

Statement for the Record
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Special Operations and Combating Terrorism
Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
April 12, 2010

Chairman Hagan, Senator Portman, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting us to testify at this hearing today and for the opportunity to share with you the core plans, policies, and programs we pursue to address global security threats. The missions of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities span a wide range of issue areas, from counterterrorism and direct action to security assistance and humanitarian assistance; from support to multinational peacekeeping operations to countering narcotics trafficking. We will each speak to our perspectives on current and emerging threats from the vantage point of our respective portfolios, noting that these issue areas complement one another as we collectively work to support U.S. military forces and address these threats.

I. OUR MISSION

Special Operations Forces are a uniquely specialized component of our U.S. Armed Forces trained to conduct operations, including counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, civil affairs, military information support operations, and counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, in areas under enemy control or in politically sensitive environments. Over the last half century, these forces have repeatedly proven their ability to act with speed, agility, and precision, making them an invaluable asset for national strategic missions of an extremely sensitive nature. Trained particularly to work by, with, and through local partners, at the same time Special Operations Forces have historically executed the lion's share of indirect and unconventional U.S. military missions, such as training and advising foreign militaries or providing support to civilian authorities abroad.

Since 9/11, the critical need for these core capabilities has increased exponentially. Furthermore, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated, these skill sets can no longer be thought of as capabilities reserved for Special Operations Forces but must also be inculcated in our conventional forces as well. Key trends shaping the future security environment, such as the growth and power of non-state actors, increasing instability in already fragile states, and lowered barriers for entry to develop and acquire advanced technologies, suggest that the skill sets that Special Operations Forces bring to bear will likely continue to increase in importance for the foreseeable future.

As mandated by Section 138 of Title 10 USC, the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict was established to provide senior civilian supervision of special operations activities and low intensity conflict, including oversight of special operations policy and resources. We are the principal civilian advisors to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low intensity conflict matters, and after the Deputy Secretary of Defense, provide senior management for special operations and low intensity conflict within the Department of Defense. As a policy office, the responsibilities of ASD SOLIC are unique in that they include Service Secretary-like roles, such as providing overall supervision of the preparation and justification of SOF programs and budget, while also including civilian oversight and supervisory responsibilities, such as developing policy and reviewing plans for the conduct of sensitive special operations, coordinating those activities within the interagency, and overseeing their execution.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism, I serve as the principal advisor to the ASD SOLIC&IC for DoD policies, plans, authorities, and resources related to special operations and irregular warfare, with special emphasis on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, sensitive special operations, and other activities as specified by the Secretary of Defense.

In addition, I serve as the principal crisis manager for the Office of the ASD SOLIC&IC in response to international and/or domestic activities related to special operations and combating terrorism. I was also recently assigned responsibility for overseeing Department of Defense Information Operations.

Special Operations Policy

Within this broad set of responsibilities, one core mission of my office is to provide oversight of the Special Operations Command, which has grown significantly since 2001. Created by Congress in 1986, SOCOM is charged with responsibilities to organize, train, and equip Special Operations Forces, including those that comprise the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the Air Force Special Operations Command, Naval Special Warfare Command, and the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command. Each component ensures Special Operations Forces are highly trained, properly equipped, and capable of rapid global deployment. In 2001, the Department of Defense gave SOCOM the mission to synchronize planning of the department's global campaign against violent extremists. On average more than 12,000 Special Operations Forces and support personnel are deployed around the world, with a significant majority assigned to the CENTCOM area of responsibility. Since 2006, we've increased the baseline budget for SOCOM by about 50% and in FY12, SOCOM will grow by 2,209 military and civilian authorizations. We created five additional Special Forces Battalions and Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations / Military Information Support Operations units in order to provide additional support for Special Operations Forces and the regular Army.

Several key initiatives we are pursuing in FY12 will enhance SOCOM's flexibility and effectiveness. This year, the last of the originally planned 61 MH-47Gs began modification, and procurement of eight additional MH-47Gs is underway. As part of the recapitalization of MH-60 K/L platforms, SOCOM will also field the first of 72 planned MH-60M helicopters. We would like to bring the total production of the tilt-rotor CV-22, which provides long-range, high-speed infiltration, extraction, and resupply to Special

Operations teams in hostile, denied, and politically sensitive areas, to 43 aircraft. We have also been working with the command to recapitalize SOCOM's Vietnam-era AC-130 gunship fleet with AC-130J models. My office continues to play a critical role in advancing the Non-Standard Aviation Program and delivering a variety of smaller aircraft to provide intra-theater airlift capacity. A new Aviation Foreign Internal Defense program starts in FY12 to train, advise, and assist partner nations in a variety of special operations missions and capabilities. SOF Warrior line items consist of Small Arms and Weapons for SOF warfighters; SOF Visual Augmentation, Lasers and Sensor Systems to provide day and night visual augmentation systems for SOF troops; SOF Tactical Vehicles; and SOF Soldier Protection and Survival Systems that provide specialized equipment to improve survivability and mobility of Special Operations Forces. To address shortfalls resulting from fielding new capabilities, a growing force structure, and aging infrastructure that was inherited without a future recapitalization budget, we are also making a significant investment in Military Construction (MILCON), raising the MILCON funding minimum from four to six percent to support this priority in future budgets.

