



**SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UZBEEKISTAN: IN THE PAST, AT PRESENT, IN THE
FUTURE**

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
This article analyzes retrospectives and current state of the SOF of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan in comparison with the Special Operations Forces units' organization and experience of use in the leading foreign armies of the world.	

Introduction

Fight for lasting peace and strengthening of peaceful coexistence, as well as weakening and, in perspective, elimination of the armed conflicts' danger both in Central Asia and world as a whole are nowadays and have been over the past years key directions of the international activity of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Not a single day the Republic of Uzbekistan can become blinded to the issues of the state defensive potential and its Armed Forces strengthening.

Instable internal political situation in a number of states, strained contradictions of the territorial, national and ethnic character led to the abrupt activity of different terrorist and extremist organizations.

As the experience shows, there appeared a desperate need to form a special structure capable of standing with dignity against terrorist tactics based on frightening, sabotage, avoidance of straightforward engagements with governmental troops and preference to fight on the difficult of access areas.

All these problems contributed to the formation of the new component in the Armed Forces structure of many countries. This arm of service was named Special Operations Forces (SOF). Since their formation SOF have been effectively used against international terrorism threats in difficult circumstances. At different stages of their development SOF units and sub-units proved their ability to cope well with the most complicated missions. They showed their high combat readiness and professionalism, as well as their ability to survive while conducting special types of combat actions aimed at the localization and neutralization of the enemy. At the same time content, forms and methods of special actions (operations) conduct went beyond the frames of the traditional armed fight.

In the Defensive Doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan concept of "military security" lies in the fact that military security serves as a condition for assurance of many other types of security and simultaneously it is guaranteed on its basis. Military security of the country characterizes its two-sided

unity: internal and external. External side of security characterizes possibility and ability of preventing or neutralization of the military force's impact acting from abroad. Internal side of security characterizes possibility to exclude, prevent or locate internal destructive manifestations inside the country.

In the light of internal political situation instability in the number of Central Asian states and necessity of the operational and adequate reaction to the state security possible threats, in 1998 the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan made and adopted the Decision to build up within the existing structure of the National Armed Forces Ministry of Defence new units called Special Operations Forces, small in number, mobile, well-armed and equipped, capable of accomplishing particular assigned missions in any proper time.

Special Operations Forces are a separate arm of service in the Army of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan. They are intended to execute special combat missions aimed at the protection of the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In their activity Special Operations Forces are guided by the Constitution and Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Directives and Orders of the President, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Resolutions and Instructions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and departmental normative acts of the Ministry of Defence.

The main peculiarity of the SOF is their self-sufficiency, high mobility, as well as units' constant readiness to execute assigned combat missions. They are distinguished from other troops by high level of professionalism, universality of personnel, servicemen' moral and strong-willed mettle, proficiency in related professions, all methods and ways of surviving in any operational situation or terrain conditions, as well as technical equipment with the most modern means of communications, reconnaissance, target indication and special types of armament. To date, different types of state-to-art flying vehicles, automobile and armoured equipment entered service to provide combat support for SOF units and sub-units in any operational environment.

For the last period of time on the regular basis Special Operations Forces have been involved in operational and tactical exercises of the Armed Forces in the difficult of access regions and provinces of the Republic of Uzbekistan in order to:

- suppress the attempts of the sabotage-reconnaissance groups of the "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan" extremist organization to penetrate into the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan from the Kirghizstan mountainous regions of the Batkent province (in the eastern part of Uzbekistan, in 1999);
- suppress activity of the drug traffic groups in the mountainous regions of the Surkhandarya province (in the southern part of Uzbekistan, in 2001).

It is also necessary to point out that in the context of threats to the national security in military sphere over the period from 1998 to 2017, there were for the most part Special Operations Forces who had effectively confronted illegal armed formations and executed different missions in the fight against terrorism in all its manifestations, as well as ensured at home security in the course of the conducted special operations.

Experience of the similar sub-units functioning in the structure of other countries' armed forces, and first of all, in the USA, Great Britain, Germany, France and Russia gives evidence to the fact that Special Operations Forces' formation was predetermined by the existing threats to the state security.

At the same time, at present their perfection is being actively realized on the basis of the armed warfare means' development.

Traditionally Special Operations Forces consist of the different, according to their role and combat strength, reconnaissance, reconnaissance-sabotage and sabotage-assault formations of the Army, Air Force, and Navy including command, control and logistics elements. Special Operations Forces operate in all the NATO member countries excluding only some of them. The most numerous Special Operations Forces units operate in the USA, France, Italy and Turkey.

Special Operations Forces' Tables of Organization and Equipment have not yet been finally fixed and at the moment are being constantly updated. Nowadays, western military specialists pay attention to the tendency of bringing together national reconnaissance-sabotage formations and activity of the structures supporting them into a united armed forces organization directly subordinated to the higher governmental bodies of power.

Military and political leadership of the USA actively uses SOF in the forced actions when implementation of the general purpose armed forces is untimely or politically counterproductive.

All reconnaissance-sabotage units of the armed forces services are brought together into the frame of the Joint Command. In this regard, according to the opinion of western military experts, the idea of the corresponding units' integrations provides high level of the SOF' preparedness and combat readiness, as well as centralization of their effective combat use.

