Lockheed Martin photo

Lockheed C-130J *Hercules* in Canadian markings.

CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS MOBILITY – GETTING THE RIGHT TOOLS

by Bernard Brister

Introduction

In June 2006, the Department of National Defence (DND) announced a series of capital acquisitions for the Canadian Forces (CF), as part of what is known as the "Canada First" Defence Procurement Program. Among the acquisitions were a series of three joint-support ships, 16 medium-to-heavy lift helicopters, 17 fixed-wing aircraft for tactical airlift, and four fixed-wing aircraft for strategic airlift. These acquisitions involve an estimated total expenditure of more than $17-billion over the life of the various projects.[1]

The program appears to be on track, for the most part, with the awarding of contracts for the 16 helicopters, 17 tactical and four strategic fixed-wing aircraft having been placed. The strategic-lift aircraft, the Boeing C-17 *Globemaster III,* have already been delivered and are in service. The helicopters, 16 CH47F *Chinooks,* are on order, but, as an interim measure, Canada will be operating six older CH47D models on short-term lease in support of the operations in Afghanistan prior to the end of Calendar Year 2008. The delivery dates and schedules for the tactical lift aircraft, the C130J *Hercules,* have yet to be announced publicly, and the specifications for the joint-support ships are still being developed.[2] These acquisitions are intended to rebuild, and, in some cases, to *increase* the strategic, operational, and tactical mobility of Canada's armed forces, such that the ability of the Canadian government to project power in support of national sovereignty and Canadian interests abroad is enhanced.

The public discourse with respect to these "Canada First" initiatives has been varied, but, perhaps not surprisingly, what has been missing to date has been any discussion with respect to the potential multiplier effect these initiatives might have upon a political asset already recognized for its effectiveness in the pursuit of Canadian interests – the Special Forces and Special Operations Forces of the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM).[3] The intent of this article is to remedy that shortcoming, and to discuss the implications of these capital acquisitions upon tactical, operational, and strategic mobility, and the resulting change in the ability of the Canadian special

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operations community to project power in pursuit of Canadian interests at home and abroad. The discussion in the following paragraphs will attempt to flow logically from the identification of what capabilities the community currently possesses, the capabilities it requires in order to be most effective, the extent to which the new acquisitions can meet these capability requirements, and, finally, a summary assessment of the utility of the recent commitments to enhance the overall effectiveness of the special operations community in supporting government policy at home and abroad. The analysis and discussion will necessarily be restricted only to those sources and capabilities that lend themselves to an open source, or unclassified, examination.

What We Have

The air and maritime mobility assets presently available to CANSOFCOM are limited in number. On the maritime front, there are no purpose-built naval vessels available at the strategic, operational, or tactical level currently. However, there are Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment (AOR) ships in the inventory, as well as destroyers and frigates stationed in Halifax and Esquimalt, and while these vessels have a generic support capability as maritime warfare platforms, they do not possess specific SOF capabilities for which they have been designed, trained, and equipped.

The strategic air mobility picture is no different. The air force possesses the CC-150 *Polaris* (Airbus 310) for passenger and limited cargo movements. However, the age, the relatively small carriage capacity by current standards of these aircraft, and the limited number of them in the inventory make them suitable for maintaining limited operations once they are established, but they are largely inappropriate for the large-scale movement of men and materiel across the country or the world in order to quickly establish a presence, or to extract our men and women from an impending disaster in a timely manner. The heavy demands placed upon these aircraft, even for the day-to-day support of CF operations, makes them largely unavailable for special operations, barring an executive order that essentially would cripple the CF air movement plan for weeks or months thereafter.[4]

The situation with respect to tactical airlift is unfortunately no better. With an aging CC-130 *Hercules* fleet that must do triple duty at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels to make up for shortfalls in all three areas, there is little room for the specialized training, capability, and allocation of these assets to the high demand and high readiness world of special operations.[5]

