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**CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING AND
READINESS CHALLENGES FACING SPE-
CIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND
CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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**CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING AND READINESS
CHALLENGES FACING SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
SUBCOMMITTEE,

Washington, DC, Wednesday, January 31, 2007.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:01 p.m. in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. SMITH. We will go ahead and call the meeting to order. One of my goals is to start all our meetings on time. In Congress, I am not sure how long I will achieve that objective, but I am going to do my best to do that.

I want to thank Representative Thornberry for being here and for working with me on the subcommittee. I think we will have a very, very good hearing. I think the subcommittee has a very important series of issues to deal with within our jurisdiction and look forward to doing that. Our primary goal is to be as helpful as possible to our forces in the field to help them do the job we all are asking them to do, and we are very, very fortunate with our first hearing today to have the Commander of Special Operations, General Brown, here, as well as all of the component commanders here as well. That will give us a great opportunity to get a terrific perspective.

The other thing I am going to try to do as chairman is dispense with opening statements from Members of Congress. I have been in hearings before where the witnesses didn't get to talk until we were about an hour into it, and it always struck me as kind of odd. So, for ten years, I watched that and figured, if I get the opportunity, I would do it differently, and this is my opportunity.

So I will just say that we are very interested, obviously, in the mission of Special Operations. We know we are trying to increase the size of the force and that challenges come with that. I want to hear a little bit about that. I am also very interested, not just the direct action piece, but in the hearts and minds piece, which General Brown and I have talked about before, and how we can use that more comprehensively in many places in the world.

With that, I will turn it over to my ranking member, Mac Thornberry from Texas, for any comments he has.

STATEMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, RANKING MEMBER, TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would just say that we are looking forward to working with you as well. On your left, or my left, we bring a lot of expertise and a lot of intense interest in the matters which are before this subcommittee, and we look forward to working with you, looking at what is happening today but with a focus to what we need for the future, which I think is Congress's proper role. So we look forward to working with you and appreciate, as you do, General Brown and our other witnesses being with you today.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I will do one other thing. I will recognize Representative Castor, who I know has MacDill Air Force Base in her district where General Brown is joining us from. So if you want to say a quick greeting to your constituent, we will do that and then move on.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to point out that the Tampa Bay community appreciates everyone that works at MacDill and all of the brave men and women that serve our country, whether it is at MacDill Air Force Base, Central Command (CENTCOM), but especially Special Operations Command (SOCOM). Everyone in our community is so pleased to have the brave men and women of SOCOM working hard in the Tampa Bay area. So thank you. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Representative Castor.

With that, General Brown, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF GEN. BRYAN D. BROWN, COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, U.S. ARMY

General BROWN. Mr. Chairman, Representative Thornberry and distinguished members of the subcommittee. It is an honor to appear before this committee today to report on the current manning and readiness challenges facing Special Operations Forces (SOF). With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few remarks to compliment my written statement for the record.

Two decades ago, Congress created the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to be an exceptionally trained, exceptionally skilled and highly successful joint command with a mandate to accomplish our Nation's most challenging military missions. As we mark the 20th anniversary of USSOCOM, the innovation of Congress—

Mr. SMITH. I am having a little trouble hearing. Is the microphone on? Thank you.

General BROWN. As we mark the 20th anniversary of USSOCOM, the innovation of Congress has proven to be visionary in today's conflict. We find ourselves engaged in a fight we were built for, a dynamic conflict against a multifaceted enemy who is global, unconventional and formidable. A significant portion of our recent successes is due to the tremendous support we have received from the office of the Secretary of Defense and the Congress as a whole to ensure our SOF warriors have been appropriately resourced to successfully accomplish the types of unconventional, irregular and adaptive missions demanded of them. Enabled by

SOCOM's responsive and agile acquisition authorities, today's SOF warriors are better trained and equipped than ever before.

Recruiting across the command has been good but not without its challenges. One of those challenges has been the enlisted Navy Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) ranks. To meet this recruiting challenge, the Chief of Naval Operations has made SEAL recruitment the top recruiting priority in the Navy.

Our components have been proactive in maximizing our training pipelines. We have grown the school houses, increased the number of instructors and reviewed and revised our training methods. This ensures we can accept the increased student load while upholding the rigorous standard required to become a SOF operator.

Additionally, some of this group growth has been building new SOF capabilities never before in our inventory. I have mentioned MARSOC, the Marine Corps Special Operations Command, but there is also the addition of a predator unmanned vehicle squadron, manned intelligence surveillance reconnaissance (ISR) capability, strategic psychological operations capability, and the delivery of our first ever CV-22 tilt rotor aviation, just to name a few of the new capabilities.

We are proud of our growth and I commend our component commanders for meeting the challenges of growth while transforming the force and deploying at the highest rate in our history, all while keeping or improving the standard. However, we must continue to grow carefully. The hallmark of Special Operations Forces is their skill, experience and maturity. Building the force with new graduates must be balanced by retaining our seasoned operators to maintain effectiveness on the battlefield. We simply cannot overpopulate the force with junior personnel to meet the aggregate numbers.

Our Special Operations component commanders will appear following my testimony, and I trust you will hear the details of incredible programs that they have built and manage every day.

Our retention initiatives have been successful. In fiscal year 2005, the Under Secretary of Defense for personnel and readiness approved the SOF retention initiative. This initiative enables us to provide focused incentives for SOF throughout their career and provide us a known inventory for management. But it isn't enough. Currently, we have commissioned a study of SOF recruiting and retention incentives and compensation that will help us determine what works and what doesn't so we can better manage the force of the future.

Our overall readiness is excellent, and our deliberate growth is supported by associated gains in training and equipping of SOF. The readiness of our equipment is challenged by sustained combat operations and increased maintenance requirements impacting an aging fleet of aircraft, land and sea mobility assets.

Our high operations tempo tests the strength of both our personnel and the enablers that support them. Our equipment receives first class maintenance, but, more importantly, the SOF warriors receive first class family support. In recruiting SOF, we gain the individual, but we retain the family.

I want to thank you and the members of the House Armed Services Committee for your continued support to our soldiers, sailors,

airmen and Marines, our first class Department of Defense civilians and our dedicated USSOCOM families. The support of this committee, especially your visits to our troops in the field and the support of the Secretary of Defense help ensure SOCOM remains the most capable special operations force in the world. I will be happy to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Brown can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, General.

On the questions, we will try to stick to the five-minute rule, but also I want to say, for members, this is a relatively small committee. We are not going to adhere strictly to the five-minute rule or to the order. If you have something we are talking about and something you really want to ask about, then we will be liberal about yielding that time; I will be very liberal about yielding that time and allowing the conversation to flow forward.

So don't feel like you have to sit there and wait forever if there is something you think is important, and I will trust your judgment on that, at least for a little while.

With that, I just have a couple of quick questions. I had the opportunity, Representative Thornberry and I did, to be down at SOCOM on Monday. So we got a lot of our questions answered then, and I appreciate that.

One specific question, particularly with regard to the Army. They have the bulk of the Special Operations Forces and the bump-up in terms of getting to the higher numbers on the training piece. Has there been any alterations in the training to sort of make, easier is the wrong word, there is nothing easy about this, have they had to alter, have the requirements been more liberal on how they have accepted people in order to meet these numbers, or are they still at the same requirements they had before the bump-up?

General BROWN. Mr. Chairman, actually, they are higher than they were before. When I used to command Army Special Operations Command, the requirement for an Special Forces (SF) soldier to graduate was what we call zero-plus-zero in the language capability. Today they have raised this standard to one, one, one; read, write and understand the language. So the standards have actually been raised.

Now what they have done through a very, very detailed analysis of every training day, they have reduced the course and the length of time, and they begin training language the day the soldier starts the course, thereby giving him a full year or more to study the language.

Those kind of innovations in the training pipeline for Special Forces has been very, very positive. We get a better product out of the end of the pipeline, but quite frankly, if anything, the standards are much, much higher than they were throughout history.

Mr. SMITH. What percentage of Special Forces are in Iraq right now, of your forces?

General BROWN. To give you the specific percentage, I would have to—I would have to figure it out. We have got about 7,500 folks deployed, about 5,000 in Iraq across all of the SOCOM—of all SOCOM, we have got about 5,000. For Special Forces, I would have to figure that out specifically.

Mr. SMITH. One last question. When we were down there, you talked about the need to upgrade your aircraft, C-130, and you are, as we all know, dependent upon the forces themselves for the larger pieces of equipment like aircraft basically, and then you specialize it from there, so you are dependent on them moving forward and you are waiting for the Air Force to make their decision on what to do about the air frame around the 130.

What is your preferred outcome, accepting for the moment you have to live with ultimately what the Air Force decides, but in terms of our input in the process, what would you need? Do you think you can take the existing air frame out there and upgrade them? Do you need a new air frame? If you needed a new one, what would it look like? I ask that because where the V-22 is concerned, you didn't exactly get what you wanted. You are going to live with it, and I understand that, but I would like to try to avoid that when we are trying to replace the 130. I am curious what your preference would be.

General BROWN. I think what we need is a 130 size aircraft. I think that we are about done modernizing our current fleet. Now we have already started a small modernization program with what we call the C-130 Whiskey fleet.

Mr. SMITH. What does that mean? You mentioned that when I was down there.

General BROWN. Our most capable C-130 is called the Combat Talon II, and that is an all-weather penetrating aircraft that can penetrate enemy defenses and weather to deliver troops to the target. We have a lesser version of that; it is called the Whiskey model. It is not a full-up Talon but it is part of our modernization and it will be the stop gap so that we have some new rebuilt airplanes on the flight line until we do get a decision and figure out what our modernization program is for the future of our C-130 fleet.

It is my opinion that we need a new aircraft. Most of our aircraft are I would guess 29 to 40 years old, and they are flying every day, and we are putting a lot more hours on them. I would say my number one modernization issue is the C-130 fleet. Today we have several different models of C-130's. Pilots can't fly each other's model. So you have—you fall into the law of small numbers immediately because you have got a few aircraft that can do this, a few aircraft that can do a different mission.

What we are looking for is a modernization program with a new aircraft about a C-130 size that ultimately will give us a pure fleet so that we can get some mass in our capability and better manage the force.

Mr. SMITH. So that basically one pilot could fly—same pilot could fly any one of the four or five different versions you need.

General BROWN. That would be a good solution to a lot of our problems.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, General.

Mr. Thornberry.

General BROWN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, one of the tasks that has been assigned to SOCOM is overall planning for the global war against the terrorists, and I

think it would be helpful to hear from you, at a very high level, how do we win this war in the long term because there is concern of course that we will have a difficult time hunting down every person who chooses to become a terrorist and so there must be a larger and longer approach? How—how would you describe that?

General BROWN. We have written the global war on terror (GWOT) plan. Without getting too detailed into the plan, there are two basic vectors, and one is the direct action piece, and one is the indirect action piece. The direct action piece has a direct impact on our enemy. The indirect action has a direct impact on the environment, thereby influencing the enemy.

The most important piece of that is the indirect piece, and that is the very, very difficult piece, eliminating underlying conditions, eliminating Islamic extremist ideologies. It is the indirect piece that is very, very—building partner nation capability. That is the more difficult, and long term is a piece, but it is critical to the success in the long war for the global war on terror.

The direct action piece is critical because quite frankly that has a direct impact on the enemy and in fact protects the homeland and buys time for the indirect piece of the global war on terror strategy to work.

So I would say the secret is we have got to do both, both of them to protect the homeland, but the indirect piece of working with our partner nations, enabling them to be able to hunt down terrorists inside their own borders, building their capacity, eliminating underlying conditions, eliminating Islamic radical ideologies, those are the things that will eventually win it, and that influences the environment, which in turn influences the enemy.

Mr. THORNBERRY. As you know, there has been some criticism that we as a government are too heavily weighted toward direct action. How do you think—do you think we have the balance about right or not?

General BROWN. Well, I think there is a need for both of them right now, but I would say, it would be better if we could be doing more indirect action around the world. Our Forces, SOF Forces are specifically capable of doing the indirect piece as well as the direct action piece. Most of our deployments as you know are into Afghanistan and Iraq, and so we are not doing as many engagement and training host nation countries and partner nation countries as we would traditionally do around the world. SOF forces are very good at that. There is one other point I would make, and that is on the Iraqi battlefield, our SOF Forces, our Special Forces and our SEALs are doing direct action, but they are doing it in concert with the Iraqi battalions. They are doing it in the combat advisor role, which is in fact the indirect piece. It is enabling partner nations.

Now the outcome may be a direct action mission, and I think that is widely misunderstood and reported because people think that because you are going to hit a direct target, that is a direct mission, and it is in fact a direct action mission. But when you are doing it by training the Iraqi forces and then combat advising them, helping them plan and execute the mission, you are building their capacity and capability to do it by themselves, thereby making it an indirect approach.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. I believe what we will do is, I will call on Ms. Castor, and we will break, and if the General could, I think the other members of the committee would have questions for you. We will endeavor to be back as quickly as possible. Probably about a half hour.

Ms. Castor.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When talking about the indirect action, that piece of it that we have got to further develop in the global war, talk to me about how your recruitment efforts have changed and the challenges you face in recruitment, especially of the high-quality type that you place special emphasis on in Special Operations and the challenges you face with cultural and racial diversity and recruits that have the linguistic skills that are necessary for your type missions.

General BROWN. That is a great question. First of all, recruiting since 9/11 has not been a problem for Special Operations Forces. Every seat in every school is full to start the course. We have had some problems getting people through the course but, quite frankly, overall speaking, and there may be some spot shortages, our recruiting has been excellent.

We require every Special Forces graduate to be able to speak a language, and so they obtain those language skills while they are in our course. We have subsequently started language programs also in our SEALS, and the main requirement for language in our Air Force Special Operations Command is a unit we call the 6th SOS, which is a foreign internal defense, and they specialize in going into countries and helping them learn to maintain and fly their aircraft. So they have a language requirement.

Language is incredible. It is incredibly difficult to train and maintain, and so we then target the people that we train in one area of the world so that they can maintain that cultural awareness and language skills. So while we don't try and recruit people with language ability, it is helpful.

Our premise is that we are going to bring you in, we give you the Defense Language Aptitude Test, and then we put you in the language that we want to target you against where you will stay in that area of the world.

Our recruiting, quite frankly, has been very, very good.

Ms. CASTOR. And the training has been successful. The recruits are making it through that training and learning the languages in a timely manner enough to be deployed, and you are not having any difficulties with sending qualified, highly qualified troops out on their mission.

General BROWN. The troops going out on the mission today from Special Operations Command are the best that have ever gone out of Special Operations Command. About 23 percent graduate from the course, and they fail the course for all kinds of reasons, one of them being their inability to pass the language portion. And so if you can hit a target at 600 meters, that is great, but unless you can speak a language that we ask you to learn, you are still not going to graduate and wear a Special Forces tab.

Ms. CASTOR. I am still learning a great deal about all of the services under the jurisdiction of this committee, but I imagine that, under Special Operations indirect action missions, those are much longer deployments, much longer-term than I am typically learning about in the Army Brigades that are in the more traditional combat missions. Is that right?

General BROWN. I think you are right. On the indirect approach, we have to provide some sort of persistent presence to build that relationship, to build that capability, and occasional deployment to an area to work with a foreign military to train them for four to six weeks is helpful but it is not nearly as helpful if we can keep a persistent presence in that country working with those forces for a much longer period of time and bring them up to a higher state of resonance to include training their non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps.

The people I failed to mention real quick on the indirect piece that are critical to the indirect piece are the Civil Affairs and the Psychological Operations Forces, which are two core tasks of Special Operations Command, and we enjoy the good fortune of having the active Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Forces under our command and proponentry for them. They are critical in the indirect piece, which I think is pretty clear.

Ms. CASTOR. Can those deployments go on for many years then?

General BROWN. They could. What our concept for future operations is that we will build a rotational force with the growth, with the SOF growth that is being provided by the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) that will allow us to maintain whatever the deployment is required but have sufficient forces trained in a joint nature so that we can still continue to do rotational Special Operations deployments.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, General.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. With that, I believe we will recess. I would imagine it would be about 25 minutes to a half hour.

General BROWN. Yes, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for your patience.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH. Call us back to order. Ms. Drake.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Chairman.

General Brown, first of all, thank you for being here. I am very concerned and I know all of us are about the increasing use of IEDs. As we all know, they are the leading cause of U.S. combat deaths and injuries in Iraq and additionally the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Afghanistan has doubled last year alone. IEDs are the low-cost weapon of choice of our enemies, and it seems to me that, as long as we are fighting the war on terror, we will be confronting IEDs.

It is my understanding that SOCOM's role in this battle against the use of IEDs is to attack the networks that place them, thus neutralizing the threat before it even materializes. Can you comment on this mission and address for us whether your command has the resources necessary to execute this mission?

General BROWN. Thank you for the question. I think it is everybody's mission on the battlefield at all times to see if we can take this network apart that is developing the IED, delivering the

parts for it, employing it, and so it is everybody's mission, but certainly, we are very, very aggressive about trying to track down that network that is providing the supplies that build the IED, all the way to the guys that hire people to put them in, people that put them in, and so we are very aggressive about it. We have got the resources we need to take this mission on.

I should say that, right from the beginning, when the first IEDs started to hit us, we were very, very aggressive about doing what I think was just about everything we could do immediately to go after this problem set. We actually deployed forces to other countries that had some experience in it. We learned from them. We wrote the handbook. We worked with the United States Army and the Marine Corps to help develop the handbook for tactics, techniques and procedures. We immediately tried to start armoring up our vehicles.

So we have taken the IED threat very, very seriously. But I think you hit the nail on the head. It is the entire spectrum from the IED maker all the way to protecting our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines with the best equipment we can. That is critical. IEDs are going to be with us a long time. They are a very, very inexpensive weapon of choice of terrorists around the world and it is proliferating around the world, but I think we do have the resources and the drive and the initiative to go after everything that we can to try and protect our forces on the battlefield.

Mrs. DRAKE. General Brown, thank you for that. But just one other thing that I wanted to mention. We had a breakfast here a couple of weeks ago for Special Operation Forces, and we had two SEALs who came to tell us about their experience in Iraq, and they said three things that all of us have heard the exact opposite of and Americans have heard the exact opposite of. The first thing they said is they hire Iraqis when they are able to contract out work. Then they said this, the sheik had given them 350 of his people to be Iraqi police. And the third thing was that the Iraqi Security Forces were doing a very good job, and they were very impressed by the progress they have made.

My question to them is, can we put them on TV, or how do we get the message out? Is there a better way to get the message out of what you are able to accomplish?

General BROWN. I am sure there is a better way to get the message out. I would just reiterate and re-emphasize what they said. I have been over there many times, will be back over there next week. I have been out with the Iraqi Security Forces, especially the Iraqi special operations forces that we have had the responsibility for training, and they are very, very good, and they are very dedicated to the task and so the folks that we have had the opportunity to train, quite frankly, are doing very, very well.

I am sure there are better methods of getting the information out, and we are probably not doing well enough.

Mrs. DRAKE. It was just the exact opposite of what we all think. Thank you for your answers. I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. If I can follow up on that, and I did hear that, but isn't it fair to say, it is a little bit more of a mixed bag in terms of the quality of the Iraqi forces and the support from the locals? I think there are some areas, particularly in the Sunni-held prov-

inces, where a number of Sunnis have decided recently that al Qaeda is not in their best interest, and they are working with us. That has made an enormous difference. There you are working with basically what amounts to the militias for the local sheiks. Once the local sheiks have given the big thumbs up that they are supposed to work with them, then it is really good. But at other places, particularly in more mixed neighborhoods, the Iraqi forces, there have been instances when they haven't shown up, they haven't been prepared to do the job. Our forces have had to take on responsibilities.

It is not all just one side or the other, and I will agree with Mrs. Drake that certainly we hear more of the negative than the positive, but I think it would be misleading to give the impression that all the negative stuff just isn't accurate.

General BROWN. I think you are exactly right. Sir, it is a mixed bag. It depends on where you are and what forces you are training with and their commanders. So it is different for whoever you draw as your team.

The point I would make is for the Iraqi special forces, which we have trained from day one, they are very, very good, and so I am very, very confident and comfortable with their capabilities, and, as you know, that force is expanding.

Once you get out away from the Iraqi special operations forces, our Special Forces teams and some of our SEAL teams, specifically in Ramadi, are out as combat advisors, and it is a mixed bag. But a little bit of training—when I was there, on the last trip I was there, the SEALs that I visited in Ramadi were in a large warehouse where they had taken the leadership of the Iraqi battalion that they were training with, and they had pulled off the NCO corps and had taken them to this warehouse and were training them at night so that the next day when they showed up to take over their platoons as platoon sergeants and first sergeants, they would act like NCOs, and they would have expertise that the troops did not have. So they were giving them this little additional training off to the side where nobody would see it to try and build the credibility of the NCO corps.

So I would agree with you that it is dependent upon the unit you are working with, how good that commander is, but, quite frankly, the ones I have seen over the years, it is much improved. One of my first trips over up in the Mosul area, quite frankly, we had problems with just getting them to come to train. I didn't see that the last trip over. They were out there training, and we were getting pretty good numbers to show up.

So it is a process you just have to stay after. It is not going to be instantaneous.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Saxton.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to take this opportunity before I ask the question to congratulate you, inasmuch as I wasn't here for the re-organization of the subcommittee, upon your becoming chairman of the subcommittee. I look forward to working with you and with Mr. Thornberry as ranking member, and I, as you know, enjoy serving on this subcommittee very much and getting to know

the men and women of the Special Operations Command. So I look forward very much to working under your leadership in this regard so congratulations.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Of course, chairing, you have chaired the committee as well and did so quite ably. So I appreciate that. Thank you for those kind words.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you.

General Brown, just by happenstance, Congressman Thornberry and I about a month ago realized that in between, sometime in between the election and when we came back here to reorganize the Congress, he and I both read a book entitled, *The Sling and the Stone*. The book is a book that explains the nature of what the author refers to as fourth-generation warfare. And without going through an explanation of first generation, second generation and third generation, fourth-generation warfare is a strategy which attempts to weaken the political will of your opponent.

As I watch the progress of the war, the global war on terror, I see the author's description played out over and over again. Basically, the folks in the Middle East have realized after watching the United States military or the coalition military in 1990 and 1991, that it is probably not a good idea to take us on in that kind of a war.

And so in order to accomplish their goals, they had to find another way, and they watched what has happened through history where weaker—the weaker force has been successful in taking on a stronger force and using those techniques and methods and strategies to carry out this war.

I don't know if you have seen that book, but could you—I think you probably get the gist of what I am saying. Could you just comment on what you see going on in regard to this as being a different kind of war, perhaps even a fourth generation warfare?

General BROWN. I am not familiar with the book. I will go get it and read it. But it sounds exactly like what we are talking about. This is that kind of war.

It is a different kind of war. People have to understand that it is not big formations on big formations. A lot of people find that a very comfortable way to go to war because you can do all kinds of simulations and modeling and, as you know, in this kind of a war very, very difficult to do any of that.

As you know, we have just written in concert with the Marine Corps our, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept*, and basically the definition of irregular warfare fits right into that type of warfare it sounds like this book is talking about with protracted—the protracted efforts to exhaust your enemy and his political system as opposed to direct action force on force. So I think that exactly describes what we are up against. So I will take that book on and read it before my next testimony.

Mr. SAXTON. Thank you, General Brown. Good to see you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. McIntyre.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Brown, for your outstanding leadership. I wanted to ask you, I know we have been interrupted by votes, and wasn't sure if this had been examined, I had the opportunity to be

at the new Marine Special Operations Center in late August that is being stood up at Camp Lejeune and I know the good General is going to be with us in the next panel to talk with us about that.

But with the proximity of Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, has there been any effort in the option of utilizing Army Special Operations Command infrastructure with the Marine Special Operations Forces training?

General BROWN. While we haven't physically overlaid the Marine Corps Special Operations training on top of the Special Warfare Center and school at Fort Bragg, the very first thing that the commanding general did, and I am sure he will be glad to talk to you about that, is go to visit the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg and look for areas where they can work together to help get the Marine Corps Special Operations Command assessment, selection, training, get it on board and get going with it.

They have in fact—we do share, all of our SOF forces share each other's schools so we are already maximizing that. The Marine Corps Special Operations Command has a high number of medics in our medic course there at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which the Special Forces medic is world renowned. So we are already sharing a lot of those kind of schools. We will do better a year from now as we work through more slots and building the capability to put more Marine Special Operation Forces into our schools. But there is a lot of work going into making sure we are not redundant, that we are parallel, because those forces have different requirements, different mission sets. So where we can do the same training and assessment, selection together, then we are encouraging them to do that. But where they need to be separate, they are.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Brown, thanks for coming today. A couple of questions, hopefully quick answers, on the Civil Affairs and the other non-operational types, for lack of a better phrase, are they fully SOF-qualified or other folks that don't necessarily need to be able to do all the things that—

General BROWN. The Civil Affairs Forces and the Psychological Operations Forces come through our school at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and have to graduate from our Civil Affairs or our Psychological Operations Course. And so when they come to us, and they also have language skills and language requirements dependent upon what unit that they are habitually aligned with. They will be airborne qualified. They will deploy with SOF forces.

So they are fully integrated into Special Operations with special training.

Mr. CONAWAY. I know they are fully integrated, but in terms of their overall level of training, they go through all of the schools that someone—

General BROWN. Not all of the schools. They go through the schools that are applicable to the skills that we require them to have on the battlefield. I might mention that the Civil Affairs force has done a phenomenal job in Iraq and Afghanistan, and these are

small four-man teams or, in many cases, men and women teams that are far out all by themselves, in villages, on the roads, in a Humvee, just doing an incredibly important job, and they have done it very, very well.

Mr. CONAWAY. You talked to us a little bit more about modernization. You mentioned aircraft issues and needs. Are there other areas where there is training facility or equipment capability that you need that you don't already have?

General BROWN. Modernization, it never stops because you are always looking at what you have and what is available to make sure that we are putting the best equipment that we can for SOF operators. One of the key areas that we also focus on is what we call soldier systems, but it is really soldier, sailor, airmen and Marine systems for the ground forces and those that are on the ground to make sure that we are getting the best body armor, lighter body armor, the best radios, the best weapons, and so we are modernizing the force in all those areas.

We are looking at a new weapons system called the combat assault rifle, Special Operations Combat Assault Rifle called the SCAR. We are about to start fielding that at low rate initial production to make sure it meets our requirements.

We are modernizing our helicopter fleet. We are building MH 60 model Black Hawks. We are building G model, through great efforts by the United States Army, G model Chinooks. We are not only modernizing that fleet. We are growing that fleet, and we are stationing some helicopters out at Fort Lewis, Washington, so, for the first time, in our history, we will have aviation on the west coast. Forty percent of all SOF is stationed west of the Mississippi, but no aviation, so we are fixing that piece on the helicopter piece and of course CV-22 is probably our biggest modernization project.

All of our—we need to move faster on our boat programs, and we are. We have got some initiatives going on to look at the next generation of our riverine craft, our Mark 5 SEAL assault crafts. So we are looking at our boat programs, and we are starting to move on. So we are modernizing in just about every area. We have got some pretty good plans.

Mr. CONAWAY. But there are no glaring deficiencies that you are really concerned at this stage?

General BROWN. Glaring deficiencies is probably too hard. We need to work a little harder and get some decisions on the modernization of our C-130 fleet. That is the biggest one that kind of sticks out right now.

Mr. CONAWAY. One last quick one. Can you talk to us about casualty rates among SOF forces in Iraq and Afghanistan versus non-SOF forces?

General BROWN. I have not taken a look at the numbers of casualties compared to the conventional force casualties. Our forces are doing high-risk missions, all the way down to Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations, like I talked about. They are out on very dangerous roads, out by themselves, they are in small teams. So they are doing very high-risk missions.

They are provided the best equipment and the best training. They are trained at a higher level. So all that plays into the amount of casualties we take but the other thing is we are very,

very proud of our medical capability for all the special operations medics so when they are wounded we have got very, very highly trained medics right next to them.

I have not looked at the numbers. I can go back and look at that. Quite frankly, I try and stay away from briefing the numbers of casualties. These guys aren't numbers. These are absolutely wonderful special operators that are on the battlefield defending this Nation.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Hayes.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Brown, thank you for being here. A special thank you and our prayers for the men and women that you represent.

General BROWN. Thank you.

Mr. HAYES. I have been kind of tagging along behind your wonderful folks ever since I have been in Congress, and it has been an incredible privilege. If I could yield my time to you, and I can, is there anything that you can bring to this hearing in terms of the folks back home—the committee is pretty well aware we are at war and what the stakes are. This is not a negotiating kind of thing.

Is there a comment that you can add there that might help focus on the one word to describe Iraq, which is win, which is what you are doing.

General BROWN. I think I need to focus, if I were making a comment about Iraq, I need to focus on what the special operations tasks are and how well our forces are trained, organized, equipped and employed. And we will be going back over tomorrow morning to visit them.

And when you go over, you kind of look at are we doing things right, and are we doing the right things with our Special Operations Forces? Are we doing missions that conventional forces are not organized, trained and equipped to do, because that is the purpose that this Nation built this wonderful Special Operations Forces? We are trained, organized and equipped to perform the functions that conventional forces are not.

So the measurement of success for the SOF forces, when I go over, I see them doing everything, and they are doing it very, very well. I am not just up here cheerleading for them because they are a wonderful people, and we certainly don't get everything correct. But I will tell you that where I see them training and combat advising Iraqi and Afghani forces, they are phenomenal. Where I see our Civil Affairs Forces out meeting with Pashtun leadership, they are phenomenal.

So I am very, very happy. And then our high-value targeting capability is very, very good. So I think that the thing I would say about Iraq is that the SOF forces over there are doing a tremendous job.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, sir. I am smiling because I am thinking about the breakfast that Chairman Smith and Mike McIntyre and others of us had. You generals are fine. We appreciate you, but when the operators come and tell from their own perspective in a very humble way who they are and how they do it, the press can't refute that. Again, thanks to all those guys.

A cousin just graduated from college in December magna cum laude, and guess what he did with his degree, he is headed down to Fort Benning to join Special Forces to be a combat medic.

Yield back. Look forward to the next panel.

General BROWN. Thanks very much.

We will look forward to seeing him in the force.

Mr. SMITH. I should say for all members' information, we are going to try to do more of those hearings with Special Operations Forces, individual members coming back from battlefield and giving us some firsthand accounts, informal briefings. Try to do the same thing, something early in the morning. I have discussed that with General Brown, something they definitely want to do, interested certainly in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also one of the pieces, and I will be asking Admiral Maguire, when he comes up, about this, about the experience in the Philippines and the more indirect action piece of it, which as Mr. Thornberry has said, has enormous potential. So we are going to try to set them up and urge all of you to attend because I agree with Representative Hayes, that was incredibly useful for all of us.

Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General Brown, for being here. I have missed some of the testimony and the questions and answers, and I don't want to be redundant, but I do want to say how very grateful I am for your service and the service of the extraordinary men and women in the Special Operations Command, to thank you and to thank them.

I, too, am looking forward to the testimony of the next panel, but with my deep thanks and congratulations. I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

General BROWN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Actually, I think that concludes. I have just one more question. On the Capstone Concept for Special Operations, which put differently, is sort of your I guess 30,000-foot vision of, here is what we want the Special Forces to be doing in the immediate future in the environment we are in on the war on terror. If you could say a few words about that vision, because I think it is going to be enormously important in the war on terror.

General BROWN. Thanks for the opportunity.

In Special Operations Command, our staff is built by functions. It is not built with the normal line and block charts that you would normally see in a joint staff. One of those that we stood up is called the Center for Knowledge and Futures, and their job is doing our Title 10-required doctrine writing, and also I have given them the task of taking on the future.

We based our concept, Capstone Concept for Special Operations employment on three factors, and that is global war on terror, expeditionary trained joint SOFs, and the ability to have a persistent presence forward.

So what we did is we took this look at what we thought would be required around the world, how we could best meet those three strategic requirements, and I think we have come up with a good concept that will allow us to build and train a joint SOF force to match the requirement in a specific environment, build that and

train it in the United States, put a command and control over it, enable it with all the schools, all the command and control communications intelligence, with all the logistics pieces, and then deploy that as an integrated unit to take care of a problem set in a specific environment.

Mr. SMITH. By specific environment, you mean as specific as this particular part of the world.

General BROWN. Exactly.

Mr. SMITH. Train about the culture, the language.

