

STATEMENT OF  
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COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND  
  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE  
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## **Introduction**

Chairman Visclosky, Ranking Member Calvert, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to inform you on the posture of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and your Special Operations Forces (SOF). USSOCOM continues to field ready and capable SOF to the Geographic Combatant Commands to conduct globally integrated operations as an integral part of the Joint Force against state and non-state threats to America and its interests, and to advance U.S. policy objectives. We greatly appreciate the continued support of the Congress in this endeavor.

USSOCOM is focused on addressing the defense and security threats and challenges from emerging great power competitors as well as terrorists and violent extremist organizations (VEOs) identified in the National Defense Strategy (NDS) along the directed lines of effort: building a more lethal force, strengthening alliances and attracting new partners, and reforming our institution for greater performance and affordability. Consequently, we are re-shaping our current forces and capabilities even as we develop new technological and tactical approaches for our diverse missions. USSOCOM is an organization of empowered SOF professionals, who are globally networked, partnered and integrated, and relentlessly seek advantage in every domain and against any adversary for the Joint Force and the Nation. To achieve this vision, we are embarking on a path I will outline today.

### **SOF Vision – “Empowered SOF Professionals...”**

Our vision emphasizes the enduring truth that “humans are more important than hardware” by recognizing that our people – more than platforms – are the source of our decisive advantage. To that end, we continue to recruit, assess, select, and retain the Nation’s finest human potential. We empower them with training, technology and authorities to solve some of the most complex

and dangerous mission challenges. That empowerment comes with a degree of trust, the foundation upon which we operate on a daily basis.

In the recent past, members of our SOF units have been accused of violating that trust and failing to meet our high standards of ethical conduct this command demands. The overwhelming majority of our teammates continue to serve with honor and distinction as our ethos demands, and anything less than 100% is unacceptable. We understand that criminal misconduct erodes the very trust that enables our success. We continue our efforts to inculcate and reinforce our core values. Toward this end, USSOCOM provided input to a report the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC) submitted to Congress on a comprehensive review of our ethics and professionalism programs, as directed by the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). We also just completed a USSOCOM-wide directed 90-day review of our core values and their role in the SOF culture. The results are currently being analyzed for review and consideration for any follow-on actions. You have my commitment that we will hold members of our SOF enterprise accountable to our ethical, moral, and discipline standards, and preserving the trust America has in its SOF.

Empowered SOF professionals are the foundation of USSOCOM. Since we have high expectations for them, we will continue to invest in them and equip them with a comprehensive set of tools to make SOF ready and resilient in all aspects. We steward our SOF professionals through their careers and their transition out of service, placing a special emphasis on resiliency by providing exceptional care to them and their families. In order to continue meeting today's operational demands and enable longer, more productive careers in SOF, we endeavor to holistically address impacts on our people. Our Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) programs are agile and innovative, taking advantage of advancements in medicine, psychology,

and data science. We have directed mandatory participation for all SOF members in our embedded, multidisciplinary program. We appreciate your support through the authorities and funding provided to date. USSOCOM's FY20 POTFF request increases our investment significantly over the FY19 program to properly support the entirety of our force through improvements in behavioral health, human performance, and family support programs. I look forward to continuing to work with Congress in improving this initiative for our special operations personnel and their families.

USSOCOM is also appreciative of Congress' sustained support for our Warrior Care Program. Wounds, injury, and illness threaten the ability of our SOF personnel and their families to continue to serve. Our Warrior Care Program – the largest in the Department of Defense with over 15,000 participants – contributes to the resiliency of our force by providing advocacy and care coordination through the recovery and rehabilitation process, returning 75% of our SOF professionals to the fight, and restoring their families' footing as rapidly as possible.

We continue to make strides in managing the deployment-to-dwell (D2D) and personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) of our personnel. Our force is executing the FY19 Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP) as ordered, and is prioritizing and resourcing emergent requirements based on the updated department guidance to adhere to a *minimum* of a 1:2 ratio. This guidance is driving ongoing efforts in our current force generation models to ensure SOF provides ready forces at a consistent and sustainable rate to meet the NDS and National Military Strategy (NMS) objectives. The continuation of a planned increase of personnel in FY 2019-2020 will help close current D2D and PERSTEMPO gaps among our enabler forces. These additional support personnel, and adherence to a 1:2 rate for Active and 1:5 for Reserve Forces,

will ensure SOF can sustain our support to future Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) requirements with the capabilities they require.

