

[H.A.S.C. No. 112-69]

**THE FUTURE OF U.S. SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS FORCES: TEN YEARS  
AFTER 9/11 AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS  
AFTER GOLDWATER-NICHOLS**

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS  
AND CAPABILITIES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

#### THE FUTURE OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES: TEN YEARS AFTER 9/11 AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER GOLDWATER-NICHOLS

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**THE FUTURE OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES:  
TEN YEARS AFTER 9/11 AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS  
AFTER GOLDWATER-NICHOLS**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES,  
*Washington, DC, Thursday, September 22, 2011.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mac Thornberry (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES**

Mr. THORNBERRY. The hearing will come to order.

Twenty-five years ago, the Congress added an amendment to Goldwater-Nichols legislation that created the Special Operations Command. That law listed 12 core mission areas for the command and gave SOCOM some unique authorities.

It certainly is appropriate, it seems to me, for Congress to review its handiwork, especially as we look back now at a decade of fighting terrorists, a decade in which SOCOM has roughly doubled in personnel, tripled in budget, and quadrupled in overseas deployments. We may not be able to quantify as precisely the achievements of these last 10 years, but they are, in my opinion at least, undeniable.

Looking back on the past decade, my strongest impression is of the incredibly talented, committed, hardworking individuals who serve our country in SOCOM units. As I travel to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, I am continually impressed and inspired by them, just as I know other members of this subcommittee are. The capability that these people, with their training, their hardware, and their supporting organizations, bring to our country is without parallel anywhere in the world.

Some of that capability was on display to the world in the Osama bin Laden raid. But SOCOM does much more, often with little or no fanfare, as it should be. It may well be that the future of the command will require greater emphasis on some of those other mission areas, such as unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense.

Of course, we consider the future of SOCOM and our entire military within the constraints of tight budgets. But it seems to me it would be the height of foolishness to provide insufficient resources to an entity charged with fighting terrorists, preventing weapons of

mass destruction from being used and training other nations to defend themselves so that we don't have to.

The first job of the Federal Government is to defend the Nation, and SOCOM is truly the tip of the spear that does that. We are honored to have Admiral McRaven in his first testimony before this subcommittee since assuming his new position as SOCOM commander and appreciate Assistant Secretary Lumpkin, himself a former SEAL [U.S. Navy Sea, Air, Land teams], for being here today as well.

Before turning to our witnesses, I would yield to the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island, the ranking member, for any comments he would like to make.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thornberry can be found in the Appendix on page 27.]

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM RHODE ISLAND, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES**

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for convening this hearing.

Secretary Lumpkin and Admiral McRaven, welcome, and thank you very much for being here today. I look forward to your testimony. The importance of SOF [Special Operations Forces] in today's fight, while so often in the shadows, as the chairman pointed out, was brought into the spotlight during the daring raid into Abbottabad back in May. All of us in the room, and in fact the Nation, owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the men and women who serve with you in SOCOM. Raids such as the one which killed Osama bin Laden highlight the wisdom and the prescience of the authors of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation.

Today, joint operations between the services are commonplace and expected, and we have seen an unprecedented rise in both the capability of our Special Operations Forces and the prominence they play in our modern military.

It wasn't that long ago that SOF was looked upon as sort of a boutique force, one with niche capabilities that performed important but lesser activities around the edges of a primary conventional force effort. Because of their efforts, they were known often only to a few with the right clearances or keen-eyed observers. Some even questioned whether we needed SOF at all.

Well, 10 years after 9/11, and due in no small part to our experience fighting Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are the stuff task forces are built around, oftentimes augmented by conventional forces and a very central component of our ongoing fights in the Middle East and elsewhere. Those legislators who had the vision to create SOCOM could not have envisioned exactly how SOF would evolve in the 25 years that followed. But they knew they had to create a framework that would enable success, whichever way requirements pulled the force. That remains our task today.

Now, I am not suggesting that we need another massive piece of legislation, but we do need to think about whether the way we are currently training, manning, and equipping our SOF today is sufficient and appropriate for the future. We must utilize the lessons

learned from the past 10 years of warfare and ask tough questions. Have our SOF forces withstood the last decade—I should say how have our SOF forces withstood the last decade? What factors, both internal and external, help and hurt their growth and efficiency? As the defense budgets tighten in coming years, where must SOF grow? And which areas have the experiences that have yet to be explored?

The timing of this hearing couldn't be better, Mr. Chairman. And we have to consider how best to posture our forces for the future security challenges and contend with the prospect of austere resources. I hope we see a wide-ranging and robust discussion today about lessons learned and thoughts about what is to come. Are the acquisition authorities agile enough while still properly tailored to yield the specialized equipment you need when you need it, without duplicating other efforts and costs elsewhere in the greater DOD [Department of Defense] budget? Would the rest of the force benefit from new acquisition efforts, as appropriate? Can we train your people properly? Are the authorities governing your operations crafted so that you can do what you need to do, and yet still be subject to appropriate control and oversight? And how have the lines blurred between Title 10 and Title 50 affected the force? And most importantly, are you able to stay true to your core, to the SOF truths, which all operators know and understand in spite of the current operational and fiscal realities? These are the questions that we hope to explore today.

And Mr. Secretary and Admiral, thank you both for your great service to our Nation. We are deeply in your debt, and to those whom serve under you. And I look forward to your discussion and your testimony here today.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for convening this hearing. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Langevin can be found in the Appendix on page 28.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. I thank the gentleman.

Now we will turn to our witnesses: Mr. Michael D. Lumpkin, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict; and Admiral William McRaven, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

Mr. Lumpkin and Admiral, without objection, your full statements will be made part of the record. And please feel free to summarize them and make such comments as you see fit. Mr. Lumpkin.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL D. LUMPKIN, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SPECIAL OPERATIONS/LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT**

Mr. LUMPKIN. Good morning.

Thank you, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin, and members of the committee. Thank you for the invitation to be here today.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the founding of United States Special Operations Command and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, I want to acknowledge the unique relationship we have had

with the Congress and this committee. Your support, and that of the American people, for our Special Operations Forces was essential in the creation of SOCOM and SO/LIC, and continues to be the key enablers for us today. As we reflect on the lessons learned over the past decade, it is crucial that we put them into a broader context.

In 1970, American Special Operations Forces carried out one of the most daring raids in American military history, the attempted rescue of 61 American prisoners of war suspected of being held in a North Vietnamese prison camp at Son Tay, a mere 40 miles west of Hanoi.

Only 10 years later, in 1980, our Special Operations Forces attempted to rescue 55 American hostages held in Iran. That operation failed, resulting in the death of eight service members and damaging American prestige worldwide, principally due to a decrease in operational capabilities.

Thirty-one years after the tragedy of Desert One, our Special Operations Forces have come full circle. The daring and successful raid at Abbottabad, approximately 40 miles north of Islamabad, led to the death of Osama bin Laden, showcases the superb skills of special operators today.

As we enter an era of constrained defense budgets, we must not repeat the mistakes that led to the degraded SOF capabilities throughout the 1970s. Our goal must be to retain and, in fact, hone all of our SOF capabilities so that our Nation will have them in full measure in the decades to come. We must retain and sharpen our proven direct action capability, the tip of the spear so to speak, which is what most Americans think of when they hear Special Operations.

But this is only one aspect of what SOF does. There are less obvious, but equally important SOF capabilities for indirect activities that enable us to persistently engage throughout the world, working with international partners to build their capabilities before conflicts arise so that they can defend themselves and, by extension, defend us.

Our experiences have validated the five SOF truths. First, humans are more important than hardware. SOF is successful because we equip the man, not man the equipment. It's all about our people.

This leads us to the second SOF truth. SOF are uniquely able to provide a Nation with targeted and precision capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict, whether it is training partner military units, countering terrorist threats or conducting high-end direct action missions. Our return on investment is the highest among all U.S. forces.

The third and fourth SOF truths are interconnected. SOF cannot be mass-produced, and competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur. It has taken the last decade to grow our SOF capability from approximately 33,000 service members to almost 58,000 today. As we increase the number of SOF, we must ensure a commensurate growth in our enablers.

This takes us to the fifth SOF truth. Most Special Operations require non-SOF support, including support from general purpose forces and the interagency. We know that the team approach in



DOD and the interagency and with international partners carries the day.

Another key lesson over the past decade relates to the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. For a relatively small cost, we are able to build partner forces and gain access to better local intelligence, which can create security without requiring a large, expensive U.S. footprint.

In the foreseeable future, disrupting, dismantling, and defeating Al Qaeda, its adherents and associated movements, will continue to dominate the SO/LIC and SOCOM agendas. Supporting SOCOM's efforts to refine counternetwork targeting, interagency collaboration, and organizational structures will remain a priority. SO/LIC will continue to be the focal point for coordinating DOD's role in the national strategic counterterrorism activities.

Post-2014, DOD is projecting a baseline requirement of 10,500 to 12,500 deployed special operators on any given day. SOF represents an exceptional value to our Nation, consuming just 1.6 percent of the defense budget and comprising less than 3 percent of U.S. military personnel. The characteristics of our Special Operation warriors guarantee that our military possesses the capability for facing the unknown threats of the future and general purpose forces downsize.

On behalf of everyone who serves in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, I thank you for your long-standing support of our Special Operations soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, and the thousands of civilians that support them. This concludes my opening remarks, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lumpkin can be found in the Appendix on page 30.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.  
Admiral.

**STATEMENT OF ADM WILLIAM H. MCRAVEN, USN,  
COMMANDER, U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

Admiral MCRAVEN. Good morning. Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin, and distinguished members of the committee, again, thank you for the invitation to appear before this committee and the opportunity to represent the men and women of the United States Special Operations Command.

I am honored to command such a capable and effective organization, and privileged to appear today alongside my teammate, Secretary Michael Lumpkin, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict.

I have positioned a few posters around the room which highlights SOCOM's rich history; our authorities, those legislated by Congress and those directed by the President and the Secretary of Defense; how Special Operations has changed since 9/11; where we are today; and how we are preparing for tomorrow.

As you know, SOCOM was legislatively created by Congress in 1986. Congress' vision and support, coupled with tremendous military leaders and exceedingly talented operators, have created the most capable Special Operations force the world has ever seen. I

applaud lawmakers' foresight in legislating this command into existence. You can be very proud of the results.

U.S. SOCOM is one of nine unified combatant commands across the Department of Defense. And while similar in many regards, we are unique in that we also exercise numerous service, military department, and defense agency-like responsibilities. Among SOCOM's legislated responsibility is to prepare Special Operations Forces to carry out assigned missions, including training and equipping the force, and to command select Special Operations missions when directed to do so by the President or the Secretary of Defense.

Additionally, U.S. SOCOM is directed by the Unified Command Plan to synchronize planning for global operations against terrorist networks. In carrying out these tasks, we work closely with the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the geographic combatant commands, and appropriate government agencies. These authorities have effectively prepared and equipped our force to meet the threats of the last decade, and to be postured appropriately for future challenges.

Since 9/11, our force has doubled in size, our budget has tripled, and our deployment requirements have quadrupled. However, congressional support has enabled U.S. SOCOM to continue providing rapid global options to meet a broad set of complex and dynamic challenges. Special Operations Forces currently serve in both supporting and supported roles across the battlefield.

