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In a world in which the use of violence continues to be viewed as an acceptable method to pursue political goals, the use of terrorism as a political method will also continue. And within that world, in the coming years, hostage rescues and other direct actions to combat terrorism are likely to be the most frequent type of missions conducted by state special operations forces, including those of Romania.

This thesis explores the importance of integrating three types of decisions—informational, structural, and operational—for the successful outcome of special operations. The thesis analyzes four operations, conducted by American, Belgian, and Israeli forces, and the circumstances of their positive or negative outcomes. The historical cases show that, if any one of the three types of decisions was not integrated with the other two, the operation was doomed. The analysis also reveals that the integration of decision-making can best be realized by using interagency coordination mechanisms and a collocation of decision-makers, especially for situations in which command arrangements are highly complicated or unclear.

In light of the findings in the four case studies, an analysis of the Romanian Special Operations Forces reveals that its overall structure does not favor either immediate-response or high-complexity missions. The thesis concludes with a number of recommendations for short- and long-term mitigation of current command and control problems faced by Romanian Special Operations Forces.
DECISIONS INTEGRATION: A CRITICAL NECESSITY FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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I. INTRODUCTION

Command and control can best be appreciated by considering the penalties for its failure.

(Snyder, 1993, p. 10)

A. BACKGROUND

1. The Romanian Politico-military Context

The last century has brought Romania two global confrontations and a large number of regional wars. Recent years have been characterized by the rise of terrorism, but also the demise of the communist block. Former members of the Warsaw Pact, once enemies of Western countries, have become significant military contributors to global stability along with their former adversaries.

Romania, a former member of the Warsaw Pact, has been contributing peacekeepers since 1993, and became a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member in April 2004. These developments have created pressure on Romanian politico-military decision-makers to integrate NATO's needs into Romania’s national security needs. The risk assessment part of Romania’s National Security Strategy suggests that Romania will not fight a conventional war in the immediate future due to its relatively good relations with its neighbors (Consiliul, 1999). Though Romania’s international relations seem fine, terrorism and transnational organized crime are sub-national threats to stability in the Black Sea and Balkan Regions.

Currently, four light-infantry battalions from the Romanian Army are involved in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their battlefield experience, although extensive, is restricted to peacekeeping type missions, such as patrolling, guarding, humanitarian assistance, and convoy protection.

Consequently, the Romanian military has undertaken serious transformations in two areas: 1) the improvement of combat readiness simultaneous with the process of renewal of combat systems and equipment in
order to be a credible contributor to NATO’s military capability; and 2) the creation of a set of units able to deal with sub-national threats (Consiliul, 1999; Sorin, 2004).

2. **The Romanian Special Operations Forces (SOF)**

   In order to shape military capabilities for terrorism-related threats, the Romanian Supreme Council of National Defense (SCND) has coordinated or authorized a set of transformations with regard to the military sector. First, in March 2002, the Romanian Minister of National Defense (MoND) authorized the creation of a central structure responsible for Special and Counterterrorism operations: the Special Forces and Counterterrorism Bureau under the Operation Directorate (J3), General Staff. Second, in April 2003, the SCND authorized the creation of the 1st Special Operations Battalion. Third, the Romanian Ministry of National Defense (MoND) approved *The Doctrine for Special Operations* (Romanian Ministry of National Defense, 2003).

   These three decisions, made in a very short time, shaped the Romanian Special Operations Forces’ missions, structure, and command and control relations. Though based on United States Special Operations Forces missions, the Romanian doctrine establishes a very different chain of command, and consequently a different repartition of authorities and responsibilities in the conduct of operations by Romanian SOF.

3. **The Priorities for the Romanian Special Operations Forces**

   Three documents frame the priorities for the Romanian Special Operations Forces (SOF):
   
   - *Romania’s National Security Strategy*
   - *Romania’s Military Strategy*
   - *The Doctrine for Special Operations*.

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1 The Supreme Council of National Defense (SCND) is the deciding body with regard to the following matters: the strategic concept of national defense, the national defense system, declaration of war, cessation of war, and coordinates the responses during crises. The following officials are statutory members of the SCND: the President, the Prime-minister, the Minister of Economy, the Minister of National Defense, the Interior Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs the director of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), and the director of the External Intelligence Service (SIE) (The Romanian Parliament, 1990, p. 1).
There is a common thread in the first two documents that can be summarized along the following lines: the constant global threat of terrorist attacks suggests that nobody is safe and that all countries should take steps to actively combat terrorism. Consequently, the SCND assessed that the world’s future stability depends on wide international military cooperation rather than a single nation’s military defense sufficiency. However, our National Security Strategy states that the Romanian military must be capable of undertaking operations, even unilaterally, to defend the country’s vital national interests (Consiliul, 2000). Therefore, two of the sixteen types of missions assigned to the Romanian SOF take priority over the rest: operations meant for combating terrorism (CBT) and direct actions (DA) conducted either unilaterally or in coalitions (Consiliul, 1999; Romanian Ministry of National Defense, 2003, p. 13).

Within “combating terrorism” missions, the MoND has emphasized three tasks that easily fit into the direct-action description: hostage rescues, recovery or capture of sensitive materiel, and the targeting of terrorist organization infrastructure (Romanian Ministry of National Defense, 2003, pp. 15-16).

B. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

The creation of the Romanian Special Forces represents a step forward in the transformation of the Romanian military. However, the novelty of its structure and of its missions precludes the Romanian political and military decision-makers from assessing the implications of that particular command and control relationship. This paper analyzes some command and control arrangements of various special operations and does not attempt to take the place of war gaming, command post exercises or simulations.

Based on Snyder’s theory of command and control, this paper examines the appropriateness of Romanian command and control relations (as reflected in the Doctrine for Special Operations) for DA or CBT missions which take place in situations other than war.
THESIS STATEMENT

In Command and Control: The literature and commentaries, Frank Snyder (1993) argues that the essence of the command and control process is informational, organizational, and operational decisions. He, then, argues that the intelligence decisions, made in relation to an event, are the basis for the organizational/structural decisions. In turn, the structure of the organization directly influences its operational effectiveness related to that particular event (p.12-13).

I therefore hypothesize that, for a special operation to be successful, integration of the informational, organizational, and operational decisions must be realized at the level of the special operation commander, or as close to that level as possible.

METHODOLOGY

In the absence of any operations conducted by the Romanian SOF, I have identified a set of operations conducted by other countries’ Special Operations Forces. From the abundant history of military operations, I selected cases that fit the following profile:

- Short duration
- Direct action or hostage rescue (CBT related)
- Undertaken in situations other than war.

Based on the pre-established profile, four operations qualified as appropriate case studies:

- November 24-26, 1964—OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE—a successful rescue of the hostages who had been held in Stanleyville, Congo;

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2 The commanders make informational decisions to establish what they believe the situation to be.

3 The organizational decisions establish a chain of command for the execution of operations, and the flow of reports and the responsibilities of each individual within the unit’s structure.

4 The operational decisions design the organizational response to the events/threats outlined in the mission received from the higher echelons.
• July 3-4, 1976—OPERATION THUNDERBALL/JONATHAN—a successful rescue of hostages held at the Entebbe Airport, Uganda;
• April 24-25, 1980—OPERATION EAGLE CLAW—an attempted rescue operation of the American hostages held in Teheran, Iran;
• October 3-4, 1993—OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT—Task Force Ranger’s raid in Mogadishu that triggered the withdrawal of the United States military presence in Somalia.

Coalitions of forces conducted the first and the fourth operations; single nations unilaterally conducted the second and the third operations. In each category (coalition action or unilateral action) only one of the two cases selected was successful.

Given the different values of the dependent variable (success/failure), I will study the selected cases using the controlled comparison based on the “difference method” (Yin, 1988; Van Evera, 1997, pp. 67-88). The three types of decisions proposed by Snyder are the coordinates of the analysis for each case study. I will conclude each case by analyzing the integration of decisions. I expect, in the successful cases, to identify a high level of integration of the decisions made at the special operation commander’s level or at the level immediately above. Conversely, I expect to identify gaps, or no integration at all, between the levels integrating all decisions and the special operation commander’s level,

**E. THESIS OUTLINE**

Chapter I introduces the problem and the proposed hypothesis. Additionally, it covers the methodology and the rationale for the selection of the cases.

Chapter II addresses the basic concepts necessary for understanding the phenomenon of command and control: command functions, command and control, and

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5 “In the method of difference the investigator explores several cases with similar characteristics and different values on the study variable…The investigator picks similar cases to reduce the number of candidate causes or effects that emerge: the more similar the cases, the fewer the candidate causes.” (Van Evera, 1997, pp. 68-69)
control processes, and the support system. Additionally, it presents some of the most representative military thinkers' opinions on the matter of command and control integration.

Chapter III is devoted entirely to the analysis of OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE. The operation was a combined Belgian-American effort to rescue Western citizens kept hostage in Stanleyville, Congo.

Chapter IV deals with OPERATION THUNDERBALL/JONATHAN: one of the most fascinating rescue operations ever conducted. Israeli Special Operations Forces raided Entebbe International Airport with the aim of rescuing 105 Israeli hostages\(^6\) taken by a terrorist group.

Chapter V covers OPERATION EAGLE CLAW: the attempted rescue operation of the American citizens held hostage in the United States Embassy in Teheran, Iran. The operation was cancelled half way through after seven aircraft were destroyed or incapacitated in the Iranian Desert.

Chapter VI analyzes OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT: a set of raids conducted by United States Task Force Ranger targeting the decapitation of the Somali National Authority's militia charged with the murder of 25 Pakistani peacekeepers. The raids resulted in 18 deaths on the American side and around one thousand on the Somalis' side. Following the shocking images of American corpses being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the United States withdrew its military presence in Somalia.

Chapter VII presents the conclusions drawn from the chapters III-VI, and addresses the potential issues related to the command and control architecture for Romanian SOF. Subsequently, based on the previous conclusions, it makes recommendations for the improvement of the command and control process for Romanian SOF.

\(^6\) The figure 105 includes the French crew of the Flight 139, who did not want to leave with the non-Jewish passengers released earlier.
II. COMMAND AND CONTROL: CONCEPTS, DEFINITIONS, AND THEORIES

Theory cannot equip the mind with formulas for solving problems,…But it can give the mind insight into the great mass of phenomena and of their relations, then leave it free to rise into the realm of action.

(Clausewitz, 1989, p. 578)

A. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Generalities

I will use the United States Department of Defense’s (DoD) definition of the “command and control” concept, for it comprehensively gathers the functions of command, the process and the structure supporting the command functions. DoD defines command and control as:

[T]he exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission. (DoD, 2004)

This definition is intrinsically linked with the authority and the responsibilities assigned to an individual or a structure with the aim of accomplishing a military mission. The term commander indicates an individual in a position of authority.

2. Command Functions

According to the definition provided by the United States’ Department of Defense, the functions of a commander consist of planning, directing, coordinating and controlling. Planning is conducted in order to answer at least five questions:
• What is the overall mission of the organization?
• What resources are available?
• How should the resources be allocated to accomplish the mission?
• Which tasks are to be fulfilled, with priority in order, to achieve the goals of the mission?
• Are there limitations imposed on the use of force?

Directing is the process of creating a structural relationship to carry out the mission established in the planning phase. Coordinating involves communicating the plans to the subordinates, motivating them to perform the tasks necessary to accomplish the overall mission. Controlling presupposes observation of the execution process and the corrective actions needed for ensuring the tasks are fulfilled for accomplishing the mission.

3. **Command and Control Process**

The process of command and control can be summarized as the “procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission” (DoD, 2004).

The command and control process includes the methods that commanders use to gather information on which to base their decisions, as well as the methods used to ensure that the decisions are carried out as planned. In other words, the process of command and control represents the transformation of information into directives (orders), and of directives into actions. In order to transform information into actions, the commanders make three types of decisions: operational, organizational (structural) and informational (Snyder, 1993, pp. 12-13).

The organizational or structural decisions establish a chain of command for the execution of an operation. Such decisions also establish a flow of reports and the responsibilities of each individual within the unit’s structure.
Commanders make informational decisions to establish what they believe the situation to be. They have to make such decisions because they do not always have complete data on the event for which they prepare.\footnote{These decisions provide the best estimate of the opponent/enemy’s characteristics: pattern, players, intention, payoff, place, time, strength, style and channel of communication (Whaley, 2004, pp. 81-95).}

Using the information received through the established channels, the commanders make operational\footnote{The term “operational” refers generically to the decisions made at any level that result in military actions (Snyder, 1993, p. 16).} decisions. These decisions design the organizational response to the event/threat outlined in the mission received from the higher echelons.

According to Snyder (1993, p. 60) the command and control process can be divided into four phases:

- Development of potential courses of actions (COA).
- Development of a plan to carry out the elected COA.
- Promulgation of a directive.
- Supervision of the planned action.

**4. Command and Control Support System**

The definition provided by the Department of Defense describes the command and control support system as “an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities and procedures” that allows the commander to perform his/her functions for mission accomplishment (DoD, 2004).

During the last decade, the command support system had multiple acronyms, such as C3\footnote{C3—command, control and communications.}, C4I\footnote{C4I—command, control, communications, computers and intelligence.}, and C4ISR\footnote{C4ISR—command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.}. Despite how different they are, the acronyms represent the same thing: the command and control support system. For the purpose of this paper, C4ISR and command and control support system will be considered interchangeable.
The underlying characteristics of the command and control process play a major influence in the design of a C4ISR for a certain operation. To expand, the underlying themes of the C4ISR can be summarized as the *people*, the *technology* and the *structures* that support the decision making and the mission accomplishment (Snyder, 1993, pp. 13-14).

All the people under the authority of a commander are part of the command and control system. Obviously, people at different levels in the hierarchy have different responsibilities and roles in decision-making.

The technology that supports the command and control process is composed of sensors, telecommunication systems, computer networks, databases and intelligence processing systems.

**B. THEORIES OF COMMAND AND CONTROL INTEGRATION**

Three military thinkers, like no others, have placed their philosophical mark on military operations: Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, and Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini. Without trying to summarize their work, I will point out how each of them addressed the issue of integrating command and control.

Sun-Tzu's (1988) book, *The Art of War*, is permeated by five themes that are addressed in each chapter: civil leadership, weather, terrain, military leadership, and discipline (p. 17). However discursive it may seem, the author covers each of the command functions (planning, coordinating, directing, and controlling), and provides advice for achieving political aims through military victory. Throughout his book, Sun-Tzu subordinates military action to a political purpose. Interestingly, although he argues for great civil-military integration, he points out that a certain degree of separation must exist between the civil leadership and the armies in order for the military to be effective (p. 79).

In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz starts his argument with the assumption that war (military action) is an instrument of statecraft. Consequently, he focuses mostly on the principles that must be followed in war for furthering the state’s political interests. That is why he does not address the command and control concept in a centralized fashion: it is safe to say that he addresses the issue as a
constant thread throughout his masterpiece. On the other hand, the author thoroughly analyzes the importance of integrating political purpose with military means.

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish … the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. (Clausewitz, 1989, p. 88)

Contemporary to Clausewitz, Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini (1996)—in The Art of War—addresses in separate chapters the components of the command and control process. Regarding the decision-making process, the latter places a great emphasis on acquiring accurate information (pp. 268-277), the proper composition of forces (pp. 277-290), and their deployment in battle (pp. 277-320). Jomini’s chapter “Logistics; or, the practical art of moving armies”, is an exquisite analysis of what the relations between the staff and the commander ought to be in the pursuit of military success (Jomini, 1996, pp. 252-277).

Each of the three authors analyzes the military action as an instrument of statecraft. Following from that, they all point out the need for military plans to fit into the overarching political strategy. Furthermore, Clausewitz and Jomini cover in depth the need to integrate the military services.\(^\text{12}\)

The major difference between the armies of present times and the ones fighting the Napoleonic wars\(^\text{13}\) resides in the way the absolute power of the emperor/supreme commander is separated now into a multitude of authorities assigned to different people. That is why my thesis attempts to shed light on a very small area of the command and control phenomenon: the need for integration.

\(^{12}\) Infantry, cavalry and artillery were the three services mentioned in both works.

\(^{13}\) Both Clausewitz and Jomini have drawn their ideas mainly from the Napoleonic Wars. Clausewitz was first published in 1831, Jomini in 1838, but they both served in the belligerent armies.
III. OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

This chapter briefly presents the political instability and the circumstances of the civil war in Congo between 1960 and 1965. With an eye on the Simba Rebellion, the chapter focuses on events pertaining to the rescue operation conducted by a Belgian-American task force in Stanleyville, Congo, in November 1964. The combined-joint military operation—known as DRAGON ROUGE—succeeded in evacuating more than 2,000 Western citizens kept hostage in the African country. Simba rebels used the foreigners as leverage in their negotiations with the Congolese government for political concessions.

In this chapter, I will show that the way responsibilities and authorities were assigned in relation to OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE helped the military decision-makers deal with the fast-changing situation and adjust their plans as more intelligence on the hostages became available. Although the United States and Belgium’s diplomatic and military efforts were not always coherent, the operation succeeded. The success is attributed by military analysts to the integrating mechanism used during the Congolese hostage crisis, and to the empowerment of the low-level commanders. Among the integrating mechanisms, combined planning conferences and coordination meetings seem to have played a crucial role in the success of the operation.

The chapter begins with the identification of organizational entities involved in all three types of decisions (informational, structural, and operational). It continues with an analysis of the role of integrating decisions in the success of the operation. In the conclusion, using a chart displaying the entities involved in all types of decisions, I analyze the extent to which the three types of decisions were integrated.
2. The Political Context in Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo gained its independence from Belgium colonial rule on June 30, 1960. Seventy-five years of colonial domination kept Congo politically undeveloped, rather than transforming the country into a self-sustaining system. The only advances were at the economic level where the copper, diamonds, and uranium-extraction industries were flourishing. In that context, the withdrawal of the Belgian authorities from Congo brought to the surface two insurmountable realities for the new state: the lack of educated people to take over the government, and the demographic diversity with its underlying clan culture. About the first aspect, there were only thirteen university graduates of Congolese descent working in the country (Odom, 1988, p. 3). In regard to the second aspect, the “14 million people [were] divided into 70 major ethnic groups, each subdivided into hundreds of tribes and clans, with over 400 dialects” (Wagoner, 1980, p. 6).

