

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Introduction

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

Since my last address, USSOCOM has focused its efforts on addressing the defense and security threats and challenges from near-peer competitors as well as violent extremist organizations (VEOs) identified in the National Defense Strategy (NDS) along the directed lines of effort: building a more lethal force, strengthening relationships, and reforming our institution for more efficient performance. Consequently, we are re-shaping our current forces and capabilities even as we develop new technological and tactical approaches for our diverse missions. Toward this end, Assistant Secretary West and I co-authored a shared US SOF vision to guide us into the future. In short, it directs that USSOCOM must be an organization of empowered SOF professionals, who are globally networked, partnered and integrated, and relentlessly seek advantage in every domain for the Joint Force and the Nation. To achieve this vision, we are embarking on a path I will outline for you today.

SOF Vision – “Empowered SOF Professionals...”

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

and dangerous mission challenges. We steward people throughout their careers and their transition out of service, placing a special emphasis on resiliency by providing exceptional care to them and their families.

We appreciate your support of SOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) programs through the authorities and funding provided. Over the past seven years we have made substantial improvements in the readiness and resilience of our force and their families.

As we address core issues of high operations tempo and personnel tempo, we are better suited to holistically address their impacts on our people. Last year, I referred to POTFF as "our stay well plan." This year I would go further and echo the sentiment of my commanders across the SOF enterprise and say that it is our lifeblood. POTFF resources fuel our ability to continue meeting today's operational demands and enables longer, more productive careers in SOF. I am more convinced than ever that this is the right thing to do, and that the embedded, multidisciplinary model of POTFF is the right way to do it. So strong is my conviction, that I have directed mandatory participation in the physical and psychological services of POTFF for all SOF members.

In order to execute this program in all of its aspects, we plan to add additional behavioral health and psychological performance resources. We also plan to expand our Human Performance efforts to address rehabilitative needs. Our POTFF programs must be agile and innovative, taking advantage of advancements in medicine, psychology and data science. I hope we can rely on your continued support as SOCOM moves forward with these program improvements.

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

We continue to make strides in managing the Deployment-to-Dwell (D2D) and Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO) of our personnel. Based on updated Department guidance, SOF formations are now focused on achieving a *minimum* of a 1:2 ratio and with the exception of a select few critical skill sets and career fields, the vast majority of SOF deploy at or above the deployment-to-dwell ratio of 1:2. This guidance is driving ongoing efforts to optimize our current force generation models to ensure SOF will continue to provide ready forces at a consistent and sustainable rate to meet the NDS and National Military Strategy (NMS) objectives. A planned increase of personnel in FY 2019-2020 will help close current gaps among our enabler forces. These additional support personnel, and adherence to a 1:2 rate for Active and 1:5 for Reserve Forces, will ensure SOF can sustain our support to future Geographic Combatant Commander requirements with the capabilities they require.

The nature of our special operations missions brings a high expectation that USSOF will operate with the highest standards of ethics and honor. We are working closely with ASD West to complete the assessment of culture and accountability within the USSOCOM enterprise mandated by Congress. On January 1st of this year, we began a 90-day internal focus on core values. Commands are reviewing programs of instruction for opportunities to address SOF culture and implement values-based decision making to reinforce moral courage. Command

teams at the battalion/squadron level and above will conduct direct engagements with their personnel on the cultural climate of their units. Our goal is that all of our special operations teammates operate in a culture that is mission-focused and undistracted by misconduct, harassment, or abuse. 99.9% of the USSOCOM teammates continue to serve with honor and distinction as our ethos demands. That is 0.1% short of our goal. We will not be complacent and will push forward our efforts to inculcate and reinforce our core values.

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

SOF is an integral part of the Joint Force and the whole-of-government effort that must successfully compete on a global scale. USSOCOM provides critical coordination and assessment functions for the Department’s operations and activities against VEOs and WMD threats. And SOF’s worldwide access and placement and our networks and partnerships enable the Department to understand adversary actions and intent and to respond across the spectrum of competition, especially beneath the threshold of conflict where our competitors such as Russia and China continue to hone their skills and advance their strategic objectives.

