

[H.A.S.C. No. 117-56]

HEARING
ON
NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022
AND
OVERSIGHT OF PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED
PROGRAMS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND
SPECIAL OPERATIONS
ON
**REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2022
BUDGET REQUEST FOR U.S. SPECIAL
OPERATIONS FORCES AND COMMAND**

HEARING HELD
JULY 21, 2021



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

RUBEN GALLEG0, Arizona, *Chairman*

RICK LARSEN, Washington	TRENT KELLY, Mississippi
JIM COOPER, Tennessee	AUSTIN SCOTT, Georgia
WILLIAM R. KEATING, Massachusetts	SAM GRAVES, Missouri
FILEMON VELA, Texas	DON BACON, Nebraska
MIKIE SHERRILL, New Jersey	LIZ CHENEY, Wyoming
JIMMY PANETTA, California	MICHAEL WALTZ, Florida
STEPHANIE N. MURPHY, Florida, <i>Vice Chair</i>	C. SCOTT FRANKLIN, Florida

JESSICA CARROLL, *Professional Staff Member*
PATRICK NEVINS, *Professional Staff Member*
ZACH TAYLOR, *Clerk*

CONTENTS

	Page
STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	
Gallego, Hon. Ruben, a Representative from Arizona, Chairman, Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations	1
Kelly, Hon. Trent, a Representative from Mississippi, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations	2
WITNESSES	
Clarke, GEN Richard D., USA, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command	4
McMenamin, Joseph J., Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, U.S. Department of Defense	3
APPENDIX	
PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Clarke, GEN Richard D.	37
McMenamin, Joseph J.	27
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
[There were no Documents submitted.]	
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
[Responses provided were classified and retained in subcommittee files.]	
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Mr. Gallego	49
Mr. Scott	49

**REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET REQUEST
FOR U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES AND COMMAND**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:16 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ruben Gallego (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RUBEN GALLEGO, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM ARIZONA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

[Mr. Gallego's reading of instructions for virtual remote hearing attendees was inaudible.]

Mr. GALLEGO. Good afternoon. I call to order this hearing of the Intelligence and Special Operations Subcommittee on "Shaping the Future: A Review of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request for U.S. Special Operations Forces and Command." Today's hearing follows a significant shift in the operational landscape which has dictated the deployments, training, and lives of special operations forces [SOF] through the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

For the last two decades, special operations forces answered our Nation's calls, responding to the most dangerous threats in the most difficult environments. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq consumed SOF in profound ways which we do not yet fully understand. The neurological trauma, psychological burden, and moral injury borne by the women and men across the SOF formation, enablers and operators alike, must be properly diagnosed, treated, and rehabilitated.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan provides an opportunity to provide timely care for the formation and to demonstrate commitment to SOF truth number one: that humans are more important than hardware. As such, I appreciate the prioritized investments in cognitive rehabilitation and performance research through the Preservation of the Force and Family program, which is a critical vehicle to deliver specialized care and support across the formation. We must not lose sight that although SOF make up a small percentage of total joint force, they have endured the bulk of U.S. combat casualties over the last years.

Today's hearing is focused on the fiscal year 2022 budget request for Special Operations Command [SOCOM] and SOF. The budget request highlights SOCOM's shifting focus to confront the complex threat landscape we face, most notably calling for a reinforcement of core competencies in irregular warfare, clandestine activities,

and information operations, as well as investments in the unique capabilities that enable those activities. Additionally, the command invests in cybersecurity, rotary-wing upgrades, and accelerated development of emergent technologies required for the future fight.

While winning the future fight is not just about acquiring new things, it is about making sure our special operations forces themselves have the skill and experience necessary to respond to the demands of strategic power competition. That means making a coherent and deliberate effort to diversify the SOF workforce in both background and skill set.

Prioritizing diversity in SOF also means widening the range of expertise in technical fields such as cybersecurity, biomedical engineering, and programming, which our forces can bring to bear against our adversaries and enhance our competitive edge. Retainment of diverse personnel is equally important. Retraining manpower in historically undervalued fields, such as civil affairs and psychological operations, will need to be reprioritized and incentivized in order to compete with the likes of China and Russia.

All of these topics—diversity and inclusion, health of force—are essential to our readiness. We need ready, able, and healthy special operations forces to compete. Much in the way one would never approve deployment of an aircraft that is partially airworthy, we cannot condone a partially ready force.

With that, let me introduce today's witnesses who will defend U.S. SOCOM's \$12.6 billion request for fiscal year 2022.

Mr. Joseph McMenamin, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict; and General Richard Clarke, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command.

Gentlemen, we look forward to hearing from your commentary. I will now turn to ranking member for any opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF HON. TRENT KELLY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSISSIPPI, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank both you witnesses for being here.

I thank you for your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, and your leadership in organizing this afternoon's posture hearing.

Today we will hear from two leaders across the special operations enterprise. The fiscal year 2022 budget request for Special Operations Command didn't just fail to keep pace with inflation, but it cut the top line for the second year in a row. The fiscal year 2022 budget request represents a \$495 million decrease from fiscal year 2021, a 4 percent cut. And the fiscal year 2021 enacted budget was a \$600 million cut from the fiscal year 2020. Proper authorization and appropriation of national defense activities is vital. We cannot force our SOF formation into the impossible choice between readiness and modernization.

As far as current operations go, maybe most pressing of all the threats right now is how SOCOM is postured to continue counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan with the impending redeployment of our troops. As we know, the Biden administration ordered all troops out of the country by September 11 of this year, of which

we are currently on target to be ahead of that, and the Department continues to push forward ahead of this deadline, now currently targeting August 31 for the complete withdrawal of activities.

The way in which we plan to keep an eye on the security situation and the way in which we conduct intelligence gathering in Afghanistan post-withdrawal is of great concern to myself and members of this subcommittee. We continue to hear but I have yet to be briefed on what over-the-horizon capabilities truly means. And I use this as an example. As a battalion commander, a company commander, we used to always back-plan the mission and the fight, but we didn't plan to get out of the assembly area, the uncoiling from an assembly area and getting to an LD [line of departure] on time. Seems like a simple operation. But military operations, as no one knows better than SOCOM, have to be detailed planning and detailed execution. Otherwise, they fail. So a hand wave of over-the-horizon doesn't get it for me. We have got to know the detailed plans of how we intend to continue to get after the targets we need to in Afghanistan, North Africa, and other hard-to-reach areas.

Lastly, I would like to publicly voice my support for SOCOM's Armed Overwatch program. I am pleased and assured by the work conducted by ASD(SO/LIC) [Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict] and SOCOM to ensure the right measures have been put in place to validate the need for this platform. I am eager to see the results of the ongoing demonstrations taking place right now and what that will mean for procurement in fiscal year 2022.

I would like to thank Representative and Colonel Mike Waltz for his leadership on this issue. And as a special operations community operator for many years and a colonel, he definitely has the background to understand this.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on all these topics, in addition to this year's budget request and the associated priorities of fiscal year 2022. I want to thank our witnesses in advance for their time today. I look forward to continuing to work with our special operations leaders during the 117th Congress to ensure we are appropriately postured to meet and defeat the threats posed by our adversaries.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Ranking Member Kelly.

Now, we turn to our witnesses, and we will start with Mr. McMenemy for your opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH J. McMENAMIN, PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. McMENAMIN. Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on our global posture for America's special operations enterprise. I am honored to testify alongside General Clarke, who has provided exemplary leadership for our special operations soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and civilians.

Secretary Austin has outlined his three principal priorities for the Department: defend the Nation, take care of our people, and

succeed through teamwork. The SOF community excels in each of these areas and plays an essential role within the joint force in advancing our strategic priorities. As reflected in SOCOM's fiscal year 2022 budget request, we continue to invest in capabilities to meet the challenges of strategic competition with China and Russia, while strengthening vital alliances and partnerships. As we innovate to compete more effectively, we recognize that our counterterrorism operations must become even more sustainable and focused on the most pressing threats to our citizens and interests.

I appreciate the strong support of Congress for our SOF warriors and their families. This community has borne over half of all U.S. combat casualties over the past 2 years, and many more have sustained life-altering injuries and suffered psychological trauma.

Enhancing the readiness and resilience of our SOF personnel and their families remains a top priority. Despite the COVID-19 [coronavirus] pandemic, SOF have continued to maintain a high level of operational readiness. The President's fiscal year 2022 budget request sustains funding for SOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Family program to optimize the performance of SOF personnel, and we continue to make progress in easing the strain of high rates of overseas deployments.

General Clarke and I remain concerned about the moral and ethical health of the SOF community. SO/LIC is working closely with SOCOM on the implementation of its comprehensive review of SOF culture and ethics. We are also committed to enhancing diversity within the SOF community. As we compete against increasingly capable adversaries, a more diverse force empowers us to draw upon broader perspectives, different lived experience, and new ideas. Civilian military partnership will be critical to addressing these challenges.

Finally, we continue to make progress in strengthening SO/LIC's role in providing civilian oversight for the SOF enterprise. On 5 May, Secretary Austin reaffirmed ASD(SO/LIC's) role as the principal staff assistant and direct report to the Secretary for SOF administrative matters. We are committed to ensuring that these reforms meet the intent of Congress and serve the interests of the Department and the men and women of our SOF community.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by thanking the committee again for its strong support of our special operations community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. McMenamin.

And now General Clarke.

**STATEMENT OF GEN RICHARD D. CLARKE, USA, COMMANDER,
U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

General CLARKE. Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity, and I am honored to testify, along Mr. Joe McMenamin. But also joining in behind me is Chief Greg Smith, my Command Senior Enlisted Leader, representing the almost 70,000 men and

women of this great command. Greg marks his 31st year in uniform this past spring, and I am always welcome to his counsel and his leadership.

USSOCOM, our structure, our authorities, and our purpose are the direct outcome of Congress. We strive each and every day to honor Congress' vision by training and employing the world's finest special operations force this world has ever known, a force that is inclusive and professional, supremely competent and trusted, and reflective of American diversity, values, and always committed to our constitutional oath.

The incredible women and men of this multicomponent command employ their unique skills globally, fully integrated with the joint force, and aligned with the national priorities set by our Secretary that Mr. McMennamin outlined.

USSOCOM continues to deter and disrupt persistent threats by terrorists and extremist organizations. Twenty years of this fight have honed our capability and our resolve. We remain poised to address any threats to the homeland or to the American people with approaches that are effective and sustainable.

SOCOM remains well-postured to compete against malign state influence. SOF provide unique value in this critical endeavor. Below the level of armed conflict, SOF teams support a wide range of U.S. policy objectives and generate options to counter China, Russia, and other competitors. Often our activities to counter violent extremist organizations have tangible, derivative value to strategic competition. As we forge partnerships and build partner capacity, we gain access, placement, and influence in critical regions. Should future conflicts arise, our modernization priorities will provide interoperable forces able to win as part of the joint warfighting concept.

Our team also extends beyond operators in the field to a wide array of military, interagency and international partners, as well as our unassailable partnership with ASD(SO/LIC). The oversight, policy guidance, and advocacy within the Department of Defense provided by ASD(SO/LIC) are essential for the modernization, readiness, and well-being of SOF and their families. Above all, we are committed to upholding the principle of civilian control of our military in line with the Constitution we have pledged to defend.

Your continued support in Congress and the vital trust of the American people allow this command to support our Nation now and prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. Today, while we are here, over 4,000 special operators stand vigilant in over 60 countries. Their commitment to America's security and prosperity is inspirational. And their enthusiasm to learn, adapt, and serve is infectious. It is my honor to serve with them.

And I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Clarke can be found in the Appendix on page 37.]

Mr. GALLEGOS. Thank you, General Clarke.

And now we will be entering the question portion of the committee hearing, and we will start with 5-minute questions, and I will begin.

General Clarke, earlier this year, USSOCOM released the Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion. What does diversity, inclu-

sion, and equity mean to you? And what are your next steps to actualize this document?