The two realities explain to some extent the continuous violent conflicts among the local warlords in their contest for power. In an attempt to stabilize the country, the newly formed Congolese government tried to employ the 24,000-man Force Publique (Public Force) against the warring factions. After independence, Force Publique’s Belgian officer corps started losing authority over the Congolese soldiers, later on resulting in the July 4, 1960, mutiny. With military discipline collapsing, the Belgian Government feared its citizens in Congo were in danger, and subsequently authorized the deployment of 10,000 Belgian soldiers on July 10, 1960 (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 8-9).

In response to the Belgian invasion, Joseph Kasavubu (the President of Congo) and Patrice Lumumba (the Prime Minister) asked the United Nations (UN) to send troops to secure Congolese territory. The UN troops helped the African government deal with two regions’ secession attempts and obtained the withdrawal of the Belgian forces. Following the accomplishment of its mandate,

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14 The Public Force was a combined frontier guard and a police force. The officer corps was entirely Belgian, whereas the soldiers were Congolese.
the UN troops withdrew, on June 1964, without getting involved in the unfolding crisis: the Simba Rebellion (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002, pp. 112-118).

The Simbas (lions)—the fighting bands of the *Conseil National de Liberation* (Liberation National Council)—unlike the previous secessionist groups, were no longer pushing for regional separation but for the complete overthrow of the existing order (Wagoner, 1980, p. 15). They emphasized the need for social justice, which, they considered, could only be achieved by the replacement of the central government. The Simbas’ movement started building in the autumn of 1963, but only erupted in overt violent acts on July 6, 1964 after the withdrawal of the UN troops. The violence in the Eastern Congo generalized during the month of July and on August 5, 1964, the third major city in Congo, Stanleyville, was occupied by the Simbas. At that point they began calling themselves *L’Armée Populaire de Liberation* (the Popular Army of Liberation) (APC). They took hostage more than 1,600 Westerners, among them 600 Belgians and around 50 United States citizens (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002, pp. 95-139).

3. **Operation DRAGON ROUGE**

Following the August 5, 1964, events, the United States and Belgium concomitantly, but separately, began planning for rescue operations. The first efforts were on the diplomatic level, where the United States attempted to negotiate the release of United States Consulate personnel in Stanleyville.

As the negotiations slowly progressed, the United States Undersecretary of State for Policy, Averell Harriman, proposed a combined US-Belgian effort in Congo. The Belgian foreign minister, Paul-Henry Spaak, embraced the idea, but emphasized the necessity of disguising the intervention under the cover of an international humanitarian effort (Odom, 1988, p. 14).

The first steps for containing the hostage crisis consisted of the deployment of 150 Belgian advisors to the *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC; The Congolese National Army) and the commitment of the United States Joint Task Force Leopoldville (JTF LEO) to support the Congolese Government in its quest to liberate the hostages (Odom, 1988, pp. 15-16). At the same time, with
the deployment of JTF LEO, the Congolese President assigned full military authority, in dealing with the Simbas, to his Belgian military adviser, Colonel Frederick Van de Waele. The latter took control of the Armée Nationale Congolaise, the white mercenaries paid by the Congolese Government, and the CIA-provided aircraft flown by Cuban pilots.

Van de Waele’s new position as the head of the Congolese counter-insurgency effort and the devastating results of the CIA aircraft attacks prompted the Simbas to declare that they were at war with the United States and Belgium. Consequently, the rebels declared the Belgian and United States citizens “prisoners of war”, on October 5, 1964 (Odom, 1988, p. 40). On November 1, 1964, the rebels started killing hostages in retaliation for the increased number of casualties inflicted by the CIA aircraft. That event signaled that the US State Department’s efforts to secure the release of the American citizens were fruitless.

Having failed diplomatically, the US did not assume the leading role in the rescue operation, which was graciously offered to Belgium. The bilateral US-Belgium negotiations and planning resulted in the following partition of responsibilities: one Belgian paracommando regiment would rescue the hostages located in four urban areas—Stanleyville, Paulis, Watsa, and Bunia—and the United States would provide the airlift for the insertion of the forces and for the extraction of the forces and the released hostages.

On November 24, 1964, the US and Belgium launched OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE (which was also the name of the combined-joint force). The US aircraft provided transportation for the Belgian Paracommandos who parachuted onto the Stanleyville International Airport. Minutes before the Belgians penetrated Stanleyville, the Simbas started executing the hostages. The results of the Stanleyville hostage massacre were gruesome: 18 dead and 40 severely wounded (Odom, 1988, p. 94). The paracommandos rescued about 1,600 Westerners and escorted them to the airport. During the following forty-
eight hours, US, Belgian and British military aircraft and other commercial aircraft (Air Congo and Sabena) evacuated all the Westerners to various locations in Europe (p. 124).

The results of the Belgian assault on Stanleyville reached the Simba leader in Paulis, General Olenga, who gave orders for the execution of the Westerners held there. That development was taken into account by the Belgian-American rescue force, which conducted another drop on Paulis on November 26, 1964. The Paulis operation, DRAGON NOIR, saved more than 200 hostages at the cost of one killed and five wounded from the Belgian rescue force (Odom, 1988, p. 139-142).

Sensitive to the public condemnation of the intervention in the international media, the United States and Belgian governments decided not to pursue the other two rescue operations—DRAGON VERT in Watsa and DRAGON BLANC in Bunia (Odom, 1988, pp. 121, 146). As a result, on November 28, 1964, the Belgian forces started redeploying to Brussels, while JTF LEO continued to operate in the Congolese capital, Leopoldville.

B. INFORMATIONAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

As mentioned in the introduction, the situation in Congo deteriorated immediately after the United Nations forces' withdrawal. Between July 6 and August 5, 1964, the fall of Stanleyville, the Western embassies in Africa sent reports to their governments about the rumors of atrocities committed by the Simbas. On July 31, the American Consulate in Stanleyville reported that the European embassies had started evacuating dependents (Wagoner, 1980, p.16). In response to this report, the United States ambassador in Leopoldville also recommended the evacuation of dependents but the continuation of the consulate's activity (p. 19-20). Because of the latter development, I conclude that the threat was assessed as being moderate to low.
Following the fall of Stanleyville, the US consulate there sent four more messages to Leopoldville. The consul played the role of intermediary in the negotiations between the Simbas and the US for the purpose of freeing the US citizens held in the city. All those messages were sent in the presence of the Simbas, so a complete description of the situation in Stanleyville could not be passed along (Hoyt, 2000).

Positioned very close to the Congolese borders, the US embassies in Kigali, Rwanda, and Bujumbura, Burundi, filled the informational gap. They were able to tap into the wealth of information brought to them by the Congolese refugees. The reports sent to Washington, D.C., described a series of atrocities committed by the Simbas against some Congolese tribes (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 73-74). As a result of the gloomy reports, the US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, decided to create the Congo Working Group (CWG)—an interagency staff tasked to deal with that hostage crisis only. The group was headed by Ambassador Joseph Palmer II and consisted of representatives of the State Department, the Department of Defense, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the CIA, the United States Information Agency (USIA), and the White House (Odom, 1988, p. 25). From August 29, 1964, the CWG became the clearinghouse for all the decisions taken in relation to the Congolese hostage crisis.

In a similar tough spot, the Belgian government tried to collect additional information from the ANC forces with the help of Belgian military advisors. Their data matched accounts of the events reported by the US embassies. However, the Belgian diplomats and military, more accustomed to the regional culture and problems, could make more sense of the information received (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 30, 43-44). For a better integration of his country’s efforts, Paul-Henry Spaak, Belgium’s Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, took over the control of all military and diplomatic actions related to the Congo.

On November 8, Spaak convinced his United States counterpart in the Congolese crisis, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs W. Averell
Harriman, that the situation in Congo required military action. Consequently, two days later, the proposal was presented to the US President, who agreed on preparing the military action (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 127-129).

2. **Post-deployment Phase**

   Following the November 8 agreement, the United States and Belgium created a combined-joint planning staff (US-Belgium Planning Conference). Based on their recommendations, the two governments deployed the DRAGON ROUGE—a combined-joint task force—on Ascension Island, West Africa, which force was later moved to the town of Kamina, South Congo. During their stay in the two locations, the DRAGON ROUGE force continued to receive intelligence through both United States and Belgian channels (Wagoner, 1990, pp. 149-152).

   However, the situation changed as soon as they launched the assault on Stanleyville. Intelligence on the hostages’ locations was missing, so the paracommandos had to rely on information provided by rescued hostages or captured Simbas. Colonel Laurent, the Paracommando Regiment Commander, perceived the intelligence on hostages as very perishable, and he allowed the company commanders to take the initiative whenever the lives of hostages were in immediate danger. Consequently, the Belgian paracommandos gathered information and acted upon it immediately with almost no approval from the higher echelon (Odom, 1988, pp. 88-107; Wagoner, 1980, pp. 177-182).

3. **Conclusions on the Integration of Informational Decisions**

   The information flow during OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE can be described as bipolar. On one side, the Belgian embassies in Africa and the military advisors to the ANC collected information and passed it to the Belgian foreign minister, who became the apex of the collection system (Figure 1).

   On the American side, the flow of information was more complicated. USEUCOM\(^{15}\) and USSTRICOM\(^{16}\), through JTF LEO collected information on the

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\(^{15}\) USEUCOM—United States European Command

\(^{16}\) USSTRICOM—United States Strike Command was the predecessor of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).
crisis and passed it along to the Secretary of Defense. The US embassies sent their reports to the State Department, whereas the CIA agents (whether in embassies or attached to the ANC) sent their situation reports to CIA headquarters. The creation of the Congo Working Group unified the three streams of information at the strategic level (Figure 1).

As already indicated, two entities became the focal points of the information flow: Belgian Foreign Minister Spaak and the US CWG. For the combined-joint effort, both entities dispatched representatives to the “US-Belgium Planning Conference.” The “Conference” became the military planning body and had access to both Belgian and American intelligence related to Congo (Figure 2).

As soon as the military operation started, exploitation of tactical intelligence was at the discretion of the paracommendos. However, the US CWG and the Belgian foreign minister kept their hands on the pulse of the international media, ready to cancel the operation if developments in Congo hurt their nations’ public image.
Figure 1. The intelligence flow during the preparation and the execution of OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
US sources based informational decisions

Belgian sources based informational decisions

United States President

Belgian Premier

Secretary of Defense

Under-Secretary of State

Belgian Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier

US-Belgium planning conference

United States Embassies and CIA personnel

Belgian Embassies’ personnel

USSTRICOM

CWG

Paracombando Regiment Commander

JTF LEO

Dragon Rouge Airlift

US military channels

US diplomatic channels

On the spot informational decisions (interrogations/debriefings)

Strategic level

Operational level

Tactical level

Figure 2. The intelligence integration for OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
C. STRUCTURAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

During the Congolese hostage crisis the United States prepared three force packages for unilateral rescue operations. First, Leopoldville embassy personnel decided that their men (less than 20) would be able to launch a rescue operation—OPERATION FLAGPOLE—with the help of CIA aircraft that were supporting the Congolese Government. That plan was immediately denied by the US State Department (Wagoner, 1980, p. 21).

Second, the USSTRICOM developed a plan—OPERATION GOLDEN HAWK—involving the covert insertion of one Special Forces A team to snatch the US embassy personnel in Stanleyville (Odom, 1988, pp. 28; Wagoner, 1980, pp. 54-57). On October 6, the plan was scrapped because of the Simbas’ declaration of war on the United States. The planners considered that, given the change in the hostages’ situation, a small force was not able to rescue the consulate personnel (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 67-68).

Third, following the cancellation of OPERATION GOLDEN HAWK, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were tasked to prepare an alternative plan. USSTRICOM planned for an airborne assault—OPERATION HIGH BEAM—with one brigade from the 101st Airborne Division. The proposed package consisted of 1 airborne brigade, 16 tactical fighter aircraft, 84 troop carrier aircraft, and 20 air refuel tankers (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 68-69). This plan was considered “overkill” by the CWG and was immediately denied on October 15. None of the plans responded to the two critical requirements: saving the hostages while keeping a low profile.

Following the denial of all three unilateral plans, the President Johnson decided to accept the combined option proposed by Foreign Minister Spaak. Consequently, on November 11, 1964, the US and Belgian military planners started what was called the US-Belgium Planning Conference. In fact, it was a combined staff consisting of representatives of both countries. From the United States, six agencies were represented: the United States European Command
(USEUCOM), the United States Air Force Europe (USAFE), the United States Air Force (USAF), the 8th Infantry Division, the Joint Staff, and the CWG. From the Belgian side, the presence was equally impressive: the Chief of the Belgian Joint Staff, the former commander of the Kamina Airbase (Congo), the commander of the Paracommando Regiment, the Minister of Defense, and various military officers and NCOs with in-depth knowledge of Congo (Odom, 1988, pp.45-47).

The results of the planning conference were transmitted to both governments for final approval (Figure 3). The final version of the Dragon Rouge Force required two paracommando battalions and the regimental support units from the Belgians, and fifteen C-130s from the US 464th Troop Carrier Wing (Odom, 1988, pp. 50-59).

2. Post-deployment Phase

From the moment the Dragon Rouge Force deployed from Belgium, the paracommando regiment commander made the structural decisions regarding the Belgian component. The composition of forces for each mission DRAGON ROUGE/DRAGON NOIR was then communicated to the US Airlift Commander, Colonel Gradwell (Figure 3).

On the US side, there was no change in the force structure. The only changes referred to the number of aircraft involved in each mission to provide airlift for the Belgians and the rescued hostages.

However, the cumbersome chain of command established for the US component made reaching operational decisions more difficult. The USSTRICOM assigned Operational Control (OPCON) over the Dragon Rouge Airlift to the commander of JTF LEO (Figure 3), a problem that will be discussed in the “Operational Decision” section of the chapter.

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Structural Decisions

Three entities seem to have played the most important roles in the structural decisions. At the operational level, the US-Belgium Planning Conference integrated the concept of operation approved by the two
governments at the strategic level with the forces provided by the Paracommando Regiment and the USEUCOM (Figure 4).

At the tactical level, the commanders of the Paracommando Regiment and the US Airlift had the power to decide what forces would be involved in each mission. These two commanders were collocated, which allowed them to adjust their structural decisions on the spot as the situation changed. In conclusion, I would characterize the structural authorities at the tactical level as being unified in the “Gradwell-Laurent command body” (Figure 4).
Figure 3. The command and control relations for OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
Figure 4. The integration of structural decisions for OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
D. OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

On the Belgian side, Foreign Minister Henry Spaak controlled both the diplomatic and the military effort related to the Congo crisis. He was also in direct contact with Colonel Laurent, the commander of the Paracommando Regiment, whose plans he personally approved. However, Laurent had full command authority over the Belgian forces; thus he was able to change the sequence of the tasks on the spot, in accordance with newly acquired intelligence, without requesting permission from the higher echelon (Figure 5).

On the United States side, the Congo Working Group (CWG), established in Washington, D.C., was the focal point for the coordination of State Department and Department of Defense efforts. CWG was also coordinating US participation in the US-Belgium Planning Conference. Consequently, it became the lead US authority in relation to the hostage rescue operations in Congo.

During the month of November 1964, the United States pondered whether to cease the diplomatic efforts. Foreign Minister Spaak downplayed the US attempt to procrastinate in the military intervention and publicly announced the deployment of Dragon Force to Ascension; so the US was presented with a fait-accompli. Following that announcement, the US began to accept that a military solution was the only way out of the crisis.

2. Post-deployment Phase

The US-Belgium Planning Conference developed a concept of operation based on the paracommandos’ capabilities to seize an airfield. During the conference, the plan evolved into a three-phase plan. The first phase consisted of the airlift from Kamina followed by the airborne drop from 5 C-130s over the Stanleyville golf course, adjacent to the airport. The first phase would end with the seizure of the airport and the clearing of the runway. The second phase consisted of the landing of two C-130s, which would transport the troops responsible for the airport protection. Following the two aircraft’s landing, the men dropped in the first phase were to move on to Stanleyville. The third phase
consisted of the landing of 5 more C-130s with equipment and troops. This phase was to end with the extraction of the hostages and their transport to Kamina (Wagoner, 1980, pp. 134-135).

As for the command relations, Colonel Laurent (Belgium) and Colonel Gradwell (United States) shared the responsibility for the hostage rescue. The command and control over the airlift phase belonged to Gradwell, but the ground phases belonged to Laurent. However, they would be permanently in close contact and share their common experience, breaking cultural and language barriers. Although it was a Belgian responsibility, Laurent would allow the US Airborne specialists to coordinate the drop.

The details of the plan were clear to the DRAGON ROUGE FORCE, which only needed the launch signal. The United States and Belgians decided that the launch signal would be transmitted through a single US channel, following the agreement of the two governments (Wagoner, 1980, pp.146-149) (Figure 5). The moment of launching was established for 03.00 AM on November 24, 1964. The timing was conditioned by the arrival of the Congolese government's forces, led by Van de Waele, in the vicinity of Stanleyville. So the Simbas would receive two simultaneous blows: the paracommandos from the air, and the ANC on the ground from the South. As the ANC reached the designated position south of Stanleyville, the US and Belgian governments agreed to launch the operation. The signal was transmitted by the US JCS through USSTRICOM and JTF LEO.

The first and the second phases of the operation went as planned, so the paracommandos entered the town. As they advanced, it was obvious that the intelligence provided prior to launching had been sketchy at best. Laurent and his forces had to reprioritize the succession of tasks so they were able to save more hostages. Instead of perimeter defense, 12th Company was sent, based on a tip, to a location where 50 hostages were held. Even though the rescue operation now seemed unorganized, Laurent held tight control over the Belgian forces in
Stanleyville: the rescue of hostages in immediate danger being the only exception from the pre-established plans.

Overall, the operational freedom given to company commanders paid off. Without devolving decision responsibilities, the Belgians would never have been able to save as many hostages as they did.

