understood as referring to methods and techniques rather than skills. It is the "quantity and intensity or level of skills required of each man or very small group" that make the significant difference, not necessarily the set of skills itself.³⁸ The well-known Special Operations Executive's operation against the heavy water plant at Rjukan (a location presumably crucial to Germany's nuclear program) in 1943 did not necessarily involve particular skills exclusive to special operations forces. Rather, a combination of personal skills, initiative, rigorous training, and the ability to improvise made this operation a success.

The spectrum of conflict is defined as a scale with "peace" at one end and "armed conflict" at the other. Somewhere in between is "crisis". "Armed conflict" includes "war", a term used in national doctrine. In a post-Cold War scenario, this must be interpreted as the spectrum of conflict *in the area of operation*. This point might seem obsolete, but the distinction is important because "war" is a negative word in comparison to the arguably more neutral term "operations". This became clear during NATO's air campaign in Kosovo in 1999, when the Norwegian Prime

35 NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)* (NATO, 2002), section 8.1. *Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine* explicitly states this is the definition used in national doctrine. See Forsvarets Overkommando, *Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine Del B – Operasjoner* [Joint Doctrine Part B – Operations] (Oslo, 2000), p. 203.

36 Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, p. 146.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 145. Tugwell and Charter define Special Operations as "[s]mall-scale, clandestine, covert or overt operations of an unorthodox and frequently high-risk nature, undertaken to achieve significant political or military objects in support of foreign policy."

38 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, refuted that Norwegian F-16 pilots were engaged in war, claiming they were rather “part of a restricted military campaign.”³⁹ To wrongly interpret the level of conflict is likely to result in misuse of military power including the misuse of special operations forces. On the individual level, a conflict or operation is often perceived as nothing less than war.

A feature arguably pertaining more than anything to the particular image of special operations is their association with covert and clandestine operations. The term “covert” is frequently used to describe a mode of operation hidden from the enemy. Although this captures the general idea of the term, it is too vague to capture the essence of a covert special operation. NATO uses the terms “discreet” and “covert” to describe the modes of operations, while national doctrine use the terms “discreet”, “covert” and “clandestine”. For the purpose of this study, the terms covert, clandestine, and overt will be used exclusively:

- A *covert* operation conceals its sponsor, i.e., the authorizing agency does not take responsibility whether the operation succeeds or not.
- A *clandestine* operation conceals its existence, i.e. mission success hinges on the ability to keep planning and execution secret. The sponsor will, however, normally claim responsibility upon completion.
- An *overt* operation neither denies its nature nor its sponsor.

A special operation can be any of these types, as well as a combination of the covert and clandestine.⁴⁰

However, there are organizational and technical, as well as moral and constitutional implications, to the conduct of covert operations. Discussing the legal implications of snatching Osama Bin Laden in a covert operation involving US Special Operations Forces in 1993, Vice President Al Gore remarked to President Bill Clinton that “[o]f course it’s a violation of international law, that’s why it’s a covert action.”⁴¹ Using this definition, covert operations are necessarily associated with high political risk for their sponsors. This is also reflected in NATO’s definition. Without this understanding of risk and risk management at the political level, Norwegian Special Operations Forces might not be utilized at maximum capacity. This will be discussed below.

39 Halvor Elvik, “Ord om krig” [Words on War], *Dagbladet*, 23 June 1999 [online 9 Sep 2005]. Prime Minister Bondevik later admitted that the pilots had participated in a war.

40 Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, p. 146.

41 Cited in Richard A. Clarke, *Against all Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), p. 144.

Lastly, the definition does not exclude conventional forces or units from executing special operations. It is not unthinkable that a submarine can conduct missions or tasks covered by NATO's existing definition. Special operations aviation units do fly special operation missions, arguably following Arquilla's definition more than NATO's. Following Arquilla, the issue is whether the mission or operation is done in accordance with conventional warfighting principles (maneuver and concentration) or not.

Special Operations Missions

NATO defines three principal special operations tasks: Special Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Direct Action, and Military Assistance.

"Special reconnaissance complements national and allied intelligence collection assets in the Area of Intelligence interests and systems by obtaining specific, well defined, and time-sensitive information of strategic or operational significance."⁴²

Special reconnaissance includes area assessment, advance force operations, target acquisition, early warning on enemy forces concentration, movement, command and control, and intelligence on critical infrastructure in denied territory. This list is not exhaustive, and neither should it be. However, the emphasis on intelligence collection of operational or military-strategic value is of special importance.

Direct Action is normally thought of as small-scale offensive raids with operational or military-strategic goals. "[Direct Action] operations are normally limited in scope and duration, and usually incorporate a planned withdrawal from the immediate objective area."⁴³ The World War II British X-craft attacks on the battleship Tirpitz in Altafjord and the raid on the heavy-water plant at Rjukan are both examples of raids with military-strategic goals. The time factor associated with planning these operations is not necessarily limited, as both missions took months and years to plan and develop. But once initiated, they were clearly both of short duration and limited scope. A more recent and unorthodox example of direct action capabilities was the initial phase of the US invasion in Afghanistan in 2001, where US Special Operations Forces units embedded in the advancing Northern Alliance provided terminal guidance for the Air Force.

Military Assistance is the third principal special operations task.

Special operations may include the requirement to provide Military Assistance (MA) to friendly or allied forces in peace, crisis and conflict. This assistance can be provided directly or indi-

42 NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, 8-2.

43 *Ibid.*, 8-3.

rectly to a designated friendly force or to an indigenous military or para-military force to protect their democratic society from subversion, lawlessness or insurgency.⁴⁴

Military Assistance encompasses support to peace operations by

providing immediate technical advice and assistance in organization, planning, intelligence, command and control, health service, engineering and security, during humanitarian crisis or disaster relief. Facilitating, using cultural and language skills, a co-ordinated, multinational approach to conflict resolution through liaison teams.⁴⁵

At this point, national doctrine does reflect a change compared to NATO doctrine, as national doctrine states that military assistance “is most often conducted by special operations forces from other countries ...”⁴⁶

The term *unconventional* is often used to explain types of operations that fall outside the realm of conventional warfare. Unconventional Warfare (UW) has, however, a narrower and more explicit definition. According to the US doctrine for Joint Special Operations, unconventional warfare is defined as:

operations that involve a **broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations**, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degree by an external source ... UW [Unconventional warfare] military activity represents the culmination of a successful effort to organize and mobilize the civil populace against a hostile government or occupying power ... SOF units do not create resistance movements. They advise, train, and assist indigenous resistance movements already in existence to conduct UW and when required, accompany them into combat.⁴⁷

Unconventional warfare is one of the nine core tasks for US Special Operations Forces. This specific task is first of all connected in its present form to the US army special forces. Established in 1952, 10th Special Forces Group was primarily intended to operate in denied territory, first of all

44 Ibid., 8-4.

45 Ibid., 8-4.

46 Forsvarets overkommando, *Forsvarets Fellesoperative ... del B*, p. 206.

47 US Joint Chief of Staff, *JP 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations Forces*, 17 December 2003 (Defense Technical Information Center [online 5 Dec 2006]), p. II-7-II-8.

behind the Iron Curtain separating Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union from Western Europe. The concept of operation was partly based on World War II experiences of partisan warfare. The concept of unconventional warfare and the link to the US Special Forces continued to develop during the Vietnam War, primarily at the initiative of US President Kennedy.⁴⁸ As a military technique, however, unconventional warfare was never held in high esteem by the conventional side of the US army, partly because it did not fit with what was regarded as the correct way of defeating the enemy.⁴⁹

The other eight special operations tasks defined by US doctrine are: Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, Foreign Internal Defense, Counterterrorism, Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Civil Affairs Operations, Psychological Operations, and Information Operations.

Direct action and *special reconnaissance* are more or less identical with NATO's direct action and special surveillance and reconnaissance. *Foreign internal defense* is, in its simplest explanation, complementary to unconventional warfare. The focus is on "action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency ... the goal is to enable these forces to maintain the HN's [host nation] internal stability ..."⁵⁰ *Counterterrorism* consists of "operations that include the offensive measures to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism."⁵¹ *Counterproliferation of weapons of mass destruction* "refers to actions taken to locate, seize, destroy, render safe, capture, or recover WMD [weapons of mass destruction]."⁵² *Civil affairs operations* are those operations supporting civil-military operations, where civil affairs activities can include "establishing and conducting a military government or civil administration within operational areas until civilian authority or government can be restored or transitioned to other appropriate authorities."⁵³ The first seven tasks do, in my view, find their equivalent in NATO's tasks.

In principle, US doctrine resembles NATO's when it comes to special operations tasks, arguably with the exception of *Psychological Operations* and *Information Operations*, which are not special operations forces tasks within the Alliance. Table 2 lists NATO's three tasks and the corre-

48 Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998), ch. 3.

49 Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, MA: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986).

50 US Joint Chief of Staff, *JP 3-05 ...*, p. II-7

51 *Ibid.*, II-9.

52 *Ibid.*, p. II-10

53 *Ibid.*, p. II-10

sponding US tasks, psychological operations and information operations excluded.

NATO, incl. Norway	Special Surveillance and Reconnaissance	Direct Action	Military Assistance
US	Special Reconnaissance	Direct Action, Counter- terrorism, Counter- proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	Foreign Internal Defense, Unconventional Warfare, Civil Affairs Operations

Table 2: Comparison of Special Operations tasks according to NATO and US doctrine

Neither US nor NATO doctrine says anything about service-based missions or roles, i.e. whether there are characteristics, requirements, roles, or missions that distinguish the army, navy, or air force’s SOFs. One explanation for this might be that doctrine is developed based on a conceptual understanding of the forces themselves, i.e. how the forces have developed within their respective services throughout history. Although one might claim that unorthodox or unconventional warfighting techniques are as old as warfighting itself, the creation of special operations forces as a warfighting component is a modern invention. Doctrine can therefore only offer general guidelines for the continuing development of Norwegian Special Operations Forces.

Literature and common parlance often separate special operations’ modus operandi into the commando role and the unconventional warfare role. Unconventional in this context resembles the unconventional warfare task defined by US doctrine. The idea is that special operations consist of an offensive and a defensive component.

Lamb and David Tucker, Associate Professor at the Department of Defense Analysis, Naval Postgraduate School, California, offer a slightly different framework to explain this difference. They claim there are two principal modes in which special operations forces accomplish their tasks: the direct action approach, which brings force directly into contact with the enemy, and the indirect action approach, which brings force to the enemy indirectly through a surrogate force. The essential idea is that there are distinct capabilities that separate the two approaches.⁵⁴ Assuming that direct action and special surveillance and reconnaissance are the more offensive of NATO’s three tasks, and that conversely military assistance is

⁵⁴ David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, “Restructuring Special Operations Forces for Emerging Threats”, *Strategic Forum*, no. 219 (January 2006) (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich [online 24 Jan 2007]): 1–6.

the more defensive task, doctrinal tasks could then be reorganized and understood according to Table 3.⁵⁵

	Direct Action Capabilities	Indirect Action Capabilities
NATO, incl Norway	Special Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Direct Action	Military Assistance
US	Special Reconnaissance, Direct Action, Counterterrorism, Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	Foreign Internal Defense, Unconventional Warfare, Civil Affairs Operations

Table 3: Doctrinal tasks separated in Direct Action and Indirect Action Capabilities

This framework will be used in the following to explain special operations forces' principal modes of operation.

Special Operations Missions with Strategic Objectives

Special operations in support of strategic objectives do not initially require a separate definition. The topic does, however, require clarification to fully understand the broader context of such missions. Current definitions do not exclude this type of special operations per se, but using them for military-strategic or political-strategic purposes is far more controversial than the operational-level operations normally found in military campaigns.

As per NATO's doctrine, "SOF may be employed in support of the Alliance's military-strategic objectives and operational objectives as directed by the JFC [Joint Force Commander]."⁵⁶ In NATO operations and exercises, special operations forces are normally used as an operational level asset. NATO's definition of special operations also addresses political implications and political risk. To what extent NATO has the authority to pursue objectives other than military ones, is questionable. The political risk involved in a NATO operation is collectively divided within the Alliance and hence mitigated to a level where national interests are hardly at stake. Covert special operations using the definition above are therefore more applicable as a tool for the nation state as such than they are for the Alliance as a whole. It is unlikely that Norway would conduct a covert special operation pursuing national strategic objectives within an Alliance context where consensus is required.

55 From a US perspective, the two tasks Psychological Operations and Information Operations would fall into the indirect action capabilities category.

56 NATO, *AJP-1(B)*, p. 8-1.

Studying US strategic special operations after World War II, Vandenbroucke defines these as strikes which seek “to achieve major foreign policy aims rather than just tactical objectives ... These are secret military or paramilitary strikes, approved at the highest level of the U.S. government after detailed review.”⁵⁷ Vandenbroucke claims that strategic special operations support political rather than military objectives, so tight political control is required. One could argue that the political level at any time has the necessary control over the military as an institution. Strategic special operations are, however, initiated, controlled, and executed under specific and tight political supervision.

Vandenbroucke’s definition is narrow, and focuses exclusively on direct action operations. His case studies specifically include toppling foreign regimes (Bay of Pigs, 1961) and hostage rescue operations (Son Tay, 1970 and the Iran rescue attempt, 1980). To qualify as a strategic special operation, the operation must support a foreign policy crisis. Hence political monitoring of planning and execution is required beyond what is considered normal for military operations.⁵⁸

There might be more to strategic special operations than offensive strikes in support of a foreign policy crisis; military assistance could include operations through its definition that could be perceived as supporting foreign policy. Paul de B. Taillon, Director, Review and Military Liaison, Office of the Communications Security Establishment Commissioner in Canada, asserts in a concept paper published at the Joint Special Operations University in Florida that special operations forces are one of Canada’s two strategic assets, intelligence being the other, because

[t]he future employment of CANSOF [Canadian Special Operations Forces], as a training asset to assist friendly nations, could ensure high-quality training while, at the same time, extending and leveraging Canadian foreign policy and interests and influence abroad.⁵⁹

Taillon’s assertion might very well be true, but might not the same effect be achieved with conventional assets? An extended conventional bilateral training program initially seems just as likely to achieve the same foreign

57 Lucien S. Vandenbroucke, *Perilous Options: Special Operations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 4. Vandenbroucke emphasizes the unconventional application of force to differentiate strategic special operations from conventional strikes in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives. The latter is exemplified by the 1986 air strike against Libya. Unconventional special operations are exemplified by the Bay of Pigs (1961), the Son Tay raid (1970), and the attempt to rescue US hostages in Iran (1980). The latter eventually led to a reorganization of US SOF chain of command and the emergence of USSOCOM in 1986.

58 Ibid., p. ix.

59 J. Paul de B. Taillon, *The Evolving Requirements of the Canadian Special Operations Forces: A Future Concept Paper* (Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2005), p. 3.

policy effect. Also, a training program is less likely to be politically controlled beyond what is considered required for a strategic strike. If one accepts that a strategic special operation implies political risk and is narrowed to the responsibility of the nation state, Vandembroucke's definition thus seems more plausible than Taillon's. If this is not so, then all training and exchange programs are strategic by nature. Hence in a national perspective, a strategic special operation could be defined as a covert or clandestine direct action operation in support of Norwegian foreign policy objectives, approved at the highest governmental level.

Conducting strategic operations requires contact between the special operations forces and the relevant military and political authorities. Without close contact, special operations for strategic purposes are historically not likely to be an option for policymakers. This observation stems from the US experience and literature on this topic. It is commonly known that special operations forces were not held in high esteem by the conventional military leadership after the Vietnam War. The US special operations forces community was collectively downsized after 1974, as it was after the Second World War. This downsizing reached a culmination in the catastrophic 1980 attempt to rescue embassy personnel being held hostage in Teheran. This incident, more than any other, triggered the 1986 creation of US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), which was initiated by politicians, not by the military establishment itself. Once established, the new command started a process of leveraging special operations forces' influence within the military organization.⁶⁰

Having US Special Operations Command as an overarching organization with distinct funding authority, responsibility for doctrines and for coordinating tactics, techniques, and procedures within the complete special operations forces community, helped improve the capabilities of SOF.

However, it can be argued that US Special Operations Command's strategic role is still challenged. According to Richard Schultz, organizational behavior and a lack of strategic influence prevented special operations from being an option to eliminate the emerging threat of Al Qaeda prior to the 9/11 attack.⁶¹ Although Schultz's article is written with the benefit of hindsight, his argument illustrates the obstacles to special operations forces' being used for foreign policy purposes. Much changed after 9/11, illustrating the importance of a visible crisis to actually leverage SOF's status.⁶² Yet, according to the definition, it can be argued that cur-

60 Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution, 1997), p. 319. See especially pp. 60–90 for a thorough account of political involvement in this process.

61 Richard H. Shultz Jr., "Nine Reasons Why we Never Sent our Special Operations Forces After Al Qaeda Before 9/11", *Weekly Standard*, 26 Jan 2004, vol. 9, issue 19 [online 7 Feb 2006].

rent special operations forces operations in Afghanistan and Iraq are generally not strategic special operations; to the degree these are strategic, they support military strategic objectives, which again support foreign policy.