General CLARKE. Congressman, diversity for USSOCOM is to make sure that we, first, we reflect the best talent and the best people of this country. The people of this country have unique talents and skill sets, and we don't—we want to ensure that all of them are given the opportunity, you know, when able, to meet the standards that are required within our force.

And the last thing I would say on the diversity side of this is that we want to ensure that any barriers to come into SOCOM, that whether they are actual or perceived, those are actually put down to allow the best talent to come in. And, at the end of the day, this still comes as an operational imperative for our force. When we are operating globally, and as you talked about in great power competition, having individuals that reflect this country but individuals that can understand others' cultures and where they are coming from that are problem solvers are exactly what we need in our force.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you.

Mr. McMEnamin, if I said that correctly, in your opinion what is the state of SOF readiness? And what do you believe are the most significant issues affecting readiness today?

Mr. MCMENAMIN. As General Clarke can probably attest to, SOF readiness is an important criteria for us to stay globally engaged. Whether we are deployed in a security assistance role, whether we are supporting an interagency partner, or supporting a foreign partner, the readiness and the SOF capability to respond is a crucial part of the development of the SOF operator and the SOF teams. The training, education, and development of the individual and the leader is imperative to allow us to accomplish missions set out by the Department of Defense and the President of the United States.

Mr. GALLEGO. To follow up—or not follow up. This is another question, Mr. McMEnamin.

The official May 5 statement regarding the revised organization and role of ASD(SO/LIC) stated that the Deputy Secretary of Defense wanted to ensure that SO/LIC maintains dedicated resources and grows to a level commensurate with its increased responsibilities.

How is the Department facilitating the growth, given the increase of responsibilities?

Mr. MCMENAMIN. Yes, sir. The office has set up a secretariat that is growing in strength with key personnel to work in both the personnel areas, such as the diversity and inclusion, also assisting in oversight, assisting in budget development, and working very closely with SOCOM. The team that is in place has a very good relationship with the leadership down at SOCOM, and we can see this relationship growing stronger as the expertise and the exchange of knowledge continues.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you.

General Clarke, in 2020 posture—in the 2020 posture statement, you specified that USSOCOM continues to rightsize our deployed forces to meet the Secretary of Defense's minimum objective of 1:2 deployments-to-dwell ratio with a goal of 1:3. In this year's state-

ment, you reference an expectation to achieve a sustainable balance of deployed forces across C-VEO [counter violent extremist organization] and strategic competition mission sets and reach the DOD's [Department of Defense's] directed 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for all SOF. Is a 1:3 ratio still a goal, and what progress has been made in achieving that goal?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. In align with the Secretary's guidance, the 1:3 is still the goal.

Mr. GALLEGO. What do you—what changes are you making to make that—to increase the dwell time?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir.

Mr. GALLEGO. Administrative changes or anything of that nature.

General CLARKE. It really goes to operational changes in accordance with—in align with the geographic combatant commands, number one. We are making sure that the missions that SOF conducts on behalf of the geographic combatant commanders are missions that only SOF should and can do.

Mr. GALLEGO. As I said before, not every CT [counterterrorism] mission has to be done by SOF.

General CLARKE. Not every single mission across the globe has to be done by our special operations forces. There are, as you well know, there are SOF-specific missions. But—and then we are also making sure that we leverage allies and partners who are also capable, very capable partners, that we have trained with that can actually do the mission that is required by SOF. And so, when others can do it at the adequate level, we should allow others to do it.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, General.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I am very encouraged by our progress made on the Armed Overwatch program and the capability it can provide to our special operations forces. It is important to have a combat platform that is at your disposal, especially when it doesn't put other service members at risk and delivers the firepower that you need because our men and women that serve under you, General Clarke, they are not scared of going into danger's way, but we don't need to put them there when we have a platform that doesn't put human lives at risk. And so I am very encouraged by this.

Can you elaborate on the types of missions it can be used for outside the counterterrorism mission in Africa?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir, I can. And thanks for your support to this program.

This multirole capability that could provide both intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance [ISR] overhead but also is prepared to fire munitions in support of a team that could be in harm's way; it could be used globally. As you identified, it could be used in Africa, which it is optimal there. But it could also be used in the Philippines, in Thailand, you know, wherever we need or in South America, wherever we need ISR overhead for our troops. It is really a policy whether or not fires are required. It is policy and it is the conditions on the ground that could dictate whether or not you needed fires. So it is a multirole platform.

Mr. KELLY. Absolutely. And I know President Biden supports this system, and I know that several other people do, but—and I just want to reiterate the point. It does collect intelligence and help with that, but at the end of the day, it delivers a payload that either support or keep our men and women in uniform from having to be exposed to combat fire of the enemy.

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. If I could take that, from the intel side, it is—but it is direct operational support to the team on the ground. And it is that direct—and it is raw information that is provided for the team. It is not there specifically—

Mr. KELLY. Just like an Apache helicopter or a C-130 that is armed to support you guys, it is your platform that is operational in nature.

General CLARKE. That is correct.

Mr. KELLY. Let me go a little bit. I mentioned in my opening remarks this is the second year in a row that SOCOM has incurred a budget decrease. The fiscal year 2022 budget request from the administration cuts SOCOM by \$495 million, a 4 percent decrease. And that is not counting real dollars on inflation, which continues to rise. What are you not able to do because of these cuts, and what are the associated risks?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. I will—for us, our operations and maintenance [O&M] funding remains steady. So we can still maintain the operations required overseas and the readiness and training, as was asked about. Our training levels can maintain. Where we are taking some reduction is in MILCON [military construction] and some of our research, development, and technology. But what we have done inside of SOCOM's budget on the O&M is actually adjusted toward some priorities toward great power competition and looking long term for that budget.

I will defer to Mr. McMenamin.

Mr. KELLY. And let me—let me just real quick, because I know how much time you guys spend actually pulling triggers and training in preparations for missions and working as teams and the extensive amount of training. I understand that most of our warriors in your command are a little older. They are not—they are not your 19-year-old kids. They are a little older, and trust me, as you get older, your body is a little harder to maintain. And so some of those dollars is where that is going. And it matters that they be mentally, physically, and technically competent in everything that they perform. Would you agree with that, General Clarke?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir, I would agree with that.

Mr. KELLY. And I won't even try to pronounce. I am from Mississippi, and we don't get more than one syllable out.

Mr. MCMENAMIN. Yes, sir. Either "Joe" or "Mac" always works for anybody that can't say it.

You know, in support of the President's budget, SOCOM has had to make some choices. But, as General Clarke, you know, laid out what his priorities are, he still maintains that, you know, the operational readiness will be there, taking care of the force will be there. But the challenges would be in some of the R&D [research and development] and some of the MILCON. But, you know, in supporting the budget we make the hard choices and General Clarke, you know, working—

Mr. KELLY. Let me interrupt you there, because I have got one more question. And I will take it for the record, because I don't think you can answer this here. And this is both of you-all. I am really concerned about this over-the-horizon. I really feel like we are hand-waving this. And we are not doing the amount of details to air corridors, which locations we are, protecting—how things are used, you know, our tactics, techniques, and procedures.

So, guys, I think you guys have to take the lead on this in making sure that you give us a detailed plan of how we plan on executing over-the-horizon, rather than a hand wave.

And, for that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GALLEG0. Thank you.

I now recognize Representative Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry to turn on my microphone.

Mr. GALLEG0. I saw that.

Mr. LARSEN. Anticipating you might call on me.

Mr. GALLEG0. Jumped the gun on me.

Mr. LARSEN. Sorry about that. I will stay in my lane.

So thanks for coming out. Actually, McMEnamin's is a pub based out of Portland. So it is really easy for us in the Northwest to pronounce your last name.

Mr. McMENAMIN. I wish I was related for the free—

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah, absolutely.

So, General Clarke, I want to go back to Armed Overwatch and thanks for answering the questions and thanks for coming in yesterday to discuss that as well.

But I think one of the concerns in 20 years of being on the subcommittee and on the committee and trying to do my oversight job is suddenly it is almost—it is almost suddenly coming across a program called Armed Overwatch that wasn't there. And now it is there, and that usually doesn't happen. Usually there is a longer process, a set of requirements to walk us into, even walk the Pentagon into a program that you need.

And so, in my view, the program deserves a lot more—a little less love than it is getting and a little more scrutiny than it is getting, in my view. And that is where I come from on this, and we have had this conversation a little bit. So, in that vein, a basic question I have for you about the application of the platform in austere environments is kind of basic requirements. Is there enough work for an Armed Overwatch platform for what you are asking for? Given the focus on—really, really it is a CT-VEO purpose. I understand what you are coming from in other countries, but it is really a CT-VEO purpose.

Right into the microphone. Pull it up. There you go.

General CLARKE. Is that better?

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah.

General CLARKE. Sir, to your first point, since the minute I walked into this job almost 2 and half years ago, we have been talking Armed Overwatch. And so it was not—it was not new to me, coming in. So, if we have not communicated that from the onset—and it was there before I came into the position.

As far—in terms of the requirement, as we looked globally and looked at the operating [inaudible] where SOF deploys—where SOF

forces are deployed today and where they are deployed in the future, we do think that the operating concept that we have for these aircraft would, in fact, get to full utilization of them in the future.

Mr. LARSEN. And how many would you—in the end, how many would you presume you would need?

General CLARKE. We—

Mr. LARSEN. SOCOM would need?

General CLARKE. We would presume for operations, 60 aircraft divided into 4 squadrons of 15 each. And then we would need additional 10 to 15 aircraft for training. So we could have 5—we could have 4—1 squadron of 15 aircraft deployed at any one time.

Mr. LARSEN. Uh-huh.

General CLARKE. And it goes back to the question about dwell ratio.

Mr. LARSEN. Uh-huh.

General CLARKE. That we then, with this aircraft that we are setting up for the future, we would have, you know, one deployed and three back, recovering, preparing, and then training for future mission to make that dwell ratio.

Mr. LARSEN. So explain, if you can—5 minutes really isn't long enough for this. But explain, if you can, your number two and number three priorities are undersea capabilities, and I think more ISRs, ISR platforms. And then you have an under—unfunded priorities list as well—

General CLARKE. Yes, sir.

Mr. LARSEN [continuing]. Which you are required to give. And I would love to rescind that law because, you know, Head Start doesn't give—we don't require Head Start to give us their unfunded priorities list, which they ought to be able to do as well, but they are not allowed to. That is my problem.

How does this—why did this come out number one? Because you have talked about this number one, compared to a lot of other really great things that are on the list and really great things that are on the unfunded priority list. I am not sold on where it sits in your priorities.

General CLARKE. And as we are looking as the broad capabilities for USSOCOM, the modernization of our ISR is one of our top priorities.

Mr. LARSEN. Sure.

General CLARKE. It is not just Armed Overwatch. But we see Armed Overwatch as a very cost-effective, you know, approach to a requirement to support our SOF teams, you know, in the future. So that is why we continue to push for it and knowing that our other—

Mr. LARSEN. Can I—I have a short time, and I apologize.

How long in the near future is your near future for the use of Armed Overwatch? Do you see this as a bridge to something else? Or is this something that is, it is necessary now and so we got to spend the money now because this won't be a problem later?

General CLARKE. It is part today because there are other platforms that are actually as—that are actually hitting the end of their life cycle that are currently in support. And that is the U-28 aircraft that would need re-winging of all those—of all those platforms which would be almost as cost—it would be almost the

same cost to re-wing all those aircraft as we start going towards the Armed Overwatch.

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah, I have run out of time.

And I appreciate it, Mr. Chair.

General CLARKE. Yes, sir.

Mr. GALLEGO. Representative Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Clarke, does the fiscal year 2022 budget request include efforts to provide the human performance and wellness program to the special forces community and the National Guard?