Indeed, there are several examples of the extent to which both the *Polaris* and *Hercules* fleets are simply not able to cope with their conventional tasks, let alone the unique requirements of the special operations community. Two such examples are embodied in the Winnipeg floods of 1997, and the eastern Canada ice storm of 1998. In both instances, airlift capacity generously made available from the United States Air Force (USAF) had to be utilized to address these critical issues of domestic security. Even with this American support, only a portion of the required equipment could be moved to the afflicted areas, and then, only in accordance with the priorities and scheduling of another sovereign state.[6]

These events, coupled with the present airlift burden of supporting operations in Afghanistan, serve to highlight the fatal flaws in the argument of those who contend that if one needs a moving van, one rents it rather than buying it. In terms of strategic airlift, the commercial availability of large-volume lift aircraft is *decreasing* in relation to demand, not *growing,* with demand consistently exceeding availability since late last year.[7] Additionally, commercial aircraft are not reliably available either at all or on short notice, but are allocated to what is effectively the highest bidder on an 'as available' basis. They also do not travel to war zones, disaster areas, or even some relatively austere operating locations, due to the risk involved. In many cases, these are the very areas that must be accessed regularly to support Canadian deployments, for sovereignty (i.e., the Arctic), disaster relief, international development, and to fulfill

DND photo PW2007-0007-10

JTF 2 personnel at a typically dynamic moment.

the national responsibility to protect. Lastly, the availability of these commercial resources is frequently linked to the policies of a host government, which may or may not be aligned with those of Canada on a given issue, thus raising yet another sovereignty concern for Canadian policies and interests.[8]

Taken in its entirety, the paucity of integral airlift, and the uncertainties and 'strings attached' to the commercial market for this commodity, illustrate the dire straits within which the CF has operated for almost a decade. In these circumstances, and notwithstanding the best efforts of the military community, the provision of strategic, operational, or tactical fixed-wing airlift support for special operations has always been an uncertain proposition, and it has carried with it a significant price tag in terms of the operational penalty paid in other parts of the CF for each instance of support.

"The situation with respect to tactical airlift is unfortunately no better."

The situation with respect to helicopter support of any kind to the special operations community is only a little better. Although some peripheral support is provided by the CH-124 *Sea King* fleet, it is incidental to its regular duties with the navy, and it may or may not be available or suitable when it is required. The only helicopters or aircraft specifically dedicated to the support of special operations are the CH-146 *Griffons* of 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (SOAS).[9] Even in this case, the capabilities this helicopter brings to the special operations community are limited.

It is readily acknowledged that the *Griffon* is not capable of performing all the required roles in support of SOF operations, and it is being employed as an interim platform for the execution of only the most essential domestic SOF tasks until a more suitable platform becomes available.[10]

Taken as a whole, the air and maritime mobility capabilities of the Canadian special operations community appear to be in much the same condition as those of the CF in general – namely, there are just too few assets to go around. Those aircraft that are currently available must be kept in a central pool to ensure that the highest-priority airlift requirements of the CF are addressed in a form of ongoing 'triage' process. This, in turn, makes any form of asset dedication or task specialization an impossible dream, if the greatest benefit to the widest client base is to be derived from the few resources that are available. Contemplation of the impact of the impending capital acquisitions becomes a very appealing task after one considers the grim realities iterated in the preceding paragraphs. Before this can be done, however, it is important to first identify those air and maritime mobility capabilities in the special operations community that will have the greatest effect upon increasing their value and usefulness in the attainment of Canadian objectives at home and abroad.

What We Need

A mobility capability has three components; availability, dedication, and specialization. 'Availability' speaks to the concept that, in general terms, there is a given amount of a particular resource available within a system. Ideally, resource availability is set by those in authority at a level that satisfies demands for the service under normal circumstances. Availability also implies that, in those circumstances where the system is overloaded, there exists a rational prioritization and allocation system that will make best use of a resource in order to address the highest priority interests and objectives – the 'triage' process mentioned earlier.