Norwegian Special Operations Forces are, according to Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003-2004), a strategic asset. The bill also emphasizes that “increased manning at the operational level is necessary in order to strengthen Commander National Joint Headquarter’s ability to direct special operations forces missions when authority is transferred.”⁶³ Command authority is thus normally retained at the military strategic level.

Special operations with strategic objectives represent a spectrum of operations conducted in peace, not in war. The extent to which Norwegian authorities are psychologically capable of initiating such operations is questionable, and certainly worth further study.

Command and Control of Special Operations Forces

NATO doctrine states that

[b]ecause of the nature of special operations, a clear chain of command, uncluttered by additional headquarters, is essential [...] Special operations should be directed and controlled by a special operations functional component commander called a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) ...⁶⁴

Within NATO, the higher headquarters-level for assigned SOF units is therefore the operational level.

National doctrine distinguishes between four levels of military operations. The *political level* is responsible for coordinating elements of national power in order to secure the nation’s interests, elements such as diplomacy, information, military or economy. The *military strategic level* is responsible for coordinating military efforts to support political intentions. The *operational level* is responsible for planning and conducting joint operations as set forth in political-strategic directives, while the *tactical*

62 This phenomenon is also apparent from World War II experience. Before World War II, the Norwegian military organization did not have a special operations capability. Between 1940 and 1945, most operations conducted on national territory were performed by units either designated as SOF or conducting what can be labelled special operations. After the German capitulation in May 1945, all special capable units were transferred back to the conventional military.

63 Forsvarsdepartementet, *Den videre moderniseringen ...*, p. 56, author’s translation.

64 NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, p. 8-6.

level is responsible for tactical deployments and the use of force in support of operational plans. The hierarchy is illustrated in Figure 1.⁶⁵



Figure 1: Levels of military operation, and corresponding levels of responsibility

Norway's political and military strategic level is integrated and co-located in Oslo. The Minister of Defense retains political control over the military organization via the Ministry of Defense, the Chief of Defense holds a seat within the Ministry, which is an integrated civil-military organization. At the same time the Chief of Defense heads a small defense staff, which is purely military and responsible for managing the military organization. The defense staff is co-located with the civil-military ministry.⁶⁶ The operational level headquarters, National Joint Headquarters, is located in Stavanger, which contains a special operations element that will act as advisors to the operational level commander when authority is transferred from the Chief of Defense.⁶⁷ As tactical units, the Marinejegerkommando (MJK) and the Hærens Jegerkommando (HJK) are located in Ramsund and Rena respectively.

65 These levels are retrieved from Forsvarets overkommando, *Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine Del A*, ch. 2.8., but are adapted to reflect recent changes in the military organizational structure as set forth in Forsvarsdepartementet, *Omleggingen av Forsvaret ...*

66 Forsvarsdepartementet, *Forsvarsdepartementet: Integrert fra 1. August 2003* [Ministry of defense integrated from August 1, 2003] (Oslo, 2003).

67 Fellesoperativt hovedkvarter [National Joint Headquarters], *Forsvarets operative ledelse: En handlekraftig fellesoperativ ledelse for nasjonal sikkerhet og internasjonalt engasjement* [An active joint leadership for national security and international engagement], *Forsvarnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 12 Dec 2005]), p. 5. As St.prp.nr.42 (2003-2004) also highlights, NJHQ will only direct SOF operations when authority is transferred.

However, resources for the Special Forces are allocated through the respective Service Chief, and not through the operational chain of command. It is commonly known that the further down the chain a unit is located, the more resources are filtered. HJK is directly subordinate to the Chief of Army Operations.⁶⁸ In contrast, MJK is two levels below the Commander of *Kysteskadren* [the Navy], who in turn is subordinate to the Chief of Naval Operations.⁶⁹ An organizational outline of NORSOF command and control relations is depicted in Figure 2. *Kysteskadren* has recently been reorganized, but MJK’s organizational location, as depicted in Figure 5, still applies for the purposes of this study.

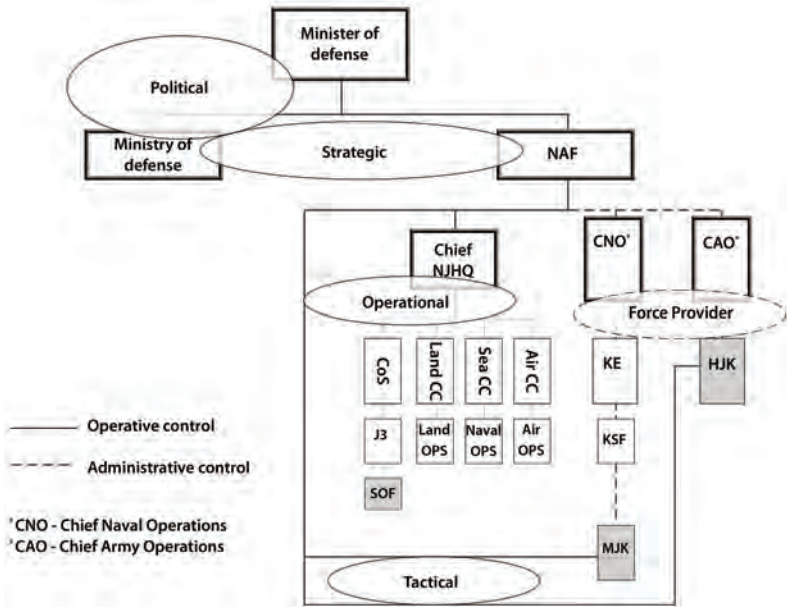


Figure 2: National command relations

According to AJP-01(B), NATO operations are “planned and executed at three levels”: military-strategic, operational, and tactical.⁷⁰ The responsi-

68 “Hærens Organisering” [Army Organization], *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 10 Nov]).

69 Forsvaret: “Kysteskadren” [the Navy], *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 10 Nov 2005]).

70 NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, 2-1.

bilities of each level are defined in AJP-01(B) in terms of its focus (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: NATO's levels of military operations and associated focus (from AJP-01(B))

The Allied strategic level deals with campaign objectives, while the operational level plans and executes major operations. The tactical level is concerned with individual battles and engagements. Figures 1 and 3 both indicate that there is no clear separation between the various levels.

NATO command structure is illustrated in Figure 4. The figure is simplified, and only indicates functional names at the appropriate levels. Unless operations are led from NATO's established command structure, a combined joint task force will normally be established to handle individual operations. Figure 4 illustrates organizational arrangements for such a force. This is also the current command relationship for NATO's ongoing operation in Afghanistan.⁷¹ Depending on the mission, a combined joint task force may or may not have a special operations component Commander attached.

From the discussion thus far, it is clear that in a national context, NORSO's level of influence is retained at the strategic level. From an operational perspective, conditions are favorable for NORSO as a strategic tool. But from a force provider perspective, are resources allocated appropriately? HJK is subordinate to the Chief of Army Operations, allowing shorter administrative lines to the strategic level within the bureaucracy, while MJK is located lower in the same hierarchy. The long-

71 NATO, *International Security Assistant Force* [online 10 Nov 2005].

term development of NORSOF as a collective institution in terms of funding is therefore open to question.

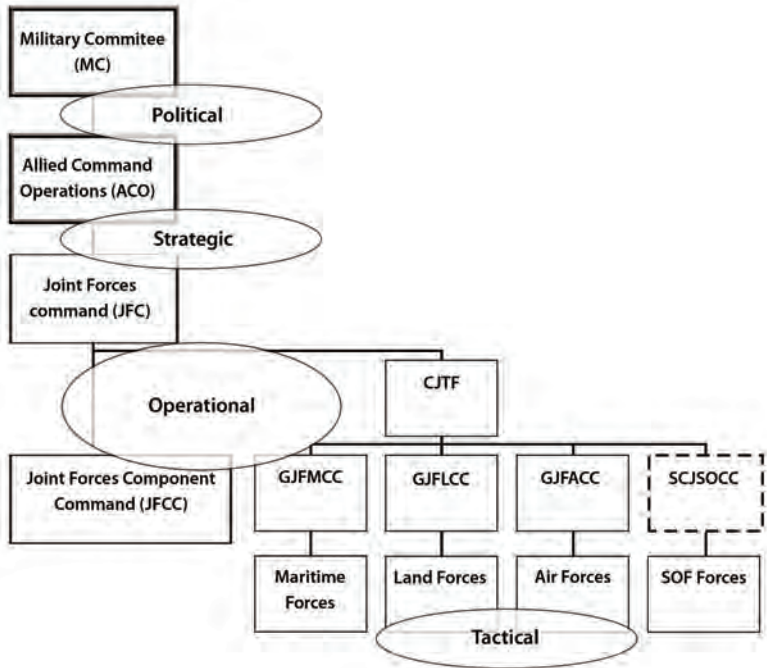


Figure 4: NATO command hierarchy

In a NATO context, special operations forces' operations support strategic rather than political objectives. This does not exclude them from pursuing political objectives, when the situation necessitates this. Since NATO in practical terms does not pursue political objectives on behalf of individual nations, and since consensus is required for collective action to be initiated, strategic special operations are not likely to be an option. Strategic variables determining SOF's utility in an Alliance context is first and foremost found within classic, conventional strategy: time, space, and force disposition.⁷² In other words, NATO Special Operations Forces as a collective concept are still dominated by ideas associated with Cold War strategy.

Norwegian Special Operations Forces first of all have two roles with respect to their utility: one within a national context, the other within NATO. In the national context, NORSOF can pursue political objectives, in a NATO context they can only pursue military objectives.

72 Sverre Diesen, *Militær strategi* [Military Strategy], 2nd ed. (Oslo: J.W. Cappelens Forlag AS, 1998), p. 60.

NORSOF: History and Current Context

This section describes Norwegian special operations from the Second World War until today in order to provide an unclassified historical context for current roles and missions. World War II is a good point of departure because there is no tradition for irregular or unorthodox warfare in a national context before this war. The situation is not unique to Norway, and some have even argued that special operations forces are a product of the Cold War, an arguable proposition beyond the scope of this thesis.⁷³

World War II

I have limited the account to three groups, namely Company Linge, The Shetland Group, and the Partisans of the Northern Norwegian region of Finnmark. This is not to exclude Norwegians participating in other elite or special operation units at the time, but these have been selected mainly because Company Linge and the Shetland Group are arguably the most famous of all the units operating during the war. The Partisans of Finnmark, on the other hand, did not receive acknowledgement for their contribution until 1995, almost 50 years after the end of World War II.⁷⁴

Company Linge and the Shetland Group were initially created at an early stage of the war by British authorities via the Special Operations Executive. Special Operations Executive, a secret organization, was authorized in 1940 directly by Churchill “to promote sabotage and subversion in enemy occupied territory and to establish a nucleus of trained men tasked with assisting indigenous resistance groups.”⁷⁵ Command of the units later fell under national authority as the Norwegian government was reorganized in London. But their roles and tasks remained more or less the same throughout the war. A third group, the Partisans of Finnmark, are less known, but by studying the available documentation, it is clear that partisan activity clearly fell within the special operations category.

Company Linge was initially trained to perform raid operations based upon the British Commando model. The raid force concept was abandoned by the end of 1941, although the Company participated in success-

73 Richard H. Shultz, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff and W. Bradley Stock (eds.), *Special Operations Forces: Roles and Missions in the Aftermath of the Cold War* (U.S. Special Operations Command, 1995), p. 186. See also Arquilla (ed.), *From Troy to Entebbe*, p. 360.

74 Ståle Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen: Militermakt eller folkeforsvar* [Norwegian Defense Traditions] (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2002).

75 Records of Special Operations Executive, *The National Archives* [online 15 Nov 2005]. Churchill's personal initiative with respect to the creation of SOE is often held up as an example of the importance of special operations forces being nurtured by the political elite. Kennedy's personal interest in Green Berets and the development of US SOF units during the Vietnam era is another example.

ful raids in Norway. The Company's founder, Martin Linge, was killed in a commando raid at Måløy in December 1941.

Company training was redirected towards irregular warfare with the intent of deploying agents to organize, train and equip local resistance groups.⁷⁶ The goal was to create a unified resistance organization that could support a possible allied invasion in Norway, attack communication nodes, conduct sabotage against selected targets, protect installations in case of a German retreat, and maintain stability in the immediate aftermath of a German capitulation. According to Jens Christian Hauge, who commanded Milorg in 1944 and served as Norwegian Minister of Defense from 1945 to 1952, it was mainly because of Company Linge that Milorg achieved those ambitious goals.⁷⁷ Its most famous operation, often cited as one of the most important strategic operations of World War II, was the 1943 attack on the heavy water plant at Rjukan. Throughout the war, 530 operators were trained, 51 were killed in action, and seven were captured. Several operators were killed during training, indicating a high level of realism in exercises.

The Shetland Group was the result of a British attempt to organize and utilize the refugee flow across the North Sea after the German occupation. Fishermen and others contributed to the evacuation of both national refugees as well as British soldiers retreating from combat actions in Norway after the capitulation in 1940. In November, Major L.H. Mitchell went to Shetland to organize this activity.⁷⁸ The intention was to create a sustainable organization that could ferry agents and supplies to Norway and return with refugees. Due to the heavy fortification of the Norwegian coast, clandestine operations were the only viable option for bringing in necessary personnel and supplies. The Shetland Group thus became a major effort in shaping the various resistance organizations that emerged during the war.

In 1942, the group's operations, like Company Linge's operations, were coordinated with Norwegian authorities. In 1943, the Shetland Group was implemented and organized in the Royal Norwegian Navy as a special unit.⁷⁹

The Shetland Group was also involved in offensive operations. In 1942, Leif Larsen, the most notable group member, towed two *Chariots* (two-man torpedoes) with his fishing vessel across the North Sea into Trondheimsfjorden in an attempt to attack the German battleship Tirpitz. A severe storm made one of the Chariots break loose, and the mis-

76 The Norwegian military resistance movement was called "Milorg".

77 Erling Jensen, Per Ratvik and Ragnar Ulstein (eds.), *Kompani Linge*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Oslo: LibriArte, 1995), p. 12–13.

78 Forsvaret, "KNM Hitra" [HNoMS Hitra], *Forsvarsmnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 16 Mar 2005]).

79 Ibid.

sion was aborted before the attack could be initiated.⁸⁰ The Shetland Group was later issued with US submarine chasers which radically improved its operational capability.

Due to the high-risk mission profile and harsh winter weather in the North Sea, the Shetland Group suffered heavy losses throughout the war. During the winter of 1942/43, German counter-operations sank several vessels, leaving 33 dead. The largest individual loss occurred in November 1941, when the vessel *Blia* with a crew of 43 people was sunk.⁸¹

A third group, the Partisans of Finnmark, consisted of refugees who fled east after the German occupation. This group was organized and trained by the Soviet Northern Fleet and the Soviet secret police, NKVD (precursor to the KGB). Although minor operations had already commenced in late 1940, the term “partisan” in this context normally refers to Norwegian personnel working for the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1944, 1941 referring to the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, and 1944 to the liberation of Finnmark.⁸² Partisan activity was focused on operations in Troms and Finnmark, the two northernmost counties of Norway.

The Soviets never coordinated partisan activity with Norwegian authorities as did the groups organized by the British. Instead, partisans were on occasions forced to sign a lifelong oath of allegiance to the Soviet Union. Implicit in the oath were threats of punishment including death if this connection was ever revealed. The partisans’ war efforts were thus never appreciated. Instead, this group was subject to investigation after the war on suspicion of espionage. Their war efforts, however, were significant in the Soviet strategy of relieving German pressure against the Soviet 14th Army at the Litsa-front.⁸³ As such, their operations are interesting in a special operations perspective.

Partisan missions focused on reconnaissance missions against German shipping, establishing agent nets, and target acquisition on German base structure. The area of operation, located 1000 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle, was sparsely populated with very little vegetation, which made operations extremely vulnerable to detection. Insertions could generally not be made during summer due to 24-hour daylight, and winter weather was harsh, making insertions, whether by submarine or airdrops, difficult.

Early attempts to establish and run local agent nets or partisan groups were quickly discovered by German counter-intelligence, mainly due to

80 Sven U. Larsen, “Shetlandsgjengen”, *Norgeslexi* [online 16 Mar 2005].

81 Ibid.

82 Tønne Huitfeldt, “De norske partisanene i Finnmark 1941–1944: I skyggen av den kalde krigen” [Norwegian Partisans in Finnmark 1941–1944: In the shadow of the Cold War] *IFS Info*, no. 3 (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 1997), p. 5.