General CLARKE. Sir, it provides specifically for the—for our Active Component, you know. And it does, as you are well aware, we have increased the funding specifically to the human performance cognitive and behavioral health capabilities within this. There has been some funding to the National Guard as a part of the POTFF [Preservation of the Force and Family] program. But on the spending of this money, we are very, very careful about how—about not the amount but that we are in accordance with the law of this funding towards our—to our National Guard Component.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. So, if the Guard Component is an issue, then we need to take a look at the law in the National Defense Authorization Act with regard to including—

General CLARKE. Sir, I need to come back to you.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay.

General CLARKE. If I could take for the record—

Mr. SCOTT. That is fine.

General CLARKE [continuing]. Because I don't want to confuse myself or the committee on what is allowed under the law for funding of the National Guard with our Preservation of the Force and Family funding.

[A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. That is fine.

Obviously, the special forces operations have been predominantly Middle East oriented over the last couple of decades. As we talk about the changes to great power and near-peer competition, the reorientation, the training of special operations forces, how do you expect that to change specifically with regard to the urban terrain versus a desert terrain? And while I recognize that there are cities inside the countries that we have been operating in, they don't necessarily look the same as a metropolitan area in an industrialized country. So my question gets to the special operations training, urban terrain.

General CLARKE. Sir, you are hitting a key point that we—and as always, we are operating in a—we operate in urban environments even in the counterterrorism VEO fight. But I think increasingly we will operate more in a subterranean and urban environment.

And if I could take your question one step further, the mission, many of our missions in the counterterrorism, counter violent extremists have been direct-action missions. I think more importantly what we have to look at is our irregular warfare competencies and training surrogate forces, not necessarily in a direct-action fight.

Mr. SCOTT. That includes information and cyber?

General CLARKE. That includes information, cyber, logistics networks, and working with foreign partners.

Mr. SCOTT. One of the reasons our men and women are so good at what they do is because of the—as much as we wish they weren't deployed as much as they are, they have a lot of experience. My concern is, if we end up in a true urban conflict, that is not going to be something where our operators have done it repeatedly, if you will.

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. And we set up specific venues to train our individuals in those urban environments.

Mr. SCOTT. I am looking forward to more information on the Armed Overwatch. I am getting short on time right now. I appreciate your time discussing the A-10s, and I understand that the Army is expecting to have a close air support platform. I very much look forward to the continued discussions on that platform, what it is, what it costs, and what its capabilities are. But I appreciate your time this morning, and I will save the remainder of my questions for the next session. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Representative Austin.

Representative Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the witnesses for their service to the country. Just want to touch on an issue in terms of machine learning and artificial intelligence being used for support force and mission readiness, how you think the budget serves this, and also just not the systems. It is the individuals behind the systems. I am curious to share conversation I started in terms of a fine institution in Massachusetts, MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], and some of the work that is being done to prepare our forces.

General CLARKE. A couple initiatives that SOCOM has taken on over the last few years. We hired our first chief data officer into SOCOM 3 years ago. And he is now the chief data officer for the Department of Defense. We have hired a subsequent one. And as anybody working in the AI [artificial intelligence], data is the most important part to ensuring that we have—that we can use AI effectively.

Second, we are bringing interns into SOCOM—we brought our first group in last summer—to help us solve some of our problems in real world. We are teamed very closely with the Project Maven and the Joint Artificial Intelligence inside the Department of Defense. And they see us as a first user for these capabilities, and we have used and looked hard at object detection in the combat zones using Maven.

And as you and I spoke about, but for the broader committee, SOCOM set up AI course with MIT for our mid- and senior-grade leaders, over 400 participants of mid-grade and senior leaders, in order for them to learn what the AI principles were so they could ask the right questions. And MIT was a great partner with us in teaching our workforce, our men and women in uniform. Thank you.

Mr. KEATING. Yeah, the systems are great. But we have to have the people there to utilize those the right way.

Just the second area I just want to touch upon and that is your feelings on our preparedness and where we have to go for under-

water systems and marine systems, maritime systems, something that, again, in my district, you know, we have fine institutions there, doing great studies. And so it is an interest level of mine. But I am sure it is with you folks, too. So maybe you can explore or expand on some of the priorities there. And are they being met?

General CLARKE. Our Navy SEALs [Sea, Air, and Land teams] over the past 20 years have been heavily invested in the land and specifically in the combat zones. We are now refocusing their efforts to their undersea/seabed capabilities. And in that, as we looked at our budget, we are actually shift—we have shifted within our budget to develop those capabilities for the future. And so teaming with the Navy and with other civilian organizations is critical. Thank you.

Mr. KEATING. Well, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Representative Keating.

Now we have Representative Franklin.

Mr. FRANKLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To follow up a little on the undersea warfare and seabed warfare question and also along with Ranking Member Kelly's questions before regarding the budget, I see, you know, in the unfunded priorities, there are some of those that touch into that area. And I would love to hear some more probably in a different forum about some of the capabilities that you are working on from the R&D side. But, you know, in looking at the cut that you received this year, we could fund all of those unfunded priorities with less than what the cuts have been to your budget which—and I understand we can maintain the OPTEMPO [operations tempo]. We can get the job done, and that is what you-all are called to do and will always do.

But do you have concern that if this persists, will you be able to fund going forward the R&D necessary to shift from the CT mission in the Middle East towards the great power competition?

General CLARKE. I will take a stab at it and then turn it over to Mr. McMenamin. I do believe with this year that we were able to adjust accordingly and prioritize. And for that unfunded requirement list, if we had more money, that is where we would go to. And that is they are prioritized in that manner. But for future years, we've got to continue to look at what those priorities are.

Mr. McMenamin.

Mr. MCMENAMIN. I would say, as we all know, technology moves a lot faster many times than the budgets in the budget planning process does. You know, General Clarke made the choices to prioritize. I think, as we go forward, working within the President's budget, we look at some of these requirements and continue to identify those investments that have the greatest promise to the SOCOM enterprise, whether that is in ISR, human performance, AI, machine learning, to prioritize those that can increase the effectiveness of SOCOM and the SOF operators more than others that may be on the list sometimes.

Mr. FRANKLIN. General, regarding SOFWERX, you have mentioned that in your testimony. And, again, kind of piggybacking on the thought of, you know, the responsiveness, the technology is changing quickly, this is a program, I think, other services are en-

vious of the special operations' ability to act on technology quickly and get them fielded out there.

The work, the ability to interact with the Small Business Innovation Research pilot program, I think, has been helpful. I have gotten very good feedback from small businesses that have wanted to be more involved in the acquisition process. It seems like it has been a great success. That is—that authorization is expiring this year. We are looking to not only continue that but expand it. Could you elaborate or comment some on what that means from your end and what you would like to see from it going forward?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. A couple of points.

You highlighted SOFWERX which is our off-campus what I call incubator of ideas where folks without security clearances can come in, work with our operators. And it is a magnificent capability for us. It is enabled by the small business initiative, and we really appreciate Congress' support to that and would look—would ask for your support in continuing to grow that small business capability because it is giving us ideas, because a lot of the good ideas—a lot of the great ideas are really coming from those small businesses that we can tap into very quickly because we very—you know, what I think we do better than anyone else is tie our operator, who knows what the specific requirements in, right to the industry partners and work that together so we come up with the best product. Thank you.

Mr. FRANKLIN. That is really all the questions I had.

I did want to take the opportunity, though, to thank you, General, on behalf of the subcommittee here for your and your staff's hospitality a few months back down at MacDill [Air Force Base]. I haven't spent a lot of time on the base. I still learned a lot, and there is nothing like the firsthand opportunity to see it. But thank you all for that.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. GALLEGOS. Thank you.

Representative Murphy.

Mrs. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Clarke, as you know, I got a chance when we were on that visit to MacDill to see the Joint MISO [Military Information Support Operations] WebOps Center [JMWC]. And I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about the value of the JMWC to our national security objectives and then also confirm that the budget request of just \$479,000 would fully fund its requirements.

General CLARKE. Our Joint MISO WebOps Center—MISO, Military Information Support Ops, the acronym within the acronym. Information in today's competition is critical. And ensuring that adversaries' disinformation and misinformation is countered is one of the things that our JMWC does. And I think it, as you personally witnessed, it does it well. And we continue to grow the capabilities now and in the future, working very closely with the combatant commands.

Our budget request for that in times with the Department is, as you know, was steady from last year to this year. A lot of that just has to do with it is still growing, and it is still developing. I will tell you if—if—we see that we could actually spend more money and more capability was needed in this fiscal year, I would ask for

adjustments to be made in the middle of the fiscal year. But right now we don't see that. We do believe it is sufficient funding.

Mrs. MURPHY. Great. Thank you.

And then, on a topic that you and I discussed a little bit yesterday, given that we both live in Florida, I am really concerned about some of the threats that are in our neighborhood or in our backyard in the Caribbean and Latin America, whether it is from China or non-state actors.

I was wondering if you can talk a little bit about how SOCOM and SOCSOUTH [Special Operations Command South] are postured to address these threats and challenges and what you are seeing in the region.

General CLARKE. South America, you know, Central America, in our backyard. We work very closely, you know, with our special operations component, and we have had persistent presence and engagement inside South America for decades and continue to employ SOF forces and capabilities to include ISR and our people into the region.

It has changed. Many times we are there to address other nations' security threats. But as we have seen, both Russia and China are showing great interest in that neighborhood. And having individuals that are present and helping host countries allows us to see and sense what some of those two near-peer adversaries' malign behaviors are and ensure that we can, in fact, counter those and work with the host countries.

Mrs. MURPHY. And although my last name is Murphy, I am not going to take a swing at Mr. Mac's full last name here. But I was wondering if you can give me a little bit of an update about the Functional Center for Security Studies in Irregular Warfare. It is going to be—irregular warfare is going to be a key component of great power competition, and in the fiscal year 2021 NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act], we had directed the Department to move forward with establishing that.

Mr. MCMENAMIN. Yes. And, in fact, I saw the draft of the report a few weeks ago. And it makes some very good recommendations, but it needed to be refined a bit more before we send it over. So we are in the process of going through the report, making sure it answers the appropriate questions, and provides the right information. We may find ourselves requiring a change to the security cooperation legislation that talks about regional centers, and that would be chapter 16 of the bill.

So, as we go through this, we look at the different options and the locations. And we also look at what we may need for legislative authority to establish the center. We will include all those in the report and work within the Department to bring that legislative proposal up to you.

Mrs. MURPHY. Great. Thank you.

And, General Clarke, do you think that that center and the irregular warfare focus can be of use to SOF?

General CLARKE. I absolutely do. And because of the education, continued education, of our force, tied in, I think—and you are familiar with our Joint Special Operations University. I think the power of those two together could make it even better.

Mrs. MURPHY. Great. Thank you.

Go ahead. Did you have something else to add, Mr.—

Mr. McMENAMIN. No. I would also just like to add onto what General Clarke just said. It would also be a great value for our general purpose forces because irregular warfare is not just a SOF enterprise. We have to train our regular general purpose forces to operate in various environments, gray zone, irregular warfare, whatever we name it. But I think it is just as important for our general purpose forces as it is for our special operators.

Mrs. MURPHY. Great. Thank you.

And I yield back.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Representative Murphy.

We will go to Representative Waltz.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to pick up on Ranking Member Kelly and Mr. Larsen's conversation on Armed Overwatch and kind of get out there for the record that this isn't new. It may be, you know, I guess a new conversation and new people to the conversation. But this is something that has been going on for over a decade. It was under the Air Force with the Light Attack/Armed Reconnaissance program that actually started, my understanding, in 2009.

So, for a dozen years, we have been messing around with this program. And our operators downrange, including myself, in many occasions couldn't get the air support and the close air support that they needed. So I just think that is important for everybody to understand.

But we are where we are now. And we have had not one but two chiefs of staff of the Air Force, General Goldfein and now General Brown, validate this requirement, say SOCOM should have a leadership role in this requirement. We now have the number one request from the SOCOM commander and, as required by last NDAA, an independent third-party study that says the other alternatives, namely the MQ-9 and/or the A-10, are far more expensive and far less capable.

Did I mischaracterize anything there, General Clarke?

General CLARKE. No, you did not.