The second component of mobility capability, that of 'dedication,' refers to the idea that an organization can rely upon the provision of specific resources only when that asset is assigned formally to that entity as part of its integral make-up, or when it is so allocated on a first-priority basis. The sole example of this component present at the moment in the Canadian special operations case is that of 427 SOAS, which is now under the 'operational command' of CANSOFCOM. A detailed discussion of command and control relationships is beyond the scope of this article, but, generally speaking, a relationship of operational command, or even operational *control* in specified circumstances, assures the user that certain resources will be made available to them, and that they can be relied upon for the execution of key parts of the mission.

The last component, that of 'specialization,' refers to the idea that a basic mobility capability can be enhanced with specialized equipment, training, and operational procedures to increase the value and the utility of the capability, such that it allows the user to perform at a higher level of effectiveness than would otherwise be the case. In the special operations context, this could involve the provision of aircraft with specialized low-level navigation capabilities, as well as crews who regularly qualify to operate these aircraft at lower levels, in poorer weather, or in other reduced operating conditions required by the demands of the specialized task.

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As was mentioned earlier, all three components of the mobility capability, namely, availability, dedication, and specialization, are at a premium in the CF. From the maritime perspective, there is limited availability, and there is no dedication or specialization present *at*

all. Strategic and operational level air mobility is available to the special operations community only in limited cases of the highest priority, and dedication or specialization of these assets is not possible without further reducing an already limited general capability. Special operations tactical helicopter mobility, however, does possess all three components, and, as such, it provides 'the rosiest picture' in the mobility landscape. But even then, the platform upon which it is based is of limited utility *domestically,* and is not employed at all *internationally.*[11]

What should a viable and robust special operations mobility capability look like? What is required to get the job done? To answer these questions, one must briefly examine some of the circumstances of the 2003 invasion of Iraq that witnessed what was arguably the greatest deployment and concentration of special operations forces in history.

One of the most critical considerations with respect to the deployment of each nation's Special Forces Task Forces (SF TF) was the ability of that SF TF to address its own mobility requirements. This requirement extended from the *strategic* need to deploy and redeploy into/from the theatre with the required men and equipment, to an in-theatre *tactical* mobility, be it ground (vehicles) or air (aviation.)[12]

Strategic lift is extremely expensive for any nation to acquire and to maintain, and it is this type of transport that is in chronically short supply among nations requiring a global or strategic reach for their militaries. Certainly, in times of a crisis that would generate the requirement for a coalition, each individual nation's lift capability would be fully utilized in moving its own forces to and from the fight. The commitment of an SF TF by a contributing nation, without a parallel commitment of the strategic lift to deploy/re-deploy, therefore had little value beyond being that of being a symbolic gesture.

Integral mobility in theatre, whether it is tactical or operational, was also a critical prerequisite to an effective SF contribution.[13] As with strategic lift, there were few nations capable of fielding sufficient operational and tactical lift to support their forces. The ability to deploy fixed-wing aircraft (i.e. MC-130 *Hercules*) with the specialized navigation and defensive suites, combined with an air-to-air refueling (AAR) capability, ensures that the national forces have the support they need for the missions for which they have been deployed. Reliance upon these resources from other coalition nations is an option, but it is not viable when one considers that national needs will be addressed only when they suit the agenda and priorities of another nation's armed forces.

Similarly, the possession of rotary-wing, medium-lift helicopters with the same specialized equipment, including an AAR capability, provides increased tactical mobility and flexibility for the execution of the SF mission. Taken altogether, the possession of sufficient strategic, operational, and tactical air mobility to support itself by a nation deploying an SF TF has the effect of putting that nation firmly into the top echelon of contributors, and on the list of preferred military coalition partners. Without such mobility, regardless of the quality of the men, an SF TF is of limited value in most coalition situations and *could* even be viewed as a liability.[14]

General concepts aside, what were the specific capabilities of some of our traditional allies that made their contributions so valuable? Not surprisingly, the Americans deployed what is arguably considered the 'gold standard' capability. The US provided the greatest support capability with AC-130 gunships, a number of C-130 variants each with a specific tactical or operational capability ranging from deep penetration with air-to-air refueling to psychological operations (Psyops) mission profiles, and an aviation inventory of medium-to-heavy lift H-47 *Chinook* helicopters, H-53 *Super Stallions,* and H-60 *Blackhawks,* each with specific, low-level navigation, self-defence, radar/FLIR, and/or air-to-air refueling capabilities.