83 Ibid., p. 17.

the transparency of the communities. The Soviets thus concluded that permanent partisan warfare was not possible.⁸⁴

Strategic reconnaissance teams were initially more successful. Deployed at isolated locations on the coast, teams normally consisted of three operators and a mission lasted at least six months. Strategic reconnaissance missions contributed to the Soviet success in disrupting German naval supply lines established to support the 70,000 strong German presence in Finnmark and Northern Finland.⁸⁵

Target acquisition on German air bases, fuel dumps, fortifications, and soon, in vital areas enhanced the effectiveness of the Soviet Air Force's raids. In an early phase of the war, the Germans did not link the increasingly large number of ships sunk and the exact targeting of military installations with enemy activity. When this connection became evident in late 1942, German counter-intelligence initiated a series of counter-operations. Through two operations, *Mitternachtsonne* and *Tundra*, major portions of the partisan activity in Eastern Finnmark were uncovered.⁸⁶

The exact number of partisans explicitly trained and used in operations is not known for certain, but estimates suggest approximately 75 people. Partisan losses were more severe than for other groups. Ragnar Ulstein, a noted Norwegian author, estimates 35 were killed or executed, and refugees and captives brought the total loss close to 100 percent.⁸⁷

The groups described above were tasked to and conducted unorthodox or special operations throughout the war. Their personnel were specially trained and equipped for small unit tactics behind enemy lines. The groups supported strategic or operational objectives through reconnaissance and direct action, on occasion also through Unconventional Warfare in a wider interpretation. Whether the current doctrinal definition of special operations applies to all three groups is open to debate. Company Linge is arguably the only group that was "specially designated, organized, trained and equipped" as stated in NATO's doctrine. Using Arquilla's definition, however, both the Shetland Group and the Partisans of Finnmark clearly operated outside the realm that was categorized as conventional at the time.

The major difference between World War II and contemporary operations is that the wartime groups operated behind enemy lines within their own country. This does certainly not make their war effort less important, sacrificing, or heroic. But although partisan operations in Finnmark were hampered by societal transparency, in general cultural differences were clearly not a problem. On many occasions, the operators were directly related to the areas in which they operated. Nevertheless,

84 Ibid., p. 7.

85 Ibid., p. 6–7.

86 Ibid., p. 11–13.

87 Huitfeldt, *De norske partisanene ...*, p. 5.

history illustrates there is at least a national tradition, albeit a short one, of conducting special operations in times of war. Accepting World War II as a starting point for this tradition, it is therefore reasonable to assume subsequent thinking around this issue is rooted in the Second World War experience.

The Cold War

Shortly after World War II, most special purpose units were disbanded, and their personnel were either dismissed or joined the conventional military as it was reconstructed. This process was not unique to Norway. To some degree, it reflects the status of special mission units and their traditional role in times of war and peace. "Special" units were initially not considered part of the new military organization being recreated for a changed security environment that included nuclear weapons.

The origins of MJK and HJK can be traced back to the early 1950s and 1960s. Both were organized under conventional military command within their respective services. The degree to which their creation was based on strategic or operational requirements, or resulted from enthusiastic insiders' bottom-up approach, is subject to debate. The latter is probably closer to the truth than the former.

Hærens Fallskjemjegerskole (HFJS), the origin of today's HJK, was established in 1962 as a school unit to train conventional Army reconnaissance units in parachute insertion techniques. In 1966 and 1967, the school, located at Trandum outside Oslo, started educating its own *fallskjemjegertropp*, a platoon-size paratrooper unit designed for reconnaissance and sabotage in the enemy's rear, an area beyond the scope of conventional Army units. The main body of its personnel consisted of conscripts serving a mandatory year of military service. At the same time, the school changed its name to *Hærens Jegerskole*.⁸⁸

Marinejegerlaget, the origin of today's MJK, was formally established in 1968, although its origins are older. The National Intelligence Service, strongly inspired by Italian and British successful underwater attacks during World War II, asked the Navy in the early 1950s to establish a diving school. With National Intelligence Service financial support, the first class of *froskemenn*, frogmen, was examined in 1953.⁸⁹ Training was based on a model adopted from the U.S. Underwater Demolition Teams, and its purpose was to develop "perfect saboteurs and underwater warriors."⁹⁰

88 Forsvaret, "Hærens Jegerkommando" [Norwegian Army Special Operations Commando], *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 15 Mar 2005]).

89 Erling Kränge, *Fra marinedykkings historie i Norge* [History of Norwegian Naval Diving] (Kristiansand: Erkra Forlag, 1994), p. 99.

90 *Ibid.*, 102. The quote is a translation of "perfekte sabotører og undervannskrigere".

As their tasks grew to include a mixture of explosive ordnance disposal, deep-diving, rescue-diving and so forth, a decision was made in 1968 to disband the frogman organization and create two new units. Tasks categorized as offensive were assigned to *Marinejegerlaget*, and those defined as defensive to *Minedykkertroppen*. The MJL tasks included sabotage against ships and harbor installations, reconnaissance, raids, and the conduct of special operations at the joint level.⁹¹

Part of MJL's education involved parachute insertion techniques. Cooperation with HEJS had been initiated in 1965 for this purpose. The operational concept was to drop personnel close to ships or harbor installations, have them conduct the raid, and extract the operators with the assistance of paratroopers located onshore. As the new organization emerged, a decision was made to enlist most MJL personnel, mainly for safety reasons, as the training program was assumed to be too dangerous to be left to conscripts.⁹²

It is the environment defined by the maritime or the land domain respectively that traditionally have distinguished MJL and HJS. In 1978, the Norwegian political authorities ordered the Armed Forces to establish a counterterrorism capability aimed at assisting the police in case of terror attacks against the oil infrastructure in the North Sea.⁹³ Jurisdiction on the continental shelf was and still is retained by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police. The Army was tasked with establishing this capability. *Forsvarets Spesialkommando* (FSK) was established as part of HJS to support this task. The unit was declared operational in 1984.⁹⁴

The decision to assign a maritime task to the Army might have altered an established division of roles between MJL and HJS. According to Jan Berglund, the creation of FSK implied that HJS had to focus on two principal tasks: the 12-month training of the conscripted paratroopers, and training for offshore counterterrorism, the latter being the most challenging. Due to the focus on counterterrorism, HJS was unable to fill its traditional special operations role because the paratroopers were only capable of conducting limited special operation missions. However, MJL, already partly professionalized and not involved in offshore operations, broadened its range of traditional littoral tasks to include land-based operations. Consequently, both units "have acquired expertise and tasks that naturally should have been in the other SOF unit's domain."⁹⁵

91 Ibid., 133. According to Krange, one task was to "cooperate with other services in executing special operations", in this paper understood as operational-level tasks.

92 Ibid., p. 135.

93 Justis- og politidepartementet, *Samsfunnsikkerhet og sivil-militært samarbeid* [Societal security and civil-military cooperation] report no. 39 (2003-2004), *Odin* (Ministry of Justice and Police [online 12 Jan 2006]), para 5.1.4.

94 Frode Danielsen, "An Asset: The Special Forces", *Forsvarsmett* (Norwegian Defense [online 15 Mar 2005])

The distinction between traditional land and naval roles thus became blurred. During the Cold War, this paradox never became apparent, nor was it disputed. Yet MJL focused its training on littoral operations in support of Naval operations, while HJS focused on training its paratrooper unit in support of land operations. It is not obvious to what degree tactics, techniques, and procedures differed in the execution phase of a mission. Both units have thus in principle possessed overlapping capabilities since being established.

In terms of command and control, both units had since their origin been subordinate to the equivalent of today's Service Chief. Assuming MJL and HJS initially developed organizationally due to a "bottom-up" approach rather than out of strategic necessity and guidance, tactical utility was arguably the Service Chief's rationale for maintaining the capabilities MJL and HJS could offer.

The national command structure has since World War II developed from being very service-oriented towards today's joint-oriented structure. One milestone in this development was the 1971 establishment of the Defense Command Northern Norway, where the basic idea was tri-service integration and unity-of-command. The establishment of Defense Command North Norway in Bodø was the result of the Hauge II-committee of 1967, which proposed the establishment of two national command centers, one responsible for operations in Northern Norway and one equally responsible for Southern Norway. Area of responsibility was divided at the 65 degree parallel. Defense Command South Norway was established accordingly, yet remained geographically divided between Oslo and Stavanger until the 1980s when Defense Command South Norway was united in Stavanger. Each Defense Command was in turn subordinate to the Chief of Defense.⁹⁶ In practical terms, this implied that units located north of 65 degrees North were operationally controlled by the Defense Command North Norway through the respective Service Commander, and vice versa for units located in the south. MJL, located in Ramsund from the early 1970s, was under the operational control of the Commander Naval Forces North Norway, which again was at the level just below the Commander Armed Forces North Norway, which had operational command north of the 65 degree parallel.

In 1979, a special operations office was established as part of Defense Command North Norway where MJL and HJS started to exercise joint command and control. Foreign special operations units participating in exercises at the time were also controlled from this cell.⁹⁷ The office was

95 Jan Berglund, "The Possible Merger of Norwegian Special Forces – an Assessment of Key Factors" (term paper for MN 3121, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2002). Berglund has previous operational experience in MJL and HJS/FSK; he served as MJK commanding officer from 1993 to 1996.

96 Bjerga, *Enbet Som Våpen*, p. 107–112.

not formally established until later, and the command relationship to assigned units, including HJS, was only retained for the duration of the exercise. This arrangement was generally retained until 2002, when the current command structure was implemented.

At the end of the Cold War, Norwegian Special Operations Forces' roles and missions were thus focused on operational-level operations including intelligence collection and raids in the enemy rear. Due to the defensive posture of national strategy in general the missions were principally to be executed on national territory in case the Cold War became "hot". The resemblance to strategy and tactics used in World War II operations is obvious. The other principal NORSOFF role was the off-shore counterterrorist mission, retained by HJS.

Post Cold War to the Present

The end of the Cold War implied changes to the Armed Forces' traditional missions and roles. Domestically, the debate focused on the relevancy of a national strategy based on territorial defense. The economic situation also changed, implying the Armed Forces needed to review the existing structure, including its capabilities. Although the Government approved 13 propositions between 1993 and 2000 concerning merging or disbanding units or capabilities, this process was considered unsuccessful. The change did not occur according to a strategic plan or idea, but rather as a result of an acute necessity to reduce military expenditures.⁹⁸

However, in the 1990s, Norwegian Special Operations Forces were spared while other units or capabilities were disbanded. The MJL had traditionally been a low-cost capability due to its small organization, low technological requirements, and unique capabilities within the Navy. This may explain why MJL was sustained as a capability. The HJS counterterrorist role represented a unique capability within the military organization, which most likely explains why HJS was maintained despite the severe cutbacks. In 1997, MJK daily organization consisted of approximately 40 personnel, expanding to approximately 160 personnel in case of mobilization. HJK equivalent numbers were 90 and 210 respectively.⁹⁹

In 1991 MJL was renamed to Marinejegerkommandoen (MJK), and in 1997 HJS was changed to Hærens Jegerkommando (HJK). HJK at the same time relocated to the newly established Army camp at Rena in Østerdalen. The term NORSOFF was first used when both units were de-

97 Forsvarets overkommando: *Forslag om samordning ...* This office was also known as the UMO-cell (Unconventional Military Operations).

98 Jacob Børresen, Gullow Gjeseth, and Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk Forsvarshistorie*, vol. 5: *Allianseforsvar i endring* [The History of the Norwegian Armed Forces] (Bergen: Eide Forlag, 2004), p. 315.

99 Forsvarets overkommando: *Forslag om samordning ...*

ployed to Afghanistan in 2001/2002 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and is now a common term for the two units. It has no organizational meaning and merely serves as a common denominator for Norwegian Special Operations Forces. From 2006, HJK is officially renamed to Forsvarets Spesialkommando/ Hærens Jegerkommando (FSK/HJK). The abbreviation HJK will be used throughout this study.

From official sources, very little information is revealed on contemporary operations or the forces involved.¹⁰⁰ What is commonly known, though, is that MJK and HJK participated in NATO operations in the Balkan conflicts,¹⁰¹ and HJK claim on their official home page to have been deployed more or less continuously to international operations since 1996.¹⁰² It is, however, through recent operations in support of Operation Enduring freedom that NORSOFF has received most attention. While deployments to the Balkan theater occurred after peace negotiations had been formally declared and initiated, the 2001 deployment to Afghanistan implied deploying for war.

The post-Cold War era thus increased the focus on international operations. Regarding NORSOFF, this trend was not obvious, although Norway has a long tradition of international military commitment through various UN missions.¹⁰³ Magne Rødahl, former Executive Officer at HJK, claimed in 1998 that it was time to re-evaluate the type of armed forces that Norway normally deployed to international peace operations, and subsequently time to explore Norwegian Special Operations Forces' potential in such operations.¹⁰⁴ There were several reasons for Rødahl's claim. Prior to the Balkan Wars, the Army's contributions to international operations mainly consisted of volunteer units designed for a specific mission or task, and normally deployed on UN peacekeeping missions. Standing units, designed for national defense, were not deployed collectively. These volunteer units were generally not deployed in a combat role. That said, even UN peacekeeping missions could prove challenging, as was demonstrated when Israel invaded southern Lebanon in 1982 and Norwegian peacekeepers were suddenly caught in the line of fire.¹⁰⁵ The combat role was therefore at the time inconsistent with diplomatic as well as military traditions. As a small nation, Norway has tradi-

100 Danielsen, "An Asset: The Special Forces".

101 Per Fr I. Pharo, "Norge på Balkan 1990-1999. 'Lessons learned'" [Norwegian participation in the Balkans 1990-1999] *IFS Info*, no. 3 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2000), p. 7.

102 Forsvaret, "Hærens Jegerkommando".

103 Ulf Andenæs, "Internasjonal innsats Forsvarets nye mål: 'Ola Soldat' går utenriks" [International Operations the New Modus Operandi for the Armed Forces], *Aftenposten*, 15 February 2001 [online 12 Dec 2005].

104 Magne Rødahl and Erik Dokken, "Norske spesialstyrker i fremtidige internasjonale fredsoperasjoner" [Norwegian Special Operations Forces in future international peace operations], *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, no. 10 (1998): 5.

105 Børresen, Gjeseth, and Tamnes, *Norsk Forsvarshistorie*, pp. 171-177.

tionally sought to solve conflicts by means other than military force. The Norwegian Armed Forces have equally been assigned a defensive role, and traditionally been considered a last resort option for national defense. Deployments to the Balkan Wars, including NORSOFF, represented a break with existing traditions in the sense that standing units, prepared for combat operations were deployed.¹⁰⁶ A national “lessons learned” seminar covering Norwegian military involvement in the Balkan Wars recommended increasing the national special operations capabilities due to the flexibility and versatility of the units themselves along with the international recognition of the job they did.¹⁰⁷

Although little has been publicly released on international operations, a fair assumption is that Norwegian Special Operations Forces have been utilized within their traditional domain, which is within the spectrum of direct action capabilities. Since October 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom has focused on manhunt operations, implying that direct action rather than indirect action capabilities are being utilized. Sean Naylor, senior reporter for the US *Army Times*, claims that coalition special operations forces, with the exception of the Australian Special Air Service, did not bring in sufficient capabilities at an early phase of the Afghanistan campaign to act in anything but a reconnaissance role. Hence, he claims, coalition special operations forces’ role in Operation Anaconda in February 2002 was operationally limited.¹⁰⁸ While Naylor may or may not be right – his sources are largely US, and to a great extent anonymous – personnel from MJK and HJK have later been recognized and awarded by US authorities for their contributions in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁹ Lt. Gen. Dell Dailey, senior officer at the US Special Operations Command, claims in a recent (2006) interview that “even our own special operations forces have a problem matching the terrain and the training standard NORSOFF represents.”¹¹⁰

Domestically, HJK retains its offshore counterterrorist role. Although HJK claims it is standing by for other counterterrorist operations as well, this claim is contested. HJK obviously has the capability, but military support to police operations is restrictive. One basic precondition for the military to support domestic police operations is that the police in a particular operation must lack personnel, expertise or equipment.¹¹¹

106 Naval ships or Air Force detachments have always deployed as standing units. Such deployments includes for the Navy participation in NATO’s standing naval forces.

107 Lessons Learned seminar for politicians, officers, academics, and high-ranking civil servants, April 2000, coordinated by the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, the Norwegian Staff College, and the National Defence College.

108 Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Berkley Books, 2005), p. 425.

109 Ole K. Eide, “Special Forces Acknowledged”, *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 18 Mar 2005]).

110 Riseth, Kim, “Vil ha norske soldater [Wants Norwegian soldiers], *Verdens Gang*, 23 November 2006.

Military support is thus considered on a case-by-case basis. While national police only have limited capabilities offshore, they maintain the full responsibility for onshore counterterrorism operations. Nevertheless, as long as HJK is on standby for offshore missions, it represents an option for policy makers regardless of the location of the target.

Likewise, MJK has on occasion been used to support the Coastguard's operations, exemplified by the October 2005 *Elektron* incident. During an inspection by the Coastguard, the skipper of the Russian trawler, *Elektron*, decided to run for Russian territorial waters with two Coastguard inspectors still on board. According to Rear Admiral Grytting, who was responsible for handling this incident, only bad weather prevented the vessel from being boarded.¹¹² The inspectors were released when *Elektron* reached Russian territorial waters.

In support of Berglund's earlier assertion, the question whether MJK and HJK share the same roles and missions is arguably a result of what would seem to be two contradictions: Both units deployed during the Balkan Wars and Afghanistan, two landlocked theaters, and both units are trained for potential domestic roles in a maritime counterterrorism scenario.