In contemporary wars the scale of the SOF' implementation is increasing. At the moment one can see, and it is not an accident, that over the last years the U.S. Armed Forces structure has been subjected to intensive changes. The Americans not only have not reduced SOF's strength, but also even enlarged it to 42.6 mln. people. As for Germany, upon the establishment of the Special Operations Forces Command in 1996, the overall strength of the SOF increased by 4.3 times. In contrast to the general purpose forces, even in peacetime, SOF's units and sub-units are being constantly and purposefully trained for conducting special operations in definite areas.

Right now western analysts consider SOF as" the third force" alongside the nuclear forces and the general purpose troops. Experience of the local wars has shown that in peacetime SOF' actions in general have had covert character. Their use was under the direct control of the higher military and political leadership. Since 1991 SOF have participated in 17 operations aimed at the crises settlements and in 194 operations counteracting against drug and arms smuggling. Within 1997 Special Operations Forces' formations operated in 144 states. Moreover, they have undergone active combat training (took part in 224 all-arms exercises conducted in 91 countries of the world.)

In the world the number of the armed conflicts is growing from day to day. According to the scientific report given by the Institute for International Conflicts Research (the city of Heidelberg, Germany) in 2013 taken together there were 414 conflicts worldwide. Of those, 45 conflicts were put "onto the highest grade of the use of force". Military experts classified 20 conflicts as wars. Besides, analysts clearly recognized 11 military rivalries between the countries.

According to the definition of the Russian Federation military leadership Special Operations Forces represent a unified structure that includes Army "spetsnaz" sub-units from different fighting services and arms of the Armed Forces. SOF Command is the main command and control body of the SOF. It is subordinated to the Russian Federation Armed Forces Chief of the General Staff through the Main Intelligence Directorate. The main missions of the Russian Federation Special Operations Forces are to conduct at home and abroad operations.

Taking into consideration the efficiency of the Russian troops grouping's success in Syria, one can establish the fact of the high professional execution of many reconnaissance operations. Actions of the SOF units provided both not only successful commitment of the Russian troops into the area of action but also effective accomplishment of the whole operation and consequently—achievement of all the assigned strategic goals.

The General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces managed to create in Syria a unified multilevel reconnaissance system serving the interests of the comprehensive and objective support provided to the conducted military operations. The developed reconnaissance system enabled successful conduct of the land and air operations, as well as fire destruction of the early indicated and double reconnoitered enemy objectives.

Analysis of the publications and materials (shows or demonstrations) in the mass media, on TV or in the Internet witnesses to the essential role of the Russian SOF in all the offensive operations of the Syrian army and other integrated forces in the course of the Syrian territory liberation (including cities, towns and large inhabited localities) against armed formations of different terrorist organizations. In Syria practically the majority of high precision strikes launched by the Russian Military Cosmic Forces succeeded due to the operational data and guidance provided by the acting SOF' units.

It is also worth highlighting that in the course of combat operations in the Syrian Arab Republic the Russian Federation Armed Forces simultaneously tried and tested in combat environment the most modern models of armament, special equipment and means of reconnaissance (infrared sights, thermal images, small-sized reconnaissance drones and even combat robots) designed for the equipment of the SOF' formations.

Summarizing, it is reasonable to point out that the world witnesses a considerable increase of the tasks placed on the SOF. And in some cases these missions can be appraised as the strategic ones. To date, fighting strength of the SOF' structures is increasing. Normative and legal regulation of their actions is being updated. As of today, the so called army "spetsnaz" has stopped its activity in the former predestination. Its structures have become much more complicated. "Spetsnaz" sub-units are manned with skillful servicemen of different military specialties able to provide mutual support and interchangeability in the operational environment. At the moment separate military agencies are practicing formation of the specialized "spetsnaz" sub-units within their structures.

Nowadays, SOF are going through reforms as an interspecific functional structure including components from different armed forces services, command and control echelons, as well as supply and support units for logistic purposes in the course of actions. Moreover, system of the "spetsnaz" command and control needs some improvement, mainly in the centralization of its guidance and subordination to the higher political and military national leadership excluding intermediate structures. The world recognizes that creation, development and implementation of the SOF is a very expensive project without which not a single state can solve the mission of the national security assurance. The project of the SOF' development demands immense state investments, unique state-to-art models of armament, equipment and ammunition design including set up of the training aids supply objects.

Therefore, there is a growing tendency towards transition of the SOF from the combat support missions in the military actions conducted by the armed forces groupings to the new role of the "cutting edge" in the forced assurance of the national security.

Currently high efficacy of the Republic of Uzbekistan Armed Forces' SOF will be achieved by the set of the following factors:

- professional combat training of the SOF servicemen;
- supply and replenishment of the SOF' units with combat, material and technical resources for the execution of the assigned missions;
- availability of the developed centralized command and control pyramid offering necessary stability and reaction to the detected threats;
- guaranteeing of the constant and ongoing monitoring of the subordinate sub-units' state.

For this reason, to date SOF' formations of the Republic of Uzbekistan Armed Forces must make continuous improvement. SOF units must be mobile, moving, able to survive, highly effective, not burdened with heavy weapons and ammunition capable of getting into action over a short period of time at any point of the country to accomplish the necessary "jewelry work" meeting the interests of their country security.

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