The United Kingdom provided what could be considered a mid-range capability by virtue of a number of C-130s flown by specially trained crews and equipped with enhanced navigation and self-defence systems. The British also contributed a number of H-47 *Chinooks,* as well as some *Lynx* helicopters that were similarly equipped and capable.

DND photo PW2007-0009-31

Another shot of JTF 2 personnel on the move.

Michael Davis/Australian Department of Defence 20070722adf8246638_209

Australian commandos in training.

Last, but possibly of the greatest interest, the Australians deployed air and aviation mobility assets with their task force in what might be considered a baseline contribution or capability. The Australian SF was in the initial stages of developing its organic SF air and aviation capability at the time the Iraq crisis occurred. Thus, while they have a longer-term development plan that visualizes specially trained crews with uniquely configured aircraft assigned an SF role, the Australians were unable to deploy that capability for the Iraq campaign.

The Australians did, however, provide three standard configuration C-130s as a contribution to the SF air support fleet. While they were not SF-capable, they did provide a contribution to the operational airlift pool that, in turn, provided leverage for obtaining fixed-wing airlift support, where and when they needed it. Thus, even though the Australian SF air capability was in the early stages of its development, the deployment of basic resources in this campaign was seen as an effective way of pushing that development forward.

As with the *air* capability, the Australian SF *aviation* capability was just being developed at the time, and 3 x H-47 *Chinook* basic configuration airframes were deployed on this operation to further this development process, and to assist in securing an influential place for Australia in the coalition.

The key aspects of all of these three national mobility capabilities will now be itemized. First, each of these organizations brought with them all of the mobility capabilities they required. In no case were they dependent upon anyone else in the coalition for mobility support. They were able to deploy, maintain themselves, move about the battlefield, and to re-deploy with their own resources at the times and places of their choosing. Within the context of operations within an international coalition, the most likely scenario for Canada both now and in the future – the ability to arrive at the fight, to get the job done, and then to go home using one's own resources – differentiates the valued contributors from what might be considered the special operations 'posers.'[15]

The second key aspect is illustrated by the Australian example. The immediate expenditure of large amounts of funding and resources toward the dedication and specialization of aircraft and crews is not a prerequisite to the development of a fully-mobile force that garners significant value and influence within a coalition

Michael Davis/Australian department of Defence 20070722adf8246638_041

More Australian commandos honing their fighting skills.

context. The only *real* requirement is the establishment of a basic capability in these areas and the presence of a development program aimed at gradual improvement of those capabilities over time.

The Australian strategic capability to deploy and maintain itself in-theatre, combined with its nascent operational and tactical contributions to the special operations mobility pool, were sufficient to generate a significant amount of political influence and benefit. Regardless of whether one agrees with the rationale or the policies involved with the war in Iraq, no one can argue credibly that the limited Australian contribution to that conflict (Canada, even in denial, contributed close to the same volume, if not the same type of resources) garnered an impressive degree of cooperation from the United States in the pursuit of Australian political and policy objectives in the months and years that followed the Australian deployment.

Thus, it would appear that rather than aspiring to the American 'gold standard' of special operations mobility, and, quite probably, to living in a world of ongoing disappointment and frustration, Canada might reasonably pursue what could be considered the 'Australian option,' involving the acquisition of a basic mobility capability, and, thereafter, its development to the extent possible in terms of dedication and specialization. If this is the most viable option for Canada, the question then becomes whether the Canadian special operations mobility agenda is actually being advanced by the "Canada First" defence procurement initiatives.