Mr. WALTZ. Okay. So I think the other thing that is important to understand is it is easy to say this is really just focused on Africa. Right now, we have operators—and I think, frankly, we need more—out there. This great power competition isn't just about Taiwan. It is happening on the continent of Africa, operating in a space the size of the United States, China, India, and Western Europe combined with next to no air support, that this capability could provide down there with the teams in a rugged capability and at a fraction of the cost. I think the biggest piece here and why the Air Force is so supportive is they need to focus on the great power fight. They need their fifth-generation stealth assets focused on China and Russia, not bombing terrorists in the grass at \$40,000 an hour.

Is that a fair characterization of kind of the requirement?

General CLARKE. Sir, on top of that, of what you just said, it is also the tanker support and the back side of more than just the aircraft flying but the other aircraft that have to support those aircraft and the significantly larger maintenance tail that goes with

that, that our Armed Overwatch requirement specifically narrows and limits the maintenance force.

Mr. WALTZ. All of which we need focused on, rightly, with—on the great power competition. But we still—the terrorists are still out there. And we still have operators out there by, with, and through our local allies, accompanying them in light-skinned, unarmored vehicles that needs this kind of capability.

I wish we had this kind of handwringing, for the amount of money that we are talking about here, that we had this kind of handwringing in Congress over the, you know, things like the Joint Strike Fighter or the *Ford*-class carrier. But it just kind of befuddles me the overriding concern here. It is a need. And we have third parties, the Air Force, and SOCOM, and now the President's budget, all saying it is a need. And I certainly hope we can find that support here.

I just want to switch in the time I have remaining. I share the concern about over-horizon. I have yet to find that doctrinal term. We have got the President of the United States saying it as though this is something we do all the time. Of course, we have the capability to hit anyone anywhere around the world. And I know your operators are going to maintain that capability. But we need to be very wide-eyed about the massive risk we are asking them to undertake. And we may not be blind in Afghanistan, but I think we are going to be legally blind. We are going to be darn close.

And—let me ask you this. Would—could you do your mission better from a counter-VEO standpoint, keeping a lid on half the world's terrorist organizations with Bagram or without Bagram?

General CLARKE. We can always do our mission better when we are in closer proximity to the problem.

Mr. WALTZ. Absolutely. In the time I have remaining, if you are ever asked to undertake any type of unconventional warfare activities against the Chinese Communist Party, it is notable that most of their nuclear—new nuclear capabilities coming online are in western China, 400 miles from Bagram. Would it be better to have that base and have that platform or to try to do it from somewhere else?

General CLARKE. We have developed unique capabilities, as you well know, over the last 20 years. And now there is no place in the globe that SOCOM could not go to accomplish its mission.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield.

Mr. GALLEGOS. Representative Sherrill.

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. And I would like to thank both of you gentlemen for your service and for joining us at today's hearing, as well as to pass on my appreciation to the entire SOCOM enterprise for the tireless work they do to protect our Nation, as well as to ensuring broader peace and stability worldwide.

I would like to thank you, General Clarke, and your staff for taking the time to meet with me yesterday; I found our conversation very informative. And the continued work to provide updates, including General Slife briefing me on Operation Overwatch during his son's Naval Academy graduation.

Most critically, though, I want to draw attention to the immense sacrifices made by our special operators and their families over the

last 20 years, particularly in Afghanistan. As our presence in that country comes to an end, we, as a Nation, owe the brave men and women who fought there our immense gratitude and appreciation.

Please pass on my personal thanks to all of those who have served, continue to serve, and to their families.

So, with regard to cyber, where we are increasingly finding ourselves challenged by China and Russia. This is also a key area where USSOCOM is seeing a significant per capita increase in spending. Can you explain what your cyber activities funding within your operations and maintenance budget, what you want that to provide?

General CLARKE. Cyber for SOCOM is particularly focused on the close access near where we would be in proximity to the threat; where CYBERCOM [United States Cyber Command] is actually looking globally, ours is in direct support of our operators on the ground.

Ms. SHERRILL. So how much of your cyber defense and information assurance is coming from contractor-provided services and how much is an organic SOCOM or DOD CYBERCOM capability? What factors at SOCOM do you use in choosing one over the other?

General CLARKE. Cyber mission teams that are provided by CYBERCOM in direct support of SOCOM. We have some contractors that support the defense of our network inside SOCOM, but I would have to take for the record to get back to you on the specific breakout of each one.

[A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Ms. SHERRILL. Thank you. And so I will submit for the record whether or not those costs could go down if we provided some of the capabilities organically. And given the cyber threat of Russia and China with the transition to great power competition, as well as special operations forces' historic leadership in operating from denied areas, to what extent do you see opportunities to leverage SOCOM in the future in support of intelligence, influence, cyber operations against China and Russia? And do you have the tools and resources to do so?

General CLARKE. This goes back to our value proposition of being forward deployed, as I talked about in opening statement, in 60 countries where both Russia and China are also deployed and that close proximity. And in closed session, I can give you some specific information on that.

Ms. SHERRILL. That is great. I will take the rest of the questions in closed session. Thank you.

And I yield back.

Mr. GALLEG0. Representative Bacon.

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

And I appreciate our leadership here today, grateful for what you do. Mr. McMenamin, thank you for serving the Pentagon and we appreciate General Clarke and the Command Chief Smith in the back there.

I primarily served in the conventional forces, but I have had a lot of opportunities to work with the special forces. When I spent my year in Iraq at one of my four deployments, seeing at least as a minimum four missions a night by the SEALs teams, it was awe

inspiring. The courage, the can-do spirit, the OPSTEMPO was just incredible. I know it is not just the SEALs; it is the whole community. And I think America's best aspire to be on the special forces teams.

I would like to say, for the record, that I oppose the President's budget. When you factor in a 5 percent inflation rate versus a 1.7 percent growth in the budget, not factoring in the inflation, that amounts to about a 3 percent cut to our budget, or about \$30 billion. And that is going to have an impact throughout our military.

And so I think, as a minimum, the President should be recommending at least even with inflation or an even budget, but this is a reduction of real dollars, and it is going to have an impact on our services and on our special forces community.

So, with that in mind, if we could get about a 3 percent growth or at least some increases there, I would like to ask General Clarke, what would be your top unfunded priorities that you would like to see funded? I know you touched on this a little bit, but I would like to deal with it directly.

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. We have submitted our unfunded priorities, and they are broadly in the crisis response, underwater capabilities, you know, that we need for the future. And so the continued funding of those—in those areas and next-generation ISR is a third one that, with Congress' support to those unfunded requirements, that is where I would spend my next dollar.

Mr. BACON. And I hope we can, through this process, do a little better than what we have proposed. I think one of the aspects of your missions that a lot of people don't know about is the training you give to special forces with our allies. Could you talk about some of our successes there because I am aware of them, but I think the public would like to know.

General CLARKE. There are two parts to training with our allies: One is there is many times when our allies come here to the United States where our forces are stationed. They come to our Joint Special Operations University. They go to some of our schools and classes here in the U.S., and they will bring entire units, and we will set up specific training to help them meet their requirements. But then many of our training exercises are actually when we deploy a team, an element to that country. And it could be anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, what is referred to as our joint combined exercises for training, or JCETs, which are value added for us because we are getting the vast majority of the training benefit, whether we are working in the mountains, you know, in Peru, or whether or not we are in the jungles of somewhere in Panama or Colombia, that we can't get some places in the United States.

And so those training exercises are invaluable for us to work in different environments.

Mr. BACON. You see some of our allies do missions after years of training with you. There has been some impressive successes there, and it expands our capability in the end. When our allies have similar capabilities, it doesn't fall just on our shoulders. So I appreciate that.

Changing gears a little bit. I am going to try to ask this question carefully. Ayman al-Zawahiri is still the al-Qaida leader as far as

we know. Is it safe to say and can Americans feel confident that we are being vigilant, and if given the opportunity, some day we will get justice for this guy who has killed thousands of Americans?

General CLARKE. We continue and we will always look at those individuals who threaten our country, whether Zawahiri or others. We give no one quarter, and we will always go after the enemies of our country as directed.

Mr. BACON. Thank you.

And I yield back.

General CLARKE. Thanks.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Waltz, you have a question? Okay. Go ahead, for the record.

Mr. WALTZ. General Clarke, as we know, all of the services except Air Force/Space Force are looking at force reductions, looking at size reductions. And my concern is, as the, you know, Army wrestles with that internally and the Navy wrestles with that internally and the Marine Corps wrestles with that internally, that has a threefold compounding effect on SOCOM. So can you walk through how you are managing that process with the services and with OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense]?

General CLARKE. Honestly, I would like——

Mr. WALTZ. We will ask OSD. Fair enough. Phone a friend.

General CLARKE. It is a great question, and before I defer to Mr. McMenamin, this is exactly why we in SOCOM need a strong ASD(SO/LIC) who can see the compounding interest of all services looking at SOCOM inside cuts. So I will defer to Mr. McMenamin.

Mr. MCMENAMIN. As the services look at the different reductions, I know we advocate very strongly to sustain the quality and the size of the force that we have down at SOCOM and whether that is the Army, Air Force, Marines, or some of the great civilians we have. You know, being an advocate means we sit at the meetings, we explain why it is important, we push for the budgets, we push for the training programs, we push for the access to get interviews with quality individuals to come join the SOF team. So it is just a broader effort from the new ASD role, you know, with the oversight to push and be an advocate for the SOCOM programs within the Department.

Mr. WALTZ. So Secretary Austin has made the decision to not elevate SO/LIC to an Under Secretary, but continue that direct reporting line, the dual reporting line, right, to USD [Under Secretary of Defense for] Policy and to him. So I am taking from that your assurance that we don't have that triple multiplying effect from all of the services, that SOCOM doesn't become the bill payer for three services' force reductions. You giving the committee that assurance?

Mr. MCMENAMIN. The role for SO/LIC is a direct report to the Secretary and an advocate for the SOCOM enterprise. For those things that don't deal with the SO/LIC man, train, and equip, the ASD role goes through the Under Secretary for Policy, but we very strongly advocate with the Secretary either through the defense management groups, the senior leader seminars and meetings, or the role and the——

Mr. WALTZ. Do you want to give me that assurance?

Mr. McMENAMIN [continuing]. The sustainability. We believe in the sustainability of the SOCOM enterprise.

Mr. WALTZ. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield.

Mr. GALLEGO. Representative Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

And just on that point, it is going to be something that I think we agree on—a lot of us agree on on the subcommittee about oversight, the need for it, the directive, the new directive. A little bit different than it was in the past before the last change and a little bit more aggressive. And so I think that is generally, after going through this, it seems to be something that we can grab on to a little bit to ensure there is appropriate oversight.

But just a question on something totally different here. General Clarke, the 2022 budget requests \$10 million for a new POTFF Cognitive Performance program. Can you discuss how that funding will be used on cognitive agility and resilience within the forces, please?

General CLARKE. Yes, sir. I appreciate this question because as we have seen—

Mr. LARSEN. I wanted to ask a question that you appreciated.

General CLARKE. Not all the questions have to be appreciated as you well know. The cognitive domain is something that is critical to our forces, as you can well imagine. When POTFF first started, it was almost exclusively focused on the physical because it is what we could see. In particular, we were having a lot of physical wounds.

In cognitive space, it is to ensure that our operators actually go through the mental drills—and I have been through some of them when you have to rapidly identify targets. I have shoot or no-shoot scenarios with someone watching you and quickly adapt to what we are doing because we want our folks—and they combine this with the physical where it becomes challenging and actually bringing in professionals who can assess where someone is today and then also look to where they could be in the future to help them develop, really makes a better and honestly more capable force.

Mr. LARSEN. Can you just discuss the resiliency part, though? At some point, the person is going to leave special operations forces, going to retire; can you discuss a little bit how these dollars might be used to think about the long-term mental health and life of that person?