General BROWN. If in fact you were the European Command (EUCOM) commander and you had a requirement today for a campaign in Africa, we can build that force. We can train it to a standard and it will have all the pieces and enablers, and they will work as a joint force. Today, we traditionally do it based on the requirement of the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs). They will ask for like a Special Forces team. We will then train, organize and equip and deploy that Special Forces team.

Our concept goes beyond that. Our concept is building a Joint Force with a joint command and control with all the enablers in it to match the problem set that you are giving us. And so we wrote this Capstone Concept.

The two enablers for it are the SOF growth that we got in the QDR, which helps us have the capacity to do this in the future, and global positioning of where our forces are around the world so that we match up with the task that we are trying to take on.

So we put all those kind of pieces into a document. We wrote the concept. It is called the Capstone Concept for Special Operations, and it kind of guides us in the future of how we intend to employ special operations.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. One last question, as I was thinking about it. It could sort of touch off a broader discussion, but I will ask it anyway. In terms of the use of our forces and what you just talked about there sort of triggered it in my mind, there are a lot of places particularly in Africa, Southeast Asia, different parts of the Middle East where there is a definite threat. There is an unstable environment, an extremist element if not al Qaeda directly. We have seen these extremist elements may not start out as al Qaeda but link up with them, as is happening in Algeria. It strikes me those are areas where you guys could really be enormously important in stopping that before it starts. The main problem with that right now is there is such a high percentage of the force in Iraq, would be my guess. I am not suggesting, and don't mean to, that somehow we can just go ahead and abandon that because we have other things to do.

But I just make the point because conceptually the GWOT is about more than Iraq. It is not like if we win there, whatever at this point win might look like, if we succeed there, get a reasonably stable environment I think is a better way to put it than in terms of a win or a loss at this point, but even if we succeed there, we have got all these other places where you guys can be making an enormous difference, is my perception. Is that sort of, as you look at the world, can you see 5, 10, 15 places like gosh, if we have two dozen of our SOF guys, that would make an enormous difference there?

General BROWN. Sir, I think there are plenty of places and opportunities where small Special Forces teams working with indigenous forces to train them, to help equip them, to help give them the capability to defend their own borders, fight terrorism inside their own countries, that Special Operations Forces could be working today.

Our center of gravity as you said is Iraq. We are going to build five more Special Forces battalions, for example. Those battalions, while people think that is to reduce our ops tempo, it will do some of that. But the main thing it will do is give us the capacity and the capability to spread out and do the other types of missions that you are discussing.

I should say also that, when we do the indirect piece, and part of that is enabling our partner nations around the world, I failed to mention earlier that there is a big interagency piece of that. And working with the interagency in our plan for the global war on terror is a key piece of our entire strategy.

Mr. SMITH. That is all I have. Does any other member have anything else for General Brown?

If not, again we thank you very much. We know you are headed out into the field, so give all of our troops over there our best and our support, and thank you very much for being here and for all your great work on behalf of our country.

General BROWN. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. SMITH. We will bring in the other panel. My preference is if we could just have us sit here. It shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes. I don't want to lose any time. So we will bring in the four component commanders and get going as soon as they are situated.

Is Admiral Maquire just outside the room? We will give him just a minute. We did that kind of quick. You didn't necessarily see that coming, then all of a sudden we asked for you.

I apologize, Admiral. My fault. We should have given you a little bit more of a warning time there.

Welcome. We are now joined by our four Special Operations component commanders. We have Lieutenant General Robert Wagner from the U.S. Army Special Ops; Rear Admiral Joseph Maquire, Commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command; Lieutenant General Michael Wooley from the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command; and Major General Dennis Hejlik from the U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command.

I want to welcome all four of you and say we are very honored and pleased to have all of you here. It is incredibly helpful to our committee to have your perspective. We know it is not easy. You are busy. You are in the middle of a war and doing very important things. So for you to take time and come back here and testify before us and give us a chance to ask you some questions means a great deal to this committee and gives us a great opportunity to get insights on what you could and, more importantly, how we can help you do it.

With that, we will go left to right and start with Lieutenant General Wagner from the U.S. Army Special Ops Command and go down from there. General.

**STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. ROBERT W. WAGNER, COMMANDER,
U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, U.S. ARMY**

General WAGNER. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Thornberry, distinguished Members of Congress, it is my honor to appear before the committee and to report on the manning and readiness of the U.S. Army Special Operations Forces, which are the best manned, trained and equipped in our history. They continue to perform magnificently. They are incredibly capable soldiers, and I think you can be very proud of them.

My top two priorities are support the global war on terror and the readiness of our forces. First I would like to talk about the command support to the global war on terror.

Every day we have over 4,500 carefully selected, highly trained, and well equipped Army Special Operations soldiers, the Green Berets, our Rangers, our Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Special Operations aviators and support forces deployed around the world.

The pace and intensity of their deployments is incredible. The soldiers are engaged in full-dimension warfare, from indirect to direct action, requiring maturity, judgment and seasoned experience.

In regard to the kinetic aspects of our mission, Army SOF soldiers are in a continuous cycle of find, fix, finish, exploit and analyze. Our SOF soldiers and the joint team are routinely hitting multiple targets per night. Their agility at exploiting intelligence from one target to go to the next is unmatched in the annals of warfare. This cycle is played out nightly in multiple locations in Iraq and Afghanistan and is a hallmark of the direct action success on the battlefield.

Just this weekend, our Special Forces teams, embedded with Iraqi counterpart units and Air Force Special Operations Forces and conventional forces, were engaged in a major operation on short notice that prevented a major attack on a holy celebration.

The force is very heavily committed. Most of our operators have completed eight or more combat rotations, with very little rest at home while they are in fact training for the next deployment and are on alert for contingencies.

Conversely, in the non-kinetic aspect of our mission, Army SOF teams are embedded with indigenous people in the armies of Iraq and Afghanistan and in the Philippines and around the world, working side by side, building capacity and capability in the host nation forces, enabling them to operate independently with increased effectiveness.

In my opinion, this is the most important work we do and is aptly key to winning the war, working by, with, and through partner forces and enabling their success. It is a hard, tough, patient work that President Kennedy had in mind when he insisted on expanding the size of the Special Forces, forces that are uniquely blended of skills to help those who have the will to help themselves. That we find ourselves today expanding the size of Special Operations Forces once again is instructive and, again, to your credit.

To my second priority of force readiness, it is linked to the current fight. As General Brown stated, people are our most precious asset, followed closely by equipment and training. We must recruit,

train, assess, equip, retain and professionally develop our SOF soldiers and continue to monitor every aspect of that process.

As you know, we are in the process of adding over 6,800 Active Duty soldiers to the Army Special Operations Forces from the QDR growth. Continued increased production of our SF Civil Affairs and PsyOps soldiers has been the total transformation of the instruction program at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg.

This continues to be very much a good news story as Special Force student production has increased from an average of 238 per year in the nineties to a current steady state of over 750 Active Duty soldiers per year. We did this basically using best business practices, all while maintaining increasing standards.

Army SOF's population is more senior than most units, which highlights the importance of senior-grade retention initiatives. Retention programs are critical to keeping these extraordinary skilled professionals, who routinely separate themselves from their families and place their lives at risk. Over 1,000 retirement-eligible soldiers have accepted retention incentives to remain in Army SOF. With your help, we must sustain these initiatives and be prepared to initiate others to keep the force at peak readiness.

In conclusion, I thank the members of your committee for your continued support to our soldiers. You help make our success possible as we prosecute the global war on terror, grow the force and maintain our high standards. I look forward to answering your questions.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, General.

[The prepared statement of General Wagner can be found in the Appendix on page 59.]

Mr. SMITH. Admiral Maquire.

**STATEMENT OF REAR ADM. JOSEPH MAGUIRE, COMMANDER,
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND, U.S. NAVY**

Admiral MAQUIRE. Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry, distinguished members of the subcommittee, good afternoon. It is an honor and privilege to appear before the subcommittee and talk to you about the state of Naval Special Warfare and the maritime component of the United States Special Operations Command.

As I said in my written statement to you, and Mr. Hays said earlier in General Brown's session, nobody in this room has to be told that the Nation is at war and we have been engaged in combat operations for 5-1/2 years.

Those of us who got Title 10 responsibilities to organize, train and equip have done our part, but I am glad to be here this afternoon to have an opportunity to thank the Congress for the equipment part. You have resourced us well. You have given us all the tools that we need to achieve victory on the battlefield. But we also realize that of those that are given much, much is expected.

That said, Special Operations is not about the equipment, it is about our people, and I know that the focus of this afternoon is about our manpower and our retention.

I was pleased to have the opportunity two weeks ago to be here with a couple of my young operators to talk to you about what they

are doing on the battlefield, and I look forward to continuously engaging the subcommittee on such matters.

Thank you for the opportunity this afternoon, and I look forward to a continued relationship as we support the marvelous men and women of Special Operations and do what we can to help them achieve victory on the battlefield.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Maguire can be found in the Appendix on page 82.]

Mr. SMITH. General Hejlik.

**STATEMENT OF MAJ. GEN. DENNIS J. HEJLIK, COMMANDER,
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COM-
MAND, U.S. MARINE CORPS**

General HEJLIK. Chairman Smith, Congressman Thornberry, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much on behalf of all the marines, sailors and Department of Defense (DOD) civilians of the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, MARSOC, for the opportunity to testify this afternoon on our manning, our equipping and our readiness of MARSOC.

In less than one year, because of your untiring support, we have gone from an operational concept to global deployed forces in the long war on terror. We have four military training unit teams at Tajikistan, in Yemen and in Columbia, and soon to have them in Saudi Arabia and in Chad. We have a Marines Special Operations company that is offloading on the 3rd of February from Djibouti and will join our fellow Special Operational Forces in Afghanistan in the fight in Afghanistan.

Last, I would tell you that I look forward to your questions, and please come down and see your marines, sailors and civilians in Camp Lejeune. We would really appreciate that.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. We appreciate the invitation and will take you up on it. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Hejlik can be found in the Appendix on page 93.]

Mr. SMITH. Last we have General Wooley.

**STATEMENT OF LT. GEN. MICHAEL W. WOOLEY, COMMANDER,
AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, U.S. AIR FORCE**

General WOOLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman Thornberry, and other distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor for me as well to appear before this committee today representing my airmen and Air Force Special Operations Command.

As you know, as the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Commander, my primary responsibility is to provide General Brown and SOCOM with this specialized airpower required to execute SOCOM's mission. As airmen, we bring our Air Force core values, our heritage and service capabilities to join my fellow soldiers, sailors and Marines in forming a truly awesome Joint Special Operations capability for this great Nation.

I believe AFSOC is a force unlike any other. We are very small in numbers. We have always been transformational. We always seek the edge in personnel training and readiness, tactics and equipment of our force in order to prevail in any conflict. We believe the maturity of our Air Commandos and their high levels of training have been directly responsible for our success on the battlefield.

Recently we have been engaged in providing fire support, mobility and air control for Joint Special Operations teams engaged in this global war. The addition of our Predator unmanned aerial systems and the companion intelligence processing and dissemination capability has provided the field commanders with time-critical information to make effective battlefield decisions. I am proud to say that our AFSOC airmen are operating the Predator and those intelligence pieces that are enabling special operators to view data from a Special Operations perspective.

Not only are we fully engaged in hunting down the Nation's vilest enemies, but we are also engaged in assisting friendly foreign air forces in developing their own internal capability to fight terrorism. We know that AFSOC is in high demand, yet our forces cannot be mass produced. We incorporate that philosophy when devising the best ways to apply that force in the future.

I too would like to thank this committee for the things that you have done for us in the past, the things that you will continue to do for us, and I look forward to answering your questions. I am honored to be here today before this committee. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of General Wooley can be found in the Appendix on page 98.]

Mr. SMITH. Thank you all. I have quite a few questions. I will ask some of them, and then move on to my colleagues and catch them at the end.

Beginning with the training component, we all agree that basically you all are going to be asked to do a lot more in the years ahead, try to bring more Special Operations Forces on line, ready to go, do a divergent number of missions, and there are all kinds of layers of challenge there in terms of can you recruit the people, do you have the trainers, do you have the facilities to train, are you able to do, as General Brown was talking about, some of the special, okay, we are sending this particular group to this part of the world so we are going to take three months and train them in this language and culture. So there is a wide range of different pieces of that.

I would like all of you to sort of let me know, tell the committee what are the greatest challenges. What do you think are going to be the biggest difficult hurdles to overcome to get to those numbers in general?

Then specifically I have specific questions for the Army, Navy and Marines. Sorry, I didn't come up with one for the Air Force. I am new at this. I will work on that.

But in the Army piece, there have been allegations, concerns, that in order to get those numbers up, you made the training slightly easier or given more opportunities for people to meet the levels. Just anecdotally, I have heard this. General Brown an-

swered the question, but General Wagner, I would like to have you answer on that as well.

On the Navy piece, concerns about language skills, the language skill requirements are not as high in the Navy.

On the Marines piece, since you are relatively new at this, and we had the opportunity to talk a little bit before the hearing, but I am curious; seeing as how Camp Lejeune is so close to Fort Bragg, are there plans to coordinate and cooperate with the Army to take advantage of the training facilities that they have at Fort Bragg as you train your marines?

That is a complicated, multipart question, but I figured I would throw it out there to get it started. So both the specific questions I asked, but also the general piece for each of you, what is going to be the toughest part of getting this done?

General WAGNER. Sir, thank you very much. From our standpoint, the transformation within our school is a major success and we have made a lot of changes. We did a number of things that I would say were business practice changes. They introduced efficiency without in any other way impacting cost or performance.

We introduced the language training at the very beginning of the course. So if I am going to train to be an engineer sergeant and I am going to be assigned to the 7th troop and my area is Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and my language is Spanish, part of my engineering training is in Spanish.

What we have been able to do is get people to go through the course, and, with a 98 percent pass rate first time through, introduce language without having to add a separate phase following training, which used to exist.

So what we did simply is we told people at the beginning of their training what group they were going to, what their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was, as opposed to waiting to the end of the training. That gave us the language piece.

Another thing we did is we used to teach the course four times a year. We teach it eight times a year. In so doing, we were able to use basically the same faculty, but increase the throughput by eliminating the space between blocks of training.

Mr. SMITH. The mere fact you are speeding up getting these people through doesn't mean that you are dumbing down the training?

General WAGNER. Absolutely not. We did make some changes. I will give you an example. We deemphasized map reading. We increased intelligence. Does that make sense? We are teaching the course to be directly applicable to the soldiers who are going to the warfight.

We have increased the amount of interagency participation, particularly with the intelligence functions. We teach the course now at a secret level, so we can have true integration of the intelligence function into the program.

I will tell you that we have exceeded all of our recruiting categories for our officers and our enlisted strength to come to the program, so there are more than enough people that want to do this work.

The other thing that is unique about my recruiting is I do very little recruiting from initial entry training. I am recruiting career professionals. I go to the active Army and find people who are suc-

cessful sergeants or captains and we recruit them to come to the command. So I draw on the experience of the active Army force, which is increasing phenomenally, as you know, and we recruit those people.

The other point that is important to me is while most units have a large number of junior soldiers and a small number of senior people, our command goes the other way around. The junior people don't exist. There are senior people. So I have to not only recruit them, but I have to retain them. So to me recruiting and retention are hand in hand, because I have to retain those senior people.

That is the heart of our strength, is in that senior team. In that 12-man team, for example, that has a captain, a warrant officer and senior non-commissioned officers, we have as much leadership there as in a conventional infantry company. So retention is key and recruiting is very strong and we are meeting all those goals.

So I think you should be very, very confident and feel very good about what is happening within that transformation. I could take it to the other courses as well, but that is an example. Perhaps that is enough at this point, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Admiral MAQUIRE. Chairman Smith, there are many facets to the training. I have got a great deal of time I spend with my forces on the advance, and we really have no significant issues to report to you on that.

My greatest challenge in Naval Special Warfare is with my basic training, my Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training in order to achieve the correct number of students in the door with the proper throughput out the door to fill the requirements from the Quadrennial Defense Review and the program as far as the number of SEALs.

So, with that, in the last two years, working with General Brown's leadership and the Chief of Naval Operations, we have been able to apply the focus to prioritizing SEAL recruiting within the United States Navy and changing the way we are doing business within the United States Navy in order to bring young people into Naval Special Warfare.

Last year, in 2006, I had a demand signal for over 1,000 students, recruits, to come to our basic training, and we achieved roughly somewhere over 600 enlisted men in the door with a throughput of about 120-plus, which was significantly short. Giving that feedback to the Chief of Navy Personnel and to the Chief of Naval Operations, we have, as I said, changed the way we did business in recruiting, which I won't go into too much.

But the results are this year, the fourth month of the fiscal year, I have a requirement for 1,400 men in the door. As of this week, the Recruiting Command has signed contracts for 1,200 of the 1,400, which is a significant improvement. So I feel confident we will be able to get the proper number of students in the door.

In addition to that, I had changed my basic program and done away with my winter class, because that was my highest attrition class. But as a result of the work that recruiting command has done and the throughput, I had a backlog of young men to start training.

So based on my experience, I didn't want them to lose their motivation; I reinstated my winter class and this week I have class 263 going through hell week. And as of today, just coming in to testify for the subcommittee, I still have 67 young candidates left on Wednesday of hell week.

Now, they have got until Friday to complete the 120-hour program, but based on my experience as a SEAL and also as the former commanding officer of the Center, nobody is going to quit after going this far on Wednesday.

Mr. SMITH. After this long, you are going to stick out the last two days.

Admiral MAQUIRE. So we will finish up with about 65 of these guys, because of some illness. The other two will be rolled back. But if you complete hell week, then you have a 95 percent chance of receiving it all the way through to receiving your Trident.

Based on these numbers, and this is just a snapshot, but even in southern California it gets pretty cold, we will have 60 of these men finish. Roughly, being conservative, let's just say only 50 of them make it to their Trident, and I have five classes a year this year, so right now, it is looking pretty good to growing the force.

So that is my greatest challenge right now, and changing the way we are doing business, because we have a different battlefield. My Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL training is pretty much the same program as started in World War II. The battlefield in the 21st century and the irregular war we are in right now requires a different type of warrior.

But yet we are the maritime component of the United States Special Operations Command, so I also need to make sure that I am doing that part for the Nation. Because if I am not preparing the young force to conduct maritime operations, Special Operations in a maritime environment, then nobody else is doing that as well.

So my greatest challenge is to get the throughput in. I think that the United States Navy and General Brown have done a great deal to do that. I am confident that my community can increase this, and I have also hired industry to work within the United States Navy to do some stuff.

So as far as the language training is concerned, it is somewhat of a challenge for us, because we are primarily a strategic reconnaissance and direct action force. Today, I am involved in combat operations, well, my men are, in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are also throughout—we are in Kenya, we are in Chad, we are in Nigeria and throughout the globe, in the southern Philippines as well.

So with a small force of 1,771 enlisted men and roughly 450 officers, it is difficult to key on the language and then have that individual be focused on that country with the language requirements and the cultural awareness with worldwide commitments.

So we do have language requirements and I do have a number of my force who have achieved a level on that, but I do not have the level of language capability that is resonant in the United States Special Operations Command.

Mr. SMITH. You have a different mission, so that is understandable.

Admiral MAQUIRE. Yes, sir.

Mr. SMITH. General.

General HEJLIK. Sir, thank you very much for your question. It is a two-part question. The first one is on the training.

First of all, we recruit within the Marine Corps, so we don't have the real young marine, the 18, the 19-year-old for the most part. There are two mission sets in MARSOC. One is the indirect phase, which the foreign military training unit does, and the other one is the direct action, which the Marine Special Operations companies do.

If you are a four military training unit indirect recruit, you are a combat veteran and you have anywhere from four to six years in the Marine Corps. A little younger force.

Their requirement is for zero-plus, zero-plus for language capability. They go through a 25-week training package. We have patterned some of that from General Wagner's Special Warfare School, taking some of their program in destruction and adapted it to what we need in the indirect approach on the battlefield.

For the Marines Special Operations companies, we have gotten tremendous support from General Wooley down at Hulbert Field. We have had our people working down there with AC-130 gunships, with the CV-22 and with our own V-22 in the Marines, with Admiral Maquire's folks down at Norfolk and at Coronado—because I am split, my forces are at Camp Pendleton and at Camp Lejeune—and with General Wagner through the Schoolhouse. A great example of through the Schoolhouse, we have doubled the number of corpsmen or medics that we put through this Schoolhouse from 16 to 32. So the training coordination and interrogation is there throughout the components.

If you look at my biggest challenge, sir, when it comes to training, it is what we call our high-demand, low-density MOS's or skill sets, that is our Intel capability and that is some of our communicators. You have to be in the Marine Corps, for most of our Intel capability, you have to be a sergeant with anywhere from four to six years. Our school throughput is very small.

So that is our challenge. It will take us until about fiscal year 2010 to make sure we are up to that skill set. The interrogation is there, the cooperation is there, and we are using all of the facilities throughout the components.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

General WOOLEY. Mr. Chairman, I would like to kind of come at this from two different perspectives.

As you know, we have a ground force with similar recruiting needs and a pipeline to train them with. The Air Force has been very cognizant of the issue with finding those new recruits, and we have specialized recruiters that go out, for example, to extreme sporting events to use as a recruiting base for us. It is a known fact—

Mr. SMITH. You are watching the X games on television and go, that is the guy we want.

General WOOLEY. In a sense we are, because we need that physical ability, the stamina, the mental facilities, if will you, to do that. We, too, have reengineered our training pipeline. We have come down from about 2 years, down to just over 12 months to get them through our advanced skills training, which is a very concentrated course of events.

Our battlefield airmen, as we call them in our component, are very highly skilled air traffic controllers. They are parachutists, they are underwater divers. So they are multidisciplined, and it is hard to recruit folks that can do all of those things. We are on an up-tick right now. The pipeline is helping us out. The concentrated recruiting is helping us out.

On our air crews side, we are entering into a new phase where we are flying UAVs with a SOF operator. That is a magnificent thing for us to add to our capability. We are taking pilots and sensor operators from our gunships, for example. We are taking gunners from helicopters and training them to be sensor operators. But the SOF mind and the mind-set of those SOF operators operating those unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) is bringing a force multiplier to the battlefield. We are doing that mainly within our own crew force.

One place that we go outside of our own crew force when we field new weapons systems, like non-standard aviation that we are fielding as a result of the QDR, we are asking for help from the Air Force, as well as internal crew members as well.

So we have got to come at it from a couple of different perspectives in our ground force as well as our crew force.

Mr. SMITH. The specific question about who you allow to fly on the unmanned vehicles, if enlisted folks are allowed to do that? I heard in the Air Force there is a restriction.

General WOOLEY. Yes, sir. It is a two-person crew. The aviator is actually a pilot, and in some cases it can be a navigator, but they must be Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot qualified. And then the other position is that enlisted sensor operator. As I mentioned, the core that we drew from are the sensor operators that we already have on our gunships, gunners and intelligence specialists that we train to operate the sensors on the Predators.

So it is a two-person crew, an aviator that actually flies the machine, and the sensor operator that actually flies the sensor.

Mr. SMITH. Picks up the data. Thank you. I thank the panel for their patience. Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Chairman, I yield to our colleagues and will save my questions to the end.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentleman, thank you for coming today. I am a certified public accountant (CPA), and periodically the profession has to go through an analysis of what CPAs do, particularly entry-level CPAs, in order to set the bar for folks who can get in and not get in, not dissimilar to what your "hell week" and other things do. But one of the things you have to decide, and that—

Mr. SMITH. I'm sorry, could you pull the mike up closer? I can't pick you up there.

Mr. CONAWAY. Sure. That mission changes over time. It was a whole lot easier when I did it 40 years ago. As a part of that 10- or 12-year review, that then changes the tasks, changes the skill sets that young folks need.

Collectively across your systems, do you do a similar type of review to make sure that—particularly, Admiral, you mentioned hell week looks like it did following World War II, but yet we have a

different fight today—to make sure that wherever you set the bar, and I am not saying to lower the bar or raise the bar, but wherever you decide you set the bar, that that is in fact an appropriate current bar for whatever it is we are going to pass these wonderful young men, and perhaps some women, to do?

Can you speak to me about how you come to the conclusion you still have the right test as across the system?

General WAGNER. Would you like me to answer that first?

Mr. CONAWAY. All four of you, sir.

General WAGNER. I truly do appreciate your question, because a standard can both help you and hurt you. If you are not careful, you can eliminate somebody who had great talent but didn't quite look like the profile you thought was appropriate. So we do continuously review our criteria.

The good news, I think because we have been running our programs as long as we have, we have a good feel for what "average" looks like and a place to see how to go above or below that, where we need to make our changes. I think as I mentioned in the Special Forces qualifications course, that causes us to eliminate from the program emphasis on one area and place more of it on another area.

I will tell you that we place a lot of the emphasis too on psychological analysis, on people being interviewed to make sure we are bringing in people that have the characters, the values and the moral strength to be part of the team, because in essence we rely on mature people with good judgment, because we oftentimes put them into very undefined situations, which is the heart of how we use the Special Operations Force. As opposed to giving them details, do this, this, and do this, you give them intent and mission guidance. So the character of the person and their moral courage is a key part of that. Many of the other skills we can train them over time if they are a little weak in one area.

I think we can tell you that we feel very confident that we do continuously review them.

As we look to the number of people we need to bring in and the categories, every year we take a 2-year backward look to see what is happening and we review our analysis in terms of where we want to place our emphasis. We have a program where we would bring in a number of initial entry personnel. We start with 400. We went to 1,000. We went to 1,500. We are down to 900. We looked at where we think that balance will be, because we were new into the program so we had to establish a water level to see how those people will perform.

Then a key part of all of it for us is how will those people be retained, because we cannot invest in people who will stay with us two or three or four years. We need the people to advance through our senior ranks to run the organization.

So your point is very important to us and I do think we give it a tremendous amount of emphasis. We have trained professionals, civilians as well as military, who help us look at our standards and our criteria.

Thank you, sir.

Admiral MAQUIRE. Although we may conduct hell week pretty similar to the way we did it back in World War II, certainly the

quality of the standard of the individual is far greater than it was in the past. I feel quite confident, sitting here as the Commander of Naval Special Warfare, that had I applied today with my previous record, that I would not be accepted into Naval Special Warfare.

That said, our basic program is a course. It is a curriculum. It is Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL training, which is a "26 curriculum" under the Chief of Naval Education and Training.

Mr. CONAWAY. Twenty-six weeks?

Admiral MAQUIRE. It is what the basic course is. It is a 26-week curriculum, and each hour is just broken down into different blocks of instruction, different blocks of training, just like any other curriculum would be. So it is a schoolhouse. As such, any curriculum undergoes continuous review.

As the commander, I have had delegated from the Chief of Naval Education and Training the curriculum control authority for the basic course. So we are continuously improving it, and no matter what you put on paper, it is one thing.

I would think though, sir, it is the quality of the instructors that makes the program what it is today. I was most fortunate when I went through to have all Vietnam combat veterans. Today the young men who go through our basic program have the privilege of being put through training from some SEALs that have got three—and some actually have seven combat tours.

So as far as the academic environment and the curriculum, it is something we do take very seriously and we continuously review.

General HEJLIK. Sir, thank you. That is a great question for us, because one of the things we really wrestled with up front is what do we want the MARSOC Marine and sailor to look like? What attributes does he or she have to have?

One of the things we really tried to get away from, the core of the MARSOC, the Marine Special Operation Company, is the Force Reconnaissance Marine. He has about 11 to 15 years in the Marine Corps. He is an E-5, E-6, E-7. The standing joke in the Marine Corps had always been, to get into Force Reconnaissance you have to put an 80-pound rucksack on your back, swim the Mississippi twice, longways. That was a standing joke.

We did not want that in a MARSOC Marine, standing joke or not. So what we look for is a Marine who is mentally tough, physically tough and morally tough, because that Marine has to stand alone and he is a strategic asset when he is out there in Chad, Yemen or wherever he happens to be. So, again, does he have the attitude, does he have the aptitude, can we take him to a higher level?

If you are an Foreign Military Training Unit (FMTU) marine, it is a 25-week training package. If you are an MARSOC Marine, it is an 18-month training package. And it is tough. We haven't lowered our standards. But, again, we start with that basic mental, physical and moral toughness.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you. General.

General WOOLEY. Sir, we too have the same high standards as the other components. It had been a while when I arrived since we had gone through and reviewed those standards and our pipeline. We reengineered our training pipeline for our combat controller

battlefield airmen last year. We are currently going through our pararescuemen training pipeline as we speak. So we are doing just what you talked about. It had been a while. We needed to do it, and we are about halfway done.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mrs. Drake.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Well, first of all, welcome to all of you. Admiral Maquire, I think I met you probably close to two years ago. I remember at that time we talked about the time you spend in the air between the West Coast and the East Coast, and I certainly think that is difficult. I know a lot of my fellow Members of Congress do the same thing. But I wondered, since that time—

Mr. SMITH. For the record, I for one don't mind the plane trip. The West Coast is worth it. I just wanted to make that known.

Mrs. DRAKE. I won't talk about my drive. But, anyway, the Marines Special Operations Command has left Navy Special Warfare, so you are the only component command on the West Coast. You know I have been very supportive of your command moving to the East Coast, because I truly believe that would benefit the Special Operations Forces community.

Can you comment on the status of that project or where we are with that now, or is it still up in the air?

Admiral MAQUIRE. Well, Congresswoman Drake, I would be happy to him comment on that. There have been some other factors that have mitigated that as well that I would like to share, inasmuch as now they are charging for a bottle of water onboard planes, and I think it is just a matter of time until you have to start trading frequent flier miles to use the lavatory. I think that the move to the East Coast is looking like something that needs to be done.

I spend over half my time on travel, and most of it to the East Coast corridor. Obviously, the Navy Command is here, my boss, General Brown in Tampa, as well as the other component commanders. So programmatically, the United States Special Operations Command has placed about \$60 million into the 2008 program that is still working its way through the Department of Defense, and we are conducting site surveys in the Virginia Beach area for the possible headquarters location, if that is approved. I believe that we have also even started on the environmental impact on that.

So I think that it looks like it is probably very likely to take place, and I would envision that if it is approved in the 2008, we will start the money flowing there in fiscal year 2008 and probably a move to the East Coast in the 10/11 time frame, ma'am.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you for that. The question I have for all of you, because I know our troops that are serving overseas in Iraq or Afghanistan are typically four months to a year, based on the branch of service, how long they rotate in and out of there.

For Special Operation Forces, can you comment on what is the amount of time they typically are deployed into theater?

General WAGNER. Yes, Congresswoman. Good to see you again.

I think there is a couple of things that I would look at. Oftentimes you talk about tempo, which is how long people are gone. But I have come to believe that what is even more important than that is the pace and tempo of what they are doing while they are gone, because different forces are doing different things. So while I used to think there should be a standard, I think that was shortsighted, and the reality is we have to make sure we understand what we are asking the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to do so they can stay at the operational peak that is required.

For example, with our Rangers, who are hitting multiple targets at night, direct action missions, high intensity night operations, we are rotating them at a shorter duration than we are with the Special Forces, who we want to go in and build rapport and relationships and help create an environment.

So our rotations go between 90 days to 7 months, and we think that is fair. The reason I think it is fair is because we are training the soldiers. They go back again, again and again. And I will tell you, when they come back, what they are doing is preparing to go back again. For the most part, a lot of our forces are there 50/50 time, or one-third of the time. That is how the bulk of our forces are rotating.

Of course, in addition to that, they are doing the other deployments, the other Joint Security Assistant Training (JSATs), the 70 joint exercises for training that we do. So it is a very busy pace, but we do feel it is proper to balance it toward the intensity of their level of effort, don't burn them out in a short period of time, and let them do that. We are fighting a long war, so we each have a schedule that we think we can sustain for time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you. Admiral Maquire.

Admiral MAQUIRE. Echoing General Wagner's statement, though, it is really kind of diverse. I have SEALs and I have Special Warfare Combat-craft Crewman (SWCC) and then I have SEALs Special Mission Unit. But as far as the boat teams, the Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewmen, I have the river boats deployed in the Euphrates, so right now they are only a small unit under Mr. Taylor's district there in Stennis, Mississippi, that had been deployed there for about the last eight months on a rotational basis.

My other boat teams are rotating throughout the world, to Europe, down in the Philippines and into Central Command, on a one-in-four rotation. My SEAL, teams, right now I have them back into a one-in-four rotation, which means that they have six months forward deployed in the combat zone and 18 months out of the combat zone.