As soon as the Congolese government’s forces commanded by Van De Waele (the L’Ommengang Column) broke the encirclement of the Simbas around Stanleyville, the Dragon Force commander relinquished control of the town to the former. Subsequently, Laurent shifted his focus from control of the town to the evacuation procedures. The tight link between Laurent and Gradwell allowed the first 1,400 hostages to be evacuated within 24 hours. A great role in that feat was played by the American, Belgian, and Congolese governments, which managed to put together a civil-military air fleet (US Air Force, Belgium Air Force, United Kingdom Air Force, Sabena and Air Congo). The third phase ended on November 25, when all the Dragon Forces were redeployed to Kamina.

On November 26, 1964, the Dragon Rouge Force conducted OPERATION DRAGON NOIR. The same concept of operation as in DRAGON ROUGE was used, but it now involved a smaller force due to the smaller size of the town targeted—Paulis. The assault on Paulis rescued more than 200 Westerners. The same night, the DRAGON ROUGE force withdrew to Kamina (Odom, 1988, 132-144; Wagoner, 1980, pp. 183-189).

In regard to the final withdrawal of the Dragon Rouge Force from Congo, the decision was negotiated at the strategic level by the Belgian foreign minister and the CWG (Figure 5). Two other operations—DRAGON VERT and DRAGON BLANC—were cancelled because of an international media uproar against the US-Belgian intervention.

3. **Conclusions on the Integration of Operational Decisions**

   At the strategic level, the three governments (American, Belgian and Congolese) succeeded in agreeing on the concept of operation. Furthermore, at
the operational level, the planning conference united all resources into a plan that was agreed upon by all participants. At the tactical level, the collocation of the two tactical commanders—Laurent and Gradwell—allowed a greater degree of interoperability between the Belgian and American forces (Figure 6).

However, the subordination of the Dragon Rouge airlift to JTF LEO caused problems in communication between the two US tactical commanders. Organizational rivalry, or personal feuds, caused the JTF LEO commander to exclude the Dragon Rouge airlift commander, Gradwell, from the discussion of the follow-up plan, DRAGON NOIR. That problem was mitigated by the collocation of Laurent and Gradwell: the latter was immediately briefed by the former (Odom, 1988, pp. 158-159; Van Nederveen, 2001, pp. 38-42).

My conclusion is that the key players for operational decisions were the CWG and Foreign Minister Spaak at the strategic level, the US-Belgium Planning Conference and Van de Waele at the operational level, and the Paracommando Regiment commander at the tactical level (Figure 6).
Figure 5. The command and control relation for OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
Figure 6. The integration of operational decisions for OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
E. DECISION INTEGRATION ANALYSIS

By superimposing all the charts in this chapter on one another, it is obvious that OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE enjoyed a high degree of integration for all types of decisions (Figure 7). The chart shows that the integration of the decisions was achieved at all levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. The use of joint planning, of conferences, and of collocation allowed the US-Belgian combined rescue operation to succeed.

At the strategic level, the US assigned all the integration responsibilities to CWG, whereas, on the Belgian side, the Foreign Minister controlled all Belgian assets involved in the Congolese crisis. Another coordination was achieved with the L'Ommengang (Van de Waele), showing the Congolese government's support for the hostage rescue.

At the operational level, the USSTRICOM, USEUCOM, US State Department, Belgian Foreign Minister, and Belgian Defense Minister sent representatives to the US-Belgium Planning Conference. The conference managed to accommodate both the US needs to stay invisible in the Congo crisis and the Belgian push for an immediate rescue operation. Consequently, the size of the force and the rules of engagement for the Belgian forces were established with consideration for the US sensitivity to bad publicity in Africa. Later on, the decision to launch the operation was sent concomitantly to the US and Belgian forces, showing the synchronization of the end of diplomatic efforts with the launch of the military solution. Van de Waele pushed the Congolese ground effort (L'Ommengang) at a high rate in order to divert the attention of the Simbas from the Belgian rescuers.

At the tactical level, the Paracommandos were able to call in air strikes, provided by L'Ommengang, indirectly through the CIA element attached to ANC. The tactical coordination was excellent as a result of the numerous face-to-face meetings between Van de Waele, Laurent, and Gradwell. Additionally, Laurent
and Gradwell were collocated all the time, so US counterparts immediately accommodated any need of the Paracommandos.

Figure 7. Overall decision integration for OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE
F. CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the argument, the partition of authorities regarding the informational, structural, and operational decisions allowed four entities to be involved in all three types of decisions: the United States “Congo Working Group,” the Belgian Foreign Minister, the operational planners, and the combined-command (Laurent-Gradwell) of the Dragon Rouge Force. Even more, the strategic-level decision bodies had direct command of the operational-level planners. The unification of the military planning body into a single one created a plan that satisfied both parties, the United States and Belgium. At the tactical level, the collocation of the commanders and the assigning of the US liaison to L’Ommengang permitted on-the-spot adaptation to the fast-changing situation. In conclusion, the operation shows cross-level integration from the strategic to the tactical one, as well as lateral integration at all levels.
IV. OPERATION JONATHAN/THUNDERBALL

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

The chapter focuses on events pertaining to the rescue operation conducted by the Israeli Special Operations forces in Entebbe, Uganda, July 3-4, 1976. Analysis of the case study will demonstrate that the way the responsibilities and authorities were assigned in relation to OPERATION JONATHAN enabled the operation commander to deal with the fast-changing situation and adjust the plans as time constraints became critical.

This chapter briefly presents the intertwined relations among Israel, the Palestinian authorities and Uganda between 1968 and 1976. The period began with the first episode of Palestinian hijacking, and ended with the Entebbe crises. In the context of terrorism resurgence, the Palestinians joined forces with members of the Baader-Meinhof gang in order to push their mutual anti-Zionist agenda. On July 27, 1976, using Uganda as sanctuary, the Palestinian and German terrorists hijacked Air France flight 139 from Rome to Tel Aviv. In exchange for the passengers, they demanded the release of Palestinian terrorists from Swiss, Kenyan, West German, French, and Israeli jails. In response, Israel launched a military rescue operation—also known as OPERATION JONATHAN/THUNDERBALL—17—which succeeded in evacuating 105 hostages including the 12 French crew members kept hostage in the African country.

Military analysts worldwide attribute the Israeli success to the integrated strategy used during the Entebbe hostage crisis, and to the utilization of units highly specialized in hostage rescues (Thomas, 1983, pp. 707-708). Several practices related to the decision-making process—the parliamentary

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17 Some documents present the name of the operation as THUNDERBOLT.
consultations, the combined planning staff, and the deployment of the overall commander to the scene—seem to have played a crucial role in the success of the operation (Maoz, 1981, p. 704).

The chapter begins by identifying the organizational entities involved in three types of decisions (informational, structural and operational). It then analyzes the role of the integration of the decisions in the success of the operation. To conclude, I use a chart displaying the entities involved in all three types of decisions to analyze the extent to which the three types were integrated.

2. **The Political Context**

Ever since the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, Palestinians have contested the Jewish state and have fought against it. Palestinian attacks on the Jewish settlers have sometimes been combined with other Arab states’ attacks on Israeli borders. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) managed to defeat two multidirectional attacks conducted by Arab states: the IDF defeated the Egypt-Syria-Jordan coalition in 1967 (the “Six-day War”), and the Egypt-Syrian combined attack in 1973 (the “Yom Kippur” War) (Ahola, 1999, pp. 13-19).

Following those two Arab defeats, the embittered Palestinians resorted to terrorist attacks, which soon became the preferred tactics for pursuing political objectives (Freedman, 1993, p. 539; Gambill, 1998, pp. 59-60). Episodes of terror on Israeli streets became routine. However, in 1968, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) embarked on a new strategy of also attacking Israeli citizens and interests overseas. This began on July 23, 1968, with the hijacking to Algiers of an El Al airliner flying from Rome to Tel Aviv. It continued later that same year with gunfire attacks on an El Al airplane in Athens on December 26. A similar modus operandi was used against an El Al airplane in Berne, Switzerland on February 18, 1969. Then, in May 1972, two Arabs attempted to hijack a Sabena Airliner, but were forced back to Ben-Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv. Palestinian attacks were not confined to the airlines, however; they also targeted airport installations, embassies, official buildings and schools (Herzog, 1996, p. 334).
Moving from the Middle East to Africa, the Israelis had an extensive economic presence in Uganda during the late 1960s. Israeli engineers helped build the Ugandan infrastructure (roads, airports, etc), while the IDF provided training to the Uganda military, both in Uganda and in Israel. That cooperation ended in 1972 when Idi Amin, the Ugandan president, asked for the Israeli Air Force to bomb the Ugandan neighbor, Kenya. The Israeli Parliament (Knesset) denied the request, which resulted in the severance of economic and military relations (Southall, 1980, pp. 630-637).

3. **Operation Jonathan/Thunderball**

On Sunday, June 27, 1976, four terrorists hijacked Air France flight 139, flying from Tel Aviv to Paris via Athens, with 246 people aboard (Williams, 1976, p. 1). Immediately after take-off from Athens, two PLO members and two Germans (members of the Baader-Meinhof gang) overpowered the French crew, and directed the flight to Benghazi, Libya, for refueling. Later that day, the flight continued to its final destination: Entebbe, Uganda. The Ugandans’ complicity became obvious when nine more terrorists joined the plane, parked on the taxiway, with no interference from the Uganda authorities (Herzog, 1996, p. 335; Knisbacher, 1977, pp. 69, 72).

Two days later, Uganda Radio aired the terrorists demands related to the liberation of 53 convicted terrorists held in five countries: Israel, West Germany, Kenya, Switzerland and France. The hijackers demanded the convicted terrorists be released by July 1, 1976, or they would kill the hostages (Herzog, 1996, p. 335).

The Israeli Cabinet pretended to accept the terrorists’ demands in an attempt to move the deadline from the July 1 to July 4. In the meantime, the IDF prepared a Joint Task Force consisting of seven aircraft, a counterterrorist unit, paratroopers, and armored infantry with the mission to rescue the hostages.

On July 3, Israel launched OPERATION THUNDERBALL. Just before midnight, four aircraft carrying the assault forces landed at Entebbe Airport, using the cover of night and a planned electronic shadow on the radar of a British civilian cargo plane. The Israeli commandos killed the terrorists, rescued the
hostages, and destroyed the Ugandan MiGs parked at the airport\textsuperscript{18}. Soon after midnight, the rescue force and the freed hostages took off for Nairobi, Kenya for refueling. With the successful landing of the aircraft at Ben-Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv, Israel, the operation was over. The results of the operation: 13 terrorists dead, over 50 Ugandan soldiers dead or wounded, 4 hostages dead\textsuperscript{19}, and 1 Israeli commando dead, and 1 wounded.

Of the Israeli counter-terrorist unit, the commander, Lieutenant-colonel Jonathan Netanyahu, was the only fatality. To honor his sacrifice, the Israeli Chief of Staff changed the operation name from THUNDERBALL, to OPERATION JONATHAN.

B. INFORMATIONAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

At the onset of the crisis, the French and the Israelis had only a few bits of information: they knew that the terrorists had hijacked the plane to Benghazi, Libya for refueling and than to Entebbe, Uganda. Thus immediately, both French and the Israeli intelligence turned their focus to the Uganda crisis.

On June 29, 1976, the terrorists aired their demands via Radio Uganda, asking for the release of 53 imprisoned terrorists in exchange for the passengers. The fact that the terrorists used a state controlled broadcasting entity raised suspicions in Israel concerning the Ugandan president’s position in the crisis. The MOSSAD\textsuperscript{20} investigated and found that Ugandan soldiers were protecting the old terminal at the Entebbe Airport, where the hostages had been moved after the aircraft landed. Additionally, the MOSSAD discovered that the Ugandan

\textsuperscript{18} According to Aidan Southall, Libya offered 13 million British Pounds to Ugandan military to replace the MiGs destroyed by the Israelis. That gesture supports the Israeli’s theory that all the details of the hijacking were established prior to July 25, 1976. It also proves that Uganda and Libya were active supporters of terrorist groups.

\textsuperscript{19} Two of the hostages died during the take-over of the old terminal. Another died in Israel from wounds suffered during the rescue operation. The fourth, committed to a hospital in Entebbe at the time of the rescue, was subsequently killed by the Ugandans.

\textsuperscript{20} The MOSSAD is the Israeli Intelligence Service responsible for the collection of external and internal information related to the security of the Israeli state.
dictator, Idi Amin, had paid a visit to the aircraft immediately after landing (Knisbacher, 1977, p. 72).

On June 30, 1976, the terrorists released a group of 47 non-Israeli passengers, and an Air France aircraft transported them immediately to Orly Airport in Paris (Williams, 1976, pp. 8-9). Upon arrival, French Intelligence debriefed the passengers looking for information related to the number of terrorists and their equipment. During the debriefing the French came across a piece of critical intelligence: nine additional terrorists had joined the four on the plane immediately after it landed in Entebbe.

The intelligence concerning Idi Amin’s position in relation to the terrorists started to pile up. Based on reports received from Israeli and French sources, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin decided that Idi Amin was to be considered a collaborator of the terrorists (Warbrick, 1986, p. 673; Williams, 1976, p. 10). Following that conclusion, Rabin met with the Knesset Opposition leader and asked for his full support during the crisis (Maoz, 1981, p. 703). Subsequently, backed by the Knesset in its entirety, Rabin pretended to concede to the terrorists’ demands, in order to delay the deadline for three days.

In regard to their tactical intelligence needs, the IDF brought together all the active and reserve officers who had trained the Ugandans during the late 1960s (Williams, 1976, p. 7). From them, the IDF found out about the Ugandan military bases and Amin’s habit of traveling in a black Mercedes with Land Rover escorts. The latter information became the basis of the deception plan used to approach the old terminal in Entebbe (Herzog, 1996, p. 338). Additionally, the MOSSAD identified the designer of the old terminal, an Israeli citizen, who provided them with the blueprints.

On July 1, the terrorists released another group of hostages, 101 non-Jewish passengers, who were subsequently transported to Paris by an Air France aircraft. French and Israeli intelligence officers then debriefed the released hostages and compiled a comprehensive picture of the terrorists’ habits,
weapons, and routine (Maoz, 1981, pp. 689, 692; Williams, 1976, p. 12). That information was passed immediately to the Israeli decision-makers.

In conclusion, the information flows during the pre-deployment phase intersected at the Israeli Cabinet level (Figure 8). The French sources transmitted their intelligence through the MOSSAD liaison and the Israeli Embassy in Paris. The IDF collected their data through the Intelligence Branch of the IDF, while other civilian sources were tapped by the MOSSAD and military intelligence officers. All the key players, from the Prime Minister to the commander of the operation participated in the daily meetings related to the crisis. The General Staff passed all informational decisions made during the daily meetings to the planning staff led by Major-General Dan Shomron, the operation commander (Figure 8).

2. Post-deployment Phase

Before the launching of the OPERATION THUNDERBALL, the Israeli Prime Minister authorized the Operation Commander, Major-General Dan Shomron, to make “all the necessary decisions” on the spot, while the Chief of General Staff deployed a Boeing 707 to fly over the region, carrying the Advanced General Headquarters (AGHQ) in a support role to the operation commander. The AGHQ plane carried Major-General Benjamin Peled (Commander of the Israeli Air Force), Major-General Yekutiel Adam (Chief of General Staff Operations Branch), and a small staff (Herzog, 1996, pp. 338-339).

The operation plan allowed the unit in charge of the take-over of the old terminal (Sarayet Matkal) the liberty to act in any way that was consistent with the mission to save the hostages. The rest of the force elements—transportation, engagement, support, and reserve units—were to pass any piece of intelligence to the Operation Commander (Figure 10).

Having secured the hostages, Shomron reported to the AGHQ the increased danger of Ugandan forces intervening at the airport. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s subsequent approval to fly without refueling to Nairobi (Kenya) was transmitted to Shomron through the AGHQ.
3. **Conclusions on the Integration of Informational Decisions**

At the tactical level, Major-General Dan Shomron was directly involved in the intelligence-related decision-making process during the pre- and the post-deployment phases (Figures 9, 11). At the operational level, the AGHQ had only an intermediary role of passing requests from Shomron to Rabin, and orders from Rabin to Shomron. At the strategic level, the Cabinet and General Staff experienced a shift from a decision-making role in the pre-deployment phase to a support role in the post-deployment phase.

Based on the analysis, I conclude that two actors played a crucial role in all the informational decisions: the Prime Minister and the Operation Commander (Figures 9-11). The former integrated the intelligence flows at the strategic level, whereas the latter was on the ground in Entebbe, directly involved in the collection and analysis of tactical intelligence.
Figure 8. Pre-deployment information flow related to the Entebbe crisis
Political consultations

Israeli Prime Minister

IDF

Strategic level

General Staff

The Cabinet

Tactical level

MOSSAD

Non-military source-based intelligence integration

French Prime Minister

French crisis management team

Knesset

Operational level

Air Force

Military Intelligence

Military sources-based intelligence integration

Aerial reconnaissance

Former engineers with the Entebbe Airport

Released hostages debriefing team

Former military assistants in Uganda

Figure 9. Pre-deployment intelligence integration for OPERATION THUNDERBALL
Figure 10. The intelligence flow in the post-deployment phase for the forces involved in OPERATION THUNDERBALL
Figure 11. The integration of intelligence flows during OPERATION THUNDERBALL
C. STRUCTURAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

On June 27, 1976, following the hijacking of the Air France aircraft, the IDF Central Command established a command post at the Ben-Gurion International Airport, as was indicated in existing contingency plans for hijacking situations (Williams, 1976, p. 2). However, that same night, the IDF Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-General Mordechai Gur, decided to disband the command post established at the airport: it became clear that the plane could not be forced to land in Israel, so the command post was useless.

Instead, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin created a crisis cell with overarching authority on all the matters related to the unfolding crisis. The cell consisted of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the IDF Chief-of-Staff, the Foreign Minister, and a minister without portfolio (Maoz, 1981, p. 687; McRaven, 1996, pp. 334-335).