General CLARKE. I think you are hitting a key part and this is where both the cognitive development and make sure that our forces—it also hits the behavioral piece and, you know, 40 percent now of POTFF or slightly more is actually the cognitive and the behavioral so that our operators—we are looking for someone that is SOF for life. They are inside this formation. We are taking care of them as they leave and make sure they get a health check on their way out to make sure that they can be a functioning citizen and continue to provide value to our Nation after they leave.

Mr. LARSEN. And, finally, have you thought through, if we were to provide the dollars, how would you deploy these dollars, not how would you use them, but the mechanism?

General CLARKE. Specifically, it would be bringing in professionals that are versed in this and then tracking the improvements, the data to make sure that the money is being spent properly and we are actually seeing improvement in our operators.

Mr. LARSEN. That is fair. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

Mr. GALLEG0. Thank you. And that finishes our open committee hearing, and we will be moving to 2212 for our classified portion. We will reconvene in about, let's say, 10 minutes. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:26 p.m., the subcommittee proceeded in closed session.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 21, 2021

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 21, 2021

Statement for the Record



Mr. Joseph J. McMenamin

Performing Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

Before the

Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations

Committee on Armed Services

U.S. House of Representatives

July 21, 2021

Introduction

Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, and other distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on our global posture and the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 for United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). My remarks will focus on the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC)'s statutory responsibilities for administrative oversight of USSOCOM. I am honored to testify alongside General Clarke and greatly appreciate his decades of leadership and service in protecting our national security interests.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the service, sacrifice, and success of our Special Operations Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and civilians. U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) have played a critical role in every major conflict since the Second World War, and they remain in the fight today – conducting operations against ISIS, al-Qaeda and its affiliates; working alongside partners and allies in a struggle against threats from hostile states; and providing our Nation's leaders with flexible and rapid response options to a wide range of national security emergencies. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, our SOF community has established a remarkable record of achievement. From the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in December 2001, to the complex operations targeting the world's most notorious terrorist leaders like Osama bin Laden, and to the extraordinary effort to eliminate the ISIS caliphate in Syria and Iraq, we owe our SOF community our deepest gratitude.

Despite recent reductions in deployments, SOF remain at the forefront of U.S. combat operations, often operating in remote and hostile environments. Over the past two years, fifteen members of the SOF formation were killed in combat operations. Although SOF make up only approximately three percent of the Joint Force, they have endured more than half of U.S. combat casualties during that period. Many more have sustained life-altering injuries or suffer from psychological trauma. The service and sacrifice of these men and women challenge us to live up to the high standards they embody.

I would also like to thank Congress for your strong support of the SOF community as well as your predecessors and their foresight in recognizing the need to build and sustain special operations capabilities to respond to an increasingly complex threat environment. The Nunn-Cohen amendment that established USSOCOM and the position of ASD (SO/LIC) in 1986 was prescient in recognizing that future conflicts would be fought by both state and non-state actors and often through unconventional and irregular means. The authors of these reforms rightly understood that dedicated resources for Special Operations-specific purposes would be essential for promoting and sustaining these capabilities within the Department.

My statement this morning will focus on how the SOF community is supporting Secretary Austin's three principal priorities as outlined in his March 3, 2021, "Message to the Force" – 1) Defend the Nation, 2) Take Care of Our People, and 3) Succeed through Teamwork. The Department's \$12.6 billion FY 2022 President's Budget request for USSOCOM supports these priorities as we continue to rebalance the force towards strategic competition and invest in the well-being of our SOF warriors and their families. Representing a four percent decrease from the FY 2021 enacted level, the FY 2022 President's Budget request allows USSOCOM to

accomplish its assigned missions and prepare for current and future challenges, prioritizes SOF crisis response, sustainable counterterrorism (CT), competing effectively below the level of armed conflict, and investments in SOF-unique capabilities to enable operations in contested environments. USSOCOM's budget request also includes approximately \$3 billion in direct war and enduring requirements that are now funded through the base budget.

In the nearly two decades following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, SOF have continued to develop new technologies and capabilities to become the most effective CT force in history. Today, the SOF Enterprise is in the midst of a critical period of transition as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (INSSG) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) challenge us to conduct CT operations more sustainably while we also adapt to the challenges of strategic competition and develop capabilities to deter gray zone actions. At the same time, I am pleased to report that we have continued to improve the readiness of the force and reduce the strain of deployment on our SOF warriors and their families. Your leadership and support have been, and will continue to be, essential in this effort.

Defend the Nation

Representing approximately two percent of the Department of Defense (DoD) budget, SOF play a crucial role within the Joint Force, and the SOF community continues to make progress in adapting its capabilities to the challenge of great-power *competition* with China and Russia. I emphasize the word "competition" because just as the NDS calls on us to develop traditional military capabilities to deter and respond to threats, we are also called to strengthen our alliances, innovate, and compete more effectively below the level of armed conflict. Revisionist powers, rogue states, and non-state actors are actively pursuing unconventional, irregular, and asymmetric strategies to undermine U.S. strategic interests, erode democratic institutions, and destabilize and reshape the post-WWII world order to their advantage, without provoking a U.S. conventional military response. Indeed, as the Department continues to strengthen our traditional military capabilities, we can expect that our adversaries will increasingly employ indirect approaches to achieve their strategic objectives and capitalize on asymmetries that work to their advantage.

Thus, winning the *competition* is essential to achieving our near and long-term strategic objectives, and to precluding a major conflict. This is not a theoretical battle to prepare for in the future. This is today's fight, and the SOF capabilities we have nurtured over the past 30 years are essential to successfully competing – *and winning* – in today's unconventional and irregular battlespaces. In close coordination with the Joint Staff, Services, and Combatant Commands, including USSOCOM, SO/LIC is leading the Department's efforts to institutionalize irregular warfare (IW) throughout the Joint Force. If successful, the Joint Force will have the necessary tools to operationalize IW in competition, shape conditions and create dilemmas to deter future aggression, and maintain favorable balances of power for us, our allies, and partners.

As we adapt to meet the challenges of strategic competition, we remain focused on ensuring that our CT operations are sustainable and focused on the most relevant threats to U.S. national security interests such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, and their affiliates. Continued U.S., allied,

and partner nation pressure has helped prevent these groups from attacking the homeland and our vital interests.

Within this strategic context, and consistent with the INSSG, we continue to adapt our global posture and develop SOF-unique capabilities that enable our operators to *compete and win* in a wide variety of contingencies, including CT, crisis response, competition below the level of armed conflict, and as a force multiplier to the Joint Force if deterrence fails. Although our adversaries increasingly employ irregular warfare tactics outside of a declared war, SOF support can ensure the Department does not depend only on high-end warfighting and deterrent capabilities. Today, approximately 40 percent of SOF deployed forces are tasked with countering malign influence in strategic competition.

Central to our irregular warfare efforts is a suite of legislative authorities that allow us to address these challenges alongside our international and interagency partners. We appreciate Congress's support for the expansion of "Section 1202" authority to conduct irregular warfare operations, and for the establishment of a new Title 10 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) funding authority for operational preparation of the environment (OPE) activities in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2021. The USSOCOM FY 2022 President's Budget request includes \$15 million for Section 1202 activities, and \$4.5 million for clandestine activities that support operational preparation of the environment under the Title 10 U.S.C. Section 127f authority. Authorities such as these and Title 10 U.S.C. Section 127e (\$68.4 million requested in FY 2022) are cost-effective, agile means to advance U.S. national security interests working by, with, and through partners.

We continue to invest in technologies and capabilities to empower SOF to operate in denied areas and conduct high-risk operations in remote and austere environments, integrate with our general purpose force counterparts, and produce scalable, precision effects. For instance, the FY 2022 President's Budget request includes investments in developing next-generation Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance capabilities to enhance situational awareness for the SOF warfighter, even in contested areas. We are investing in enhanced SOF maritime capabilities such as surface combatant craft, submersibles, and unmanned underwater vehicles. In coordination with the Department of the Navy, we are integrating SOF operational concepts and capability investments in support of strategic competition.

USSOCOM is pursuing technological advancements designed to enhance network interoperability, enable secure communications for command and control, and employ data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to enable our SOF to operate more effectively. In close collaboration with the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, USSOCOM is adapting and employing AI to streamline a wide range of activities, such as intelligence analysis and operational functions. For instance, USSOCOM is leveraging AI/ML to optimize preventive maintenance for aircraft of the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) that has demonstrated significant potential for increasing the operational readiness rate of the unit's fleet of aircraft.

USSOCOM has also employed innovative pathways to execute tailored acquisition strategies and streamline capability delivery to the warfighter. Additionally, USSOCOM is

leveraging public-private partnerships and deepening relationships with academic institutions and non-traditional partners, including through its pilot project to expand small business participation in technology development to enhance SOF warfighting capabilities. The Department has submitted a legislative proposal that would extend and expand upon this program that has demonstrated significant results for USSOCOM in accelerating the development and delivery of innovative technologies into the hands of the warfighter. This authority (Sec. 851 of the NDAA for FY 2020) is set to expire at the end of FY 2021 if not extended.

Take Care of Our People

Consistent with the clear priorities outlined in the INSSG and the NDS, we continue to invest in the readiness of the force and the resiliency of our SOF warriors and their families. Despite the unique challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year, SOF have continued to maintain a high level of operational readiness in support of strategic priorities. COVID-19-related restrictions on CONUS and OCONUS movements have reduced flight hours and training opportunities, particularly alongside our overseas partners. Although the number of forces deployed overseas is down approximately 15 percent over the past year, nearly 5,000 SOF personnel are currently deployed to 62 countries.

In the years following the terrorist attacks of September 11, operational requirements resulted in a near-constant cycle of deployments for some high-demand capabilities. To address the strain caused by that operational tempo, we have taken a hard look at the forces that we can responsibly and sustainably provide to support global demand amid multifaceted and simultaneous mission requirements. Over the past several years, we have made considerable progress toward meeting the Department's requirement of a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio across the force, meaning that a typical service member would expect to spend twice as much time at home station as on deployment. We continue to make progress toward achieving this target with now more than 90 percent of the force at a 1:2 ratio or better.

The additional dwell time spent at home station is not only contributing to increased predictability for the force and improved work-life balance, it is also enabling additional time for training, screening, rest, refit, and reintegration. USSOCOM continues to achieve the Department's goal of fewer than five percent non-deployable military personnel.

In addition to monitoring metrics of SOF readiness, we are closely evaluating how SOF posture relates to our ability to sustain CT and crisis response operations along with high-priority missions. We are also focused on limiting SOF deployments to those that require SOF-specific capabilities and training. For instance, the establishment of the Army's Security Force Assistance Brigade has provided a capable General Purpose Force option for training and mentoring foreign security forces. The combination of these efforts has helped ease the strain of a high and unsustainable rate of overseas deployments for SOF personnel.

The SOF Enterprise is further enhancing readiness by taking a holistic approach to caring for SOF warriors and their families. With the strong support of Congress, USSOCOM has

continued to develop its Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF) program to address SOF-unique challenges and to optimize physical, psychological, social, and spiritual performance. The POTFF program leverages a combination of USSOCOM, Service, and DoD resources to meet the needs of the various SOF components and individual unit commanders. These programs include injury prevention/strength training, performance nutrition, rehabilitative care, improved access to behavioral health and suicide prevention, family and community programs, promoting healthy living, and reinforcing resiliency and spiritual fitness. The FY 2022 President's Budget request sustains funding for the POTFF program and establishes the Cognitive Performance program category of service to optimize the performance of SOF personnel and their long-term brain health.

Participation in the POTFF neurocognitive baselining are now mandatory for all USSOCOM personnel. Our SOF warriors recognize POTFF as an invaluable resource for their readiness and career longevity, and data collected from our SOF commanders indicates that the program is having a significant and positive impact on the mission readiness of their units. SO/LIC is currently collaborating with the command to develop standardized and quantitative outcome metrics to help inform future resourcing decisions, and we look forward to working closely with the committee to ensure we are achieving a solid return on this investment in our personnel.

