



R.A. Mammadov

*Military Research Institute, Azerbaijan Army, Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan  
(E-mail: Turksancenter@mail.ru)*

## **The application of special operations forces combat tactics**

Special Operations Forces (SOF) are pivotal assets in contemporary military endeavors, undertaking missions demanding precision, stealth, and adaptability. This article scrutinizes the critical imperative of refining combat tactics for SOF units. It delineates multifaceted strategies for tactical enhancement, including rigorous training regimes and immersive simulation exercises. Moreover, it emphasizes the integration of cutting-edge technologies, such as advanced weaponry, surveillance systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and cyber capabilities, to augment situational awareness and mission efficacy.

Effective collaboration and information sharing among diverse military branches and intelligence agencies are underscored as indispensable for maximizing operational impact. By perpetually evolving their tactics, SOF units can adeptly navigate the intricate dynamics of modern warfare, effectively countering emerging threats and ensuring mission success in today's ever-evolving security milieu.

The article explores the importance of enhancing the application of combat tactics for Special Operations Forces (SOF) in modern military operations. It discusses various strategies for tactical improvement, including training and simulation, integration of technology, collaboration, and information sharing among different branches of the military and intelligence agencies. By continuously refining and innovating their tactics, SOF units can stay ahead of emerging threats and achieve mission success with greater efficiency and precision in today's dynamic security landscape.

*Keywords:* Special Operations Forces (SOF), combat tactics, tactical improvement, training and simulation, technology integration, collaboration, information sharing, military operations, security environment

### *Introduction*

In the realm of modern military operations, the Special Operations Forces (SOF) stand as elite units with unparalleled capabilities and versatility. Charged with executing missions demanding precision, stealth, and adaptability, these specialized forces form the backbone of many strategic operations worldwide. As the nature of warfare evolves and adversaries become increasingly sophisticated, the efficacy of SOF tactics becomes paramount to achieving mission success and maintaining strategic advantage.

Recognizing the pivotal role of SOF in contemporary conflict, it becomes imperative to continually refine and enhance the tactics employed by these elite units. The ever-changing landscape of global security demands agility and innovation in military strategy, particularly in the realm of special operations. Therefore, this article delves into the significance of advancing the application of



SOF combat tactics, offering insights into the various strategies and approaches aimed at bolstering the effectiveness of these specialized forces. Through a comprehensive examination of the challenges, opportunities, and best practices in SOF tactics, we aim to provide valuable insights into optimizing their performance in diverse operational environments.

A lot of researchers have contributed valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with improving tactical effectiveness for special operations forces: David Kilcullen [1], Stanley McChrystal, Linda Robinson, Sean Naylor, Charles T. Cleveland etc. [2].

David Kilcullen is a counterinsurgency expert who has extensively written about modern warfare and the role of special operations forces. His works, such as "Counterinsurgency" and "The Accidental Guerrilla," provide insights into the evolving nature of warfare and the strategies required for success.

As a former commander of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, Stanley McChrystal has firsthand experience in leading SOF units. His book "Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World" explores the need for adaptability and collaboration in modern warfare.

Linda Robinson [3] Robinson is a senior international policy analyst who has conducted extensive research on special operations forces. Her book "Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces" delves into the history and evolution of SOF units, shedding light on their tactics and missions.

Sean Naylor is an investigative journalist who has written extensively about special operations forces and their operations. His book "Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command" provides a detailed account of JSOC's missions and tactics [4].

Charles T. Cleveland is a retired lieutenant general and former commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). He has written articles and given lectures on the importance of innovation and adaptation in special operations tactics.

**Importance of Tactical Improvement: The Evolving Landscape of Modern Warfare**

In the contemporary era, the landscape of warfare is undergoing a rapid transformation, characterized by complex geopolitical dynamics, technological advancements, and the proliferation of non-state actors. Traditional notions of conventional warfare have given way to a more fluid and asymmetric battlefield, where the lines between combatants and non-combatants blur, and the distinction between conventional and irregular warfare fades.

Adversaries, ranging from state-sponsored actors to terrorist organizations, exploit this ambiguity to their advantage, employing tactics that defy conventional military doctrine and challenge the capabilities of conventional forces. Asymmetric warfare, characterized by its reliance on unconventional tactics, such as guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and cyber attacks, has emerged as a dominant feature of modern conflict. In this dynamic environment, Special Operations Forces (SOF) occupy a



critical role as the vanguard of military operations, tasked with confronting these unconventional threats head-on.