What We Are Getting

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the "Canada First" procurement initiatives include, among other items, the acquisition of three joint-support ships, 16 medium-to-heavy-lift helicopters, 17 fixed-wing tactical transport aircraft, and four C-17 *Globemaster III* strategic transport aircraft. From the general strategic mobility perspective, the acquisition of the *Globemasters* is an excellent choice. The C-17 can operate to and from relatively austere locations similar to the C-130 *Hercules,* and it has the strategic reach of an A-310 *Polaris*. It can move almost four times as much cargo as a C-130, and 30 percent more than an A-310 at a cost that is one-fifth that of a C130 and four-fifths that of an A-310.[16] The acquisition of this capacity will provide a much needed increase in the strategic-lift capabilities of the Canadian Forces, allowing it to better cope with existing day-to-day demands for lift, and giving it a broader base from which to address 'surge' requirements brought about by the start-up or close-out of an overseas operation, or the advent of a crisis or disaster requiring a high-volume, short-notice reaction. It is important to note, for both this and for the other mobility capabilities under discussion, that the advantages being discussed here apply equally well to both domestic and international situations and circumstances.

"The C-17 can operate to and from relatively austere locations similar to the C-130 *Hercules,* and it has the strategic reach of an A-310 *Polaris.*"

Unlike other nations, such as the United Kingdom, France, or Germany, whose strategic-lift capabilities can be applied in international situations only, the capabilities that Canada is in the process of acquiring and of expanding upon can be applied both at home and abroad. Whether it is moving personnel and equipment or supplies from one coast to the other, or from anywhere in Canada to anywhere in the Arctic, the volume and speed at which the C-17s can accomplish these tasks represents a huge increase in capacity to respond to demands for mobility.

Yet another benefit that accrues from the C-17 purchase relates specifically to the fact that Canada's major allies use the same aircraft as the mainstay of their own strategic-lift capabilities. What this means for

DND photo CK2007-0456-37

A Canadian *Globemaster III* readies for flight.

Canadians is that there is an interoperability in both operations and maintenance of the capability that will reduce the overall operating costs of the Canadian capability and enhance its availability by reducing time lost through the occurrence of unserviceabilities abroad. The value of the C-17 purchase is even further enhanced by its ability to fit into any coalition strategic-lift capability as a recognized and interoperable asset that brings excellent value, and, therefore, a measure of influence to the coalition table.

The specific special operations advantages of the C-17 purchase are general in nature, and they are more along the lines of an increase in the overall capacity of the system to the extent that support for special operations missions will increase at a reduced cost to the rest of the CF mobility system. In terms of specific capability, the characteristics of the C-17 will, not surprisingly, permit a faster deployment of a larger special operations capability to a broader range of locales, both domestic and international.

The advantages of the upcoming purchase of 17 C-130J *Hercules* tactical transport aircraft are similar in nature to those of the C-17, but with a few subtle differences worth noting. In addition to generally increasing the tactical air mobility of the CF, and therefore increasing the likelihood of reliable support to special operations missions when necessary without trauma to the CF capability as a whole, the acquisition of this advanced *Hercules* variant would have the same advantages of interoperability and economy of operation that was discussed with respect to the C-17. Additionally however, the increase in mobility represented by the C-17 and C-130 at the strategic and tactical level within the CF in general (availability) opens up the possibility of the 'dedication' of several of these assets to the ongoing support of special operations in general. While the exact command and control and support specifics of these aircraft should they be dedicated to CANSOFCOM, is beyond the scope of this article, such an assignment would greatly facilitate the development of a higher degree of expertise in some advanced skill sets. These skill sets, once developed and nurtured within the CANSOFCOM environment, could be made available, not only to the special operations community, but to the national security capability as a whole on a priority basis.

As indicated earlier, the dedication of some of these aircraft to the special operations community would facilitate the development of the third component of a mobility capability; that of "specialization." The aircraft dedicated to the special operations community could undergo modification to facilitate an AAR capability, could be fitted with enhanced defensive suites, as well as low-level bad-weather navigation capabilities that would further increase the value of a Canadian contribution to any coalition. As with the other advantages, these specially modified aircraft *can* and *should* also be used domestically to further enhance Canadian sovereignty over its territories, no matter how remote the location or forbidding the weather conditions.

Nathan Hoskins/DVIDS 102246

Two new CH-47F *Chinook* helicopters.

