

Last modified on 7 March 2012, at 03:41

Joint Special Operations Command



Emblem of the Joint Special Operations Command

Active	15 December 1980-Present
Country	United States
Branch	Joint activity
Type	Counter-terrorism, special reconnaissance, direct action
Part of	U.S. Special Operations Command
Nickname	JSOC
Engagements	Operation Urgent Fury (1983) Operation Just Cause (1989) Operation Desert Storm (1990) Operation Provide Comfort (1991) Operation Gothic Serpent (1993) Operation Uphold Democracy (1994) Bosnian War (1996) Operation Allied Force (1999) Operation Enduring Freedom (2001) Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003) Operation Neptune Spear (2011)

Commanders

Current commander	LTG Joseph Votel
Notable commanders	William H. McRaven Stanley A. McChrystal

List of JSOC commanders

Rank and Name	Start of Term	End of Term
MG Richard Scholtes	December 1980	August 1984
MG Carl Stiner	August 1984	January 1987
MG Gary E. Luck	January 1987	December 1989
MG Wayne A. Downing	December 1989	August 1991
MG William F. Garrison	1992	July 1994
MG Peter J. Schoomaker	July 1994	August 1996
MG Michael Canavan	1 August 1996	1 August 1998
LTG Bryan D. Brown	1998	2000 ^[28]
LTG Dell L. Dailey	2001	March 2003
LTG Stanley McChrystal	September 2003 ^[29]	June 2008
VADM William H. McRaven	June 2008 ^{[30][31]}	June 2011
LTG Joseph Votel	June 2011 ^[32]	Present

See also

[Operation Gothic Serpent](#) ; [Operation Enduring Freedom](#)
[Central Intelligence Agency's Special Activities Division](#)
[Strategic Support Branch](#)
[1st Special Forces Operational Detachment - Delta \(Delta Force\)](#)
[Naval Special Warfare Development Group \(SEALs\)](#)
[Intelligence Support Activity \(The Activity\)](#)
[Commandement des Opérations Spéciales](#)

Joint Special Operations Command

The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) is a component command of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and is charged to study special operations requirements and techniques to ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct special operations exercises and training, and develop Joint Special Operations Tactics. It was established in 1980 on recommendation of Col. Charlie Beckwith, in the aftermath of the failure of Operation Eagle Claw.[1] It is located at Pope Army Air Field and Fort Bragg in North Carolina, USA.

Table of Contents

1 Overview

2 Security support

3 Operations in Pakistan

4 Operations in Iran

5 Operations in Yemen

6 List of JSOC commanders

7 See also

8 References

8.1 Bibliography

9 External links

Overview

The JSOC is the "joint headquarters 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."^[2] For this task, the Joint Communications Unit (JCU) is tasked to ensure compatibility of communications systems and standard operating procedures of the different special operations units.

The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) also commands and controls the Special Mission Units (SMU) of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). These units perform highly classified activities.^{[3][4][5]} So far, only three SMUs have been publicly disclosed: The Army's 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment—Delta, the Navy's Naval Special Warfare Development Group, and the Air Force's 24th Special Tactics Squadron.^[6] Units from the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment and 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment are controlled by JSOC when deployed as part of JSOC Task Forces such as Task Force 121 and Task Force 145.^{[7][8][9]}

The Intelligence Support Activity (ISA) is also under JSOC.^[10] The ISA collects specific target intelligence prior to SMU missions, and provides signals support, etc. during those missions. The ISA often operates under various cover names, the most recent one being Gray Fox. The army once maintained the ISA, but after the September 11 attacks the Pentagon shifted direct control to Joint

Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, NC.[11] JSOC's primary mission is believed to be identifying and destroying terrorists and terror cells worldwide.[12]

JSOC has an excellent relationship with the CIA's elite Special Activities Division (SAD) and the two forces often operate together.[13] The SAD's Special Operations Group often selects their recruits from JSOC.[14]