With an annual budget of \$10.5 billion, U.S. SOCOM comprises only 1.6 percent of the Department of Defense proposed fiscal year 2012 budget and, put simply, provides a tremendous return on the Nation's investment. Our success in these roles hinges on the application of the indirect and the direct approaches, meaning that both approaches are required to achieve the desired results.

The direct approach is characterized by precision, highly kinetic strike forces enabled by technology and linked through a digitally networked battlefield. Since 9/11, these largely kinetic counterterrorism operations have had great effect disrupting Al Qaeda and its affiliates by providing space and time for the indirect approach to achieve its desired effect.

Conversely, the indirect approach is focused on advising, assisting, and training our global partners. Our persistent presence is enabled by a deep understanding of a local culture and context. These two approaches are mutually supportive and necessary elements of effective Special Operations employment.

Currently, more than 13,000 members of Special Operations Command are deployed globally, with 85 percent of those forces deployed to the Central Command area of responsibility. Of these deployed forces, more than 10,000 SOF are in Afghanistan and Iraq. The other 3,000 Special Operations Forces are deployed to more than 75 countries around the world. Operating at the invitation of the country and the approval of the ambassador, these forces are performing noncombat missions in diverse, challenging environments.

The goal of these forces deployed outside combat is to build partner nation capacity. Building this capacity is critical to enabling our partners to deal with their own security challenges, strength-

ening their regional stability, and decreasing the demand for U.S. support.

As many of you know, our total force faces challenges as well. With a significantly increased operational tempo and continued high demand for Special Operations Forces, the past decade of continuous combat has resulted in increased pressure on our forces and families. While SOF and their families are resilient by nature, the effects of 10 years of focused combat operations convinced my predecessor, Admiral Eric Olson, to form a task force to examine what he described as the fraying around the edges of the force. Over a period of several months, the task force conducted over 400 focus group discussions with more than 7,000 Special Operations service members and more than 1,000 spouses from 55 different SOF units around the world, including forces deployed in combat.

For SOF, there is no single cause responsible for the fraying. It is the accumulation of a multitude of stresses spread throughout the training and deployment cycle. While I can assure you the state of Special Operations Forces is strong, the pressure on our service members and their families requires careful attention to ensure the long-term health of the force. Compounding the stress on the force is the reality that the demand for SOF continues to exceed supply.

As we draw down the general purpose forces in Iraq and contemplate drawdown in Afghanistan, SOF will likely be the last force to experience relief. As Admiral Mullen said earlier this year, SOF are typically the first force in and the last to leave. With 85 percent of deployed SOF in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, the pent-up demand across the other geographic combatant commands continues to grow. And I do not anticipate it to decrease.

Another challenge for SOF is our reliance on the general purpose forces for supporting infrastructure and enablers. SOF, by design, depends heavily on the service-provided capability for support. Consequently, as we look at the drawdown in Afghanistan, the potential drawdown in Afghanistan, and the potential for additional SOF requirements, we need to make sure the appropriate infrastructure and enablers remain in place to make SOF as effective as possible on that battlefield.

Globally, Special Operations Forces are contributing well beyond their numbers, and are known for their high return on investment. In the future, I see great benefit in developing a global SOF network. We are working through the geographic combatant commands. And bolstering our ties with the interagency and the allied SOF partners, we can react even more rapidly and effectively against our enemies.

My number one priority is winning the current fight, while maintaining the health of the force. But close behind that priority is expanding this global SOF and interagency network to deal with future challenges.

I would like to conclude with two final points. First, I believe the Special Operations Forces have never been more valuable to our Nation and to our allies around the world than it is today. And the demand will not diminish for the foreseeable future.

Second and lastly, I want you to know how proud I am to command the greatest Special Operations force in the world. And you have my promise that we will continue to fight as long and as hard

as you need us to in order to protect this great Nation and the principles we hold so dear.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral McRaven can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Admiral. And I don't believe any member of this subcommittee has any doubt about that. And that is reassuring.

Let me ask for you all's brief comments for a couple of issues within the time I have available. One is back to the statute. As I mentioned, the statute lays out 12 specific areas for Special Operations Command. If you look through them, it seems to me it is a huge breadth of our security challenges right now, from foreign internal defense, terrorism—counterterrorism, you know, the whole list. Are there any of them that you would recommend Congress at least examine to see whether there should be changes, either additions or subtractions, to that list of 12 that were put in, in the original bill?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Mr. Chairman, as we look at the missions that were legislated within the Goldwater-Nichols, what we do is we have the codified process of the Quadrennial Defense Review, where we go through all of these missions and we scrub them to make sure that we indeed are doing what needs to be done for our Nation. So the process works very well.

What we have identified in, for example, the 2006 QDR was that the missions were largely what we needed to be, but we didn't have the force size to accomplish them completely. So the QDR 2006 was the program growth of SOF itself, of the operators.

In 2010, we saw the shortfall of the enablers to allow SOF to do that, to execute their missions. So we saw that programmed in the growth across the FYDP [Future Years Defense Program]. And that is the program that we are executing right now. So I think our missions are accurate and effective for what our Nation needs, but I will defer to Admiral McRaven.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I would agree with Secretary Lumpkin.

The great thing about this is a lot of those missions are mutually supporting. So if you are training a Special Forces officer and NCO [noncommissioned officer] in how to do counterinsurgency, that same skill set can apply to foreign internal defense. If you are training an operator in how to do counterterrorism, a lot of those same skill sets will apply to countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

So the great thing is when we look at those mission sets that we have, again, I think if you focus on kind of the direct and the indirect approach, and we train all of our operators to do both, the mission set, as Secretary Lumpkin said, I think is exactly what we need now and for the future.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay.

Second issue I would invite you all's comments on is budget. Under some scenarios, there could be reductions to every account in the defense budget, as I understand the way that potential sequestration would operate. I also understand from reading the press that the Department of Defense has put out some restrictions

on how military officers can talk about consequences of defense budget cuts. And I certainly am not asking you to violate any orders that you received. But I would appreciate, I think we all need to hear somewhat about the potential for 5, 10 percent budget cuts to SOCOM's budget.

Mr. LUMPKIN. Within the Department, as you are aware, Mr. Chairman, is that we are doing a strategy-based review as far as the budget reductions to make sure that we have a holistic look at what the requirements are of the Nation and to make sure that we have the forces that are prepared to respond to those future situations globally.

So we are looking within the Department to find out where we can find those efficiencies. The key that we are really looking at, not only within the SOF portfolio, but also with the enablers, because as the services look at reductions that may impact them, they have a direct impact on us, for a number of reasons.

First of all, that is where we draw a large portion of our forces from. They come into the general purpose forces and then will transition to SOF at some point. So we have them as a talent pool, first of all.

Number two is that they provide the support that we need to execute our mission so we can focus on those specifically. And while we do have the need for organic combat support and combat service support, we do rely heavily on the general purpose forces. So we are looking very closely to see what the budget impacts are going to have on them, which will in turn influence and impact us.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I just echo those comments.

I think, within OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense], within the Department of Defense, they understand the value that SOF brings to the current fight and the future fight.

Our real concern, as Secretary Lumpkin said, is the impact on the services. And as the services have to potentially cut key enablers, that is going to affect us. And we just have to make sure that we are in constant dialogue with the services, which we are through this whole process.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. Just be in constant dialogue with us, too, because I am concerned about where this could lead and the idea that some people might have that, oh, we can keep the counterterrorism effort going; we will just cut the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines. This enabler issue that you brought up I think may not be apparent to most people.

The gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again Mr. Secretary and Admiral, thank you for your testimony here today and your service.

Given my roles on both the House Armed Services Committee and the House Intelligence Committee, and the ability to have transparencies into both Title 10 and Title 50 responsibilities, I wanted to focus on that area a bit this morning.

I am increasingly aware of and to a degree concerned that the lines between those two authorities are becoming blurred as they relate to our military SOF capabilities. Ten years ago, the 9/11 Commission, for example, recommended that responsibility for paramilitary operations should be shifted from the CIA [Central In-

telligence Agency] to U.S. Special Operations Command. This recommendation was primarily based on the belief that the CIA doesn't have a robust capability for conducting these types of activities. But with over a decade of warfare experience now under its belt, I certainly believe it goes without saying that the CIA's capability has grown tremendously in this area.

Without delving into classified information, and we will talk more about this in a classified setting later, I would like to hear your thoughts on the following: Has the Title 10-Title 50 divide taxed your force significantly? Do you agree with the 9/11 Commission that the U.S. military should take on this traditionally agency-led role? And the third question in this area, how can Congress best bridge the Title 10-Title 50 divide and provide the necessary oversight in this somewhat gray area?

So, Mr. Secretary, do you want to start?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Thank you for the question, sir.

We can go more in depth, of course, in the closed session after this. I would submit that the 10-50 divide that you speak of, we have a very good relationship with the interagency. We have the processes and memorandums, in terms of reference, in place to effectively ensure that we within the Office of Secretary of Defense's Special Operations have oversight over any activities that go on between U.S. Special Operations Command and the interagency in that realm.

I don't believe that this is a mission at this point that should migrate to DOD because the relationship is very good, and it maximizes and gives us the capability to work through the different authorities that each agency has. And the rest of it I would prefer to defer to the closed session, if possible, sir.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Fair enough.

Let me ask this, and I think I can probably ask this in open session, is the agency properly resourced to do the missions that it is called upon to do, or is it the type of thing where they are stressed and it is more of an area where SOF forces would be more capable?

Mr. LUMPKIN. I have not run into a situation yet where they were resource deprived to execute a mission that was uniquely theirs that we could not help them with. When they find that there is a shortage, we can work something through that to bridging the gap to make sure they have the capabilities that are necessary.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay.

Admiral, do you care to comment?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I am not sure there is much to add, but I will tell you the relationship between CIA and Special Operations Forces is as good as I have ever seen it. Both under Director Panetta, and now, of course, under Director Petraeus, I think we are going to see that relationship continue to strengthen and blossom. And again, great relationship.

I think we clearly understand on the Department of Defense side the lanes in the road in terms of Title 10 versus Title 50. And as Secretary Lumpkin said, I think we can certainly address some of your other concerns in the closed session.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Fair enough. Let me turn to budgets in the time that I have left.

Mr. Secretary, in light of the budget debate here in Washington and the inevitable shrinking of the defense budget, I am concerned about the effects of this squeeze on the SOF community, as is the chairman. During our brief meeting yesterday, you had mentioned concerns about the effects of ongoing DOD budget efficiency efforts on SOCOM and the various forces who would enable SOF to do their mission so well. Can you elaborate on those concerns more specifically, and which enablers are absolutely vital? And are there any areas where some flexibility exists in those enabling forces?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Thank you, sir.

The principal concern goes back to the issue of enablers, to making sure that those are in place to support our SOF. As we see the general purpose force footprint reduced, specifically in Afghanistan in the future, we understand there is going to be a higher reliance on the Special Operations community. So we are watching to see how those reductions will impact SOF.

ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] in particular is one thing that we rely heavily upon. And so we have to make sure that we watch to see how that looks and how that goes to make sure we fully recognize the impact on our Special Operations community. So, again, it goes back to largely to the enablers.