Moving on to consideration of the CH-47F *Chinook* helicopters, the selection of this platform will, as it has with the C-17 and C-130J, serve to enhance interoperability with our allies, and to reduce the fleet operating costs for the Canadian taxpayer, while simultaneously increasing fleet utilization. And, as with the C-130J *Hercules,* in addition to 'availability,' there are also the options of 'dedication' and 'specialization' that would provide a more complex and sophisticated capability that could then be used broadly throughout the Canadian security infrastructure, both at home and abroad.

Lastly, there is the addition to the special operations capabilities that would be represented by the acquisition of the joint-support ships. Although at first glance, the utility of such vessels in a special operations context might not be entirely apparent, a closer examination of the capabilities embodied in these vessels will quickly make such benefits clearly visible. The best means of illustration is through comparison with some of Canada's allies, in this case, the Australians and the 'Kiwis' (New Zealanders). Both nations are developing a maritime capability that will permit sustained operations away from the homeland, but within their areas of interest at remote locations unsupportable by air assets or land bases. They are both developing ships that can deploy with and sustain the operations of moderate-sized force groupings with capabilities that include command and control, supply and maintenance, helicopter transport, and medical care.

Canada has a requirement for such a capability in support of both domestic and international operations. In the domestic context, the ability to quickly deploy one of the joint-support ships to support sovereignty operations of any sort in a remote Arctic, Pacific, or Atlantic coastal region of Canada would clearly demonstrate Canadian resolve to maintain control over the territory it has claimed. The long list of specified capabilities for the ships, including the navigation of first-year Arctic ice, will provide a robust and sustainable sovereignty presence anywhere on the three oceans bordering our nation. Indeed, the capability represented by the C-17 to quickly deploy large volumes of personnel and equipment, bolstered by the use of the C-130 and H-47 fleets to support operations in the area of interest, followed shortly thereafter by the arrival of a joint-support ship for the longer-term support of an ongoing operation, would represent possibly the strongest show of resolve possible in any circumstances short of developing a widespread and permanent military presence in the nation's northern regions.

With respect to specific applications in a special operations context, the use of such a ship would allow for the conduct of sustained low-profile operations in a littoral theatre of operations without the requirement for political negotiation, or the cost or security requirements associated with a land-based operation. Such a ship could easily form part of and support an existing Canadian naval commitment to the coalition of the moment, in addition to forming a floating base of operations for a substantial special operations capability.

Conclusion – Toward a Special Operations Mobility Capability

The common theme in all of the discussions undertaken in the preceding pages has been one of power projection. The question has been: how do the announced acquisitions under the "Canada First" Defence Procurement Program increase the ability of the Canadian government to project power, and how can these increases be best utilized as a force multiplier to further enhance the unique value and contributions of the special operations community in the pursuit of Canadian interests at home and abroad?

The opening paragraphs of this article included a description of the weakened or atrophied ability of the CF, DND, and the government of Canada to project their influence across the country and around the world, with the consequent reduction in our ability to influence domestic and international events in Canada's favour. It is a fact that that Canada has been in the position of having to stand in line for a market-driven and/or politicized commercial capability, or for going 'hat-in-hand' to allies for assistance to be provided on their terms

and in accordance with their policies, or just doing without and accepting the consequent limitations to our national goals and objectives.

The key ingredients to a mobility capability at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels were then examined. Specifically studied were those components that might be considered robust and sufficient to the extent that they would allow Canada to pursue its own national objectives both domestically or internationally, and in doing so, to maintain sovereignty over territories and polices, while at the same time providing contributions that have value and garner influence for the achievement of national goals and objectives in the international community.

"Canada has a requirement for such a capability in support of both domestic and international operations."

Lastly examined were the multitude of ways in which the projected "Canada First" purchase of aircraft, helicopters, and ships will, in fact, enhance Canadian capabilities in all of these areas in general and within a special operations context in particular. It has become clear from the examination conducted that these acquisitions are essential to the effective support of our national objectives at home and abroad, and that the absence of these capabilities makes our policies somewhat hollow and lacking in credibility. It is also clear that they will further enhance the value and cost-effectiveness of the deployment of special operations capabilities, both domestically and internationally, simply by fulfilling the 'available' criteria. If the dedication and specialization criteria are pursued, there will be even greater benefits resulting from these purchases in both special operations capabilities and the support for Canadian goals and objectives at home and abroad.