Security support

JSOC has provided support to domestic law enforcement agencies during high profile or high risk events such as the Olympics, the World Cup, political party conventions and Presidential inaugurations. Although use of the military for law enforcement purposes in the United States is generally prohibited by the Posse Comitatus Act, Title 10 of the US Code expressly allows the Secretary of Defense to make military personnel available to train Federal, State, and local civilian law enforcement officials in the operation and maintenance of equipment; and to provide such law enforcement officials with expert advice.[15] Additionally, civilian and uniformed military lawyers said provisions in several federal statutes, including the Fiscal Year 2000 Defense Department Authorization Act, Public Law 106-65, permits the secretary of defense to authorize military forces to support civilian agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in the event of a national emergency, especially any involving nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.[16]

In January 2005, a small group of commandos were deployed to support security at the Presidential inauguration. They were allegedly deployed under a secret counter-terrorism program named Power Geyser. The New York Times quoted a senior military official as saying, "They bring unique military and technical capabilities that often are centered around potential WMD events," A civil liberties advocate who was told about the program by a reporter said that he had no objections to the program as described to him because its scope appeared to be limited to supporting the counterterrorism efforts of civilian authorities.[16]

Operations in Pakistan

According to The Washington Post, JSOC's commander Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal operated in 2006 on the understanding with Pakistan that US units will not enter Pakistan except under extreme circumstances, and that Pakistan will deny giving them permission.[17]

That scenario happened according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), in January 2006, JSOC troops clandestinely entered the village of Saidgai, Pakistan, to hunt for Osama Bin Laden. Pakistan refused entry.[18]

According to a recent report in The Nation, JSOC, in tandem with Blackwater/Xe, has an ongoing drone program, along with snatch/grab/assassination operations, based in Karachi and conducted both in and outside of Pakistan.[19]

In a recent leak published on the Wikileaks website, US embassy communication cables from the US Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson states the Pakistani Army approved the deployment of U.S. Special Operations Forces, which include elements from the Joint Special Operations Command were embedded in the Pakistani Army's 11th Corp to provide support for operations targeting militant groups in north and south Waziristan and other areas of Pakistan. The extent of these actions would include assisting in training but also to conduct 'offensive combat operations'. These actions by JSOC elements would be mainly providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets such as drone UAV aircraft.[20]

JSOC is credited with coordination of Operation Neptune's Spear that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden on 1 May 2011[21][22]

Operations in Iran

On 11 January 2007, President Bush pledged in a major speech to "seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq." [23] The next day, in a meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chairman Senator Joseph Biden (Delaware), informed United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the Bush Administration did not have the authority to send US troops on cross-border raids. Biden said, "I believe the present authorization granted the president to use force in Iraq does not cover that, and he does need congressional authority to do that. I just want to set that marker." [24]

Sometime in 2007, JSOC started conducting cross-border operations into Iran from southern Iraq with the CIA. These operations included seizing members of Al-Quds, the commando arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and taking them to Iraq for interrogation, as well as the pursuit, capture, and/or execution of high-value targets in the war on terror. The Bush administration allegedly combined the CIA's intelligence operations with JSOC covert military operations so that Congress would only partially see how the money was spent.[25]

Operations in Yemen

Anwar al-Aulaki, a Yemeni-American U.S. citizen and al-Qaeda member, was killed on September 30, 2011 by an air attack carried out by the Joint Special Operations Command. After several days of surveillance of Mr. Aulaki by the Central Intelligence Agency, armed drones took off from a new, secret American base in the Arabian Peninsula, crossed into northern Yemen and unleashed a

barrage of Hellfire missiles at al-Aulaki's vehicle. Samir Khan, a Pakistani-American al-Qaeda member and editor of the jihadist Inspire magazine, also reportedly died in the attack. The combined CIA/JSOC drone strike was the first in Yemen since 2002 — there have been others by the military's Special Operations forces — and was part of an effort by the spy agency to duplicate in Yemen the covert war which has been running in Afghanistan and Pakistan. [26][27].

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