Naylor raises the first contradiction as an issue regarding the American use of navy SEALs in the current conflict in Afghanistan. His anonymous sources claim that SEALs had no role in a land warfare scenario. Rather, this is the domain of Army Special Forces.¹¹³ There is, however, no historical precedence for this claim. Navy personnel or units have on occasion successfully contributed to irregular operations outside the navy's traditional areas of operation.¹¹⁴

One significant difference between army and navy SOF units is the environment where their activity normally takes place. This can be called the unit's niche, and could be illustrated by the US division of roles. Land operations normally fall within the land component commander's domain; hence support to army operations is traditionally a responsibility of the US army's special forces. The same applies to the US navy's SEAL-teams and their support of naval operations.

However, as part of the army, Special Forces were originally created with the purpose of conducting irregular warfare in Eastern Europe in

111 Justis- og politidepartementet, *Samfunnsikkerhet og sivil-militært samarbeid*, ch. 4.2.

112 Kjetil Olsen, "Marinejegere skulle borde Elektron" [MJK should board the Elektron], *Aftenposten*, 12 January 2006 [online 4 Dec 2006]. In this newspaper article, Chief of Police in Tromsø, Truls Fyhn, claims he was aware that MJK was deployed in support of the operation. This information is neither confirmed nor denied by military officials. Whether this is a fact or not, this incident at least exemplifies a potential utility of special operations forces in times of crisis.

113 Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die*.

114 Milton E. Miles, "Chinese Pirates and the SACO Dragon" in John Arquilla ed.: *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), p. 288–311.

case the Cold War went hot, and later to act in a counterinsurgency role in Vietnam. The Special Forces' modus operandi was thus focused on indirect action capabilities, primarily through their unconventional warfare task. The primary mission was to establish resistance groups (guerrilla warfare in Eastern Europe) or population control (counterinsurgency in Vietnam).¹¹⁵ The Special Forces retained an offensive capability, partly because this is a component of any small unit's tactical requirements, and partly because training indigenous forces required this knowledge. Cultural knowledge and linguistic capabilities, however, are the primary focus for those working with local populations, whether they be guerrillas or civilians and whether this is done within a unconventional warfare context or as foreign internal defense.

For the SEALs, the traditional support to the US navy has emphasized maritime capabilities. Operating in the littoral for intelligence or raiding purposes, or supporting the navy with maritime interdiction capabilities for embargo operations, requires direct action capabilities. Diving, especially combat diving, is equally embedded in the maritime environment as a maritime task. The counterinsurgency or guerrilla role is thus not the SEALs primary focus. Navy SEALs can act in an advisory role, but since this is not their principal role, such missions are primarily assigned to the Special Forces. US Special Forces and SEALs thus possess capabilities within each other's domain, which might seem odd from a defense reform perspective. The key to understanding this redundancy in terms of capabilities, is that both must possess small unit tactics capabilities in order to perform their primary missions. Figure 5, derived from Adams, illustrates special operations forces' redundancy, regardless of primary mission.¹¹⁶

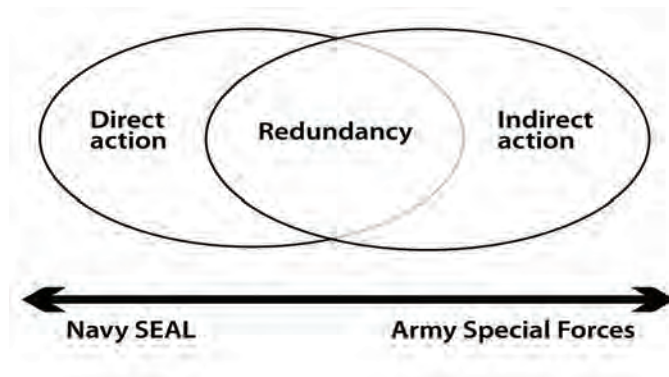


Figure 5: SOF redundancy in terms of capabilities

115 Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action*.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Counterterrorism is regarded as a highly specialized form of Direct Action. Due to the level of precision and perfection required in hostage rescue operations, the US has established separate units to fill this role, the *Army Delta Force* and the *Navy SEAL Team Six*.¹¹⁷ Whether it is relevant to compare the US structure with Norwegian requirements can be argued. But this illustrates that different special operations forces units fill different niches, by nature implying redundant capabilities. In the US structure, however, various units are as a principle assigned primary and secondary roles and missions.

The second contradiction is that MJK and HJK are both seemingly trained for counterterrorist operations. Although the HJK is the only unit specifically assigned a national maritime counterterrorist role, MJK shares at least a similar capability through its focus on supporting the Navy.¹¹⁸ Traditionally, support to maritime interdict operations is part of Naval SOF units' tactical support to maritime operations.

It can thus be argued that NORSOFF has traditionally focused on direct action rather than indirect action capabilities. The question, however, is whether this is sufficient or desirable in the future.

Summary: Defining NORSOFF Roles

History and recent practice both indicate that Norwegian Special Operations Forces' traditional roles and missions continue to be within the direct action spectrum of special operations, or strategic reconnaissance and direct action as defined in current doctrine. Created during the Cold War for Cold War purposes and requirements, NORSOFF represented a service-based joint capability, hence the special operations forces became an operational asset in pursuit of strategic objectives.

Throughout the Cold War, MJL and HJS continued to have what seemed to be similar or overlapping tasks. However, each unit focused on the environment as defined by their parent service: MJL operated in the littorals and HJS inland. Thus both units represented a service-based capability. The environment was then and remains now an important part of their individual niche; it represents an important component of their joint roles. The two organizations, MJL and HJS, thus had overlapping tasks as they both conducted strategic intelligence and direct action missions.

HJS was assigned a domestic offshore counterterrorism role in 1981, thus bringing a new capability to the Armed Forces. Introducing maritime counterterrorism arguably altered the established land/maritime distinction between MJL and HJS. While MJL expanded its missions to

117 Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action*, pp. 160–167.

118 *Det nye Sjøforsvaret: Omstilling i Sjøforsvaret 2004–2010* [Changing the Navy 2004–2010] (Bergen: Kysteskadren, 2005), p. 5.

include operations beyond the littoral area, HJS concentrated its focus on the maritime domain.

The international deployments of Norwegian Special Operations Forces started with the Balkan Wars in the 1990s. National lessons learned from the Balkan Wars suggested a further expansion of NOR-SOF's capabilities, regardless of the costs involved. To a certain extent, this advice has been followed. HJK has been able to deploy internationally since 1996, while retaining its domestic task. According to Berglund, HJK did not have this capability before 1990. Likewise, MJK has expanded its organization to manage its deployments. The degree to which MJL had this capability prior to 1990 is unclear.

However, NORSOF has drawn most public attention by virtue of recent deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. At the same time, the fact that both Afghanistan and the Balkans are landlocked theaters has fuelled an impression that it will be cost effective to merge the two units. A question then arises: Why does the small state of Norway need both a Navy and an Army SOF capability? If one believes the environment is the niche where one unit has certain advantages compared to the other, this contradiction is no longer apparent. As current international practice illustrates, some degree of overlap between units should be considered a strength rather than a weakness.

Recent deployments indicate that Norwegian Special Operations Forces have still deployed as an operational level asset supporting operational or strategic level objectives. This is also consistent with national and NATO doctrine. Yet, NORSOF has a strategic role in a national context as stated in Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003-2004). This study would claim that existing doctrine does not cover this expanded role, and suggests a new definition. Thus Norwegian Special Operations Forces can be seen as having two roles: First, a strategic role in direct support of national foreign policy objectives, secondly in support of allied strategic and operational objectives. Regarding the former role, direct support of national foreign policy seems unexplored through historical practice.

A New Security Environment, Changed Threats, and New Strategies

This chapter looks at the current security environment and potential strategies available to deal with emerging threats. The chapter intends to highlight the nature of the security environment and perceived future threats, and to discuss possible national strategies to deal with this environment.

The current framework for assessing future challenges for the Norwegian Armed Forces considers the type (conventional and asymmetric) and location (national or international) of potential conflicts.¹¹⁹ It may be discussed whether today's conflicts are best understood within a conventional or asymmetric framework. Based on recent experiences from Afghanistan and Iraq, one likely scenario is that future conflicts will be of both types, more or less at the same time. The location of future conflicts and its implications have been more prevalent as considerations in the national defense debate. Simply put, should the Norwegian Armed Forces prepare for national or international tasks? While there is dissent surrounding the answer to this question, debaters concur that the Norwegian military alone cannot deter or prevent an invasion of its national territory. The crux of the discussion is to what extent Norway must participate in international operations in order to receive sufficient military and political support from its allies in case of attack on the homeland. In other words, what national strategies must be adopted to ensure Alliance credibility?

The rest of this study will focus on the official view, which concludes that only via international engagement can Allied reinforcements be guaranteed in case of a future territorial dispute. There are, however, other schools of thought, or alternative ideas, most notably represented and expressed by Commodore (ret.) Jacob Børresen. He claims, contrary to the

119 Diesen, "Moderniseringen av Forsvaret ..."

official view, that Norway is more exposed to external military pressure today than was the case during the Cold War. While Børresen and others certainly bring a necessary and relevant dimension to the defense debate, this view will not be pursued to any extent.¹²⁰

A New Definition of Security?

The end of the Cold War altered the existing concept of security, a concept that since World War II had been more or less exclusively focused on state security, or state survival.¹²¹ Recently, the concept of societal security has increased in importance. "Societal security concerns the safeguarding of the population and the protection of key societal functions and important infrastructure against attack and other kinds of damage, in situations in which the existence of the state as such is not threatened."¹²²

Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are regarded as the gravest threats to societal security. Due to its domestic nature, societal security is mainly the concern of civilian leaders and police forces, but the military organization must be prepared "to contribute when needed."¹²³ In addition, human security, i.e. "protecting the individual with regards to human rights ..."¹²⁴ has become increasingly important. Humanitarian concerns have been the direct objective of several interventions since the Cold War, including Somalia in 1992 and Kosovo in 1999.

An expanded security concept has "major significance for the tasks that military forces might be asked to carry out, and therefore also for training, equipment and operational concepts of the Norwegian Armed Forces."¹²⁵ Although the requirements of security have changed, the fundamental focus remains on state security and national survival. With the absence of a clear and present danger, the fundamental question then becomes how to best secure the state's interest.

In 2004, the Ministry of Defense issued its strategic concept *Relevant Force*, stating the following generic objectives for Norwegian security policy:¹²⁶

1. Prevent war and the emergence of various kinds of threats to Norwegian and collective security

120 For a comprehensive version of Børresen's ideas and arguments, see Jacob Børresen, *Forsvar uten trussel: Det norske Forsvarets rolle og funksjon etter den kalde krigen* [Defense without threats: The role of the Armed Forces in the aftermath of the Cold War] (Oslo: Abstrakt Forlag, 2005).

121 Forsvarsdepartementet, "Relevant Force": 16.

122 Ibid.: 16.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.: 17.

126 Ibid.: 48.

2. Contribute to peace, stability and the further development of the international rule of law
3. Uphold Norwegian sovereignty, Norwegian rights and interests, and protect Norwegian freedom of action in the face of political, military and other kinds of pressure
4. Defend, together with our allies, Norway and NATO against assault and attack
5. Protect society against assault and attack from state and non-state actors.

According to *Relevant Force*, the military must prepare for eight specific tasks to achieve these objectives. These tasks are divided into three categories. “National tasks that are solved without Alliance support”. “Tasks carried out in cooperation with allies and possibly others”, implying coalition operations, preferably through NATO. “Other tasks” are supporting tasks to ministries other than the Ministry of Defense. The specific tasks are:¹²⁷

National tasks

1. Ensure a national basis for decision-making through timely surveillance and intelligence gathering.
2. Exercise Norwegian sovereignty.
3. Exercise authority in defined areas.
4. Prevent and handle security-related incidents and crises in Norway and in areas under Norwegian jurisdiction.

Tasks carried out in cooperation with allies and possibly others

5. Contribute to the collective defence of Norway and other parts of NATO against threats, assaults and attacks, including the use of weapons of mass destruction.
6. Contribute to multinational crisis management, including multinational peace operations.

Other tasks

7. Provide military support to diplomacy and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
8. Contribute to the safeguarding of societal security and other vital societal tasks.

While at first glance both objectives for security policy and tasks to the military might seem reasonable, neither, with the possible exception of

127 Ibid.: 61–66.

framing tasks as national or Alliance-specific, gives significant substance to the specific roles and missions of Norwegian Special Operations Forces.

The Nature of the New Security Environment

Much is said about the new security environment. This section reviews only the most important features with regards to their implications for Norway. This analysis is undertaken in light of the expanded view of national security as outlined above, and includes state security, societal security, and human security. The analysis uses the framing of tasks as either national or Alliance-driven.

The National Context

The conclusion of the Cold War ended an era where a single threat determined the military's roles and missions. Although it still maintains a substantial military presence in and around the Kola Peninsula, Russia's political intentions seem to have changed. One of the pleasant implications is that the current threat of conventional war is negligible, at least in the short-term.¹²⁸

Although conventional war is a less likely threat to state security, Norway still has unresolved jurisdictional disputes within its vast maritime economic zone. Figure 6 depicts Norway's economic zone (NEZ), which expands close to seven times Norway's land mass. More than 70 percent of national revenues are extracted from activities in NEZ, and more than 80 percent of national import and export are shipped through this zone.¹²⁹ To secure free access, not only to NEZ, but to the high seas in general, is therefore a vital national interest.

128 Diesen, "Moderniseringen av Forsvaret ..."

129 Vidar Hope, "Regjeringen satser i nord: Må ha tung tilstedeværelse" [The Government prioritizes the Barents Region: Must have a heavy presence], *I Marinen*, no. 7 (2005): 7.



Figure 6: Norwegian Economic Zone (from *ioParliamentary Bill no. 42* (2003-2004)).

Issues concerning sovereignty rights in the Barents region have been contested for decades.¹³⁰ Today, the Barents region is increasingly economically important due to greater petroleum exploration. Although sovereignty issues will most likely lead to nothing more than a diplomatic tug of war, a satisfactory agreement has so far proven impossible. Several arrests of Russian and EU vessels fishing illegally in disputed areas around Spitzbergen and Bjørnøya late 2005, along with the more dramatic *Elektron* incident, illustrate this area's potential to spark off a more serious crisis. Willy Østreg, Director of the Centre for Advanced Study in Oslo, asserts that these incidents have the clear potential to set back political re-

¹³⁰ The contested areas are associated with the 200-mile zones surrounding Svalbard, and the disagreement on the demarcation line in the "grey zone" in the Barents Sea. See Utenriksdepartementet, "Norway and Russia: Fisheries", *Odin* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [online 4 Jan 2006]).

lations between Russia and Norway. Maintaining a firm yet credible policy with regard to jurisdiction in this region is therefore essential.¹³¹

On the mainland, Norway shares a 196 km long border with Russia. The Army retains national responsibility for surveillance and control of the remote parts of the shared border. This mission is executed on behalf of the Ministry of Justice and Police. The Army is issued limited police jurisdiction to quickly respond to border violations. The principal threats to this border are activities related to organized crime, and potentially smuggling of nuclear, biological, or chemical substances.¹³² The border runs through a relatively isolated area, and the possibility of terrorists using this route to pass from east to west cannot be excluded.

The Global Context

International terrorism and local/ regional wars are currently assessed to be more likely threats than conventional war, and societal security is thus challenged more than state security.¹³³ Apart from global terror networks, weak or failed states, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, these threats are not sufficiently understood. On top of this diffuse situation, globalization has made national economies increasingly dependent on international stability, which makes promoting peace, stability, and democracy in troubled regions a national interest.¹³⁴ This somewhat vague description of threats illustrates the complexity of today's threat environment.

Terrorism in itself is not a new phenomenon. What is new, though, is that non-state actors are capable of inflicting damage and fear to an extent previously reserved nation states. This new wave of terrorism is characterized by its fanaticism and determination "to inflict maximum civilian and economic damages on distant targets in pursuit of ... extremist goals."¹³⁵ What is generally expected is that non-state actors led or under the influence of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, are willing to use weapons of mass destruction to promote their cause. It is unnecessary to document Al Qaeda's potential to wreak havoc, which was most clearly demonstrated by the attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. in 2001, and later in Madrid and London.

Another trend is that the existence of weak and failed states increasingly has regional or global ramifications or spillover effects. The ongoing

131 Eirik L. Berglund, "Fare for opptrapping" [Danger of escalation] *Nordlys*, 25 October 2005 [online 4 Jan 2006].

132 Espen B. Eide, *Ny regjering – ny sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitik?* [New government – new security and defense policy?], speech at The Norwegian Military Academy 16 December 2005, *Odin* (Ministry of Defense [online 7 Jan 2006]).

133 Forsvarsdepartementet: *Den videre moderniseringen ...*, p. 19.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

135 Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. vii.

war on terror is illustrative. States like Afghanistan and Pakistan are harbingers of international terrorism. Although Pakistan is a crucial ally to the US in the global war on terrorism, its political and military control in Waziristan, a border region to Afghanistan, is seriously questioned.¹³⁶ The same argument can be used for regions on the African continent, where government functions in some instances are completely absent, Somalia arguably being the best example.

Norway and Norwegian interests have so far not been directly targeted by this new wave of terrorism. There are several reasons why this might be the case. The relative size of the Norwegian population compared to Spain or Great Britain's for instance, makes society itself more transparent. Likewise, having a smaller immigration community than many other European countries allows for better control over potential radicalization within these groups. Norwegian foreign policy has also traditionally focused on promoting respect for international law based on justice and diplomacy rather than power. Norway in 1904 was entrusted with the authority to award the Nobel Peace Prize, further illustrating the nation's peaceful traditions.¹³⁷ Thus, this perception of Norway being a peaceful nation without harmful foreign policy agendas might have had an impact.