I think our Nation understands the benefit of SOF, especially in the environment that we anticipate in the future globally. So I think that we need to work with the services, make sure that we are focused and adaptive to what happens in the future as we look at the budgets in the coming years.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay.

Thank you both for your testimony.

I yield back.

Mr. THORBERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

First question, Admiral, is you talked about pent-up demand. I am assuming you mean Central America, South America, Philippines. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. As I mentioned in my opening statements, we have got about 85 percent of our Special Operations Forces currently in the CENTCOM area of operation. And frankly, I think at this time and place, that is probably the right percentage to have there.

But clearly, there remains demand in other theaters that over the course of the last 10 years, we have had to draw from some of the other theaters in order to support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. So as we look at the future and the potential, with the drawdown in Iraq and obviously, over time, the drawdown in Afghanistan, certainly what I will try to do is balance those requirements that are coming from the geographic combatant commands in the various theaters so we can better support them. But right now a lot of our lift, a lot of our personnel have come from those theaters in order to support the effort in CENTCOM.

Mr. HUNTER. So when you look out the next say even 10 to 20 years and how SOF is going to need to transition, whether it is being more in like Southeast Asia, what do you see as the most important thing that—because you have people like Chairman Thorn-

berry, Chairman Langevin, they have been here for a long time. They have seen administrations come and go. They have been here prior to 9/11 and afterwards. So what is next, looking forward, that we need to make sure that we don't take our eye off the ball as those of us that are here longer, through multiple administrations, through multiple changes, multiple wars, what do we need to keep focused on over the long term?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, sir. Our strength I think is this global SOF network that I talked a little bit about in the opening comments. We work through the theater Special Operations commands [SOCs] in order to influence and support the geographic combatant commanders. So as I look at the future of the U.S. Special Operations Command, one of the areas where I intend to put a lot of emphasis is building up the theater Special Operations commands so that they have the entire spectrum of capability that I think they will need for the future.

Now, every theater Special Operations command will be a little different. Clearly, as we look at someplace like PACOM [U.S. Pacific Command] and SOCPAC [Special Operations Command Pacific], can they use ISR, for example, unmanned ISR? And the answer is I think in certain cases, they absolutely could for disaster relief. If a tsunami hit someplace, somebody may want to understand what the problem looks like. So ISR is probably applicable in SOCPAC as well as SOCSOUTH [Special Operations Component, U.S. Southern Command].

But as you look at a place like SOCEUR [Special Operations Command Europe], I am sure our ability to fly into European airspace with unmanned aerial vehicles is probably a nonstarter. So we are going to have to balance out what comes out of Afghanistan, as you point out, in the next—whatever that timeline looks like, 5, 10 years—take those resources and then again balance them out across the various theater SOCs. But I believe that our future, SOCOM's future, lies in the theater of Special Operations Forces and making sure that they are robust enough to handle the problems in their particular geographic areas.

Mr. HUNTER. Going back to enablers again, you can talk conventional Navy, which is your primary enabler internationally—not right now in Iraq and Afghanistan, but primarily after these—we draw down. Do you think that they are set up in a way right now? Would you change anything in big Navy, conventional Navy in the ships that they are buying, in the way that they are going towards unmanned vehicles in their movement, I guess trying to get involved right now in these two wars and be somehow involved in these two wars and have a role to play? Would you change their direction, or do you think that they are doing enough to enable you in the future when we start moving out of Iraq and Afghanistan?

Mr. LUMPKIN. If I may, Mr. Hunter, we are working closely with the Navy as far as when it comes to their structure, especially in the realm of maritime ISR, to support SOF and to make sure that they have a capability that can meet our needs globally, especially in the expeditionary nature of the Navy as we move forward and sometimes frequently with short or little notice that if they are already in place, they can support our forces through that maritime



ISR. So that is one of the key things that we are working with the Navy in particular on.

Mr. HUNTER. What about shipbuilding? Are you guys happy with the Littoral Combat Ship [LCS] and its capability?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Candidly, I haven't had those discussions with the Navy. As we look at it, a more robust capability is always better for us that is out there. But I would like to take that one for the record, if that is okay with you, sir.

Mr. HUNTER. So SOF, just to make sure, SOF has not looked at then the LCS as one of their primary vehicles for the future? Especially the Navy SEALs?

Mr. LUMPKIN. We have definitely, I know the force has looked at the LCS and the Navy capability at large. I don't have the answer to that question right now, and I would like to take it for the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 57.]

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And Secretary Lumpkin and Admiral McRaven, thank you both for being here.

I especially want to welcome a fellow San Diegan, as well, Mr. Secretary, thank you.

I think one of the things that has become really clear is that our SOF members have become really the experts in the whole-of-government approach. And I wonder if you could share with us, I guess is there something that we really can take from your experience, from the SOF's experience into the military as a whole as we train and prepare individuals on all of the—across the services? And also whether in fact we are able to I guess send a clear message that, working with our international partners, that it takes—you know, it is still, as we deal with SOF, it is still the military. And yet we talk about the whole of government as being something perhaps different and added value to the military. How do you work that in the field, particularly as we go into many areas where we are trying to prevent those conflicts?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am, thank you.

And I am glad you asked the question. Frankly, from my previous command tour as the commander of JSOC [Joint Special Operations Command], I can tell you that not a single mission that we conducted did not have a heavy interagency flavor to it. And we learned very early on that what the interagency brought in terms of diversity of their cultures and their unique capabilities was a huge enabler for Special Operations Forces, particularly the kinetic side. So if you are going to go against a target, you are going to have intelligence support from CIA, NSA [National Security Agency], DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency]. You will have support from NGA [National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency] on the graphics. Everybody, and of course State Department, a key player in all of this. FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], as we are supporting certain missions that the FBI may be conducting. So tremendous

interagency lash up between Special Operations and our inter-agency partners.

On the indirect side, I would say it is very much the same. Those forces out in the field are working with USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development]. They are working with NGOs [non-governmental organizations], again, trying to build host nation capacity. If they are in a noncombat area, they are sitting at the table with the country teams to make sure that the country team mission, that they are in support of that. So interagency is really kind of a foundation of how we are doing Special Operations today.

Mrs. DAVIS. Is there something unique about the way you have been able to break down those barriers and perhaps we have had more difficulty in other areas?

Admiral MCRAVEN. I think a lot of it has do with at the end of the day, there are results, in terms of if an interagency supports an operation in Afghanistan with intelligence, or graphics, or authorities, they will see a result of their support to Special Operations.

And that tangible result really makes a difference in how much they want to provide support. And you see that again down range as well.

I think if you would talk to ambassadors across the 75 countries in which we are in kind of day in and day out, they will tell you that the support provided by the military information support teams, the civil affairs teams, and then the joint training that happens with the Special Forces and the SEALs is tremendous to support U.S. policy. So they see immediate results when they invest in Special Operations. And I think that is what brings us together.

Mrs. DAVIS. Is there something in particular we, though, could generalize to training among our forces? I know we have done cultural training. What is it that should be included more, that should be a higher priority perhaps than what we have today?

Admiral MCRAVEN. In terms of Special Operations or the conventional force?

Mrs. DAVIS. Conventional forces.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Yes, ma'am.

I think the conventional forces are also embracing the inter-agency. I can tell you from my time in Afghanistan, you saw a little bit of what we had developed at the Joint Special Operations Command in Afghanistan with all the way down to the brigade combat teams and to the battalions that were on the ground. They knew that the interagency support, the intelligence community, along with the other supporting agencies were a tremendous resource that they could use. And again, they got results.

So I think the conventional force gets it. It is just that we are dealing with a larger scale in the conventional force; whereas the smaller scale of SOCOM and Special Operations Forces allows us to turn that information more quickly.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

If I could make an editorial comment, I greatly admire Ms. Davis's relentless pursuit of making sure that the Federal Government can use all the tools available to it as effectively as possible.

And I appreciate your answers on the good things that are happening in the theater. But in my opinion, we have a ways to go in this government to really be effective with all the tools we have and to break down those barriers that still exist.

Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Preach on, Mr. Chairman. Preach on.

Admiral, Mr. Secretary, thank you all for being here. I appreciate it. Thank you for your service.

Admiral McRaven, you walked us through a little bit of the things that you are doing and that Admiral Olson started with respect to making sure that the folks we ask to do the most—and quite frankly, we probably ask them do more than we should have, but we will continue to ask them because they will stand in and make it happen—that they and their families are treated—not treated well, but have the tools and resources they need to do whatever it is that must be done so that the next time we ask them to go do something, they are ready to do it. And then when they come back from that, that they go back to being able to live as a family man and taking care of their families.

Are there things that you would like to do, or things you would like to have done that you can't do at this point in time because you need authorities or something? I assume that the things you can do you are doing. But is there anything out there that needs to be done that this group needs to be aware of?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, I think we have all the authorities we need. And I think that we have the resources we need. I think, frankly, it is a function of focusing our resources. The Pressure on the Force Task Force that Admiral Olson started just recently kind of reported out. And I have gotten the recommendations from that task force. And in fact, I am sitting down with my staff at USSOCOM to figure out how we are going to implement those recommendations. Some of them I think are well within our ability to implement. And some of them are just the nature of the fight that we are in. You know, as long as we are continuing to fight, there is going to be stress on the force.

But what I know I have an obligation to do as the commander of SOCOM is to make sure we are making the predictability factor as good as we can make it. And by that, when you talk to most of the families, they will tell you that if they can get more predictability in their spouse's deployment cycle, then they can begin to plan things. And they may understand that their spouse will be gone on Christmas or on Easter or another holiday. And if they can plan for that, they are kind of okay with it. But it is the unpredictability that drives a lot of them—that drives a lot of the stressors I think around the families. And I think we can certainly deal with that issue and deal with it well.

The other piece is education. They want to understand the effects of TBI [traumatic brain injury] and PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder]. And so there is an education piece that I think we have got to broaden the aperture a little bit with our families.

Mr. CONAWAY. I am sure everybody on this committee, as well as the broader full committee, would be keenly interested in tracking or watching those kinds of things that you do as a result of the report that the task force put in place.

One of the tools that you have to have is language skills. How are you dealing with the demand for language skills when you are having folks at the operational tempo that you have got them at? Talk to us a little bit about what the focus is there.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, we have got a magnificent language program at Fort Bragg that the U.S. Army Special Operations Command runs. And every Special Operations officer and NCO at some point in time in his career is expected to get a language baseline.

So we are continuing to invest a lot of money in language because, as I pointed out in my opening comments, I mean, it is about us being culturally aware. And I don't think you can become culturally aware of a society until you can understand their language. I think that is a big part of it at least. So we are putting a lot of investment in it. And I know that is going to pay huge dividends for us in the future. It is certainly one of my top priorities.

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, in the time I have got left, General Clapper made an interesting comment the other day in a conversation in Intel spaces about not everything that the intel community does is of equal value. And I don't need an answer this morning, but one of the things that kind of following on the chairman's questions about those 12 things that we have asked you to do, is an honest, straightforward analysis at some point in time that if there are things that you can off-load, not that they are not super important, but things that you can off-load to other places or that we simply as a team don't need to do, that is something that I think collectively the entire system ought to be thinking about and looking at as we look at shrinking resources or resources that stay flat, how do we manage that? And one of them has to be an opportunity to say this is something that we did in the past, you asked us to do in the past, and we don't think that is necessary, and having an honest conversation.