The agility, versatility, and specialized skill sets of SOF units make them uniquely suited to operate in this complex and fluid environment. However, to maintain their effectiveness and relevance in the face of evolving threats, SOF units must continuously adapt and innovate their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). The importance of tactical improvement cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the ability of SOF units to achieve their objectives with precision, efficiency, and minimal risk.

Enhancing the application of combat tactics is not merely a matter of refining existing techniques; it is a strategic imperative driven by the need to outmaneuver and outsmart adversaries who operate outside the bounds of conventional warfare. By staying ahead of the curve and constantly innovating their tactics, SOF units can maintain a competitive edge on the battlefield and effectively counter emerging threats.

Furthermore, the nature of modern warfare demands a holistic approach to tactical improvement, encompassing not only combat skills but also intelligence gathering, cultural understanding, and interoperability with allied forces. SOF units must be able to seamlessly integrate with conventional forces, intelligence agencies, and local partners to achieve mission success in diverse operational environments.

In the article we will explore the various strategies and approaches aimed at enhancing the application of SOF combat tactics. From leveraging cutting-edge technology to fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability, we will examine the key factors driving tactical improvement in SOF units and the implications for future military operations.

### *Strategies for Tactical Improvement: Training and Simulation*

Regular training exercises and realistic simulations are foundational elements in the continuous development and enhancement of SOF combat tactics. These exercises serve as invaluable opportunities for SOF operators to hone their skills, refine their techniques, and cultivate the mindset necessary for success in high-stakes environments. By immersing themselves in realistic scenarios that mirror the complexities of actual combat situations, operators can enhance their situational awareness, decision-making abilities, and teamwork skills.

One of the key advantages of training and simulation is the ability to expose operators to a wide range of potential scenarios, from urban warfare to counterinsurgency operations, and everything in between. By simulating these diverse environments, operators can develop the flexibility and adaptability needed to navigate dynamic and unpredictable situations effectively. Moreover, training exercises can incorporate elements of stress and fatigue to simulate the physiological and psychological pressures of real-world operations, ensuring that operators are prepared to perform under duress.



In addition to tactical proficiency, training and simulation also play a crucial role in fostering innovation and creativity among SOF operators. By encouraging operators to think critically, problem-solve, and adapt their tactics to new challenges, training exercises can stimulate a culture of innovation within SOF units. This culture of innovation is essential for staying ahead of adversaries who continuously seek to exploit vulnerabilities and disrupt conventional tactics.

Furthermore, training and simulation provide an opportunity for interoperability and collaboration with allied forces and partner nations. Joint exercises allow SOF units to train alongside conventional forces, intelligence agencies, and local partners, fostering mutual understanding and enhancing coordination in joint operations. This interoperability is essential for maximizing the effectiveness of SOF units in complex and multi-dimensional operational environments.

Overall, training and simulation represent foundational pillars in the strategic approach to tactical improvement for SOF units. By investing in comprehensive and realistic training programs, SOF organizations can ensure that their operators are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary to succeed in the most demanding and dynamic operational environments.

### *Integration of Technology*

Advancements in technology represent a game-changing opportunity for enhancing the tactical capabilities of Special Operations Forces (SOF). With rapid developments in various fields, including weaponry, surveillance systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and cyber capabilities, SOF units have access to a diverse array of cutting-edge tools and platforms that can revolutionize their operational effectiveness.

One of the most significant benefits of integrating technology into SOF operations is the enhancement of situational awareness. Modern surveillance systems, equipped with advanced sensors and imaging technologies, provide operators with real-time intelligence and a comprehensive understanding of the battlefield environment. Whether conducting reconnaissance missions or infiltrating enemy territory, SOF units can leverage these capabilities to identify threats, assess risks, and make informed decisions with greater precision and confidence.

Furthermore, technology facilitates seamless communication and coordination among SOF operators, enabling them to maintain connectivity and share critical information in real-time. Advanced communication systems, including encrypted radios, secure networks, and tactical data links, ensure that operators can communicate securely and effectively, even in the most challenging and hostile environments. This seamless integration of technology not only improves operational efficiency but also enhances overall mission effectiveness by enabling rapid decision-making and synchronized execution.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, have emerged as indispensable assets for SOF units, providing them with unprecedented



flexibility and versatility in reconnaissance, surveillance, and targeting operations. Equipped with high-resolution cameras, thermal imaging sensors, and other sophisticated payloads, UAVs enable operators to gather actionable intelligence, conduct precision strikes, and monitor enemy movements from a safe distance. By leveraging the capabilities of UAVs, SOF units can conduct operations with reduced risk to personnel while maximizing operational impact.