Nonetheless, Jørn Holme, head of the Norwegian Police Security Service, claims it is just a matter of time before Scandinavia is hit by an attack. According to Holme, Norway is currently used as a safe haven by terrorists planning operations in Europe, and could in the future be regarded as a soft target due to its rather liberal society.¹³⁸ In addition, Norway is a strategic energy partner for several European countries, a fact which might lead to terrorism on Norwegian soil for strategic purposes. Lastly, Norway has participated with troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Whether a UN resolution was the premise for military support is probably irrelevant to a terrorist. To assume Norway is safe from international terrorism is therefore imprudent.

A third trend is that conflicts have increasingly shifted from conventional, interstate wars towards intrastate conflicts or civil wars. Between 1946 and 1955, the ratio between these types of conflicts was approximately equal. Between 1996 and 2000, the ratio shifted to 1:20, while the number of conflicts has remained unchanged. Likewise, the relationship between civilian and military casualties has shifted from 1:8 to 8:1 over the last 100 years.¹³⁹ The increasingly deliberate targeting of civil-

136 David Montero, "Pakistan's Tribal Strategy", *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 January 2006 [online 1 Feb 2006].

137 Olav Riste, "War and Peace in the Political Culture of Scandinavia in the 20th Century", *IFS Info*, no. 5 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, 2003): 8.

138 "Militants Will Try to Hit Scandinavia", *Aftenposten*, 14 December 2005 [online 5 Jan 2006].

ians indicates that the nature of war has changed to become more ideologically oriented. Geography matters less than affiliation. The shift from conventional wars towards “other” wars has led to new terms like Low Intensity Conflict, Military Operations Other Than War, Crisis Response Operations and the like. The current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq both exemplify a Low Intensity Conflict, which is normally defined as a protracted conflict between a state and non-state actors.¹⁴⁰

National Interests

With the exception of threats to state security, Norway’s national interests are connected to the maritime environment in general and the Norwegian Economic Zone (NEZ) in particular. The ability to defend national interests is inherently connected to international stability, which Norway cannot provide on its own. Collective security is thus a keyword. *Relevant Force* states that

protection of the environment, welfare and economic security is ... a fundamental security interest for Norway ... Norwegian security interests thus comprise challenges that might threaten international law, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, economic security, and the environment.¹⁴¹

It can thus be concluded that it is in the nation’s interest to protect and defend these values.

Upholding national control of the vast economic zone is vital for the national economy. Protection of the petroleum infrastructure is deemed particularly vital, not only by national authorities, but also for consumers. “The same is the case for international regulations and principles connected to the freedom of the seas and the management of resources in the oceans.”¹⁴²

National security is closely connected to Euro-Atlantic security. Promoting “democracy in regions adjacent to Europe”¹⁴³ is therefore deemed a national security interest. Norway cannot do this by itself. Collective measures, primarily through NATO, thus become important in this ob-

139 Jan Ångström, “Lågintensiva konflikter som forskningsområde: En introduktion” [Introduction to Low Intensity Conflicts as Area of Research] in *En ny medeltid? En introduktion i lågintensiva konflikter* [Introduction to Low-Intensity Conflicts], Arne Baudin, Thomas Hagman and Jan Ångström eds., (Stockholm: Försvarshögskolan, 2002), p. 3.

140 Björn Marcusson, “Kärt barn har många namn? Lågintensiva konflikter och de militärteoretiska klassikerna” [Low- Intensity Conflicts and Military Theory] in *En ny medeltid? En introduktion i lågintensiva konflikter* [Introduction to Low-Intensity Conflicts], Arne Baudin, Thomas Hagman and Jan Ångström eds. (Stockholm, Sweden: Försvarshögskolan, 2002), p. 62.

141 Forsvarsdepartementet, “Relevant Force”: 17–18.

142 Ibid., 18.

143 Ibid.

jective. It is a national interest to create conditions favorable for collective security. The same argument applies to the UN's role as a transnational organ promoting international law.

National interests are therefore closely tied to the concept of security, where it must be assumed that national security is ranked higher than societal security, which in turn is ranked higher than human security. Accepting that Norway alone cannot defend its national interests in a hostile environment, a coherent alliance affiliation is the primary goal for national security. Defending national interests connected to the maritime environment, with emphasis on the NEZ, will be the next priority, along with societal security. Promoting democracy outside Europe is thus deemed less important than maintaining the national economy and national survival.

A Changed Strategy: From Territorial Defense to International Operations

As a small nation Norway first of all seeks to solve international disputes through diplomacy rather than conflict. Diplomacy alone is, however, not sufficient to guarantee national sovereignty as was proved by the German invasion in 1940. A pre-World War II era of neutrality was exchanged for NATO membership in 1949, and for the next 50 years the national strategy evolved around Alliance reinforcement. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, this strategy suddenly became obsolete.

According to Iver B. Neumann, a professor at the University of Oslo, a serious impediment to creating a coherent national strategic plan was the lack of a national strategic concept. Since Neumann made this claim in 2002, *Relevant Force* has been developed to fill this gap. Yet, as Neumann claims, the next step is to “concretize and formulate a national security strategy ... and align military doctrines in accordance with the strategy.”¹⁴⁴ The national security strategy is still lacking. However, historical precedents suggest strategic trends from which future NORSOFF roles and mission could be derived.

Since its inception, Norwegian governments have consistently considered the UN the principal organ promoting international security and stability. Between 1947 and 2000, more than 50,000 personnel participated in 30 missions around the world, the longest operation being 20 years of commitment to UNIFIL in Lebanon.¹⁴⁵ Until Operation Desert

144 Iver B. Neumann, “Norges handlingsrom og behovet for en overordnet sikkerhetspolitisk strategi” [National Options and the Necessity of a Security Political Strategy], *Det sikkerhetspolitiske bibliotek*, no. 3 (2002) (The Norwegian Atlantic Committee [online 12 Dec 2005]): 19, author's translation.

145 Forsvaret: “Norsk deltakelse i internasjonale fredsoperasjoner” [Norwegian Participation in International Peace Operations], *Forsvarnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 7 Jan 2006]).

Storm in 1991, Norway's international military contributions were exclusively with UN peace operations.

Since the mid-1990's, however, international deployments have shifted in favor of NATO and US-led operations. The reason has not been discontent with UN so much as a lack of personnel resources.¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, the UN's ability to direct independent military operations under its own leadership is challenged due to several failed peacekeeping/peace enforcement operations in the 1990s. Rwanda and Bosnia are but two UN operations where expectations were not met, whether from the local population, the UN forces themselves, or international society at large. The recent oil-for-food scandal involving high-ranking UN officials also indicates an ineffective and unhealthy organizational culture.

Nevertheless, the Stoltenberg II Government in Norway has re-emphasized the importance of the UN as a promoter of peace, stating that “[i]t is in Norway's interest to have the UN leading the new world order, and not to have a situation where nations do whatever they like.”¹⁴⁷ The latter could be seen as a sidekick to the previous government's (Bondevik II) more US-friendly approach to foreign policy. This shift in favor of the UN is nevertheless more aligned with the historical tendency in Norwegian foreign policy issues.

NATO has been the cornerstone of Norwegian security policy since 1949. The emphasis on neutrality that kept Norway out of First World War, but failed to do the same in World War II, was abandoned for Alliance partnership in 1949. Yet, as part of the Alliance, Norway maintained a “non-aggressive” posture through its membership, hoping to reduce Great Power tensions on the Scandinavian peninsula. Several restrictions were unilaterally imposed on NATO's strategy. Neither nuclear weapons nor permanent basing were allowed on national territory in times of peace. The Cold War military strategy was fairly straightforward – maintain a firm posture in defensive positions and await Alliance reinforcements.

Since 1990 NATO has been transforming, as have its member countries. The most important change to NATO's strategy is the adoption of the out-of-area concept as set out in the 1999 Strategic Concept and reiterated at the *Prague Summit* in 2002. With this concept, NATO and its member countries must be prepared for operations on a global scale.¹⁴⁸

NATO's Response Force (NRF) concept is another important result of the transformation. NRF, which was supposed to be fully operational

146 Ulriksen, *Den norske forsvarstradisjonen*, p. 251.

147 “Plattform for regjeringssamarbeidet mellom Arbeiderpartiet, Sosialistisk Venstreparti og Senterpartiet 2005–2009” [Soria Moria declaration], *Odin* [online 11 Dec 2006].

148 Ian Forbes, “The Transformation of NATO”, speech by Deputy Allied Command Transformation Admiral Sir Ian Forbes, Høyres Hus, Oslo, 25 May 2004 (The Norwegian Atlantic Committee).

by 2006, is a rapid reaction force designed to conduct the full spectrum of military operations from show of force to forced entry operations. Emphasis is placed on deployability and interoperability, both necessary to fulfill new missions.¹⁴⁹ Norwegian Special Operations Forces have been part of Norway's force contributions to NRF.

NATO's ambitions are clear, but the Alliance still works on the basis of political consensus. Out-of-area missions are therefore still likely to be politically challenging, especially because NRF participation commits more than did earlier contributions.¹⁵⁰ It remains to see to what extent NRF will be an effective tool. NRF was not deployed for Afghanistan in August-September this year when NATO experienced its fiercest combat operations so far in its history.¹⁵¹

NATO's core mission remains collective defense as defined by NATO's Charter Article 5. However, most of NATO's involvements since the Cold War have been non-Article 5 missions ranging from peace-keeping in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, to combating terrorism in the Mediterranean, to supporting disaster relief in Pakistan. Although NATO's efforts are impressive, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, NATO Secretary General, admits the Alliance is driven more by short-term ad-hoc decisions than by fundamental strategic choices. "In Afghanistan, for example, [NATO's] political rhetoric was not always matched by corresponding military commitments."¹⁵²

NATO's ongoing mission in Afghanistan, ISAF, is currently the largest operation involving Norwegian forces abroad.¹⁵³ Currently, Norway contributes approximately 500 personnel to ISAF, including maintaining responsibility for the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Meymaneh. The forces are presently committed to Northern Afghanistan only.

NATO's first operation outside Europe also shows the inherent weaknesses of warfare by consensus. As the Afghan insurgency has steadily increased in intensity since 2002, the Norwegian debate is focused on the tension between deploying Norwegian forces according to Commander ISAF's requirements on the one hand, and national caveats on the other. The current national commitments are tied to the provinces in the north, and not to the more troubled regions in the south. Refusing to let Norwegian troops be redirected to the south where they are arguably more needed opens up for criticism internally in NATO.¹⁵⁴ The criticism ap-

149 "The NATO Response Force: At the Center of NATO Transformation", *Allied Rapid Reaction Corps* (NATO [online 23 Aug 2004]).

150 Harald Eraker, "Nato-opdragene Norge må si ja til" [NATO Missions Norway must accept], *NyTid*, 14 October 2005 [online 1 Feb 2006].

151 Jonathan Marcus, "Nato Struggles in Afghanistan," *BBC News*, 14 September 2006 [online 27 Nov 2006].

152 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, "Keeping NATO Relevant: A Shareholders Report", speech by NATO Secretary General at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Annual Session, Copenhagen, 15 November 2005, *Online Library* (NATO [online 2 Feb 2006]).

153 Eide, *Ny regjering – ny sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitikk?*

plies not only to Norway, but to the German and Italian force contributions as well. When refusing to deploy Norwegian Special Operations Forces to Afghanistan in October the fall of 2006, a contribution that was explicitly asked for by NATO, Minister of Defense Anne-Grete Strøm Erichsen defended the decision by stating that “Norwegian special operations forces would not make a significant difference.”¹⁵⁵ The decision not to send additional forces to Afghanistan was a political trade-off to the left wing of the coalition government. Other NATO countries face the same political realities. Regardless of political challenges, nothing seems to dismiss the fact that NATO will continue to constitute the cornerstone in Norwegian security policy.

The EU is an important political actor in Europe and for Norway, but I do not yet consider it a major military actor. Norway has truly signed an agreement to participate in the EU’s new Battle Group concept, and also participates with personnel in the EU’s continuing operation in Bosnia, Operation Althea.¹⁵⁶ But Norway is still not part of the EU, and the EU is still working to formulate its security policy concept as a realistic alternative to NATO and the US.¹⁵⁷ The current Government is also committed through a common political compromise, the Soria Moria declaration, not to apply for EU-membership in the current period. The EU is thus not yet an important military factor for deriving new roles and missions for NORSOFF.

The US plays an important albeit ambiguous role in Norwegian security policy. During the Cold War, a close bilateral relation to the US, as an ally within NATO, was fairly unproblematic. Despite national restrictions on the Alliance, Norwegian air bases were prepared for rapid deployment of US air assets (the COB agreement), and equipment for a complete brigade size reaction force was forward-deployed in Trøndelag.¹⁵⁸ Due to its proximity to the Soviet Union and the naval bases on the Kola Peninsula, an extensive intelligence collaboration program developed. Both nations benefited from this cooperation; the US had early access to signal intelligence, and Norway had access to US technology. In

154 Jarle Brenna, “Danmark kritiserer Norges NATO-nei” [Denmark criticizes Norway’s no to NATO], *Verdens Gang*, 25 November 2006 [online 27 Nov 2006].

155 “– Norske spesialstyrker utgjør ingen stor forskjell” [Norwegian Special Operations Forces do not make a huge difference] *Aftenposten*, 13 November 2006 [online 27 Nov 2006].

156 Forsvarsdepartementet, “Avtale om EU-innsatsstyrke signert i Brussel” [Agreement on EU Reaction Force Signed in Brussels], *Odin* (Ministry of Defense [online 6 Jan 2006]).

157 Jahn Otto Johansen, “NATO og de transatlantiske motsetninger – kortsiktige og langsiktige perspektiver” [NATO and transatlantic contrasts – short and long term perspectives], *Det sikkerhetspolitiiske bibliotek*, no. 3 (2004): 8 (The Norwegian Atlantic Committee [online 22 Aug 2005]).

158 Finn Molvig, “Norsk forsvarspolitikk i 1970- og 80-årene” [Norwegian defense policy in the 1970s and 80s] *IFS Info*, no. 4 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, 1994).

addition, keeping close ties to the US reinforced the notion of Norway as an important ally.¹⁵⁹

The collapse of the Soviet Union changed this relationship. Norway does not enjoy the same status as an important flank in America's strategy.¹⁶⁰ An alternative scenario is instead that US and Russian cooperation on petroleum issues could lead to a marginalization of Norwegian territorial interests in the Barents region. It is therefore uncertain how far Norway might rally support from the US in case of a more serious territorial dispute.

As by far the largest contributor to the Alliance, the US is nevertheless held as the guarantor of NATO's continuous existence. If NATO should fail and disintegrate in the foreseeable future, most likely if the EU were to establish an alternative through its European Defense Agency, Norway could face a strategic choice: either to integrate with the EU's defense alternative or to establish a bilateral defense pact with the US. According to several commentators the former is not a very realistic option.¹⁶¹ *Relevant Force* does not exaggerate the political effects of the debacle that occurred between European actors and the US in the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Rather, it is of "utmost importance to Norway that NATO's role as a transatlantic forum for consultation be strengthened."¹⁶² The participation of Norwegian Special Operations Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom between 2001 and 2005 could then be evaluated as strategically important to maintain this relationship. The political effect is probably more important than the military. In this perspective, Norwegian Special Operations Forces' strategic utility is of high value.

As stated above, the current government (Stoltenberg II) has signaled a change of priorities in order to give more support to the UN. State Secretary Espen Barth Eide, in a speech at the Norwegian Army War College in December 2005, stated that the new government would increasingly emphasize peace operations, particularly on the African continent. International deployments will be diverted from US-led "coalitions of the willing" in favor of multilateral organizations like NATO, UN, and the EU. The new government will "to a larger degree prioritize Army units for international operations. This objective will be achieved by assigning Navy and Air Force capabilities to NATO and EU's standby forces, like NATO NRF."¹⁶³ Barth Eide indirectly suggests that NATO Response Forces are

159 Rolf Tamnes, "Norges hemmelige tjenester under den kalde krigen – et sammenliknende internasjonalt perspektiv" [Norwegian Secret Services during the Cold War – a Comparative International Perspective] *IFS Info*, no. 2 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 1992).

160 Forsvarsdepartementet, "Relevant Force": 39.

161 Johansen, "NATO og de transatlantiske motsetninger".

162 Forsvarsdepartementet, "Relevant Force": 39.

163 Eide, *Ny regjering – ny sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitik?* author's translation.

more or less limited to Article 5 operations. By its very nature, NRF ties up assets that otherwise could be used in peace operations. Accordingly, the NRF concept does not allow for national forces being used optimally for foreign policy purposes.