Your tendency, I seem to hear from all the folks in uniform, is that whatever it is you are asked to do, it is yes, sir, yes, ma'am, and we will go do it. There ought to be an opportunity for us at some point to have a rational conversation around that issue that there are just some things that you don't need do or don't need to be done. And we need to have that conversation. I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Gibson.

Mr. GIBSON. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the panelists for being here today. To a degree I think we are all products of our own experience. I am no different. On this subject, I am informed by my experiences as a G3 for Multinational Division North during the surge. A lot of debate as to what may have gone into why the atmosphere, the environment in Iraq changed over time. I think it is really a combination of things. I think, yes, the Sunni Awakening had a part of it. There is no question the surge also played a part, because it was important to have security on the ground to allow all the Iraqis to give some thought as to what kind of future they wanted to have.

But then also very important the role that the Joint Special Operations Task Force played in terms of killing and capturing high-value individuals. I saw on a daily basis just the remarkable integration of intel and operations for effective action. And very keenly

interested in seeing us raise that level of play and focus at the national level. I am aware of, to some degree, of global pursuit and some of the actions and studies that have been done in the past. And I am trying to bring that spirit to what we are doing nationally in terms of policy.

So in the intel authorization bill, got an amendment that looks at consolidating the intel community to better fuse it with operations. And I wanted to make you aware that with the chairman and the ranking member's help, we did put in the mark something you alluded to earlier, Admiral, and that is the 1986 law that created SOCOM. And I am of the mind that we should revisit that and take a look at, are there changes, restructuring within the headquarters, that may allow us to more effectively fuse intel and ops and to really neutralize this threat? Even helping us work in concert with friends and allies as you bring this to a finer point and to a higher priority.

And so I guess I wanted to make you aware of that, if you weren't aware, that I have had conversations with your predecessor about this. I am particularly frustrated with the Christmas Day bomber and the fact that that radicalized young youth's dad called our country, and we didn't have the agility to process that information. And you know, had we had the same facility as we had in Iraq at the operational and tactical level, I think at the national level, we would have been in a better position to address that threat.

So I just want you to know I am going to be supportive going forward to your efforts, and certainly welcome your dialogue at this point on these comments.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Well, sir, first, thank you very much. And I certainly appreciate your interest in those efforts, because we think they are exceedingly important. And as you know from your time in Iraq, we took those lessons learned, you know, how do you fuse ops and intel, and we migrated that over to Afghanistan. And I would contend that the reason the Special Operations Forces on the kinetic side have been so successful in Afghanistan is because of the fusion of that ops and intel.

Having said that, I will tell you that I think our greatest success in Afghanistan has come from the Special Forces officers and NCOs who have been on the ground trying to change the landscape, if you will, in terms of our relationships with the Afghans. The village stability operations [VSO], developing the Afghan local police [ALP], this is, I think, the most promising effort we have in Afghanistan right now. And the fusion of the ops-intel piece, as you know, much like Iraq, you know, we are not going to be able to kind of kill our way to victory in Afghanistan. We have always understood that. Every soldier understands that you can't do that in a counterinsurgency.

So the effort that we are putting in to supporting the VSO and the ALP I think is going to be critical. The real question is how do we take that concept of fusing ops and intel, get it down to the ALP level, the village stability operation level, and ensure that those young SF officers and NCOs and SEALs that are out there doing this have got the same sort of situational awareness that we have kind of on the kinetic side. It is a different requirement. The

kinetic side, frankly, is a lot easier than understanding the human landscape out there in the districts and the provinces.

Mr. GIBSON. Without question, tremendous integration of the indirect and direct approach there. And in particular, I just wanted to, as we close here with my time, that your predecessor had some ideas on how we may be able to reorganize the headquarters there so that we could elevate the priority, the very successful actions that are happening in the Central Command area of responsibility so that we recognize we face a global threat here. And in protecting our cherished way of life, we are going to have to I think step it up a little bit. And really it is us in the Congress I think that can be helpful to you, because every day, the Herculean efforts that are done throughout your command, there may be ways that we can organize more effectively.

Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I thank the gentleman.

And I appreciate, Admiral, your comments on the village stability operations. Members of this subcommittee have been in Afghanistan walking in some of those villages, and are also incredibly impressed at the progress being made through that effort. And as you say, it is a complicated, different sort of mission. But incredibly promising.

Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, it can never be said often enough how much those of us on this committee appreciate all of you. It is easy to say that, Mr. Lumpkin, Admiral McRaven, those of you that are attending, it is easy to say you are the best of the best. Everyone knows that. But oftentimes I think it is something we overlook, that those of you in this position don't—aren't motivated for glory, but you are committed to fight because you love what is behind you, not because you hate what is in front of you. And we just want you to know this committee appreciates that very deeply. And some of the recent discussions on the budget may not reflect that.

And so I don't want to ask the wrong question here. I know that those of you in the military and in uniform always handle some of the most awkward questions so well. Sometimes you get asked the most stupid questions on the planet, and you come back with great decorum and answer them like they were coming from the deepest intellect possible. And I am grateful.

But at a time when there are, as you put it, Mr. Lumpkin, Special Forces warriors spending more time in a year in a deployed or training posture than at home, you know, there are those of us that are very concerned about the budget hollowing out our forces and doing things that put enormous pressures on all of you. So I guess I have to ask a little bit of a question that you can't possibly answer. And that is, do you feel forgotten by Congress? Do you feel Congress doesn't care?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Absolutely not.

Mr. FRANKS. He had to say it that way, didn't he?

Mr. LUMPKIN. The Congress, especially this committee, has been very supportive of U.S. Special Operations Command, and my office, to make sure that we are resourced, whether it was through

QDR, the different QDRs, 06 and 10, to build us a force that can meet the needs of the future. The key is we have to stay and continue that growth that is already programmed to make sure that we are there for the Nation in the future.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, I can tell you, there are a lot of us that are deeply committed to that. But when you talk about fraying around the edges, there is a conviction on our parts, many of us, that part of that rests with Congress. And we want to make sure that you have the resources and everything that you need. So let me just ask a general two-part question to both of you, and it will probably take the rest of my time for you to answer. If you had any area that you could point to as your front line in your agencies, in the Special Forces, the things that you think represent the greatest challenge that you have, can you elaborate on that a little bit?

And also can you say to this committee, if you were able to speak as candidly as possible, what would be the greatest need that you have? What would be the greatest—not request, but admonition that you might make toward this committee as to what we might do, whether it is in an area of funding, or the focus of that funding, or in the area of policy? What is it that you need most from us to do the tremendous job that you do?

And Mr. Lumpkin, I will start with you.

And then I hope, Admiral McRaven, you will follow up.

Mr. LUMPKIN. Thank you, sir. And I will be brief here. As we look at the fiscal challenges that we face, the sequester in particular would be very problematic for us.

Mr. FRANKS. Problematic. That is a nice way to put it.

Mr. LUMPKIN. In that it doesn't allow us to be strategic. So in order to make sure that we don't go down that road would be very helpful to us and the Nation as a whole. And the greatest need, frankly, is to stay on the current program growth that we have got as we are moving forward. Because that will get us where we need to be as a Nation and to make sure that our SOF is properly resourced.

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, if I could add to that, I think our greatest challenge in SOF right now is that we are in great demand. And that is a good place to be, but obviously, that demand is in fact taxing our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and civilians that support SOCOM. I would tell you that the greatest need is to continue to have great Americans and congressional delegations come down range and continue to show the soldiers their support.

I have probably done hundreds of congressional delegations that have come to visit me in Iraq and Afghanistan. And every one of them sends a signal to those young soldiers that America cares. So it is vitally important, I think, for the Congress to continue to come down range to see what is going on, to have an understanding of what the needs of the soldiers are, and then come back here and be able to put that into play.

But I can tell you as a commander, I always welcome the congressional delegations and the staffs. And I think you should continue that to show support for the effort.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you both. Thank you all for your noble service. Thank you.

Mr. THORBERRY. I thank the gentleman.

Let me ask about a specific authority. There has been talk, Admiral, about having your position have greater influence on personnel management issues. And as you know, there has been a proposal to change one of the words in Title 10, where it would give you—change from monitoring to coordinating. The idea would be to kind of strengthen the hand you have in personnel management. Now, as I understand it, DOD has put out kind of a new directive, but to date, only the Navy has reached an agreement on how to implement that. So it comes back to my mind saying, well, maybe we need to take another look at the law, if the other services are not able to work with SOCOM, to have some sort of arrangement on how the personnel issues will fit together. Tell me where we are, and shouldn't we look at that issue?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, as you know, I have been in command about 5 weeks now. And but I can tell you from my discussions with Admiral Olson, this was clearly a concern of his. Having said that, I think the relationships between Admiral Olson and the service chiefs was very strong. And he made a point on a very routine basis to sit down with the service chiefs to ensure that between what the service chiefs felt was their responsibility, what the service responsibility was for advancement and for promotions, was kind of consistent with what Admiral Olson and how Admiral Olson wanted to kind of shape the force. So I think the dialogue and the discussion between the services and SOCOM has been very good. But that is at a very thin level, if you will, of the force.

So, Admiral Olson, again I will defer to his wisdom on this, was always very strongly committed to getting the language changed from monitoring to coordinating, to again give SOCOM a little bit more strength over the advancement and the promotion of our service members.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, it is certainly something that I am personally very interested in, especially given the delays in having the other services work out an arrangement. Let me ask this, Admiral. I have been appalled, frankly, at the amount of public disclosure of, not just the Osama bin Laden raid, but a variety of Special Operations missions. Some of that is illegal leaks. Some of it comes from briefings by senior officials of various kinds. Has the tremendous amount of information that has gotten into the public sphere on operations that are carried out by Special Operations Command folks increased the danger that people operate under in, not just Iraq and Afghanistan, but around the world?

Admiral MCRAVEN. Sir, as you know, we go to great pains to protect our operations and make sure that we maintain our operational security as best we can. But the reality of the matter is, you know, we live in a very media-intense environment in this day and age. And I think there are certain red lines, as we look at what we expose to the public, whereby things like the names of the operators, which obviously would bring greater risk to them and to their families, we are very, very conscious of that. And frankly, I have found that the American public understands that and the media understands that. And they are generally pretty good about ensuring they stay below that red line, that threshold of protecting the individual operators and their families. Clearly, certain tactics, techniques, and procedures are of concern to us. So if we have



something that is exceedingly sensitive, that is something we need to protect very, very carefully. However, having said that, a lot of the operations that the media gets a hold of and will tend to embellish upon, is a fairly routine operation. Again, in a 1-year period of time in Afghanistan, we conducted 2,000 raids. Well, those raids are a pretty standard kind of infantry tactic, if you will, on how to get to an objective. And the media tend to sensationalize it a little bit. But frankly, there is very little I think of that aspect of it that is compromising to Special Operations.

Now, again, when we get into some of the much more sensitive operations and the areas in which we conduct them, then absolutely, sir, that is a red line, and we have to be very careful about the exposure of those operations.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Obviously, we kind of think about this in a counterterrorism sense. But if you think about counterproliferation and a variety of other missions in your set, then it even increases concern.