That does not necessarily mean that they are home every night. So when they return, the way we have the situation set up, is that the individual level training for the first six months back, that is when the young SEAL will go off and do their language training, their advanced medical training and the individual skills that advance them personally. Then we have six months' unit level training where they form up in a SEAL platoon and work together as a group. And then the final six months prior to deployment is squadron integration training, where the SEAL team commanding officer steps up and becomes a squadron commander, brings in the SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) teams, the boats, the cryptologic

technicians and all of the enablers and work within the next six months as a team prior to deploying.

So roughly in the 18 months back, or 18 months out of combat zone, they are roughly away from home I would say probably about 11 to 12 months of that time.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you. General.

General HEJLIK. Thank you, ma'am, very much. I may have misunderstood in the last question you had with Special Forces on the West Coast, we have a battalion at Camp Pendleton that is neighbors down with Maquire's folks. So there is a Marine Special Operations battalion at Camp Pendleton.

Mrs. DRAKE. Right, but your command is at Camp Lejeune.

General HEJLIK. My headquarters is at Camp Lejeune, that is correct. So I fly back and forth all the time. And I don't enjoy it.

For our dwell time, ma'am, a great question for us, we do one-to-one dwell time. We are trying to do one-to-one. If you are a Marine Special Operations company, you will be deployed for 7 months. When you return, you will have basically 18 months back at the home station.

Like Admiral Maquire and the rest of the components, that is not time necessarily at home. Bring them back up to standards and make sure they get their proper professional military education, that they are still qualified in their military free-fall, their dive, all those other functions.

With the foreign military training teams, the dwell time again is one-to-one. They will be deployed anywhere from 60 to 120 days. After that 120 days, they are eligible to deploy again. The team that we have right now in Yemen was in Chad in November, and they just redeployed into Yemen. The team that we had in Colombia back in October is back in Colombia. But, again, we are trying very hard to stay to that one-to-one dwell time. For every day you are deployed, that equal amount of time back in CONUS. Not necessarily at home. Thank you.

Mrs. DRAKE. General.

General WOOLEY. Yes, ma'am. Again, two parts to my answer. Our ground force mirrors the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) that General Wagner talked about, because we attach our combat controllers and pararescuemen to those teams out in the field to integrate the air and the ground piece.

Let me say that any airplane flying with weapons is able to support a ground team in a troops-in-contact or particular mission because of their air traffic control skills and their air attack skills, if you will. They can call in F-16s, they can call in B-52, they can call in our own AC-130 airplanes for air support. So our attachment to those teams out in the field, our battlefield airmen, mirror what General Wagner just explained to you.

On the air crew side, it is different for each airplane. What we don't want to get ourselves into a situation of doing is concentrating in just one particular area of our warfighting skills on the aviation side. Iraq and Afghanistan bring a different set of requirements than you would find, say, out in the Pacific.

What I don't want to do is atrophy, so I rotate my crews through the airplanes that are stationed there. And depending on the type of airplane it is, whether it is an MC-130, MH-53 helicopter or the

AC-130, between 90 days and 120 days are the typical deployments for our air crews. Then we bring them back for their leave, their retraining, getting specialized training in those skills that they haven't been able to practice in Iraq and Afghanistan, so that they remain worldwide deployable.

So our problem is just a little bit different, but the OPTEMPO is about the same. We don't have anybody that is exceeding the one-to-one dwell time. So we are doing okay.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentleman. This is a little challenging. I would like to thank you all for coming. As I told you in the lobby, the reason I asked to be on this committee was because I want to help you complete your missions and keep Americans safe. This may be to the Rear Admiral, all you have to do is watch one episode on Discovery of the BUD/S training and you realize how bad of shape guys my age are in.

This may be the quickest question, and you may not be able to answer this, but I was intrigued. We talked a lot about training. General Hejlik, a comment you made in there, does it fall under any of your bailiwicks, on the training we are doing, and I am referring to page four, the Foreign Military Training Unit, where you are responsible and/or oversee the training of the trainers in theater, especially the Iraqi military. And, if so, then I guess I would like some kind of response on what you are getting back and how tough that is on our trainers, to train them in theater when things are going. It is one thing when you are over here and things are safe on our ground, and when bombs are exploding and bullets are flying by.

Then I think it was General Wagner that said the will to help those who have the will to help themselves. I guess that is my question, is what are we hearing back on that training, the Iraqis' will, their fortitude, their aptitude to pick up. I have 100 percent confidence in our troops and what you are doing with our troops. I would like to get a feel for how they are adapting to our training methods.

I know I have kind of covered a gambit there, but if anybody or one or all can comment on that, what kind of vibes you are getting back?

General WAGNER. I will give you some comments first, sir. To me, that is an ideal Special Forces SOF mission, and all of our forces in the different capacities can do it and with different elements. For example, we have an aviation outfit, who would do that with aviation. And General Hejlik's forces and my forces could do it in a similar area with the ground force, and Admiral Maquire's could do it in a different environment.

So the real question gets down to when you are teaching the forces of another nation, where do you apply what force?

In my case, with the Special Operations Forces, they started training the Iraqi Special Forces. So you start with a unit that doesn't exist. You recognize the need and you go through a recruiting effort to find people. You then vet those people and then you

put them through a training program. In some cases we did that in Iraq, and others we took out of country to train them.

Then you build the unit. Then you start to take them through. After you do the individual training, you do small unit training. Then you let them go with you on a mission. Then they participate in a mission. Then you step back and let them do the mission. And, before long, they are doing the mission and you are watching them from a distance.

That is what is happening. I think General Brown made a comment to you about the effectiveness of how that is happening. In fact, we have the most effective units in the theater that have been trained under that program and are doing an absolutely wonderful job.

So that is kind of the ideal, and that is the goal of a SOF operator, is to have that opportunity to create that, because what we are trying to do is build capacity, build the capacity of the Nation to do the job themselves.

Now, while we can do that with Special Operations Forces and it becomes a priority—you should prioritize our forces against special mission units in the country—conventional forces have to do the same thing. They are training infantry battalions and the infantry brigades, because it is more of a capacity than we can do ourselves. So it becomes a priority, where you prioritize your Special Mission Units against that special capability you are trying to develop in the nation.

So I can tell you that it is happening. It is happening around the world. It is happening in the Philippines. It is happening all around the world. It is a little bit more visible perhaps right now in Iraq.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. And the will, the fortitude and the will is there?

General WAGNER. Absolutely. We are very proud of the people. Then you see the missions they are conducting. What you do when you build a special unit like that, it brings the local leadership, the civilian leadership to the field to see these people, and then they start to get resources because they realize how capable a unit like that can be.

So it goes far beyond just you trained a unit. It makes a mark on how they try to bring that professionalism to the rest of their force. It is a nation-builder,

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you.

General WOOLEY. Sir, if I could jump in there and add the aviation piece. One of the things we got in the QDR was capacity doubling, if you will, in our aviation, foreign internal defense capability, which we are very excited about.

We are training those folks right now. We have got a pipeline set up. As we drawdown our Image 53 Fleet, we are taking those already trained SOF aviators and maintainers and bringing them into this new unit that we are building to go out and work with other countries' aviation assets. Not teaching them how to fly the basic airplane, because they already know that, but taking them to the next level, if you will, giving them the skills that we want them to excel in, night vision goggle flying, for example.

So we are pretty excited about that capability, and one that you all have been very supportive of and the Department at large has been very supportive of. So we thank you for that.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you. I yield back.

General HEJLIK. Sir, I don't have teams in Iraq. I have teams in Chad, basically Africa. And your question is, what do we get out of it? That is a great question.

First of all, the teams that we trained in Chad were the same two battalions that pushed the forces back in East Chad on the border. That in itself, to bring that force up to that level, was absolutely amazing.

What we get out of it is language skills. You watch those young marines go in there with basic French, basic Arabic. They come out of there at 1-1 out of a 2-2. So we get that out of it. We get retention out of it, because those young marines go in there and they go, wow, this is exactly what I signed up to do.

So it is tough to deploy a lot, but that country, we build the capacity in that country so they don't have to go back when we are in phase four or active combat operations, and we get retention out of it and get language skill sets out of it.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. I didn't want you to misunderstand. It is just what feelings you are getting about those people we are going over and training. Are you getting feelings they are receptive and/or have the same—or at least a percentage of the will—that our troops do, because I know that is a high level.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentleman, good to see you all again.

General Wagner, a trip or two ago when I was in Iraq, I was looking at the training of the Iraqi counterterrorism forces. I know we have changed the names and the organization a little bit. But fundamentally, your forces, in particular the Green Berets, were doing the training of those Iraqi forces. I understand from our subsequent conversations that the Iraqis are now doing most of their own training, or a significant part of it. Is that correct?

General WAGNER. Yes. That is, of course, again one of the objectives, is to train them to that level where they can do it; yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. But we still have some Green Berets involved in supervising and so forth?

General WAGNER. Participating with them, yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. Great. Thank you. I just was very, very impressed with their capabilities when I was over there, and I gather again from subsequent discussions that you are pretty pleased with their progress as well and their ability to do the job and to do most of their own training.

General WAGNER. Yes, sir.

Mr. KLINE. General Hejlik, I got to talk to the Marines. Just a couple of quick things. When MARSOC was stood up, there was no end strength/force structure to accommodate that. It was taken out of hide. With the new addition of new Marines and the end strength of the Marines Corps, is MARSOC now whole in that regard? Or perhaps looking at it another way, is the Marine Corps now whole? Are the Marines part of MARSOC now accommodated?

General HEJLIK. They are, sir. As you well know, 2,600 came right out of the end strength of the Marine Corps. There is also 191 sailors in there, which are basically corpsmen and doctors, and there are two Army veterinarians in there, because we have dogs or will have dogs for that capability. But with the plus-up of the Marine Corps for that 20,000, 22,000, it will take about 5 years to recruit that.

But, Representative Kline, I think the important thing to understand is when we took those 2,600 marines, 1,300 of which we have on deck right now, we took basically all of the Marine Corps' force reconnaissance capability.

Mr. KLINE. That was my next question. Do we still have a force reconnaissance capability in the regular Marine Corps, or are they now your Marine Special Operations companies?

General HEJLIK. What we did, sir, each force reconnaissance company had seven platoons. Two platoons stayed with the Marine Expeditionary Force, one east and one west. So they still have that capability.

The other thing that the war has done for both force reconnaissance battalion that belongs to the division and force reconnaissance that belongs to the Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF), their capabilities gap has really shrunk. So they still have that capability in the Marines. What we took from the Marine Corps is really that more experienced Marine.

Mr. KLINE. I assumed that is what happened when we set up MARSOC, is that Force Recon would take the hit. I would hope that with the plus-up in end strength of the Marine Corps, that the Marine Corps, not MARSOC, but the Marine Corps can go back and do some of that repair work, or, as you are suggesting or perhaps I am hearing, that the recon Marines who are not Force Recon but in the regiments will improve.

Let me ask that question then. How would you compare the Marines in your Marines Special Operations Company to the Force Recon Marines of three years ago before there was a MARSOC? Are they the same, a little below, twice as good? Just ballpark for me. Come on, you can do it.

General HEJLIK. The Marines in the Marine Special Operations Company get in the Corps as the Force Reconnaissance Marine. So if you look at the capability of the MARSOC today and looked at the capability of the Force Reconnaissance platoon three years ago, the standard is quite a bit higher. The difference is this: They shoot probably five times as much. But the other part is, you can teach any Marine to shoot, any good soldier, any good sailor, any good airman. Give them enough ammunition and give them enough time, they can shoot.

Mr. KLINE. Apparently even you and I.

General HEJLIK. Well, at least you can, sir. I don't know about myself. But the other side of that is where we really get to that SOF standard is working with General Wagner's folks at Fort Bragg and at Fort Campbell and Fort Lewis, Washington, working with Admiral Maquire's folks at Coronado and down at Norfolk, and working with General Wooley's folks at Holbrook Field.

That is the difference, because they are very well qualified in the AC-130, working with the different type aircraft. All our air con-

trollers are JTAC, Joint Tactical Air Controls, they are all qualified that way. And they have the enabler, that high demand, low density. That is also a bit different. They carry their own Intel assets with them. That is about 14 Marines.

Mr. KLINE. Okay. I am looking forward to the opportunity to come down and visit.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Wagner, you mentioned a couple of phrases which I wrote down a while ago. When talking about people you talked about the unique blend of skills that was required and mature people with good judgment, particularly in thinking about those Special Forces involved in indirect action. I guess I want to ask how do we keep such people. We talked a lot today about how we get them and how we train them, but if you could do one thing that you can't do currently to retain folks who have worked their way through and have developed these skills and this judgment, what would that be?

I will just throw out one example. This committee last year heard testimony that we need to expand the number of E-8 or E-9 slots to make it easier to keep people who have worked their way through the ranks. But without limiting to that, what one thing that we are not doing now could we, should we do or look at in order to retain the folks that develop that judgment and skills that you talked about?

General WAGNER. Congressman, I say we can't afford to break our system because I can't fix it. Because I have senior people, you have to build them over time, and if I lose them, I can't replace them. I can only bring in junior people and wait over time to grow them. So I cannot afford to break the senior structure that I have because I can't fix it on my watch. So we watch that very carefully and ask why do these people stay. It is a very good question because most of them could easily earn more money somewhere else. They are highly motivated, they have got great initiative, and they are problem solvers. So they are people that could be easily attracted for employment somewhere else.

The heart of it is they have to believe in what they are doing, they have to believe the team they are part of, and they have to think that we care about what they are doing and it has to be an honest caring. I think some of the initiatives, incentives and bonus payments that we give them, it is not the money that keeps them there, it is believing that we care and knowing that we are going a little bit of an extra step to thank them because we know that nobody else in the world can do what they are doing and that their job is absolutely critical.

So I think how we take care of our soldiers and their families. When we say we recruit the soldier but we retain a family, we must continue to care for these people as we would want to be cared for while they are doing this serious work for us.

So we continue to look at our incentive programs, we look at the amount of time we have them deployed. They see that we are trying to grow the force. They realize if we grow the force it will help

them with the tempo. I think they stay with us because they trust in what we are doing and believe in what they are doing. If we break faith with them we will have made a serious mistake. For example, if we are giving an incentive, a bonus, and we take the money away and ask them to do the same work, than what have we told them? We have now told them, hey, it's not that important anymore. And that would be unfair.

And so the sergeant majors do a wonderful job of looking at the rank structure and been giving a fair amount of latitude with the Army to increase range structure where we need to do it, but personnel system is a total throughput and the retention part is absolutely the most key to us because if we can't retain those people we are in trouble.

So I do think honestly it is about truly caring about the people and recognizing how important they are to us, the soldiers and their families. And I think that is true for the other services, but that is my view. Thank you.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Anybody else have a suggestion on something we could do that is currently not being done to help retain these people?

General HEJLIK. I think, sir, it is being done but it is something we are going have to pay attention to as we continue to go through this, and that is the care of our wounded because as those young Marines, sailors, soldiers, airmen come back, some with traumatic brain injury, TBI, that is a long-term effort, and if the service member knows he is going to be taken care of and his family is taken care of, no matter how seriously wounded, then they will do anything we ask them to do regardless of the money because they are just that patriotic.

Taking care of our wounded I think is going to be a long-term effort.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. I do want to ask General Wooley about one other matter. The chairman referred earlier to the fact that if special operations were designing the CV-22 it would be designed with probably greater carrying capacity in some way. I would like to get your view on the program, where it stands now. Do you think it is on track, moving ahead and so forth.

General WOOLEY. Yes, sir. Thank you for that question. The CV-22 is a wonderful airplane. I have had the opportunity to deliver two of the CVs, one out to Kirtland, our training unit, and the first operational one to Hurlburt on the 16th of November. The airplane, as you know since it is put together in your district, flies at turbo prop speed, so it is comparable to our C-130 fleet that we have, and then it can pull into a hover and land exactly where it needs to land to drop off those troops.

The aircraft, as you know, was filling a niche that we found that we had a shortfall in after the failed Iranian hostage attempt at Desert 1 during Operation Eagle Claw. The airplane was specifically designed to do combat radius of 500 nautical miles unrefueled and in one period of darkness, so that is why the speed is such an important factor.

The airplane is performing very, very well. I often get questions well, what about the bad rap? There has been several deaths. When you take a transformational leap, particularly in the aviation

field, I think this airplane has performed and is continuing to perform at or above standards.

We don't anticipate any real difficulties bringing this airplane on board. We are still in the testing phase, so there are some things that we will continue to find out about the airplane. But I would invite any of the members of this subcommittee to come down and fly on the airplane because it will answer a lot of questions in your mind, and it is a magnificent piece of equipment, one that is truly transformational for us.

If there is one thing that I could make a pitch for to this subcommittee and other committees is the time frame that it is scheduled to be delivered is almost unacceptable for us. Acceleration of the delivery would be most helpful to get it out on the battlefield in useful numbers because the first time we will have enough airplanes that we will be able to deploy is in fiscal year 2009. So anything we could do to speed up that initial capability for the airplane and then get all 50 of them sooner rather than later would be very helpful.

But I would invite any of the members to come out and visit with us and explore the airplane for yourself. It is magnificent. One of the things that I think we did exactly right in building and designing this airplane, we designed it as a system. One of the strengths of the airplane is not the airplane itself, but it is in the training system that we bought to go with it. The FAA level D simulator capability we benchmarked from the airlines, and most of you may know that when an airline captain changes from one airplane to another, most often the first time he lands with people in the back of the airplane is on his first mission, it is not on a training mission in the airplane. He or she learns that in the simulator.

So we have benchmarked off of them and bought the training systems with the fidelity and the other things that will allow most of the training and currency and some of the proficiency flying to be done in the simulators so we don't waste that precious airframe time. So that is one of the things that we did do right when we designed that airplane.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. Let me say, Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, that I appreciate each of the witnesses being here and each of your service to the country and through you the people you lead.

General Wagner, I hope each of them knows how much this committee appreciates them and their families and the sacrifice they make because it is certainly inspirational for us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. McIntyre.

Mr. Conaway, something quickly on that subject?

Mr. CONAWAY. You mentioned care of our wounded. Are there gaps there, do you have concerns there, or are you just making that as a statement that that is something we need to do? Are we not doing that?

General HEJLIK. It is a concern because I think it is a long term.

Mr. CONAWAY. But you will keep us apprised—this committee, among all of them, including Veterans' Affairs, would come unwrapped if we—let me tell you a quick story. John Kelly tells a great story about a young Marine he was visiting at Bethesda, and the family was there from Montana, and the dad pulled Kelly

aside, said I need to visit with you about something. So John walked out with him and said my son is really hurt pretty bad but he's getting great care. He said but I'm just a working man from Montana, I don't know how I'm going to pay for that care.

Of course Kelly looked at him and said what do you mean, he said well, we don't have health insurance. Kelly was just stunned that this father thought he needed to take care of that son.

So if any of you see something that Armed Services Or Veterans' Affairs or something is not doing in regards to making sure that there is a 50-year commitment to that young soldier who is unable to do for himself what he ought to be able to do, you will bring that to our attention, I hope.

General WOOLEY. Yes, sir, thank you.

Mr. SMITH. To follow up, I think there are some gaps. One of the biggest gaps right now is in mental health. And I know there are different pieces that are working to change that. Out at Ft. Lewis and Madigan they have got a program to make it mandatory and a whole bunch of different pieces to deal with. There are things beyond the basic health care. Actually, when we were down with General Brown in Tampa he mentioned SOF has a special charity that is set up, and a variety of different examples. One soldier was going home in a wheelchair and the house where he was at wasn't outfitted for that so they had some money set up to build what was necessary. There are some pieces and my initial look at it is there are things that we can be doing better to make sure that the wounded are taken care of. I think when you are talking about when they are in the hospital when they are getting that direct care, it is pretty good, but there is so many complications to the life of an injured soldier and his or her family that looking at that total piece is something we can do and it is great that these charities are set up. They shouldn't have to rely on that. It might be a good thing to look at.

Mr. McIntyre.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thanks to each of you for the magnificent mission that each of you do in leading our forces who are at the tip of the sphere. As you know, I share Ft. Bragg with a couple of my colleagues here and go up near the edge of Camp Lejeune, so I want to ask you, General Wooley, the airlift capacity, do you feel like you have the necessary airlift capacity to help with the projected increase in the Army, in the Marines Special Operations Forces particularly?

General WOOLEY. Sir, we are looking very closely at that. One of the things that is going on right now is we are looking at recapitalizing our mobility fixed wing fleet, the MC-130's, and I believe General Brown talked a little bit about that during his testimony. But that is something that we have to keep our eye on, we need that recapitalization effort to move out very quickly the decision to be made and then purchase those aircraft, get them on the ramps where we can use them.

There has been a lot of growth in Special Operations Forces across the board. This will not be a one-for-one replacement of the airplanes but an increase in the number of the airplanes that we will buy. So it will be very, very important for us to get through this source selection process.

Mr. SMITH. General, do you have a time frame on that? Because I know that is already running months behind schedule and I know that is the Air Force that needs to make that decision. But as the Air Force guy here, I know that is not your decision. But do you know the time frame?

General WOOLEY. Yes, sir. Source selection is scheduled for the springtime. I would tell you that I don't think it is running behind. We ran very fast to catch up with an existing program. We linked up with Air Combat Command (ACC) on the rescue side. They are recapitalizing their eight C-130 fleet. Our airplane is almost a mirror image of that one.

So we got our documentation very quickly after the increases in the QDR manpower, the growth of the SOF forces was made known to us, and then we joined up on ACC's wing.

Mr. SMITH. If I may, I wasn't talking about the SOF forces piece. The Air Force overall was supposed to come up with a new airframe decision for the 130 for their needs as well as yours. Maybe I got the information wrong but actually General Brown was the one that told me eight, nine months ago that was supposed to have been done.

General WOOLEY. We don't know what the airplane will be. We have written the requirement document. It is going to be a C-130 size airplane. There are two or three airplanes out there that would fill that bill, ranging from a new airplane; the A-400 comes to mind, the C-130J comes to mind. There are attributes of all of them. And we are urging moving quickly through that process that is very rigid, as you know, and, as I said, that decision should be made in the springtime on which airplane that will be.

And one of the things that we have pushed very hard for is that we don't want just the basic airplane when we get it. We have written the requirements such that we will get the SOF modifications done as the airplane is being built because we can ill afford to stagger step, if you will, get an airplane and then have to turn a brand new airplane right around and go through the modification process.

So we have very meticulously and specifically written into our requirement that those—the airplane be delivered full up as a SOF airplane, which is a different approach. And that may be what you may have been thinking that has slowed down the process. But I would tell you that from where we were when we were notified that the plus-ups were coming to where we are today, the Air Force has done very well by us and we are working very closely with them to—and anxiously awaiting these new airplanes to get to us. It is a wonderful question and one that we have to keep our eye on to keep it moving.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Very quickly in my remaining time, what additional capacity would you require? Do you have an idea about how many additional planes for Special Operations Forces?

General WOOLEY. Two numbers are coming to mind. The initial 37, which will recapitalize the fleet that we have, and then the growth of the forces takes that number up to 61.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you. If I may ask you about one other plane, the AC-130 gunship. How many gunships now are operational? How many do you have in the fleet and how many are actually operational?

General WOOLEY. We have 25 today. There are eight H models, which are the oldest Vietnam-era airplanes, and 17 U models, which are the newest ones. In that 17 are four brand new ones that was just recently completed and are going through the testing phase. We are putting some new weapons on the airplane, we are getting rid of the 25-millimeter up front on the U models and the old 40-millimeter cannon in the back of the airplane.

So the new four that are coming off the line will have 30-millimeter, an area suppression weapon, if you will, with common ammunition with the other services, and of course the Stalwart 105 cannon in the back as well. We had to replace the 40. It is getting very expensive. Each round fired is about \$200 and the cannon is literally an old naval anti-aircraft gun that has been in use ever since we designed the C-130 model of the gunship.

The thing that I would tell, though, even though the U models are the newest airplanes they are the ones that I am concerned the most about. We are flying, literally flying the wings off of those airplanes. The center wing box where the attachment point of the wing to the fuselage joins together, we are putting so much stress on that airplane because it is flying three times the amount that we had programmed for it to fly.

So the equivalent hours that we are eating up on that airplane, we have got about four airplanes that are entering into a caution zone. So we are having to meticulously monitor the flying time on those airplanes, use them for trainers at Hurlburt, keep the ones that have airframe hours left on that center wing box because we can ill afford to sit those airplanes down waiting for the center wing box to be replaced.

We have a similar problem with our Talon II fleet, and I know that wasn't part of your question but I will take this opportunity to say we have the same issue with our Talon IIs. We have a plan that we have worked on, the money is there, the wings boxes are being built. We have got our first one in modification now.

But the rate at which we are flying the U model gunships has brought that as a new issue and one that I am very, very concerned about.

Mr. MCINTYRE. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I have a couple more questions. The hour is late here so I will probably just ask you them and then you can just get back to us on the piece. One is going back to something that Mrs. Drake was talking about on the time away from families, on the dwell time and how even within that they are away, soldiers are away training a great deal.

If there was any way to consolidate that training someplace closer to home, we would be very interested in ideas. I know that costs money undoubtedly, but we would be happy to provide that to try to help with some of that retention of the family piece.

I am also interested in, within each of your forces, the difference between direct and indirect action and the emphasis. One of the concerns is that direct action gets more emphasis in terms of promotions, in terms of how it is used. If you would just let me know sort of what the practice is in your field because I think it is the opinion of this committee on both sides that the indirect piece is

enormously important and more long term. So the emphasis that is placed on that.

I guess the only thing that I would like to get an answer from before we go is if Admiral Maguire could tell us a little bit about the experience in the Philippines and what your teams did down there. Obviously you can answer that question in an hour length version, so I am looking for a little more condensed. If you could give us a little bit of an idea of what you did, why it was successful, and how it worked down there.

Admiral MAGUIRE. Mr. Chairman, we are just part of the team down there. I don't mean to minimize and give an "aw, shucks" on that, but we are down there in the Philippines working through the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) down there, the Special Operations Task Force led by a Special Operations colonel. I provide SEALs and special boats to that effort.

Mr. SMITH. That is my ignorance. I apologize. It wasn't just Navy, it was other?

Admiral MAGUIRE. We have got Green Berets, also Air Commandos. So it is a team effort. But what the Pacific Commander is doing and what we are supporting is a long-term foreign internal defense down in the southern Philippines. We are working in Mindanao, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan Island and Jolo Island in order to work with the Filipino military to help them raise their standard of professionalism in order for them to be able to conduct military operations to a certain level down there in the southern Philippines.

We as a group have been supporting the Pacific Command in those operations now for about over two years, and I think that you can see from some of the stories in the press that the Filipinos that we are working with and the Filipino military is actually having some success with their combating terrorism operations down there, with the recent stories that have been in the press as far as those that have been killed.

Our forces were not directly involved in those military operations, but we have been advising and training those Filipinos that have conducted those military operations. In addition to that, it is a maritime environment. So I do have my Mark Vs that have been there, as well as my rigid hull inflatable boats that have been significantly working not only to transport folks back and forth, but we are putting ISR equipment on board that and working around there in order to, just like overhead with ISR in order to be able to increase the intelligence picture there as well and then with Pacific Command we share what intelligence we can with the Filipinos in order to enable them to be successful in the battlefield.

Mr. SMITH. And the final question, actually, your comment made me think of it, that I did want you to get back to us on, is the ISR piece and what acquisition you might need in order to get that up to a higher level. I know it is at a very high level right now. I appreciate your honesty there, Admiral. And what other equipment you need. Just in the brief period I have been looking at this I know that is enormously important to have that complete situational awareness real time, and we have the technology these days, a lot of great stuff out there, we just want to make sure we get

it to you. So let us know what your wish list top priorities are on that.

I will also say for the record that if any members want to submit questions for the record, they can do that as well. And with that, if there are no objections, nothing further, we are adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 5:52 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JANUARY 31, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 31, 2007

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL BRYAN D. BROWN, U.S. ARMY
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,
UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
ON THE CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING, AND READINESS
CHALLENGES FACING SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
31 JANUARY 2007

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL BRYAN D. BROWN
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Mr. Chairman, Representative Thornberry, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor and privilege to report to you on the manning and readiness of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Our Special Operations Forces (SOF) are better trained and more capable than ever before. Since 9/11, USSOCOM has grown faster and in greater proportion than at any other time in history, maintaining the high standards for selection, assessment and training that are the foundation of SOF. We have done this while maintaining our readiness and manning in virtually all areas, while responding to many unique challenges presented by operations on a global battlefield.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) directed SOF growth in both the capacity and capabilities. This allows USSOCOM to accomplish its increased missions and responsibilities of synchronizing the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as both a supported and supporting command. This growth will occur over a span of five years and encompasses every aspect of SOF. Growth areas include increasing the number of U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Special Forces (Green Berets), Rangers, and Special Operations aviation; growing the number of active duty U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) forces; increasing Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM) SEAL Team force levels; establishing the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) as a Marine Corps component of USSOCOM; and increasing U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command

(AFSOC) aircraft inventory and Special Tactics capacity, as well as establishing new specialized aviation capabilities. This growth, while large by SOF standards, is occurring over enough time to recruit, select, train, and equip the right people to maintain the high quality of SOF.

End Strength and Personnel Growth

With few exceptions, the personnel readiness of SOF is excellent. By the end of FY 2007, USSOCOM will achieve its authorized personnel end strength of 47,911. With current manning at 46,223, overall USSOCOM manning today sits at 96 percent of authorized growth for FY 2007. The programmed enhancements to USSOCOM's capability focus on our most valuable resource - the SOF Warrior. Our future end strength will be 58,801 (military and civilian) in FY 2012, incorporating the total QDR manpower growth of 13,119 personnel. Our growth plan involves each of the Services contributing personnel to build Special Operations capability and capacity, as described below.

USASOC accounts for 57 percent of Special Operations growth, including five new Special Forces Battalions, one per year starting in FY 2008, increasing our Special Forces capacity by one third. In addition, we will grow three new Ranger companies and add reconnaissance capacity and other support functions to our existing Ranger units. The Special Operations Aviation Regiment will increase its capacity in airframes and aircrews, while USASOC's Civil Affairs personnel will double and PSYOP forces will grow by five companies.

The MARSOC will contribute to 19 percent of SOF growth and are well ahead of schedule. Our newest component has already contributed significant Foreign Internal

Defense (FID) capability to the SOF family, with eight FID capable Foreign Military Training Teams. These units have already deployed to Africa and South America and are making significant contributions to theater engagement plans. Two Marine Special Operations Battalions have been activated, one on each coast. In keeping with our plans, we deployed the first Marine Special Operations Company under command of a Theater Special Operations Command in January 2007, and we will deploy the second in April 2007.

AFSOC provides 9 percent of our growth, doubling our Aviation FID capacity, increasing AC-130 Gunship and specialized fixed-wing aircraft, as well as adding a critical Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability with a dedicated Special Operations Predator Squadron.

NAVSPECWARCOM will account for 8 percent of the overall growth by adding capacity to our SEALs and Surface Warfare Combatant Crewman (SWCC). The manpower equivalent of two SEAL Teams will increase the total SEAL end strength by approximately 20 percent. Additionally, the SWCC are programmed to grow by approximately 13 percent.

Government civilian positions round out the remaining 7 percent of QDR growth, providing tremendous added capability and continuity to headquarters units and supporting commands that might otherwise require active duty SOF personnel.

USSOCOM's growth is proceeding well: With the close-out of FY 2006 we experienced significant growth in SOF manning levels with Army Special Forces manning at 98 percent, Navy SEALs at 88 percent (SEAL operators and Corpsmen combined), and AFSOC's overall manning improving to 89 percent. Despite these

improvements, these are still areas USSOCOM is closely watching. Continued recruiting and retention success is key to the long term support of these warriors.

MARSOC has now reached Initial Operational Capability (IOC), adding more capacity to USSOCOM. We are working very closely with the Marine Corps and anticipate full integration of this component into our personnel management monitoring and reporting structure in the very near future.

A significant realignment in FY 2006 was the transfer of all Reserve Civil Affairs and PSYOP organizations to the U.S. Army. This realignment will increase the effective use of these units and better prepare them to work in conjunction with conventional units, which are their traditional partners. USASOC maintains control of active duty Civil Affairs and PSYOP units, and will remain the proponent for Civil Affairs and PSYOP capabilities and training.