Similarly, USSOCOM's Warrior Care program continues to provide SOF members who are physically and/or psychologically wounded, ill, and injured with support through recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration. We have no greater responsibility than to care for our SOF warriors and to provide them with a path to return to service and/or transition to civilian careers following their years of service. We appreciate the strong support of Congress for each of these efforts.

I remain concerned about instances of moral and ethical failings within the SOF community, and I know General Clarke shares this concern. Incidents such as these have no place in the military or our Department, and if not tackled head-on, they can erode morale and undermine trust and our moral authority with our allies and partners. I commend General Clarke for his initiative in directing a comprehensive review of SOF culture and ethics beginning in August 2019. The review was directed to address shortfalls and limitations of multiple previous studies and to build upon them to address enterprise-wide issues and to analyze data from across the SOF Enterprise.

SO/LIC strongly supported this effort, and SO/LIC personnel actively participated in the review, which entailed conducting in-depth interviews with approximately 2,000 personnel of all ranks within more than 50 SOF commands. Although the comprehensive review did not identify evidence of a systemic ethics deficiency, it did note that "in some instances USSOCOM's cultural focus on SOF employment and mission accomplishment is to the detriment of leadership, discipline and accountability," and it outlined concrete recommendations. My office is now helping to guide the Comprehensive Review Implementation Team, established to drive implementation of the review's recommendations that address training and organization of the force, leader development, and the prevention of over-exertion on the force that we believe contributes in part to ethical lapses.

As we address challenges related to SOF culture and ethics, Secretary Austin has placed special emphasis on combatting sexual assault and addressing actions associated with extremist or dissident ideologies within the Department. The men and women who make up the SOF community deserve nothing less than a safe and supportive work environment – free from intimidation, harassment, and bias of any kind. We recognize that extremist ideology exists within our military, and we must ensure that our service members honor the oaths they have taken to uphold and defend our Constitution against all enemies – foreign and domestic. For this reason, Secretary Austin directed a Department-wide stand-down to allow senior leaders to discuss the importance of our oath of office, impermissible behaviors, and procedures for reporting extremist behaviors. I am committed to working hand-in-hand with General Clarke in addressing these challenges on behalf of the SOF community, ensuring that our efforts are closely aligned with top-level guidance and actions and policies taken by the Department and the Military Services.

We recognize that many of the solutions have not yet been fully implemented and that true cultural change will require a sustained and focused effort over many years. I look forward to working with you and your staff as we strengthen the foundation of our culture and ethics throughout the SOF community. SO/LIC will continue to support this effort by focusing on those actions that fall within our administrative role overseeing the organization and training of SOF personnel and ensuring these efforts are adequately resourced. Working closely with USSOCOM and each of the Services, we will continue to develop and sustain a SOF culture of personal accountability that is worthy of the men and women that constitute our force.

We are similarly focused on enhancing the diversity within our SOF formations. As it stands today, our force is not adequately reflective of the American people. In addition to the moral imperative of addressing this challenge, we recognize that a more diverse force makes us more effective operationally by allowing us to draw upon diverse perspectives and talents and new ideas to enable us to prevail in the global contest for influence and legitimacy we are faced with today. Enhancing diversity within the force is increasingly important as the Department places greater emphasis on operations in the information environment against foreign disinformation and malign influence, in particular.

Over the past year, ASD(SO/LIC) played an active role in the DoD's Board on Diversity and Inclusion and creating a truly diverse and inclusive SOF workforce. The ASD (SO/LIC) co-chairs, along with the USSOCOM Vice Commander, the SOF Executive Committee on Diversity and Inclusion to advise the execution of the USSOCOM Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. I look forward to working with the command as we continue to collectively address this challenge.

In addition to addressing diversity and inclusion challenges within the SOF formation, we are also working to ensure that all SOF career fields are open to all who have the desire and meet the rigorous standards. Women have filled vital roles within the SOF community for many years, and we are proud that in the past year, two women have for the first time successfully completed the Special Forces Qualification Course and are currently serving as Green Berets.

Although we recognize that we have much more progress to make in this area, these talented soldiers have blazed a path that we expect many others will follow.

Addressing each of these challenges will require a multifaceted, sustained approach, with a clear strategy, concrete objectives, and measurable benchmarks. Additionally, the continued institutionalization of ASD(SO/LIC)'s role in the administrative chain of command will provide additional avenues to highlight policy and resource issues affecting SOF, including diversity, ethics, and accountability. For instance, regularly occurring readiness briefings from USSOCOM to ASD(SO/LIC) will include more personnel readiness data, such as sexual assault and harassment, domestic violence, suicide, COVID-19 vaccination rates, and accession/promotion by gender and ethnicity. SO/LIC brings unique perspective to these challenges, and you have my commitment that we will remain fully engaged.

Succeed Through Teamwork

Secretary Austin's Message to the Force challenges us to join forces with our partners and allies; work in partnership across U.S. departments and agencies, with Congress, and with private industry; and to build unity of effort and missions throughout the Department, including strengthening civil-military cooperation. The men and women of the SOF community excel in building strong and lasting partnerships, including with our foreign, interagency, and private industry partners. SO/LIC and USSOCOM continue to deepen our civilian-military collaboration across a wide range of issues, including SOF personnel and readiness, budget and acquisition, special access programs, and legislative affairs.

Civilian control of the military is a bedrock principle of our democracy, and strengthening civilian institutions within the Department is a key priority of Secretary Austin. As the Secretary testified in his confirmation hearing, "the safety and security of our democracy demands competent civilian control of our armed forces ... the subordination of military power to the civil." We also recognize and appreciate the Congress's strong interest in empowering civilian leadership, both within the Special Operations community and throughout the Department.

The continued institutionalization of the ASD(SO/LIC)'s role in the administrative chain of command, as codified in Title 10, is one of many examples where the Department is making progress in empowering civilian leadership, oversight, and advocacy within the Department's decision-making mechanisms. Over the past year, we have made progress in strengthening civilian oversight of SOF, but we recognize that more remains to be done to realize the full intent of recent legislative reforms to strengthen the ASD(SO/LIC)'s role and to establish the Secretariat for Special Operations. Recent actions include designating ASD(SO/LIC) as a Principal Staff Assistant (PSA) to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations administrative matters and establishing a position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense to lead the Secretariat and to assist the ASD with those responsibilities. The ASD(SO/LIC) also has been added to numerous senior Departmental decision-making bodies, in many instances marking the first time the SOF Enterprise has had representation and a voice in these discussions and

decisions. The ASD(SO/LIC) staff worked closely with USSOCOM in the development, justification, approval, and submission of the FY 2022 President's Budget request.

On May 5, 2021, Secretary Austin issued direction that reaffirms the ASD(SO/LIC)'s role as a PSA and a direct report to the Secretary for SOF administrative matters, as specified in Title 10. At the same time, the Deputy Secretary approved an update to the SO/LIC Charter (DoDD 5111.10) that adds new responsibilities for ASD(SO/LIC) including oversight of USSOCOM resources and administrative matters, irregular warfare, and information operations.

Enhanced civilian leadership and oversight are essential to advocating for SOF within the Department and tackling key issues affecting the SOF Enterprise. Civilian oversight also helps ensure an independent and objective assessment of military capabilities and policy issues. Further institutionalization of the ASD(SO/LIC)'s administrative chain of command responsibilities will require continued close coordination with senior DoD leadership, USSOCOM, and Congress. I fully embrace this role, and I also recognize that there is more work ahead as we fulfill Congress's intent. As these efforts mature, I look forward to working with you, General Clarke, and other DoD senior leaders to ensure that these reforms meet the intent of Congress and serve the interests of the Department and the men and women of our SOF community.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by thanking the committee again for its strong support for our special operations personnel, who serve as a critical linchpin in safeguarding our national security – in wartime and peacetime. As an integral component of the Joint Force, SOF bring unique capabilities that complement and strengthen those of our general purpose forces as well as our interagency and international partners.

I thank the committee again for the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

Joseph J. McMenamin
Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict

CURRENT ASSIGNMENT: Joe McMenamin is currently Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict. Among his responsibilities are all special operations, irregular warfare, counterterrorism, and information operations policy issues and the oversight of special operations peculiar administrative matters, on behalf of the Secretary.

PAST EXPERIENCE: Mr. McMenamin previously served as the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and Principal Director for Counternarcotics and Global Threats overseeing DoD's efforts to disrupt and degrade national security threats posed by illicit drugs and other illicit commodities, transnational organized crime, threat finance networks, and any potential nexus among these activities. Prior to that he held various positions in OUSD/Policy, including Principal Director for Homeland Defense Integration and Defense Support to Civil Authorities, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Principal Director for Stability Operations Capabilities.

Prior to joining Policy, he served 32 years as a Marine Corps Officer retiring as a Brigadier General. He served in a variety of operational, policy, training and recruiting positions. His last active duty assignment was the Assistant Division Commander for the 2d Marine Division both in Iraq and at Camp Lejeune, NC. As the Assistant Division Commander in Iraq, he worked the economic and governance lines of operation. Returning to Camp Lejeune, he oversaw the training of all 2d Marine Division forces deploying to Iraq. Prior to his assignment at Camp Lejeune, he was the Director of the Iraq Survey Group, Baghdad, Iraq tasked with finding the truth about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. He also served as the Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Eastern Recruiting Region, Parris Island, South Carolina.

Operational experience includes command from platoon to Commanding General, Division (Rear) with numerous deployments to the Western Pacific and the Middle East. He is a veteran of the Mayaguez rescue and the assault on Koh Tang Island, led a deployment to Peru in support of counterdrug/counterterrorist training, and participated in Operation Sea Angel in Bangladesh in addition to his time in Iraq.

His military decorations include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of Second Award, Legion of Merit Medal, Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V", Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon and various unit commendations and campaign awards.

EDUCATION: Mr. McMenamin received his Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Villanova University.

UNCLASSIFIED

Posture Statement of
General Richard D. Clarke, USA
Commander, United States Special Operations Command
Before the 117th Congress
House Armed Services Committee
Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations
July 21, 2021

Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Kelly, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for providing this opportunity to discuss the posture of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). I am proud to testify alongside Mr. Joe McMenamin, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SO/LIC)).

The unwavering support of Congress has ensured that our nation's special operations forces (SOF) are the most capable in the world. Your support remains essential to our efforts to defend the nation, care for our people, and strengthen alliances and partnerships. Your SOF remain engaged globally, setting advantageous conditions across all domains to compete with adversaries while ensuring violent extremists have no respite. We are ready to meet today's requirements while adapting to address tomorrow's challenges.

Today, I present an account of USSOCOM priorities, activities, and investments to provide the nation with peerless SOF talent, tactics, and technologies. Each of you are keenly interested in how we are building a professional force, caring for our people, defending our nation forward, and modernizing for the future. I will address each of these concerns.

The current strategic landscape comprises a complex set of problems presented by nation-state competitors and violent extremist organizations. Overmatch in strategic deterrence, conventional military force, and space and cyberspace capabilities are unequivocal necessities. However, our overmatch compels competitors to seek asymmetric avenues to attack, erode, or undermine the advantage and interests of the United States, our allies, and partners. Many of these challenges take place in the information space – with disinformation employed as a political weapon at unimaginable speed and scale without regard for geopolitical boundaries. These concerns are further amplified by disruptive, destabilizing impacts of climate change, diminished influence of international institutions, and shifts in global power dynamics.

SOF are problem solvers, and their enduring value resides in their ability to adapt and combat asymmetric threats; employ precision and surprise to achieve strategic effects in conflict or crisis; and build access, placement, and influence through sustained partnership with foreign forces – all providing discrete options when conventional action is impractical or not desired. Our team extends beyond operators in the field, to a wide array of military and interagency support, as well as our unassailable partnership with ASD(SO/LIC). The oversight, policy guidance, and advocacy within the Department of Defense (DoD) provided by ASD(SO/LIC) are essential for the modernization, readiness, and wellbeing of SOF and their families.