Whether Eide's speech should be interpreted as strategic guidelines is open to debate. But it is by far the clearest and most current strategic guidance there is along with the Soria Moria declaration (the manifesto of the current government). According to the manifesto, the government wants to increase the emphasis on societal security, change priorities from the US-led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq to NATO's operation in Afghanistan, emphasize the main role of the Norwegian Armed Forces as maintaining national sovereignty and secure stability in Norway's immediate surroundings and maintain a large presence of military forces in Northern Norway.¹⁶⁴ Based on this list, the following goals should guide future NORSOFF roles and missions:

1. Protect national interests, primarily the oil and gas infrastructure, in the Norwegian Economic Zone.
2. Contribute to maintaining a coherent NATO through participation in Alliance operations and standing force contributions.
3. Maintain a coherent and credible UN through participating in peace operations to promote peace and stability in troubled regions.

The order of priority is assumed to be based on state security, societal security, and human security.

Summary: Security through NATO

The current security environment is normally explained in a national and an international context. In the national context, threats to state security through conventional war are assessed as negligible, at least in the short term. Disputes over sovereign rights with emphasis on the Barents region are instead the main area of concern. Recent events in the region demonstrate the disputed nature of this area. Jurisdiction in the Norwegian Economic Zone is primarily a Naval responsibility. The Army maintains jurisdiction on the Russian border which is part of EU's Schengen agreement. The threat to the border is first and foremost associated with organized crime.

In an international context, terrorism, failed and rogue states, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are the dominant threats to international stability. Threats to societal security are first and foremost

164 "Plattform for regjeringssamarbeidet ..."

associated with international terrorism. There have so far been no terror incidents in Norway or against Norwegian interests abroad. National security authorities assert, however, that it can be only a matter of time before Scandinavia will be hit.

In the larger scheme, conflict patterns have changed, indicating a shift from conventional interstate wars towards intrastate wars with regional or global spillover effects. A significant trend is that civilians are increasingly targeted by the combatants.

There is no coherent military strategy from which NORSOE roles and missions can be easily derived. Therefore, existing practice and recent political statements are used to grasp the essence of a national military strategy. For the purpose of state survival, Norway's predominant strategy continues to be remaining a credible Ally in NATO. Only through active participation can this credibility be maintained. NATO is vital for national interests, hence Alliance cohesion is important. Only a continuous US presence and interest in the Alliance can maintain this cohesion. The EU is not yet considered a viable alternative to NATO.

Operations in Afghanistan through ISAF seem to be Norway's main focus in the forthcoming years. UN operations, especially in Africa, will increasingly be emphasized. Participation in UN operations will be conducted primarily with Army units. To maintain NATO obligations, Naval and Air Force units will increasingly be assigned to stand by for NATO's Response Force.

Future Roles and Missions

In this chapter the Norwegian Special Operations Forces' current and future roles and missions will be evaluated. In the discussion, principal special operations forces' approaches to warfare through direct and indirect capabilities as outlined by Tucker and Lamb will be emphasized.¹⁶⁵ The intent is not to cover the complete spectrum of tactical missions but to focus on what are perceived and assessed as characteristic roles within each approach. The strategic value of Norwegian Special Operations Forces will also be addressed. The main question under consideration is what might be possible and appropriate roles and missions for NORSOF in the future.

In the last section of the chapter issues of future transformation will be discussed. So far, it appears that the inconsistency stated in the hypothesis stems from a lack of strategic guidance and a separation of roles more than from violations of the principles of transformation: Is the current organization inconsistent with future roles and missions?

Expanding Roles and Missions

An important precondition for this discussion is that future roles and missions are derived from expected future threats. As such, possible threats in the future are not based on current wars, although lessons learned from current operations certainly apply. In other words, previous experience from Operation Enduring Freedom and the Balkan Wars are not the only conditions that should shape future roles and missions. If this were the case, a strategic perspective on transformation would be meaningless. History also suggests that drawing conclusions based on past experiences for future strategies might be inappropriate.

One approach with which to analyze emerging missions is to look at the total spectrum of military missions and roles, determine which missions are maintained by conventional forces, and subsequently assign missions and roles to NORSOF to fill the "gap". There are two principal

165 Tucker and Lamb, "Restructuring Special Operations Forces ...": 1–6.

reasons why this approach is not used. First, General Sverre Diesen, current Chief of Defense indicates that the principle of maintaining a balanced defense structure is no longer relevant. Hence the gap is probably already too large or too complex for NORSOFF to fill. In addition, to operationalize the concept (a balanced defense structure) in itself might be a challenge. Second, the emphasis on international operations pressures Norway to participate with certain capabilities. The common doctrinal denominator is NATO. Hence future missions and roles must be in accordance, or at least not in conflict, with NATO's doctrines.

Roles and missions must be seen in a national and international context. For operations in a national context, the spectrum of operations comprises peace, crisis, and war. A grey zone certainly exists between the stages. A deeper analysis of this grey zone is beyond the scope of this study. The international context has two important factors, NATO and the UN. The spectrum of NATO operations is defined as Article 5 and non-Article 5 operations (Crisis Response Operations). UN operations are defined as Peace Support Operations.¹⁶⁶ This framework is illustrated in Table 4.

Spectrum of Operations			
National	Peace	Crisis	War
Nato	Crisis Response Operations		Article 5
UN	Peace Support Operations		

Table 4: Framework for defining new roles,

The National Context

To begin this discussion, it is useful to refer to the following statement in *Relevant Force*:

The use of military force by Norway in a purely national context is first and foremost an option in limited situations, connected to the exercise of national sovereignty and authority. In all other situations, the Norwegian Armed Forces will operate in a multi-national framework – both inside and outside of Norway.¹⁶⁷

166 AJP-01(B) chapter 22, section III, distinguishes between Peace Support Operations in Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement. This article does not make this distinction because the focus is on the impartial aspect of UN operations. Whether operations are offensive or defensive is deemed less relevant.

167 Forsvarsdepartementet, "Relevant Force".

Except for a clear military violation of national sovereignty – an act of war – the military has a limited role in times of peace. In such times, it follows from *Relevant Force* that missions and roles are limited to issues concerning the maintenance of national sovereignty and authority. Whenever the military is used outside its primary role, this will occur within the context of other ministries, most likely the Ministry of Justice and the Police. This pertains to the Coastguard maintaining national interests in the Norwegian Economic Zone, the Army's expanded Schengen mission on the Norwegian-Russian border, and Hærens Jegerkommando's (HJK) national, counterterrorist task.¹⁶⁸

The *Elektron* incident might illustrate other types of operations or scenarios which involve special operations' supporting conventional forces maintaining national jurisdiction. The Marinejegerkommando (MJK) is capable of boarding ships to support maritime interdict operations.¹⁶⁹ This role is useful support to the Coastguard, but also politically challenging.¹⁷⁰

Missions outside national borders in peacetime or times of crisis could include protection or evacuation of national citizens in distress. The reactions to the row about some cartoons in 2005 – a series of pictures illustrating the prophet Mohammad first published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Tidende* – included the burning of the Norwegian Embassy in Syria.¹⁷¹ In addition, piracy is still a problem for the shipping industry, and Norwegian-flagged ships and their crewmembers have recently been targeted. Such missions, to the extent they are politically feasible, would fall into the direct action spectrum of capabilities. Where required and authorized, NORSOFF support could thus be utilized to maintain national interests where civilian authorities lack the capability.

Using the Norwegian Armed Forces to uphold national jurisdiction is no simple matter. According to the national newspaper *Verdens Gang*, Chief of Defense General Diesen is critical of the increased focus on the military's role in the Barents Sea. Gunboat diplomacy, he claims, can only be effective if Norway is guaranteed mutual political and military support from its allies. Without this support, diplomacy involving the threat of force lacks credibility.¹⁷² The Chief of Defense's concerns seems reasonable all the time military support is based on the contributions of the same

168 See Merete Voreland, "Utfordringer i norske kyst og havområder" [Challenges in Norwegian Maritime Areas], *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 17 Jan]; Forsvarsdepartementet, "Forsvarets bistand til Politiet" [Armed Forces Support to Police], *Odin* (Ministry of Defense [online 17 Jan 2006]; Forsvarsdepartementet, Lov 1997-06-13 nr 42: Lov om Kystvakten (Kystvaktloven), *Lovdata* [online 11 Dec].

169 *Det nye Sjøforsvaret: Omstilling i Sjøforsvaret 2004–2010*, p. 5.

170 Børresen, Gjeseth, and Tamnes, *Norsk Forsvarshistorie*, p. 381.

171 Kristin Welle-Strand, "Ambassaden i Syria brent ned" [Embassy in Syria burnt down], *Verdens Gang*, 4 February 2006 [online 20 Mar 2006].

172 Tom Bakkeli and Alf B. Johnsen, "Advarte mot militær maktbruk" [Warned against use of military force], *Verdens Gang*, 14 January 2006 [online 1 Feb 2006].

nations which traditionally challenges national jurisdiction, such as EU nations and Iceland. Russia is excluded in this context.

There has also proven to be tension between the military and civilian authorities, primarily the police. Truls Fyhn, Chief of Police in Tromsø, claimed as a reaction to the *Elektron* incident that the police's own counterterrorist unit, *Beredskapstroppen*, had the capability to handle jurisdictional incidents requiring the use of force, including supporting the Coastguard.¹⁷³ Whether or not Fyhn was right regarding such tactical capability is not within this study's remit, although it might be mentioned that it is clear that the police do not have the necessary tactical mobility to execute complex missions offshore without military support. This is why HJK was assigned the offshore counterterrorism task in the first place. Fyhn's argument could thus be part of an intra-sectorial debate for increased resources. On the other hand, tensions seem to have decreased in the aftermath of *Elektron* and may be less than Fyhn asserted. State Secretary Eide asserted in a speech at the University of Stavanger in January 2006 that Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Justice and Police had initiated intra-sectorial discussions to better coordinate available resources, and this in part was based on the *Elektron* incident.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, a grey zone does exist between the police and the military. An occupied oil platform in the NEZ is geographically confined within Norwegian jurisdictional territory, but outside the reach of regular police duties. Using HJK in a designated role in such a scenario seems fairly unproblematic. However, it is uncertain to what extent Norwegian Special Operations Forces can be assigned specific roles beyond offshore scenarios. The counterargument is that available assets should be used whenever the situation dictates. Should a more dangerous and destructive type of terrorism arise than the initial offshore scenario was intended to counter, the existing legal framework might prove obsolete when put to test. Both HJK, with its counterterrorism task, and MJK supporting the Coastguard represent redundant national capabilities.

NORSOF's role in support of national authority outside national borders, noncombatant evacuation operations and hostage rescue seems clearer. The wellbeing of its citizens abroad is one inherent responsibility of the nation state, maintained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Given the size of the Norwegian military, such operations are likely to be a joint effort between several countries. It follows from AJP-01(B) that NATO or NATO forces could ally to initiate such operations.¹⁷⁵ International expe-

173 "Beredskapstroppen Burde Stoppet 'Elektron'" [Police Delta Force should have stopped 'Elektron'], *Verdens Gang*, 18 Dec. 2005 [online 10 Jan 2006].

174 Espen Barth Eide, "Samfunnssikkerhet og nye trusselbilder" [Societal Security and New threats], speech at the University of Stavanger, Stavanger, 9 January 2006, *Odin* (Ministry of Defense [online 30 Nov 2006]).

175 NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, para 2230.

rience demonstrates that such operations frequently involve the use of special operations forces, and such a role should also thus be applicable to Norwegian Special Operations Forces. Such scenarios can be exemplified by the kidnapping of the Norwegian UN observer Knut Gjellestad in Sierra Leone in 2000. Gjellestad was eventually rescued in a British operation that most likely involved the use of British SOF.¹⁷⁶ Because failed or rogue states continue to exist, especially on the African continent, and radical terrorist groups deliberately target Western citizens, both missions are likely to emerge in the future.

In war, NORSOFF's direct action capabilities will still apply. Insofar as a military threat or situation exists, traditional roles will probably be as applicable in the future as they were during the Cold War. New concepts of warfare, such as network centric warfare, effects-based operations, or information operations, and adaptation to new technology certainly apply to Norwegian Special Operations Forces and to the Armed Forces in general. However, this will not affect special operations *per se*, apart from the fact that they will have to implement and adapt to emerging technology and new concepts.

Although Norwegian Special Operations Forces can conduct independent missions in the operational or strategic realm, their mission potential is arguably highest in conjunction with conventional operations. This assertion seems reasonable knowing that the overall strength of the military, in terms of maneuver units, has been significantly reduced since the Cold War. Likewise, conventional units increasingly adapt better technology and weapons systems, network centric warfare being an example, further reinforcing the necessity to be able to support joint operations. Special operation forces are already playing a key role in conventional campaigns. The integration of special operations forces with air force is often considered to be the successful formula behind the toppling of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001. In a national context, within the next five to ten years Norway will have modernized its entire Navy.¹⁷⁷ It thus seems important for Norwegian Special Operations Forces to continue to cooperate with the conventional parts of the military, not only to gain support for their own operations, but for instance also to support Naval operations in the littoral. The same logic will apply to new concepts within land and air warfare.

Indirect capabilities, as described by doctrine, are less likely to be applicable in war on national territory. The primary role will be to apply Special Operations Forces' direct action capabilities. However, there is one exception which consists of acting in an advisory role for allied units,

176 "Hensynsløse soldater holder Gjellestad som gissel" [Ruthless soldiers keep Gjellestad hostage], *Verdens Gang*, 11 May 2000 [online 7 Feb 2006].

177 Ole M. Rapp, "Får Europas beste marine" [The best Navy in Europe], *Aftenposten*, 4 February 2005 [online 17 Jan 2006].

whether conventional or not. With few exceptions, international forces have proven less capable of operating independently in Norway, especially during the winter. According to US Special Operations Command, in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, coalition warfare – warfighting with forces from more than one nation – “was arguably the most important of all the SOCCENT [Special Operations Command Central] missions.”¹⁷⁸ The advisory role was assigned to both SEALs and to the Fifth Special Forces Group. Because NATO no longer pre-designates units for Article 5 operations, Norway cannot know in advance which units will be deployed as reinforcements for Article 5 operations. Coalition warfare should therefore apply to Norwegian Special Operations Forces as a mission. This role is not new to NORSOFF, as training and exercises involving foreign units has been carried out for years.

Missions and roles as derived above all fall under special operations forces direct action capabilities. Given the previous discussion, it seems necessary to clarify NORSOFF roles vis-à-vis the police. To tie up scarce military resources for a national readiness capability that is not in demand seems less prudent. National readiness has ramifications for NORSOFF’s capability to deploy for international operations. What is most cost-effective from a strategic perspective – being on standby for national counterterrorism scenarios that have never occurred, or on standby for deployments for international commitments – is hard to tell. But it is realistic to expect that a unit cannot be two places at the same time.

I have defined NORSOFF’s strategic role as promoting national foreign policy objectives. This role is not defined by doctrine. Vanderbrouche defines strategic special operations forces’ missions as offensive strikes seeking to achieve foreign policy objectives, citing the Bay of Pigs and the 1980 attempt to rescue US embassy personnel in Iran as examples.¹⁷⁹ According to Vanderbrouche, a national Hostage Rescue capability falls within the strategic realm.

Whether Norway, with its current foreign policy ambitions, has the political and military will to conduct such strikes is questionable. Dr. Richard H. Shultz Jr., longtime analyst of and writer about military affairs, questions whether even the US dare use its special operations forces in a strategic offensive role for national purposes. Prior to 9/11, President Clinton signed several presidential directives targeting Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network. Despite the political will, in most cases the Pentagon was reluctant to conduct special operations for this purpose.¹⁸⁰ This runs contrary to the belief that politicians are more reluctant to use military force than the military itself, and also reinforces the necessity for spe-

178 US Special Operations Command,, *United States Special Operations Command: History* (Tampa, FL: USSOCOM, 2002), p. 37.

179 Vandenbroucke, *Perilous Options*.

180 Shultz Jr., “Nine Reasons ...”

cial operations forces to have direct access to political decision-makers for Norwegian Special Operations Forces to actually represent a strategic alternative.

Much changed after 9/11, both in the US and in Norway. Schulz might not worry just as much today about the US' willingness to deploy its SOF operators to capture or kill terrorists almost wherever they might be. Whether it is possible to authorize a covert, strategic special operation at prime-ministerial level, or whether Norway possess the necessary assets to conduct such an operation, is outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, national strategic strikes will most likely be conducted within an Alliance or coalition context. Although NATO is defined as a political as well as military organization, its role as a foreign policy instrument is at best limited to Alliance consensus. With the exception of a potential hostage rescue scenario, it is unclear to what extent Norway can garner sufficient support within the Alliance to pursue national foreign policy objectives. Hans Binnendijk, Director of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University, claims that unless NATO develops a NATO Special Operations Forces concept broadly modeled on the US Special Operations Command concept, NATO Special Operations Forces will not in themselves constitute a strategic resource.¹⁸¹ NORSOFF's role as a strike force pursuing national foreign policy objectives is thus limited by national constraints, political as well as logistic.

