RECONNAISSANCE METHODS

When conducting SR operations, SFODs may employ patrols, establish observation or listening posts, emplace sensors or other special equipment, or conduct clandestine target penetration directly or through surrogates based on the IPB processes and overlays. SR is used to locate high-value military targets accurately for deep-attack weapons systems; to assess friendly, hostile, and uncommitted third-party strengths and weaknesses; and to perform other collection tasks that are beyond the capabilities of traditional military reconnaissance and surveillance units, creating windows of opportunity for decisive action. In performing their missions, SFODs employ two methods of reconnaissance—zone and area reconnaissance.

ZONE RECONNAISSANCE

Zone reconnaissance includes operations conducted to obtain information on the threat, terrain, and routes within an area. The principal purpose of using SFODs against such targets as industrial facilities or LOC is to monitor their status and activities for use in a follow-on or standoff attack. SR targets are normally located beyond the capabilities of conventional reconnaissance means. Zone reconnaissance teams reconnoiter one specific objective and its immediate surrounding area using long- and short-range surveillance and/or vantage points. An SFOD may conduct one or more area reconnaissances within its zone based on its mission analysis. Zone reconnaissance missions may require more than a single SFOD. When two or more SFODs are used in a zone, close coordination is required. Mission planners should consider splitting the zone into smaller sections. If such a split is not feasible, the planners should clearly define boundaries. Zone reconnaissance includes use of the fan, converge, successive-sector, and “L,” “U,” “W,” and “Z” techniques.

Fan

In the fan technique, SFODs leave an objective rally point (ORP) and return to the same ORP. As shown in Figure B-1, SFODs move out of and enter the ORP at opposite sides and move in the same clockwise direction to eliminate the chances of accidental contact between the elements. They may survey their routes singularly or simultaneously. The routes must be planned so that SFODs do not converge and interfere with one another. This method tends to compromise the location of the ORP after a time because of frequent movement into and out of the ORP. Therefore, SFODs should relocate the ORP often. They must ensure enemy trackers don’t follow them back to the ORP.
Converge
In the converge technique, SFODs move through areas on converging routes. Beginning at an ORP where elements are briefed, they move on separate routes through the area and converge at the end of the area at a rendezvous point. The SFOD leader briefs each element on the route it is to take, the location of the rendezvous point, and the linkup time at the rendezvous point. As shown in Figure B-2, the SFODs start their sector reconnaissance in the same relative direction from their rally points (RPs) and move in the same counterclockwise direction to prevent chance contact.

Successive Sector
In the successive sector technique, SFODs may divide the objective area into segments and assign each element a segment. As each element moves at its own pace until it completes its part of the reconnaissance, no time is wasted in waiting. It also allows element leaders more freedom of action. The SFOD leader may only dictate the general direction of movement the elements will take in their AO, the time for completion, and the linkup or rally point. Figure B-3 shows the use of two techniques and an optional third that may be used by reconnaissance elements.

Figure B-1. Fan technique.
Figure B-2. Converge technique.

Figure B-3. Successive sector technique.
"L" "U," "W," and "Z" Techniques
It is generally impossible to completely survey over-sized patrol sectors. In such situations, the SFOD must therefore plan to employ a technique of cross-country movement that will provide the best coverage consistent with the mission, threat force disposition, weather, and terrain. It is important that the SFOD move in a way that will permit it to intersect LOC, linear obstacles, and that forces, especially in an area about which little is known of the threat and/or terrain. Basic movement techniques used for surveying specific patrol sectors in such situations include the "L," "U," "W," and "Z" techniques as illustrated in Figure B-4. In all cases, the patrol inserts at one point in its sector and is picked up at another distant point. In most cases, threat forces, weather, and terrain preclude following a model pattern, but the principle remains valid.

Route or Corridor Reconnaissance
A variation of zone reconnaissance is route or corridor reconnaissance. Route or corridor reconnaissance obtains information on the targeted activity, obstacles, route conditions, and key terrain features (Figure B-5). Reconnaissance and classification of existing vehicular routes can be of great importance in determining the mission capabilities of the target complex and taking appropriate follow-on actions. SFODs normally generate ROUTEREPS and BRIDGEREPs in route or corridor reconnaissance. See Appendix D. For more information on route reconnaissance, refer to STP 31-18C.34-SM-TG.
AREA RECONNAISSANCE

An area reconnaissance is a survey of a specific location such as LOC choke, special weapons storage sites, launch sites for such weapons, industrial plants, or terrorist safe houses (see Figure B-6, page B-6). The basic purpose of using SFODs in this context is to provide real-time and NRT information on status, disposition, and significant activity to predict threat activities and/or generate enough information for a friendly reaction.

As in Figure B-7, page B-6, area observation is accomplished by maintaining OP surveillance on the target, usually a known or suspected choke point, position or activity. When SOT A augmentation is available, there may also be an additional SIGINT OP surveying the target.
Figure B-6. Observation of a specific point.

Figure B-7. Choke point observation.