In addition to traditional warfare domains, technology also plays a critical role in the cyber domain, where SOF units are increasingly engaged in offensive and defensive operations. With expertise in cyber warfare and digital forensics, SOF operators can disrupt enemy communications, sabotage critical infrastructure, and gather intelligence through cyber means. By integrating cyber capabilities into their tactical toolkit, SOF units can gain a significant advantage in the information domain, enabling them to outmaneuver adversaries and achieve strategic objectives with greater agility and precision.

Overall, the integration of technology into SOF operations represents a transformative shift in modern warfare, offering unparalleled opportunities for enhancing situational awareness, communication, and overall mission effectiveness. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies and embracing innovation, SOF units can maintain their competitive edge and continue to deliver decisive outcomes in the most challenging and dynamic operational environments.

### *Collaboration and Information Sharing*

In today's complex security landscape, effective collaboration and information sharing among various branches of the military and intelligence agencies are paramount for the success of Special Operations Forces (SOF) missions. These missions often require a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon the unique capabilities and expertise of different units to achieve strategic objectives with maximum efficiency and precision.

One of the key benefits of collaboration is the pooling of resources and expertise from diverse organizations. Each branch of the military and intelligence community brings its own specialized skills, equipment, and knowledge to the table, which can complement and enhance the capabilities of SOF units.

For example, air support from the Air Force can provide crucial cover for ground operations conducted by Army Special Forces, while intelligence gathered by the CIA or NSA can provide critical insights into enemy movements and intentions [5].

Furthermore, collaboration facilitates joint training exercises and interoperability among different units, ensuring seamless coordination and integration during complex operations. By conducting joint exercises and sharing best practices, SOF units can enhance their effectiveness and cohesion as part of a larger joint force. This interoperability is particularly crucial in joint and combined operations, where SOF units often work alongside conventional forces, partner nations, and other government agencies to achieve common objectives.



Information sharing is another key aspect of collaboration, enabling SOF units to access a wide range of intelligence sources and analytical capabilities. By sharing intelligence with partner agencies and coalition partners, SOF units can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the operational environment and identify emerging threats more effectively. This shared awareness enables SOF units to adapt their tactics and strategies in real-time, maximizing their agility and responsiveness to changing conditions on the battlefield.

Moreover, collaboration fosters trust and cooperation among different organizations, breaking down silos and bureaucratic barriers that can impede effective communication and coordination. By building strong relationships and networks of cooperation, SOF units can leverage the collective expertise and resources of the entire military and intelligence community to achieve common objectives more efficiently and decisively.

Thus, effective collaboration and information sharing are essential pillars of success for Special Operations Forces in today's dynamic security environment. By working closely with other branches of the military and intelligence agencies, SOF units can harness the full spectrum of capabilities and expertise available to achieve their mission objectives with maximum efficiency and precision.

### *Conclusion*

Enhancing the application of combat tactics is essential for maintaining the effectiveness of Special Operations Forces in today's complex and dynamic security environment. By investing in training, technology, collaboration, and innovation, military leaders can ensure that SOF units remain at the forefront of military operations, capable of achieving their objectives with precision and efficiency.

### References:

1. Kilcullen, D. (2010). *Counterinsurgency*. – Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. – 272 p.
2. McChrystal, S. (2015). *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World*. – Penguin UK. – 304 p.
3. Robinson, L. (2005). *Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces*. – PublicAffairs. – 432 p.
4. Naylor, S. (2016). *Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Joint Special Operations Command*. // *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Special Issue: Designing Danger: Complex Engineering by Violent Non-State Actors. - P. 142-143
5. Charles, T. Cleveland (2020). *The American Way of Irregular War. An Analytical Memoir*. – RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif. – 276 p.