The day after the hijacking, Major-General Dan Shomron (Chief Infantry and Paratroops in the IDF) had started planning the rescue of the hostages in Entebbe (Herzog, 1996, p. 336). By June 30, both Shomron and the Operation Branch of the General Staff had developed—indeed, independently, without communicating with one another—two different plans involving varying types of units. However, on June 30, Shomron briefed his plan to Major-General Yekutiel Adam (Chief of General Staff Operations Branch) who embraced the overall concept of the proposed operation.

Following that briefing, the Israeli Chief-of-Staff appointed Shomron the Operation Commander. Additionally, Major-General Peled (Air Force Commander) was charged with the logistic aspects of the operation, including the airlift. Subsequently, Peled and Shomron were allowed to select the men for the operation.

Based on intelligence provided by Israeli and French sources, the Chief-of-Staff Gur also approved the concept of operation proposed by Shomron. The plan involved the following forces:
• A force to illuminate and secure the runway.
• A force to occupy the old terminal and release the hostages (the take-over component).
• A force to take control over the new terminal (the engagement component).
• A force to secure the airfield and destroy the Ugandan MiGs (the support and reserve component).
• A force to evacuate the hostages from the terminal to the aircraft (Herzog, 1996, pp. 338-340).

For the ground assault, Shomron selected a counter-terrorist unit, Sarayet Matkal, subordinate to the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, as the take-over unit. Additionally, Shomron chose a paratrooper company from the Paratrooper Brigade (T’zanhanim) and an armored infantry company from the “Golani” Brigade. The former was to engage the forces protecting the new terminal in Entebbe; the latter was to provide the perimeter security and to destroy the fighter aircraft (MiGs) parked at the Ugandan Airport (Figures 12, 13).

For the airlift of the force, Major-General Peled decided to prepare five C-130s, four for the troops and one in reserve. During the planning phase, the Kenyan Government hinted to the Israelis that it would not permit Israeli military aircraft to fly over Kenya, but it would allow civilian aircraft (Flora, 1998, p. 12). Subsequently, Chief-of-Staff Gur decided to deploy the Advanced General Headquarter (AGHQ) on board of a “civilian looking” Boeing 707 to fly over Kenya during the operation. According to Flora (1998), the AGHQ was to provide “command guidance as required” (p. 7).

To complete the force package, the IDF Medical Branch proposed the deployment of an airborne hospital aboard a second Boeing 707. The IDF Chief-of-Staff approved the proposal (Williams, 1976, p. 13).

2. Post-deployment Phase

Both the chain of command and the role of each component established in the pre-deployment phase remained unchanged during the operation. The killing
of the “take-over” component commander (Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Netanyahu) did not affect the command relations, for the pre-established second-in-command, Major Betzer assumed his role immediately (McRaven, 1996, p. 363; Williams, 1976, pp. 20-21).

Following the successful rescue of the hostages, the take-off of the last C-130 from Entebbe ended the ground phase of the operation. Subsequently, Major-General Benjamin Peled (flying in the AGHQ airplane) assumed the command over the entire Israeli air fleet in Uganda and Kenya until their landing in Israel. He arranged for the aircraft to be refueled in Nairobi and the wounded to be transferred to the airborne hospital waiting in the Kenyan capital.

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Structural Decisions

Although the forces involved in the operation came from different regional or functional commands, the command and control relations were simple and clear. Instead of a long and complicated chain of command, the Israelis empowered the operation commander as the single decision-maker on the ground. As mentioned before, the only role of the AGHQ during the ground phase of the rescue operation was as a communication aide (Figure no 14).

The IDF chief-of-staff assigned the IDF Air Force commander responsibility for the airlift and logistics. The medium in which each phase of operation took place became the single identifier of the transfer of authority over the rescue party.

Judging from my structural-decisions’ analysis, therefore, I conclude that Major-General Dan Shomron at the tactical level and IDF Chief-of-Staff Gur at the strategic level were the key players in structure-related decision-making.
Figure 12. The chain of command for the forces selected to conduct OPERATION THUNDERBALL
Figure 13. The integration of structural decisions during the pre-deployment phase of the OPERATION THUNDERBALL
The chain of command for OPERATION THUNDERBALL

LEGEND

Airlift authority —
Command authority —
Support —
Communication channel ---
D. OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

Initially, Major-General Adam developed three potential plans for rescuing the hostages, but they were all based on the assumption that the Ugandan dictator was at least neutral (Williams, 1976, p. 9). In contrast, Major-General Shomron developed a plan based on the assumption that the Ugandans were accomplices to the terrorists, and MOSSAD intelligence reports showed that Shomron’s assumption was correct (Knisbacher, 1977, pp. 72, 82).

Taking into account the Ugandan support for the hijackers, the Israeli planners developed the concept of operation based on C-130 pilot’s capability to land “blindly”\(^{21}\) at Entebbe Airport. The plan evolved into a four-phase plan. The first phase consisted of an airlift of the rescue force from Ophir in south Israel, followed by the landing at Entebbe. This phase was to end with the seizure of the old terminal and the installation of emergency lightning on the runway. The second phase consisted of the landing of the remaining three C-130s transporting the troops charged with the take-over of the new terminal, airfield security, and destruction of the parked MiGs. The third phase consisted of the embarkation of the hostages and the refueling of the four C-130s. The final phase was to be the extraction of the rescue forces, the freed hostages, and their transport to Israel (Herzog, 1996, pp. 337-344; Williams, 1976, pp. 13-16).

2. Post-deployment Phase

As planned, the four aircraft carrying the rescue force took off from Ophir at 13.00 on July 3, 1976. The air fleet flew over the Red Sea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Lake Victoria. At 23.01 the lead aircraft snuck behind a British cargo plane\(^ {22}\) and landed undetected at Entebbe Airport. A small team debarked and installed emergency landing lights, while the plane continued to the end of the runway.

\(^{21}\) That term is used for a nighttime landing on a runway having no guiding lights.

\(^{22}\) Apparently MOSSAD had collected data on all the flights scheduled to land at Entebbe International Airport. However, only the British cargo matched the time frame selected for the conduct of the operation.
There, the “take-over” unit unloaded a black Mercedes (similar to the one used by Idi Amin) and two Land Rovers. They drove the vehicles to the old terminal and succeeded in surprising the terrorists, though one Ugandan soldier opened fire on the vehicles. One of the two access doors into the terminal was blocked, but the commandos quickly adjusted to the new situation. Within seven minutes the take-over force killed all 13 terrorists and a majority of the Ugandan guards posted on the second floor of the airport (Herzog, 1996, pp. 340-344; Williams, 1976, pp. 19-24).

By the time the old terminal was under the rescuers’ control, all four aircraft touched the runway. The “engagement component” assaulted the new terminal, while the infantry company machine-gunned the seven MiGs parked at the airport. In the meantime, Shomron received the orders to refuel in Kenya.

At 23.52 the aircraft loaded with the freed hostages took off for Nairobi, where the airborne hospital had already landed at 23.25 (Williams, 1976, p. 21). At 00.40 on July 4, the last Israeli aircraft left Entebbe—the ground phase had lasted less than 100 minutes. After a short stop for refueling, the rescue force and the freed hostages headed for Tel Aviv, Israel where they landed around 10.00.

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Operational Decisions

As mentioned before, Lieutenant-General Shomron not only headed the planning staff for this operation, but he also was appointed as the Operation Commander for the ground phase (Figure 15). He allowed Sarayet Matkal a great deal of operational flexibility, on the condition that they secured the hostages within five minutes from the landing.

The take-over component managed to secure the old terminal with minimal casualties: two rescuers and three hostages. Having accomplished that critical phase, Shomron focused on the new terminal and on the MiGs parked at the airport. The engagement and the support components managed to take-over the new terminal and destroy the MiGs within 30 minutes of their landing.
The only major change in the execution of the plan was Yitzhak Rabin’s decision to refuel the planes in Nairobi. That decision shortened the time on the ground by more than one hour.

Judging from the analysis conducted, I conclude that the key operational decision-makers during the rescue were Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Lieutenant-General Shomron, Operation Commander and IDF Infantry and Paratroopers Commander.
Figure 15. The integration of operational decisions during OPERATION THUNDERBALL
E. DECISION INTEGRATION ANALYSIS

By superimposing all the charts in this chapter on one another, it is obvious that OPERATION JONATHAN/THUNDERBALL enjoyed a great degree of integration of all types of decisions (Figure 16). The chart shows that a successful integration of decisions was achieved at the strategic and tactical levels: the Israeli prime minister decided to designate the task force directly to the Chief-of-Staff, thereby reducing the “operational level”. That decision shortened the chain of command, which created faster communication between the forces in Entebbe and the Crisis Cell in Tel Aviv.

At the strategic level, the Israeli prime minister was involved in all aspects of the crisis. He created the Crisis Cell, which gathered all the decision-makers involved in the military, intelligence, and diplomatic domains. By doing so, he made sure that all the key players in the Entebbe hostage crisis acted according to an agreed protocol. The pretend diplomatic concession to the terrorists’ demands was so well orchestrated that the terrorists agreed to a three-day delay for their demands to be met, three days that were essential for operational planning.

Those three days allowed the military force the necessary time to refine the plan, to train commandos, and to improve the overall effectiveness of the joint task force. The Israeli prime minister assigned all the responsibilities of the task force to the IDF chief-of-staff. And he, in turn, delegated the IDF Infantry and Paratroops Commander all the responsibilities related to the ground assault, and the airlift phase to the IDF Air Force Commander.

That clarity of the separation of authorities and responsibilities gave the operation commander the freedom to plan the ground phase and exercise the rescue plan with selected units. Similarly, the IDF Air Force commander personally supervised all the details of the preparation for the “blind” landing. Only after he was convinced that the procedure was feasible, did he sign off on the concept of operation.
At the tactical level, the operation commander had sole charge of planning the ground phase of the rescue operation. The resulting detailed plan and the full-scale rehearsals conducted during the preparation phase benefited the commandos during the ground phase of the actual rescue. The rescuers followed the plan to the letter and succeeded in securing the hostages in less than seven minutes from the landing. Having rescued the hostages, the Operation Commander Shomron assessed that refueling in Entebbe might allow the Ugandan forces to mount an attack on the airport. He communicated that assessment to the Crisis Cell, led by Prime Minister Rabin. Rabin immediately approved a change of plan: the refueling was to take place in Nairobi. That critical change in the plan was made possible by the short chain of command that had been established for the operation.
Figure 16. Overall decisions integration during OPERATION THUNDERBALL
F. CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the arguments in the chapter, the tripart division of authority involved in the informational, structural, and operational decision-making meant that only three people would be involved overall: the Israeli prime minister, the IDF chief-of-staff, and the operation commander. What’s more, the first two actors were the key members of the Crisis Cell. Thus any decision related to the hostages in Entebbe had to go through them.

My conclusion, based on an analysis of the key actors’ roles in the Entebbe crisis, is that there were no fissures in the integration of all three types of decisions. On the contrary, the involvement of the three critical actors in all aspects of the crisis even allowed the rescue force to change parts of the initial plan, with no negative consequences.
V.  OPERATION EAGLE CLAW

A.  GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.  Introduction

This chapter briefly presents the volatile political situation in Iran following the departure of the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, and the instauration of the Islamic government in February 1979. With the Iranian Islamic revolution in the background, the chapter focuses on events pertaining to the takeover of the United States embassy in Teheran by radical Islamists and to the attempted rescue operation conducted by the United States military.

On April 24-25, 1980, Joint Task Force (JTF) 1-79 launched OPERATION EAGLE CLAW. The military operation was aborted in the insertion phase when three helicopters failed to reach the rendezvous point, thus crippling the minimum capability required for that operation. While preparing to return to their base, two aircraft from the force collided. Eight US airmen died in the ensuing explosion.

In this chapter, I will show that the way responsibilities and authorities were assigned in OPERATION EAGLE CLAW impeded the military decision-making process during the hostage rescue operation.

The chapter begins by identifying United States organizational entities involved in making all three types of decisions: informational, structural, and operational. It continues with an analysis of the role the lack of integration of decisions played in the failure of the operation. For the conclusion, using a chart displaying the entities involved in all three types of decisions, I analyze the extent to which they were integrated.

2.  The Political Context Pertaining to the Crisis

Internally, Iran had been in turmoil since 1978, when Islamist militants began protesting against the Shah’s rule. Because of the increasing hostility of the Islamists, the Shah sought a way out of Iran. In that context, the United
States authorities approved the Shah’s request for a visa, founded on his need for cancer treatment (Warren & Kreisberg, 1985, pp. 58-60; Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 114).

In January 1979, the shah’s visa approval sparked the Iranians’ discontent, which moment coincided with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s return from exile in France (Carter, 1982, p. 447). The void created by the shah’s hasty departure triggered a bitter power struggle between moderate and radical Islamists. On one hand, the Iranian moderates, chiefly the Western-educated middle class, were hoping to create a liberal, democratic state within an Islamic framework (Perdue, 1989, pp. 164-166). On the other hand, the radical Islamists, supported by the clergy, viewed the future of Iran as “purified” of the Western influence. Though initially, Khomeini avoided taking sides openly in the political confrontation between moderates and radicals, his discourse incited Muslims to hit the Western powers’ interests in Islam’s lands (Cogan, 2003, pp. 201-216; Engelmeyer & Wagman, 1981, pp. 98-100; Mirbagheri, 1998; Vandenbrouke, 1993, pp. 114-151).

In that context, the US embassy in Teheran was seen as fair game. By attacking the embassy, the radicals hoped to discredit the Iranian government, led by moderates, and to pressure the United States into extraditing the shah to Iran (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 114).

Thus, on November 4, 1979, several hundred Iranian students occupied the embassy demanding the extradition of the shah in exchange for the 90 hostages, mostly United States citizens. In retaliation, the US froze all Iranian assets in its possession and broke off diplomatic relations with Iran. Later, all Iranian immigrants were expelled from US soil (Buck, 2002, pp. 5-26; Cogan, 2003, pp. 203-206).

3. **Operation EAGLE CLAW**

The takeover of the American embassy started the longest hostage crisis in the modern history: 444 days. In an attempt to gain international sympathy for
their actions, the Islamist militants initially released all non-US citizens. Then, they released African-Americans and women: of the 90 hostages taken, 38 were freed.

United States diplomatic efforts, mediated by a Frenchman, Christian Bourguet, and an Argentinean, Hector Villalon, failed to secure the release of the remaining 52 hostages. Consequently, on April 24-25, 1980, the US military mounted a rescue operation, known as OPERATION EAGLE CLAW. The rescuers failed to reach the hostages’ location in Teheran. Even more, coordination problems caused two aircraft to collide at a rendezvous point. In their hurry to return to base, the US forces left behind six intact helicopters, which were to be destroyed by US attack aircraft. The Carter Administration believed however that another incursion into Iranian airspace to destroy the aircraft would cause more trouble than benefits. As a result, the operation ended with 8 Americans dead, 2 aircraft completely destroyed, and 6 helicopters abandoned.

Following the failed attempt, the US government re-engaged in negotiations with Iran through Algerian intermediaries (Warren & Kreisberg, 1985, pp. 9, 21). On January 20, 1981, the crisis ended peacefully, when the Iranians released all the remaining hostages. In exchange, the United States released some of the Iranian financial assets that had been frozen at the onset of the crisis (Cogan, 2003, pp. 201-216; Mirbagheri, 1998; Vandenbroucke, 1993, pp. 114-151).

B. INFORMATIONAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

As mentioned, the situation in Iran flared immediately after the Ayatollah’s return from exile in February 1979. During the February-November period, radical Islamists continually attacked the British and American embassies in Teheran with rocks and Molotov cocktails (DeYoung, 1997, pp. 1-5; DeYoung, 1988, p. 1; Marshall, 1997, p. 3). Because of the continuous harassment, Great Britain withdrew its diplomatic representatives, but despite those signals, the United States continued its diplomatic presence until the November 4, 1979.
Immediately after the capture of the embassy, the United States National Security Council (NSC) gathered to advise the president on a diplomatic course for dealing with the Iranian crisis. Consequently, United States President Jimmy Carter sent two envoys to Teheran in an attempt to negotiate the release of the hostages. Much to their surprise, the envoys found an Iranian government incapable of dealing with its internal problems, and a religious ruler, Khomeini, unwilling to intervene on the hostages’ behalf.

The political picture became clearer when the CIA found that the US Chargé d’Affairs in Teheran, Bruce Laingen, and two of his advisors had also been taken hostage in the Foreign Ministry Building and were subsequently sequestered in the basement of that building (Beckwith, 2000, p. 225).

Following that discovery, the White House’s foreign policy coordinating committee, the Special Coordinating Group (SCC), determined that, though necessary, a rescue operation would be very difficult because of the hostages’ location in a hostile city. Subsequently, the SCC advised President Carter to continue negotiations (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 116).

Christian Bourguet, a French lawyer, and Hector Villalon, an Argentinean businessman living in Paris, became the intermediaries for the US-Iran negotiations. They enjoyed the confidence of Khomeini and were accepted by the United States. With their help, the US drew up a plan in which the hostages would be released in exchange for a United Nations commission’s investigation of the former Shah’s crimes. The plan collapsed, in late February 1980, when Khomeini demanded that the United Nations publicly condemn the aggressive interference of the United States in Iran’s internal affairs (Engelmeyer & Wagman, 1981, pp. 62-65, Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 118).

On April 1, 1980, the last hope for a peaceful resolution of the crisis died: the radicals foiled the moderates’ plan to take control over the hostages. Subsequently, on April 7, President Carter agreed that the terms of the negotiations were unacceptable for the US (Engelmeyer & Wagman, 1981, pp. 6-9). The same day, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Iran and
prepared legislation to seize the Iranian assets frozen on the onset of the crisis (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 137). The events of April 7 suggest that, at the strategic level, President Carter assessed that neither Khomeini nor the Iranian government were going to help liberate the hostages, and therefore, a military rescue operation was the only option for the United States. The planning task was assigned to an *ad hoc* planning group within the Pentagon (p. 122).