Unless somebody else has a pressing question they would like to ask in the open session, we will adjourn and reconvene in a closed briefing.

[Whereupon, at 11:07 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



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**A P P E N D I X**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

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**PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

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**Opening Remarks of  
Chairman Mac Thornberry  
for the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee Hearing:  
The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces: Ten Years After 9/11 and Twenty-Five  
Years After Goldwater-Nichols**

**September 22, 2011**

Twenty-five years ago, Congress added an amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols legislation to create the United States Special Operations Command. The law lists 12 core mission areas for the Command and gave SOCOM some unique authorities.

It is certainly appropriate for Congress to review its handiwork, especially as we look back on a decade of fighting terrorists -- a decade in which SOCOM has roughly doubled in personnel, tripled in budget, and quadrupled in overseas deployments. We may not be able to quantify as precisely its achievements over these ten years; yet, they are undeniable.

Looking back on the past decade, my strongest impression is of the incredibly talented, committed, hard-working individuals who serve our country in SOCOM units. As I have traveled to Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, I am continually impressed and inspired by them, just as other members of this subcommittee are. The capability that these people, with their training, their hardware, and their supporting organizations bring to our country is without parallel anywhere in the world.

Some of that capability was on display to the world in the Osama bin Laden raid. But SOCOM does much more --often with little or no fanfare, as it should be. It may well be that the future of the Command will require greater emphasis on some of those other mission areas, such as unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense.

Of course, we consider the future of SOCOM and of our entire military within the constraints of tight budgets. But it seems to me that it would be the height of foolishness to provide insufficient resources to an entity charged with fighting terrorists, preventing weapons of mass destruction from being used, and training other nations to defend themselves so we don't have to.

The first job of the federal government is to defend the nation, and SOCOM is truly the tip of the spear that does that.

We are honored to have Admiral McRaven in his first testimony before this subcommittee since assuming his new position and appreciate Assistant Secretary Lumpkin, himself a former SEAL, being here as well.

**Opening Remarks of  
Ranking Member James R. Langevin  
For the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee Hearing  
Ten Years On: The Evolution of Special Forces Since 9/11**

**September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Lumpkin, Admiral McRaven, thank you very much for being here today. The importance of SOF in today's fight, while so often in the shadows, was brought into the spotlight during the daring raid into Abbottabad Pakistan back in May. All of us in this room and, in fact, the nation, owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who serve with you in SOCOM.

Raids such as the one which killed Osama bin Laden highlight the wisdom and prescience of the authors of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. Today, joint operations between the Services are commonplace and expected, and we've seen an unprecedented rise in both the capability of our special operations forces, and the prominence they play in our modern military.

It wasn't that long ago that SOF was looked upon as a sort of boutique force – one with niche capabilities that performed important but lesser activities around the edges of a primary conventional-force effort. And because the results of their efforts were often known to only a few keen-eyed observers, some even questioned whether we needed SOF at all. Ten years after 9/11, and due in no small part to our experience fighting Al Qaeda and its affiliates in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are the stuff Task Forces are built around, often times augmented by conventional forces, and a very central component of our ongoing fights in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Those legislators who had the vision to create SOCOM could not have envisioned exactly how SOF would evolve in the 25 years that followed, but they knew they had to create a framework that would enable success, whichever way requirements pulled the force. That remains our task today.

I'm not suggesting that we need another massive piece of legislation, but we do need to think about whether the way we are currently training, manning, and equipping our SOF today is sufficient and appropriate for the future. We must utilize the lessons learned from ten years of warfare and ask the tough questions. How have our SOF forces withstood the last decade? What factors, both internal and external, helped and hurt their growth and efficiency?

As Defense budgets tighten in coming years, where must SOF grow, and which areas have efficiencies that have yet to be explored? The timing of this hearing couldn't be better, Mr. Chairman, as we consider how best to posture our forces for future security challenges and contend with the prospect of austere resources.

I hope we see a wide-ranging and robust discussion today about lessons learned and thoughts about what is to come. Are the acquisition authorities agile enough while still properly



tailored to yield the specialized equipment you need when you need it, without duplicating other efforts, and cost, elsewhere in the greater DoD? Will the rest of the force benefit from your acquisition efforts as appropriate? Can you train your people properly? Are the authorities governing your operations crafted so that you can do what we need you to do, yet still be subject to appropriate control and oversight? How have the blurred lines between Title 10 and Title 50 affected the force? And, most importantly, are you able to stay true to your core, to the SOF truths which all operators know and understand, in spite of the current operational and fiscal realities? These are the questions I would like to explore today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL D. LUMPKIN, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF  
DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS / LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT,  
TO  
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES**

**“THE FUTURE OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES: TEN TEARS AFTER 9/11  
AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER GOLDWATER-NICHOLS”  
22 SEPTEMBER 2011**

Good morning, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the invitation to be here today. As we approach the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding and creation of Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-intensity Conflict (SO/LIC), I want to also acknowledge the unique relationship we have had with Congress and this Committee. Your support, and that of the American people, for our Special Operations Forces (SOF) was essential to the creation of SOCOM and SO/LIC and continues to be one of the key enablers to our success, so thank you.

In order to give you a sense of where we have been and where we are going, I will discuss first, the lessons we have learned from recent conflicts and employment of SOF; second, the strategic environment we see today and in the future; and third, what that means for the future of SOF, SOCOM, and SO/LIC.

**I. Lessons Learned from Recent Conflicts and Employment of SOF**

As we look at the past decade and the lessons learned, it is critical to put it into the broader context. In 1970, America's special operators carried out one of the most masterful and daring raids in American military history to rescue American Prisoners of

War suspected of being held at Son Tay, a mere 40 miles from the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. Ten years later, our SOF were unable to rescue American hostages in Iran. Thirty-one years after that tragedy, we came full circle with the daring and successful raid at Abbottabad, nearly 40 miles north of Islamabad, that led to the death of Osama bin Laden.

We must retain and hone our proven direct action capability, which is what most Americans think of when they hear the term "SOF", but it is only one aspect of what Special Operations Forces do. There are less obvious, but equally critical, indirect SOF capabilities that enable us to persistently engage throughout the world, working with partners to build their capabilities before conflicts arise so that they may defend themselves, and by extension, defend us. SOF's ability to persistently engage against our adversaries and with our friends at the small-footprint, village-by-village level is a unique and powerful tool for building the capacity of our partners and allies. Where our enemies or their ideologies are present, we and our partners must also be ever-present. Perhaps the biggest lesson of the past ten years is that we must retain the capability to conduct the full range of Special Operations activities and low-intensity conflict.

9/11 was a wake-up call. Decades old counterinsurgency manuals were dusted-off, revised, and reissued. The Department issued policies placing stability operations on par with combat operations, and requiring the Services to balance their abilities in conventional and irregular warfare. New approaches, Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Village Stability Operations, for example, were developed; and existing capabilities such as civil affairs and psychological operations, now called military information support operations (MISO), were expanded. Critically, in many cases, the U.S. military

made an intellectual and cultural mind-shift from enemy-oriented strategies to more population-centric approaches. These required us to refocus on regional, cultural, and language skills so as to understand the beliefs and aspirations of friends and foes alike. Looking at the past twenty-five years, the Balkans, Somalia, the Philippines, Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan have given our military, both SOF and General Purpose Forces (GPF), hard-won experience and skills that we must retain. Those conflicts have also validated the five SOF "Truths."

First, that "humans are more important than hardware." You cannot convince people to trust their government by just deploying a high-tech surveillance system. You must put people on the ground to earn that trust and you must ensure that the government is able to meet the needs of its people. In some situations, SOF is the right answer, in others, it is GPF conducting classic stability operations, both to prevent escalating conflict and to recover from post-conflict challenges.

That said, it is important to enable our humans with the hardware they need. Taken in isolation, some SOF-unique items may seem expensive, but when you consider that SOF is a mere 1.6% of the total DoD budget and less than 3% of DoD's military personnel, it is obvious that the nation is getting a bargain when it properly equips and employs SOF.

Which leads to the second "truth," that "quality is better than quantity." SOF are uniquely able to provide the nation with targeted and precise interventions across the spectrum of conflict - whether it is training a partner military or indigenous force; tracking and capturing Saddam Hussein, enemy combatant leaders, or other high value targets;

eliminating terrorist threats; or countering weapons of mass destruction or other high end threats.

The third and fourth "truths" are connected - "SOF cannot be mass produced" and "competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur." We entered the 21st century with approximately 33,000 Active, Reserve, and Guard SOF and we are now at almost 58,000, but it has taken a decade. We are in the final stages of our programmed growth now, with completion expected in Fiscal Year 2016. From 2001 through 2015, our Army Civil Affairs active component will have grown by almost 900% (from 247 to 3,247) and our reserve forces by 70% (from 5,157 to 8,077). We are in the process of building five additional Army Special Forces battalion equivalents, expanding Military Information Support Operations capabilities, maturing the Marine Special Operations Command, adding more SEAL operators, and increasing the capabilities of the Army's 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment. This larger force is vital as we seek to sustain a force that has had very little time at home and, as I will discuss later, will continue to be stretched thin. On average today, a SOF warrior spends more time in a year deployed or training than at home.

Equally essential to increasing the number of SOF is matching that growth with a commensurate growth in enablers, which leads to the fifth truth, that "most special operations require non-SOF support," including support from GPF and the interagency. We know the team approach wins the day. When, for example, a SEAL Team needs to conduct an operation on a hostile shore, they must first be able to get there, undetected and ready to execute their mission. In some cases that means having the right submersible fleet. In many cases, movement to the target requires a sequence of

vehicles, some of which are provided by the GPF, such as a Destroyer, and others that are integral to SOF because of their unique features or employment methods, such as a Mark 8 SEAL Delivery Vehicle. Still other operations require traditional piloting skills to fly in and drop munitions on target.

A key enabler is ISR, our eyes in the skies. The advent of more technologically advanced Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities has transformed warfare today. The successes we have had in employing our Special Operators in direct action missions against high value targets has been greatly enhanced by these key enablers. These capabilities, both those organic to SOCOM and in the Services, have allowed SOF to conduct complicated and risky missions with a greater degree of safety and confidence of success.

It is critically important to recognize that SOF success also often requires bringing together interagency skill sets. As such, it is essential to properly resource the interagency for their assigned roles and authorities, so that we can effectively fight the enemy.

In Afghanistan, the expertise and authorities of our U.S. civilian partners has been essential to accomplishing our military objectives. A good illustration is DoD's support to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration-led efforts to build competent, vetted Afghan law enforcement units to investigate and execute warrants. Those warrants lead to successful prosecution in the Afghan counternarcotics judicial system. The Departments of State and Justice Afghan Counternarcotics Task Force has produced an 85% prosecution rate, sentencing drug traffickers to an average of 16.5 years of incarceration. Not only does this take combatants off the battlefield, it eliminates key

Taliban revenue. Since January 2011, over 445 suspects have been removed from the battlefield as a result of the operations of DoD-supported Afghan counternarcotics forces. These combined military and law enforcement operations have created one of the most effective means of removing combatants from the battlefield.