USSOCOM's growth is not without obstacles. SEAL officer manning and SEAL training throughput continue to be major challenges. During our most recent staff talks with the U.S. Navy, the shortage of SEAL mid-grade officers was highlighted. Some of the officer shortage is a result of increased authorizations due to force structure increases, requiring time to grow and fill those billets. In an effort to alleviate this problem, the Navy has implemented a spot promotion program for select mid-grade officers. In addition, a thorough review of the current SOF Officer Continuation Pay Initiative is being conducted. To address SEAL training throughput, the demanding Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training regimen is under constant review to increase graduates without compromising standards.

The inventory for critical AFSOC Special Tactics specialties remains too low for current requirements. Significant changes to the training pipeline are resulting in steady annual increases in the number of these Air Force SOF battlefield airmen. Based on the AFSOC projected increases through FY 2009, its current manning shortfalls should be eliminated. USSOCOM is reviewing the skill sets required in the Special Tactics field to ensure the pipeline is only as long as necessary to accomplish required training levels.

As we create and grow MARSOC as a component command, support from the Marine Corps and Navy is paramount to fill critical billets needed to reach full operational capability (FOC). The growth of Marine Corps SOF is affected by the availability of support personnel for both USSOCOM headquarters and MARSOC. We are working with the Navy and the Marine Corps to meet the challenges of available personnel to fill required MARSOC billets.

Finally, we must ensure sufficient infrastructure such as Military Construction is available for QDR growth. Such growth is currently programmed, but delayed FY 2007 MILCON appropriations may present subsequent challenges in projected milestones.

Recruiting, Assessment, Selection and Retention

The SOF Warrior is at the core of SOCOM's unique capabilities. Success in recruiting these warriors is the cornerstone of our ability to maintain a quality force, turning bright, capable young individuals into trained SOF warriors. USSOCOM monitors this recruiting very closely. With the support of the Services, we continue to excel in this area.

Obtaining sufficient SEAL candidates is our main recruiting challenge. To meet this, the Chief of Naval Operations has made SEAL recruitment a top Navy priority. The Navy's FY 2007 goal for qualified recruits arriving at BUD/S is 1,400 personnel. In the first quarter of FY 2007, the Navy recruited 77 percent of that goal, providing 1075 recruits as SEAL candidates – an 18 percent increase to the total goal reached in FY 2006. USSOCOM is partnered with the Navy to focus on this area, and we are confident that progress will continue in the future.

Recruiting challenges are not unique to the Navy. Recruiting Combat Controllers and Pararescue Operators have historically been a challenge, but the U.S. Air Force recruiting for these very talented individuals has improved dramatically. Although still short of operators in the field, AFSOC's redesigned training curriculum and improved recruiting are closing the gap, facilitating the projected elimination of the shortfall by FY 2009.

Assessment and selection is the critical initial process by which candidates with the necessary aptitude and attitude are identified for entry into the Special Operations community and is a common starting point for SOF warriors. A relative few possess the essential combination of maturity, unfailing character, mental agility, physical strength, and endless internal drive necessary for selection and future success.

USASOC is a shining example of effecting change after increasing instructors and totally redesigning its accession schools. In the case of the Special Forces Qualification Course, planning began in 2002 with the foresight to reach the commands goals. A phased plan was implemented to grow from a 10 year average of 350 active duty enlisted graduates per year to 750 for FY 2006. I am pleased to report that 947

Special Forces soldiers graduated SFQC in FY 2006, proudly serving in the ranks of USSOCOM today.

SOF are generally a more mature and experienced force, requiring tailored methods to maintain readiness. The Department of Defense continues to work with USSOCOM to develop creative ways to use the force management tools available to maintain current personnel readiness levels. USSOCOM Component training pipelines have been maximized to the greatest extent possible while maintaining quality in the process. The Services have been briefed on the increase in requirements and they have pledged their fullest support. However, we cannot simply overpopulate the force with junior personnel to meet aggregate numbers and simultaneously strive to maintain required personnel readiness. To meet this challenge, USSOCOM identified the need for retention incentive bonuses. In FY 2005, the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness approved the SOF Retention Initiative enabling us to provide focused incentives to SOF throughout their careers. In the first year, we guaranteed an inventory of 671 senior SOF with 19+ years of experience. By the end of FY 2006, we added another 440 experienced operators to that cadre. Most will stay with SOF through 24 years of service.

Retention incentives, the expansion of our training base, and ongoing efforts to improve recruiting, are the pillars on which we will maintain and grow the force. Overall, our SOF populations are healthy in the areas of inventory, promotions, training, command opportunity, and active component retention. Again, with few exceptions SOF personnel continue to equal or exceed Service averages in all areas. We expect and need this positive trend to continue into the future.

Equipment

Today's SOF are better equipped than ever, but continue to face challenges meeting high demand for ISR and next generation SOF-specific armored vehicles. Persistent airborne ISR is a critical supporting element to USSOCOM's prosecution of the GWOT. ISR must not only be ever present, but must rapidly disseminate operational information to key elements on the battlefield. USSOCOM has been rapidly equipping SOF with ISR capabilities within the overall constraints of our budget and our Special Operations-unique responsibilities. Through mission analysis and lessons learned, we have determined a combination of manned and unmanned airborne ISR is required to provide the flexibility to support the dynamic SOF mission set. We have modified existing SOF equipment where available, procured additional dedicated ISR equipment, and partnered with the Services to cooperatively field additional airborne ISR equipment in support of USSOCOM missions.

It is important that Congress fully fund the FY2008 budget request that will be presented next week for airborne ISR so that USSOCOM can continue to work toward filling its full requirement for this critical capability. Additional airborne ISR equipment is needed to enable USSOCOM to accelerate successes in the challenging GWOT mission. The FY 2007 USSOCOM Supplemental Request included over \$100M for immediate additional airborne ISR needs. We are currently working with the Joint Staff to reallocate priorities for use of existing assets.

It is also critical that Congress fully fund the budget request for additional modern lift assets. All USSOCOM components have identified the need to recapitalize aging

systems, as well as increase the quantity and combat capability of a wide array of ground, sea and air vehicles.

Conclusion

Readiness and manning remain at the bedrock of our foundation. We are committed to meeting our growth requirements while fulfilling the needs of the Geographic Combatant Commanders and synchronizing the overall Global War on Terror. SOF growth supports the GWOT Campaign Plan and USSOCOM's implementation of the GWOT plans. This growth is not taken lightly, or without forethought. It is happening at a pace that USSOCOM and its components can sustain without compromising the high standards of the SOF Warrior.

I appreciate the opportunity to meet and speak with you. I could not be more proud of our Special Operations Forces, and am humbled to represent them before you. We remain focused on our mission, ever mindful of the fact that this is a long war, one that will be fought over generations, not across a few short years. I thank you for your time, and look forward to answering your questions.

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STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT W. WAGNER, U.S. ARMY
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
AND CAPABILITIES
ON CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING, AND READINESS CHALLENGES FACING
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
JANUARY 31, 2007

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STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT W. WAGNER, U.S. ARMY
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor and privilege to report to you on the state of the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). Today's United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) are the best manned, trained and equipped in our history and are the most capable in the world. They have performed magnificently on the battlefields of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and in support of Geographic Combatant Commanders' and Ambassadors' activities around the world.

As commander of the U.S. Army component of USSOCOM, my two top priorities are supporting GWOT and the readiness of our forces, both today and in the future. These two priorities are inextricably linked. I understand that the purpose of this hearing is to discuss the latter of these two priorities – the manning and equipping readiness challenges of our force; but, before I do, I would like to say a few things about supporting GWOT.

To prosecute GWOT, defeating the terrorist threat requires the full range of Special Operations capabilities. ARSOF's carefully selected, highly trained and well equipped Special Operators continue to be deployed in support of the Geographic Combatant Commanders and our nation's Ambassadors and have been involved in every phase of this global effort. Employing the tactics, techniques and procedures

most appropriate to a given situation, our forces act across the full spectrum of operations from Civil Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PO), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and Unconventional Warfare (UW), to Direct Action (DA). As they have been since September of 2001, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) are decisively engaged in the Long War in both the kinetic aspects of the war by disrupting the terrorist cells of our enemies, and, perhaps more importantly, quietly and persistently working in their non-kinetic role of nation building, and developing the professionalism and capacity of the indigenous Armies of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines and other countries worldwide, oftentimes shifting from kinetic to non-kinetic activities on the same day. On any given day, approximately 4,500 ARSOF Soldiers are deployed worldwide. The pace and intensity of ARSOF deployments are unmatched in our nation's history. I am continuously amazed, humbled and grateful for the dedication, maturity and judgment of our Soldiers as they conduct repetitive combat rotations. Far more impressive than the amount of time deployed, called the "tempo", is the fast pace and intensity of the Soldiers' daily activities: the incredible manner in which they rapidly integrate all-source intelligence, and rapidly coordinate and immediately execute complex plans and time sensitive operations. This work requires extraordinary professionals operating at peak capacity. We also honor the heroic sacrifices of our 155 soldiers who have lost their lives deployed in the war on terrorism, the 976 who have been wounded and injured, and the patriotism of their families. The word Soldier is a simple word for complex heroes serving our nation.

In addition to combat rotations, ARSOF annually participates in over seventy Joint Combined Exercise Training (JCET) events globally with host-nation forces. In the

PACOM and SOUTHCOM theaters, ARSOF supports these respective Geographic Combatant Commanders and Ambassadors by providing assistance to allied nations seeking to stem terrorists, narcotics trafficking groups, and insurgents and to enhance the professionalism and capability of their forces as well as our own. SOF support includes counter-narcoterrorist training deployments, training assistance to Host Nation SOF, help with establishing special operations command and control (C2) organization, long-standing Civil Affairs and PSYOP activities, and assistance fusing intelligence with operational planning. As we help build partner nation capacity we enable our allies to shoulder the burden of fighting terrorism in places where we are not in combat. These missions are critical and, in the long term, some of the most important work we do. Additionally, ARSOF continues to assist with the search for American citizens held hostage by terrorists in Colombia, working alongside the elements from the Colombian Military who are still engaged in the recovery of those held captive. ARSOF also continues to provide training support in Central and South America, Africa, and to Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P), where, in addition to Special Forces, our Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers continue to advance nation building through effective training and a full range of developmental programs which extend the reach and effectiveness of Philippine programs and forces and garner support of local populations.

As stated earlier, to achieve success in GWOT, force readiness is crucial to mission success. USASOC's number one readiness issue is our people, followed closely by our equipment and training. People are our most precious asset. ARSOF operators are high-caliber professionals with intelligence, stamina, problem-solving

skills, mental toughness, flexibility, determination, and the highest integrity. They are of extraordinary strength of character, will, dedication to duty, and belief in selfless service. Additionally, they are experts with their weapons, and many are language trained. Our carefully selected, well-trained, and well-led people are key to our quality force. To accomplish the ARSOF missions, maturity, experience and highly specialized skill sets are required, including cultural and regional awareness and expertise, and skill in employing both low and high-tech equipment and solutions. To achieve the required level of proficiency and guarantee SOF relevance, recruitment, training, accession, promotion, retention, and professional development of the force must be carefully monitored.

What are the current and projected end-strength requirements as established in the most recent QDR and what plans and timeframe are in place to achieve it? If the current forces are not filled to authorized strengths, why not?

Up front I must report that that our current fill rates have never been better and, faced with the current deployment tempo and mission requirements, we are most grateful and appreciative of the absolutely required recent year decisions to add ten new battalions, new companies and support capabilities, and over 6,800 active duty Soldiers to our force structure. For the next six to eight years, snap shot views of our manning will not tell a complete story as we will repeatedly (cyclically) build over-strength to form the core of a new battalion, which, upon activation, will be under-strength. This up and down percent change is necessary for growth and should not be

viewed with concern, just as our over-strength now should not be viewed with extreme excitement. What is important to understand is the complete pipeline personnel process, and to see if that process is producing and retaining Army Special Operations Soldiers at a sufficiently faster or higher rate than historical trends. The answer to that important question is, "yes."

It is also important to understand that many Army SOF career fields do not recruit initial entry candidates; rather, we recruit experienced, proven Soldiers from the conventional force. Thus, our recruiting effort is uniquely different than that of a conventional Army recruiter but is uniquely tied to the overall health of the Army. Because of the unique character of each of our commands, command wide averages are of less value and each unit must be studied and appreciated separately.

Personnel.

We are at the beginning of unprecedented ARSOF growth adding over 6,800 additional active duty Soldiers between FY 05 and FY 12. Army Special Operations Force (ARSOF) population in the areas of enlisted inventory, promotion and active duty retention are at a historic high. From FY 05 to the current date, we have added over 2,200 Active duty Soldiers. The officer inventory is also strong, with selected exceptions including Warrant Officers, Civil Affairs Captains, and National Guard Captains. Overall, our strength numbers decreased as a result of the transfer of the United States Army Reserve (USAR) Soldiers of the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) to the United States Army

Reserve Command (USARC). USASOC is currently a very healthy force in terms of manpower strengths. All of the projected manpower growth is planned. We are prepared to implement our PDM and QDR approved force growth in accordance with the established timelines.

Current Strengths.

Special Forces (Active Component). Special Forces Command is our largest component with 8,309 Active Duty and 3,373 National Guard Soldiers authorized comprising 62% of our population. Current USASOC Active Duty Special Forces officer strength is 111%, Special Forces Warrant Officer strength is currently 86%, but is expected to climb to 90% by the end of this Fiscal Year, given the successes of our recruiting campaign and change in training venue. Inventory of our Active Duty Special Forces enlisted Soldiers is currently 114%, an historical high. We do have skill areas of concern with our Special Forces medics at 641 assigned vs. 744 authorized for 86%, and other Army-common, low density, military occupational specialties which are addressed later.

Special Forces (Army National Guard). National Guard Special Forces officer strength trends are positive with the exception of Captains which are at 34% with 159 authorized and 54 assigned, and Warrant Officers which are at 26% with 137 authorized and 35 assigned. However, changes in the Warrant Officer course will result in an improvement in this area in the near term. The FY 06 inventory of National Guard enlisted Soldiers was 125% of requirements. The high assigned enlisted strength

percentage however distorts the low military skill qualification rate which 74% for enlisted Soldiers. All six of our National Guard Special Forces battalions have been involuntarily mobilized and have voluntarily mobilized to the authorized two-year limit. Beyond that, many Soldiers have deployed in a Contingency Temporary Tour of Active Duty (COTTAD) status. Individually, Soldiers are extraordinarily responsive as individual volunteers. These great Soldiers have rightfully taken their place alongside their active component brothers and performed with distinction. However, policies make it hard to have rapid access to these units even though they are ready volunteers.

75th Ranger Regiment. The 75th Ranger Regiment is authorized 2,168 Soldiers and is 12 % of our force. The Ranger Regiment's strength continues to be very well supported by the Army, in both officer and enlisted categories (112% and 121% strengths, respectively).

160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR). The 160th SOAR is authorized 2,437 Soldiers and is 13% of our force. Shortages of trained aviator officers and warrant officers persist, and result from many factors. Continuing high GWOT requirements compete with training resources and contribute to the shortfalls in MH-47 Chinook aviator qualifications. The availability of pilots and enlisted crew members to be trained is not the issue: it is a training through-put problem. Availability of aircraft, training time, and instructors are a constant challenge. Although we recognize this challenge and have a plan to improve in this area, the fix will not be immediate. Increased authorizations in our growth in MH-47 aircraft and personnel will result in continuing low personnel fill rates in the short term. Overall strength of enlisted Soldiers in the SOAR is 97%, but many of the factors for the MH-47 officers and warrant officers

extend to the MH-47 enlisted flight engineers. MH47 officer pilot strength is 63%, warrant officer pilot strength is 68%, and enlisted flight engineer strength is 79%. These percentages are against an aircraft to crew authorized ratio of 1:1.5. We can crew every flyable aircraft and our fill rate is steadily improving.

Psychological Operations. PO and CA officers were formerly managed as an Army Functional Area; however, effective 1 October 2006, they were each designated as a separate officer career branch. Creation of these branches is expected to result in significant improvements for USASOC and the Army as a whole. In the interim, however, we are experiencing expected growing pains of creating new branches, particularly when combined with significant growth in both branches. USASOC's PO officer fill rate is 70% in the aggregate, with a 20% fill rate for Captains, 103% for Majors, 155% for LTC and 100% for Colonels. The Captain's fill rate will increase to 36 of 65 or 54% by July 07. The rate of fill for enlisted PO Soldiers is 88%

Civil Affairs. While we increased the branch inventory of CA officers in FY 06 by 60 officers to 249, the authorizations also increased by 115. USASOC is currently at 67% officer fill rate. Our critical shortage is Captains which were at 22% strength in FY 06 and is expected to improve to 43 of 125 or 34% in FY 07. The enlisted MOS 38B (Civil Affairs) was created in FY 06 and, much like the CA and PO officer strengths, is also influenced by the growth in CA authorizations. The USASOC aggregate enlisted fill rate is 102%; however, with approved growth in March 07, the rate will drop to 85%. USASOC recently activated a CA brigade and is in the process of adding three battalions to the structure.

Special Operations Sustainment Brigade (SOSB). This unit has undergone a major transformation as its internal support battalion was reassigned; parts to each of the Special Forces Groups to be the core of the 5 newly formed Special Forces Support Battalions, and to provide augmentation to three Ranger Support Companies. This is in line with Army Transformation, similar to the Brigade Combat Teams. We are currently in the process of standing up an additional support battalion for the 75th Ranger Regiment to better support their operational deployments. The Soldiers in the SOSB hold Army common specialties, for which we rely on Department of the Army to support. The aggregate strength of the brigade is 98%.

Projected Personnel Growth.

Program Decision Memorandum (PDM) approved growth that will add over 6,800 active duty Soldiers between FY 05 and FY 12 and will impact all units and skill sets, including Combat, Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) specialty skills. This growth represents ten additional battalions – five tactical Special Forces battalions, one Special Operations Aviation battalion, one Ranger Special Troops battalion; three Ranger rifle companies, significant growth in Ranger reconnaissance, support, military intelligence and communications capabilities; three Civil Affairs battalions in addition to standing up the Civil Affairs Brigade Headquarters; five Psychological Operations companies; and growth in support and training units.

Key to increasing pipe-line production of Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers has been the total transformation of the programs of

instruction at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. These changes focused on an immediate relevance to current operations, increasing Interagency contributions, earlier integration of language training, increased frequency of course offerings, integration of computer assisted training, curriculum modification, focused time management, and concentrating the 18X target population (initial entry Soldiers selected to attend Special Forces training) - as examples.

In order to support the approved growth in Special Forces (5 Active Special Forces battalions), USASOC's Special Forces student production has increased from an average of 238 per year from FY 95 to FY 97 to an average of 723 per year from FY 04 to FY 06, and now a steady-state of 750 Active Duty Enlisted Soldiers per year. This phenomenal increase employed best business practices to increase production while maintaining or increasing standards, without increasing costs. This will keep our Special Forces force at "P-1", 90% or better, our highest personnel readiness rating throughout the growth period without sacrificing our standards or quality of training. Additional student training has been factored into the training pipeline to support both Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations growth.

Authorized Strength by Component and FY	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 05-12 Increases
Special Forces Command	10,541	11,781	11,468	12,451	12,872	13,293	13,715	14,137	3,596
75 th Ranger Regiment	2,138	2,392	2,392	3,071	3,071	3,071	3,071	3,071	933
160 th SOAR	2,342	2,519	2,519	2,603	2,736	2,693	3,039	3,075	733
4th PO Group	1,354	1,354	1,354	2,120	2,488	2,488	2,488	2,488	1,134
95 th CA BDE	409	505	554	687	884	884	884	884	475

On 1 Oct 06, the Department of Defense approved the proper decision to transfer 8,431 United States Army Reserve (USAR) Component Soldiers and Headquarters of the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operation Command (USACAPOC), from USASOC to FORSCOM and the United States Army Reserve Command, USARC. This transfer did reduce the overall personnel numbers within USASOC; however, USASOC retained all active component Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PO) units and will continue to serve as the proponent for both the Active and Reserve CA and PO forces. Concurrently, not only did the forces transfer, but they also grew significantly in numbers. As part of the approved force growth, USASOC is increasing from one AC Civil Affairs battalion with 409 Soldiers to a Civil Affairs brigade comprised of four battalions with a combined strength of 884. There is also an AC force structure increase of five companies in our AC Psychological Operations Group as it grows from 1,354 in FY 05 to 2,488 in FY 09.

On 1 Oct 06, the Department of Army also approved the establishment of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations as career branches. The impact of establishing these branches will greatly benefit the selection, training, assignments and career-long professional development of these officers as a career field instead of just a functional area of interest.

Approval for USASOC to conduct Special Forces Warrant Officer training and commissioning entirely at Fort Bragg provided significant benefit to course content and Active Duty and National Guard throughput. This change dramatically reduced the time to train these officers and adds a critical element as we build force structure. This is critically important in increasing our National Guard Special Forces Warrant Officers as

this change dramatically reduces their time away from home and their civilian jobs. National Guard Special Forces Warrant Officer recruitment increased from eight in FY 05 to 18 in FY 06.

Another key component of USASOC's overall personnel strength is our professional and dedicated civilian workforce. We work hard to ensure our authorized positions are filled with permanent employees and have leveraged the use of temporary (2-year max) and term (4-year max) employees since the beginning of GWOT. Today our civilian authorizations are 1,233 with a total of 1,337 civilian employees on board for a 108% fill rate. Of this total 201 employees are either temporary or term hires. This represents 15% of our civilian work force which we are steadily decreasing as our authorizations grow. In FY 08 our civilian workforce authorizations will grow by 11% to 1,390.

Retention and Recruiting.

Retention.

As previously mentioned, our population is more senior than most units. For example, of the current 4,537 assigned Active Duty enlisted 18-series Special Forces Soldiers, the authorized numbers include 0 Soldiers in grades E-1 through E-5, 1,419 E-6, 1,974 E-7, and 618 E8/ E9. This inverted senior rank structure is at the heart of ARSOF's unique capabilities and highlights the critical importance of senior grade retention. We cannot afford to see decreasing trends and then try to fix the problem –

which could take years to rest and recover. I view the retention incentives as absolutely critical as we ask ourselves why these extraordinarily skilled professionals separate themselves from their families and place their lives at risk, all the while facing ongoing criticism for a war losing popularity. They don't do it for the money. However, the money and growth of the ARSOF force shows our Soldiers and families that we care, we recognize their sacrifice, and we highly respect and value their selfless service. I am often reminded of the old saying that we recruit individuals but retain families.

Significant numbers of Soldiers are accepting retention pay and compensation incentives to remain within ARSOF. We have specifically targeted our most senior and experienced operators with these pay incentives as a key factor to support our approved growth and help reduce our operational tempo as we continue to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism along with numerous other mission profiles throughout the world. These pay incentives have produced the desired results. They are a critical element to retain and adjust the force as necessary as we grow. Some of these programs are highlighted below:

- Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) for selected Special Forces, Rangers and 160th SOAR NCOs.
 - SF: Level 5 = \$375 / month
 - Rangers: Level 4 = \$300 / month
 - 160th SOAR Level 2/3/4 = \$150/\$225/\$300 / month

- Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) increased to \$150K for SF NCOs and WOs operators for a six-year commitment. Average increased commitment of five years with 100K payment.
 - Service Remaining Requirements waived making more Soldiers eligible for this incentive.
 - Modifications to contracts permitted allowing maximum flexibility to add to years of commitment.
 - FY 05 = 402 Soldiers = \$28.6 million
 - FY 06 = 260 Soldiers = \$26 million

- Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) implemented for SF Warrant Officers and NCOs operators. This program targets Soldiers at their 25th year of service and beyond with a \$750 dollar per month payment. Total results for FY 05 and FY 06 were 136 senior and experienced Soldiers being retained past their eligible retirement date.

- Aviation Continuation Pay (ACP) increased in FY 06 for 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment Flight Qualified Warrant Officers (K4). Results are 200 K4 pilots receiving ACP for a total of \$18.9 million.
 - CW5s added to the program.
 - Annual Payments based on contract commitments of two years for \$12K, three years for \$18K, and four years for \$25K.

What are the selection standards and challenges facing component recruiting and retention? Is it possible, with the standards implemented today, to expedite recruiting without sacrificing quality. If not, then why not? What issues are involved?

Recruiting.

The provisional establishment of the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion which recruits Soldiers from within the U.S. Army for Special Operations service is of critical importance to ARSOF in contacting three times the population as five years ago and setting in motion the ability to source our approved growth of ten new battalions. USASOC and U.S. Army Recruiting Command resource this unique Special Operation Recruiting battalion and work very closely in coordinating and targeting the right people and skill sets to meet our needs. In partnership with the Army Recruiting Command, we have increased and will continue to increase our recruiting capability by adding more recruiters. An example of this recruiting effort includes the ARSOF Recruiting Van (tractor trailer), manned by Army recruiters and augmented with ARSOF and has a national level footprint and showcases ARSOF to the American public.

A major effort this year was gaining Army approval for USASOC to add the selection of CA and PO officers, on a yearly basis, to our existing ARSOF selection board. In the past, the ARSOF board only focused on the selection of Special Forces officers. With the activation of CA and PO as branches, USASOC was allowed to establish a special accessions board to select CA and PO officers to help "jump start"

these new career fields. This now combined ARSOF Officer Accession Board selects future Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers, and is directly linked to our ability to fill the force with the highest caliber leaders possible.

Personnel Recruiting and Retention – Future Challenges.

Our current high aggregate fill rates are the result of the combined contribution of recruiting, retention incentive programs, redesigning enlisted, warrant and commissioned officer training, and career field changes. In FY 06, ARSOF exceeded the Army average in all retention categories with the exception of reserve component transition. As positive as the current fill and retention rates are, we are at the beginning of five to eight years of hard work to recruit, train, and retain over 6,800 additional active duty Soldiers. To do this, we must:

1) Increase our recruiting capability both in-service and initial entry to ensure the proper numbers of Soldiers enter our training pipeline. We have experienced major success with our 18X program (initial entry Soldiers selected to attend Special Forces training) and must ensure those now trained, qualified, and deploying ARSOF Soldiers are retained past their initial service obligation.

2) Maintain, and, in some cases, initiate new retention incentive programs to attract and retain these highly trained and deployed Soldiers. Like building a bridge, the quickest way is starting at both banks; we have made great efforts to recruit into our ranks and retain our experienced Soldiers and now need to look hard at retaining our middle grades as well.

3) Leverage the ARSOF Officer Accession Board to increase selection of sufficient Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers to meet growth requirements. We do have competing demands with the Army as they now are assigning Civil Affairs officers at the Brigade Combat Teams and higher levels of command.

4) Maximize Active and Guard warrant officer through-put to our newly redesigned warrant officer training program.

5) Carefully manage enlisted, warrant and commission officer Aviation transition and growth.

USASOC relies on the Army for many critical, low density enlisted Soldiers, many of whom are in Combat Support or Combat Service Support specialties. Coordination with the Army to provide low density, high demand, Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) is continuous as USASOC does not train these specialties which are also required throughout the Army. Our growth will place additional demands on these critical skills. Some of these include:

25B (Information Technology)

25R (Visual Information Equipment)

25S (Satellite Communication)

35M/97E (Human Intelligence)

35P/95G (Cryptological Linguist)

46R (Public Affairs Broadcast)

We must not allow initial enthusiasm and positive results to dilute our understanding of the difficulty of the task ahead. As a simple example, prior to a battalion's activation date, we may have 250 "excess" Soldiers. A day later we may be 200 to 300 "short". Today CMF 18 enlisted strength in USASOC is 115%, but is projected to drop to the low 90 percentile as we build the five additional Special Forces tactical battalions. This scenario will play itself out repeatedly as we form a total of 10 new battalions and multiple companies all cast against what might arguably become a less supportive recruiting pool and an incredible tempo, which will stress retention. ARSOF is postured to keep pace with the programmed growth through improved targeted recruiting; increased training efficiencies in the Special Warfare Center and School, the 75th Ranger Regiment, and the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. This will be hard and critically important work as we move forward to fill our ranks.

Modification to Standards.

We have modified our administrative procedures while maintaining and, in some cases, increasing standards. Experience showed us that our highest attrition in the 18X program was with 18 and 19 year old Soldiers: we no longer accept them into the program. Special Forces Soldiers must now attain a passing language rating of 1,1,1 in reading, speaking and understanding to graduate. The Special Forces Qualification Course is taught at the Secret level and requires a security clearance. It places less emphasis on lower end skills (map reading) and more focus on intelligence operations.

The Special Forces Warrant Officer program, although still taught in 15 training weeks. These and many other changes have maintained or increased performance standards. We have seen no need or reason to reduce standards to meet manning requirements.

Equipment.

USASOC is extremely fortunate to be well supported by both the United States Special Operations Command and the United States Army, both of which advance evolving technology to improve the precision, versatility and lethality of our systems, and the survivability of our Soldiers against adaptive adversaries. We are well resourced. Our continuous challenge is validating the capabilities, limitations and necessity of new technologies against anticipated threats; and, if validated, the pace of funding, acquisition and fielding. Oftentimes, industry production is the limiting factor.

Today's ARSOF soldiers are better equipped than at any other time in our history. Equipment shortfalls, mainly, fall into the category of improving the quality or performance of an already existing or on-hand capability. For example, this is especially true in the area of vehicle force protection where we seek advanced materials offering increased protection at reduced weight. As an example:

Phase II Armor Kits. Every ARSOF vehicle conducting combat operations is armored. We are currently in the process of upgrading our armor kits through a Phase II version with ballistic aluminum and titanium underbody. Phase II production is on schedule for complete delivery and installation of 245 sets by Feb 07.

Gunner's Protection Kit (Turret). The turret production is on schedule for delivery of 219 turrets by May 07.

Modular Supplemental Armor Protection (MSAP). Every deployed ARSOF Soldier has body armor. Through the United States Special Operations Command Program Management Office, we have procured enough sets to fill the deployed Ranger and Special Forces operator requirements. Through Army common procurement, every other ARSOF Soldier is provided the Interceptor Body Armor (IBA).

We anxiously anticipate fielding of the Army's new Mobile Regional Hub Node (MRHN). The MRHN is a satellite terminal that provides high bandwidth in the Super High Frequency range, significantly enhancing our current capability. The MRHN also serves as a gateway or hub for other satellite terminals. We look for this program to remain on track.

Industry production rates to keep pace with the manufacture of improved or replacement equipment, single source producers, and access to specialized raw materials are a concern. For instance, the production rate for AN/PVS 15 Night Vision Devices is currently 65 per month instead of the 130 it was programmed/contracted for. At this rate, ARSOF fielding will be complete in 2021 or 2022.

Facilities

Between FY 05 and FY 12, USASOC will grow in end-strength by over 6,800 personnel throughout the command. Because most of this growth occurs inside the 5-year MILCON cycle, we are working to ensure we have adequate interim facilities available until permanent construction can be completed. Our intent is to avoid purchasing modular facilities as much as possible, and instead invest in renovating older facilities to bring them up to a minimum standard. These older facilities include: World War II wood, and 1950 and 1960s era barracks and administrative buildings. The majority of these buildings were scheduled for destruction. Our intent is to extend their life for a few more years as we have found that this is more cost effective than buying modular facilities. In addition to this growth, BRAC 2005 directed that we move the 7th SFG(A) (2,240 personnel) from Ft Bragg, NC to Eglin AFB, FL. This move is directly linked to the vacating of Fort Bragg facilities to accommodate QDR directed growth of units at Fort Bragg. Our plan is to utilize existing 7th SFG(A) facilities at Ft Bragg to stand up three new Civil Affairs battalions within the 95 CA Brigade, and a 4th Special Forces Battalion in the 3rd SFG(A). Effectively, we have synchronized the construction of facilities at Eglin AFB with the growth at Fort Bragg. Our synchronization plan is currently at risk due to a one year delay in the environmental impact survey at Eglin AFB, a delay that portends to upset the timely construction of facilities - which would create a domino effect of delaying fielding of our QDR-directed force structure. The 7th SFG(A) is scheduled to move to Eglin AFB during the summer of 2010, but could be in jeopardy of slipping to the summer of 2011. We are very concerned about any delays in that move as it would directly affect our ability to synchronize facilities with growth at

Fort Bragg, and cause increases in the project's construction cost estimates, which will exacerbate already problematic MILCON funding issues..

Conclusion.

Our efforts will remain focused on our mission. Solid plans are in place to meet growth and challenges while maintaining standards. Our success will come from the finest trained and prepared ARSOF warriors in the world. With your persistent support, ARSOF will continue to play a key role in America's and the world's defeat of terrorism. We understand that the fight will take a longtime and that we must continue to implement our transformation efforts, grow and deploy into combat at the same time. We also know that when the nation needs highly trained dedicated men and women, ARSOF will answer the call.