Unfortunately for the Americans preparing the rescue operation, the CIA’s case officer was also a hostage in the embassy building, which fact delayed intelligence collection related to the crisis. However, within the next weeks, the CIA and the Department of Defense infiltrated several agents into Teheran (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 126). The CIA also debriefed the hostages released from the embassy. Using those sources, the intelligence analysts succeeded in pinpointing the hostages’ location. Immediately, Delta Force started rehearsing the rescue operation on a mock-up building similar to the one in which the hostages were located (Beckwith, 2000, pp. 252-253).

In early April, the CIA had located a Pakistani cook working in the US embassy in Teheran. His debriefing confirmed the hostages’ location in a certain building within the embassy compound (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 128). Colonel Charlie Beckwith, Delta Force commander, pressured the intelligence community for more data on the Iranian military and police units in the vicinity of the embassy. From military and CIA sources, the Pentagon succeeded in gathering partial data on the Iranian units’ strength and readiness, which helped the planners assess the level of immediate risk to the rescuers.

Four nights prior to the mission, the CIA deployed a reconnaissance plane to assess the quality of the location, codenamed “Desert One”, designated for refueling the US helicopters on Iranian soil. On their way there, the CIA plane’s radar-detection system identified that the only significant radar threat came from stations along the Iranian coast. Then the plane landed at “Desert One,” installed remote-control landing beacons, and tested the soil consistency and hardness. During the testing, the CIA operatives assessed that the highway crossing

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“Desert One” was a security liability: Iranian drivers would be able see the American planes landing and taking off from that location (Vandenbroucke, 1993, pp. 133, 144). Unfortunately, only parts of the intelligence collected by the CIA operatives reached the Pentagon planners.

The *ad hoc* planning group modified the action plan in keeping with the CIA input regarding the risks associated with the highway. Consequently, the rangers protecting “Desert One” were to establish two checkpoints on the highway in order to stop all vehicles driving by, thereby preventing the disclosure of the US forces’ presence in Iran (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 133). The intelligence related to the Iranian radar threat and the soil consistency—data that would prove crucial in the conduct of the operation—never made it to the JTF helicopter detachment. This will be discussed further in the “Operational decisions” section of the chapter.

Thinking constantly about the need for strategic surprise, the Pentagon took all precautions necessary to prevent any intelligence leaks related to the United States’ intent to conduct a rescue operation. The Pentagon compartmentalized access to the Iran intelligence as much as possible. In that regard, the Air Force meteorologists providing weather forecasts for Iran were not allowed to get in contact with the pilots, but gave their predictions to an intelligence officer attached to JTF 1-79. Therefore, although the meteorologists identified sandstorms as a possible hazard for the flight, the pilots never received that critical piece of intelligence (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 128).

2. **Post-deployment Phase**

On April 24, 1980, after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, emphasized the time constraints, President Carter finally agreed and gave the order to launch the rescue operation. General Jones pointed out that any delays might affect the raiders’ ability to move undetected between the rendezvous points because of increasing daylight (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 136).

After launching the operation, the President remained in contact with the JTF 1-79 Commander, Major General James B. Vaught, located in Egypt,
through the Pentagon’s National Military Command Center. The JTF commander, in turn, was in radio contact with Colonel Kyle, the on-scene commander.

At 10:00 P.M. on April 24, the first plane landed at “Desert One,” carrying Colonel Kyle, the air component commander, and Colonel Beckwith, the ground component commander. Immediately after landing, the Rangers established two control points on the highway, immobilized a bus, and destroyed a fuel truck. However, a small civilian pick-up truck got away. Kyle summarized those events to General Vaught, who contacted the White House, but the crisis cell there decided to allow the operation to continue.

Between the moment of the landing and 03:00 AM the next morning, events turned for the worst for the Americans. From a total of eight helicopters, only five arrived in good condition at the rendezvous point, “Desert One.” A sandstorm and mechanical failures prevented two helicopters from making it through the insertion phase, while a third suffered damage to its hydraulic system, and the JTF helicopter detachment commander, Colonel Edward Seiffert, decided it was not safe to take off again.

In the planning phase, the Pentagon planners had assessed that the rescuers would need at least six helicopters to evacuate the hostages. The on-scene commander, faced with the situation of having only five viable helicopters, contacted the JTF commander, who in turn contacted President Carter. The President then made the decision to abort the operation and ordered the forces to return to base (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 148). Unfortunately, tragedy struck the US forces preparing to return to Masirah Island, in the Gulf of Aden: a helicopter collided into a C-130, setting both on fire.

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Informational Decisions

The information flow during the OPERATION EAGLE CLAW can be described as multidirectional. The State Department collected data through embassy personnel in the region. The covert military operatives communicated their intelligence to the DoD, while the CIA used their own channels to pass
information from their sources to the CIA Director. Those information flows unified in the White House (Figures 17, 18).

However, the intelligence needs increased substantially when President Carter tasked the Department of Defense to prepare a rescue operation. Suddenly, information about the conduct of the hostage-takers and the hostages’ location was no longer enough. The intelligence services now had to provide information on a multitude of other aspects, such as safe locations near Teheran, Iranian security forces in the area, Iranian radar coverage and distribution, and so on (Beckwith, 2000, p. 214).

Faced with the need for an increased volume of information, and with the risk of intelligence leaks about US plans, the JCS chairman decided to compartmentalize the information collection and analysis responsibilities and the access to Iran-related intelligence. Because of that decision, the Air Force meteorologists failed to convey to the JTF helicopter pilots the risk of sandstorms (Engelmeyer & Wagman, 1981, p. 86).

That extreme compartmentalization also accounts for the fact that CIA assessments of the radar threat got to the C-130 and C-141 pilots, but failed to reach the JTF helicopter detachment. That mishap directly influenced the number of helicopters that arrived at “Desert One.” Not knowing that the radar threat was low, the helicopter pilots flew at low altitudes therefore being affected by sandstorms.

The CIA report on the soil consistency at “Desert One” also seems to have been disregarded. The sand on the desert plateau was softer than the pilots expected, and the 34 working propellers and rotors working at the same time created a blizzard of dust (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 148). The helicopter collision with the C-130 resulted from visibility problems.

At the strategic level, the informational decisions were integrated only during the SCC meetings (Figure 19). Although the chairman of the JCS participated in those meetings, he could not influence all the organizations
involved in the Iranian crisis. And, the task force he created was not able to overcome the inter-service rivalries and cross-organizational barriers.

Because he worked only at the operational level, the JTF commander did not have a role in informational decisions. During the pre-deployment phase, he received the concept of operation from the Pentagon, from which he put together a task force. Similarly, during the actual operation, he facilitated communications only between the on-scene commander and the US President.

At the tactical level, there was very little cooperation between the CIA and military operatives. The relation between the JTF units commanders throughout the preparation and execution phases was similarly characterized by a reduced level of cooperation.

My analysis leads to the conclusion that five actors played critical roles in the informational decision-making process: US President Jimmy Carter; the JCS Chairman General David Jones; the CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner; the ground component commander, Colonel Charlie Beckwith; and the JTF helicopter detachment commander, Colonel Edward R. Seiffert. The President decided that negotiations with the Iranians were hopeless, thus giving way to the use of military action. The JCS chairman and the CIA director organized their information collection and analysis assets to focus on the Iranian crisis, but they failed to create coordination mechanisms between their assets and the Joint Task Force, the ultimate beneficiary. The ground component commander was the driving force behind the insertion of covert operatives in Iran. He also established priorities for the US collection assets allocated to the crisis. Lastly, the helicopter wing commander assessed that the helicopter with hydraulic problems was no longer viable to fly, thus causing the decision-makers to abort the operation.
Figure 17. Intelligence flow during the pre-deployment phase for OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
Figure 18. The integration of informational decisions during the pre-deployment phase of the OPERATION EAGLE CLAW...
Figure 19. The integration of decisions during the post-deployment phase of the OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
C. STRUCTURAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

On November 5, 1979, the White House Special Coordinating Committee (SCC) held its first meeting to discuss the Iranian crisis. The committee consisted of President Carter; Vice President Walter Mondale; National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski; Secretary of Defense Harold Brown; Secretary of State Cyrus Vance; Secretary of Treasury William Miller; Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones; Director of the CIA, Admiral Stansfield Turner; and White House Chief of Staff, Hamilton Jordan (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 116). They decided to try and negotiate the release of the hostages, and assessed at that time that a military rescue operation was premature. Consequently, President Carter sent two US negotiators to Teheran, but their efforts were fruitless (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 117). Later on, the US resorted to foreign negotiators who were deemed more credible by the Iranians. Unfortunately, those efforts also failed to secure the hostages’ release.

In late November, the chairman of the JCS formed an ad hoc secret planning group, under his direct supervision, and tasked them to plan and prepare a hostage rescue operation (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 122). General David Jones, the chairman of the JCS, appointed Major General James Vaught commander of the JTF 1-79, and Colonel James Kyle, from the Air Force, deputy commander of the JTF and commander of the JTF air component. Jones also selected Colonel Charlie Beckwith, Army Delta Force Commander, as the ground component commander.

After reviewing all the available intelligence, the planning group, in consultation with the component commanders of JTF, established the following force structure for the rescue operation:

- A strategic airlift unit to transport the rescue forces to Iran and to evacuate both them and the freed hostages
• A helicopter unit to provide transportation for the ground component between the rendezvous points
• Helicopter refueling tankers on C-130 platform
• Delta Force unit to rescue the hostages located in the US embassy
• One Special Forces (SF) 13-man team to rescue the hostages located in the Foreign Ministry building
• One Ranger company to provide security at rendezvous points
• Two AC-130 gunships for close air support during the assault on the embassy
• Two Iranian exiles to guide the rescue force in Teheran
• A Special Forces team, already infiltrated into Iran, to prepare 5 trucks for the transportation of the ground component from a hiding place to the target.

The simple enumeration of all the elements involved in the operation shows the plan’s high complexity. To ameliorate the coordination problems entailed by such a diverse task force, the JTF commander established that each component commander was responsible for the preparation of the plans and of the forces involved in their respective phases.

Consequently, Colonel Kyle would prepare the details of the plan for transporting the forces, refueling the helicopters, extracting the rescue forces and freed hostages. He had under his command: 1) a transport detachment composed of 6 C-130s and 2 C-141s, 2) a close-air-support (CAS) unit consisting of 2 AC-130 gunships, and 3) a transport-helicopter detachment consisting of 8 RH-53 helicopters (Figures 20, 21).

Colonel Beckwith, the ground component commander, was responsible for both the Delta Force action to rescue the hostages in the embassy and a Special Forces team tasked to rescue the three hostages held in the Iranian Foreign Ministry Building (Figures 20, 21). Additionally, Beckwith had the authority to coordinate the Rangers’ actions for securing the two rendezvous points.
established for refueling and loading the hostages on the planes (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 122).

In theory, the structure of the task force was coherent and preparation for the action should not have been influenced by external actors. The chain of command, however, was less than clear.

At first, the ad-hoc planning group opted for Navy RH-53 helicopter, “Sea Stallion” due to its common presence on carriers, its superior payload, and its reduced storage space, as compared to the CH-53 version used by the Air Force (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 124). The pilots regularly flying those helicopters did not have the necessary set of skills required for the low-flight-insertion type of mission that was envisioned by the planners. Subsequently, they were all replaced by Marine Corps and Air Force pilots (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 124).

Second, General John S. Pustay, the senior assistant to JCS chairman, directed Marine Corps Colonel Charles Pitman to review all planning and training involving the JTF helicopter force, even though Pitman had no official position in the JTF chain of command (Figure 21).

Third, the JCS chairman appointed General Phillip Gast as advisor to the task force commander. Instead of remaining focused on the Iranian regional aspects he was supposed to give advice on, Gast became involved also in the preparation and training of the helicopter pilots. Furthermore, the helicopter detachment had another command layer, the officially designated commander, Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Edward Seiffert (Vandenbroucke, 1993, pp. 122-123). In that context, Colonel James Kyle, the air component commander, decided to direct his attention toward the preparation of the fixed-wing detachment (DoD, 1980, pp. 13-18). The consequences of these arrangements will be discussed in the “Operational decisions” section of the chapter.

The preparation responsibilities for the ground component were clearer than the ones for the air component. Although the personnel selected came from a variety of backgrounds and units, Colonel Beckwith managed to mitigate their inherent differences by developing an action plan requiring little coordination
among elements that had not worked together previously. In that regard, Delta Force, more cohesive and possessing superior counterterrorist training, was tasked to free the larger group of hostages, located in the embassy. A special SF team, comprised of 13 men from the Army Special Forces, was tasked to free the chargé d’affairs and his advisors from the Foreign Ministry building. The two rescue elements would operate in different parts of Teheran, and thus not require a great deal of coordination.

Thinking along those lines, Beckwith allowed the SF team to prepare in Europe and never asked them to rehearse the plan together with Delta Force. The SF team would join the JTF only on Masirah Island. Secrecy concerns forced the JTF commander to run only partial rehearsals while in the United States, and no rehearsals on Masirah Island. The largest rehearsal thus involved only six aircraft, from the air component, and 110 men from the ground component.

2. Post-deployment Phase

On April 16, 1980, having decided upon the necessity of the rescue operation, Carter met with the military planners at the White House (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 139). In the presence of the key actors in the Iranian crisis—the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the JCS chairman, the JTF commander and his deputy, and the Delta Force commander—Carter established a clear chain of command for the operation: with himself at the top, the JCS chairman next, and the JTF commander last (Figure 22) (Beckwith, 2000, p. 278; Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 139).

One event that occurred during the operation deserves some attention here: it relates to the minimum number of helicopters necessary for a successful operation. During the preparations, Beckwith stressed the necessity to have at least 132 men for rescuing the hostages held in the two locations. And from that assessment, the Pentagon planners determined that the ground component needed at least six helicopters to transport the rescue force to the hiding place and to later evacuate the rescue forces and the hostages to a location where they could board the planes providing the strategic airlift.
As described earlier, during the insertion phase, only five helicopters arrived in good condition at the rendezvous point “Desert One.” When the JTF commander asked Beckwith whether he was willing to pursue the mission with only five helicopters, thus renouncing up to 20 men, Beckwith’s negative answer was forwarded to President Carter, who decided to abort the mission.

3. **Conclusions on the Integration of Structural Decisions**

The original concept for the hostage rescue operation required the contribution of a large number of units from different services to JTF 1-79. The Army provided Delta Force, the SF teams, and the Ranger unit. The Marine Corps contributed the pilots for the Navy helicopters. The Air Force contributed to the strategic airlift with assets from the 8th Special Operations Squadron. Unfortunately, each service got involved through various informal arrangements with the preparations of their own asset within the JTF.

The JCS chairman, even though he viewed operational security (OPSEC) as paramount to the success of the operation, did not prevent the various services’ interference in the mission planning and preparation. He only required the JTF components to train, prepare, and rehearse separately. The cost of this was the JTF’s lack of internal cohesion (DoD, 1980, pp. 23-24).

In keeping with my analysis, I conclude that three actors played a crucial role in the decisions related to the JTF structure: Colonel Charlie Beckwith, the ground component commander; Colonel James Kyle, the air component commander; and General David Jones, the JCS chairman. Colonel Beckwith was the driving force behind pushing the Pentagon to agree on a force of 132 men. That pre-condition than triggered an increase in the number of aircraft assigned to the JTF. In that regard, Colonel Kyle played an important role in selecting the units that were to contribute forces to the air component of the JTF. Lastly, General Jones succeeded in shaping the size of the JTF according to the component commander’s requests. Jones’s paramount concern for security, however, affected the units’ ability to conduct full-dress rehearsals and thus he failed to create a cohesive task force.
Figure 20. The chain of command for the forces selected to conduct OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
US President
Secretary of Defense
CJCS
Ad hoc planning group

NAVY
JTF 1-79
AIR FORCE

Special Deputy advisor
Airlift and CAS TTPs

Low-flight Rangers insertion TTPs

Special Forces
Delta Force

Operational level

Tactical level

Strategic level

Figure 21. Preparation arrangements for the components of JTF 1-79
Figure 22. The chain of command for the JTF 1-79 during OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
D. OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

In the beginning of the crisis, the United States refrained from engaging in military actions against Iran. On November 6, 1979, the Carter Administration decided to seek the release of the hostages through diplomatic means (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 116). The following day, Carter tasked the Pentagon to plan for a rescue operation. Later in November, the US banned the import of Iranian oil and froze the Iranian assets in US possession worldwide (p. 118).

By March 1980, US public opinion started pressuring the president for military action, and, since he was seeking re-election, President Carter felt compelled to do something. The US-Iran negotiations trailed until March 31, 1980, when the United States gave an ultimatum to the Iranian government to assume control over the hostages (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 119).

On March 22, the JCS chairman briefed Carter on the operation plan (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 136). Later on, the chairman briefed top officials from the Departments of Defense and State on the rescue plan on three other occasions.

On April 11 and 15, after five months of fruitless negotiations, President Carter reconvened the National Security Council and polled his advisors for their views on the Iranian situation. They all supported a rescue operation except for Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. He argued against the intervention because the hostages were in no immediate danger (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 138). Vance argued that the plan for the rescue operation was too complex, and the fact that it unfolded over two days increased the operational risks.

The mission would begin with eight helicopters lifting off at nightfall from the USS *Nimitz*, an aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Oman. They were to fly 600 miles to a rendezvous point at Dasht-E-Kavir, code name “Desert One,” 260 miles southeast of Teheran, in the Iranian Desert. The helicopters would rendezvous there with six C-130 transport planes. “Desert One” was planned to
serve mainly as a refueling point and for the embarkation of the ground component onto the helicopters. The C-130s were to leave the Iranian Desert by daybreak.

With Delta Force, the Army SF team, and the Iranian exiles aboard, the helicopters would fly to a hideaway place some 50 miles southeast of Teheran, where they would stay hidden during that first day. At nightfall, using civilian trucks purchased by a US clandestine support unit, they were to assault the two locations: the US Embassy and the Foreign Ministry Building. During the assault, 2 AC-130 gunships would provide close air support to the raiders. Then the forces would evacuate the hostages by helicopter to a designated location “Desert Two,” where the hostages and the rescue force would board C-141s and be flown out of Iran (Vandenbroucke, 1993, pp. 125-126).