Another key lesson of the past decade that is not captured in the five SOF "truths," relates to the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Preventing conflict or enabling partners to deal with conflict saves American lives and treasure. The Philippines is a great example. With a small task force of approximately 500 SOF and GPF enablers, we have assisted the Armed Forces of the Philippines to degrade the terrorist threat from Abu Sayyaf and Jamaah Islamiyah. This type of persistent, low visibility engagement is essential to our future success in other parts of the world. In a global fight, we must have global partners with the skill to act. Partner capacity building programs are both force multipliers and a tremendous investment for the taxpayer. For a relatively small cost, we are able to build partner forces with access to better local intelligence, which creates security without requiring a large, expensive U.S. presence.

Those are some of the lessons of the past decade – that we must retain our ability to conduct the full range of Special Operations missions, from high-end direct action to partner capacity building; that we must continue to hone our stability operations and low-intensity conflict capabilities; that we must ensure key enablers are in place within SOF, the GPF, and the interagency; and that capable partners are force multipliers for the U.S. These are the lessons we must take forward into a dynamic future threat environment.

## II. The Strategic Environment – Today and in the Future

As time marches forward, we know that the United States and our international partners will continue to confront many complex challenges. Terrorism around the globe; rogue regimes willing to support terrorists and seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction; the deadly nexus of transnational criminal organizations and terrorists; the multiple security threats created by fragile states and poorly governed areas; and new manifestations of ethnic, tribal, and sectarian conflict all represent the menu of items we must squarely face. We also know that our adversaries will be creative and that new threats will continue to emerge.

Change is one of the few constants in the new environment, which is why the agile and innovative mindset of SOF and SOCOM is so critical to helping secure the future. It also means SOCOM and SO/LIC are often the default option for new mission sets. We must ensure that as SOCOM and SO/LIC are given new missions, they are the entities best suited for the respective threat. In many cases they are. For example, technology has made the information environment more complex, ubiquitous, and navigable by our adversaries, increasing the need for military information support operations to shape current conflict and prevent future conflict. The virtual world gives our enemies a platform to propagate their extremist ideologies, recruit, organize, and plan. As such, SOF-led information operations, an enduring and traditional military activity, to counter violent extremism (CVE) and enemy combatant messaging are increasingly essential, in peacetime and in conflict.



Counter Threat Finance (CTF) represents another new frontier to SOCOM. SO/LIC provides resources and policy direction and SOCOM is the global synchronizer of DoD's efforts. We provide critical support to interagency CTF efforts in order to diminish enemy capabilities, including efforts such as the DEA-led Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC). The ATFC is a whole-of government organization established to identify and disrupt the sources of funding that support insurgent and terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan. The recognition that "it takes a network to defeat a network" is a powerful concept developed by our forces that will become more important in attacking the increasingly globalized, interconnected, and transnational threats of the future. DoD, through SO/LIC and SOCOM, brings critical analytic skills, planning capabilities, and technology, providing the U.S. a more powerful network to defeat those threats. Now and in the future, our security is directly linked to our ability to disrupt the flow of resources to enemies who rely on non-traditional finances.

Another critical challenge going forward will be the need to execute complicated operations in austere areas with limited infrastructure or minimal U.S. presence. Threats emanate from ungoverned spaces, which means we need to have access to those spaces and the ability to operate within them for periods of time without a great deal of support. It also means we need to engage partners to increase their ability to govern or stabilize those spaces, eliminating havens for radicalism.

This range of challenges blurs the line between peace and war, demanding both persistent engagement and direct action capabilities. In a globally networked world, our enemies are devious and capable of doing great damage with minimal resources. A well-resourced special operations force provides America agility and effectiveness for

pennies on the dollar compared to many other military options. That is important as we look at a future with more constrained resources.

As Secretary Panetta has said, the strength of our military is tied to our economic well-being as a nation. The nation we defend must be fiscally strong. We must continue to produce warriors with a vested interest in the opportunities and freedoms of this great nation. We are prepared to do our part and are conducting a thorough review of all programs and organizations to wring out legacy investments and unnecessary capabilities. We are not asking all elements to contribute a set amount of savings or taking a "Last In-First Out" approach. Instead, we are evaluating the requirements in existing operational, security cooperation, and contingency plans, Secretary of Defense-validated planning scenarios, and future capability assessments. At this point, our analysis indicates that SOCOM will be required to maintain a steady-state, annually deployed presence of between 10,500 and 12,500 SOF, with organic enablers, once we complete the drawdown of conventional forces in Afghanistan. Sustaining that force requires us to continue to move funding from the Overseas Contingency Operations bill to the SOCOM's base budget. You will see that migration continue in future budget submissions.

### **III. The Future of SOF, SOCOM, and SO/LIC**

Defeating the dark force of Al Qaeda and its associated extremist movements will continue to define OASD SO/LIC and SOCOM. In close collaboration with our interagency partners, we excel at the art and science of pursuing and disabling our enemies. We will continue to support SOCOM's efforts to refine counter-network

targeting techniques and organizational structures. We will continue to foster the dynamic culture of innovation and interagency cooperation that has blossomed over the past ten years. We will remain the focal point for coordinating Department and national strategic counterterrorism (CT) guidance.

Our second priority is to provide overall supervision of low-intensity conflict activities in the Department to guarantee post-Afghanistan does not mirror post-Vietnam, an era where we reverted whole scale to a traditional war fighting force structure following the end of combat operations. In the past ten years, "Irregular Warfare" (IW) has become the organizing mechanism within DoD for low-intensity conflict. This approach can be summarized as focusing on maintaining or winning the support of the population in a contested area as opposed to the traditional concept of destroying the enemy's armed forces. Specifically, IW consists of five types of operations: CT, foreign internal defense (FID), unconventional warfare (UW), counterinsurgency (COIN), and stability operations.

SOF are uniquely trained and resourced for carrying out the CT, FID, and UW components of IW and are typically deeply involved with COIN and stability operations. SO/LIC has the broader mandate to ensure the entire Department continues to be capable of conducting COIN and stability operations. The skill sets required for success in these complex operations are a nuanced blending of the Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic tools this nation possesses. SOF, with their maturity, language, cultural expertise, and regional focus, provide our Nation with multi-dimensional warriors that understand how to blend these elements with other U.S. government entities along

with partner nation military and political structures to implement creative and effective plans of action.

For the foreseeable future, the most likely contingencies the U.S. will face will involve the messy realities of irregular warfare as America's dominance in traditional warfighting will continue to create powerful incentives for adversaries to use alternate methods to counter U.S. influence and interests. As noted above, DoD has established a baseline requirement of 10,500 to 12,500 deployed SOF to conduct remote, persistent, highly distributed operations supported by organic, SOF-specific Combat Support and Combat Service Support assets. It is also important to remember that as we drawdown conventional forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan, a SOF presence that is similarly-sized, or potentially larger, will likely remain.

In recognition of the future expanded role played by SOF in these complex operations, the 2006 QDR directed the growth of SOF operational formations by roughly 25 percent. As mentioned earlier, this carefully phased growth is almost complete.

This future SOF force structure is designed to be highly flexible and able to operate in a highly decentralized and dispersed manner. They must be prepared to be successful in remote areas where there are no U.S. military bases or even host-nation infrastructure. This requirement was captured in the 2010 QDR's direction to increase organic SOF enabling assets, otherwise known as Combat Support and Combat Service Support capabilities like equipment and infrastructure maintenance, supply and transport, and intelligence and communications, to match the increased force structure and expected mission sets.

SOF operations will continue to depend on a range of ISR assets that increase our ability to see while not being seen. While unmanned land-based assets like UAVs are widely-used, both sea-based and manned ISR are also critical. A sea-based ISR capability increases our access to the vast number of areas where land-based ISR assets cannot reach due to political sensitivities or geographic location. Unfortunately, that capability is still very limited within DoD. Manned ISR aircraft are important because they are often less obvious and more acceptable to partner nations than UAVs. In addition, in some cases, a manned cockpit sharing the same environment as our SOF operators on the ground provides a capability critical to mission success. ISR support to SOF must be persistent, dedicated, and habitual to support the full spectrum of SOF core activities and operations.

SOF air mobility will also continue to be critically important for movement and support. With the support of Congress, Air Force Special Operations Command will soon have a CV-22 tilt-rotor Osprey fleet of 50 aircraft. This dynamic aircraft provides a tactical advantage of a helicopter with speeds and ranges of a C-130 resulting in the ideal machine to conduct a variety of missions to include the "Desert One"-style mission from which SOCOM was born. However, CV-22s alone do not provide the entirety of SOF lift and it concerns me that we have some SOF flying into harm's way on MC-130 aircraft that are approaching 43 years of age. The Administration has begun to recapitalize the MC-130s, and the equally important AC-130s, with the newer J-model aircraft. Given the enduring importance of SOF mobility, finishing this recapitalization is one of my highest program and budget priorities.

Lastly, SOF will continue to lead the Department's efforts in facilitating interagency solutions to the irregular security challenges of the future. OASD SO/LIC and SOCOM are on the leading edge of our Nation's efforts to apply a whole-of-government approach to current and future threats. For example, our approach to the increasingly lethal nexus between crime, narcotics, and terrorism has resulted in new and effective operations in Afghanistan. This approach will be applicable to the complex challenges and operating environments SOF will face in the future.

SO/LIC is also leading the effort to improve our capacity building tools, training and equipping our partners and allies to defeat evil both within their own borders and globally. We are the stewards of the Department's Section 1206 Global Train and Equip authority and ministerial level capacity-building programs -specifically the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI) and the Afghanistan-oriented Ministry of Defense Advisory (MoDA) program. DIRI and MoDA show tremendous promise to become highly effective tools in increasing partner nation security and governmental capacity with a relatively small investment. Section 1206 is an essential and effective tool for our CT work and our effort to build more capable partners to conduct stability operations. Through CN authorities such as Sections 1004 and 1033, DoD provides critical training, equipment, infrastructure, and information sharing, to enhance the ability of partner nation CN forces to confront drug trafficking, narco-terrorism, and other forms of transnational organized crime.

We are also working with the Department of State and Congress to create a new Global Security Contingency Fund. Many of our security challenges can be most effectively addressed if we improve partner capabilities in the network of security related

activities, including governance and justice sector capacity. Secretary Clinton and former Secretary Gates proposed this Fund to give the U.S. government an agile tool that is responsive to fluid real-world situations (as opposed to our lengthy budget cycle) and incentivizes true interagency collaboration.

In the future SOF will continue to play a critical role in fighting al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, further developing low-intensity conflict and SOF concepts and enablers, partner capacity building, and executing solo or interagency operations that provide the U.S. the ability to protect and advance our security interests without committing large conventional military formations, with their highly-visible US signature and large fiscal costs.

### **Conclusion**

Our experiences since September 2001 have resulted in the wide-scale recognition within DoD that SOF provides a unique capability for preventing and deterring conflict, and, when that fails, working “by, with, and through” partner nations to establish control over areas of conflict with minimal U.S. military involvement. The ability of SOF to operate in a low visibility or clandestine manner with a very small signature will become increasingly important in a future of globally dispersed and irregular threats.

It is crucial to continue building and strengthening the capabilities, resources, and enablers that will ensure SOF is well-aligned to support the broad national goals of preventing and defeating terrorism, promoting stability in key regions, and providing assistance to allies and partners. We must also continue to insist both SOF and GPF

retain the stability operations skills and partner capacity building tools that can prevent or mitigate conflict.