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STATEMENT OF
REAR ADMIRAL JOSEPH MAGUIRE, U.S.NAVY
COMMANDER
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
AND CAPABILITIES POSTURE HEARING
ON CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING, AND READINESS CHALLENGES FACING
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
JANUARY 31, 2007

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STATEMENT OF
REAR ADMIRAL JOSEPH MAGUIRE, U.S.NAVY
COMMANDER
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor and privilege to report to you the state of the United States Naval Special Warfare Command. Your Naval Special Warfare warriors, comprised of SEALs and Surface Warfare Combatant Crewmen (SWCCs) and the personnel who support them, are performing superbly around the globe, prosecuting the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and conducting cooperative engagement with our friends and allies. I could not be more proud of who they are and what they do – their level of dedication and mission focus is inspiring – and I am confident in their motivation and continued efforts to defend our homeland by bringing the fight to the enemy.

In your letter of 19 January 2007, you asked me to comment on two major areas; status of manning and end strength requirements; and recruiting and retention standards and challenges. In this discussion I will focus on the operators – officer and enlisted SEALs and enlisted SWCCs. By that, I do not mean to diminish at all the importance of the NSW support personnel – logisticians, intelligence collectors, Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians, SEABEES and the like - their efforts are critically important as warfighting enablers – however, for the purpose of this discussion, I will review SEAL and SWCC manning , recruiting and retention.

The bottom line that I hope the Subcommittee takes away from my testimony is that I believe it is critical to maintain the highest possible standard of our operators while meeting the increased demand for their specialized skill set. Meeting this challenge

requires: (1) increased, targeted recruiting efforts – to get the appropriate number and quality of recruits in the front door; (2) strong counter-attrition efforts – to keep more of the right trainees in our initial training curricula, the Basic Underwater Demolition / SEAL (BUD/S) course; and (3) last but not least, aggressive retention actions to retain the skilled operators who we have invested in and have proven themselves on the battlefield and in areas where we are not at war.

MANNING AND END STRENGTH REQUIREMENTS

To set the stage for this discussion, on a macro-view, the Naval Special Warfare community is organized around eight SEAL Teams and two SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams. Of the SEAL teams, two are deployed at any given time on a 1:4 rotation. These two deployed teams, consisting of 6 SEAL platoons each, are allocated among the Geographic Combatant Commanders based on global priorities and commitments – today we have eight in CENTCOM, two in EUCOM and two in PACOM. Each SEAL platoon is nominally comprised of two officers and 16 enlisted personnel. Additionally, there are six Mark V (high speed coastal patrol craft) and 18 Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RIB) detachments available for worldwide assignment. Each detachment is comprised of 18 and nine enlisted SWCC personnel respectively. SDVs Task Units (TUs) deploy for purpose. As this is the very core of our operational warfighting capability, ensuring that each platoon, boat crew and TU is fully manned, trained and equipped is my number one priority.

Additionally, there is an increased requirement for our SEALs to be assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, as well as unified, sub-unified, joint and major staffs.

Enlisted SEALs are extremely crucial in meeting GWOT mission requirements in focus areas around the world, especially in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). The heavy demand for specialized SEAL skills sets is rapidly increasing our enlisted community's workload. NSW enlisted billets are programmed to grow by ~13% between FY 2006 and FY 2009. As of December 2006, the NSW enlisted community is manned at 87% (1771 enlisted SEALs for FY07 2005 Enlisted Programmed Authorizations (EPA)). With the current inventory of 1771 Enlisted SEALs, NSW manning will drop to 77% in FY08 with the 256 EPA growth requirement directed by PDM III. To meet these requirements, our Navy has increased SEAL enlisted accessions annually since 2004. In the first quarter of FY 07, our Navy has recruited 1075 of the 1400 goal (77%) as compared to 859 of 1400 (59%) for all of FY06. Although early for definitive results, this is an encouraging improvement to increase the enlisted candidates beginning their initial training pipeline. SEAL officer billets are programmed to increase by 69% from FY 03 to FY09. SEAL officer manning is currently at 84% (475/564 SEAL unrestricted line officers), with the greatest shortfall being at the mid-grade (O-4 LCDR level). To meet increased requirements, the Navy has increased SEAL officer accessions annually since 2002. In FY07, the Navy will access 83 qualified SEAL officer candidates – an all time high.

Enlisted SWCCs are also in extremely high demand to meet worldwide GWOT mission requirements. My only officer SWCCs (14) are Chief Warrant Officers, accessed

from the enlisted ranks. The increasing demand for SWCC skill sets has rapidly increased this particular enlisted community's workload and operational tempo (OPTEMPO). NSW SWCC enlisted billets are programmed to grow by ~13% between FY 06 and FY 09. As of December 2006, the SWCC community is manned at 87% (614/703 enlisted Special Warfare Boat Operators FY07 EPA). With the current inventory of 614 enlisted SWCC, NSW manning will drop to 73% in FY09 with the 138 EPA growth requirement directed by PDM III. To meet these emerging requirements, the Navy planned increased SWCC enlisted accessions annually since 2004. In the first quarter of FY-07, the Navy has recruited 283 of the 366 goal (77%) as compared to 207 of 320 (64.7%) for all of FY06. This, in addition to SWCC curricula reforms, is an encouraging improvement to increase the SWCC enlisted candidates preparing for their initial training pipeline.

Our inability to meet end-strength requirements in the near term is due to these increased demands outpacing our ability to effectively recruit the quality candidates who can meet the rigorous training standards set. The challenge in meeting these current and future end strength requirements is ensuring that we have absolutely, positively, unequivocally the right individual filling every Special Operations Forces (SOF) billet on the battlefield – and that the warfighter is fully trained to meet every mission that he may face. I would be remiss as the leader of this community if in any way I proposed lowering training standards in order to rectify manning shortfalls. The relatively low casualty rate and battlefield successes experienced by our warfighters in the present conflict speaks loudly to our selection process, our ethos and most importantly the quality of the training

SEAL and SWCC operators receive to prepare them to be the fighting force on which the nation depends.

I think it important to note that we are aggressively scrubbing our manpower base to ensure that we are placing SEALs and SWCCs in only those billets that require their specific warfighting skills, and that to the maximum extent we can, are augmenting our force with critical enablers of combat support and combat service support personnel – organizing them into Support Activity Teams – one per coast - which will go a long way to meet QDR directed growth but not overly stress the SEAL/ SWCC skill sets.

In summary, working with the Chief of Naval Operations and Commander United States Special Operations Command we will achieve required end-strength increases by improving targeted recruiting efforts, continuing to focus on effective counter-attrition efforts and aggressive retention actions. I intend to meet SWCC end-strength requirements by 2009, SEAL enlisted end-strength requirements by 2010 and SEAL officer end strength requirements by 2011.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION STANDARDS

In FY-06 the Navy goal for enlisted recruiting was 1400 SEALs/320 SWCC; of which only 829 and 207 were realized respectively. As a result, our Navy has dramatically enhanced its business practices on SEAL and SWCC recruiting and pipeline training. Changes such as the implementation of the SEAL and SWCC ratings (as of Oct 06) are streamlining the time it takes for a recruit to get to BUD/S. Changes in recruiting business practices, combined with the positive results for the first quarter FY-07 show that we are making progress and moving in the right direction. The average timeline for a

recruited BUD/S candidate to complete all SEAL training to earn his warfare designation and be assigned to a SEAL Team is 14 –18 months, therefore we anticipate measurable results in FY-07. Additionally, it is expected that the Commander Naval Recruiting Command (CNRC)'s commitment to the hiring of the ex-Special Warfare and Special Operations Sailors at each of the 26 Naval Recruiting Districts, with specialized knowledge of this unique community, will continue to improve both quality and quantity of the recruits.

Improving SEAL recruiting processes will have the greatest impact on improving SEAL manning but it is a challenging endeavor, which has been inefficient in the past. However, recognizing the significance of this initiative, the Chief of Naval Personnel has stated that focused and targeted enlisted SEAL recruiting is his number one priority. Previously, the Navy suffered 60-70% attrition of new recruits for the SEAL challenge program even before they arrived at BUD/S for the arduous SEAL training program. In January 2006, the Navy issued a planning order to improve the quality and quantity of SEAL recruits. Specifically the Navy changed several previous policies, such as now requiring SEAL candidates to pass SEAL Physical Screening Test (PST) prior to issuing a SEAL contract. In March 2006, the test included the swim portion of the SEAL PST, which had previously been excluded. This and other bureaucratic barriers have been overcome by the Navy to achieve recruiting goals. Partnering with the Manpower, Personnel, Training & Education (MPT&E) of Navy and SOF communities has led to other recruiting initiatives such as all Navy Recruiting Districts (NRDs) now have a dedicated Special Warfare/Operations program coordinator (ex-SEAL / Special Operator) to act as subject matter experts and facilitate testing, screening and mentoring recruits;

NSW detailed a SEAL Master Chief to the CNRC major staff in September 2005 to coordinate NSW and CNRC SEAL and SWCC recruiting issues; all NRDs must produce a specific goal for SEALs and report weekly. Competitive recruiting bonuses have also played a key role in improving overall metrics -- in Feb 2006, CNRC raised SEAL Enlisted Bonus (EB) to its maximum authorized level (\$40K) for recruits completing SEAL training and SWCC EB was raised to \$25K. Additionally, RTC Great Lakes increased the amount of SEAL and SWCC candidate mandatory Physical Training time by 300% (from 9 to 31 days) during Basic Training to better prepare SEAL and SWCC recruits for the arduous BUD/S and SWCC training. The Navy commissioned a SEAL Selection Working Group to evaluate psychological and mental aspects that will help CNRC focus on identifying the right candidates for SEAL training. Psychologists at various locations are working to identify a screening test for mental acuity required to succeed in BUD/S. Additionally, CNRC has aggressively launched targeted SEAL recruiting ads in TV, movie trailer and print media.

We also need to make sure that we are consistent in the BUD/S standards for those qualified and selected. BUD/S is a physically intense and mentally challenging military training course. Graduates of the course who proudly wear a Trident have a "Never Quit" attitude, confident that they can meet any challenge and solve any problem, on or off the battlefield. During the 26 week BUD/S course and the 27 week additional basic course of instruction there are hundreds of high risk training evolutions, including parachute qualification, 5 mile open ocean swims and 14 mile sand runs, complex tactical problems and a wide range of other demanding requirements. This training has historically had a high attrition rate due to the high standards and physically challenging

regime. The process is continually monitored and revised, to include continually evaluating the curricula and instruction methodology, making changes as needed to gain increased effectiveness - resulting in a 6% graduation rate increase in FY2006 over previous years. Continual improvements are made in instructor and staff development, and leadership training. I am confident with improved recruit screening we can continue to lower the attrition figure without sacrificing quality. We recently contracted with private industry to assist in our review of ALL aspects of SEAL manpower requirements – from recruiting to Boot Camp through awarding of the Trident, to help model pipeline inefficiencies and develop metrics for process improvement.

Regarding retention, we are presently experiencing the highest retention rates of enlisted SEALs in recent history, due to job satisfaction and aggressive measures taken early by the Department as authorized by Congress. Retention rates for SEALs declined in FY-03 and 04 due in some measure to increased opportunities in the private sector. According to "exit surveys" of resigning personnel, this short term anomaly was overcome by a true sense of job satisfaction and working with teammates, as well as the SOCOM Incentive Bonus instituted in FY-05, which targets the SEAL and SWCC enlisted population by improving existing DoD incentives and adding two new pays (CSRB and AIP). The measures are evaluated quarterly but current data reveals an increase in SEAL retention across all zones. In FY05 the specific measures included: Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) increased for SEAL E-4 to E-9 from \$110 to \$375 a month. SWCC SDAP was increased from \$75 to \$225 per month.

Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) was established in February 2005 for SEAL and SWCC senior enlisted and warrant officers with 19 to 25 years of service. The retention bonus ranged from \$8K for one year to \$150K for six years of obligation.

Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) provides senior enlisted and warrant officer SEALs with over 25 years of service (YOS) \$750 per month when they obligate for at least one year of service past their 25th year (not to exceed 30 years). The Navy currently offers a \$60K to \$75K Selective Re-enlistment Bonus (SRB) to SEALs in Zones A and B, and increased Zone C SRB to \$75K in July 2006. SWCC SRB for Zones A, B, and C have been increased to \$45,000. I could not be more pleased with the aggressive approach SOCOM and my Navy have taken toward retaining our skilled and experienced operators. Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO) or Turn-Around Ratio (TAR) is another retention variable we are addressing. As stated previously, for a typical two- year cycle, SEALs will spend 18 months CONUS-based before a six month deployment. However, of the 18 months spent within CONUS, SEALs typically spend approximately 50% of that time deployed away from their local area conducting training - due in large measure to the non-availability of local training ranges - with a significant impact on our families as well. To lower this OPTEMPO, the Department has approved several military construction range projects within the San Diego and Virginia Beach areas to provide more live-fire training opportunities within these Fleet Concentration Areas.

Mr Chairman, our country is at war and the burden of this war rests squarely on our shoulders. I realize that although much is expected of this community, much is given. I am confident with your support that we can continue to initiate programs that improve efforts to focus recruiting on the correct candidate pool, to fund SEAL and SWCC current

and future retention initiatives, and support policy changes to improve the SEAL and SWCC recruiting, training and mentoring pipeline.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this information regarding your Naval Special Warfare community and the support that the SOF community has had in the past and continues to receive. I look forward to meeting with you to continue the discussion on 31 January.

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STATEMENT OF
MAJOR GENERAL DENNIS J. HEJLIK, U.S. MARINE CORPS
COMMANDER
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS, AND CAPABILITIES
JANUARY 31, 2007

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STATEMENT OF
MAJOR GENERAL DENNIS J. HEJLIK
COMMANDER
U.S. MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Thornberry, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the current manning, equipping, and readiness challenges facing the United States Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC). On behalf of the Marines, Sailors, and Department of Defense Civil Servants of MARSOC, and their family members, I want to express our gratitude. With your support, MARSOC has gone from an operational concept to a forward deployed capability consisting of a special operations company and foreign advisor teams combating our nation's adversaries in the Global War on Terror.

Quadrennial Defense Review 2005 mandated that US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) "establish a MARSOC composed of 2600 Marines and Navy personnel to train foreign military units and conduct direct action and special reconnaissance." MARSOC is currently progressing on schedule with the build plan for personnel and equipment agreed to by USSOCOM and USMC and is due to reach full operational capability by the end of September 2008.

MARSOC is authorized 2289 Marines, 191 Navy, and 33 civilian personnel for a total of 2513 personnel. MARSOC has a current strength of 1285 Marines, 70 Navy, 2 civilian for a total of 1357 personnel (53.9% of authorized end strength). Officer manning will be complete during FY07. However, MARSOC will receive some personnel later than September 2008 - 27 Marines in FY09 and 18 Marines in FY10. These high-

demand low-density specialties are limited by throughput at formal schools. These specialties are almost entirely intelligence Marines and special communications Marines. Navy corpsman billets are all fully funded through the build plan, but throughput may prove challenging at their required specialized schools because Navy input numbers have to be higher than historical norms to meet MARSOC and increased NAVSPECWARCOM needs.

MARSOC currently does not have equipment shortfalls that have not been addressed by the scheduled build plan.

MARSOC currently recruits, screens, assesses, and selects in service. MARSOC does not direct recruit; it is dependent on the USMC and USN for mature personnel well into their first 5-10 years of service. MARSOC selection standards are set by conducting mission analysis on assigned special operations forces core tasks, developing mission essential task lists, determining what skills are required by Marines and Sailors to complete those, and then determining what attributes a Marine or Sailor needs to have coming into MARSOC.

The attributes MARSOC is looking for are those that enable the candidate to accept the greater responsibility of conducting special operations missions independent from large formations to a unique set of conditions and standards. MARSOC has identified applied intelligence, leadership (to include judgment, maturity, and cultural aptitude), and physical ability (including both determination and fitness) as selection criteria. MARSOC will not sacrifice quality for quantity in this process.

The Marine Special Operations School recruits, screens, assesses and selects Marines for MARSOC. To date, MARSOC conducted a pilot course in 2006 and will

have a fully functional process by May 2007. This process will recruit and screen all MARSOC Marines and Sailors, and assess and select all specialties required of operational billets at the Marine Special Operations Battalions, the Foreign Military Training Unit, and the Marine Special Operations School. Assessment and Selection will be a two week evaluation period to determine if a candidate for MARSOC has the attributes required to complete training and conduct special operations missions. There are mental and problem solving elements, physical elements, and team events over two weeks at an off-site location that give the Assessment Cadre an overall pattern of performance to match with screening data and empirical data from a Marine's career to determine if he has the right skill sets required to perform MARSOC core tasks.

MARSOC Marines receive specialized training in accordance with their assigned special operations core tasks. We have worked closely with US Army Special Operations Command Special Forces soldiers and US Navy Special Warfare Command SEALs to ensure that MARSOC Marines and Sailors have skills that are fully integrated and interoperable on the battlefield.

Foreign Military Training Unit Marines train in combat advisor techniques, language and culture, and mission specific skill sets depending on the requirements of the host nation. Foreign Military Training Unit Marines are also required to be duty experts in infantry skills, combat medicine, and advanced communications because they are often working in small teams independent from friendly forces and in some cases may be the only US military forces in a foreign country.

Marine Special Operations Battalion Marines train in special reconnaissance, sniper skills, specialized insertion and extraction (including helicopter operations open

and closed circuit diving, and the full spectrum of airborne operations from static line to Military Free Fall operations), close quarters battle, precision marksmanship, and coordinated reconnaissance and direct action mission profiles. These skills are trained to a unique set of special operations conditions and standards.

MARSOC plans to have a "closed loop" for its personnel. MARSOC is currently working with Headquarters, Marine Corps (HQMC) as well as USSOCOM to design the "closed loop" while minimizing the impacts on the careers of the Marines and Sailors transitioning from a conventional to a special operations manpower model.

We at MARSOC consider it a privilege to represent the United States Marine Corps within the Special Operations Command and are proud to be contributing to the Global War on Terrorism and assisting in meeting our national security goals. We look forward to working closely with the members of this committee as we continue to develop, evaluate, and refine the most effective means of manning, equipping, and maintaining the readiness of MARSOC in order to lay the foundation for continued success.

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STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL W. WOOLEY, U.S. AIR FORCE
COMMANDER
AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND
CAPABILITIES
ON CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING, AND READINESS CHALLENGES FACING
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
31 JANUARY 2007

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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL W. WOOLEY, U.S. AIR FORCE
COMMANDER
AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor and privilege to report to you on the state of the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). As you are well aware, the men and women of AFSOC continue to be actively engaged in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), both on the ground and in the air. As America's specialized airpower, our number one priority is to support the mission directives of the United States Special Operations Command.

Introduction

Today our AC-130 Gunships, one of the most highly tasked air assets, continue to provide precise fire support to conventional and special operations forces on the ground. In the past 6 months we have delivered over 6,100 rounds of 105mm howitzer ordnance, 15,000 rounds of 40mm, and 38,000 rounds of 25mm. To accomplish that required 791 sorties, encompassing 4,398 flying hours. In that same period, our MC-130 Combat Talons and Combat Shadows have flown over 987 sorties encompassing 1,695 flying hours while our MH-53 PaveLow Helicopters flew 661 sorties and 1,045 hours to provide direct support to special operations ground force movements, positioning joint teams on the battlefield and extracting them once their missions are complete.

In addition to the aerial missions, AFSOC Battlefield Airmen (Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen, and Combat Weathermen) have been instrumental in creating an air-

ground interface, linking the awesome firepower from air platforms directly to forces on the ground. These Airmen are embedded with ground forces -- they train and operate as members of those ground teams -- and are equipped to designate targets and control ordinance delivery from B-52s thousands of feet above the battlefield, to fighters dropping guided weapons, to low flying helicopter gunships. They also provide a battlefield triage/rescue capability, along with a unique, remote weather observation and forecast capability. In the past 6 months, combat controllers have controlled air assets in nearly 2000 missions, resulting in delivery of over 320,000 pounds of ordinance in support of combat missions.

Our role in GWOT is expanding, resulting in new mission areas to prosecute the war today and tomorrow. These plus-up areas include not only airframes and associated crews, but increased Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability teamed with Unmanned Aerial System technology to process, exploit, and disseminate actionable intelligence to our coalition forces seeking to kill or capture our nations enemies. AFSOC Airmen fly the Predators and AFSOC Airmen implement an AFSOC-developed analytical methodology that focuses on constant observation of persons or locations of interest. This analysis has greatly improved the "find" ability in targeting terrorists in today's environment, and has lead to "finishing" (capture or kill) of hundreds of high value individuals.

Personnel end-strength requirements

AFSOC's total force is a little over 13,000 active duty, Reserve, Guard, and civilian personnel. This equates to only 1.8% of Air Force manpower. Of this number,

our current end strength is 9,825 active duty personnel, with a fill rate of 96%. The most recent QDR recommended the addition of 771 additional positions to meet increased global demand for AFSOC forces. This increased capability is in three mission areas: Unmanned Aerial Systems, Intelligence, and Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AFID).

To execute the QDR recommended growth, we have activated a Predator squadron (3 SOS), sourced the initial cadre, and are currently controlling missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. We will receive 123 of the 248 new authorizations in FY08, the remaining positions in FY09, and are actively working with the Air Force's Air Education and Training Command (AETC) to ensure sufficient training slots to support this growth. The primary aircrew training challenge remains initial training slots. The speed at which the UAV force buildup has occurred has resulted in an overload on initial training resources.

Operating Predators is just one piece of the puzzle. Our SOF operators also need uniquely skilled personnel to process, exploit and disseminate (PED) the data gathered by UAVs and other intelligence sources. To meet this need, we have activated the 11th Intelligence Squadron (11 IS) with the majority of authorizations programmed for FY08 and FY09. As of today, we have already filled 58% of the initial allocation. Our biggest challenge will be filling the authorization vacancies. With the operational experience we have gained so far, the command has identified a requirement for additional growth in personnel to meet the desired QDR capability. This growth will be addressed in future POM submissions.

Lastly, we are expanding the size of our unique Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AFID) capability, an elite squadron that works directly with coalition partner

militaries to help them defeat internal terrorist threats. As recommended by the QDR, the unit will double its ability to provide teams to partner nations. To date, 161 of the unit's 225 authorizations have been filled and it is projected that the remaining positions will be filled by the end of FY07. This is a major accomplishment based on the unique requirements for the 6 SOS. Personnel assigned to this unit require exceptional teaching skills and a developed maturity to operate as a representative of AFSOC, the Air Force, and the United States. This is an all-volunteer unit and often requires a priority fill at the expense of other organizations.

Bottom line is the QDR growth is being executed. We are dealing with unique challenges and manning the force with required experience by using intra-command cross-flow.

Selection standards and challenges in recruiting and retention

AFSOC selection standards and application vary with different units. Some unique units like the 6 SOS have very specific selection standards (instructor qualification, language qualification) others, such as Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen, and Combat Weathermen have demanding physical qualifications (timed run, pull-ups, sit-ups). For the rest, rigorous Air Force training and evaluation standards for basic aircrew training provide initial screening. From the time aircrews enter the training pipeline for AFSOC weapon systems they are constantly evaluated through initial qualification and recurring checkrides, as well as observation and assessment by their supervisors and commanders.

The most significant challenge AFSOC faces in obtaining the personnel we require, is our ability to train. While we rely on the Air Force to provide initial skills training, AFSOC forces typically require 4-12 months of additional training to get new accessions to the entry level in an AFSOC unit. While most of the initial qualification courses have high completion rates, our SOF skills training courses tend to be very demanding and lengthy. This contributes to higher washout rates and longer lead times to replace losses. Our Combat Controllers and Pararescuemen currently experience 60-70% washout rate due largely to self-initiated eliminations, injuries incurred during training, and failure to pass the water phase of training.

In the past, Combat Controller training took 3-4 years from accession to fully mission ready status. After 18-24 months of initial qualification training, they were assigned to operational units, but still required an additional 18-24 months of training to be mission ready. To reduce the stress on operational units, improve and standardize training, and reduce overall pipeline length, AFSOC and Air Education and Training Command (AETC) re-engineered the entire training pipeline. Key to this re-engineering was the creation of an Advanced Skills Training (AST) program. This initiative has reduced the length of the training pipeline to an average of 24 months, improved the quality of instruction and provides operational units with fully qualified personnel — that is a 50% cut in the length of the training program while maintaining the high quality that we have always had.

In a time of extremely high operations tempo and frequent deployments, AFSOC's FY06 first-term reenlistment rate for Battlefield Airmen and enlisted aircrew member was 64 percent, which exceeded the Air Force average of 55 percent. The

career Airman reenlistment rate for this same group was 98 percent. We believe our Air Commando's sense of mission accomplishment coupled with appropriate compensation to include special pays and bonuses have made this possible.

The SOF Truth of "Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced" rings true. For the first time, we are able to project that available resources will match requirements because of streamlined training pipelines.

Expediting the training pipeline

AFSOC continually reviews recruitment and training standards to maximize the efficiency of the training pipeline. At this time, I feel that those standards are valid. Our analysis indicates that the best way to reduce the length of our training programs and increase operational readiness is to invest in new training facilities specifically designed to meet the command's unique requirements and to provide high-fidelity simulators at our schoolhouses and operational bases.

An AST facility is currently under construction at Hurlburt Field, Florida. When completed in April, our future Battlefield Airmen will have a state-of-the-art facility that will maximize the quality of their training and allow for future growth. The Air Force has also identified a need for a new training facility at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico to support increased Pararescueman training. This new facility is currently an unfunded MILCON project.

For aircrews, the most significant limiting factor on our ability to increase training is a lack of resources to establish an industrial-strength training capability. For example, within AFSOC our AC-130 schoolhouse competes for the same aircraft

currently deployed to the battlefield. With over 60% of the AC-130 fleet deployed, our ability to train replacements or surge for combat operations is limited. To reduce the demand on all of the command's limited airframes, additional Level-D simulators are needed to provide initial qualification, upgrade, and continuation training for the operational units. These high-fidelity simulators will allow aircrews to complete many of their required currency training events at home station regardless of the availability of actual aircraft.

Conclusion

The bottom line on end-strength is that while AFSOC does have some challenges ahead in order to meet requirements, I do not believe that our situation is unmanageable. We have worked closely with the Air Force to fill the most critical requirements and are working to develop long-term fixes to our manning shortfalls. Processing personnel through the training pipeline is our challenge. In order to reduce the training timeline, while maintaining high standards, we will continue to improve and invest in our training equipment and facilities.

Before closing, I want to address my #1 concern. Many of the aircraft that the command flies today began their service in the Vietnam war. Our MC-130P and MC-130E aircraft have an average age of 40+ years and our AC-130H average 37 years. The ability to provide specialized airpower depends on the unique airlift and firepower capabilities of these aircraft. These aircraft must be recapitalized in order to meet current and future requirements, as well as increased airlift requirements (driven by QDR growth) in other components of USSOCOM. We have begun the process to

program replacement the MC-130Ps and MC-130Es. We are also in the process of refining the requirements for the next Gunship, which will be required to operate day or night, and in high threat areas to provide close air support to our troops on the ground. The replacement of our aging fleet has become more urgent due to the Center Wing Box issues we have on our remaining aircraft, which average 25 years old. Your support will be required to make this recapitalization plan a reality.

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you today. I am very proud of the Air Commandos and I hope that I have been able to provide you with a better understanding of AFSOC's unique needs. I can assure you that every member of the command is dedicated to improving the efficiency of our operations. The Air Force has a tradition of embracing new technologies and capabilities to improve effectiveness. AFSOC may be a small command, but we are at the forefront of transformation.

Again, thank you for your time. I look forward to answering your questions.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE
RECORD**

JANUARY 31, 2007

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SMITH

Mr. SMITH. Mrs. Drake was talking about on the time away from families, on the dwell time and how even within that they are away, soldiers are away training a great deal.

Admiral MAGUIRE. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Deployment Red Line Policy, dated January 23, 2007, sets the command's dwell time at a 1:1 ratio. This policy was originally established on August 2, 2005, and is retroactive to May 1, 2004. USSOCOM personnel do spend time training away from home when they are not deployed. The greatest impact is on our Naval Special Warfare personnel who conduct most of their training away from their home station.

The command recognizes that training cuts into dwell time and has considered that in our policy. The policy states: "The dwell time ratio is the time away from home versus home station time. Calculating time away from home includes deployments, Theater Security Cooperation Plan events and unit training temporary duties (TDY), i.e., Joint Combined Exchange Training, Certification Exercises, etc. However, individual training/school TDYs, i.e., military freefall, professional military education, etc., are not included in time away from home calculation."

Mr. SMITH. If there was any way to consolidate that training someplace closer to home, we would be very interested in ideas. I know that costs money undoubtedly, but we would be happy to provide that to try to help with some of that retention of the family piece.

Admiral MAGUIRE. Some training may be consolidated at venues closer to home. Where possible, U.S. Special Operations Command Component commands are moving training closer to home facilities. For example, the Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) established a Naval Parachute Course at Otay Lake, on the eastern edge of San Diego, just a few miles from Naval Air Base Coronado, California. This school provides what is now considered a pipeline skill to all NSWC personnel locally. The upside to this is less travel cost and temporary duty time. The downside, specifically to new schools, is they must be assessed initially to ensure they meet Special Operations Forces (SOF) standards, with some type of monitoring function to ensure operators from various components are receiving a minimum standard of training. An additional strategy that can be used is the use of mobile training teams (MTTs) for certain skills that can be taught in 1-2 week blocks. Unfortunately, not all training can be accomplished close to home. Some training events require specific ranges cleared for military operations such as live fire, exercises, realistic urban terrain training, military operations in urban terrain, etc. Is it possible to move more training "closer to home?" Yes. However, such a move would require feasibility studies to determine which training could be moved, expansion of facilities, coordination with local and state authorities, and the completion of several Environmental Impact Statements for training to be moved closer to home.

Mr. SMITH. I am also interested in, within each of your forces, the difference between direct and indirect action and the emphasis. One of the concerns is that direct action gets more emphasis in terms of promotions, in terms of how it is used. If you would just let me know sort of what the practice is in your field because I think it is the opinion of this committee on both sides that the indirect piece is enormously important and more long term. So the emphasis that is placed on that.

Admiral MAGUIRE. I share your opinion that the indirect approach is enormously important and more long-term in nature. In fact, in the Department of Defense's plan for the Global War on Terror (GWOT), three of the five lines of operation use the indirect approach to combat our terrorist enemies. They are: Enable Partners to Combat Violent Extremist Organizations; Deter Active and Passive Support for Violent Extremist Organizations; Erode Support for Extremist Ideologies.

DOD's GWOT plan further stipulates that enabling our partners is expected to be the decisive military effort in the campaign over time. It is understood that these efforts will require a long term effort by not only DOD, but the entire US Government, as well as our partners around the world. The direct approach by itself, while important in keeping us safe, will not win this war. It will, however, allow us and our Partners the time needed for the indirect approach to have effect and ultimately

defeat our terrorist enemies. One of the keys to the indirect approach is to address the roots of terrorism.

We believe addressing the roots of terrorism requires a whole government approach where DOD predominantly supports interagency actions and requirements such as those required by the Department of State or the U.S. Agency for International Development. Their actions to engage partner nations focus on the nation state or the regional development necessary to diminish extremist influence by implementing socio-economic initiatives that improve governance as well as health, welfare, and education programs. Also, the Department of State Strategic Communication activities promote our messages and counters radical ideology. Development and enhancing local or regional leadership capable to represent and establish legitimate local governance extends control and support to ungoverned areas and de-legitimizes the terrorist ideological focus against their governments.

Mr. SMITH. The final question, actually, your comment made me think of it, that I did want you to get back to us on, is the ISR piece and what acquisition you might need in order to get that up to a higher level. I know it is at a very high level right now.

Admiral MAGUIRE. The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) continues to rely on a combination of Service-provided and Special Operations Forces (SOF)-unique airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) to help meet our needs. Currently we are working with the U.S. Central Command and the Joint Staff to meet the immediate surge requirement of SOF in that theater. At the same time, we are formalizing our Fiscal Years 2010 through 2015 enduring ISR requirements, which will likely continue to increase. USSOCOM appreciates the Committee's support of our past and current requests for ISR needs, and as emergent needs are identified, we will work with the Committee to address those requirements.

Mr. SMITH. Could you please describe for us the vision of the Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2006, or CCSO? What are the goals of this vision and what are the plans for implementing it throughout the community?