**SOF Vision – “Globally networked, partnered and integrated...”**

SOF is an integral part of the Joint Force and the interagency effort that successfully compete on a global scale. USSOCOM provides critical coordination and assessment functions for the Department's operations and activities against VEOs and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threats. Our worldwide access and placement, our networks and partnerships, and our flexible global posture enable the Department to understand adversary actions and intent and to respond across the spectrum of competition, especially below the threshold of armed conflict where our competitors – particularly Russia and China – continue to hone their skills and advance their strategic objectives.

As the Coordinating Authority (CA) for the C-VEO mission, USSOCOM collaborates with geographic and functional combatant commands on the Global Campaign Plan for VEO (GCP-V). USSOCOM provides an annual assessment on VEO trends – which we have just completed – and the Joint Force's progress towards accomplishing its campaign objectives. Along with this assessment, we make recommendations on campaign adjustments to the Secretary of Defense. To facilitate GCP-V execution, USSOCOM integrates Joint Force, Interagency, and partner nations' activities into a unified effort, the Transregional Synchronization Forum (TRSF). Current campaign efforts are focused on disrupting the financial, messaging, and foreign terrorist fighter networks that enable and sustain VEOs. Severing these conduits will degrade and disrupt VEO attacks against the US homeland, our interests, and against our allies and partners.

Similarly, as the CA for countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD), we continue to develop and refine our capabilities to execute CWMD campaigns. We completed and signed the DoD Functional Campaign Plan to Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction last November. This campaign nests under, cross-cuts, and complements the NDS, the National Military Strategy (NMS), and global and other functional campaigns across the Department. USSOCOM guides and coordinates the planning and assessments of CWMD campaign execution, and then makes recommendations to the Chairman and Secretary of Defense on actions to disrupt and deter adversary WMD programs.

USSOCOM has the mission to field a transregional Military Information Support Operations (MISO) capability to address the opportunities and risks of the global information space – an increasingly critical domain that challenges the Department’s command and control boundaries. The Joint MISO WebOps Center (JMWC) is operating today, and will act in close coordination with the State Department’s Global Engagement Center and other members of the interagency to deliver GCC messages under their authorities to a broader portion of the Joint Force and beyond C-VEO themes. The JMWC supports the combatant commands with improved messaging and assessment capabilities, shared situational awareness of adversary influence activities, and coordinated internet-based MISO globally. We remain on track to achieve Full Operating Capability by the end of FY 2025.

We continue to work with and rely extensively upon the capabilities provided by DoD. These include the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA). The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), in particular, has done exceptional work on CWMD and counter-proliferation (CP) problems. DTRA plays an integral role in creating shared awareness of the threat that supports

our campaign planning. We are also working closely with them on the pressing and expanding asymmetric threat of small unmanned aerial systems (UAS) by VEOs and state actors is a significant concern to the Joint Force. USSOCOM fully endorses DTRA's initiatives to understand and counter this threat and is working with them on several fronts toward this end.

Beyond our national collaborative efforts, USSOCOM also extends its network abroad to engage willing international partners, fulfilling the NDS direction to strengthen alliances, and attract new partners. USSOCOM hosts highly qualified and talented Special Operations officers and Non-Commissioned Officers from 24 nations with established SOF capability, many of whom are contributing combat forces to today's C-VEO efforts. We also maintain US Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLOs) in 21 countries. These liaison relationships provide agility to a global network that creates a common understanding of threats, develop response options, and – in some cases – to develop technology, tactics and equipment for mutual benefit to our forces.

For developing countries, security cooperation activities are key tools for strengthening relationships and attracting new partners while enabling them to tackle threats and challenges of common concern. USSOCOM appreciates Congressional consolidation of security cooperation authorities in 10 U.S.C. §333. USSOCOM on behalf of GCCs have leveraged this authority to build partner capacity by providing the necessary skills and equipment to conduct security operations in their own self-defense.

SOF continues to use the authority to support foreign forces and groups for irregular warfare operations as provided in Section 1202 of NDAA for FY2018 to work by, with, and through partners, and in support of the GCCs. This authority fills a gap in our arsenal at a critical juncture for USSOF as we sustain our capacity for conducting CT and CWMD missions, while

increasing the efficiency and affordability of these capabilities enabling us to invest in readiness and modernization efforts for high-end conflicts. Through these authorities, we will partner with select regular and irregular forces possessing unique access and capabilities to frustrate, deter, and disrupt peer competitor actions harmful to our mutual interests. Recognizing the strategic implications of great power competition, we will move forward deliberately, coordinated with interagency partners, while providing full transparency to Congress. We are seeking a four year extension of this authority to allow the necessary time to deliberately pursue these initiatives and adequately assess their value and impact.