This plan was arrived at after great efforts made by the JTF commander to discard hundreds of proposals made by various high-ranking officers in the Pentagon. Too many people wanted to get involved in the operation, thereby consuming the JTF component commanders’ resources. Beckwith and Vaught were forced to dedicate time and people to explain to those “benevolent contributors” why certain solutions were not feasible (Beckwith, 2000, pp. 210, 215, 238).

2. Post-deployment Phase

On April 17, 1980, the JTF was deployed to Egypt, and then to Masirah Island in the Gulf of Aden. At 6:00 PM on April 24, the first C-130, carrying Delta Force, the SF team, and a Ranger security group, took off for Iran. While approaching the Iranian coast, the pilots realized that the planners had miscalculated the launch time, so the aircraft were flying over Iran during daylight. Two hours into the flight, helicopter number 6 had to land on the desert floor because of mechanical problems. The crew boarded helicopter number 8, leaving their aircraft behind (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 143). One hour later, the helicopter detachment encountered a sandstorm, which forced the pilots to break formation and fly independently to “Desert One.” Four hours into the flight,
helicopter number 5 lost its gyroscope and headed back to the carrier (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 145).

At 10:00 PM on April 24, the first C-130 landed at “Desert One.” Immediately after, the Rangers installed road blocks. As recounted above, they captured a bus full of women and children, blasted a fuel truck, but failed to stop a pick-up truck.

The other 5 C-130s arrived at the site and prepared for the arrival of the helicopters. The sandstorm not only delayed the helicopters 90 minutes, but also made them arrive in a different order. The delay of the flight leader meant that the helicopter unit was without command and control because no contingency plan had been established for such situations.

To make matters worse, the senior officers already at “Desert One” wore no insignia, nor did the key personnel wear recognizable identification. Those two deficiencies added to the lack of a pre-established command post and made the coordination at “Desert One” very difficult (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 147).

Finally, around 2:00 A.M., the last of the six helicopters arrived. However, helicopter number 2 experienced hydraulic problems. Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Seiffert, the helicopter detachment leader, determined that the helicopter was not usable (Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 147).

The JTF commander immediately reported to the JCS and then to President Carter that the air component was unable to provide the minimum six helicopters essential for the ground phase of the operation. Subsequently, President Carter agreed to cancel the mission (DoD, 1980, pp. 30-31; Vandenbroucke, 1993, p. 148).

While preparing to depart from “Desert One” an RH-53 helicopter hit a C-130 and they both went up in flames. Immediately after, the force abandoned all helicopters, boarded the C-130s, and departed for Masirah Island.

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Operational Decisions

At the strategic level, the US President played a key role in the management of the diplomatic and economic measures taken against Iran. On the military side of the American effort, the President established a clear chain of
command for the JTF, which favored fast communication and immediate feedback. He then allowed the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones to take the lead in planning and running the rescue operation (Figures 23, 24).

At the operational level, the Pentagon’s ad hoc planning group and the JTF commander played key roles in protecting the task force’s preparations from the services’ intrusion. The JTF component’s actions were secretive, at the cost of the overall cohesion of the rescue package. However, General Vaught did not succeed in completely separating the service components from their service organizations. For instance, the Marine Corps continued to be involved in the training of its pilots in low-flight-insertion techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs). At that level, Colonel Kyle, the air component commander, also played a crucial role, in both the pre- and the post-deployment phases. But he failed to develop a contingency plan for situations in which a certain air component became decapitated. He also played only a passive role in the preparation phase, allowing the Pentagon planners to reduce the number of helicopters assigned to JTF 1-79 from 11 to 8.

At the tactical level, Colonel Beckwith, the Delta Force commander, was the key actor. He developed the task force’s capability to free the hostages in the embassy. He also coordinated the SF team’s preparation and the support provided by the Ranger unit. During the operation, when confronted with the option of reducing the ground component by one-sixth of its size, he voiced his doubts about the chances for the operation to succeed. His position was not questioned by the President, who ordered the operation be aborted.
Figure 23. The integration of operational decisions during the pre-deployment phase of the OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
Figure 24. The integration of operational decisions during the conduct of
OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
E. DECISION INTEGRATION ANALYSIS

By superimposing all the charts in this chapter on one another, it is obvious that the informational, structural, and operational decisions made in relation to OPERATION EAGLE CLAW were not integrated (Figure 25). The chart shows that the integration of the decisions was achieved only at the JCS chairman’s and at the ground force commander’s levels.

The chart also shows four important fissures. The first is visible between the air component and the ground component, where the commanders had little or no contact with each other. The second fissure is evident within the air component. The helicopter detachment acted as a stand-alone unit up to the deployment to Masirah Island. Third, and most important, the JTF commander separated himself both from the planning group in the Pentagon and from the rescue forces. He remained a low-level actor throughout the preparation and the execution of the mission. The final fissure is the US President’s separation from the military effort. His involvement would have increased the attention with which every aspect of the operation was prepared.

After the operation, the Department of Defense put together a panel of six flag and general officers, who investigated all aspects of the operation: planning, preparation, and execution. They put together the Rescue Mission Report, also known as the Holloway Report. It contains 23 areas that had potential influence on the decision to abort the mission. However, they found critical failures only in the following areas:

- The intelligence support from the entities outside JTF
- The helicopter force size
- Force readiness
- Command and control arrangements

The fissures identified in my charts account for all four types of failures. In relation to the intelligence support, the charts indicate that the JCS chairman had
access to military and CIA intelligence flows. However, the JTF commander did not enjoy the same access to intelligence resources. What is more, the command arrangements within the JTF account for the fact that the helicopter detachment received only partial data on the radar threats and on the meteorological risks associated with a low-flight insertion (DoD, 1980, p. 45-47).

Although the USS *Nimitz* carried 10 helicopters, the force launched the operation with only eight. The fissure I have identified between the helicopter detachment and the rest of the air component accounts for the reduction of the size of the helicopter force. After studying statistical data related to mechanical failures in the RH-53 helicopter fleet, the panel assessed that JTF should have launched the operation with at least 11 aircraft (DoD, 1980, pp. 33, 44-46). That data was available to the planners, but the compartmentalization of responsibilities related to the helicopter detachment created an environment in which cooperation was considered a risk to operational security.

Improvised structural arrangements created a lot of friction. The helicopter detachment was an *ad hoc* force using crews and aircraft from different services. Additionally, the informal involvement of two high-ranking officers in the force training created the impression that they were in command (DoD, 1980, pp. 35-36). As a result, the air component commander failed to assume responsibility for the helicopter detachment planning and training.

The same informal command arrangements resulted in a failure to create contingency plans for situations in which the helicopter force was “decapitated” or its communication systems incapacitated. In the pre-deployment phase, the helicopters did not have a communication link to the air component commander. During the operation that fact proved costly. In order to communicate to the air component commander at “Desert One,” the helicopters had to contact the JTF headquarters in Egypt, which in turn relayed the messages to the forces at “Desert One” (DoD, 1980, p.48).

The issue of readiness is intertwined with the command arrangements. The panel concluded that full-dress rehearsals and joint exercises would have
uncovered, in the preparation phase, a lot of the problems faced during the operation. They note that the extreme compartmentalization of responsibilities in relation to JTF was ultimately the cause of the mission's failure. In that regard, the panel's findings support the fissures I identify.
Figure 25. Overall decisions integration for OPERATION EAGLE CLAW
F. CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the argument, the repartition of authorities regarding the informational, structural, and operational decisions allowed two entities to be involved in all three types of decisions: the United States Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, and the Delta Force Commander, Colonel Charlie Beckwith.

At the strategic level, the decisions were integrated only indirectly at the chairman’s level due to his participation in the SCC meetings. Unfortunately, at the operational level, the JTF commander was not a key player in any of the three types of decision-making. What is more, the planning group, that played the role of the JTF staff, was in fact subordinated to the JCS chairman. With regard to the tactical level, although there was a high level of integration of all decisions at the ground component commander level, it was not enough for the operation to succeed.

The key conclusion of this case study is this: even the best “ingredients” can fail to produce the desired outcome if they are not mixed and matched properly. Integration mechanisms, like joint planning and training, at the tactical level, and coordination groups at the strategic level, would have created an environment in which critical actors could provide feedback related to the operation planning and the forces’ readiness level. While the lack of integration of all decisions at the JTF commander’s level did not directly cause the failure of the operation, it did cause a set of small but critical failures, which ultimately caused the operation to fail overall.
VI. OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

The chapter briefly presents the three major operations conducted under the United Nations mandate in Somalia, between 1992 and 1994, in the effort to stabilize a country torn by famine and civil war. Then, it focuses on the operations conducted by the United States Task Force Ranger (TFR) between August 26 and October 4, 1993, in Mogadishu, Somalia—code name OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT. TFR was tasked to decapitate the Somali National Authority (SNA) indicted for masterminding the ambush of the United Nations peacekeepers in June 1993 (Warner & Levin, 1995, p. 40).

In this chapter, I will demonstrate that the way responsibilities and authorities were assigned in OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT impeded a coherent integration of all decision types, thus causing the failure of the operation. I will start the chapter by identifying the organizational entities involved in all three types of decisions, and to what extent their actions were integrated into the overarching effort to stabilize Somalia. Subsequently, I will provide an alternate explanation for the operation failure by addressing the lack of decision integration.

2. Operation RESTORE HOPE

After analyzing the Somali context of 1992, characterized by inter-clan wars and the prospect of starvation for 1.5 million people, the United Nations launched the UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA I (UNOSOM I) with the mission to provide security for the delivery of food to the starving people. The humanitarian mission was to last one year (April 1992-April 1993). However, the repeated attacks of the Somali clans against the humanitarian food convoys made the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) realize that the mission was not going as planned.
Consequently, the UNSG, Boutros Ghali, asked the United States to lead a Unified Task Force in Somalia (UNITAF) under the auspices of Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcement). In December 1992, the United States agreed to lead a 20-nation coalition for securing the lines of communication in Somalia in order to distribute food more effectively—the mission is also known by its United States’ name OPERATION RESTORE HOPE. Within six months, UNITAF secured the delivery of 103,000 metric tons of food (Sessions & Jones, 1996, pp. 39-50).

3. Operation CONTINUE HOPE

Notwithstanding UNITAF’s efforts, the inter-clan war was still going on. Subsequently, the UNSG demanded the expansion of UNITAF’s role to include disarmament of the warring factions. UNITAF’s reluctance to expand its role led to the formation of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) on March 26, 1993. The latter was activated under the auspices of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter (peace enforcement) as opposed to Chapter VI auspices (peacekeeping) under which UNOSOM I forces were deployed. UNOSOM II was tasked to continue the protection of food supplies, concomitantly with disarmament of the warring factions—the mission is also known by its United States’ name OPERATION CONTINUE HOPE (Warner & Levin, 1995, pp. 4-5).

On June 5, 1993, the members of the Habr-Gidr faction killed 25 Pakistanis serving under the United Nations mandate. The subsequent UN investigation revealed the involvement of Mohammad Farah Aidid in the masterminding of the ambush. Aidid was the head of Habr-Gidr clan and the leader of the Somali National Authority (SNA). At that time SNA was one of the two major contenders for political power in Somalia.

Following that discovery, the special representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Somalia, US Admiral Jonathan Howe (Retired), asked for a special operations unit to be tasked to capture Aidid, officially indicted by United Nations security Council Resolution 837 for the June 5 ambush. In addition,
Howe asked for armored vehicles to provide superior protection to the UN troops (Sterling & Jones, 1996; Funkhouser, 1999).

4. **Operation GOTHIC SERPENT**

Following the June 5 ambush, the United States decided to create a task force to arrest Aidid. In August, 1993, the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, approved the deployment of Task Force Ranger (TFR) to Somalia, with the primary mission of capturing or killing the leaders of the Somali National Authority (SNA). This operation was code-named OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT. The task force consisted of 440 Army Delta Force Operators, Rangers from the 75th Ranger Regiment, Navy SEALs, and aviators of the 160th Special Aviation Regiment (Warner & Levin, 1995, p. 5).

Between August 26 and October 4, 1993, Task Force Ranger conducted seven raids against targets associated with Mohammad Farah Aidid and his close associates. The seventh raid, the focal point of the chapter, targeted the arrest of two of Aidid’s lieutenants, and was planned to last one hour. Instead, the Somali militia swarmed the raiding party, triggering a gruesome battle in the streets of Mogadishu. The aftermath was tragic: on the United States side, there were 18 soldiers killed and 84 wounded; whereas on the Somali side, there were more than 1,000 casualties,23 killed or wounded. Following that raid, the United States withdrew its military presence from Somalia in March 1994 (Allard, 1995, p. 20).

**B. INFORMATIONAL DECISIONS**

1. **Pre-deployment Phase**

On June 5, 1993, the militia associated with the SNA ambushed Pakistani peacekeepers conducting a scheduled inspection of an arms cache near Radio Aidid. The ambush resulted in 25 dead, 53 wounded, and 10 missing on the Pakistani side, and three wounded on the United States side (Warner & Levin, 1995, pp. 5-15).

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23 Many sources acknowledge that figure without providing details on the number of the people killed or wounded.
The next day, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 837, which condemned the ambush on Pakistani soldiers, and mandated the UNOSOM forces to arrest Aidid.\textsuperscript{24} In retaliation, between 12 and 15 June, the UN forces attacked several locations associated with the SNA’s leader. On June 17, 1993, the United Nations Special Representative in Somalia posted a $25,000 reward on Aidid’s head. Six days later, the United States Senate approved a 1.2 billion dollar supplemental appropriation for the Department of Defense, of which $750,000 was for the operation in Somalia. All these events suggest the sense of urgency attached to arresting Aidid (Warner & Levin, 1995, pp. 11-12).

During the months of July and August, various high-profile characters in the United States and United Nations pressured the Department of Defense to agree to send special operations forces to Somalia. Additionally, Major-General Thomas M. Montgomery—commander of the United States Forces in Somalia (USFORSOM)—supported the idea of having specialized people in the theater tasked with capturing Aidid. Given the decrease in US troops, from 25,000 in December 1992 to 4,000 in March 1993 (of which only 2,000 were combatants), Major General Montgomery could not afford to diminish his Quick Reaction Force (QRF) by assigning many of his 2,000 men to arresting Aidid (Warner & Levin, 1995, pp. 16-17).

USSOCOM\textsuperscript{25} (JSOC\textsuperscript{26}-J2) started monitoring the situation in Somalia in December 1992, but allocated information collection resources to monitor closely events in Mogadishu only in May 1993 (Faust, 1999, pp. 8). Between June 12 and 24, 1993 a team led by JSOC J2 Colonel (SF) Dave McKnight assessed the capacity of the US Forces in Somalia to gather intelligence on Aidid. For that

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\textsuperscript{24} According to Warner & Levin (1995), Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was not consulted when the resolution was drawn by US Ambassador Madeleine Albright (p. 41).

\textsuperscript{25} USSOCOM—United States Special Operations Command. This entity is a Unified Combatant Command that is responsible with the preparation and management of the Special Operations Forces.

\textsuperscript{26} JSOC—Joint Special Operations Command. JSOC is a joint headquarters, subordinated to USSOCOM, designed to study special operations requirements and techniques; ensure interoperability and equipment standardization; plan and conduct joint special operations exercises and training; and develop joint special operations tactics.
purpose, the team worked together with USCENTCOM Intelligence Support Element (CISE) and the US National Human Intelligence Element (HUMINT element), both in Mogadishu. He prepared the report and sent it to USCENTCOM and USSOCOM stating that Aidid's capture was viable and feasible given the level of intelligence from human sources (HUMINT) available in the theater.

Immediately after, USCENTCOM J2 requested the deployment of a second assessment team to reassess the viability and feasibility of the intelligence support for a potential capture operation. The team consisted of six people specialized in planning, surveillance, and HUMINT (Faust, 1999, p. 12). Faust mentions that the information flow design created a major gap between the Counter-Intelligence (CI) assets and the rest of the CISE (p. 13). Notwithstanding the structural gap, Colonel Faust presented his findings to Brigadier-General Patrick M. Hughes, USCENTCOM J2, on July 17, 1993. The six-man assessment team also transmitted its assessment to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to USSOCOM.

The intricate intelligence architecture complemented in an unfortunate way the great deal of distrust on the US side regarding the security of the intelligence passed to UNOSOM. Nonetheless, CISE and the HUMINT element continued to handle the United Nations forces intelligence needs, but only after thoroughly “sanitizing” the information before passing it to UNOSOM II J2 (Faust, 1999, pp. 24, 28; Stuteville, 1996, pp. 32-35) (Figure 26).

Considering all the previously mentioned issues, I have put together a chart presenting the integration of the intelligence coming from Mogadishu, Somalia (Figure 27). Four players had a major impact on how the events in Mogadishu were perceived by United States President, Bill Clinton: the United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali, the Secretary of Defense Les Aspin,

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27 USCENTCOM—United States Central Command. This entity is a Unified Combatant Command that is responsible with the military operations in the Horn of Africa, South and Central Asia, and Northern Red Sea regions, as well as the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq.
the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and the USFORSOM commander, Major-General Thomas M. Montgomery.

Figure 26. The intelligence flow—June-August 1993
Figure 27. Intelligence integration for OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT—Pre-deployment phase
2. **Post-deployment Phase**

The intelligence architecture experienced little transformation after the deployment of Task Force Ranger. CISE and the HUMINT element remained subordinated to USCENTCOM with support responsibilities toward TFR and USFORSOM (Figure 28).

As shown, USCENTCOM became the focal point of the intelligence flow on the US side, whereas the UN intelligence flow remained unchanged. Stuteville (1996) regards the subordination of CISE and the HUMINT element to USCENTCOM as a “violation of the principle of unity of effort” (p. 43). His argument is that the particular arrangement in the command and control of the intelligence assets disintegrated the information flow, thus diminishing its accuracy and ultimately its efficiency (pp. 43-45). The subordination of the intelligence assets to USCENTCOM seems to have impeded the collection of intelligence on targets considered first priority by USFORSOM. In turn, CISE remained focused on the collection plan approved by USCENTCOM.