As the Coordinating Authority (CA) for the C-VEO mission, USSOCOM collaboratively works with geographic and global functional combatant commands on the Global Campaign Plan for counter-VEO operations (GCP-V). USSOCOM provides an annual assessment on VEO trends – which we have just completed – and the Joint Force's progress towards campaign objectives. Along with this assessment, we make recommendations on campaign adjustments to the Secretary of Defense. To facilitate GCP-V execution, USSOCOM integrates Joint Force, Interagency, and partner nations’ activities into a unified effort, the Transregional Synchronization Forum (TRSF). Current campaign efforts are focused on disrupting the financial, messaging, and foreign terrorist fighter networks that enable and sustain VEOs.

Severing these conduits will degrade and disrupt VEO attacks against the US homeland, our interests, and against our allies and partners.

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

USSOCOM also now has the mission to field a transregional Military Information Support Operations (MISO) capability to address the opportunities and risks of the global information space – one of the domains that challenges the Department’s command and control boundaries. By April of this year, the Joint MISO WebOps Center (JMWC) will be operating in close coordination with the interagency and alongside combatant command teams to provide global messaging capabilities to a broader portion of the Joint Force and beyond CVEO themes. The JMWC will support the combatant commands with improved messaging and assessment capabilities, shared situational awareness of adversary influence activities, and the capability to coordinate internet-based MISO globally. We remain on track to achieve Initial Operating Capability in a new temporary facility by the end of FY 2019.

To help the Joint Force address the complexity of networked, globalized threats and great power competition, USSOCOM has begun collaboration with other global-reach Combatant Commands to provide integrated options to address these challenges. USSOCOM, Cyber

Command (CYBERCOM), Strategic Command (STRATCOM), and Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) – combatant commands whose global presence and responsibilities shape our perceptions and the capabilities we provide to the Joint Force – are working toward a model for integrating our global capabilities more effectively into the Department’s efforts. Our goal is to help close the seams created by our post-WWII (1946) geographic combatant command framework – seams that are currently exploited by adversaries who act globally, unencumbered by similar regional frameworks.

We continue to work with and rely extensively upon the capabilities provided by DoD. These include the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA). I want to draw particular attention to the work of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) for their exceptional work in CWMD and counter-proliferation (CP). DTRA plays an integral role in creating shared awareness of the threat that supports our campaign planning. We are also working closely with them on the very pressing and expanding asymmetric threat of small unmanned aerial systems (UAS) by VEOs and state actors is a significant concern to the Joint Force. USSOCOM fully endorses DTRA’s initiatives to understand and counter this threat and is working with them on several fronts toward this end.

Beyond our national collaborative efforts, USSOCOM also extends its network abroad to engage willing international partners, as well. USSOCOM hosts highly qualified and talented Special Operations officers and Non-Commissioned Officers from 24 nations with established SOF capability, many of whom are contributing combat forces to today’s CVEO efforts. We also maintain US Special Operations Liaison Officer (SOLOs) in 21 countries. These liaison relationships provide agility to a global network that creates a common understanding of threats,

develop response options, and – in some cases – to develop technology, tactics and equipment for mutual benefit to our forces.

For developing countries, security cooperation activities are a key tool for enabling them to tackle threats and challenges of common concern. USSOCOM appreciates Congressional consolidation of security cooperation authorities in 10 USC 333. USSOCOM and GCCs have leveraged this authority to provide partner nations the necessary skills and equipment to conduct security operations in their own self-defense and to become more capable partners.

SOF continues to use Section 1202 to work by, with, and through partners, and in support of the Geographic Combatant Commands. This authority fills a gap in our arsenal at a critical juncture for USSOF, and as the Joint Force re-orientes on NDS threats beyond VEOs. Through these authorities, we will operationalize select regular and irregular forces possessing unique access and capabilities to confront peer competitors—at an appropriate level below armed conflict. Recognizing the strategic implications of great power competition, we will move forward deliberately, coordinated with interagency partners, while providing full transparency to Congress.