Admiral OLSON. The Capstone Concept for Special Operations (CCSO) is the intellectual foundation of the U.S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) long range planning and a blueprint for how Special Operations Forces (SOF) will adapt to the requirements of the complex security environment. It is our overarching depiction of how the Special Operations community will support national strategic and military objectives beyond the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP). We recognize that traditional concepts of military response will no longer succeed in defeating the current adversaries, and will not succeed in defeating adaptive future adversaries. The vision of the Capstone Concept is simply this: to develop the premier team of special operators who are highly skilled, thoroughly prepared, and properly equipped for the significant challenges our Nation will continue to face.

The goal of the Capstone Concept is to provide a direction for how USSOCOM will implement its Title 10 and Unified Command Plan functions, focus the Joint SOF capabilities growth identified in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, and operate around the world to disrupt and defeat transnational terrorists and other adversaries.

The implementation pathway for the Capstone Concept is centered on three strategic objectives: first, to plan, prioritize, and synchronize Department of Defense global operations against terrorist networks; second, to establish a worldwide persistent Joint SOF presence to shape operational environments; third, to provide expeditionary, quick reaction, task-organized Joint SOF teams.

These three objectives are enabled by five Keystone Capability Areas that we are developing in concert with our component forces. These Keystone Capability Areas represent concepts, innovations, and adaptations we must pursue to place SOF in the best posture to support U.S. objectives.

The first keystone capability is developing truly integrated SOF, with interagency and international partners that can address the spectrum of challenges in the operational environment. The second keystone is developing our SOF individuals to achieve higher order special skills for both direct and indirect approaches to defeating our adversaries. The third keystone is developing command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence capabilities that enable SOF to understand and comprehend the complex environment so that we can devise tailored, nuanced plans. The fourth keystone is developing logistics, acquisition, and resourcing capabilities to equip our team with best tools for them to operate. The last keystone is the development of intelligence and information capabilities across the full spectrum of multidisciplinary intelligence functions to enable our comprehension of the complex international environment.

Mr. SMITH. What type of Special Operator is needed to meet the national security challenges of the future and help our nation succeed in the Global War on Terror

(GWOT)? What attributes are required? How do we maintain a force consisting of these individuals?

Admiral OLSON. Our highly skilled and proficient people are the reason Special Operations Forces (SOF) are so unique, but they do not develop these attributes overnight. It takes years of development and experience. Through all our adaptations and innovations, we will maintain the focus on continuing to provide people who can do what no one else can do, in conditions no one else could operate.

To operate effectively in this war on terror, special operators need to be mature, able to comprehend the complex operational environment, adept at working alongside interagency and international partners, and able to operate in small teams or even alone. They must have highly developed intuition built from an understanding of other cultures and the variety of motivations and interests that drive peoples' actions. They must know how to knit together security, political, social, ideological, economic, and informational aspects of a particular operation to achieve the operational and strategic objectives given to them. Most of all, special operators need the ability to reason and determine what is the best thing to do in the most complex of circumstances. These attributes are highly nuanced, but they form the core of what makes our people special. The SOF warrior works at the tactical level, often with strategic outcomes.

Maintaining a force of these highly qualified individuals will be challenging but it is essential. The Joint Special Operations Warrior of the future who will be prepared and equipped for global expeditionary employment. USSOCOM is developing a prototype of the Joint SOF warrior system, blending individual skills with the proper equipment, weapons, mobility, support, and communications systems. We are also developing a Joint SOF career management system emphasizing selected educational, overseas and exchange or liaison assignments. We will continue to examine potential improvements to current selection and assessment processes to broaden the range of people joining Joint SOF. We will also look at our Joint Special Operations University so that it can direct and integrate educational initiatives and student management throughout USSOCOM and coordinate educational initiatives with other Department of Defense, interagency, civilian and foreign educational institutions.

USSOCOM takes the business of preparing its people very seriously. Our people are the essence of what we do, and we will continue to ensure we have the best.

Mr. SMITH. The MARSOC manning assessment and selection process is expected to be fully functional in May 2007. For cost-saving purposes and to incorporate already-existing training standards, have you examined the option of utilizing USASOC infrastructure for MARSOC schooling? If not, then why not? Does the current plan for the command include the creation of parallel and perhaps redundant accession pipeline? If so, then please explain how this is in the best interest of our nation?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, we are currently assessing all skill sets but not all assessments have been completed. Completed assessments include the combat medic career field. For combat medics, the increased training requirement will be accomplished through an increase in the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) training capacity. Other skill sets such as, Military Free-Fall and Combat Dive, are currently under review. We are working to incorporate those into the USASOC training pipeline where available. There are some limitations to training capacity increases that will require longer-term solutions and we are only beginning to look at those.

Mr. SMITH. What is your view of the Command's casualty rates in the GWOT? How does it compare with those of General Purpose Forces? How do these break down between the "white" and "black" SOF communities? Could you provide these figures to the subcommittee?

Admiral OLSON. Special Operations Forces (SOF) casualty rates are proportionately higher than conventional forces. Total SOF killed in action (KIA) in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)/Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) is 177 (3.7 percent of deployed SOF in the Area of Responsibility (AOR)). Comparatively, the conventional forces' KIA number is 3,176, which equates to 1.4 percent of conventional forces deployed in the AOR. Of the 177 SOF KIA, 11 were "black" SOF.

Mr. SMITH. Please share with us your views on the "1208 authority" provided by Congress. How has this improved SOF's ability to execute the GWOT? Would you please provide a detailed classified briefing on the use of this authority to date?

Admiral OLSON. In some cases, it has been used to better enable partner nation forces to support us in fixing and finishing terrorists. In others, it has been used to employ indigenous elements to gain access to hostile areas where U.S. forces cannot operate overtly and obtain information about potential terrorist targets which could not be obtained through conventional intelligence collection methods. In all

cases, 1208 has provided invaluable access and information which have saved American lives and contributed to the successful apprehension of high-value terrorist targets.

Mr. SMITH. Please tell us what modernization issues are your greatest concerns. Admiral OLSON. Since entering Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, U.S. service members have been exposed to evolving tactics by the opposition. One of the key methodologies for engaging Special Operations Forces (SOF) has been the use of the improvised explosive device (IED). Thus, we need to obtain ground vehicles capable of surviving these new and constantly evolving threats.

SOF has not modernized the standard combat rifle since the fielding of the original M4 carbine in 1994. The M4 was based on a conventional Army specification that did not take into account all the requirements of the SOF warfighter. Consequently, performance and sustainment issues with the weapon have emerged during its service life. To remedy this situation, the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) developed a requirement for a new assault rifle. This requirement, the SOF Combat Assault Rifle (SCAR), calls for a modular weapon system capable of firing current North Atlantic Treaty Organization standard 5.56mm and 7.62mm ammunition in two weapon variants labeled SCAR-Light (L) and SCAR-Heavy (H).

There are three major concerns associated with modernizing the SOF aviation fixed wing fleet: aging airframes and associated structural fatigue, obsolete avionics, and filling capability gaps. USSOCOM is addressing these concerns by recapitalizing the oldest SOF aircraft, fielding MC-130W aircraft, and accelerating the procurement of AC-130U center wing kits. Due to delays in Service-common avionics modernization programs, USSOCOM will need to execute service-life extension and replacement programs for our C-130 avionics.

To satisfy current mobility capability gaps, USSOCOM is fielding CV-22s to increase vertical lift capacity with significantly improved speed and range. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Global War on Terror (GWOT) Supplemental request includes accelerating procurement of five CV-22s. The capability gap for operational movement of small special operations teams in support of GWOT in austere and remote locations not serviced by reliable and safe commercial aviation service is being addressed by the Non-Standard Aviation program starting in FY 2008.

The major concern associated with modernizing the SOF Naval platforms is replacing the aging combatant craft. The need for a new combatant craft brings with it several areas of technological improvement such as signature reduction, utilization of advanced composites and new hull forms, better human systems integration to reduce shock and vibration, integrated bridge systems, and the need for enhanced communications.

Mr. SMITH. Please share with the subcommittee your view of the command's recruitment and retention efforts? What are the challenges and solutions?

Admiral OLSON. Recruiting and retention are Service responsibilities and we work closely with the Services to monitor and influence the process. The biggest challenge for non-prior Service recruiting is the available population of qualified applicants for military service. Figures that are widely accepted by recruiting experts show that approximately 28 percent of Americans in the target enlistment cohorts of 19-24 years of age qualify for military service. The three main qualification criteria are: medical, character, and mental. The Services, as well as universities and industry, are all competing for the same population. Successful recruiting has and will continue to be a cornerstone for Special Operations Forces (SOF).

More specifically, Navy recruiting continues to give us great support. The Chief of Naval Operations made Sea, Air, and Land (SEALs) the number one recruiting priority. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), in partnership with the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, continues to meet with success through the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB). Unlike SEALs, Army SOF are recruited almost exclusively from within the Service. The SORB is highly successful and allows us to better field candidates for Special Forces (SF) Assessment and Selection of the best qualified who volunteer whether they are prior Service and non-prior Service. In turn, there is a lower attrition rate at the SF Qualification Courses. The Air Force is meeting recruitment goals for Air Force special operators. The U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command is on target to be fully operational capable by December 2008. The Marine Corps is filling their authorizations that meet or exceed targets.

The challenges to recruiting and retention continue to be the operational tempo for our forces. Because many of our Army and Marine ground forces are committed overseas, the full complement of available in-Service SOF candidates are not optimally available for recruitment. To offset this challenge, the SORB intends to explore an in-theatre initiative by the end of the year to widen the recruitment pool.

Recruiting and retention continue to be areas that require vigilance and your support.

Mr. SMITH. The subcommittee has received anecdotal evidence of frustration with the nature of leadership at the mid- and lower-level ranks of SOF. a. What is your view of the leadership demands at these levels? b. What efforts do you have underway to strengthen leadership skills at these levels? c. Do these efforts include both compensatory and non-compensatory solutions?

Admiral OLSON. It is my view that leadership at all levels within the Special Operations Community is at an all time high due to the incredibly experienced and mature force we are currently fielding across the globe in combat and in peace. Without more specificity to anecdotal evidence referenced, I cannot address the frustrations addressed.

The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) relies upon the Services and Service Component training and education institutions, as well as SOF organizational leadership, to instill leadership values and serve as mentors for their junior officer and enlisted forces. USSOCOM also relies upon the Service and Joint Professional Military Education (PME) venues as opportunities for leadership development and discussion on leadership values and characteristics to take place. The command has SOF representation at many of the intermediate and senior Service colleges for military officers to assist in specific learning outcomes, however they are primarily directed at special operations-specific knowledge and meeting the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff-defined learning areas and objectives (CJCSI 1800.01C, Officer PME Policy). USSOCOM has developed a Joint SOF Leadership Competency Model as part of an education requirements analysis study in 2005. As SOF-specific courses are developed or revised in institutions like the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) or the USSOCOM Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), course developers and managers look to incorporate those as additional standards. The majority of the USAFSOS and JSOU courses are attended by junior and mid-level officer and enlisted special operations and SOF-enabling personnel. Of note, the Joint Staff is currently working on Joint Leadership competencies which, when approved and published, will be utilized and assessed by the special operations community.

Without specifics, it is difficult to speculate on anecdotal evidence as it relates to leadership. The welfare of our SOF personnel and their families are of primary importance to me.

Mr. SMITH. How do you compare U.S. Special Operations Forces with SOF in other countries, such as fielded by the United Kingdom, Israel, Jordan and Poland? Do each of these SOF communities have a distinct characteristics? How would you rate them and describe their respective attributes?

Admiral OLSON. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. SMITH. Please describe for the subcommittee frustrations you have about the current requirements and acquisition system for SOCOM, especially the challenge of coordinating and co-producing weapons with the larger Services.

Admiral OLSON. We must deal with two separate timelines in the requirements generation and approval process. We have our internal U.S. Special Operations Command process which is quite efficient. But the Joint Staff's Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process is much more time consuming, and not as conducive to rapid decisions on a routine basis.

From the acquisition perspective, we need to work with the Secretaries of the Military Departments to put in place overarching Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) addressing how we will do business together. These MOU would cover not only the respective acquisition processes, but also a variety of other business and administrative processes such as manpower management and participation in their requirements generation and budget processes. This particular deficiency was noted in the recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) analysis of our management of weapons system programs.

Mr. SMITH. What is your overall view about the current and projected growth of SOF? From a practical standpoint, can SOF grow beyond projected levels? If not, why not?

Admiral OLSON. The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is regularly reviews how we can increase our responsiveness and effectiveness to fight the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), as directed by the President and Secretary of Defense. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) provided Special Operations Forces (SOF) with the resources to right size and equip its force to prosecute the GWOT, but recruiting, selection and training creates challenges that have to be continually monitored to ensure force growth can be achieved. SOF can grow beyond projected

levels, but it will require a multi-faceted approach, starting with a coordinated effort in conjunction with the Services.

Prior to the 2006 QDR-approved growth, USSOCOM grew its school houses and instructor cadre in preparation for programmed growth. However, any growth beyond currently projected levels will require a re-evaluation of training capacity at SOF school houses.

Since the original QDR analysis, and in conjunction with our continuous review of our operational tempo, the GWOT has expanded SOF roles and missions, which in turn, has increased the strain on SOF forces. USSOCOM will continue to monitor this area, but a requirement for additional force structure could soon exist in the following areas: Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence (C4I); Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR); Combat Service Support (CSS); and Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). Additional air, maritime, and ground mobility will be required to support forward deployed operations and rotational deployments.

Mr. SMITH. What is your “tooth-to-tail ratio” in the community? Can it be adjusted?

Admiral OLSON. The U.S. Special Operations Command’s (USSOCOM) “tooth-to-tail ratio” is about 80 percent tooth, 20 percent tail. The tooth-to-tail ratio is appropriately balanced to support USSOCOM operational requirements. Adding or subtracting force structure could result in impacts on the ratio.

Mr. SMITH. Are current SOF incentive programs effective? Is there anything that should be down to enhance or modify them?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, the current Special Operations Forces (SOF) incentive programs are effective and require continual assessment to identify how they can be enhanced or modified. Our assessment of the incentive programs show initial popularity and success upon introduction. The programs are still in their early stages, but are making a positive difference in retention. Removal of these pays would have a disproportionately negative response than not having introduced them at all.

Mr. SMITH. What is your overall assessment of the interagency capability and level of effort? Do you have thoughts or recommendations about how it might be improved?

Admiral OLSON. Overall assessment of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) interagency capability is good. We have established our engagement efforts on two levels: a “home” team, Interagency Task Force (IATF), with liaison personnel from 11 different Department of Defense (DOD)— and non-DOD agencies; and an “away” team, Interagency Partnership Program (IAPP), with USSOCOM (to include the Joint Special Operations Command) personnel assigned to 19 different agencies.

There are several ways to improve interagency engagement. For example, exchanging liaison personnel is one key way to facilitate collaboration. USSOCOM personnel assigned to interagency locations are hand-picked for their Special Operations Forces (SOF), interagency, and Joint experience. We are currently re-evaluating our interagency program to determine if we’ve placed the right number of personnel at the right organizations. Sharing education and training opportunities is another way to improve interagency relationships. USSOCOM personnel attend agency orientation and training courses, and facilitate partner agency personnel attendance in USSOCOM courses. Another critical factor in ensuring interagency engagement is establishing interoperable communications channels. USSOCOM has developed an interagency website to provide key contact information and assist in collaboration. USSOCOM has also installed communications equipment at many of our partner agencies to provide video teleconference and secure communications connectivity. Finally, institutionalizing interactions will contribute greatly to improving the interagency process. These activities could include establishing common battle-rhythms, capitalizing on agency specific authorities, developing staff and senior leader visit programs, and attending partner conferences and key events.

Mr. SMITH. Do you foresee necessary SOF organizational growth beyond that identified in the QDR?

Admiral OLSON. Transforming Special Operations Forces (SOF) to be more responsive and adaptive to the current world situation will require the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to continuously make adjustments to its force structure. USSOCOM will continue to conduct detailed analysis of additional requirements as we realize the full capabilities, capacity, or potential shortfalls or gaps of the programmed Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) growth. We will evaluate our Active and Reserve Component force structure levels, striving to achieve the optimum force mix based on the additional increases in both the active and reserve components provided through the QDR. In addition, we will continue to coordinate with the Services to determine any future force structure requirements.

Mr. SMITH. What are the details of the SOF Retention Initiative and how will it affect your command? What specific problem or problems were identified to be addressed by this number?

Admiral OLSON. The Special Operations Forces (SOF) retention incentive initiatives are primarily the Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) and the Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) which target retention of our senior enlisted and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) SOF operators. The CSRB is offered to operators between 19 and 25 years of service. This target population is critical at the tactical and operational level because they provide senior enlisted leadership, guidance, and training to junior operators. This program provides an incentive for these highly skilled and trained leaders to remain on active duty beyond retirement eligibility. If an operator accepts a 6-year contract to the 25 years of service point, he will receive \$150,000 upfront. The amounts decrease significantly on a sliding scale with declining years of obligation: 5 years would amount to \$75,000; 4 years would amount to \$50,000; 3 years would amount to \$30,000; 2 years would amount to \$18,000; and 1 year would amount to \$8,000. The AIP targets the E-8 and E-9 senior enlisted population. They receive \$750 per month.

Our current inventory of SOF operators is critical as we achieve Quadrennial Defense Review growth. The introduction of these programs provided both measurable gains and stability in Special Forces (SF), Sea, Air, Land (SEAL), Combat Controllers (CCTs), and Pararescue Jumpers (PJs) inventory. In communities with possible shortfalls, the introduction of the CSRB increased continuation by 10% in targeted enlisted Special Forces and SEALs. For Air Force CCTs and PJs, the effects are not as clear cut. Unlike SF and SEALs, Air Force SOF are not separate communities within the Air Force, but the incentive initiatives are having a positive overall effect. As with senior enlisted operators, SF Chief Warrant Officers retention is extremely critical in the Operation Detachment Alpha teams. In Fiscal Year 2007, 83% of eligibles signed up for the CSRB. The AIP is also a critical program and designed for the highly skilled, extensively trained, and experienced senior enlisted and CWOs. We have invested heavily in their training and need to retain them. As a population, their skill sets are very sought after in the lucrative private sector.

Mr. SMITH. Please tell us more about the "assessment and selection" process and the identification of the proper "aptitude and attitude" for potential SOF-personnel.

Admiral OLSON. Assessment and selection is done at the component level. USSOCOM assures the standardization of training for SOF selected personnel. Assessment and selection for each MOS varies.

Mr. SMITH. Does SOCOM have a training modernization plan? If so, what is it?

Admiral OLSON. Modernization of training for USSOCOM is based on the Joint training system model and hinges on the recapitalization and modernization of the operational forces.

Mr. SMITH. How has your component command supported or taken steps to execute the vision contained in the Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2006?

General WAGNER. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) remains globally engaged having conducted missions to over 60 countries in the past year. Each of these engagement missions have been crafted by Geographic Combatant Commanders, Ambassadors, Theater Special Operations Commands and United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to advance priority Theater and USSOCOM missions; 50 of these countries were for Theater Security Cooperation Programs, and 32 countries were for operational missions. USASOC's Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces are experts in both advancing U.S. interests and objectives; and, developing the capabilities of partner nations through regional engagement. The Capstone Concept for Special Operations (CCSO) 2006 brings excellent focus and direction to the global engagement strategy which will enhance an already robust and successful engagement program.

The CCSO outlines the Future Operating Environment for Special Operations Forces (SOF) and lists USSOCOM's three strategic objectives: Department of Defense Global War on Terror (GWOT) Lead, Global Presence, and Global Expeditionary Force. During Fiscal Year 2006-2007, USASOC worked closely with the USSOCOM Center for Knowledge and Futures conducting wargaming and experimentation on these strategic objectives to assist in developing implementing actions. USASOC is currently involved in seven initiatives that support the CCSO:

Joint Futures Wargaming. Unified Quest 07 (UQ 07, completed May 2007) and Unified Quest 08 (UQ 08), Title X wargames co-sponsored by U.S. Army, U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) and USSOCOM. USASOC Futures Center was USSOCOM's Executive Agent for UQ 07 and is again for UQ 08. Wargame objectives for UQ 08 include examining the effects of evolving operational command and campaign design initiatives on Global SOF Posture and the Joint Expeditionary

SOF concept. UQ 08 also contains the February 4–8, 2008 USSOCOM-led Irregular Warfare Seminar Wargame, with robust USASOC participation.

Joint Futures Experimentation. Futures Expeditionary SOF Experiment 08 (FESOF 08) is a USSOCOM Futures Experiment that focuses on the CCSO's Joint Expeditionary SOF strategic objective. USASOC Futures Center is USSOCOM's executive agent for FESOF 08. The experiment is projected for execution in May 2008, and will provide quantitative analysis of joint SOF collaborative planning capability using the Command Post of the Future.

Future Operating Environment (FOE). The USASOC FOE is the Futures Center's effort to simplify the JFCOM Joint Operating Environment document into a condensed readable version that is applicable to Army SOF. Guidance contained in this document was derived from the CCSO, and provides the Army SOF component of the overarching USSOCOM FOE.

Army SOF Enabling Concept Development. USASOC Futures Center's Concept Division is developing the Army SOF portion of the CCSO's five Joint Special Operations Keystone Capability Areas.

Operational and Experimentation Support to activation of Joint Special Operations Group 08–PACOM 1.

Staff participation in USSOCOM's Global SOF Posture workgroups to identify and solve challenges related to developing and maintaining an expeditionary SOF capability. The capabilities include logistical support, personnel management, movement of personnel and equipment and command and control.

Irregular Warfare. USASOC staff directorates are participating in the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept initiative, which has now become a Capabilities Based Assessment. In support of this USSOCOM initiative, USASOC is currently conducting an Unconventional Warfare Functional Area Assessment.

Mr. SMITH. What is your view of recruiting and retention? a. What is the general quality of recruits and is there a need to improve recruiting methods? What steps are in place to make such improvements? b. What is the general state of retention? What steps have been taken or need to be taken to maintain an effective retention situation?

General WAGNER. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. SMITH. Please tell me about the linguistic skills of the Army Special Operations Force (ARSOF) community. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the command in this area? How are you trying to address the weaknesses?

General WAGNER. It is important to understand our requirement for, and our approach to language. Our expectation is that our Special Forces (SF) Soldiers will leave our training institution with a "working knowledge" of a language. We do not provide the training necessary to be a "linguist". . . we want our Soldiers to be Special Operators; not linguists. Our SF Soldiers, for example, are trained on numerous Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) such as; SF Combat Medic, SF Combat Engineer, SF Communications, SF Weapons Sergeant and others. In addition to the extensive training involved in these specialties, they will be regionally aligned throughout their career. They must understand the culture they will work in and they have functional language skills in their MOS specialty: a working knowledge of the language. To achieve that "working knowledge" we train to a minimum standard of 1/1/1 on the Defense Language Institute (DLI) Scale; this is up from the previous goal of 0+/0+. Since 2004, when we raised the standard and transformed our program, 95 percent of our SF Soldiers have achieved the new higher standard with no increase in training time. As a means of comparison, our personnel whose MOS is to be a "linguist," are trained to a minimum level of 2/2/2 at the DLI. For example, the "signals intercept" personnel in our formations are trained at DLI. Additionally, we provide for sustainment and enhancement training at the unit locations. Many of our Soldiers, with the benefit of numerous deployments, the incentive of additional pay, and additional study, improve their qualifications. Current OPTEMPO and out of sector deployments have had an effect on our language skills.

Mr. SMITH. Please provide greater detail on your statement that ARSOF's recruiting effort is "uniquely tied to the overall health of the Army." What exactly do you mean?

General WAGNER. Most of our Soldiers are recruited from other units within the Army. If the "pool" from which we select our Soldiers is healthy, in terms of numbers and quality, then our recruiting will reflect that. This is also true for our low-density Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) which are often critical throughout the entire Army.

Mr. SMITH. Please explain and describe the "change in training venue" for Special Forces Warrant Officers and why this is expected to increase end strength figures for that community?

General WAGNER. All Special Forces Warrant Officer (MOS 180A) training requirements are now conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, by the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (JFKSWCS). Previously, the training was split between Army's Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS) at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and Special Forces specific training at Fort Bragg. Unlike the larger Army; all SF Warrant Officer Candidates must have first served as a Special Forces Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) in one of the Special Forces Groups. Thus, on average, they start Warrant Officer training with an average of over 10 years service. Much of what was taught at Fort Rucker has already been taught to our NCOs through the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), and through their years of experience as a Special Forces NCO. This new format (all training at Fort Bragg) eliminates redundant training and acknowledges the NCOs' professional and life experiences. Additionally, although the course remains 15 weeks in length, the training is now tailored to our specific requirements. Further, since our Warrant Officer candidates no longer have to wait in a queue for a class date at Fort Rucker, we can enroll the candidates soon after their request is approved, and we can get them fully trained: frequently up to 30 weeks sooner. All of these factors result in a more efficient, effective and attractive course. Since inception of this new design, the 180A program has exceeded its Fiscal Year 2006 and Fiscal Year 2007 recruiting missions—after having failed to meet mission requirements the previous three years.

Mr. SMITH. Please provide your views on the low manning figures for National Guard Captains and Warrant Officers (34% and 26% respectively). Why do you believe these are so low? Please explain how the command is addressing this situation.

General WAGNER. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. SMITH. Please share with us the plan to improve the training through-put problem associated with shortfalls in MH-47 personnel.

General WAGNER. A number of major factors impact the MH-47 personnel throughput: increased pilot authorizations due to growth, ongoing transition from MH-47D/E to MH-47G aircraft, and operational tempo. In December 2006, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (SOAR (A)) received Department of Defense authorization to grow from 2,437 Soldiers to 2,993 Soldiers. This allowed the 160th SOAR (A) to organize into four battalions, provide them with equipment for another Company of 10 MH-60s, and authorized an increase of 556 Soldiers to round out the staff, maintenance, and aircrew growth to increase the ratio of crews to aircraft. This 556 Soldier growth will occur as depicted with 84 Soldiers in Fiscal Year 2008, and the remaining 472 Soldiers through the Fiscal Year 2012 Future Years Defense Program.

The planned growth over the next five years will cause the 160th SOAR (A) to annually chase personnel fill rates to meet the pace of new authorizations. However, the gradual increase of personnel authorizations over the five year period was specifically designed to give the Regiment the ability to manage that growth. Bottom line: this is "good news" as we have been authorized to grow which is essential to supporting mission requirements.

As of September 2007, the 160th SOAR (A) has fielded 38 of 61 authorized MH-47G aircraft, 8 of which are assigned to the training of new MH-47G crews.

The Special Operations Aviation Training Company (SOATC), 160th SOAR (A) can currently train 32 MH-47G pilots and 32 Flight Engineers per year. Beginning in January 2008, they will increase throughput up to 48 MH-47G pilots and 48 Non-rated crewmembers per year to keep pace with the programmed growth of the Regiment. However, the Regiment expects difficulty filling some pilot training seats. Army Aviation GWOT unit rotations complicate assessment and assignment of qualified pilots. To help reduce these new pilot assignment issues, the command must continuously dialog with other Combat Aviation Brigade Commanders.

The 160th SOAR (A) is addressing three areas that challenge the training through-put issue: availability of aircraft, training time, and instructor availability.

The availability of training aircraft will be a constant challenge until all MH-47G aircraft are fully fielded in July 2011. This requires the 160th SOAR (A) to meticulously manage its aircraft. SOATC is conducting the last MH-47E training class and will soon focus on training a pure fleet of MH-47G pilots and crewmembers. Reducing the MH-47 series aircraft to one type will increase overall aircraft availability through the reduction in maintenance and trainer overhead. While it has taken time, the 160th SOAR (A) is beginning to reap the benefits of transformation from 3 types of MH-6s, 4 types of MH-60s, and 3 types of MH-47s to a single airframe of each type.

Training time continues to be an issue while the 160th SOAR (A) remains heavily engaged in the GWOT. Every increase in the deployed number of combat aircraft

ultimately affects the ability to train our Special Operations Aviators and Crewmembers to exacting standards. The initial training base remains relatively unaffected, but we experience training setbacks as low density/high demand operational assets, such as MC-130 tankers, are committed in support of the GWOT. Our mission crews have great difficulty apportioning continuation training time as they balance a GWOT cycle of rotation at a nearly 1:1 rate. Without a reduction in OPTEMPO, mission crews will continue to get less than optimal environmental training during their dwell periods. The result is a force that is highly proficient in the environments presented in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Instructor limitations are addressed through increases to SOATC's contractor support base. The primary training base within SOATC is the complement of Civil/Military Instructors (CMIs), retired Special Operations Aviators who continue to pass on a wealth of knowledge to newly assigned aviators—holding them to the demanding standards expected of the 160th SOAR (A).

Mr. SMITH. The fill-rate within the field of psychological operations is unsatisfactory, especially at the rank of Captain. Is this a recruiting problem, a schoolhouse through-put problem, or retention problem? As the proponent of this branch, what is your command doing to assist with efforts to address this situation?

General WAGNER. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. SMITH. Please describe in detail the metamorphosis of the Special Operations Sustainment Brigade, especially as some elements will be utilized to form the five new Special Forces Battalions and three Ranger Support Companies.

General WAGNER. Based on Lessons learned from the Global War on Terrorism, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Transformation Campaign Plan, and the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Special Operations Forces (SOF) Logistics Study, USASOC redesigned and reorganized its organic Combat Support Service (CSS) force structure. The new CSS force structure supports expeditionary Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), provides early, rapidly deployable CSS force structure, provides logistical staying power to deployed ARSOF by tying into the operational theater support structure, and structures ARSOF CSS units so they are co-located and habitually train with their supported units.

Prior to transformation, the USASOC CSS force structure consisted of centralized organizational level support from detachments and platoons organic to tactical units, direct support from the 528th Special Operations Support Battalion (SOSB), and operational level support from Theater Units coordinated by the Special Operations Support Command (SOSCOM). This CSS structure was inadequate to provide sustained CSS to deployed ARSOF.

To alleviate the shortfall in organizational support to Special Forces Groups (SFG), the Group Service Detachments were merged with the Special Forces Forward Support Companies of the 528th SOSB to create five Special Forces Group (SFG) Support Battalions transitioning to a decentralized structure. The Group Support Battalions are now assigned to and located with the SFG, and are commanded by CSS Lieutenant Colonels. In the Ranger Regiment, Ranger Support Platoons were transformed to Ranger Support Companies, organic to and co-located with each Ranger Battalion, to provide the required tactical logistical support. These companies are commanded by CSS Captains. Additionally, a Ranger Support Operations Detachment was added to the 75th Ranger Regiment Special Troops Battalion to provide field grade oversight to the logistics planning and operations in the Regiment.

SOSCOM was reorganized to create the Sustainment Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) (SB(SO)(A)) which provides synchronization of logistical operations and planning, and battlefield command and control for logistical and Combat Health Support operations in support of USASOC or a SOF Joint Task Force. The most critical component of this command is the ARSOF Liaison Element (ALE). ALEs are organic to the SB(SO)(A), in direct support of the five Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC), with duty at the Theater Army Service Component Command (ASCC). The ALE coordinates ARSOF CSS requirements with the ASCC in accordance with ASCC Title 10 or Executive Agent responsibilities.

Increasing CSS structure in concert with the growth of Special Forces and Ranger units remains a challenge. The transformation of CSS units in USASOC has improved support in war and garrison.

Mr. SMITH. Special Forces Warrant Officer training and commissioning is now conducted entirely at Ft. Bragg. Would you help us understand the significance of this approach by contrasting it with how it was done previously? How is this more effective and cost-efficient?

General WAGNER. It is more effective because we can now include more training relevant to being a Special Forces Warrant Officer. It is more cost efficient because there is less time required to complete all the necessary training (transition from Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) to Chief Warrant Officer) and there is less travel involved. Previously, once NCO were selected for the Warrant Officer program, they typically waited weeks or months for a class date at Fort Rucker, Alabama's, Army Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS). After completing the 4 weeks of WOCS, they returned to their unit to await a class date for the 11 week Special Forces Warrant Officer training course at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Now, they make one trip to Fort Bragg where we design, control, and schedule the training to optimum effect.

Mr. SMITH. Please explain the vision of the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion for increasing the number of recruits for USASOC. It is more than a matter of increasing the number of recruiters, correct?