Two events that occurred prior to the October 3 raid deserve attention at this point. First, the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, denied the request for armor submitted by Major-General Montgomery (USFORSOM) on September 14, 1993—even though General Joseph P. Hoar, USCENTCOM commander, endorsed it. USFORSOM assessed that, given the swarming tactics used by the SNA militia, armored vehicles were a necessity. The first event is indicative of the Clinton administration’s need to keep a low profile in Somalia, given Senate pressure on the administration to discuss the US military presence there (Drew, 1994, p. 324).

The second relevant event was the downing of one UH-60 helicopter (from the 10th Mountain Division) by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) on September 25, 1993 (Sangvic, 1998, p. 32). From the theater perspective, it symbolized a major improvement in the militias’ arsenal—a cheap anti-armor28 weapon was used.

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28 The RPG is a shoulder-carried anti-armor weapon. Its projectiles can neutralize lightly armored ground vehicles using the thermal cumulative effect.
transformed into an anti-aircraft weapon. Garrison concluded that the superior training of the TFR pilots was able to minimize the threat posed by the adaptation of the RPG to an anti-aircraft weapon (Faust, 1999, p. 41).

Figure 28. Intelligence integration OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT—Post-deployment phase
3. Conclusions on the Integration of Informational Decisions

The conduct of the October 3 raid shows that the two events had no impact on the planning of the raid. Major-General Garrison and his staff did not consider the two new developments as critical enough to change the planning of the following raid.

In sum, three actors seem to have played a critical role in the decision-making process related to informational decisions: the Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, at the strategic level; the USCENTCOM commander, General Joseph P. Hoar, at the operational level; and TFR commander, Major-General William Garrison, at the tactical level. Secretary Aspin downplayed the urgency of the request for armor and gunships, being more sensitive to the political signals sent by the members of the Congress then to the soldiers in Somalia. General Hoar, controlled the majority of the intelligence assets in the theater, but failed to arrange for a mechanism of fast coordination between TFR and USFORSOM. Lastly, Major-General Garrison remained oblivious to the overwhelming evidence of the tactical innovations developed by Somalis, both in the swarming tactic and in the use of RPGs as anti-aircraft weapon.

C. STRUCTURAL DECISIONS

1. Pre-deployment Phase

The USCENTCOM and USSOCOM commanders were pressured by National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright, and UN Special Representative in Somalia, Jonathan Howe, to create a force able to capture Mohamad Farah Aidid, the leader of SNA and the Habr Gidr clan (Faust, 1999, p. 12). The DoD chain of command was very complicated when it came to the potential units to be sent to Mogadishu, (Figure 29).

According to Faust (1999) Howe and Albright continued to pressure the Department of Defense until early August 1993, when Secretary of Defense Aspin tasked USSOCOM to build three force packages (large, medium, and small). They were nicknamed “Cadillac” (large), “Oldsmobile” (medium), and
“Volkswagen” (small). They differed in the number of people involved, primarily, and in the fact that the small and medium packages did not include an AC-130 gunship. There was no mention of armored vehicles in any of the three packages. USSOCOM coordinated with USCENTCOM and CJCS the composition of the packages (pp. 15-16). The CJCS’s deployment order reflected the fact that the President favored the small package.

Two types of influences shaped the content of the package: mission requirements and political influence. Among the strategic actors, only the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had to deal with both type of pressures (Figure 30).

2. Post-deployment Phase

Given the short notice for deployment, TFR did not have much time to rehearse and build cohesion. However, they conducted a few integrated exercises, all of them having the support of AC-130 gunships. Much to their surprise, the President approved the package without the gunship.

As mentioned before, the “Volkswagen” package consisted of 440 men: Army Delta Force operators, Rangers from the 75th Ranger Regiment, Navy SEALs, and aviators from the 160th Special Aviation Regiment. The decision to launch the operation unified all these assets under Major-General William F. Garrison’s tactical control (TACON) 29. Garrison answered directly to USCENTCOM and not to the regional sub-unified combat command (USFORSOM). However, Major-General Garrison and Major-General Montgomery (Commandant, USFORSOM) had a very close, but informal, relation given the fact that the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for Mogadishu operations was under the Montgomery’s operational control (OPCON) 30(Figure 31).

29 Tactical control—“TACON is the command authority over the assigned or attached forces or commands or military capability made available for tasking that is limited to the detailed and usually local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish assigned missions and tasks” (DoD, 1995, p. xii).

30 OPCON—“[T]he authority to perform the functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction to accomplish the mission.” (DoD, 1995, p. xii)
Nothing in the force structure or command relationships changed during the August-October period, even though Major-General Montgomery officially requested armored forces. At that time, Secretary Aspin felt that an increase in the US presence in Somalia had two major disadvantages. First, sending more troops and armored vehicles could have signaled that other nations’ participation in the UN operation was not necessary, while US diplomatic efforts aimed at drawing forces from more nations into the UN operation in Somalia.

The second problem stems from the relation between the US president and the Congress. US law requires Congressional approval of any force package deployed, except for contingents smaller than 1,000 men, for UN missions in non-combatant capacity31 (Fisher, 1993, pp. 161-162). Returning to the forces in Somalia, their mission clearly did not fit that profile. So the US Congress became a non-supportive actor in the struggle for more forces (Figure 32).

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Structural Decisions

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff seems to have played a crucial role in the process of shaping the force package to be sent to Mogadishu. He gave into the pressure exercised by Albright and Howe and advised the President to approve the small package. His position was supported by the USCENTCOM commander, General Hoar. The latter proposed a small force package, without gunships, in order to avoid collateral damage in Somalia.

The Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, participated in the decision-making process related to the size of TFR. His approval led to the formation of both TFR and USFORSOM. That fact made him the key player in the decisions related to the structure of forces in Somalia. He denied the USFORSOM commander’s request for armor, which indirectly affected QRF’s capability to support the task force trapped in downtown Mogadishu. To summarize, three key actors in the decision-making process supported the proposal to send a small package, but each one did so for totally different reasons.

31 The author is referring to the United Nations Participation Act, passed by the Congress in 1945.
Figure 29. Command and control relations for the Task Force Ranger components in the pre-deployment phase
Figure 30. Structural decision in the pre-deployment phase of the OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT
Figure 31. The command and control relations for the elements involved in OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT
Figure 32. The integration of structural decisions in the post-deployment phase of OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT
D. **OPERATIONAL DECISIONS**

1. **Pre-deployment Phase**
   The mission for TFR was established at the Presidential level with the consultation of the CJCS. However, the actual planning was done by USSOCOM and approved by the Secretary of Defense. Subsequently, the President signed the memorandum for the deployment of the forces, which memo was transmitted—in the form of a deployment order—to the USSOCOM and USCENTCOM by the CJCS. At the moment of deployment, the US policy on Somalia was focused on a peaceful resolution of the civil war through decapitation of the SNA.

2. **Post-deployment Phase**
   The commander of the task force established the actual details of the raids. However, the fact that MG Garrison was given only tactical control (TACON) over the Task Force Ranger components is a clear indicator of the restrictions imposed on the execution of the mission. As mentioned in the previous section, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and USCENTCOM commander approved the small package in order for the task force to keep a low profile. Additionally, by giving Garrison only TACON over the forces assured that he had no authority if his orders were to exceed the one issued by the chairman upon the approval of the mission. That arrangement was legally binding for the commanders of the subordinate units, who had to follow a very restrictive set of rules of engagement.

   Additionally, USCENTCOM was involved in every step of the planning, thus complicating the decision-making process (Allard, 1995, pp. 21-22). The reduced level of authority for the TFR commander made the planning a cooperation process among the TFR components (Delta operators, Rangers, and the Special Aviators) with the oversight of USCENTCOM (Allard, 1995, p. 60). To complicate things even more, the QRF under USFORSOM never received early warnings on the operations to be conducted by TFR because of the specific command and control arrangements. The only coordination arrangement
between the two structures was the agreement that the USFORSOM commander was to be informed as soon as the operation was launched (Faust, 1999, p. 28).

On the diplomatic side of the operations in Somalia, the United States Department of State had decided to negotiate in early September of 1993 (Warner & Levin, 1995, pp. 42-46). The State Department sent repeated messages to Aidid about the United States' willingness to achieve a negotiated settlement. Obviously, TFR raids sent a different message to the SNA, thus making the diplomatic effort seem deceptive in nature (Figure 33).

Senate testimony confirms that Defense Secretary Aspin did not change Garrison’s orders to capture Aideed. This evidence suggests that Aspin did not inform the TFR commander that the policy focus had changed to a more diplomatic approach (Sangvig, 1998, p. 39).

3. Conclusions on the Integration of Operational Decisions

From my analysis, I conclude that, there were two sets of actors responsible for the operational decisions. On one hand, the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense decided to shift from the military approach to diplomacy when dealing with Mohammad Farah Aideed. On the other hand, the USCENTCOM commander, and the Task Force Ranger commander were trying to kill or capture the leaders of the Somali National Authority, including Aideed.

It is obvious that the two sets of actors failed to coordinate their actions, and, to some extent they succeeded in neutralizing each others’ efforts.
Figure 33. The integration of operational decisions for OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT
E. DECISION INTEGRATION ANALYSIS

Compiling all the charts in this chapter into a single one, it is obvious that different types of decisions were integrated at different levels. There is not a single “actor” with immediate access to all the decisions, if not to make them, at least to be part of the decision making process (Figure 34). Such a wide dispersion of authority was likely to cause misunderstanding, if not failures, in the conduct of operations.

The chart shows two critical fissures in the overall relationship architecture. Such fissures represent a lack of integration of the decisions related to those organizations and lead to various types of failures.

The first one is visible between the US military and diplomatic efforts. The second fissure can be seen between the US-led and the UN-led military operations. My observations are supported by the Congressional commission findings, which pointed out the following aspects that led to the failure of the US effort in Somalia:

- The lack of armor and road-clearing capabilities directly affected the number of casualties inflicted on the US side (Warner & Levin, 1995, p. 48).
- The elimination of the AC-130s from the package reduced TFR’s capability to deal with extreme situations such as the Somali urban swarming tactics (p. 49).
- The inappropriate distribution of “launch authority” allowed TFR to conduct its first raid without accurate intelligence. That raid had no impact on the SNA side, but it disclosed the purpose of the TFR’s presence in Mogadishu (p. 50).
- The insufficient depth of HUMINT did not allow TFR to directly target Aidid, but only his lieutenants (p. 50).
- The lack of coordination of the United States with the United Nations diplomatic and military actions caused the failure of both efforts (pp. 50-51).
The two fissures in the integration of decisions explain all but one of the failures identified by the Congressional committee, namely the HUMINT quality. That failure is better explained by the lack of local expertise and the US incapacity to break through the clan structure in order to get data on Aidid's whereabouts. Such penetration would have required a long-term, unconventional campaign, which was beyond the United States’ immediate goal.

As for the failures explained by my chart, the fissure between the US and UN efforts account for the lack of armored vehicles, and for the uncoordinated diplomatic and military efforts. In relation to the decision to deny armored vehicles, the US was in a process of downsizing its presence in Somalia concomitant with a diplomatic push for other nations to join the UN effort. At that point, a decision to commit armored forces to Somalia would have sent the signal that an international effort was no longer required.

The lack of coordination between the US and the UN was visible in both military and diplomatic efforts. The United States started negotiating with Aideed while the United Nations were still pursuing a “zero tolerance” policy in relation with Aideed. In the military arena, the most visible lack of coordination was the October 3 raid. The UN forces new nothing about the raid. Furthermore, the US-UN efforts to put together a multinational reaction force to rescue the embattled Americans in downtown Mogadishu materialized only after eight hours.

The denial of AC-130s from the initial package was caused by a fear of increased collateral damage within the Somali population (Warner & Levin, 1995, p. 49). In fact, the approval would have not only increased the package capabilities, but its size also. The cancellation of AC-130s became the middle ground between the military and the political sides of the US Department of Defense.

The inopportune disclosure of TFR’s presence and intentions can be explained by the command relationship in the theater. The TFR commander had launch authority, due to its remoteness from the higher echelon USCENTCOM (located in Tampa, Florida). The USCENTCOM commander did not have a better
picture of the theater, thus allowing TFR to operate independently. Some sort of subordination of the TFR to the USFORSOM could have improved the quality of the support provided by the QRF and an objective oversight in relation to TFR raid planning. It is safe to say that MG Montgomery’s warning in relation to the increased vulnerability of the Blackhawk helicopters would have been at least included in the contingency plans developed by MG Garrison.

Figure 34. Overall decisions integration for OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT
F. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have identified the critical events and the kind of decisions made in relation to them. Based on those observations, I was able to map the particular distribution of authorities in relation to each type of decision: informational, structural, and operational.

In the analysis of the integration of all decisions, I compiled a chart gathering together all entities with responsibilities in the decision-making process of any aspect related to OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT. Based on the findings in the chart, I have provided an explanation for a majority of the failures pointed out by the US Congressional commission tasked to investigate the events related to the TFR operations in Somalia.

Throughout the chapter, I provided sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that the lack of decision integration leads to various types of failure.
VII. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

A. HYPOTHESIS REVISITED

1. Theoretical Framework

I started the thesis with a working hypothesis stating that, in order for a special operation to be successful, the informational, structural, and operational decisions must be integrated at the level of the commander of the force conducting it. Using that hypothesis, I studied four cases presenting different dependent and independent variables.

To now refine that hypothesis, I will use the method of difference, which allows me to compare the cases with similar characteristics—i.e. operations conducted by coalitions or operations conducted by states unilaterally—having different values of a dependent variable. As indicated in the introduction, one dependent variable is success or failure of a special operation. My study of the cases revealed three other independent variables that may have influenced the outcome of the operations. To test the validity of the hypothesis, I will compare the cases studied using the following four organizational dimensions as independent variables: 1) centralization/decentralization, 2) length of the chain of command, 3) force cohesion, and 4) overall decision integration. If the value of an independent variable is similar in cases having different outcomes, that independent variable will be discounted as a potential cause for the success/failure of the special operations.

2. Unilateral Action

a. Introduction

In this section I will compare the characteristics of two unilateral operations: OPERATION JONATHAN conducted by Israel in Entebbe, Uganda, and OPERATION EAGLE CLAW conducted by the United States in Iran.
b. **Centralization/decentralization**

The analysis conducted in chapters IV and V shows that in both cases the high-level decision-makers in the states conducting those operations, Israel and the United States, chose to centralize both the planning and the preparation of the operations. Both operations reveal that the take-over components—Israel: Sarayet Matkal, and US: Delta Force—were allowed a certain freedom, by their respective governments, in the planning and rehearsing of the take-over phase. That fact, by itself, does not falsify my labeling of the operations as “centralized.”

c. **The Length of the Chain of Command**

In both cases, the chains of command were very short. The Israelis had three layers of authority for the forces conducting the rescue operation in Entebbe: the crisis cell, the advanced general headquarters, and the operation commander.

The United States operation in Iran also had three layers of authority for Joint Task Force 1-79: the President, the JCS chairman, and the JTF commander. The fact that the JTF commander delegated his authority to the commander of the air component for the refueling operations at “Desert One” does not discredit my characterizing the length of the chain of command as “very short.”

d. **Force Cohesion**

In both cases the air and ground components were put together using assets from different services and units. Given that, the overall cohesion of the forces was comparable in both operations. Though, the Israelis used pilots from a single unit, which increased the cohesion of the air component, they used three different units, from a single service, to conduct the ground phase. In comparison, the Americans built their ground component around Delta Force, which had a high cohesion, but they assembled their air component using assets from three services, which accounts for the low cohesion of the transport and
helicopter detachments. For those reasons, I characterize both force packages as having a medium-to low-level cohesion overall.

e. **Overall Decision Integration**

The Israeli operation in Uganda had the three types of decisions—informational, structural, and operational—integrated at all levels. In contrast, the American operation in Iran had a number of structural fissures in the design of its command relations, which by favoring an unfortunate dissipation of authority, failed to integrate the three types of decisions at the level of the JTF commander.

f. **Conclusions on the Unilateral Operations**

In these two unilateral operations, the evidence shows that their force packages had similar characteristics and were deployed using some similar command and control arrangements: centralized control over forces, a reduced number of authority layers, and short chains of command.

Both operations were very complex undertakings, but their complexity does not account for the failure of only one of them. Additionally, the need for secrecy was extreme in both cases, because the hostages were kept in countries sympathetic to the hostage takers, and any intelligence leaks could have led to the execution of the hostages.

The two operations seem to differ primarily in relation to the integrating mechanisms used by the two force packages during the pre- and post-deployment phases. At the strategic level, the Israeli political and military decision-makers were collocated both in the pre- and post-deployment phases. The Americans also collocated their strategic-level decision-makers during the post-deployment phase, but only infrequently during the preparation and planning of the operation.

The Israelis subordinated the planning staff to the task force commander, whereas the Americans kept the planning body subordinated to the JCS chairman. Thus, the commander of the US JTF 1-79 spent a large part of his time traveling between the Pentagon, where the planning staff was located, and North Carolina, where the ground component was preparing the ground phase.
For the intelligence support for the Israeli planners, the crisis cell included all the military and political decision-makers, as well as the directors of the two major intelligence services: MOSSAD and the Military Intelligence directorate of the IDF. That arrangement allowed the planners access to all available intelligence sources. However, the United States assigned a CIA liaison only to the JCS, which arrangement was not sufficient to create a real fusion of the intelligence flows. Furthermore, the flow of information within the US military was compartmentalized to a degree that directly affected the effectiveness of the joint task force.

In sum, the two operations had many similarities in their force structures and only a few differences related to their command and control arrangements. Nonetheless, the differences provide a plausible explanation for the different outcomes of the two operations, which will be addressed in the “process tracing” section of the chapter.

3. Coalition Operation

a. Introduction

In this section, I will compare the characteristics of the operations conducted by coalitions of forces in Congo and Somalia. A coalition formed with US and Belgian forces succeeded in rescuing Western citizens held hostage in Stanleyville and Paulis, Congo—OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE/NOIR.