Strategic utility, however, might be achieved by other means. In *Commandos and Politicians*, Dr. Eliot Cohen suggests three motivations for the creation, nurturance, and deployment of elite military units: military utility, the rather romantic image of war, and political utility.¹⁸² While Cohen's definition of military utility and the romantic image of war might not be useful concepts with which to understand strategic utility in the way I have defined it, his discussion about political utility is more promising. Cohen suggests that "small, discrete military actions can be used to signal to a number of audiences (an opposing government, its population, one's own population) threats, commitments, and intents."¹⁸³ NORSOFF's deployment to Afghanistan late 2001 is an example of such a signaling effort. While this might have been unintentional (the mission was initially a low profile deployment), the deployment clearly signaled national will and commitment to both domestic and international audiences. Deploying Norwegian Special Operations Forces indicated a policy

181 Hans Binnendijk, David C. Gompert and Richard L. Kugler, "A New Military Framework for NATO", *Defense Horizons*, no. 48 (May 2005)(Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University [online 8 Feb 2006]).

182 Eliot A. Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians* (Cambridge, Mass: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1978), p. 136.

183 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

shift which entailed Norway deploying offensive units intended for combat operations. Whether political opponents agreed with the decision is irrelevant. NORSOFF brought national values and colors to the fight. By deploying a capable and relevant force, the Government achieved this effect while simultaneously lowering the political risk; the military footprint was low, yet capable; the standard of the forces was high, hence the probability of success was equally high. Using Special Operations Forces in this role could thus be interpreted as pursuing foreign policy objectives.

This effect is not necessarily exclusive to Norwegian Special Operations Forces, as other units were deployed more or less simultaneously. Later in 2002, F-16s were deployed, and mine clearance troops were deployed before NORSOFF in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. But NORSOFF was the first Norwegian combat unit to be deployed and utilized. A “signaling” role contradicts the low profile generally sought in conjunction with special operations, and is thus open to question. This role could, however, as Cohen suggests, be a deliberate political choice.

Thus it seems unclear to what extent Norwegian Special Operations Forces are a strategic asset beyond the military domain. Gray asserts that special operations forces only “have strategic meaning ... with reference to war, or other kinds of conflict, as a whole.”¹⁸⁴ While Vandembroucke disagrees, the question is whether Norway is willing or capable to use NORSOFF for strategic purposes, i.e., to pursue policy objectives. The discussion above suggests that NORSOFF’s strategic impact is low except for a potential signaling effect, an effect that might also be attributed to conventional units.

A principal arrangement of NORSOFF missions in a national context could be depicted according to table 5.

Spectrum of Operations			
	Peace	Crisis	War
Direct Action Capabilities	Counterterrorism, Jurisdiction NEZ (Coast Guard)	Counterterrorism, Jurisdiction NEZ (Navy), Hostage Rescue, Noncombatant Evacuation Operations	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance and Surveillance
Indirect Action Capabilities		Coalition Warfare	

Table 5: *NORSOFF missions and roles in a national context.*

¹⁸⁴ Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*, p. 143.

NATO and the UN

NATO operations can broadly be defined as consisting of Article 5 and Crisis Response Operations. The previous discussion of national roles in war pertains to Article 5 operations as well, since Article 5 concerns territorial defense. It can thus be concluded that the discussion of national roles in times of war applies to NATO and Article 5. For territorial defense purposes, NORSOFF's current direct action capabilities therefore apply.

The extent to which NATO's Response Force (NRF) may be activated beyond Article 5 operations remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that NRF is intended as an initial-entry, a "first in, first out" expeditionary force with capabilities within the complete spectrum of operations.¹⁸⁵ To what extent the latter is true depends on the definition of the complete spectrum. With few exceptions, the various NATO countries developed the same kind of forces as Norway during the Cold War. With this in mind, the complete spectrum of operations emphasizes traditional defensive/offensive maneuver warfare with concentration of military effort as the center of gravity, rather than asymmetric warfare in low intensity conflicts where popular support should be the center of gravity.¹⁸⁶ Given NRF's role as an expeditionary force, its modus operandi is likely to require special operations forces direct action capabilities. NORSOFF's direct action capabilities will therefore continue to prove relevant in an NRF context.

Although NATO's strategic concept implies that threats will be met before reaching Alliance territory, it is less likely that NATO will initiate preventive operations. The negative reactions from European statesmen to the US concept of preventive war as stated by Bush after 2001, might indicate how Europe intends to use NATO for emerging threats. Offensive "War by Consensus" is inherently more challenging than its defensive counterpart. Non-Article 5 conditions, or Crisis Response Operations, are therefore likely to apply to most, if not all, out-of-area operations.

This leaves Norway with an option regarding redefining future NORSOFF roles and missions, because Crisis Response Operations (CRO) are based on national interests, and not Alliance requirements. "[U]nlike Collective Defence operations, there is no automatic commitment of forces for non-Article 5 CRO ..."¹⁸⁷ Further, "[a] nation's level of interest in a non-Article 5 CRO may vary in relation to its national strategic interest

185 NATO, *Improving Capabilities to Meet New Threats* (Brussels, 2004) (NATO [online 27 Feb 2006]), p. 9.

186 According to Dr. Gordon McCormick, Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Dr. McCormick claims this view to be the major challenge to a successful US strategy in current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

187 NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(B)*, para 2204.

in the operation. Therefore, national commitment to provide forces will vary accordingly ...”¹⁸⁸ Given the low probability of Article 5 scenarios in today’s Euro-Atlantic area, this suggests that NORSOFF should adapt new roles to stay militarily relevant beyond Article 5.

According to Scheffer, NATO’s core mission remains collective defense, but he also asserts that NATO should be used for non-military missions, like nation building.¹⁸⁹ Special operation forces in general and Norwegian Special Operations Forces in particular could certainly play a key role at this lower end of the conflict scale. From US experience, low intensity conflicts have traditionally been a niche capability of special operations forces.¹⁹⁰ Although direct action capabilities are applicable in low intensity scenarios, indirect capabilities have traditionally proven more effective against insurgents and irregular opponents. The latter is exemplified by the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. When the preferred strategy aims at restoring peace rather than conquering territory, an indirect approach to win hearts and minds becomes essential.¹⁹¹

The essence of the indirect approach as used in this study is to work by, with, and through an indigenous force or population to gain tactical and strategic advantages. As per NATO doctrine, Military Assistance as an indirect approach includes two tasks defined in US doctrine as Unconventional Warfare and Foreign Internal Defense.

As chapter 2 showed, it is clear that Norwegian Special Operations Forces is not traditionally focused on the indirect spectrum of special operations capabilities. Because most contemporary conflicts pertain to the low intensity range of the scale, and because this trend will probably continue for the foreseeable future, changing focus could increase NORSOFF’s flexibility and relevance. Military Assistance is thus applicable, whether this role supports the host government (Foreign Internal Defense) or aims at the village level (Unconventional Warfare). The US special forces are widely used in this role in Afghanistan and Iraq. In a broad sense, the Norwegian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Meymaneh, Afghanistan, is part of a strategy utilizing indirect capabilities, as they are defined in this study. While the Provincial Reconstruction Team is run by conventional units, there is no reason why Norwegian Special Operations Forces could not contribute in an advisory role in remote or high-threat areas, or where a large conventional footprint is impossible or undesirable. In a NATO context, conventional forces do not seem to have this capability.¹⁹²

188 Ibid., para 2209.

189 de Hoop Scheffer, “Keeping NATO Relevant ...”

190 Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action*.

191 Nigel Aylwin-Foster, “Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations”, *Military Review* (November–December, 2005): 2–15. Aylwin-Foster criticizes the US Army’s tendency to place too much emphasis on offensive approaches to destroying Iraqi insurgents in later phases of OIF.

While the Taliban continue to exist as an alternative to the Afghan government, counterinsurgency strategies must necessarily be NATO's preferred reaction. The steady rise of Afghan insurgency will have to be faced by NATO. If NORSOFA are assigned roles within the complete spectrum of Military Assistance, this will likely increase the relevancy of NORSOFA as a niche capability in NATO.

Roles and missions in a NATO context as discussed above are exemplified in table 6. Important about this figure is that Direct Action Operations are also in demand in Crisis Response Operations. These missions are, however, excluded from the figure for explanatory purposes mainly because this ideally should not be a primary task in such operations.

Spectrum of Operations		
	Article 5	Crisis Response Operations
Direct Action Capabilities	Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance and Surveillance	
Indirect Action Capabilities	Military Assistance (Includes the US term Foreign Internal Defense and Unconventional Warfare)	

Table 6: *NORSOFA missions and roles in a NATO context.*

NATO doctrine broadly divides Military Assistance into two separate tasks, with Unconventional Warfare/Foreign internal defense as one task and Peace Support Operations the other. These tasks can be broadly distinguished by the relationship to the host nation or the belligerents. Acting in the first role, the operation supports one side in a conflict, either the existing government or its opponent. Conversely, in Peace Operations, the operation ideally does not support any side, but rather works to stabilize the conflict. Peace Support Operations can be divided into Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement, depending on the nature of the conflict, and to what extent the belligerents accept the stabilizing force.

Current government statements clarify that Norway will increasingly focus its military support on UN operations. While discussing potential force contributions to a possible future mission in Sudan, State Secretary Barth-Eide claimed that Norway did not have forces with the necessary competence to participate in UN operations.¹⁹³ However, he claimed that Norway could deploy command and control capabilities, intelligence, engineering units, along with "capable combat elements like mechanized infantry and special operations forces."¹⁹⁴ In one sense, this is a mispercep-

192 Michael Smith, "Afghan Posting 'Too Dangerous' for Dutch Army", *Sunday Times*, 20 Nov 2005 [online 18 Jan 2006].

193 Marita I. Wangberg, "Nordisk samarbeid om FN-bidrag" [Nordic cooperation on UN participation], *Forsvarsnett* (Norwegian Defense [online 18 Jan 2006]).

194 Eide, *Ny regjering – ny sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitik?* author's translation.

tion of the general capabilities special operations forces can bring to the operation, and clearly amplifies NORSOFF's traditional emphasis on direct action capabilities. Given the Sudanese government's reluctance to accept a Western-dominated UN peace force, proposing offensive capabilities seems less prudent. The main concern should nevertheless be that Norwegian Special Operations Forces are primarily intended as an offensive capability. NORSOFF are thus not an obvious choice to offer the UN.

Whether NORSOFF represents a capability intended to deploy for UN operations, or whether the UN actually wants special operations forces capabilities as part of their operations, is of less relevance in this study. If missions are appropriate for special operations forces in the first place, it seems less important whether the operation is led by the UN or NATO as long as it meets Norway's political and strategic objectives. NORSOFF's existing offensive capabilities should thus be applicable given the scenario and adopted strategy requires this capability. By virtue of their status, Norwegian Special Operations Forces have certain tactical capabilities that should be technically relevant in a UN context: a small organizational footprint, a substantial command and control capability, and enhanced medical capability. These capabilities make NORSOFF well suited for initial entry operations, area assessments, and operations not dependent on a large conventional presence. NORSOFF's intelligence capabilities could certainly be utilized to establish early warning indicators, although this might require skills beyond those deemed necessary during the Cold War (Urban Operations, language and cultural knowledge).

Increasing the emphasis on indirect capabilities would allow more flexible NORSOFF participation, whether in a NATO or UN context. Utilizing special operations' indirect capabilities would, however, require increased emphasis on the social, political, and cultural aspects of a conflict, which again must be embedded in the chosen strategy. It is prudent to cite Adams, who claims that guerrilla warfare is a tactic, and insurgency is a political condition.¹⁹⁵ Counterinsurgency is thus a chosen strategy and not a tactic.

Applying and utilizing indirect force capabilities effectively require prior training and mental preparation. This is not acquired overnight, although this is a common misperception amongst many officers. Special operation forces do not automatically qualify for Military Assistance, whether in terms of Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, or Peace Support Operations.¹⁹⁶

195 Adams, *US Special Operations Forces In Action*, p. 46.

196 See Tucker and Lamb, "Restructuring Special Operations Forces ...": 1-6.

NORSOF’s potential missions and roles in Peace Support Operations are depicted in table 7.

Spectrum of Operations	
Peace Support Operations	
Direct Action Capabilities	Initial Entry (Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance and Surveillance)
Indirect Action Capabilities	Intelligence Collection, Command and Control, Medical and Technical assistance

Table 7: *NORSOF missions and roles in an UN context.*

Implications

Two questions emerge from the discussion above. First, is increased emphasis on indirect action capabilities as described above, desirable or necessary? Second, can direct action and indirect action capabilities be developed within the context of a single unit?

Indirect action capabilities are not necessary for national defense purposes, and given the priorities for security, direct action capabilities should continue to be NORSOF’s primary focus. Accepting that international cooperation is vital for national defense purposes does not alter this assertion. However, national security is a function of international cooperation, which is maintained primarily under a NATO umbrella. Because current NATO operations are conducted under non-Article 5 conditions, where protracted conflicts are the problem, indirect capabilities will increasingly be demanded or preferred. Norway’s emphasis on UN operations will reinforce this demand. Norwegian Special Operations Forces will increasingly be involved in conflicts where population control, impartiality, human rights, and controlled use of force are keywords. By focusing on indirect action capabilities, NORSOF will continue to be relevant. Also, by maintaining its direct action capabilities, NORSOF will continue to be flexible. The answer to the first question, then, should initially be yes.

Can both direct and indirect action capabilities be maintained within a single unit? The answer is not obvious. Increasingly, combatants must be able to switch between high intensity combat and humanitarian assistance, all within the same mission. It is a challenging task, and one that few conventional units are traditionally trained for.¹⁹⁷ Within the US SOF community, army’s Special Forces have indirect action capabilities as their primary task, while the Navy SEALs have direct action capabilities as their primary role. Yet historically both units have first and foremost been used in direct action roles. According to Adams, army’s Special For-

197 Max Boot, “The Struggle to Transform the Military”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April (2005): 103–118.

es actually prefer direct action roles to indirect action roles. One possible explanation is that missions requiring indirect action capabilities are “very hard to define and prepare for.”¹⁹⁸ The US military experience in Vietnam illustrates what happens when a direct action approach is consistently applied to an enemy who just as consistently refuses to fight on those terms. The current Iraqi conflict also demonstrates that conventional military strategies and tactics might prove ineffective against a ferocious insurgency.¹⁹⁹

Tucker and Lamb claim that it is essential to distinguish between the two special operations forces approaches in order to keep focus on the indirect action spectrum of tasks. Not only is it necessary to distinguish roles at the tactical level, i.e., which unit is assigned to which capability, but separate strategic command elements are also required. Only by virtue of a division such as this will an indirect approach (military assistance, in NATO terms) receive the proper attention.²⁰⁰

Division at the strategic level is neither possible nor desirable for Norway because of several reasons, including national ambitions and the size of the forces involved. But Tucker and Lamb’s argument underscores that an offensive nature does not imply excellence or even competence within the key concept of Military Assistance. Adams shares this view.²⁰¹

British SOF, on the other hand, do not seem to distinguish between direct/indirect capabilities to the same degree as the US. This claim is less documented in literature, although British SOF participated in counterinsurgency operations in Malaya, Kenya, and Oman. The British way of war is, however, distinguished from the Americans’ first of all due to the British experience in the former colonies. Unlike the US approach, the British one has traditionally treated insurgency as a political condition, which again is the basis for strategic choices. The post-World War II Malayan counterinsurgency campaign is often held up as a successful model in this regard. Colonial warfare, which largely focused on joint civil/military strategies, has thus shaped contemporary British doctrine.²⁰² British SOF are therefore integrated and utilized differently in British doctrine than are their US counterparts.

Is British experience and practice a better model than that of the US? I have no clearcut answer to this question. With respect to the British and US experience, their former experience in counterinsurgency operations is based on a national approach, and not on coalition operations

198 Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action*, p. 307.

199 Aylwin-Foster, “Changing the Army ...”: 2–15.

200 Tucker and Lamb, “Restructuring Special Operations Forces ...”: 1–6.

201 Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action*, ch. 11.

202 Robert M. Cassidy, “The British Army and Counterinsurgency: The Salience of Military Culture”, *Military Review*, May–June (2005): 53–59.

seen for example in Iraq and Afghanistan today. A fair assumption is that national strategies are more comprehensive than coalition strategies.

This leads to a third question regarding future Norwegian Special Operations Forces' roles: If NORSOFF is trained and equipped for indirect capabilities aimed at low intensity operations, will this capability be utilized effectively in a coalition framework? The US Special Operations Forces community consists of more than 50,000 personnel, more than double the size of the Norwegian Armed Forces in total. Using Minister of Defense Strøm-Eriksen's own words – would a NORSOFF contribution utilizing indirect force capabilities make a difference in a coalition context? If capabilities do not exist, however, the chosen strategy is likely to reflect this.

Transforming NORSOFF

In the final part of this chapter ideas about the transformation of NORSOFF will be presented. The underlying question is whether the current organizational structure is inconsistent with future roles and missions. I have earlier claimed that the challenge in the current transformation is the lack of a framework to guide the process. Another challenge is that Norway apparently can choose its future military engagements unless NATO has been directly engaged by an external enemy (Article 5 operations). National engagements in Crisis Response Operations are first of all based on their national interest. Technically, then, NORSOFF must possess roles based on which conflicts Norway in the future defines as being of particular national interest.²⁰³ Niche capabilities must then be developed according to this choice. They cannot be based exclusively on Alliance requirements or topographical and climatic preferences as stated in Relevant Force.²⁰⁴ A war on national territory will not require niche capabilities; it would require a total effort from the Armed Forces, whether labeled “niche” or not.