IW Capabilities

America's dominance in traditional war-fighting has created powerful incentives for adversaries to use alternative methods to counter U.S. influence and interests. For the foreseeable future, the most likely contingencies the U.S. will face will involve irregular warfare. Since 2006, my office has also been principally involved in supporting the strategic shift within the Department to improve capabilities and expand DoD capacity for irregular warfare.

The 2010 QDR aimed to rebalance U.S. military capabilities to emphasize flexibility of the force and investment in key enablers. My office has helped to implement this strategic shift by issuing directives and policy instructions, for example, on Irregular Warfare (IW), and by providing guidance on a range of issues from Security Force

Assistance to counterinsurgency skills and training. We've also focused on implementing key QDR initiatives, such as strengthening and institutionalizing conventional force capabilities for Security Force Assistance; strengthening and expanding capabilities for training partner aviation forces; increasing the availability of Rotary Wing assets; expanding and modernizing the AC-130 fleet; expanding Manned and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and improving Counter-IED capabilities. We've also worked to enhance linguistic and cultural abilities, focusing on building regional expertise for Afghanistan and Pakistan in particular, as well as worked across the Department to increase counterinsurgency, Stability Operations and counterterrorism competency and capacity in our conventional forces.

Oversight of Combating Terrorism

Another core mission that has grown more demanding in the last several years is our role in assisting the ASD SOLIC&IC in providing oversight of the Department's global operations against al Qaeda and its affiliates, including in Afghanistan and Iraq. I represent the Secretary of Defense on various working groups in the interagency arena and maintain an active liaison with those agencies that have responsibility for national security policy as it relates to special operations and combating terrorism. In line with the President's and Secretary's priorities, as well as the unprecedented scale and scope of operations in which U.S. forces are involved, a significant degree of our attention is devoted to providing the oversight required for sensitive operations.

I also oversee development of special operations policies for counterterrorism, including combating terrorism technology and capabilities development, and assist with the administration of Section 1206 and 1208 authorities. One of our most important tools in the counterterrorism fight has been Section 1206 authority. This authority gives the Department the ability – with the concurrence of the Secretary of State – to quickly respond to build our partners' capabilities to confront urgent and emerging terrorism

threats and support those fighting alongside us in Coalition operations. Section 1208 authorities allow special operations forces to provide support (including training, funding, and equipment) to foreign forces, irregular forces, groups and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations to combat terrorism. Since its enactment in 2005, Section 1208 has been a critical authority for the war against al Qaeda and for counterterrorism and related counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We appreciate the Committee's continued support for both Section 1206 and 1208.

Information Operations

Over the past year, DoD has performed an intensive review of the oversight and management of Information Operations (IO) and several capabilities which support IO, including Military Information Support Operations (MISO, formerly Psychological Operations). As a result of the Secretary's directed study of the Department's expenditures and management for IO, several changes have been made, including the consolidation of oversight and management of IO and MISO together within SOLIC. The Department also performed an exhaustive policy review of all MISO programs and activities to ensure these activities adhered to policy, were directly linked to military objectives, and were coordinated with the State Department at both the DoD and COCOM levels. As has been reflected in several reports this administration has submitted to Congress over the past year, Combatant Command IO programs and activities have matured over the past year enabling IO to be utilized a component of every recent military operation, to include Odyssey Dawn.

Counter Terrorism Technical Support Office

The Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office (CTTSO) operates as an interagency program office under the ASD SOLIC & IC to field rapid combating terrorism solutions. Working closely with over 100 Government Agencies, State, and local government, law

enforcement organizations, and national first responders, CTTSO leverages technical expertise, operational objectives, and interagency sponsor funding. This collective approach to resource and information sharing positions the CTTSO to gather front line requirements that service multiple users — a distinct advantage in the combating terrorism community.

II. ON THE GROUND

These force development and policy activities are brought to bear in executing the President's and the Secretary's priorities, including prevailing in today's conflict in Afghanistan and defeating al Qaeda and affiliated groups around the world.

Support to the Afghanistan - Pakistan Strategy

My office provided extensive support on the counterterrorism, special operations, and overall operational aspects of three major Administration-wide reviews of strategy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan. As you know, upon taking office, President Obama committed tens of thousands of additional U.S. forces to Afghanistan, and an additional 30,000 surge forces in December 2009, to support our core goal in the region: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda, to deny it safe haven in the region, and to prevent it from again threatening the United States and our allies. In Afghanistan, the Taliban are still largely aligned with al Qaeda, and al Qaeda leadership still enjoys a sanctuary in adjacent Pakistan. Working with our interagency partners through a range of counterterrorism efforts, we believe we have constrained al Qaeda and their affiliated groups in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan and have significantly degraded their ability to plan and conduct operations throughout the theater.