In comparison, a US-UN coalition failed to decapitate the Somali National Authority and barely succeeded in evacuating US Task Force Ranger trapped in downtown Mogadishu, Somalia—OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT.

b. Centralization/decentralization

The analysis conducted in chapters III and VI shows that in both cases the decision-makers in the states conducting those operations chose to decentralize the planning and the preparation of the operations. Both operations reveal that the take-over components—Belgian paracommandos in Congo and the US Delta Force in Somalia—were allowed a large degree of operational freedom in relation to the planning and rehearsing of the take-over phase.
c. **The Length of the Chain of Command**

In both cases also, the chains of command were relatively long. The US-Belgian Dragon Force had five layers of authority on the American side and four layers on the Belgian side. One of those layers, the US-Belgium planning conference (a combined planning staff) was a “bottle neck” for all the decisions made in relation to the Dragon Force. Although that planning body added another level of authority, it successfully integrated the operational needs expressed by the Dragon Force components commanders and the US and Belgium political decision-makers’ requirement for “swift and low” profile actions.

The operation conducted by the US forces in Mogadishu also had four layers of authority: the President, the Secretary of Defense, the USCENTCOM commander, and the TFR commander. Although an American unit, the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) that was to provide support to TFR was under UN control. For the UN forces, I could identify only three layers of authority: the UN Secretary General, the UNOSOM II commander, and the National Contingent commanders.

By comparison, the chains of command for the forces involved in OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT were clearer and shorter than for the forces involved in OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE/NOIR. However, the latter operation, with its longer command chain, succeeded, while the former, with the shortest path from tactical to strategic actors, failed. Intuitively, one would assume that the longer the chain the more difficult to adjust the plans, and therefore, that the results of the operations would have been reversed. Instead, the length of the command chains seems to no longer be a plausible explanation for the success or failure of the two operations.

d. **Force Cohesion**

In both cases the air and ground components were put together using assets from different services and units. Given that, the overall cohesion of the forces was comparatively low in both operations.

On one hand, the US-Belgian Dragon Force used only American assets for the airlift and only Belgian paracommandos for the ground phase. On
the other hand, in the US-UN effort to decapitate SNA, the Americans used a highly cohesive force package, Task Force Ranger, integrating ground and airlift assets mostly from the USSOCOM. However, the support component was loosely organized and uncoordinated, and thus barely cohesive. The UN supported TFR with a combination of light and armored infantry units from the US, Pakistan, and Malaysia, a combination of efforts never experienced before in that theater of operations, which could explain in part the delays in providing ground support to TFR.

e. Overall Decision Integration

In the DRAGON ROUGE/NOIR operation the three types of decisions were integrated at all levels. In contrast, the US-UN operation in Somalia had a number of structural fissures, which favored the dissipation of authority, thereby failing to integrate the three types of decisions at all levels.

f. Conclusions on the Coalition Operations

In the two operations conducted by coalitions of forces, the evidence shows that the two force packages had similar designs and were deployed using some similar command and control arrangements: decentralized control over forces, a large number of authority layers, and long chains of command.

Both operations were very complex undertakings, but their complexity does not account for the failure of only one of them. Additionally, the need for secrecy was extreme in both cases. In the Congolese crisis, the Simbas were merciless and resorted to executions quite often; therefore the rescuers had to avoid being uncovered before the rescue. In the Somali case, the SNA leaders changed locations frequently, thus an untimely disclosure of the TFR next target could have allowed the targeted Somalis to move to another secret location.

The integrating mechanisms seem to have been the only major difference in the way the two force packages operated. At the strategic level, the US-Belgian political and military decision-makers developed inter-service and inter-countries coordination mechanisms: the US Congo Working Group worked directly with the Belgian Foreign Minister, who was the authority coordinating all diplomatic
and military efforts on the Belgian side. The combined planning staff was directly subordinated to the two strategic actors, thus favoring the clarification of planning details at the operational level. At the tactical level, the American commander of the airlift, and the Belgian commander of the ground forces were collocated at all times, thus overcoming the communication and coordination problems entailed by such long chains of command.

The US-UN efforts in Somalia were uncoordinated at so many levels that it would have been difficult to succeed. The US forces in Mogadishu pursued an aggressive strategy to capture the SNA leaders, while the US diplomats engaged the same targets in negotiations. This shows that even within the US the entities involved in the Somali crisis did not coordinate their efforts, and much less did they coordinate with the UN entities involved in UNOSOM II. The US TFR conducted eight raids in Mogadishu, of which the UN commander, who was responsible for their support, had only *post factum* knowledge.

In relation to the intelligence support for the planners, OPERATION DRAGON ROUGE/NOIR shows that all the intelligence flows intersected in the combined planning body: the US-Belgium planning conference. With regard to OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT the intelligence was integrated at the USCENTCOM commander level, yet local-cooperation arrangements allowed the TFR commander to tap into the intelligence resources available in the theater. Operational security considerations, however, prevented the intelligence between UN and US forces to circulate effectively, thus negatively influencing the effectiveness of the UN support to TFR.

In sum, the two operations had many similarities in their forces structure and only a few differences in their command and control arrangements. These differences thus become plausible explanations for the outcomes of the two operations.

4. **Process Tracing**

The analysis in the previous two sections reveals that the differences concerning the integration of informational, structural, and operational decisions
remain the most plausible explanation for the two failed operations analyzed: EAGLE CLAW and GOTHIC SERPENT.

a. **Operation Eagle Claw**

As shown in Chapter V, the failure to integrate the informational decisions caused the JTF 1-79 air component commander to accept structural changes in the force package which did not take into account the meteorological risks associated with low flight in desert areas, and the statistical data related to the frequency of mechanical failures for the RH-53 helicopters in extreme conditions. Even more, the low radar threat was not communicated to the helicopter detachment, which instead of avoiding the sandstorm, flew right through it. The structural decision to take only eight helicopters instead of eleven, combined with the operational decision to fly through the sandstorm which incapacitated three helicopters, caused the helicopter detachment to remain with only five working helicopters. Given the fact that the ground component needed at least six helicopters for the final insertion, the breakdown of the three helicopters forced the operation commander to abort the mission, therefore causing OPERATION EAGLE CLAW to fail.

b. **Operation Gothic Serpent**

As shown in Chapter VI, the TFR commander failed to take into account the developments in the Somali arsenal and tactics, even though substantial evidence was provided by the USFORSOM commander. Subsequently, the raid planners failed to develop contingency plans for the Somali swarming attacks, and the downing of more than one aircraft. Those planning failures became obvious when four helicopters belonging to TFR were shot down and the forces on the ground, Delta Force and Rangers, had to disperse in order to insure the protection of multiple objectives, subsequently losing the operational initiative. Those operational decisions allowed the Somali militias to block and besiege the raiders in downtown Mogadishu, therefore causing OPERATION GOTHIC SERPENT to fail.
The reduced level of coordination between the Quick Reaction Force (US), the Pakistani, Malaysian, and Italian contingents in Mogadishu caused UN forces to delay the extraction of the besieged TFR with more than twelve hours, in which period the US casualty toll increased from five to eighteen.

5. Restated Thesis

The previous analysis shows that the aspect of “centralization versus decentralization” did not play a role in the outcome of the four operations. Similarly, short chains of command did not help operations to succeed, nor did long chains of command invariably cause the operations to fail. The cohesion of forces played an important role only in the operations where the plan was designed to create a high interdependency between non-cohesive components of the force packages. However, low-cohesion force packages also succeeded in accomplishing their missions, thus discrediting “force cohesion” as a plausible explanation for the success or the failure of those special operations. This observation on cohesion impact suggests, however, that it is the role of the decision-makers in creating a plan that overcomes the coherence problems through the segmentation of the mission tasks.

In light of the conclusions reached in the preceding sections, the refined thesis states that the success of the special operations was conditioned by the lateral and vertical integration of the pertinent informational, structural, and operational decisions at all levels. But, if a unification of the decision bodies at certain levels is not possible, their collocation and the establishment of permanent liaison/cooperation teams are also valid options.

B. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROMANIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

1. The Political Decision-makers

Before explaining the Romanian SOF command structure, I need to address the role of some state institutions in the military decision-making process. As in the US, power is divided among the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches.

The legislative branch consists of the Parliament at the national level and district and local councils at their respective levels. For the purpose of this paper, I
will only address the national level. The Parliament consists of two chambers: the Senate and the Deputy Chamber. The members of both chambers are elected directly by the population for a four-year mandate. However, the numbers of mandates a parliamentary can serve is unlimited (Presedintele, 1991, art. 61-64).

The executive branch draws its authorities from the parliamentary elections. The party or the coalition that receives the largest number of votes is entitled to form the Government. The Romanian President must endorse the chief of the Government, the Prime Minister. Having received the Presidential endorsement, the Prime Minister appoints the members of the Government, which have to be approved by the Parliament (Presedintele, 1991, art. 85).

The President of Romania is technically a part of the executive branch, but his responsibilities are mostly limited to foreign policy and national defense. Although the President is the Commander-in-Chief of the Romanian Armed Forces, his orders must be counter signed by the Prime Minister (Presedintele, 1991, art. 92 & 100).

The judiciary system is independent from political elections, having a supreme body the High Court of Justice empowered to administer the courts. The judiciary system is not a de facto subject of this paper, and its role will not be further examined.

The Supreme Council of National Defense (SCND)—the leading decisional body in the national security arena—consists of the Romanian President, the Prime Minister, the directors of intelligence services (SRI\textsuperscript{32}, SIE\textsuperscript{33} and SPP\textsuperscript{34}) and the ministers of defense, interior and justice (Romanian Parliament, 1991, p. 1). The presidents of the parliamentary chambers or the members of the

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{32} Serviciul Roman de Informatii (SRI) [The Romanian Intelligence Service]—The specialized entity for intelligence collection and processing in relation to the Romanian National Security (for more information access www.sri.ro)

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\textsuperscript{33} Serviciul de Informatii Externe (SIE) [Foreign Intelligence Agency]—SIE makes a specific contribution to safeguarding, upholding and pursuing Romania’s interests, within the unitary conception set out in the Strategy of National Security (for more information access www.sie.ro).

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{34} Serviciul de Protectie si Paza (SPP) [Protection Service]—The service specialized in insuring the security of the state official and diplomats, and to the foreign diplomats while on Romanian soil. The protection includes the official, his/her family and the official residency (for more information access www.spp.ro).
parliamentary Committees in charge of the National Security can be invited to the meetings.

The Supreme Council of National Defense is tasked to decide on strategic issues regarding national interests and to regulate the conduct of the authorities during national crises and wartime.

2. The Decision-making Process Related to the Romanian SOF

a. Informational Decisions

Given the fact that the directors of the intelligence agencies are members of the Supreme Council of National Defense, it is very likely that informational decisions, in relation to the use of SOF, are to be made at the SCND level (Figure 35).

However, during wartime, the subordination of the SOF to the National Joint Force Commander is likely to determine that informational decisions are to be made at the Joint Force level. For operations conducted within a multinational coalition, informational decisions are to be made by the commanding authority of the coalition (MoND, 2003, pp. 12 & 22-24).

b. Structural Decisions

According to the Romanian Special Operations Doctrine (2003), the Special Operations Forces consist of units nominated by the Minister of Defense. The current command arrangements subordinate the special operations components to the services from which they draw their assets, but the decision to employ the Special Operations Forces resides with the Romanian President (MoND, 2003, pp.12 & 20) (Figure 36). And, the strength of the component to be deployed (group, company, or task force) is established at the J3/General Staff level based on the parameters of the mission (MoND, 2003, p. 21).

Another interesting aspect is the need for a Parliamentary authorization to use the forces outside our national borders, regardless of the size of the component. In that respect, a SOF deployment in support of a coalition is conditioned by the Parliamentary approval, whereas an operation on Romanian territory (i.e., against a foreign terrorist group) requires only Presidential approval.
In the case of a crisis requiring the use of SOF to protect national interests outside the country, Presidential approval must be supported by Parliament. However, a certain degree of freedom is allowed the President who can approve a mission and inform the Parliament within 24 hours of his approval. All Presidential acts involving use of the military must be counter-signed by the Prime Minister.

c. Operational Decisions

During crises, in wartime, and for missions outside national territory the Parliamentary approval is necessary for the deployment of troops. As an exception, during wartime, the Chief of the General Staff approves the deployment of SOF in support of the war effort.

The planning of operations is conducted by the J3/General Staff for all situations except for wartime use of SOF or for their use within multinational coalitions. The Joint Force commander has the responsibility of planning the use of SOF in support of joint operations during wartime. In the case of multinational coalitions, the authority to plan the use of the Romanian SOF is given to the coalition commander (Romanian Ministry, 2003, pp. 20-24).
Figure 35. The Romanian intelligence architecture during peacetime
Figure 36. The command and control relations for the Romanian Special Operations Forces
3. **Implications of the Thesis**

The brief presentation of the command and control arrangements in the use of the Romanian Special Operations Forces reveals three generic situations: crisis, wartime, and support of coalitions. My analysis will attempt to show possible problems that the Romanian SOF might face initially because of its particular command and control arrangements.

**a. Crisis Situations**

When trying to identify the benefits of this study for Romanian authorities, the current structure and command arrangements seem to be viable for crisis situations. I will substantiate that claim by demonstrating the implications of my thesis for the planning process at the strategic level and for the cohesion of the force package.

The Supreme Council of National Defense usually meets in the capital, Bucharest, where all the important decision-making bodies are located—a closeness of location that favors a rapid response to crises. The fact that the chairman of the General Staff directly controls the J3-Operations Directorate, which in turn subordinates the SOF Bureau, facilitates intelligence communication from the SCND to the SOF Bureau through the J3 channel. Additionally, the collocation of the chairman of the General Staff and the SOF Bureau/J3 within the Ministry of Defense building facilitates immediate feed-back and adjustments to plans as situation developments require. In this setting, face-to-face meetings between planners and military decision-makers are likely to occur (Figure 37).

In relation to the forces available to conduct special operations, the situation is a little more delicate. The current subordination of the special operations components to the services impedes the rapid deployment of SOF. That arrangement also negatively impacts cohesion building within the special operations forces community. Even more, the lack of joint education programs suggests that, even at the individual level, development of trust among members of
the Army, Air Force, and Navy Special Operations components is not likely to occur (Figure 37).

In keeping with my thesis, these conclusions suggest that during crises, plans for the deployment of SOF must be examined by representatives of all services to ensure the feasibility of the plans. Additionally, the Special Operations Bureau needs to develop plans that account for the low interoperability and cohesion among the service components.

b. **Wartime**

During wartime, the SOF may be subordinated to the National Joint Force Commander. The current doctrine does not specify whether the SOF Bureau also becomes subordinated, along with the SOF, to the National Joint Force commander. Given the complexity and the particularities of the use of the SOF, the best solution in such cases is to allocate the entire SOF package—planners and forces—to the Joint Force. That arrangement would ensure that missions assigned to the Special Operations Forces are of the highest importance, thereby requiring their use.

The discussion pertaining to force cohesion and operational interdependency, presented in the previous section, remains valid. In addition, however, SOF planners must take into account the increased complexity of the operational de-confliction process in theaters of operations involving not only special operations components, but also units from all services. Therefore, joint planning bodies and other coordination mechanisms must be established.

c. **Coalition Support**

For cases in which Romanian decision-makers decide to support militarily a coalition, the Romanian doctrine establishes that the SOF be subordinated to the coalition commander. Evidence in the cases studied here suggests that the transfer of authority be partial, thus allowing the Romanian SOF components to benefit from their own national intelligence assets. Additionally, those cases advocate for the involvement of representatives of the SOF Bureau in the coalition planning process. Obviously, such an involvement must be based on
a formal position of at least one member of the SOF Bureau within the coalition Planning Staff (Figure 38).

Figure 37. Command and control arrangements for the Romanian SOF during crises
Figure 38. Command and control arrangements for the Romanian SOF subordinated to a coalition.
C. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the long run, Romanian decision-makers must create the conditions that will lead to the improvement of all service components’ interoperability with one another, with conventional forces, and with forces from other countries. To that end, I suggest the following measures:

- The complete and direct subordination of all special operations units to a Special Operations Directorate established at the General Staff level.
- The establishment of permanent liaison teams to coordinate intelligence flows between the Special Operations Directorate and the intelligence community.
- The development of joint regulations, tactics, techniques, and procedures for all special operations forces.
- The creation of specialized education and training programs addressed to the members of the SOF community primarily, but not exclusively.
- The development of combined-joint training exercises involving all services, agencies with responsibility in the national defense arena, and foreign partners.

D. FURTHER STUDIES

From the previous recommendations, two major research directions emerge. One is related to the development of education and training programs addressed to the special operations community. In that regard, a set of questions need answering:

- What are the specialty areas that need immediate attention?
- How can the education and training courses be best integrated in the overall strategy for the development of special operations capabilities?
- What are the ranks that need to participate in each type of course in order to maximize the impact of the joint education and training?
Another major research area is the combined-joint training exercises. In this domain, answers to the following questions would have a major impact on the effectiveness of the Romanian Special Operations Forces:

- What are the benefits of joint training with the Anti-terrorism Brigade subordinated to the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI)?
- How can national priorities related to the development of the Special Operations Forces be supported by combined training exercises with foreign troops?
- What are the entities with which a day-to-day cooperation would positively influence the effectiveness of the Romanian Special Operations Forces?

The six questions assume that a unification of all special operation components of the services is not likely to occur in the near future. Therefore, my proposed questions attempt to identify ways to increase the effectiveness of the Special Operations Forces without making structural changes in the command and control arrangements.

E. FINAL COMMENTS

I began the thesis believing that the current command and control arrangements for the Romanian Special Operations Forces are inappropriate. The case studies revealed, however, that the existing structural limitations to decision integration can be overcome by the use of formal and informal coordination mechanisms.

The current cohesion problems of the special operations components of the services need not be a source of operational failure. The American, Belgian, and Israeli Special Operations Forces provide compelling examples showing that the vertical and lateral integration of strategic and operationally integrated planning, focused on compensating for the low interoperability of forces at the tactical level, can lead to successful special operations, even in cases where the components have minimal cohesion.
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