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

In addition to geographic domains, we must fight and win enabled by the latest technological advancements. The increasingly data-driven, networked, miniaturized, and automated world where goods, information, and people move across the globe at a furious pace significantly impacts virtually every aspect of SOF operations. We need to understand this impact and embrace and harness the opportunities offered by technology. Data science, artificial intelligence, automated systems, and cryptography are no longer restricted or isolated products

available to select powers. They are commodities accessible to all. Social media and publicly available information presents us with a world of far fewer shadows for concealment and yet opportunities for understanding heretofore unseen indicators of adversarial intent or action. For this reason, to achieve our mission we cannot relent in our pursuit of capabilities that will sustain and increase our advantage along the entire spectrum of conflict.

To address these challenges and to seize these opportunities, USSOCOM is sustaining previous efforts that are proving impactful, establishing new efforts to provoke change in our workforce culture and mindset, and intent on confirming our results and findings through an experimentation force that will ensure that our pursuits remain solidly in support of our operational success on the battlefield.

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

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

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

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

USSOCOM values its acquisition authority and welcomes recent legislative acquisition reforms such as expanded authority under Section 2371b and Section 803 Middle Tier Acquisition Authority. These initiatives enable our SOF acquisitions personnel to leverage non-traditional DoD and commercial markets for emerging technologies and capabilities. We are also in our fourth year of leveraging the authority to enter into a Partnership Intermediary Agreement to manage our SOFWERX efforts. SOFWERX connects a growing ecosystem of over 40,000 traditional, non-traditional, large and small companies, individuals, academia, and government labs to address capabilities across SOF mission areas. SOFWERX has conducted over 2,000 events to include collaborations, hackathons, rapid prototyping, and experimentation to drive speed and efficiency into our acquisition processes. We have completed over 96 projects in support of our Component and Theater Commands. SOFWERX is currently growing its strategic partnerships across the Services' Rapid Acquisition Offices and with Other Government Agencies to mitigate redundancy and increase the speed of delivery of capabilities to DoD.

We are enthusiastically supportive of the initiatives of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) to streamline policies and procedures within the Department and fully support her efforts to minimize constraints and promote a more agile process. We also support her call for improvements in DoD software development, specifically through increasing the number of program managers and contracting officers who are conversant in the commercial processes of this domain. USSOCOM engagements with the Defense Digital Service has helped us in this regard and we will continue to bring in "digitally native" talent for the SOF acquisition workforce. We are heavily involved with the USD(A&S) effort to increase the use of Other Transactional Authorities (OTAs), enabling us to interact with non-traditional vendors in a far more commercial format. In the last year we have exercised 10 OTAs and will benefit from Defense Acquisition University's increased emphasis on OTA training.

In the push by USD(A&S) towards increased prototyping under Middle Tier Acquisition (MTA) rules, USSOCOM comprises 20 percent of the Department's total MTA effort. We expect this number to increase substantially in FY19. MTAs allow for abbreviated requirements approval and tailored acquisition approaches. As we move forward, we are closely adhering to reporting requirements in order to ensure compliance with the statute.

Conclusion

Before I conclude my update, I would like to highlight that USSOCOM will host the 2019 DOD Warrior Games in Tampa, Florida from June 21st through June 30th. Approximately 300 wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans will participate in 11 sporting events. The Warrior Games were established in 2010 to enhance the recovery and rehabilitation of our personnel with health challenges. The athletes will represent the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Special Operations Command. Additionally, allied athletes from the

United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands will compete. A large contingent of these athletes' families will also attend. I invite all of you to attend these games, and join us in cheering alongside them and honoring their courage and perseverance.

Before I conclude, I want to take a moment to remember the long and dedicated service of the late Senator John McCain, who chaired this hearing just over a year ago. Senator McCain was a consummate servant leader to his Nation—a true statesman and hero who put the interests of his fellow citizens ahead of his own. His presence is missed but his impact on our command will never be forgotten.

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