As I mentioned earlier, SOF are an exceptional value to our Nation—just 1.6% of the defense budget and less than 3% of our military personnel. The characteristics of our SOF warriors—flexibility, resourcefulness, imagination, regional expertise, the ability to work with indigenous forces in politically sensitive, hostile, or denied areas—also guarantee that our military possesses a capability for facing the unknown threats of the future. As we shrink the size of the GPF, a fully-enabled SOF is critical to reducing risk while maintaining the strong posture required to defend U.S. interests globally.

In closing, while there are crucial lessons to be learned from recent conflicts, perhaps the most important lesson is historical. When we think about the success of Son Tay, the failure of Desert One, and the triumph at Abbottabad, we see an era in which we forgot and had to re-learn critical military capabilities. Even as we down-size today's force, we must keep in mind the strategic environment and continue to institutionalize the lessons of the last decade. When our Nation requires our Special Operators to go into "the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm," we must ensure they do so with the best training, equipment, and support we can provide. Equally important, we must do all we can to prevent larger missions from being needed by staying engaged with our partners and committed to preventing our enemies from rest.

On behalf of all of us who are honored to serve in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-intensity Conflict, I want to thank



you for your commitment to our Special Operations Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines and the thousands of civilians that support them every day.

**Michael D. Lumpkin**

Michael D. Lumpkin was sworn in as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) on April 25, 2011.

Mr. Lumpkin assists the ASD (SO/LIC) in the development of policy regarding the capabilities and operational employment of special operations forces, strategic forces and conventional forces. He also assists the ASD on counterterrorism strategy, counternarcotics, force transformation initiatives, and special activities.

Prior to his appointment as PDASD (SO/LIC), Mr. Lumpkin served as both Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). As Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations he oversaw many of the day to day operations of the second largest U.S. federal department. Prior to joining VA, Mr. Lumpkin served as Executive Director of Business Development at ATI where he led tactical systems integration efforts in support of the Department of Defense and Tactical Law Enforcement Teams.

Mr. Lumpkin has more than 20 years of active duty military service as a US Navy SEAL where he held every leadership position from platoon commander to Team commanding officer. Mr. Lumpkin has participated in numerous campaigns and contingencies throughout the world to include both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. He is a proven combat leader who served as the former Deputy Commander, Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr. Lumpkin holds a MA from Naval Postgraduate School in National Security Affairs. He is a recognized subspecialist in Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and Western Hemisphere Affairs.



ADMIRAL WILLIAM H. McRAVEN, USN  
COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND  
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to address the committee so soon after confirmation as the 9<sup>th</sup> commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

My intent today is to provide a retrospective view of USSOCOM as we approach our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I will briefly highlight the lessons learned from more than a decade of sustained combat operations. I will then close with a view of the existing threats and preventative opportunities as we chart the path forward for USSOCOM.

As the only combatant command legislated into being by Congress, USSOCOM has a distinct appreciation for the advocacy and unique authorities entrusted to us. Since 1986, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have flourished under the direction of a focused strategic headquarters and a dedicated fiscal authority. Like the rest of the nation, the seminal events of 9/11 served as a historical line of demarcation for the command. SOF's core capabilities and extraordinary record of performance has endured

throughout and continues today in the most demanding operational environments around the world.

#### Global and Local

SOCOM's missions and core capabilities are characterized by direct and indirect operational approaches to special operations. The direct is characterized by precision lethality partnered with focused intelligence; the indirect -- a global persistent presence and local cultural understanding. The global and local elements are both enduring. These capabilities are mutually supportive and necessary elements of effective SOF force employment.

The urgent and largely kinetic direct actions reflective of many counterterrorism (CT) operations since 9/11 continue to disrupt Al Qaeda and its affiliates by capturing, killing, and interdicting their networks while denying access to weapons of mass destruction. Although these operations may sometimes be the most visible, and they are certainly essential, they do not fully encompass SOF's unique contributions and full value.

Engaging and influencing key populations, empowering local host nation forces, and increasing capability through partner development, all contribute to locally-led defeat of threats. These are the hallmarks of our broader mission sets. There is no reliable numerical or material equivalent to building trust, engendering confidence, and assuring host nation forces of our

support and reliability. Illustrative examples of the value seen in these enduring relationships abound throughout USSOCOM's history. SOF's decade-long partnership in Colombia assisted that democracy in the effective security force development necessary to reclaim its sovereign territory from narcoterrorists. Similar outcomes continue today via work with partner nation security forces throughout Central and South America, Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and across Africa and the Middle East. These underreported, yet vital, contributions are prioritized and targeted in support of the collective security requirements outlined in national policy. They are planned and executed by SOF provided to the geographic combatant commanders through the Theater Special Operations Commands.

In tangible ways, these forces are changing the global conditions that enable responsible local solutions to the violent extremism, insurgencies, and criminal enterprises threatening the national sovereignty and economic prosperity needed for a stable and peaceful future. Importantly, we are also seeing emulation of SOCOM's structural and operational approaches globally. We have assisted with the stand-up of sister commands in several key partner nations including continued support and a valued relationship with NATO's SOF headquarters. Our partnership and interoperability with our allies has been strengthened through combined education,

training, and exercises - and often tested and strengthened in combat on battlefields over the last decade.

Looking Ahead

In the near term, USSOCOM and SOF will continue to plan and execute our responsibilities as outlined in Defense Department policy and guidance supporting national objectives. First, we will continue to lead and deliver the nation's premier CT fighting force. Simultaneously we must also provide, with Service enablers, the preponderance of forces for sustained counterinsurgency and stability operations globally. This combined mission is currently seen in the simultaneous SOF leadership and tacit execution of the CT and Village Stability Operations in Afghanistan. As a result of these unique enduring SOF requirements, the projected conventional force drawdown in Afghanistan through 2014 is increasingly dependent upon significant SOF presence. Conventional force reductions will not equate to comparable reductions in SOF. But, when fully integrated within a comprehensive whole-of-government approach, the breadth of capability displayed in this current campaign provides the clearest evidence of SOF's inherent flexibility, agility, and value in addressing irregular missions. One of the explicit lessons of the last decade of conflict is the absolute necessity to share information, plan, and operate in concert with our interagency and foreign partners. Born of our extensive

presence and cultivated relationships, SOF has uniquely embraced this approach.

Effective and Efficient

As requirements begin to subside across United States Central Command's area of responsibility, SOF employment can return to a more balanced application against the highest priority countries and capability areas from missions that currently consume 86% of the deployed force. Here, SOF will continue to offer a deep, adaptive understanding of these environments as a cost effective hedge against uncertainty. SOF presence retains operational access for decisive action if required through a small, unobtrusive, persistent forward engagement in many countries where a more overt presence is unacceptable. SOF are exclusively recruited, assessed, selected, and trained to perform these difficult missions. They continue as the nation's highest return-on-investment military force.

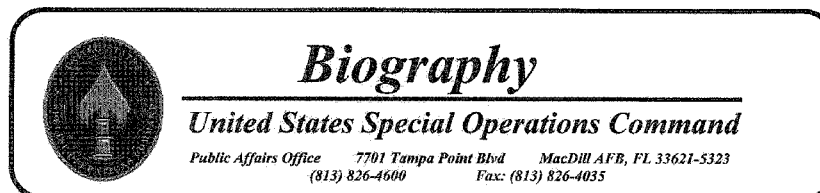
Notably, these three competing requirements equate to a significant increase on the global demand and requirement to develop the force. Even with the Quadrennial Defense Review-directed doubling of the force through a measured 3-5% annual growth and tripling of our budget since 9/11, the four-fold increase in operational tempo has placed pressure on the force. While SOF by nature are hardened and resilient warriors, my predecessor, ADM Eric Olson, directed a task force to examine

what he described as "a fraying around the edges" of the force. That study is now concluding and results will be shared shortly. Based on this effort, we are proactively implementing actions to reduce pressure on the force and families by prioritizing and, when possible, adding predictability to force employment. This effort is paramount moving forward as it protects and maintains the long-term health of our most precious resource, the SOF operator and families of which we continue to ask so much.

As we look to the future security environment, we see emerging technologies that empower populations and non-state actors to challenge traditional nation states. Gaining fundamental understanding of the underlying causes and conditions of conflict in this emergent landscape, beyond the specific threats and ideologies, is central to anticipating and deterring costly conventional military engagements. I am prepared to discuss specific existing and emergent threats in a classified forum, to include the changing environment that will continue to produce additional security challenges.

As assessed, this future makes the case for the continued support of this magnificent force all the more compelling. As with our inception nearly twenty-five years ago, USSOCOM's and Special Operations Forces' success remains indebted to your sustained support and advocacy.





### Admiral William H. McRaven, U.S. Navy



Admiral McRaven is the ninth commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. USSOCOM ensures the readiness of joint special operations forces and, as directed, conducts operations worldwide.

Admiral McRaven served from June 2008 to June 2011 as the eleventh commander of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. JSOC is charged to study special operations requirements and techniques, ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct special operations exercises and training, and develop joint special operations tactics.

Admiral McRaven served from June 2006 to March 2008 as commander, Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR). In addition to his duties as Commander, SOCEUR, he was designated as the first Director of the NATO Special Operations Forces Coordination Centre where he was charged with enhancing the capabilities and interoperability of all NATO Special Operations Forces.

Admiral McRaven has commanded at every level within the special operations community, including assignments as Deputy Commanding General for Operations at JSOC, Commodore of Naval Special Warfare Group ONE, Commander of SEAL Team THREE, Task Group Commander in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, Task Unit Commander during DESERT STORM and DESERT SHIELD, Squadron Commander at Naval Special Warfare Development Group, and SEAL Platoon Commander at Underwater Demolition Team TWENTY-ONE/SEAL Team FOUR.

Admiral McRaven's diverse staff and interagency experience includes assignments as the Director for Strategic Planning in the Office of Combating Terrorism on the National Security Council Staff, Assessment Director at USSOCOM, on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Chief of Staff at Naval Special Warfare Group ONE.

Admiral McRaven's professional education includes assignment to the Naval Postgraduate School, where he helped establish and was the first graduate from the Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict curriculum.

*Current as of: 8 August 2011*



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**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING  
THE HEARING**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

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#### **RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. HUNTER**

Mr. LUMPKIN. Special Operations Forces (SOF) are very pleased with the Navy Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). Looking to a future in which we anticipate increased mission complexity for our special forces, the transformational capability of the LCS is well suited for operating in difficult littoral environments. The speed of the LCS will enable SOF to infiltrate objective areas quickly. The mission bays and the launch and retrieval system of the LCS provide unique and flexible mechanisms for supporting special operations. More specifically, the launch and retrieval system will allow surface or subsurface insertion of SOF. Moreover, the LCS will provide SOF the ability to embark with organic rotary-wing systems or to utilize Navy assets.

In addition, the Navy's Firescout Vertical Takeoff Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) system is particularly relevant to SOF. Firescout recently conducted a proof of concept deployment in support of SOF and provided significant ISR support from the sea. This capability is designed to deploy and operate with the LCS, and it will give SOF a versatile ISR platform to find and fix targets.