Factors Important to Transformation

A major transformational principle for the Norwegian Armed Forces is to maintain *flexibility* throughout the spectrum of tasks. Implicit to this principle is also flexibility with regard to the spectrum of operations, ranging from high intensity conventional war, to humanitarian operations and perhaps to nation building. Another principle is maintaining

203 See Preben Bonnén for an alternative view of Denmark's choice of wars in the aftermath of the Cold War. Preben Bonnén, “Danmarks valg af krige og de indenrigspolitiske konsekvenser af en aktiv udenrigspolitik” [the Danish Choice of Wars and Consequences of an Active Foreign Policy], *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, no. 5 (2005): 11–15.

204 Forsvarsdepartementet, “Relevant Force”, p. 73.

complementary instead of overlapping capabilities, meaning two units should not have similar core capabilities. Since Norwegian Special Operations Forces, by definition, are complementary to the conventional military, the complementary factor will be discussed internally in NORSOFF. *Relevance for NATO's structure* is a third factor which is important due to the change of focus from national operations to international participation via NATO or other coalition operations. Units exclusively designed for national purposes will only exist to the degree that their capabilities are unique to the defense of national territory. Such units will not be trained or equipped to participate in out-of-area operations. A revitalized Home Guard exemplifies such a force element. Since the UN is increasingly vitalized as an organ for future operations, I shall add *the UN* to this factor.²⁰⁵

According to Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003-2004), two additional requirements are particular to NORSOFF. The first is the requirement to *increase NORSOFF's general capability* in order to improve "national freedom of action, flexibility, and sustainability."²⁰⁶ This increase is important to fulfill NATO requirements as well. While this requirement could be associated with increased unit size, this study defines increased capability as *flexibility within the spectrum of special operations forces' core tasks*. Ideally, the widest possible scope will enhance national freedom and flexibility, at least in an international context. The second requirement is that HJK and MJK should be able to conduct operations as a single unit or entity. *NORSOFF interoperability* is thus important.

Future missions and roles are deemed to be the independent variable in the following discussion while organizational structure is the dependent variable. Table 8 summarizes the intervening variables deemed to be important for future transformation.

Flexibility within the spectrum of special operations forces core capabilities

Complementary capabilities

Relevance for NATO and UN

NORSOFF interoperability

Table 8: *Factors pertaining to NORSOFF transformation.*

Flexibility within the Spectrum of SOF Core Capabilities

In this study SOF core capabilities have been separated into direct action and indirect action capabilities. In chapter 2 it was suggested that MJK and HJK traditionally possess direct action capabilities. I also claim service-specific capabilities, or domain, should be defined as core capabilities. Domain separation has been the traditional separation of HJK and

205 Forsvarsdepartementet: *Den videre moderniseringen av Forsvaret*, p. 53.

206 *Ibid.*, 56. Author's translation.

MJK, the domestic counterterrorism task excluded. In chapter 2 it was also claimed that domain separation is diminished over time. To define the actual degree of overlap could be a challenge and subject to perception. However, this is outside the scope of this study given its unclassified nature. The factor *flexibility* can be illustrated according to Figure 7.

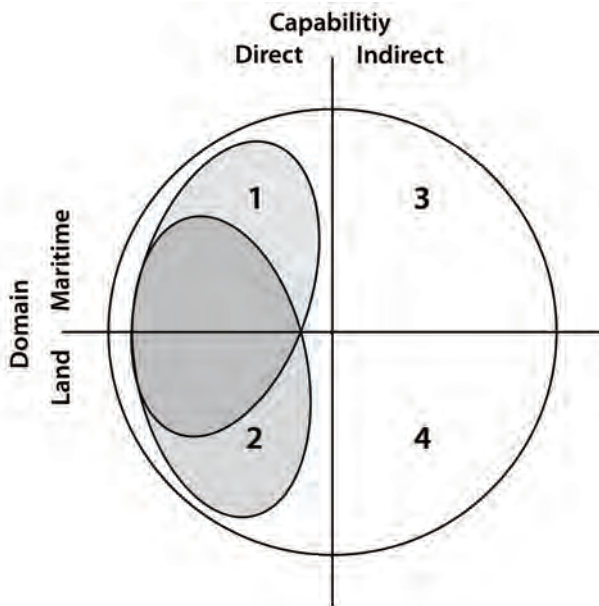


Figure 7: NORSO's current core capabilities.

Both units have repeatedly demonstrated proficiency within land warfare (the Balkans and Afghanistan), but have never been put to test in naval warfare scenarios. As this study has shown, however, both units have focused training and exercises according to their service affiliation.²⁰⁷ Both units thus collectively represent capabilities within quadrant 1 and 2 of Figure 7. This is the flexibility Norwegian Special Operations Forces are assumed to represent today. The overlap is for illustrative purposes only, but shows a degree of overlap.

Given that emerging conflicts will most likely occur at the lower end of the intensity-scale, and that indirect action capabilities are preferred in such conflicts, NORSO represents a less flexible capability. Merging the two units is not in itself likely to alter this situation. On the contrary, merging the two units without specifying new roles is likely to diminish existing capabilities within one of the domains because of organizational

207 Forsvarets overkommando, *Forslag om samordning ...*

preferences, pending a new unit's organizational location (Army or Navy). Maintaining the status quo is therefore likely to be a better option if domain matters regardless of adding new capabilities. A merger is therefore likely to reduce the existing capabilities, and thereby flexibility.

The above discussion is only valid as long as a major objective is to develop capabilities for international operations. Adding new capabilities is not necessary to pursue national objectives alone.

Complementary vs. Overlapping Capabilities

Given that the size and structure of the military at present are at what Chief of Defense would claim to be a minimum, merging units with similar capabilities is deemed necessary, first of all to maintain professional qualities within the force itself. The argument is likely to evolve around definitions of minimum size and the actual degree of overlap.

There are currently no documents that can define ideal or minimum unit size. There is a general idea, however, that a larger unit can engage larger targets. Another assumption is that a larger unit has better endurance than smaller units. To what degree these arguments are appropriate is, however, unclear. The larger the unit, arguably the more conventional it is.²⁰⁸ With regard to special operations, the general idea is to operate with small teams to achieve objectives large conventional units cannot. When the British attacked the German battleship Tirpitz in Altafjord in 1943, success in the final phase of the operation first of all hinged on the attackers' ability to remain undetected. By remaining undetected the attackers achieved relative superiority, which again compensated for the inherent weakness of being outnumbered. Once detected, however, their chances of success quickly diminished.²⁰⁹ The planners of the Tirpitz attack were not dependent on a minimum-size organization to develop their plan, train the operators, and execute the attack. They were, however, dependent of having the necessary priority and support from the military organization as such. Assuming that NORSOF as a collective organization is increased as a result of the last two defense reviews, merging for the sake of maintaining unit proficiency therefore seems less documented.

The extent to which MJK and HJK traditionally possess similar capabilities is a matter of definition. It is, I would claim, the domain where the operation takes place that constitutes the difference, not necessarily the operation itself. As chapter 2 demonstrated, over time both units have developed specific capabilities that traditionally belonged to the other

208 This argument is largely based on Henry Mintzberg's theories on behavior and management in organizations. From Richard L. Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: South-Western College Publishing, 2003).

209 William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1995).

unit's domain. It is therefore not unlikely that both units today possess overlapping capabilities that justify a merger. More importantly, to the extent that future capabilities should be duplicated, the rationale for maintaining separate units seems weak.

Relevancy for NATO and UN Operations

As shown in chapter 2, both MJK and HJK are traditionally trained and equipped for national defense purposes including NATO's Article 5 scenario. Non-Article 5 operations and UN missions are a fairly new focus, at least for Norwegian Special Operations Forces. This leads in many ways to the same discussion and conclusion as for *flexibility within the spectrum of special operations forces core capabilities*.

A focus on direct action capabilities is ideal for NATO's Response Force concept. As stated earlier, NATO's Response Force is primarily intended to be a first in, first out capability. Hence, its focus should be on Direct Action and surveillance-type missions.

Focusing solely on direct action capabilities makes NORFOP less relevant for non-article 5 and UN operations. Assuming the current NATO mission in Afghanistan is representative of future types of conflicts, counter-insurgency capabilities supporting a counter-insurgency strategy are in greater demand than the direct action focus. Without expanding its current roles, NORFOP's primary contribution will then be to support conventional operations including direct action and intelligence collection.

An important note should be that direct action and indirect action capabilities are not necessarily mutually exclusive in a given scenario. UN operations require offensive as well as reconnaissance capabilities. The intent is, however, to emphasize that core capabilities are most in demand. The UN's primary focus is to maintain impartiality to the belligerents. A direct action focus seems thus less optimal as a generic capability for future UN operations.

To determine whether a merger is justified by the outcome of this factor, one has to go back to Tucker and Lamb who say both SOF core capabilities are less likely to develop optimally within one single unit. This factor therefore favors a status quo rather than a merger.

NORFOP Interoperability

In any organization, the level of interoperability is a function of subunits' interdependence, i.e. "the extent to which departments depend on each other for resources or materials to accomplish their tasks."²¹⁰ Co-locating

210 Thomson in Daft, *Essentials of Organization* ..., p. 195.

units within an organization is desired the more their task depends on mutual communication, and when the level of coordination is deemed high. Daily face-to-face interaction, teamwork, and quicker decision-making are all benefits of increased closeness. A modern hospital illustrates a civilian organization where co-location of sub-units is both necessary and desired.²¹¹

A military task force exemplifies an organization requiring high levels of communication and coordination to perform its main task. Running a civilian hospital is an example of an organization which in principle has the same requirements. Whereas a hospital is permanently located within a geographically confined area, and designed to repeat the same tasks over time, a military organization is principally established to solve a single mission, often unique, in an unspecified geographical area. Its various task units are not organizationally merged beyond the immediate mission. As missions change, so will the task organizations.

Interoperability at the tactical level is primarily a concern in offensive operations or raids. Tactics and procedures are therefore developed to enhance intra-team cooperation to counter or diminish interoperability issues. MJK and HJK have both conducted joint operations internally as well as with personnel or units from other nations. As long as teams are not mixed beyond a minimum level, interoperability does not pose the greatest challenge.²¹² The purpose of small unit tactics is to manage interdependence in small teams, not in large formations. This might not be optimal for individual missions or tasks, but it gives flexibility when tasks are repeated in different settings.

One possible mission requiring a large formation is the national counterterrorist task. Operations on maritime petroleum installations, potentially involving hostages, are necessarily personnel intensive. On the other hand, merging for the purpose of this task alone has not been an issue until recently, indicating either that the existing national counterterrorism strategy is flawed, or that the threat has changed.

To determine a merger on the basis of increased interoperability is therefore not necessarily as obvious as it might seem. It is, however, logical that the more the units are required to operate together, the more reasonable it seems to merge. Where the separation line is, however, is less clear.

Conclusion and Implications: Strategic Merge?

The preceding discussion is summarized in table 9. The discussion is based on a framework where special operations core capabilities are separated by service-domain (Navy/Army) and direct/indirect action capabil-

211 Daft, *Essentials of Organization ...*, p. 195.

212 Author's personal experience.

ities as shown in figure 9. Maximum flexibility is achieved when all quadrants are covered. Based on my analysis, NORSOE currently represents capabilities within quadrant 1 and 3, which represent direct action capabilities in both the land and naval domain. By increasingly focusing on the doctrinal task of Military Assistance, the spectrum of core capabilities, hence NORSOE’s flexibility will increase. This flexibility can only be achieved if current organizational structure is maintained. If not, a merged unit will naturally focus on direct action capabilities.

Factors	Merge
Spectrum of core capabilities	-
Complementary capabilities	+
Relevance for NATO and UN	-
NORSOF interoperability	+

Table 9: *Factors and influence on organizational redesign (merge).*

Table 9 ranks the four factors identified as important for current transformation. (+) indicates a merger of the existing units is more favorable, and (-) indicates that a merger is less favorable

According to this analysis, the factors *spectrum of core capabilities* and *relevancy for NATO and UN operations* will suffer from a merger solution. If MJK and HJK do not develop separate roles and missions, they are likely to represent similar capabilities and a merger is the most effective organizational design. Likewise, if interoperability requirements exceed an unspecified level, merging MJK and HJK seems more prudent than not.

The question is then whether one believes the service domain matters or not, and whether *Military Assistance* is fundamentally different from *Direct Action* and *Special Surveillance* and *Reconnaissance* as special operations tasks.

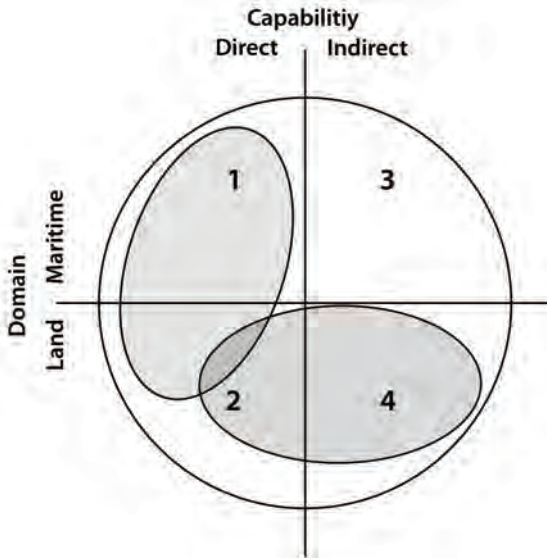


Figure 8: *Proposed separation of roles and missions.*

Assuming that one accepts this model and the subsequent conclusion – to maintain the current organization for maximum flexibility – the final question becomes how to divide roles internal to NORSO? I suggest a division of roles as illustrated in Figure 8. Direct action capabilities should remain MJK's priority, while indirect action capabilities should be assigned to HJK. Since neither task is mutually exclusive, overlapping capabilities will continue to exist. Overlapping capabilities are necessary for national purposes, and both units can act in a support/supportive function to each other. This is currently how the US SOF is organized to counter the ongoing insurgency in the southern Philippines. Here, US Army Special Forces are leading the counterinsurgency effort supported by the US SEAL teams.²¹³

This suggestion is based on the fact that stabilization missions are the domain of the army. It is the army that primarily performs the stabilizing effort in Afghanistan and Iraq. It will be an army responsibility to stabilize the Sudan conflict as well as other emerging conflicts. It therefore seems logical to assign the Military Assistance task to the HJK. Likewise, given Norway's primary interests are connected to the maritime environment, maintaining proficiency within maritime special operations seems

213 According to LtCol Greg Wilson, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. Wilson is former Commanding Officer of US Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines.

more prudent than not. HJK currently maintains this task. There is in principle no reason why this task need to continue to be an army task, just as it is not obvious to assign naval units for missions into the deserts of Afghanistan.

This division of roles and missions would enhance national capability across the spectrum of special operations, which was a goal in Parliamentary Bill no. 42 (2003-2004). The division would also underscore and increase NORSOFF's status as a niche capability in NATO. NORSOFF future roles and missions are illustrated in Figure 9, which separates national from international roles, shows maritime and land warfare in a national context, and distinguishes direct from indirect action in an international context.

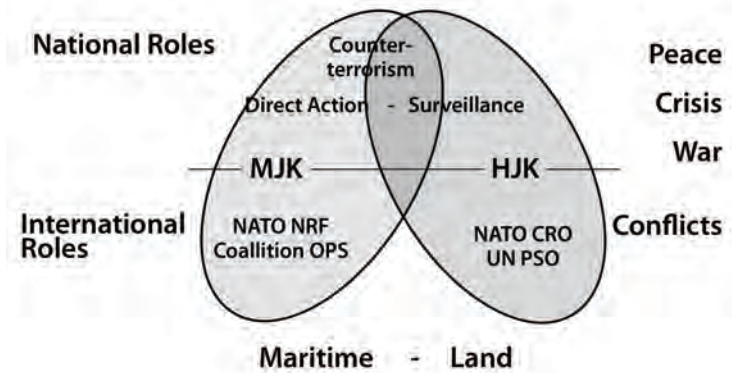


Figure 9: NORSOFF future roles and missions separated on units.

There are clear challenges involved in this proposal. One challenge is that indirect capabilities are not needed to defend the nation state. Without having discussed the practical implications of introducing indirect capabilities, there are clearly costs involved. Important factors to develop indirect action capabilities include increased focus on language training, cultural knowledge, civil/military governance and so forth. These skills are not acquired overnight. A fundamental question is whether Norway wants to offer this capability as a niche to NATO and the UN?

A second challenge, arguably the biggest, is that indirect action capabilities are necessary or useful only to the extent that the overall strategy supports an indirect action approach as defined by Tucker and Lamb. To “unilaterally” introduce this capability in a NATO framework is therefore less prudent. NATO must, however, improve its strategy in Afghanistan very soon, to include civil/military cooperation, or potentially face a strategic defeat, as the Soviet did to the Taliban.

The hypothesis initially proposed was that current NORSOF organizational structure is inconsistent with future missions and roles. As stated above, whether this is true or not depends first of all on national strategic choices. The debate whether to merge or not is only relevant to the extent these choices exist. As shown in the initial chapter, reorganizing NORSOF has been an issue of organizational design rather than operational requirements. A more prudent approach would be to assess future requirements in order to make the right strategic choices for future transformation.

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