

SOCOM'S MISSIONS AND ROLES

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UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL
THREATS AND CAPABILITIES**

June 29, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today, and to share my views with you on missions and roles of United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM). I request that my prepared statement be made part of the record.

Current Status of SOCOM

Implementation of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) produced a number of important decisions with respect to Special Operations Forces (SOF) operational capabilities, capacity, and posture. The number of active duty Special Forces (SF) battalions, which are essential for low visibility persistent presence, low-level intelligence collection, building the capacity of partners, and conducting unconventional warfare, will be increased by 33 percent. The 18X program, which allows qualified recruits to enlist for SF directly from civilian life, has been a great success, not only in helping to fill SF ranks and facilitate SOF expansion, but also in attracting talent into SF which otherwise might not be available to the military. Throughput of SF soldiers graduating from the SF School has more than doubled in the past two years.

The number of Special Mission Unit (SMU) squadrons will be increased by one-third, which will further their transition from a reactive to a proactive counterterrorism posture, and significantly enhance their manhunting and clandestine operations capabilities. A fourth company will be stood up within each Ranger Battalion, increasing Ranger operational capacity by one-third. A Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) is also being stood up. The MARSOC will add capacity to SOCOM in the foreign internal defense (FID) mission area, through its Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU), and in direct action/special reconnaissance mission area, through its two special operations battalions. Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs (CA) capacity are also to be increased by one-third. DoD's investment in tagging, tracking and locating (TTL) capabilities will be increased substantially. New investments will also be made in clandestine air mobility to insert and extract forces in and from denied areas and politically sensitive environments, and in persistent airborne surveillance through the establishment of an Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) squadron.

SOCOM's budget has nearly doubled since 9/11, and the command's budget is expected to grow by more than 50 percent over the current program period. QDR decisions with respect to SOF are resourced within the FY 2007 budget. Resourcing decisions for POM 08-13 are in process.

SOCOM as Supported Command

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the planning capacity of the Department of Defense for the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has been significantly bolstered. SOCOM has been designated as the supported command to plan, synchronize, and, when directed, execute GWOT strategy and operations. SOCOM has stood up the

Center for Special Operations (CSO) to fulfill its GWOT planning responsibilities. The Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) – the special operations component of the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) -- have received significant augmentation to make them more capable of 24/7, long-duration GWOT operations. The command and staff elements of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) have likewise been strengthened for long-duration operations.

SOCOM has produced several GWOT-related CONPLANS and OPLANS (the 7500 series), which are first-rate. The Department of Defense is currently in the process of identifying the resources needed to implement these plans, and is adapting its force planning construct to reflect the GWOT as a steady-state, long-duration war. SOCOM, however, has experienced some difficulty in fulfilling its role as the lead combatant command in the GWOT in two areas: top-level integration in the interagency planning process, and control of global SOF forces.

A Look Ahead at SOCOM

Irregular Warfare Capability

SOCOM is currently participating in the development of a multi-service concept for irregular warfare (IW). Irregular warfare capabilities and capacities are being increased across several SOF mission areas -- unconventional warfare, counterterrorism and foreign internal defense. A program to develop IW strategists within SOF is also being developed.

SOCOM's Increasing Intelligence Capability and Capacity

The GWOT is an intelligence and special operations-intensive war. SOF has made significant strides in the intelligence arena since the 9/11 attacks. Two Advanced Special Operations Training Level III courses have been stood up, producing more than 200 graduates a year with advanced human intelligence (HUMINT) training. Additionally, SOF operators now regularly attend the CIA's Field Tradecraft Course, which provides the highest level of clandestine operations training in the U.S. Government. Units dedicated to intelligence missions and advanced force operations are being established across SOF.

Making full use of special authorities to wage the GWOT is essential. The future GWOT battleground will principally occur in states with which the United States is not at war, and our primary approach will be an indirect and clandestine one. There is probably no more important single action the U.S. Government can take to improve strategy and operations in the GWOT than this. This would entail integrating CIA capabilities with those of Black and White SOF. It would also entail regularly leveraging the CIA's Title 50 authority for SOF operations through the flexible detailing of SOF personnel to the Agency. This can begin with JSOC, which currently enjoys the closest relationship with the Agency, and then be extended to the Special Forces and SEALs.

Moving toward a true National Clandestine Service (NCS) is an essential GWOT reform. Our experience in the early Cold War shows clearly the disadvantages of maintaining separate clandestine services. DoD personnel, particularly those from SOF, should play a much larger role in the NCS. This should include the ability to compete for Chief of Station (COS) positions.

Given the importance of seasoned operators to the intelligence mission, SOF should receive relief from the provisions of Section 517, Title 10, U.S. Code, which limits the number of senior enlisted personnel (E-8 and E-9) in the force.

Unconventional Warfare versus Direct Action

An indirect approach, which leverages the capabilities of surrogates and partners, will be central to the GWOT. Unconventional warfare (UW) is a vital GWOT instrument against both state and non-state actors. SOCOM has made great strides of late in developing a global unconventional warfare campaign plan. It needs to be properly resourced, however. Section 1208 authority, which enables SOF to conduct paramilitary operations, needs to be expanded several fold, to several hundred million dollars per annum.

The establishment of three-star, global UW command within SOCOM should be considered. Such a command could do for the global execution of UW (against both state and trans-national actors) what JSOC does in the area of counterterrorism and counterproliferation operations. It could be stood up by converting SF Command from a force provider to an operational command. A SOF UW command would complement, not supplant, the CIA. It would also provide a promotion pathway to the top for UW operators. The establishment of a UW command could, however, tie up scarce SOF human capital in additional headquarters, and duplicate the functions of the CSO.

Black versus White SOF

SOCOM's emphasis since 9/11 has been to make white SOF more gray, and black SOF more black. It is imperative, however, that white and black SOF be integrated fully from a strategic perspective. Accordingly, there should be a single SOF commander in theater who controls both black and white forces.

SOCOM and the GWOT

GWOT Execution

The 7500 series of plans implements the National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism. As noted above, however, the resources needed to fully execute these plans are still being identified and validated. Limited interagency and combatant command authorities continue to circumscribe SOCOM's effectiveness in the GWOT.

SOF and CA/PSYOP

SOCOM continues to have proponency for DoD CA and PSYOP forces, and command responsibility for active CA and PSYOP forces. CA and PSYOP remain essential capabilities for several SOCOM mission areas (i.e., UW and FID). SOCOM's role in the strategic communication fight remains circumscribed by DoD's limited role in this area, with the Department of State assigned the role of lead agency for public diplomacy, and CIA as the lead agency for covert influence.

SOF and the Global War

SOF forces are heavily committed to OIF and OEF. As such, there is little additional capacity at present for the broader GWOT. The QDR-mandated capacity expansion will rectify this situation, and make possible a more intensive, steady-state GWOT effort in the years ahead.