Our office has also been extensively involved in the Secretary's effort to bring counterinsurgency capabilities to bear on the current Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy. For example, the Department has made considerable efforts to improve Security Force Assistance capabilities, including adding 500 personnel to train-the-trainer units, in order

to enable the effective transition of security responsibilities to host nation forces. We continue to work aggressively to implement the Secretary's goal of fielding capabilities that support the counterinsurgency and irregular conflicts we are currently in, such as through Unmanned Aerial Vehicles programs, counter-Improvised Explosive Device capabilities, and increasing funding for rotary wing lift. We've also assisted the Joint Staff with the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands program, an initiative that supports the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy by identifying, selecting, and training a cadre of counterinsurgency and regional experts to deploy to the region on a rotating basis, build strategic relationships with local partners, and enhance the capacity of local security institutions.

Global SOF Engagement

The al Qaeda core sanctuary in Pakistan is enabled and assisted by a broad network of affiliates, including facilitators, financiers, and training sites. The rise of these affiliate organizations in the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, and elsewhere are of great concern to us.

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) poses the most immediate terrorist threat to U.S. interests and the Homeland outside the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. Accordingly, we work closely with Yemeni security forces to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQAP in Yemen, deny them sanctuary, and degrade their ability to plan, organize and train for attacks against the U.S. Homeland and our interests. To counter this threat, the U.S. adopted a balanced approach that addresses both the short to mid-term requirement to build Yemeni counterterrorist (CT) capacity and capability and the long-term requirement to address Yemen's fundamental needs across the security, economic development, political, and social spectrums.

The current unrest and political upheaval in Yemen have obviously forced us to look closely at our approach. We believe that the current protracted political issues are having

an adverse impact on the security situation in Yemen. We're monitoring the situation closely. As with every country, we regularly evaluate our assistance and CT cooperation to ensure it is being used appropriately and is as effective as possible. Our shared interest with the Yemeni government in fighting terrorism, particularly defeating AQAP, goes beyond specific individuals. As such, our focus over the course of the last several years of daily contact with the Yemeni CT apparatus has been to professionalize their CT institutions, not to bolster individual personalities.

In Somalia, we support our partners to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Shabaab, an Islamic terrorist group with nationalist roots but global aspirations. The group shows increasing signs of affiliation with al Qaeda and has made significant public overtures to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda senior leadership. Al-Shabaab has also reached out to Somali diaspora groups around the world, asking many Somalis with western passports, like American Omar Hammami to join the jihad in Somalia. Al-Shabaab's terrorist attacks against Uganda last July showed their desire to export terror across the region and threaten any country that dares to attack them.

Countering al-Shabaab is not an easy task. Our interagency partners have proven particularly effective in tracking Somali individuals of concern and preventing them from staging attacks. Our policy recognizes that a U.S. military presence would be counter-productive so we work with and through the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to counter al-Shabaab and give the TFG the time and space it needs to develop viable institutions and security forces. The Department of State provides substantial financial support to AMISOM and this year, DoD began providing U.S. military trainers for Ugandan and Burundian pre-deployment training. In addition, SOF forces regularly conduct military-to-military exercises and training with Kenya, Uganda and other regional partners. We have also provided substantial Section 1206 CT assistance to East African states. We continue to monitor al-Shabaab closely and employ our various tools to counter this threat.

The Philippines is an important and capable military partner of the United States and has worked aggressively with us to counter the threat from al Qaeda in the region. Over the last nine years, our military's efforts have successfully contained the threat posed by terrorist groups in the Philippines and prevented al Qaeda from establishing a foothold in South East Asia. Initiated in 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (OEF-P) is spearheaded by the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) which works side by side with the Armed Forces of the Philippines to reduce the effectiveness of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and deny these organizations the use of Philippine territory as a safe haven. OEF-P operations have been successful at hindering ASG/JI abilities to conduct terrorist operations and eliminating numerous key terrorist leaders. These activities also benefit the Philippines by facilitating a safe environment for numerous civic action projects, such as Dental Civil Action Programs (DENCAPs) and Medical Civil Action Programs (MEDCAPS), to provide Philippine people in remote areas much needed health care assistance.

III. CLOSING

Through their ability to execute high-end lethal strikes, as well as their competence in preventing festering problems from turning into far-reaching and expensive crises, Special Operations Forces have proven their immeasurable value for securing our national interests. The wars we have been engaged in over the last decade have amply demonstrated how much more critical those skills and competencies will be in the future. We appreciate the committee's continued support for our work to support these extraordinary men and women who undertake some of the nation's most demanding missions.