U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command participated in the design of the LCS in 2003, and the command continues to be closely integrated into the ongoing training, testing, and doctrine development of the LCS. One example of SOF's involvement is the development of the Irregular Warfare Enhancement to the Surface Warfare Package. This enhancement, supported by the Navy, will provide expanded medical, training, communications, planning, and storage capability for embarked SOF and expeditionary forces.

In summary, the LCS is an important platform, which provides sea-based support for the full spectrum of Special Operations. It will serve as the primary vehicle for SOF when mission requirements dictate. [See page 13.]



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**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

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## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. THORBERRY

Mr. THORBERRY. Can you outline your approach to update the current outdated fleet of SEAL underwater delivery vehicles (SEAL SDVs)?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Our approach to updating the SEAL Delivery System (SDV) envisions a mix of dry and wet submersible vehicles. The Shallow Water Combat Submersible (SWCS) is the program of record for replacement of the SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV), Naval Special Warfare's wet combat submersible capability. The SWCS, an Acquisition Category III (ACAT III) Program, achieved Milestone B on October 1, 2010, and on June 20, 2011, Teledyne Brown was down selected to develop and build the Engineering Development Model. The SWCS program not only includes important technology improvements but also includes improved capabilities in range and payload. The SWCS is expected to reach Initial Operational Capability at the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2015.

Mr. THORBERRY. Are you concerned that we do not have a capable long range mini-submarine to deliver SEALs to denied maritime environments?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Yes. We are concerned that we do not have a long-range submersible capability to deliver Special Operations Forces (SOF) into denied maritime environments. USSOCOM's proposed solution to this challenge is to develop a dry combat submersible. The current program of record is the Dry Combat Submersible-Medium (DCS-M), which is designed to provide our forces a capable, long-range, dry submersible to deliver SOF into denied maritime environments. USSOCOM is procuring a technology demonstrator to refine the attributes and capabilities of the DCS-M. We are working together closely during the current Program Budget Review process within the Department to address this requirement.

Mr. THORBERRY. With the disestablishment of Joint Forces Command, who is now responsible for SOF joint doctrine and training? Are there any concerns in this area?

Mr. LUMPKIN. USSOCOM, in coordination with the Joint Staff J7, is responsible for developing SOF joint doctrine and training for SOF and its assigned forces. Prior to the disestablishment of U.S. Joint Forces Command, Special Operations Command—Joint Forces (SOC-JF), was responsible for training Joint Task Force commanders and staffs on integration and employment of SOF capabilities. In April 2011, SOC-JF was reassigned to USSOCOM and renamed Special Operations Command—Joint Capabilities (SOC-JC).

SOC-JC's mission is to train conventional and SOF commanders and their staffs, to support USSOCOM international engagement training requirements, and to support the implementation of capability solutions that improve strategic and operational warfighting readiness and joint interoperability. Enhancing the interoperability of conventional and SOF commanders and staffs through robust strategic and operational level joint training remains a core function of SOC-JC. SOC-JC—in conjunction with the Joint SOF University (JSOU)—will continue to provide world-class training and education support for SOF and conventional forces worldwide.

The Department is confident that USSOCOM and SOC-JC—like U.S. Joint Forces Command—will continue to maintain the high standards of joint training and education for SOF.

Mr. THORBERRY. The hearing highlighted the importance of indirect special operations. Civil Affairs (CA) and Military Information Support Operations (MISO) are central to indirect special operations and are being used across the globe. What is your view of our current CA and MISO capabilities and can you outline any chances you are considering to improve these important but lesser known communities within SOF?

Mr. LUMPKIN. Our Civil Affairs (CA) and Military Information Support Operations (MISO) are critical special operations capabilities, and they have never been better. Cultural awareness, regional knowledge, language ability, and interagency expertise are crucial components of the CA and MISO skills that SOF employ in irregular warfare and contingency operations in support of theater security cooperation objectives. One example of these critical Special Operations capabilities is the essential contributions they make to Village Stability Operations (VSO) for the war in Afghanistan.

With respect to CA, there is currently one SOF brigade composed of 1,288 personnel, of which 230 are operationally deployed to 21 locations representing each Geographic Combatant Command (GCC). The preponderance of CA forces—roughly 90 percent—are Army assets. Historically, Army CA was characterized as a SOF asset, and U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) was the proponent responsible for managing and overseeing the training, education, equipping, and organization of these forces.

We have learned through our operations since 2001 that CA is not a uniquely SOF capability. Accordingly, proponent responsibilities for CA were transferred from USASOC to the Department of the Army, and a significant effort will be made to improve CA effectiveness and efficiency in Fiscal Year 2012. This transfer of responsibility will meet two requirements: (1) it will allow SOF CA to focus on support to Special Operations; and (2) it will enable the Army leadership to develop, build, and maintain the Army's CA capability directly, while working to align CA with Stability Operations doctrine and requirements.

In addition to the Army, the other Services have recognized the value of developing an organic CA capability. For instance, in 2001 the Navy established a 562-person CA capability within its Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command (MCAST).

MISO and persistent engagement are the primary means by which Combatant Commanders seek to counter al-Qaida's ideology as well as other violent extremist messaging. And, although the majority of the Department's MISO forces are part of a small and segmented community within the Army, major initiatives are underway to strengthen DOD's MISO capabilities. These initiatives include USSOCOM's efforts to establish a more robust MISO planning capability at the regionally focused Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC), and to reorganize its MISO forces to enable a global network that can better coordinate, integrate, and execute MISO in support of the U.S. Government and DOD's efforts to Counter Terrorism (CT) and Counter Violent Extremism (CVE).

Earlier this year, the Commander of USSOCOM submitted a Force Design Update requesting the establishment of a Military Information Support Operations Command (MISOC), to strengthen our Inform and Influence capabilities, and to provide greater capacity to meet anticipated future demand. Given the size, complexity, and global reach of the MISOC's mission, he requested this command billet be a general officer billet.

I recognize the asymmetric importance of CA and MISO to SOF's Irregular Warfare portfolio of capabilities. The Department is working to refocus and hone these capabilities within SOF, to maximize the CA posture of Army forces, and to enhance the global capacity of our MISO forces. These actions are intended to position U.S. SOF to prevail in the uncertain security environment of the future.

Mr. THORNBERRY. How should special operators and CIA's paramilitary forces share responsibilities that interlock and overlap, given respective strengths and weaknesses are distinctively different?

Mr. LUMPKIN. USSOCOM and the CIA currently coordinate, share, exchange liaison officers and operate side by side in the conduct of DOD overt and clandestine operations and CIA's covert operations. Our activities are mutually supportive based on each organization's strengths and weaknesses and overall capabilities.

Whichever organization has primary authority to conduct the operation leads; whichever organization has the superior planning and expertise plans it; both organizations share information about intelligence, plans, and ongoing operations fully and completely. Whether one or both organizations participate in the execution depends on the scope of the plan and the effect that needs to be achieved. Currently all USSOCOM and CIA operations are coordinated and deconflicted at all levels.

The current DOD-CIA Memorandum of Agreement allows for these activities to be coordinated at the lowest execution coordinating authority feasible—forward in the Geographic Combatant Commander's area of operation. It also allows each organization to socialize differences up through respective leadership chains for resolution. This partnering with respect to all operations has strengthened in recent years and ensures the application of the correct USG capability against agreed upon threats.

USSOCOM reports all of its clandestine activities quarterly through DOD to Congress for appropriate oversight.

Mr. THORNBERRY. How may the roles of women in SOF change in the future?

Admiral MCRAVEN. a. Because of the combat exclusion policy USSOCOM does not have females assigned to SEALs, Special Forces, Rangers, Air Force Special Tactics Teams or Marine Special Operations tactical units. SOCOM does have female information (MISO) and civil affairs specialists.

b. SOF are constantly adapting to an increasingly intricate and unpredictable operating environments. Because of the restricted access to the Afghan female population, females have been used to perform tasks deemed culturally inappropriate for male service members and to engage the local population in/around secure objective areas.

c. As a result of the operating environment in Afghanistan, SOCOM developed Cultural Support Teams (CST) to support SOF. Incorporating female military personnel into our post operation activities have allowed our forces greater access and integration with the Afghan civilian populace which were not previously accessible.

d. CSTs are attached to SOF units to influence a larger segment of the rural populations enhancing their ability to connect and collaborate with a critical part of Afghan society. Currently, there are (53) CST-qualified females supporting SOF operations in Afghanistan.

e. This is a capability that we will continue to develop and use in the future global operations.

Mr. THORNBERRY. What challenges remain with SOF integration with conventional or general purpose forces?

Admiral MCRAVEN. a. *5th SOF Truth*: Most special operations require Non-SOF Support. The integration of GPF's and SOF has produced quantifiable success across Afghanistan. This force multiplication construct has enabled rapid expansion (60% increase) of Village Stability sites in the past 18 months; definitively improving GIROA legitimacy, security and stability.

b. This adaptive organizational design combined with the resultant mission requirements of operating in geographically remote and austere locations has dramatically increased SOF dependence on GPF logistical support. GPF logistical assistance accounts for approximately 50% of the total support for all Village Stability sites.

c. There has been some institutional capacity challenges associated with this integration. GPF service and support personnel familiarities with SOF unique equipment have impacted repair and sustainment efforts. Additional time has been required to train and familiarize GPF with SOF vehicles, radios, weapons and other equipment.

d. SOF will become increasingly reliant on the Special Operations Forces Generation Process (SOFORGEN) to integrate SOF pre-mission training with supporting GPF. This process is critical to forming the Special Operations Task Forces in CONUS and conducting training before deployment. This construct will definitively expand national security options, provide opportunity for greater force employment and collective force capabilities. This enhanced interoperability between GPF and SOF units will increase their functionality and effectiveness once the force is forward deployed into the CENTCOM Theater.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Please outline for the committee any changes you are considering to SOCOM's acquisition framework and authorities?

Admiral MCRAVEN. USSOCOM is not considering any major changes to our overall acquisition framework. However, we have asked for a change to the threshold reprogramming limits within the Defense-Wide Investment Accounts (Research Development and Procurement) for USSOCOM in the FY12 conference report. By changing one word in the current reprogramming language; changing "lesser" to "greater", in the language will provide USSOCOM the flexibility within the current Acquisition Framework to meet our expanded role in deterring, disrupting and defeating global terrorist threats. This simple change will provide us the ability to rapidly procure new capabilities and upgrade existing equipment to meet emergent SOF requirements. We are not requesting a change in public law, but stated in the FY12 Conference Report. The change would not generate any new reporting requirements, since the transparency required for congressional oversight is already in place within the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System (PPBES).

#### QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN

Mr. WITTMAN. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations is currently conducting an investigation focused on Guantanamo Bay detainee transfers and rising reengagement rates. The Director of National Intelligence James Clapper recently testified that the recidivism rate for former detainees has risen to an estimated 27 percent demonstrating that a significant number of detainees have returned to the fight. Can you share your thoughts on this trend and its impact on operations?

Admiral MCRAVEN. SOCOM does not dispute that the trend of terrorist recidivism has risen. Admiral Olson testified before this sub-committee last year that the re-

cidivism rate was 20% with an expected rising trend due to several factors, but the most concerning reason is the repatriation of detainees to their country of birth and that particular country's decision not to further detain the individual and he returns to the battlefield.