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged our readiness in unexpected ways. Disciplined enforcement of DoD risk mitigation strategies has largely protected our uniformed, civilian, and contractor populations. The postponement of several major exercises and many fiscal year (FY) 2020 and FY2021 Joint Combined Exchange Training events has been unfortunate, but barring

UNCLASSIFIED

long-term disruption, our joint interoperability and multinational partnerships remain strong. We appreciate the CARES Act funding from Congress that enabled us to reduce immediate risk.

To address current and future strategic challenges, SOF are aligned with the priorities set forth in the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) and recently published Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (NSSG). The full range of USSOCOM's operational and institutional efforts coalesce within three broad objectives: strengthen our force and their families, enable the Joint Force to compete and win globally, and innovate to transform for the future.

Strengthen our Force and Families

The primacy of our people is central to the success of every endeavor. These competent and creative men and women stand ready to adapt and evolve to be the SOF the nation needs to meet any challenge. Our commitment to advancing professionalism, improving processes that attract the right talent, and caring for the health and welfare of our teammates underpins every organizational decision.

Advancing Professionalism and Credibility

Last year, USSOCOM and ASD(SO/LIC) provided Congress the results of our Comprehensive Review which identified opportunities to improve our force and address lapses in leadership, accountability, and discipline. Our Comprehensive Review Implementation Team used that assessment to make institutional adjustments that promote active and engaged leadership at all levels accountable for force governance, leader development, sustainable tempo, and behavior reflective of Constitutional and Service values. Our joint report submitted to Congress on March 29, 2021, provided details on each of our actions thus far. This is a long-term, institutional approach, and we will see this process through to make our force better.

Furthermore, the urgent need to remove the scourges of sexual assault and extremism within the force has our full attention. USSOCOM actively supports DoD and Service policies on sexual assault and harassment that have improved reporting processes and victim advocacy. With maturing response and victim support systems, we are applying focused leadership toward prevention. Our SOF components are implementing tailored programs to promote a climate and culture that is intolerant of these abuses, committed to identifying and removing predators, and enables intervention and accountability.

Extremist and dissident ideologies undermine our Constitutional obligations and corrode cohesion, discipline, and public trust. USSOCOM is fully engaged in DoD's effort to remove behaviors that promote discrimination, hate, or harassment. We are working closely with the DoD and Services to engage service members at all levels to ensure the force is undivided in their commitment to defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic.

Managing and Welcoming Diverse Talent

In 1999, a RAND study identified barriers to the participation of women and minorities. Since that study twenty-two years ago, we have made limited progress in fully opening those doors. The past few years have provided the momentum and support to correct this problem for future generations. We continue to see positive movement with the contributions of women leaders in all four Service Component Commands and the selection of the first African American officers to command a Navy SEAL Team and a Ranger Battalion. However, these steps are not sufficient as we envision a force that better reflects the society it defends.

UNCLASSIFIED

We need women and men of all ethnicities and races along with a diversity of backgrounds and beliefs in our formation. In a force charged with solving multifaceted problems in a complex global environment, service members who are included, respected, and empowered are more ready to deter aggression and win wars. We will need to draw this talent from every corner of our country, and our five-year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy provides a roadmap. Together, USSOCOM and ASD(SO/LIC) chair the SOF Executive Committee on Diversity and Inclusion ensuring senior leader oversight and engagement to keep us accountable for tangible progress over time. We are absolutely committed to finding and removing barriers where they exist and welcome all who have the desire to pursue a career in SOF.

In addition to diversity of background, the current and next eras of competition and conflict require different skills, specifically in artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies. Our AI-Ready Workforce initiative that began in FY20 and continued in FY21 supports the goal of implementing Responsible AI (RAI) and closely aligns with the recently released DoD-wide guidance. In FY20, our initiative took two steps forward in growing data-savvy leaders and technology experts inside SOF. First, in collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University and the DoD's Joint AI Center, we educated hundreds of senior and midgrade SOF leaders on basic AI principles and ethics. Second, USSOCOM welcomed our first cohort of data science and software engineer interns. The program exposes talented students and graduates to SOF problems and harnesses their creativity and technical skill in developing AI solutions for the force. Building upon those successes, we collaborated with Massachusetts Institute of Technology in FY21 to educate hundreds of additional midgrade SOF leaders to continue preparing our force for rapid advances in AI. We are working with DoD to expand these programs and find flexible means to exchange talent with industry and academia to supplement the organic growth of AI-ready service members.

Growing a Healthy and Resilient Team

USSOCOM continues to build on the successes of the Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) initiative and the Warrior Care Program (WCP). The POTFF program gained early traction and notice through its work with physical readiness; however, 62% of the POTFF team's manpower now supports the psychological and cognitive performance of SOF. Today, the program continues to increase its focus on brain health and cognitive performance to address the growing cognitive load on operators facing technologically advanced adversaries and information-rich battlespaces. Not only must we build resilience, we must care for those in need, and we have no more sacred duty than to care for our wounded, injured, and ill teammates.

Since 2005, the USSOCOM Warrior Care Program (WCP), also referred to as the Care Coalition, has led this vital effort. Over the WCP's 16-year lifespan, 72% of wounded SOF have been retained in military service – with 61% returning to duty inside their original occupational specialty. This remarkable achievement has only been possible with Congress' continued support for these programs.

Lastly, USSOCOM has not diverted our attention from the crucial problem of suicide within our ranks. In 2020, we lost teammates to suicide and saw teammates hospitalized for suicide attempts. Thus far in 2021, we are seeing a slight reduction in suicides among SOF; however, any suicide is an unacceptable loss of life. We continue to work closely with DoD and the Services to apply engaged leadership, education, training, and health care resources to prevent these tragedies.

UNCLASSIFIED

Compete and Win Globally

Special operations capabilities are essential tools to address both violent extremist threats and strategic competition with other states. Counterterrorism (CT) and Countering Violent Extremist Organizations (C-VEO) remain a priority mission for SOF, but we do not allow these missions to prevent us from also responding to the other threats facing the nation. USSOCOM fluidly prioritizes force employment to build readiness, strategic flexibility, and apply unique SOF capabilities judiciously, in concert with the Joint Force and interagency, to counter and impose cost on the malign activities of adversaries. I am proud of our forces across active, reserve, and National Guard components – each continue to provide exceptional return on investment for the nation.

Today, we have over four thousand SOF deployed to over 60 countries. Stateside, our National Guard forces deployed to 16 states, providing essential Domestic Support to Civil Authorities, COVID-19 response, and inauguration security missions. We continue to streamline direct C-VEO investments abroad and rebalance SOF to force generation, modernization, and strategic competition activities. Our deployed forces are down 15% from last year – the lowest since 2001 – and in FY21, nearly 40% of our deployed forces will focus on strategic competition requirements. This year, we expect to achieve a sustainable balance of deployed forces across both C-VEO and strategic competition mission sets and reach the DoD's directed 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for all SOF.

Sustainable C-VEO Pressure

Violent extremism remains a threat to our national interests and the safety of our people. Drivers of extremist violence exist in deep, multigenerational ideological divisions that cannot be overcome quickly or with military force. This problem will persist, and USSOCOM is committed to a sustainable approach to C-VEO focused on threats that exhibit both intent and capability to export violence transregionally, specifically against the homeland, while building burden-sharing partnerships that enable local and regional leaders to manage others. Additionally, USSOCOM fulfills our role as the DoD's Coordinating Authority for C-VEO by producing a semi-annual VEO threat assessment that uses our inherently global outlook across multiple Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) areas of responsibility (AORs) to inform department-wide policy, priorities, and activities.

Over the past year, USSOCOM has assumed moderate but acceptable risk to C-VEO capacity as we rebalance the force for modernization, readiness, and strategic competition. Despite these constraints, our unified action with joint, interagency, and multinational partners continues to illuminate terrorist attack planning, track illicit financing, and sustain pressure on transregional networks – all while meeting directed reductions in troop presence across multiple theaters. While we have had success on many fronts, challenges remain.

In Afghanistan, our forces continue to meet our troop withdrawal timeline. Additionally, we are working closely with USCENTCOM to build options for future contingencies. In Iraq, we continue to support multinational pressure on pockets of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) leaders and fighters while building the capacity of our partners in the Iraqi Security Forces. Despite losing territory and momentum, ISIS has avenues to reconstitute and spread transregional violence if pressure abates. Violent extremism among internally displaced persons is a major security concern in the Middle East. In east Africa, VEOs remain a destabilizing

UNCLASSIFIED

force, reliable local partners are limited, and remotely delivering sustainable, effective pressure is challenging.

The information sharing model of Operation Gallant Phoenix continues to enable allies and partners to prosecute violent extremists – a capability we must further cultivate. In many remote areas, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) and close air support assets are stretched thin and come at high cost, and we continue to work with DoD to address this issue. Our capacity to build and share with partners and support remote, disaggregated forces is essential to sustainable, over-the-horizon solutions to future C-VEO threats.

SOF in Strategic Competition

Competition among states remains a constant strategic consideration across multiple regions, and we must adapt to maintain advantage. Since their inception, modern SOF have contributed to this contest through the aperture of irregular warfare. These capabilities are as relevant today as they were at the onset of the Cold War. USSOCOM continues to rebalance SOF training, activities, and investments to better enable the Joint Force to compete below the threshold of armed conflict. For SOF, this requires us to reinforce core competencies in irregular warfare, foreign partner capacity building, clandestine activities, and information operations.

As the United States seeks to reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships to counter China, Russia, and other powers, SOF will play a central role. The “by, with, and through” approach inherent in SOF operations, coupled with our global C-VEO partnerships, information operations, and Counter Threat Finance authorities and expertise, present opportunities to maintain advantage. When appropriate, our C-VEO activities provide cross-cutting value as SOF illuminate adversary activities, interests, and illicit finances and inform U.S. strategy and whole-of-government efforts. With U.S. SOF as the partner of choice for C-VEO, we will continue to capitalize on these investments that build credible partners and gain access and influence abroad to counter competitor ambitions and malign activities.

Information technology is another instrument used by our competitors, allowing countries like China and Russia to exploit and manipulate populations across the globe. As the DoD’s Joint Proponent for Military Information Support Operations (MISO) and Coordinating Authority for Internet-based MISO, USSOCOM is positioning our psychological operations forces for today’s environment. The Joint MISO WebOps Center (JMWC) is our flagship effort to coordinate MISO conducted via the internet and actively engage foreign audiences to expose, counter, and compete with hostile propaganda and disinformation online. In 2021, we will incorporate our first foreign partners and interagency liaisons.

The collaborative, mutually supporting relationship among the functional combatant commands is essential to maintaining U.S. advantage. These commands have global perspective and are well-positioned to observe our competitors’ regional activities and goals across all domains. One example is USSOCOM’s role as DoD’s Coordinating Authority for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD), in which we focus on improving Joint Force readiness to mitigate risk posed by WMDs and supporting unified approaches to countering proliferation of WMDs and related technologies, materials, and expertise.

Finally, we are grateful for a range of authorities granted by Congress that allow SOF to have outsized impact across multiple mission sets. Operations supported by 10 USC § 127e (CT) provide flexible options to apply CT pressure in otherwise inaccessible or contested areas,

UNCLASSIFIED

and operations supported by FY18 NDAA § 1202 (Irregular Warfare) are essential for applying SOF capabilities to illuminate and impose cost on malign actors. Additionally, new authorities under 10 USC § 127f (Clandestine Operational Preparation of the Environment) and FY20 NDAA § 1057 (Intelligence / Counterintelligence) support SOF activities with clearer purpose and greater transparency.

Innovate to Transform

Our SOF must modernize to compete and win. Guided by DoD priorities and operating concepts, SOF are divesting of legacy platforms that fail to provide increased value across strategic competition and C-VEO mission sets. Over the last five budget cycles, USSOCOM has realigned 14% – roughly \$9B – of its Total Obligation Authority toward strategic competition and modernization. By developing and investing in advanced, SOF-unique capabilities, we are ensuring our force will be ready for all future mission requirements. We are focused on capability development improvements, digital age changes, and business administration reforms.