General WAGNER. We recruit the majority of our Soldiers from existing Army units—such as Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). The Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB) is the only recruiting battalion in the Army focused solely on recruiting in-service Soldiers. Our vision is to have recruiting teams, augmented with trained Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations personnel, co-located with the major concentrations of the Army's combat units. We also need the ability to quickly move recruiters from one installation to another as the availability of potential recruits ebbs and flows with BCT deployments. This management is provided by a Battalion command and control structure that understands this mission and SOF unique requirements. So yes, it is not about increasing the number of recruits—we have not increased the overall target number of recruits in three years. It is more about giving as many Soldiers as possible access to accurate information about careers in Army Special Operations, and then getting the right recruits to the training.

Mr. SMITH. Special Forces soldiers must achieve a passing language rating of "1, 1, 1" in reading, speaking and understanding to graduate. What was the standard before? Was there previously no language requirement for an SF soldier?

General WAGNER. Previously there was a goal of 0+/0+. If a Soldier failed to achieve this goal they were still awarded the Green Beret and sent to their unit with instructions to continue their language study. The new 1/1/1 standard provides both a better initial capability as well as a stronger base from which to improve.

Our approach is that we teach 10 core languages based on current and projected requirements. We now make language assignments immediately after a Soldier's selection for Special Forces Training, doing so based on Defense Language Aptitude Battery exam scores and personal interviews. Then, we reinforced the learning process through the use of technologies such as Rosetta Stone and grouping students for training based on languages and regions of the world. We now incorporate language and cultural training throughout the Special Forces Qualification Course training pipeline, and we incorporate language-capable role players in our Culmination Exercise, Robin Sage.

Definition of 1/1/1:

Reading: Sufficient comprehension to read very simple connected written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript.

Listening: Sufficient comprehension to understand utterances about basic survival needs, and minimum courtesy and travel requirements.

Speaking: Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.

Mr. SMITH. What modernization concerns keep you awake at night?

General WAGNER. [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. SMITH. How has your component command supported or taken steps to execute the vision contained in the Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2006?

Admiral KERNAN. To achieve our national strategic goal of defeating terrorist extremism and creating a global environment inhospitable to terrorist extremists, NAVSOF is increasing its capability to wage Irregular Warfare (IW) against Fourth Generation Warfare adversaries. Naval Special Operation Forces (NAVSOF) will continue to provide the nation with the premier maritime special operations (SO) capability; uniquely trained to access maritime environments to conduct SO. NAVSOF's highest priority is to conduct IW against the global network of terrorist and insurgent groups. Much of this capability is being sourced from our two newest commands, Support Activity Teams ONE and TWO (Questions #8 refers). Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) recruits, organizes, trains, equips, deploys, and sustains NAVSOF to conduct UW, FID, Counterterrorism (CT), Counterproliferation (CP), Direct Action (DA), and Special Reconnaissance (SR) in support of GWOT and

other operations as directed. To adapt NAVSOF to more effectively prosecute the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), NSWC has taken steps in the areas of specialized training, technology development, and equipment procurement to improve our Find-Fix-Finish-Exploit-Analyze (F3EA), Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Unconventional Warfare (UW) capabilities.

Mr. SMITH. What is your view of recruiting and retention? a. What is the general quality of recruits and is there a need to improve recruiting methods? What steps are in place to make such improvements?

Admiral KERNAN.

Recruit Quality:

Overall the quality of recruits is satisfactory with some recent improvements noted. Within the last year we have some interesting trends. On the one hand, we see increased physical preparation. Much stricter quality control has been established in the pipeline; we are seeing a much lower number of candidates who fail the basic Physical Screening Test upon arrival at BUD/S. In addition, an increased number of recruits are achieving higher scores on their PST. There are several possible explanations for this. First of all, there is more information available to potential SEAL candidates about the training pipeline than ever before, which obviously helps candidates prepare more effectively. Recent initiatives such as the CNRC contracted Mentor Program, which gives Delayed Entry Program (DEP) personnel access to contracted retired SEALs, also appears to be paying significant dividends in helping candidates prepare physically and mentoring.

On the other hand, we are still seeing students that show up for SEAL training that are not serious candidates.

Recruiting Methods:

There is a need to continue to improve recruiting methods to ensure those candidates with physical and mental attributes conducive to success in the Naval Special Warfare community are exposed to NSW career opportunities. Based on analysis of years of training data, we know that successful SEAL training graduates generally do well on the Physical Screening Test and have participated in competitive sports where teamwork, commitment and mental toughness are keys to success. In light of that, we are working with CNRC to expand the NSW-developed "Navy SEAL Fitness Challenge" that has already been piloted in several venues throughout the country, using the NSW PST is used as an athletic event. The SEAL Fitness Challenge is envisioned as a campaign with a local high school component and regional and national events that enliven interest in young athletes. When combined with both a targeted media effort and a contracted relationship with a national high school coaches organization, we have high hopes for this initiative.

Other important recruiting/accessions efforts that are underway and require continued effort:

- Media outreach to support targeted marketing within the US population and the Fleet. While there are some good supporting media initiatives, more work is required in this arena.

- Establishment of a BUD/S preparation course to better prepare SEAL candidates. Pilot course expected to start in November 2007.

- Psychological testing of SEAL candidates to complement current physical screening. A very promising test battery has already been developed and tested on four classes of BUD/S students. Further testing is planned at RTC and at Recruiting Stations. Analysis of implementation options has started recently.

Mr. SMITH. b. What is the general state of retention? What steps have been taken or need to be taken to maintain an effective retention situation?

Admiral KERNAN. b. The overall health of SEAL retention is very good. Overall SEAL retention for FY07 is 86.4% compared with 83.2% during FY02 (stop-loss) year. Below is a comparison between FY04 and FY07 as we have seen a steady increase each year since FY04.

	FY04	FY07	Percent +/-
Zone A	67.8	96.3	+28.5
Zone B	78.6	86.2	+7.6
Zone C	68.3	81.3	+13.0
Zone D	97.3	99.1	+1.8
Zone E	45.5	39.1	-6.4
TOTAL	70.6	86.4	+15.8

Incentives: Increased SDAP and SRB while adding AIP and CSRB.

CSRB should remain in effect. Reducing funding for CSRB during this time would have a negative effect not only on Zone E but those members in Zones C and D. Recommend keeping SDAP at current level and increasing SRB level.

Mr. SMITH. "WARCOM" is at 87% manning levels for enlisted SEALs and you expect this to drop to 77%. What are all the causes of this drop?

Admiral KERNAN. Current manning level for enlisted SEALs is 94%. On 1 October 2007, 150+ additional SEAL billets will come online. Due to the rapid manpower growth and rate of graduation, we expect manning levels to drop to approximately 77%. This will be mitigated by SEAL production process efforts which will increase SEAL qualification training graduates and execute the planned growth.

Mr. SMITH. The Command has increased annual accession efforts to address the need for more enlisted and officer personnel. How is this being accomplished? Why was this not initiated earlier?

Admiral KERNAN. The Navy has gone to great lengths to establish policies, offer retention incentives and improve the manning of what is one of the most critical communities in the Global War on Terrorism. This occurred recently due to 2006 QDR directed growth. Naval Special Warfare focused Navy actions for recruiting and retention:

- The significant increases in bonuses for enlisted personnel such as the \$40K enlistment bonuses for SEAL recruits and the \$60K, \$75K, \$75K Zone A, B & C Selective Reenlistment Bonuses which has improved overall reenlistment rates by 6%.

- Adding Assignment Incentive Payments for Naval Special Warfare personnel over 25 Years of Service in non USSOCOM billets.

- The creation of the Naval Special Warfare Center recruiting directorate led by a SEAL O-6 to assist Commander, Naval Recruiting Command (CNRC) with the great challenge of recruiting young men with the determination and ability to succeed as SEALs.

To combat recruiting discrepancies and Recruit Training Command attrition NAVPERS, Commander, Naval Recruiting Command and Commander, Naval Special Warfare Center have been working together to implement several actions including the following:

- * In January 2006, Chief of Naval Personnel issued a Special Warfare/Special Operations accessions planning order to provide strategic direction.

- * In March 2006, CNRC recruiting districts administered swim tests with the PST prior to offering the recruit a SEAL, SWCC, Diver or EOD Challenge contract.

- * In March 2006, CNRC began hiring former SEAL/EOD personnel as contractors to work at CNRC recruiting districts as the Naval Special Warfare and Special Operations program coordinators. As of May 2006, 14 of 31 contractors have been hired.

- * Naval Special Warfare detailed a SEAL Master Chief to CNRC Headquarters. In addition, a Navy Master diver and a Master EOD technician will be joining the CNRC team in order to better align recruiting policy and goals.

- * The Navy established the SEAL (Special Operator-SO) and Special Warfare Combatant Crewman (Special Warfare Boat Operator-SB) rating in October 2006. Aligned with Sea Warrior, the rating enables Special Warfare/Special Operations to work solely in their own rating and compete for promotion against their respective peer groups.

- * Established a Special Warfare/Special Operations recruiting goal for Naval Recruiting District.

- * Organized a cross-functional working group to attempt to develop psychological screening tests for identifying recruits with a higher chance of success in Special Warfare/Special Operations.

- * In February 2006, CNRC raised the enlistment bonus for SEALs from \$18K to \$40K; EOD from \$15K to \$30K; Navy Diver from \$12K to \$25K; SWCC from \$12K to \$18K.

Additional Navy initiatives implemented to improve retention:

- * Implemented SOF Critical Skills Retention Bonus on 08 February 2005.
- * Increased Special Duty Assignment Pay \$450 per month May 2007.

- * Began paying Assignment Incentive Pay to Sailors with 25 years or more of service as of 1 January 2005.

- * Implemented targeted Selective Reenlistment Bonus payments in order to improve retention rates.

RADM Kernan is chairing an NSW/NRC/NSTC process that is working to identify and implement policies and business practices that optimize a candidates chances for success in SEAL training while improving efficiency of the entire process. BUD/

S did have some success decreasing attrition; and due to the large amount of recruits that CNRC has accessed we have added another BUD/S class during FY07.

The Navy's FY06 goal for enlisted recruiting was 1400 and we did not meet it, producing only 829 SEAL candidates. However, the Navy has revamped its business practices on SEAL and SWCC recruiting and pipeline training. Changes such as the implementation of the SEAL and SWCC ratings (as of October 2006) are streamlining the time it takes for a recruit to get to BUD/S. The average timeline for a recruited BUD/S candidate to complete all SEAL training to earn his warfare designation is 18–24 months, so the effects of our changes in FY06 have had direct positive results in FY07 (1222 recruited for a goal of 1397—87%). Additionally, the hiring of the ex-Special Warfare and Special Operations Sailors by CNRC will continue to improve both quality and quantity of the recruits.

For Officer growth, Naval Special Warfare has increased annual accessions from 63 to 83. Accessions have been increased across all commissioning programs—U.S. Naval Academy, ROTC, and Officer Candidate School—and also in the number of Lateral Transfers from other communities within the U.S. Navy.

Mr. SMITH. The total number of SEALs—enlisted and officer—seems low when compared with the total manning figure of 47,000 in the SOF community. What is the tail-to-tooth ratio of Naval Special Warfare Command?

Admiral KERNAN. Tail-to-tooth ratio is 86%.

TOOTH (Total SEALs/SWCC Officers and Enlisted):	2729
TAIL (Total Technicians—Support Personnel):	3181
Total TOOTH and TAIL:	5910
TOOTH to TAIL Ratio:	2729/3181 86%

Mr. SMITH. Why is the greatest manning shortfall found at the mid-grade, or O-4 level? What is the cause of this?

Admiral KERNAN. Our shortage of O-4's has been created by a marked increase of SEAL Lieutenant Commander billets in a short five year timeframe, from FY03 to FY08 SEAL Officer Programmed Authorizations (OPA) have increased from 101 to 200 (99%). The current 97 SEAL Lieutenant Commanders would have filled those 101 FY03 OPA requirements very well but the 99% increase in O-4 requirements cannot be filled without time to grow Naval Special Warfare Lieutenant Commanders from the Ensign and Lieutenant Junior Grade pay grades. In an effort to meet the SEAL mid grade officer requirements Navy has increased SEAL accessions every year since 2002 and is diligently working to retain the current inventory with retention incentives such as Officer Critical Skills Retention Bonus.

Mr. SMITH. Please describe in greater detail the current and planned "Special Warfare Combatant Crew," or "SWICK," curricula reforms mentioned in your testimony. What do these entail and how do they affect standards and future skillsets within the community?

Admiral KERNAN. In early 2006, Commander Naval Special Warfare Center initiated a bottom-up review of the SWCC basic training pipeline (Basic Crewman Training and Crewman Qualification Training COIs). Upon completion of this review, the recommended changes were implemented in order to improve course efficiency and effectiveness. The changes include:

Basic Crewman Training (BCT): COI duration reduced from eight weeks to seven weeks (two weeks indoctrination and five weeks of BCT training). Weapons Training, Land Navigation, and Water Rescue phases were moved to the Crewman Qualification Training (CQT) COI. This shift allowed trainees greater opportunity to enhance individual skills required to complete training without changing the passing standards of performance.

Crewman Qualification Training (CQT): COI duration increased from 12 weeks to 14 weeks; as noted above, Weapons Training, Land Navigation, and Water Rescue phases were moved to the Crewman Qualification Training (CQT) COI.

Further changes were implemented IOT maximize training cadre capability and SWCC basic training pipeline efficiency. CQT classes are now composed of the graduates from two BCT classes. As a result, there are now a total of six BCT classes, vice four, conducted each year; and a total of three CQT classes conducted each year vice four previously.

Taken together, the above noted changes to the SWCC training pipeline decreased attrition rates without lowering training standards.

Mr. SMITH. Please explain the concept of and plan for the Support Activity Teams.

Admiral KERNAN. In February 2005, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command (COMNAVSPECWARCOM), directed establishment of two Support Activities to provide more robust, tactical-level intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance

(ISR) capability and capacity in support of Naval Special Warfare Command operations.

On December 7, 2006, Naval Special Warfare Group One commissioned Support Activity (SUPPACT) One in San Diego, CA. Support Activity Two was commissioned 19 July, 2007, in Virginia Beach, VA. The Support Activities are commanded by SEAL Commanders (pay-grade O-5).

SUPPACTS accomplish their missions by operating like other conventional Army and Marine Corps ground support units—by integrating and organizing multi-discipline, combat support personnel with administrative, logistical, and analytical skills to support SEAL combat elements. Naval Special Warfare units have been receiving this type of combat support and combat service support on an extended basis from the Navy's Individual Augmentee Program. Establishment of SUPPACTs enables Naval Special Warfare Command to permanently assign personnel to provide necessary, dedicated support at the earliest opportunity in the NSW Inter-Deployment Training Cycle—thus providing better, more integrated support to combat operators. Similar to other Services' combat and combat service support, these personnel also coordinate and deconflict tactical-level operations with other DoD units.

Increasing and focusing subject matter expertise at the tactical level of Naval Special Warfare operations fulfills the intent of the 2004 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) by engaging non-SOF forces in support of SOF's prosecution of the GWOT and enabling more SEALs to focus on combat operations.

Mr. SMITH. What is your understanding of how the Navy's Chief of Naval Personnel will execute the stated goal of pursuing a "focused and targeted enlisted SEAL recruiting" as his number one priority?

Admiral KERNAN. My understanding and hope is that the current emphasis placed on SEAL recruiting will be supported well into the future. Some important aspects of that current emphasis:

- SEAL recruiting clearly established and promulgated as CNP's #1 priority.
- Mandatory PST in DEP. (prior to 2006, no swim was included)
- Contracted NSW/NSO mentors in each of the 26 NRDs (majority are retired SEALs)
- NRD recruiters given hard goals for SEAL candidates
- Establishment of the BUD/S preparation course at Great Lakes (Nov. 2007)
- Development of a psychological test battery intended for SEAL screening (ongoing)
- Support to the SEAL fitness challenge program and a partnership with the national high school coaches association to help best identify candidates with the mental and physical attributes valued in the SEAL community.

In addition, within the constraints of a stretched NSW force, I have endeavored to help with SEAL recruiting efforts wherever possible. I established a NSW Recruiting Directorate (NSW RD), headed by a SEAL O-6, that serves as a leveraging force to help focus recruiting efforts, utilizing the lessons learned from many years of tracking successful and unsuccessful SEAL candidates. In addition to developing the Navy SEAL Fitness Challenge concept, the NSW RD has facilitated SEAL presence at a multitude of important recruiting efforts and has expanded NSW's media reach considerably.

Mr. SMITH. What exactly is the attrition rate at BUD/S? Might this be improved?

Admiral KERNAN. The historic attrition rate for BUD/S is 74% for all students and 78% for enlisted students. Over the period of the last two years the attrition rate was 70% for all students and 74% for enlisted (This is over a 15% improvement in success rate). We expect this attrition rate to continue to improve as we improve our targeted recruiting programs and as we implement a Pre-BUD/S preparatory course.

Mr. SMITH. The graduation rate in 2006 increased by 6%. Is this a sign of future rates? If so, why?

Admiral KERNAN. We believe the graduation rate increase experienced in 2006 is an indication of future rates, and our expectation is that future graduation rates will continue to improve for several reasons. First of all, we have recently implemented a professional mentorship program at BUD/S that we believe will not only help reduce DOR attrition, but will also help us develop a more mature and mentally prepared SEAL. Additionally, recent Navy efforts at targeted recruiting through events such as the SEAL Fitness Challenge will help us attract better qualified candidates that have demonstrated the attributes necessary for success during BUD/S training and a Naval Special Warfare career. Attributes such as goal-setting, self-discipline, and the desire to succeed. Last, the Pre-BUD/S preparatory course at Great Lakes will give young men the opportunity to properly prepare themselves physically and mentally for the rigors of SEAL training under the guid-

ance of mentors and physical training experts. We expect this will have an almost immediate impact on the number of medical losses due to improper physical preparation (injuries such as stress fractures) as well as reduce the number of physical performance failures during basic SEAL training.

Mr. SMITH. What is the attrition rate of recruits prior to their actual start of BUD/S? Why is this so great?

Admiral KERNAN. Historic attrition during our Indoctrination Course is approximately 10%. The FY 2007 rate went up to 25%. Many students quit before they start the First Phase of training. We believe there are two factors contributing to this trend.

First, as of October 2006 when the enlisted SO rate was established, Basic Underwater Demotion/SEAL (BUD/S) training is now a Navy "A" school. Prior to that point, all of our recruited BUD/S students (those not lateral transferring from the fleet) went to a "source rate" A school prior to SEAL training. Pre-BUD/S attrition in that part of the pipeline was spread out among a variety of A schools and was not well tracked. Now, that attrition has moved to BUD/S and is much more visible.

Second, we believe that we are seeing an unintended consequence of the continued high priority that CNRC is placing on filling the SEAL schoolhouse. Aggressive recruiting campaigns coupled with significant financial incentives to candidates that complete the SEAL training pipeline have attracted some percentage of students that would not have otherwise considered being a SEAL. We know that a true passion for a NSW career is critical to success in the pipeline; when a young man's motivation is based primarily on other factors, his lack of commitment often becomes evident in early attrition.

Mr. SMITH. Your command seems correctly focused on the recruitment and throughput phases of SEAL development and also targeted solutions for retention. But what about "non-compensation" types of solutions, such as leadership development and improved business practices and better approaches to operationalizing the force? A recent reform effort called "Naval Special Warfare-21" successfully "operationalized the operators." What about "operationalizing the direct and administrative support" to SEALS? Are there opportunities to improve WARCOC's operational support to SEALS?

Admiral KERNAN. Prior to Naval Special Warfare 21 (NSW 21), three SEAL Teams on each coast would deploy SEAL Platoons to Geographic Combatant Commanders based upon validated theater requirements and availability of forces. The SEAL Teams were organized geographically so that a number of platoons from each Team would be required to fulfill existing commitments.

NSW 21 created a fourth SEAL Team on each coast and reduced the number of platoons at each Team from eight to six. Support personnel that were previously inherent to the individual commands were synergized under a newly formed Logistical Support Unit in order to more effectively manage support requirements for deploying units. Under this new construct, the entire SEAL Team would deploy with augmentation from a variety of units as a Naval Special Warfare Squadron.

NSW 21 operationalized direct and administrative support by establishing a Logistics Support Unit (LOGSU) on each coast through the consolidation of Combat Service Support (CSS) and Combat Service (CS) assets under a single hat. The LOGSUs are responsible for CSS support in CONUS and for sustainment of deployed forces. Each LOGSU is approximately sixty percent Sea-duty and forty percent Shore-duty. LOGSU personnel regularly deploy to support NSW operations as augmentation for each deploying Squadron to provide support for deployed operations. Recently, Supply Officers have been assigned to the Teams as the CSS Troop Leaders in the Professional Development Phase of the Inter-deployment Training Cycle (ITDC) to ensure the SEAL Team's Expeditionary Operational Logistics requirements of are managed in garrison and deployed.

In the ongoing OIF and OEF operations, the direct and administrative support personnel that are within the Naval Special Warfare claimancy are not sufficient to fulfill all the existing support requirements. U.S. Navy individual augmentees have been critical to the success of Naval Special Warfare across the battlefield by filling essential support positions. The Navy is currently providing 240 Navy augmentees annually to support Naval Special Warfare. Another ongoing effort is WARCOC's POM 10 submission to USSOCOM for 177 personnel in order to operationalize the Naval Special Warfare Groups so that they may deploy as the core element of a Joint Special Operations Task Force. Additionally, 800 personnel were submitted into the POM 10 cycle to support expeditionary Echelon IV combat support/combat service support requirements to alleviate reliance on Navy Individual Augmentees.

Mr. SMITH. Please qualify for us the “continual improvements” in instructor and staff development, and leadership training. What about this gives you confidence that attrition rates will be reduced without a sacrifice in standards?

Admiral KERNAN. The instructor staff is just one element of the NSWC instructional system, so instructor training is not the sole factor in attrition. However, continual improvement in instructor performance ensures other counter-attrition initiatives are fully effective. There are four major areas in which high-performance instruction can prevent the loss of SEAL and SWCC students who pass a rigorous selection process:

1. Applied principles of learning and motivation. Instructors are expected to develop instructional techniques based on recognized research from the cognitive sciences. These fundamentals enable instructors to make sound decisions in any given learning environment. They are given the skills to continually analyze student performance and immediately respond to variable student needs, whether in the classroom or the field.

2. Presentation and briefing skills. Practical exercises in the instructor qualification process focus on teaching lessons and presenting briefs that are drawn from NSW curricula. Unlike the generic presentation-skills training stressed in standard Navy instructor courses, the NSW Instructor School centers on NSW specific training.

3. Critical review of curriculum, methods, and standards. Instructor responsibility extends beyond training delivery to an active role in continuously improving the training system. Each instructor is taught to identify deficiencies or inefficiencies in any part of the curriculum. They are expected to maintain active relationships with instructional systems specialists to fine-tune the delivery, assessment, and maintenance of their courses.

4. Mentorship and Instructional Leadership. The special responsibilities and critical role of the NSW Instructor are stressed in formalized instructor training and ongoing professional relationships. Mentorship has two dimensions. The first is instructor-to-student mentorship. Second, and equally important, is mentorship within the instructor staff—senior instructors and supervisors guiding the professional development of junior instructors.

Finally, initial instructor training is seen as the first step in a professional development continuum, not as a singular instructional event. The continuum includes regular in-service training and evaluation, but will also provide consultation from technical training experts. This includes customized workshops designed to meet the needs of any training phase or specialized course.

The initiatives cited above are specifically designed to improve student success while preserving the high standards placed on SEAL and SWCC qualification.

Mr. SMITH. How has your component command supported or taken steps to execute the vision contained in the Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2006?

General WOOLEY. AFSOC has focused on the fact that our adversaries are ideologically driven and globally networked. Traditional kinetic weapons are less important than exploiting influence, information and intelligence. Improvements in EC-130J COMMANDO SOLO aircraft contain upgrades for cell phone and PDA capabilities in the target audience, as well as satellite and wireless internet broadcasts. Our unmanned ISR capabilities have greatly expanded, providing SOF-trained specialists to process, exploit, and disseminate intelligence information. As part of this process, we stood up two squadrons specifically to operate UAVs and to process intelligence information. QDR 05 doubled our specialized aviation manpower. This growth will continue to enable our aviation advisors to help coalition partners develop an internal defense capability. This low visibility approach will facilitate indirect use of US military power without a large US presence, and help friendly nations counter terrorist threats.

Mr. SMITH. What is your view of recruiting and retention? a. What is the general quality of recruits and is there a need to improve recruiting methods? What steps are in place to make such improvements? b. What is the general state of retention? What steps have been taken or need to be taken to maintain an effective retention situation?

General WOOLEY. The general quality of AF recruits has remained high since we have the luxury of being selective while continuing to meet or exceed recruiting goals. Consistent with the overall AF quality of recruits, AF SOF recruiting quality has remained high as well. The introduction of recruiter incentives for bringing recruits into some critical SOF specialties has been beneficial. Keep in mind that getting new recruits in the door has not historically been a problem, but rather getting them through their initial qualification training in several demanding SOF specialties. Significant washout rates and training pipeline backlogs in a few specialties have hindered our ability to fully man some operational units. Within the AF

(AFSOC and AETC), we are addressing these issues. In fact, we have steadily increased production/throughput over the past 3 years. Our current manning picture in some specialties may give the appearance of remaining low due to programmed QDR growth in the out years.

Mr. SMITH. Your testimony states that your number one issue is recapitalizing your fleet. What action have you taken so far and what can this subcommittee do to assist this effort?

General WOOLEY. We have worked closely with Air Combat Command and USSOCOM to complete the formalized validation process required by the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System. In October 2006 the Initial Capabilities Document (ICD) received Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) validation. Since then we have completed an Analysis of Alternatives and produced a Capability Development Document or CDD. We are currently waiting the final stage of validation from the JROC via memorandum regarding the HC/MC-130 Recapitalization CDD. We believe we have provided the required documentation and the memorandum providing validation of the CDD should be forthcoming shortly.

With Congressional approval of fiscal year 2008 advance procurement funds and the JROC's endorsement of our urgent need to begin procuring new aircraft, I am hopeful that the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (OSD/ATL) and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQ) will move forward quickly to begin the acquisition. It is my understanding the determination of an acquisition strategy regarding full and open competition or a sole-source action has yet to be decided. This appears to be the biggest issue at this point. Once that acquisition decision is made we will have better visibility on meeting the warfighter required IOC, and enact the recapitalization effort for this critical capability.

Mr. SMITH. Do you currently have enough airlift capacity to meet the projected increase in Army and Marine Special Operations Forces? If not, what additional capacity would you require?

General WOOLEY. The 2006 QDR yielded unprecedented SOF growth and AFSOC must continue critical programming actions in order to support SOF mobility. AFSOC did not gain additional airlift force structure commensurate with SOF ground growth. It is therefore imperative that we improve our current force as we recapitalize and pursue acquisition efforts in order to support increased airlift requirements into the future. AFSOC currently has a programmed fleet of 65 MC-130s (23 MC-130Ps, 20 MC-130Hs, 10 MC-130Es, and 12 MC-130Ws).

Based on QDR guidance, the AFSOC C-130 force will necessarily increase, incorporating requirements due to increased SOF strength and a new AFRICOM combatant command. This force will include MC-130H/W and recapitalized MC-130E/P SOF tankers. In addition, AFSOC is pursuing a three-year acceleration of CV-22 deliveries, critical to getting this capability to the field. This planning is targeted toward obtaining the optimal force required to implement the SOF Pre-deployment and Training Cycle, allowing continual long term rotation of SOF forces throughout the globe.

AFSOC is also pursuing additional commercial off-the-shelf light and medium aircraft to fulfill immediate theater combatant commander intratheater lift requirements. We are also planning long range requirements to include a transformational capability that goes beyond the speed and range of the MC-130, adds greater cargo capacity than the CV-22, and increases clandestine SOF air mobility. These aircraft will provide SOF rapid, self-deployable, global, high threat, anti-access capability with agility in the objective area independent of prepared runways. This conceptual aircraft is required to support and improve SOF rapid global mobility beyond 2018.

Mr. SMITH. How mature is the AFSOC Predator Squadron concept? Has this been deployed overseas? Is this in the training/ramp-up mode? When should we expect Initial Operational Capability and/or Full Unit Equipped status?

General WOOLEY. AFSOC Predator concept is mature as evidenced by two years of 3 SOS operational experience since the squadron's activation on 28 Oct. 05. The squadron is organized to fly Combat Air Patrols from CONUS and operate overseas Launch & Recovery Elements which take-off and land the MQ-1s. AFSOC's concept for the 3 SOS is well documented in its Concept of Operations/Concept of Employment, USSOCOM Hunter-Killer Requirement, and the Unit Manning Document. Today, 3 SOS flies six Combat Air Patrols (i.e. Orbits) and operates two Launch & Recovery sites in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

AFSOC personnel are deployed overseas operating the Launch & Recovery Elements. MQ-1 aircraft that are assigned to AFSOC are also deployed.

Even with this success, we're not yet meeting the full requirement to special operations forces. That requirement calls for having the capability to operate four simul-

taneous Launch & Recovery Elements; today we do two. Requirement also calls for a rapidly deployable, expeditionary capability; we're working towards having this capability.

AFSOC should have its full unit-equipped status in FY10. This is when the USAF can provide the remaining pieces of equipment required to claim full operational capability. AFSOC can declare Initial Operational Capability when operational control of the fielded MQ-1s transfers from CENTCOM to USSOCOM control.

Mr. SMITH. What are the manning requirements of the Predator squadron and what assumptions were used to establish these requirements? Your testimony includes the term "Airmen" when describing Predator utilization. Should we interpret this to mean that AFSOC enlisted personnel will pilot these aircraft? If not, why not? If so, how will their training requirements be met? Will their training be overseen by the Air Force? What will be the role and involvement of contractor support?

General WOOLEY. For the Predator Squadron, AFSOC's current manning requirements to fly 6 Combat Air Patrol are: 100 officers, 171 enlisted, and 2 civilians for a total of 273. AFSOC would be flying 6 CAPS 24/7 with the capability to launch from up to 4 locations. Crew would consist of 1 pilot and 1 sensor with a crew ratio of 11.4 crews per CAP for a total of 92 pilots (includes Commander, Director of Operations, Stan Eval, Safety, Plans, and Tactics/Current Ops) and 86 sensors (includes Stan Eval)

Launch and Recovery Element (LRE) crews would consist of 4 pilots and 4 sensors per LRE and will also have limited mission coordinators and communications support in austere locations. Mission Coordinators would be earned as a post for a total of 6 officers and 40 enlisted (to include 10 enlisted for LRE operations). Maintenance would be Contract Logistics (CLS) for all aircraft and would require government oversight of the contract (QAEs) that would total 12 enlisted. Unit would operate and earn squadron overhead as applicable to an operations squadron by applying approved Air Force Manpower Standards.

The term "Airmen" means both officers and non-commissioned officers. In the two-person MQ-1 crew, enlisted members serve as sensor operators while officers perform pilot duties. Enlisted crews are critical to ensuring control of the laser designator and keeping "eyes" on target. Enlisted sensor operators train at Creech AFB as part of the Formal Training Unit where training is overseen in accordance with USAF regulations and operating instructions. Air Force only utilizes rated-officers to fly the MQ-1 because the MQ-1 operates in heavily congested Air Space and needs to be able to communicate with other manned aircraft.

The role of contractor support includes: contractor logistics support for maintenance; operational-level maintenance support to deployed aircraft and other MQ-1 equipment. AFSOC is also examining the use of contractors for launch & recovery element duties.

Mr. SMITH. Your testimony mentions the skills of Battlefield Airmen (i.e., Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen or "PJs," and Combat Weathermen) and note that they are embedded with ground forces. Please describe this in greater detail. Are these airmen deployed as units, deployed as individuals and assigned to Army and Navy SEAL units, or both? Are they also assigned to General Purpose Forces? How are these individuals or units trained and prepared for this joint tactical environment?

General WOOLEY. AFSOC's Special Tactics (ST) forces are flexible in their employment. PJs teamed with CCT comprise specially trained teams uniquely suited for personnel recovery missions from an air platform. Often, that Special Tactics expertise will be teamed with "shooters" who defend/secure crash sites as the PJs recover personnel and sensitive equipment, and the CCT provides fire support and long-range communications. Special Operations Weather Team (SOWT) operators are attached to each service's Special Operations Forces with a special focus on Army Special Ops (Special Forces, Rangers and Aviation).

ST members can also be attached directly to other SOF elements (e.g., SEAL teams, Army Special Forces detachments) to provide ST expertise, as required by the mission. As already mentioned, SOWT attach to Army SOF, often as individuals. The same is true of CCT and PJs, depending on the skill set needed. A single Joint Terminal Attack Control (JTAC)-qualified CCT can attach to Army Special Forces detachments and provide fire support (gunships, fast-mover CAS, naval surface fires, and indirect fires) and limited assault zone support for the entire team. A PJ can provide limited rescue/recovery capability, and extensive combat medical support to a SEAL team.