The provision of support to the same types of forces and groups to support or facilitate SOF operations to combat terrorism (10 U.S.C. §127e) remains a critical enabler for our forces executing combating terrorism operations. It allows small-footprint USSOF elements to take advantage of the skills and unique attributes of indigenous regular and irregular forces – local area knowledge, ethnicity, and language skills – to achieve effects that are critical to our mission objectives while mitigating risk to U.S. forces. This is especially true in remote or politically-sensitive areas where larger U.S. formations are infeasible and/or the enemy leverages safe-havens that are otherwise inaccessible to USSOF. The use of 127e authority has directly resulted in the capture or killing of thousands of terrorists, disrupted terrorist networks and activities, and denied terrorists operating space across a wide range of operating environments, at a fraction of the cost of other programs. This authority continues to be a key tool as we seek cost-effective and sustainable CVEO operations called for in the NDS.

**SOF Vision – “Relentlessly seeking advantage in every domain to compete and win...”**

In addition to geographic domains, we must fight and win enabled by the latest technological advancements. The increasingly data-driven, networked, miniaturized, and

automated world where goods, information, and people move across the globe at a furious pace significantly impacts virtually every aspect of SOF operations. We need to understand this impact and embrace and harness the opportunities offered by technology. Data science, artificial intelligence, automated systems, and cryptography are no longer restricted or isolated products available to select powers. They are commodities accessible to all. Social media and publicly available information presents us with a world of far fewer shadows for concealment and yet opportunities for understanding heretofore unseen indicators of adversarial intent or action. For this reason, to achieve our mission we cannot relent in our pursuit of capabilities that will sustain and increase our advantage along the entire spectrum of conflict.

In 2018, USSOCOM established the position of Chief Data Officer (CDO) to lead the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) across the enterprise and create a culture of data-driven decision making. Our CDO is guiding data governance efforts and leading engagement with the Defense Digital Service, the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, Project Maven, and related activities. Under the direction of the CDO, USSOCOM is also consolidating a data engineering lab and operationalizing a Development Operations (DevOps) environment that enables world-class talent to collaborate and deliver technical solutions for the SOF enterprise.

Embracing these technologies will allow our workforce to consume and process data in ways that exceed basic human cognitive capabilities and reserve our valuable manpower for the tasks that are the exceptional domain of the human. To maximize the effectiveness of available technology, we must also address data architecture and data management as priorities. We will transition to cloud-based data services and treat our data as a critical, strategic asset. We will

ensure that data is defended from our adversaries while remaining usable and accessible to those who need it.

To ensure that these changes are rooted in SOF unique requirements and relevant to our special operations missions and tasks, USSOCOM will expand the use of wargames and exercises, and establish a joint SOF Experimentation Force (EXFOR) within our force structure. The EXFOR will test concepts developed in our SOF Future Operating Concept alongside technology and equipment developed from our innovation efforts. The EXFOR will consist of existing units and personnel from our SOF service components and operational commands and will serve as the pacing element for the development and fielding of innovative joint concepts, equipment, and tactics.

USSOCOM funding efforts have specifically enabled the force to pursue technologies critical to resourcing the NDS priorities. Those technologies will enable the survivability of SOF operators while executing missions in denied environments by addressing evolving threat weapon systems, to include protective systems such as next-generation radio frequency countermeasures that are critical to aircraft survivability. The Special Operations Precision Guided Munition, Common Launch Tube munitions, and SOF modification of Service-provided munitions are also funded at full-rate production to meet SOF operational requirements. Funding in the FY20 budget is based on established NDS priorities to maintain a comparative advantage when operating in near-peer environments.

USSOCOM values its acquisition authority and welcomes recent legislative acquisition reforms such as Other Transactional Authorities (OTAs) under Section 2371b and Mid-Tier Acquisition (MTA) authority under Section 804 of the 2016 NDAA. These initiatives enable our SOF acquisitions personnel to move at a pace more commensurate with the commercial and non-

traditional industry partners we need. We look forward to working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Congress on ways to further enhance agile and timely acquisition schedules that can attract these innovative companies to SOF.

### **Conclusion**

In a few short months, USSOCOM will host the 2019 DOD Warrior Games in Tampa, Florida from June 21st through June 30th. Approximately 300 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans will participate in 11 sporting events. The Warrior Games were established in 2010 to enhance the recovery and rehabilitation of our personnel with health challenges. The athletes will represent the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Special Operations Command. Additionally, allied athletes from the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands will compete. A large contingent of these athletes' families will also attend. I invite all of you to attend these games, and join us in cheering alongside them and honoring their courage and perseverance.

In closing, I thank the Congress for the steadfast support for USSOCOM. We are already competing with adversaries and adapting to complex challenges facing our country and will continue to do so now and into future.