Thus, the inescapable conclusion is that the capital acquisitions under the "Canada First" program are a boon for the Canadian Government, given their ability to improve power projection capabilities in the pursuit of Canada's domestic and international interests. The addition of these air and maritime platforms greatly enhances the value of the Canadian Forces in general, and of CANSOFCOM in particular, as instruments of Canadian power projection within a coalition context *internationally* or a sovereignty context *domestically*.

DND photo MF95S0856

JTF 2 members on patrol in Afghanistan.

NOTES

1. "Canada First" Defence Purchases – A Commitment to Canadians. NR-06.035, dated 29 June 2006.
2. Minister's Speech – The Canada First Defence Strategy: Excellence at Home and Leadership Abroad, Halifax, NS, 12 May 2008.
3. For the purposes of this article, Special Forces (SF) are defined as those forces specifically selected, trained, equipped, and tasked with a range of missions outside the spectrum of conventional military operations. Special Operations Forces (SOF) are defined as those forces selected, trained, and equipped for a range of tasks, some of which exist outside the spectrum of conventional military operations. SF are traditionally considered "Tier One" assets capable of the most difficult of these specialized tasks. SOF are often described as "Tier Two or Tier Three" assets, with capabilities greater than conventional military units and operating in support of SF and/or independently on some specialized tasks. For a more detailed discussion of the SF vs. SOF and the Tier rating scale, see Bernard J. Brister. Canadian Special Operations Forces: A Blueprint for the Future, in Casting Light on the Shadows: Canadian Perspectives on Special Operations Forces, Colonel Bernd Horn and Major Tony Balasevicius (eds.), Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), pp. 285-300. Definitions adapted from Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), pp. xxiv, xxv, and 5-7.
4. 3350-1(COS J3) SOF Airlift Requirements, dated 22 April 2003. Released under AIA A0189088.
5. SOF Airlift Requirement, dated 20 May 2004. Released under AIA A0189087.
6. Canada had to resort to allied or commercial airlift at the timing and discretion of other governments or the availability of the marketplace no fewer than 222 times between January 1999 and January 2002. Briefing to the Minister of National Defence, 11 April 2003. Released under AIA A0189089.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Both companies are either directly owned by or significantly controlled by their home governments. Canada. *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Canada's International Policy Statement.* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2005): p. 20. See also Canada. *Securing and Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy.* (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 2004): pp. 21, 47. The two largest companies for the provision of commercial airlift are located in Russia and the Ukraine. See also Briefing to the Minister of National Defence, dated 11 April 2003. Released under AIA A0189089.
9. 3030-1 (CANSOFCOM) Transfer of OpCom 427 SOAS, dated 10 April 2006. Released under AIA A0189081.
10. 3030-2-4(A3 Tac Avn) Working Group Report dated 27 May 2004. Released under AIA A0189085.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Interview with Senior British SAS Officer, 25 April 2003.
13. Interview with Senior Australian SAS Officer, 27 March 2003.
14. These assets, along with their highly trained crews, will also generate an increase in a nation's strategic reach and therefore influence that will pay significant if subtle benefits on the political and diplomatic fronts as well. The ability to project power quickly in support of allies, large or small, close to home or far away, generates a tremendous amount of appreciation/cooperation. Interview with Senior Australian SAS Officer, 27 March 2003.
15. Coalition partners frequently contribute resources with minimal capabilities simply to get political credit for participation. In other instances, they use the deployment to obtain valuable equipment and experience/capabilities from their more capable allies. Although it is politically expedient to accept all contributions to a coalition, national elements that deploy with limited capabilities are a burden to a coalition and they garner little if any influence.
16. Briefing to the Minister of National Defence, 11 April 2003. Released under AIA A0189089.

DND photo AR2008-Z132-02 by Simon Duchesne