Р.А. Мамедов

### **Арнайы жұмыс күштерінің ұрыс тактикасын қолдану**

Арнайы операциялық күштер (SOF) дәлдікті, жасырындықты және бейімделуді талап ететін миссияларды орындайтын қазіргі заманғы әскери күштердің негізгі



құралдары болып табылады. Бұл мақалада SOF бөлімшелері үшін ұрыс тактикасын жетілдірудің маңызды императиві қарастырылады. Ол тактикалық жетілдірудің көп қырлы стратегияларын, соның ішінде қатаң жаттығулар режимдерін және иммерсивті модельдеу жаттығуларын анықтайды. Сонымен қатар, ол ситуациялық хабардар болу мен миссияның тиімділігін арттыру үшін озық қару-жарақ, бақылау жүйелері, ұшқышсыз ұшу аппараттары (ҰҰА) және кибермүмкіндіктер сияқты озық технологияларды біріктіруге баса назар аударады.

Әртүрлі әскери бөлімдер мен барлау агенттіктері арасында тиімді ынтымақтастық пен ақпарат алмасу операциялық әсерді барынша арттыру үшін қажет екені атап өтіледі. Өз тактикасын үнемі дамыта отырып, SOF бөлімшелері қазіргі заманғы соғыстың күрделі динамикасын шебер басқара алады, пайда болатын қауіптерге тиімді қарсы тұра алады және бүгінгі күннің үнемі дамып келе жатқан қауіпсіздік ортасында миссияның сәттілігін қамтамасыз ете алады.

Мақалада қазіргі заманғы әскери операцияларда Арнайы операциялық күштердің (SOF) жауынгерлік тактикасын қолдануды арттырудың маңыздылығы қарастырылған. Ол тактикалық жетілдірудің әртүрлі стратегияларын, соның ішінде оқыту мен модельдеуді, технологияларды біріктіруді, ынтымақтастықты және әскери және барлау агенттіктерінің әртүрлі салалары арасында ақпарат алмасуды талқылайды. Өз тактикасын үздіксіз жетілдіріп, жанарта отырып, SOF бөлімшелері пайда болатын қауіп-қатерлерден алда болып, бүгінгі динамикалық қауіпсіздік ландшафтында жоғары тиімділік пен дәлдікпен миссияның табысына жете алады.

*Кілт сөздер:* Арнайы операциялық күштер (SOF), ұрыс тактикасы, тактикалық жетілдіру, оқыту және модельдеу, технологияны біріктіру, ынтымақтастық, ақпарат алмасу, әскери операциялар, қауіпсіздік ортасы

Р.А. Мамедов

### **Применение боевой тактики сил специальных операций**

Силы специальных операций (ССО) являются основой современных вооруженных сил, выполняя задачи, требующие точности, скрытности и адаптируемости. В данной статье рассматриваются важнейшие императивы совершенствования боевой тактики подразделений ССО. В нем излагаются многогранные стратегии тактического совершенствования, включая строгие режимы тренировок и иммерсивные симуляционные упражнения. Кроме того, в нем подчеркивается интеграция передовых технологий, таких как передовое оружие, системы наблюдения, беспилотные летательные аппараты (БПЛА) и кибервозможности, для улучшения ситуационной осведомленности и эффективности миссий.

Подчеркивается, что эффективное сотрудничество и обмен информацией между различными родами войск и спецслужбами необходимы для максимизации оперативной эффективности. Постоянно совершенствуя свою тактику, подразделения ССО могут справиться со сложной динамикой современной войны, эффективно противостоять возникающим угрозам и обеспечить успех миссии в сегодняшней постоянно меняющейся среде безопасности.

В статье исследуется важность активизации применения тактики боя Сил специальных операций (ССО) в современных военных операциях. В нем обсуждаются различные стратегии тактического улучшения, включая обучение и моделирование, интеграцию технологий, сотрудничество и обмен информацией между различными подразделениями вооруженных сил и спецслужб. Постоянно совершенствуя и обновляя свою тактику, подразделения ССО могут опережать возникающие угрозы и достигать



успеха в миссии с большей эффективностью и точностью в сегодняшней динамичной среде безопасности.

*Ключевые слова:* Силы специальных операций (ССО), тактика боя, тактическое совершенствование, обучение и моделирование, интеграция технологий, сотрудничество, обмен информацией, военные операции, среда безопасности.

Мамедов Рашад Арифоглы	адъюнкт, Әскери ғылыми-зерттеу институтының докторанты, Әзірбайжан армиясы, Нахчыван, Әзірбайжан Республикасы
Мамедов Рашад Арифоглы	адъюнкт, докторант Военного научно-исследовательского института, Азербайджанская армия, Нахчыван, Азербайджанская Республика
Mammadov Rashad	adjunct, doctoral student of Military Research Institute, Azerbaijan Army, Nakhchivan, Republic of Azerbaijan