Modernizing Capability Development and Acquisitions

The acquisitions authorities given to USSOCOM by Congress are indispensable in modernizing SOF capabilities. Our SOF Acquisitions, Technology, and Logistics team works tirelessly to improve the lethality, survivability, and sustainment of our operators and special operations-peculiar equipment. Our research, development, and acquisition priorities center on adapting emerging technologies to empower hyper-enabled operators and teams. Our initiatives seek to accelerate gains in our ability to provide power, protection, and force projection at the tactical edge.

Over the years, SOF have been an incubator and testbed for new technology, and USSOCOM continues as a pathfinder for select capabilities. In FY20, we achieved notable returns across multiple programs, including modernization of AC-130 and MC-130 platforms, fielding of next-generation, software-enabled tactical radios, and successful combat tests of suitable Precision Strike missile prototypes. For future combat platforms, USSOCOM is working closely with the Services to introduce SOF requirements into the development process. Our collaborative work with the U.S. Army's Future Vertical Lift initiative is an exceptional example. By synchronizing requirements early, SOF will receive next-generation systems that require minimal modification, and the Joint Force will save on sustainment and upgrade costs.

Critical SOF capability gaps still exist, and Congressional support is essential to overcome these capability shortfalls. Capabilities like Armed Overwatch, modernized maritime platforms, and next-generation ISR are our top acquisition priorities to increase our effectiveness and reduce risk to our force in the current and future environments. To provide sustainable support to C-VEO operations, we are working with the U.S. Air Force to develop the Armed Overwatch program. This program will provide cost-effective, multipurpose aircraft to support operations in remote, austere areas for the foreseeable future. Additionally, we are working with the U.S. Navy to modernize maritime platforms central to strategic competition. Finally, next-generation ISR will provide full-spectrum space, air, ground, maritime and cyber capabilities to operate in permissive and contested environments – including both manned and unmanned options. Next-generation ISR will also integrate publicly available information and commercial digital ecosystems and will augment SOF intelligence activities through artificial intelligence and data science.

UNCLASSIFIED

Modernizing a Digital Age Force

To compete in the current environment, we need world-class talent enabled by cutting-edge data management, software, and AI. USSOCOM is committed to serving as a vanguard for the integration of AI in mission command, intelligence analysis, and operations processes. Our newly published strategies for data and digital network architecture align with DoD's vision and advance a path toward greater data processing, network interoperability, and security in contested environments. These strategies also support RAI implementation efforts and embrace DoD AI Ethical Principles. Digital transformation, multi-domain data search and discovery, and cross-domain data solutions are USSOCOM critical priorities. Incorporating these capabilities with AI at the tactical edge within a secure, reliable cloud-computing framework is essential for competing with our adversaries across multiple domains. We are working closely with USCYBERCOM, DoD leadership, and the Services to develop and implement these solutions.

We are building a wide range of partnerships to explore the potential of data-driven technologies. Our work with the DoD's Project Maven and multiple service-led initiatives have expanded our understanding of data collection and algorithm development to support the warfighter and lay the initial groundwork for future AI integration. Some of our newest partnerships focus on using AI to study cognitive performance and brain health. We are investing in AI technologies with goals to boost intelligence analysis and reduce overhead for ISR processing, exploitation, and dissemination; accelerate identification and response to online disinformation; improve reporting and decision making at the tactical level; enhance predictive maintenance and logistics; and optimize human performance.

Modernizing Business Administration

USSOCOM is steadfast in improving efficiency, costs, and transparency in business administration, auditability, and capability development. In FY20, we completed our third financial statement audit and developed a roadmap aligned with DoD and Service plans to obtain a clean audit opinion by FY28. Additionally, USSOCOM continues to reduce low-return activities and reallocate funds toward SOF, Joint Warfighting, and DoD strategic competition priorities.

We have also taken action to balance the SOF portfolio to address national priorities and SOF capabilities that will remain in high demand. In-depth reviews of deployed forces and regionally aligned headquarters are reducing pressure on the force and allowing our teams to focus on priority tasks to build long-term readiness, assist the joint force in competition, and experiment for greater interoperability. Most importantly, these reviews are now integrated with the DoD's routine force management processes. These changes better posture USSOCOM to meet the full range of national priorities.

Our acquisitions team continues to be a defense leader in applying Middle Tier Acquisitions and Other Transactional Agreement authorities provided by Congress, and we have had continued success in leveraging our SOFWERX platform via a Partnership Intermediary Agreement. SOFWERX enhances USSOCOM's ability to collaborate and connect with a diverse network of small, non-traditional companies, labs, scientists and academia. The FY20 NDAA § 851 authorization to use this platform to improve our interactions with Small Businesses through the Small Business Innovation Research pilot program has been especially effective. Since the pilot implementation, we have awarded 17 contracts with results that matter

UNCLASSIFIED

to both DoD and industry: a 200% increase in small business participation, 60% reduction in total contracting time, and 60% decrease in the time from initial award to prototype delivery.

Conclusion

In closing, USSOCOM is committed to providing the best trained and equipped SOF to support the nation. We are actively realigning our operations, activities, and investments to align with NSSG priorities and the operational needs of the GCCs, maintaining sustainable pressure on priority C-VEO threats while enabling the Joint Force to maintain advantage in competition, respond in crisis, and win in conflict. We are modernizing and innovating for the future, updating our organizational structures and processes for improved performance and affordability. Most importantly, we are staying true to our first SOF Truth – “Humans are more important than hardware” – by investing in our people, ensuring a trusted, capable, diverse, and committed force that is ready to meet any challenge.

We are thankful to Congress for the foresight in creating USSOCOM many years ago, for trusting and sustaining this command as we developed a peerless force, and for your continued support for this truly special cohort of men and women who volunteer to undertake the most complex, challenging, and dangerous missions in defense of our great nation.

General Richard D. Clarke

General Richard D. Clarke currently serves as the 12th Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, FL.

Prior to assuming command of USSOCOM, General Clarke served as Director for Strategic Plans and Policy (J5), Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

General Clarke's other assignments as a general officer include: Deputy Commanding General for Operations, 10th Mountain Division from 2011 to 2013; the 74th Commandant of Cadets, United States Military Academy at West Point from 2013 to 2014; and the Commander of the 82nd Airborne Division.

His formative and key, Army and special operations, assignments include: Director of Operations, Joint Special Operations Command from 2009 to 2011. Eight years in the 75th Ranger Regiment first as a company commander, then as a battalion commander, and finally as the regimental commander. He also served as commander of 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division.

General Clarke has led Soldiers at all levels in Airborne, Ranger, Mechanized and Light Infantry units in five different divisions, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and the 75th Ranger Regiment in the United States, Europe, Iraq and Afghanistan. His deployments while serving in the aforementioned positions include Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Joint Guardian in Macedonia, three deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, four deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and one deployment as the commander of the Combined Joint Forces Land Component Command - Operation Inherent Resolve.

General Clarke was born in Germany and raised in an Army family. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY, and was commissioned into the Infantry in 1984. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from West Point and a Master of Business Administration from Benedictine College. He is a distinguished graduate of the National War College earning a master's degree in Security and Strategic Studies.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

JULY 21, 2021

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GALLEGO

Mr. GALLEGO. In late January 2020, USSOCOM released the Comprehensive Review of SOF culture and ethics, in which it was determined that USSOCOM does not have a systemic ethics problem. The report emphasized that “USSOCOM’s cultural focus on SOF employment and mission accomplishment is to the detriment of leadership, discipline and accountability.” Yet, in the 2019 report provided to the Congress pursuant to section 1066 of the FY19 NDAA then-ASD(SO/LIC) Owen West, it was determined that “some SOF personnel face a deeper challenge of a disordered view of the team and the individual in the SOF culture, and, left unchecked, a value system in disorder threatens to erode the mutual trust among members of SOF and the trust of senior leaders, our allies, and ultimately, the American people in SOF.” Can you please explain to the subcommittee how, only a year later, your review team came to seemingly different conclusions?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. GALLEGO. We recently learned that a study was commissioned through the Joint Special Operations University to consider the case “for and against” USSOCOM—SOF—becoming a military service. Can you explain to the subcommittee the intent, objectives, and all preliminary findings?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. GALLEGO. What is the state of SOF readiness across the entire formation, and what do you believe are the most significant challenges affecting readiness today? What will be the most significant readiness challenges in the future?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. GALLEGO. Earlier this year, USSOCOM released the Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion. What does diversity, inclusion, and equity mean to you, and what are your next steps actualize this document?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. GALLEGO. In your 2020 posture statement, you specified that “USSOCOM continues to right-size our deployed forces to meet the Secretary of Defense’s minimum objective of a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio, with a goal of 1:3,” and in this year’s statement you reference an expectation “... to achieve a sustainable balance of deployed forces across both C-VEO and strategic competition mission sets and reach the DOD’s directed 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for all SOF.” Is a 1:3 ratio still a goal, and what progress has been made in achieving that goal? Does the 1:2 minimum and 1:3 goal of deployment to dwell time apply to the entire formation, to include enablers and support elements? What changes are you making to increase dwell time?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Mr. SCOTT. Are there any efforts to provide the Human Performance and Wellness program to the Special Forces community in the National Guard, i.e. specifically title 32 guardsmen/women?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. During the Cold War, 10th Group looked and talked like Eastern Europeans through the Lodge Act and targeted recruitment. Today, as we see an influx in refugees why have we not aggressively recruited from those ethnic and language groups using a Lodge Act type construct to lead to citizenship? This is most appropriate for Army Special Forces as they need language skills to do their jobs. Special Forces Groups should look and talk like their target regions especially as we embark on the roles of SOF in a near-peer fight, especially those elements doing unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense.

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. It is common for many to think of missions like counterterrorism/counter violent extremist organizations as being presumptively SOF missions, preventing SOF from fully exploring and optimizing its unique potential to leverage

special operations against potential adversaries like Communist China. What percentage of those missions are actually “special” in character? If SOF capacity were freed up, do you see opportunities for special operations in peace to enhance our current family of deterrence options in ways that might shrink the gray zone?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. U.S. doctrine employs a definition of unconventional warfare that is so restrictive that few at the policy level can see much application. However, unconstrained by our doctrine, all of the named threats in the 2018 National Defense Strategy appear to be leveraging and supporting insurgency in ways that have created many of our greatest post-Cold War security challenges. Isn’t it time for the U.S. to also adopt a more fundamental perspective on unconventional warfare if we are to compete more effectively these days?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Are there opportunities for an enhanced partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard and USSOCOM? If so, which Coast Guard missions are ideal for joint operations with USSOCOM?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. In a June 2021 Proceedings article by Lieutenant Commander Stephen Gay, U.S. Navy, entitled “Link Naval Special Warfare with FAC(A)s” Gay writes, “To compete with great powers, the Navy needs to capitalize on the experience gained from the past two decades of small wars and forge a permanent link between Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and carrier strike group (CSG) F/A–18F forward air controller (airborne) crews.” Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. How can the Navy’s big three “tribes”—surface warfare, submarines, aviation—make the most of the capabilities that Naval Special Warfare brings to the fight now?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Is the procurement system keeping up with the sort of cutting-edge technology and weapon systems that the military needs now to compete against potential enemies?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Should the Combatting Terrorism and Irregular Warfare Fellowship Program be expanded?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Is USSOCOM doing enough to prioritize recruitment focused around language skills, engineering, cyber, intelligence, and cultural skills?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. What authorities need to be established to enable SOF to anomalously employ cryptocurrency?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Does USSOCOM plan to establish special operations domain-specific analytic platforms and a cadre of SOF data scientists that understand both the computational and the social science lines of inquiry?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Is there a need for enhanced authority for provision of support to partner nation liaison officers while assigned to the USSOCOM?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Do you support an increased micro-purchase threshold for purchases by USSOCOM in support of operations overseas? If so, what is the recommended threshold?

General CLARKE. [A classified response was provided and is retained in subcommittee files.]