In conjunction with General Purpose Forces (e.g., Air Force Contingency Response Groups, Army XVIII Airborne Corps), and depending on the scope of the mission, a team of combat controllers can provide critical landing zone establishment and air traffic control for follow-on airlift forces. In an airfield seizure scenario, there may be anywhere from 10-30 combat controllers assigned duties in/around the airfield

and attached to ground elements. There may also be PJs on the airfield to conduct the casualty collection, initial treatment, and management. In this fashion, ST forces are both embedded with the assault force as well as operate in ST-only elements, ensuring the airfield operations and casualty care are proceeding safely and smoothly.

ST forces are trained to perform in the joint environment through joint exercises and training, as well as studying after-action reports from those who have gone before them. The various training pipelines and professional education expose PJ, CCT, and SOWT operators to other Services' elements, which are reinforced during training and deployments.

Mr. SMITH. Please explain in further detail the "re-engineering" of the Combat Controller training pipeline. Exactly how has it been possible to shorten this training schedule and improve the quality of instruction? And how can we be sure that the quality of instruction has improved and so soon?

General WOOLEY. In 2000, the CCT pipeline was intertwined with the PJ pipeline. Attrition was high for both PJ and CCT trainees, though CCT throughput was the more stifled of the two. Because the attrition was choking off the CCT production from the pipeline, AFSOC initiated a change in training methodology, the so-called CCT pipeline reengineering.

Working with AETC and Air Staff, AFSOC re-sequenced the CCT pipeline schools, placing "Pre-Scuba" towards the end of the pipeline, so we could realize improvements in throughput by helping trainees ramp up for Pre-Scuba over a longer period of time (approx. one year) rather than the ten weeks up front during Indoctrination. Packaged as Advanced Skills Training (AST), the streamlined 11 month program produces a graduate CCT with the same quality, having completed Dive School, Freefall School, and initial 5-level upgrade training. Previous to AST, this training with associated wait time was 6 to 12 months longer. With AST, all combat controllers graduate with standardized lesson plans, standardized individual equipment, standardized operating procedures, etc., all planned and conducted within a cookie-cutter template, year-round.

When the AST-era began, the CCT career field worried about a drop in quality CCT operators. In fact, AST operators have proven themselves year after year in the GWOT. Some have even returned to instruct at AST as 7-levels, after several deployments under fire. The fifth AST class to graduate did so about two weeks early: the 720th Special Tactics Group commander sent them to Baghdad during initial OIF hostilities to help his deployed forces secure and run Baghdad International Airport. A fair number of AST graduates are currently assigned to Special Tactics' Special Mission Unit. The Special Tactics Officers who have graduated AST are now candidates to be a squadron Director of Operations. We have seen that AST graduates are every bit as fit for duty as the Indoc graduates, which is a testament to the quality of the re-engineered CCT pipeline training.

Mr. SMITH. You state in your testimony "that the best way to reduce the length of our training programs and (simultaneously) increase operational readiness is to invest in new training facilities (with) high-fidelity simulators at our schoolhouses and operational bases." Would you please provide this analysis to the committee?

General WOOLEY. Aircrew experience can only be developed by flying aircraft or high-fidelity simulators. The SOF aviation mission requires complex aircraft and drives a need for aircrews to fly 30-40 hours per month. However as our fleet ages and maintenance requirements increase, aircraft are only available 30-35 hours a month, resulting in average monthly flying of only 15-20 hours for most pilots. Eliminating this flying experience deficit requires either additional aircraft or high-fidelity simulators.

Aircraft procurement is costly and so are life-cycle sustainment costs. Most AFSOC aircraft exceed \$8000/hour to operate and when aircraft procurement and modification costs are factored over a 40 year life span, it adds an additional \$4,000-\$10,000 per hour depending on aircraft variant. A simulator with its combination of procurement and sustainment costs can provide the same amount of training as 6-8 aircraft, and provide that training at 1/10 the cost.

An analysis of all AFSOC aircraft actual flying hours covering a five-year period shows 66% of all flying time was documented as some form of training time. In the post-9/11 period, sustained deployments have significantly reduced aircraft flying time for training. In FY06 our most heavily deployed aircraft, the AC-130U, documented 80% of flying time in combat leaving only 20% for all other flying requirements which include training, testing, and currency.

Setting aircraft maintenance issues aside, and without providing more aircraft, the only way to build and maintain aircrew readiness is to provide adequate numbers of high-fidelity simulators for formal school training/qualification and for operational unit use. Because of the small procurement numbers, several AFSOC air-

craft types were never provided adequate numbers of simulators. Those built were for initial aircrew training only.

Flight simulator technology is proven in the commercial world. The FAA allows commercial pilots to fully qualify in a Level-D simulator, so that his first flight in the aircraft is a revenue flight. High-fidelity flight simulation is the only possible way to meet the commands aircrew readiness challenges and can be done at a fraction of the cost of flying actual aircraft.

Mr. SMITH. What is the total size of the AC-130 gunship fleet? How many gunships are operationally available and mission ready at any given time? What is the current maintenance cycle of these aircraft and how does it compare with the historical average? What are the greatest challenges for keeping this capability forward and operational?

General WOOLEY. The AC-130 fleet consists of 8 H-model aircraft and 17 U-model aircraft. These numbers include combat, training and backup aircraft. Two AC-130Hs and four AC-130Us are simultaneously unavailable for modification, test and major maintenance.

The AC-130H fleet averaged 5.7 aircraft possessed with a 75% mission capable rate for FY05-07, resulting in an average of 4.3 aircraft being available and mission ready. The AC-130U fleet averaged 10.8 aircraft possessed with a 75% mission capable rate, resulting in an average of 8.1 aircraft being available and mission ready.

The Planned Depot Maintenance (PDM) cycle is 54 months for the AC-130H and 60 months for the AC-130U. Historically they required over 200 days in PDM, but through an application of AF Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFSO21) procedures, we have reduced PDM to 150 days for the last 6 aircraft. Higher combat utilization rates for the AC-130U has compressed the isochronal inspection cycle from 360 days to 330 days and may be an indicator of ever increasing maintenance frequencies.

One of the greatest challenges we face is reducing down time for PDM, recurring inspections and modifications. We are having success in achieving some of those goals, reducing the down time in maintenance inspections, but we have serious challenges ahead with C-130 Center Wing Box (CWB) replacement requirements. We are carefully monitoring individual aircraft flying time against the scheduled point for that aircraft to enter the CWB replacement modification line. Aircraft that over fly their maximum flight hours prior to entering the CWB replacement line would be "grounded" until entering that line.

Last, we are installing 30mm cannons to replace the 25mm and 40mm legacy gun systems. This program has had some accuracy problems develop during testing, but the resultant commonality and ability to strike from a higher altitude will greatly enhance our lethality.

Mr. SMITH. What is the plan for modernizing the gunship fleet? What is the current state of affairs regarding the follow-on capability for the AC-130 fleet? What kind of aircraft might be required after the phase-out of the AC-130 fleet? What might be the desired flight envelope associated with the requirements of a follow-on aircraft design?

General WOOLEY. AFSOC recognizes the critical need for AC-130 Gunship capability and has planned numerous upgrades for the fleet. The AC-130U will have its center wing box replaced for enhanced service life. Both versions of the Gunship have modernization programs, including various aspects of radar, target designator, mission computer, and sensor systems. A 30mm gun system is being tested that will provide commonality between both Gunship versions and address a vanishing vendor for the 40mm gun.

The follow-on capability planned for the AC-130 fleet is based on the Next-Generation Gunship (NGG). The specific type of platform has yet to be determined. The NGG must be capable of conducting long-endurance operations in low- to selected high-threat environments, day or night; a requirement much more challenging than any currently operational aircraft was designed to meet. The NGG will be capable of prosecuting multiple targets simultaneously and engaging them in adverse weather and all terrain environments as well as having the ability to coordinate closely with supported friendly ground parties both in terms of applying offensive fires and sharing information. Last, the NGG must have the persistence to remain in the area of responsibility for eight hours, up to 500 nautical miles from its base or tanker, deliver fires and record sensor data.

The NGG requires a cruise speed permitting operations with other CAF strike and suppression assets. The ability to operate at high subsonic airspeeds will minimize reaction time to get to real-time emerging targets and "on-call" calls for fire in support of dynamic ground situations. To accomplish this, the NGG requires an unrefueled range (without loiter) in excess of 4,000 nautical miles, a night/all-weather-

er capability, and enhanced weapons and sensors to allow greatly increased stand-off distances.

AFSOC would like to aggressively pursue a small gunship capability to augment the AC-130 fleet until the Next Generation Gunship delivers. Intent for the small gunship is not to phase out the current AC-130 fleet, but add to it. Battlefield commanders need more gunship capacity today to support ground forces, and we expect this demand to increase through the FYDP. The ideal kind of aircraft would be twin engine class aircraft capable of carrying at least 16,500 lbs. for the gunship unique characteristics (e.g. one or two side-firing guns, gun mounts, ammo, crew and sensors) with an un-refueled range of 2,000 nautical miles. Desired flight envelope is: operating altitude of 6,000-15,000 feet above ground level, 18,000 feet attack slant range, minimum service ceiling of 25,000 feet mean sea level, and day/night and all weather capable.

Mr. SMITH. What is the total number of fixed-wing aircraft in the entire C-130 family? Are modernization efforts being coordinated across each parts of this family?

General WOOLEY. AFSOC has 65 C-130 based aircraft in its active force inventory, broken down by individual aircraft type, there are eight AC-130H Spectre Gunship, seventeen AC-130U Spooky Gunship, seventeen MC-130H Combat Talon II, nineteen MC-130P Combat Shadow, and four MC-130W Combat Spear aircraft. Over the next two and a half years the MC-130W inventory will grow to a total of twelve aircraft as the donor aircraft from the Air National Guard are converted. In addition to the AFSOC inventory, Air Education and Training Command (AETC) owns three MC-130Hs and four MC-130Ps used to train our new aircrew. Finally, as part of our total force, the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) own and operate ten MC-130E and have four more in flyable storage, while the Pennsylvania Air National Guard (PAANG) at Harrisburg own and operate a total of seven EC-130Js.

Modernization efforts are being coordinated across the entire AFC-130 inventory. As a result of the USAF C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP) Nunn McCurdy actions, OSD/AT&L mandated a revised acquisition strategy for modernizing the C-130 fleet be developed and briefed. The Avionics Modernization Program has already been approved as the way-ahead for 222 Air Mobility Command aircraft and pending a decision by OSD/AT&L may be the modernization strategy for AFSOC aircraft. Another AF wide sustainment-modernization program with dramatic impact to AFSOC is the C-130 Center Wing Box replacement schedule. Both the MC-130H and AC-130U are scheduled to have their center wing boxes replaced by the enhanced service life box.

Mr. SMITH. In terms of recapitalization efforts, what action have you taken to date and what can the subcommittee do to assist in this effort?

General WOOLEY. We have worked closely with Air Combat Command and USSOCOM to complete the formalized validation process required by the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System. In October 2006 the Initial Capabilities Document (ICD) received Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) validation. Since then we have completed an Analysis of Alternatives and produced a Capability Development Document or CDD. We are currently waiting the final stage of validation from the JROC via memorandum regarding the HC/MC-130 Recapitalization CDD. We believe we have provided the required documentation and the memorandum providing validation of the CDD should be forthcoming shortly.

With Congressional approval of fiscal year 2008 advance procurement funds and the JROC's endorsement of our urgent need to begin procuring new aircraft, I am hopeful that the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (OSD/ATL) and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQ) will move forward quickly to begin the acquisition. It is my understanding the determination of an acquisition strategy regarding full and open competition or a sole-source action has yet to be decided. This appears to be the biggest issue at this point. Once that acquisition decision is made we will have better visibility on meeting the warfighter required IOC, and enact the recapitalization effort for this critical capability.

Congressional support for the recapitalization of our HC/MC-130 fleet will be vital in maintaining the acquisition rate once a strategy is in place. With the aging of our C-130 fleet, it is critical to ensure funding and timelines for recapitalization are maintained.

Mr. SMITH. How has your component command supported or taken steps to execute the vision contained in the Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2006?

General HEJLIK. The vision statement from the U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command's (MARSOC) Campaign Plan, published in April 2006, clearly aligns MARSOC's way ahead with the vision of the Capstone Concept for Special Operations from 2006.

MARSOC is charged with organizing, training, equipping and deploying highly capable, flexible, and mature special operations forces with the ability to seamlessly integrate with joint special operations forces, interagency representatives, conventional forces, or partner nation militaries. Our primary goal is to build a special operations force with long term relevancy that the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) can successfully employ across the spectrum of Special Operations Forces (SOF) mission requirements.

People are our center of gravity. MARSOC has the capability to assess and select from a qualified population of recruited and screened candidates to find the right people to perform special operations missions involving a high degree of political and physical risk while independent of friendly support. Marine Special Operations Forces (MARSOFF) will be expert conventional warriors first, a platform from which to build SOF-unique skills to meet or exceed USSOCOM standards. During our initial build, we will capitalize on our investment in training with the execution of our extended five year tour policy.

MARSOC will provide the indirect forces of choice for supported commanders. To that end, MARSOC will prioritize language and cultural training for the majority of its operating forces, with further emphasis on combat advising and expert instruction of partner nation forces. We will continue our contribution to USSOCOM's world wide standard for regionally-focused, persistent engagement designed to develop lasting relationships with partner nations. Similarly, MARSOC will maintain and refine our direct action and special reconnaissance capability in order to swiftly and conclusively deal with emerging counter-terror opportunities.

This is a critical juncture in our common history and future as MARSOC. We are in the initial stages of a campaign to create a new warrior archetype. Combining the tenacity, esprit de corps, and indomitable spirit of our Marine heritage with the independence, maturity, and cultural awareness of the SOF operator will ensure the MARSOC of 2015 is actively engaged in influencing partner nations, providing critical training to support nascent democracies and taking action to find and stop the spread of terrorism in critical regions of the world.

Mr. SMITH. What is your view of recruiting and retention? a. What is the general quality of recruits and is there a need to improve recruiting methods? What steps are in place to make such improvements? b. What is the general state of retention? What steps have been taken or need to be taken to maintain an effective retention situation?

General HEJLIK. U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) recruiting is in its infancy. We currently have five recruiters and a recruiting senior non-commissioned officer but need to grow the recruiter pool if we are to fill six to eight 80-man assessment and selection classes per year in order to achieve our staffing goals. Initial assumptions were that many Marines would be very interested in coming to MARSOC and we would have more interest than we have billets. We are currently working with the manpower section of the Marine Corps on MARSOC's unique manpower requirements to include non-standard tour lengths, assignment process, and retention process required for this unit to function. Additionally, we are establishing and codifying the processes required to make finding the correct Marines for MARSOC a Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps priority.

Currently MARSOC has conducted three assessment and selection courses. To date, our attrition rate is approximately 70 percent. This includes Marines dropped for medical reasons, failure to meet course standards, or because they chose to quit the course. Through Fiscal Year 2008, Marine Recruiting and Assessment is responsible for filling all operational billets within MARSOC.

Internally, MARSOC is also taking steps to improve the recruiting process and generate appeal among Marines about opportunities in Special Operations. A MARSOC Recruiting Website was recently created and a MARSOC Recruiting Film is in development. The film, scripted to highlight MARSOC's legacy in World War II Marine Raider Units and Vietnam Combat Advisors, will highlight MARSOC's critical role in our Nation's War on Terrorism and educate Marines about Special Operations.

Recruiting methods will be improved by bringing professional military recruiters in to educate them on the standards required in successful recruits. We are developing a plan that requires an increase in recruiting structure and manning those billets from recruiting school graduates along with a senior non-commissioned officer or Warrant Officer career recruiter.

The following SOF recruiting incentives and retention entitlements have been approved for various MARSOC Marines and Sailors based on the governing order: Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) was approved for Operational and combat support billets. Levels 2 through 5 are authorized based on billet assignment within MARSOC. Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) for enlisted members serving in critical

primary skills within MARSOC who have more than 25 years of active service is authorized. The Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) is authorized for enlisted members serving in critical primary skills within MARSOC who have more than 19 but less than 25 years of active service.

Every first term Marine in MARSOC gets interviewed, and informed what their options are in relation to retention, by his or her Career Retention Specialist (CRS) and either his or her Battalion Commanding Officer or Company Commander. First term Marines are interviewed at least twice before they become eligible for reenlistment. We are in the process of creating a First Term Alignment Plan brief that will be given to Marines to inform them on available options to stay within MARSOC. Career Marines that have not put in for reenlistment within six to nine months of their end of service will be interviewed and informed of their options. MARSOC as a whole has very little problems with retention at this time. For Fiscal Year 2007 we are at 155 percent of our mission for first term Marines and 126 percent for career Marines.

Mr. SMITH. What exactly is MARSOCs "build plan" for personnel and equipment agreed to by U.S. SOCOM and the U.S. Marine Corps?

General HEJLIK. The approved personnel plan for the U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) was a three year build plan with the understanding that an additional 45 Marine High Demand Low Density billets would not be completely filled until Fiscal Year 2010 for a total of 2,290 Marine billets, 191 Navy billets, 2 Army billets and 33 civilian billets. MARSOC is currently at 88.73 percent for overall staffing of the 1,892 personnel authorized during Fiscal Year 2007.

The MARSOC equipment build plan is designed to support the personnel build plan. The goal of the equipment build plan is to meet Full Operational Capability no later than First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2009. MARSOC will continue to build capability under this construct until it is Fully Mission Capable in Fiscal Year 2010.

The equipment required has been identified to both the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Special Operations Command. The fielding of this equipment is aligned with the personnel build plan in order to match the two and provide an operational capability.

As emerging requirements for equipment are identified through operational deployments, these requirements or capability gaps will be addressed to the appropriate headquarters in accordance with the Joint Capabilities Integrated Documentation System.

Mr. SMITH. According to your testimony, the completion of some MARSOC manning requirements will not occur in some "high demand, low-intensity specialties" until after the FY 2008 deadline due to throughput capacity at formal schools. Are these Marine Corps schools? Where are they located?

General HEJLIK. The U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) will be short 42 intelligence Marines (primarily HUMINT and SIGINT) after the Fiscal Year 2008 deadline. The below data lays out by primary military occupational specialty (MOS) the intelligence Marines MARSOC will be short during this timeframe and the schools they will attend:

Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Intelligence Officers will be short 1 officer (MOS 0202). The 0202's are trained at a 10-week U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) course at Navy-Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center (NMITC), Dam Neck, Virginia. This is a career-level, MOS-producing school where officers at the rank of Captain from the four officer specialties (ground, air, HUMINT and SIGINT) are trained to be well-rounded intelligence officers.

Counterintelligence/HUMINT specialist (MOS 0211) will be short 19 Marines. The 0211's (typically enlisted ranks E-5 through E-8) are trained at a 16-week USMC course at NMITC.

Counterintelligence/HUMINT Officer (MOS 0210—Warrant Officer (WO)) will be short 3 Marines and are generally accessed from the 0211 population and don't necessarily need to attend the MOS producing course at NMITC. The 0210 population in the Marine Corps is small, meaning the 11 Warrant Officers for MARSOC would be a healthy percentage of these professionals.

MAGTF Intelligence Specialist (MOS 0231) will be short 2 Marines and attend a 12-week USMC course at NMITC.

Communications Signal Collection/Manual Morse Operator/Analyst (MOS 2621) will be short 9 Marines and attend a 15-week combined Navy and Marine course at Corry Station.

Tactical Data Network Operator (MOS 2651) will be short 2 Marine and attend an 18-week USMC course at Corry Station.

Arabic Cryptologic Linguist (MOS 2671) will be short 4 Marines and attend 63 week joint language course at Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California, with a 10-week follow-on USMC course at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas.

Mr. SMITH. In terms of professional development, what will occur when select Marines complete their initial schooling and finally report to MARSOC? Does a plan exist to build upon their basic skills? Will additional “joint-like” schooling occur to ensure seamless, interoperability with the rest of SOF? If not, then why not?

General HEJLIK. As noted above, U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) Marines completing Recruiting Screening Assessment and Selection (RSAS) and Individual Training Course (ITC) will go on to unit level training in Marine Special Operations Teams (MSOTs) as part of the Marine Special Operations Advisory Group (MSOAG) or in MSOTs as part of Marine Special Operations Companies (MSOCs) in the Marine Special Operations Battalions (MSOBs). Designated personnel will go on to advanced schooling as necessary depending on where their parent unit is in the deployment cycle. Advanced schooling can include additional language and cultural training for those Marines who demonstrate language proclivity during the Initial Acquisition Program for language and culture in ITC and have the appropriate Defense Language Aptitude Battery score, and advanced training in Special Operations Forces (SOF) specific skills at the unit level, at the Marine Special Operations School (i.e. breaching, language, Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape), at other Service or SOF component schools (i.e. Airborne, Joint Special Operations Medical Course, and Military Free Fall) or USMC schools (i.e. USMC sniper).

Joint training occurs through informal coordination between MSOCs/MSOTs and their counterparts in Operational Detachments from Army Special Forces and U.S. Navy Sea, Air and Land (SEAL) teams. If an MSOT is engaging with a partner nation in alternation with another SOF unit, they will coordinate with that unit to maximize efficiencies and exchange of pertinent information about the host nation, tactics, techniques, procedures, and development of that host nation’s partnered forces. MSOCs are already training with the Naval Special Warfare Command’s Special Boat Team (SBT) assets during their pre-deployment training to develop the habitual relationship for conduct of Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure while underway aboard a Marine Expeditionary Unit. MSOCs are also coordinating with the Special Forces Groups who form the core of the Joint Special Operations Task Forces forward in order to synchronize their pre-deployment training schedules to allow for interoperability and exposure. MSOCs also coordinate with Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) assets to conduct air assault operations and Close Air Support training when these assets are available.

There is no substitute for conducting side by side operations with other SOF forces, and MARSOC has done this successfully in Fiscal Year 2006 and Fiscal Year 2007 around the world. Only with years of experience will there be truly “seamless interoperability” between SOF forces, but the current deployment tempo has ensured that generations of SOF Marines, Airmen, Soldiers, and Sailors have been able to work together, learn from one another, and get past many of the cultural differences and conflicts that existed as recently as a decade ago when attempting to conduct joint operations.

Mr. SMITH. Please explain the “closed loop” concept for personnel management at MARSOC. What does this mean? What are the strengths and weaknesses to both SOF and the Marine Corps writ large?

General HEJLIK. There are three key elements a component has to consider when creating Special Operations Forces (SOF). The first is selection based on a set of criteria that need to be pre-existing within the Marine and Sailor (in the Army Special Forces, this comes in the form of Special Forces Assessment and Selection and in the Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEALs) this comes in the form of Basic Underwater Demolitions School). MARSOC screens, assesses and selects for effective intelligence, leadership, maturity, people skills, judgment, physical fitness, and determination with its Recruiting Screening Assessment and Selection (RSAS) program. These are attributes that must exist in the individual that cannot be trained to and can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively through the screening and selection process.

The second key element in creating quality SOF forces is investment in SOF specific skills to a unique set of conditions and standards. This can include everything from specialized insertion and extraction skills such as military free fall (MFF) parachuting and combat diving to practical application of SOF specific equipment related to special reconnaissance, to investment in language and culture or survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) training. This investment works from the same basic skill areas that conventional forces use to form the core of their training—shoot, move, communicate, survival, medical—but take a step beyond. This investment initially occurs across the SOF component in the form of an initial training course (for the Army Special Forces this is the Special Forces Qualification Course and for the Navy SEALs this comes in the form of SEAL Qualification Training) such as the Individual Training Course (ITC) that MARSOC will start in

October 2008. Follow-on investment will occur in the form of advanced training in SOF specific skills at the unit level, at the Marine Special Operations School (i.e. breaching, language, SERE), at other Service or SOF component schools (i.e. Airborne, Joint Special Operations Medical Course, and MFF) or USMC schools (i.e. USMC sniper).

The third key element is return on investment or retention of “mature SOF.” Taking a Marine non-commissioned officer, sailor, or junior officer and investing in RSAS, ITC, and advanced skills creates a SOF Warrior, but he needs to be seasoned with experience that can only be gained by operational deployments before he can be considered “mature SOF”—the bread and butter of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) engagement strategy. What we are looking to build at MARSOC is the SOF senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) who has joint operational experience, a myriad of advanced skills, is multilingual, and has developed relationships with partner nations that can be leveraged at the strategic level in the long term. This investment of both training and experience necessitates extended tours, and in some cases, a “closed loop” personnel system to ensure appropriate return on SOF specific investment for MARSOC and USSOCOM. This impacts Marine Corps manpower management because MARSOC attracts and targets high quality NCOs, senior NCOs, and junior officers removing this group from the conventional operating forces. The five year extended tour in MARSOC serves our initial integration of MARSOC into USSOCOM with the eventual goal of achieving USSOCOM’s ‘closed loop’ personnel system.

Mr. SMITH. Have you considered utilizing the existing USASOC schoolhouse infrastructure for developing MARSOC Special Operators?

General HEJLIK. The U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) uses existing U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) infrastructure to the greatest extent possible by sending MARSOC Marines to skill courses such as Military Free Fall, Ranger, and the Joint Special Operations Medical Course. The Special Forces Assessment and Special Forces Qualification Course could be leveraged by MARSOC and has been evaluated in detail at the Marine Special Operations School (MSOS) when developing the Recruiting Screening Assessment and Selection (RSAS) and Individual Training Course (ITC), but USASOC has different requirements to fill. MARSOC has a different input than USASOC and different guidance from the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in its mission guidance letter, therefore MARSOC requires a MARSOC-unique baseline Special Operations Forces (SOF) specific school and selection process. The costs of sending MARSOC Marines to schools include filling instructor billets in proportion to allocated school seats with MARSOC operators and a lesser priority level at some SOF specific skill schools.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. THORNBERRY

Mr. THORNBERRY. How indicative is the current readiness reporting system of actual unit readiness? What recommendations do you have to improve the monitoring and reporting of unit readiness?

General BROWN. Current readiness reporting systems provide a basis for determining actual unit readiness. However, there are many other factors that must be considered in order for we can develop a more complete picture of Special Operations Forces (SOF) readiness.

One of the biggest challenges is that SOF units submit readiness reports to their respective Services and not directly to the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). This command does not have its own specific readiness reporting system. In order to derive data on our SOF components, we must utilize each of the Services’ current systems and these systems are tailored Service needs and rather than USSOCOM needs.

Each Service system measures personnel, equipment-on-hand, equipment condition, training, and an overall assessment of command readiness. Each Service has differing standards for measuring these readiness areas and each have a unique philosophy on the way readiness is maintained in its units. The end result is that USSOCOM must extract readiness data on SOF units from Service databases, break down the data, interpolate information, and then cross-level the various inputs in an effort to make a readiness assessment that covers our forces across the board. This is very time consuming and is often open to much debate within the command and the services.

A second issue is that Service readiness reports only measure equipment-on-hand and equipment condition status against Service provided equipment. However, SOF

units have significant quantities of SOF-peculiar equipment which is not measured in Service readiness reports.

USSOCOM has taken steps to make readiness reporting of SOF units more relevant for our purposes. The ultimate goal will be a tailored readiness report with SOF units reporting directly to USSOCOM.

Mr. THORNBERRY. What impact has the current restriction of one involuntarily mobilization of Reserve and National Guard troops for a named conflict had on SOCOM's ability to effectively meet its world-wide mission requirements?

General BROWN. The current restriction of one involuntarily mobilization of Reserve and National Guard troops for a named conflict has had no negative impact on the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). USSOCOM is able to meet mission requirements while complying with current policy.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Some graduates of the Special Forces Qualification Course arrive at their units without having met the graduation requirement of a 1/1/1 rating on the Defense Language Proficiency Test. What steps are taken to retrain them and how effective has that been? Additionally, some SF graduates are reassigned before the completion of the Qualification Course to a SF Group that requires a different target language than that in which the graduate has been trained. How often does this happen and why? What is done to ensure they are culturally and language proficient for the target region of their new Group?

General WAGNER. To put our response in perspective, in 2004 the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) raised the initial language standard from 0+0+ to 1/1/1. Since July 2004, we have graduated over 2,500 Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) Soldiers and 98 percent achieved 1/1/1 before reporting to their unit. Thus a very small percentage of graduates of the Special Forces (SF) Qualification Course arrive at their units without having met our self imposed graduation standard of a 1/1/1 rating on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).

Soldiers failing to meet the 1/1/1 DLPT standard on the first attempt are immediately placed into a six week intensive retraining program. This retraining program meets the requirements specified in the Department of Defense Instruction for Soldiers in order to retake the DLPT. If a Soldier fails to meet the 1/1/1 DLPT standard after retaking a second DLPT, a formal board of officers will determine if the Soldier should be allowed to continue training and be assigned to an operational unit. The board reviews each Soldier's entire training and academic record when determining suitability for continued training and assignment to an operational unit. If the board determines that a Soldier should be allowed to continue training, the 1st Special Warfare Training Group Commander signs a memorandum that is forwarded to the Soldier's gaining unit commander notifying that the Soldier requires further language training. Each Operational Group has a robust unit language sustainment training program designed and resourced to provide Soldiers with the tools to maintain and improve required language skills. Unit Language Program Managers are able to tailor continued language training to meet the specific requirements of these Soldiers. Bottom line: The Special Forces language training program is a major success operating above a 98 percent 1/1/1 graduation rate.

Reassignment before the completion of the Qualification Course to a SF Group that requires a different target language than that in which the graduate has been trained is a very rare occurrence. It should also be noted that the five Active Duty SF Groups have multiple language, and overlapping, language requirements. Thus, there are no wrong languages to know in any group as most adversaries and target countries operate in a global environment such that within their own boundaries they, and we, encounter languages "foreign" to the nation with which we are engaged. Every effort is made to assign Soldiers to the group requiring the target language in which they have been trained. The ten core languages that are taught during the SF Qualification Course span multiple operational units and regions of the world. Assignment of Soldiers to an operational group that requires a different language than that in which the soldier was trained in initial acquisition training is triggered by extremely rare circumstances; i.e. exceptional family member program, compassionate reassignment, medical or unforecasted critical personnel shortfalls in one of the operational groups.

SF units conduct routine and detailed analysis and study of their respective operational areas. Soldiers assigned under these afore mentioned exceptional circumstances will participate in these events with their fellow Soldiers who have extensive regional expertise. These Soldiers can also become invaluable when unexpected language requirements emerge in the global environment.

Mr. THORNBERRY. What is the MSOC's command relationship with the MEU on which it is deployed and how will the MSOC be operationally employed from the MEU once in the theater of operations?

General HEJLIK. The U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command's (MARSOC) forces are commanded and controlled in accordance with U.S. Code Title 10, Joint Doctrine, and the associated Joint Staff and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) deployment orders. USSOCOM executes command and control (COCOM) of MARSOC forces. Inherent in COCOM is the execution of operational control (OPCON) of MARSOC forces in the United States. When MARSOC forces deploy overseas, they are under the OPCON of the associated Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) and OPCON is normally delegated to the Theater Special Operation Command (TSOC).

MSOCs deploy with the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) or as directed by USSOCOM in support of GCC operational requirements. When embarked with a MEU the MSOC is OPCON to the associated TSOC. The TSOC has the authority and flexibility to delegate tactical control (TACON) of the MSOC to the MEU in support of specific operational requirements. The TSOC retains OPCON throughout the exercise or operation.

Our recent deployments from January 2007 to February 2008 have resulted in the MSOC remaining OPCON to the TSOC or delegation of OPCON to one of their subordinate Joint Special Operations Task Forces. The MEU maintains an OPCON relationship with the associated Naval Force (NAVFOR) while afloat and transfers OPCON once ashore to the associated Marine Force Commander (MARFOR) or Land Component Commander.

The MSOC re-embarks the MEU for the redeployment transit to the continental U.S. Once embarked; the MSOC continues its OPCON relationship with the associated TSOC until arrival in the continental U.S.

Mr. THORNBERRY. What needs to be done to ensure AFSOC has enough airlift capacity to meet the operational needs associated with a larger SOF organization?

General WOOLEY. The Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) needs to increase the capacity and capability of its mobility fleet to support the growth of the ground and naval forces in Special Operations Forces (SOF). This capacity and capability increase should be provided as rapidly as possible to insure we are able to meet our operational commitments.

