

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION FOR
APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

S. 1390

TO AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010 FOR MILITARY
ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, FOR MILITARY CON-
STRUCTION, AND FOR DEFENSE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY, TO PRESCRIBE PERSONNEL STRENGTHS FOR SUCH FISCAL
YEAR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

PART 5

EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

JUNE 18, 2009



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Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

52-624 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2009

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402-0001

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
FOR APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR
2010**

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING
THREATS AND CAPABILITIES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:28 p.m. in room SR-222, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Reed, Martinez, and Wicker.

Majority staff members present: Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Thomas K. McConnell, professional staff member; and Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; and Dana W. White, professional staff member.

Staff assistants present: Paul J. Hubbard, Christine G. Lang, and Jennifer R. Knowles.

Committee members' assistants present: Carolyn Chuta, assistant to Senator Reed; Patrick Hayes, assistant to Senator Bayh; Dan Fisk and Brian W. Walsh, assistants to Senator Martinez; and Erskine W. Wells III, assistant to Senator Wicker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED, CHAIRMAN

Senator REED. Let me call the hearing to order and welcome Admiral Olson and Senator Wicker.

Today we are welcoming Admiral Eric T. Olson, Commander of the United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM), to testify regarding the President's fiscal year 2010 budget request for SOCOM. The threats our Special Operations Forces are facing around the world and the challenges facing the command as it seeks to meet today's requirements while also ensuring future needs are the focal point of our discussions today.

Admiral Olson represents more than 55,000 military and civilian SOCOM personnel, who are fulfilling a variety of missions all over the globe in the fight against terrorists and to further other United States security interests. In the last year, Special Operations

Forces (SOF) conducted operations and training in more than 100 different countries.

However, more than 85 percent of SOF are currently concentrated in the Central Command (CENTCOM) theater. I look forward to hearing Admiral Olson's thoughts on how the drawdown of conventional forces in Iraq is likely to impact the SOF deployed there. While our conventional force continues to reduce its footprint, there is no indication that the requirements for SOF and the unique skill set they bring to the fight will be similarly reduced for the foreseeable future. Special operators will continue to require enabling support, including airlift and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, as they remain in Iraq to carry out kinetic and nonkinetic missions against the enemy. These missions come with significant risks, and SOF must continue to receive adequate support from their general purpose counterparts if they are to remain successful.

I also look forward to hearing Admiral Olson's thoughts on special operations activities in Afghanistan and specifically whether or not requirements for mobility and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets are being adequately addressed.

While the heavy commitment of SOF in Iraq and Afghanistan is understandable, SOCOM's focus must remain global. I am concerned about the "opportunity cost" of tying down so many forces in a single region for an extended period of time and how it is affecting the command's ability to maintain critical language and cultural skills and relationships in other parts of the world.

Given the extraordinarily high operational tempo faced by SOF, the long-term sustainability of such deployment remains a concern. I know that addressing this challenge is one of SOCOM's highest priorities, and I look forward to hearing more from Admiral Olson on the recruiting, retention, and family support issues facing the command.

I was pleased to see the fiscal year 2010 budget increased procurement funding after that portion of SOCOM's budget experienced a significant decrease from fiscal year 2008 to 2009. Recent congressional testimony indicated that equipment procurement, including radios and some weapons, has lagged behind SOCOM's personnel growth in the last few years. I look forward to Admiral Olson's thoughts on any equipment shortages the command has experienced, and what steps are being taken to address these shortages.

Lastly, I am interested in hearing Admiral Olson's thoughts on the balance of focus and resources on direct versus indirect action within the command. Direct action, kill-or-capture missions, are critical to dismantling terror networks, but are only truly effective when coupled with indirect activities aimed at winning the hearts, the minds, the support, and the confidence of the population. Some have argued that SOCOM has disproportionately focused on direct action in recent years at the expense of its indirect action community.

Admiral Olson, it's a pleasure to have you with us today. We look forward to your testimony.

I'm going to recognize Senator Wicker. He has informed me that there's a vote scheduled for 2:45 p.m.

Senator WICKER. 2:50 p.m. now.
 Senator REED. 2:50 p.m. now? Marked down from 2:45 p.m. to
 2:50 p.m.
 So, Senator Wicker?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I very much appreciate the cooperation that you've already exhibited toward me as the ranking member.

I want to thank Admiral Olson for being here today. In light of the fact that there will be a vote within 20 minutes or so, I think I will submit my full opening statement to the record, and simply state that I look forward to the Admiral testifying and answering questions concerning a wide range of issues, such as long-term sustainability, his efforts to increase SOF by 4 percent, and growing the force at that level without compromising quality, what efforts he's taking to deal with the strain placed on our troops because of extended and repeated deployments, and I also hope to have a discussion about efforts to enhance cultural and language proficiency.

So, with that, I will yield back to the Chair, and ask that my statement be placed in the record in full.

Senator REED. Without objection, all statements will be placed in the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Wicker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY SENATOR ROGER WICKER

Mr. Chairman, thank you for scheduling this hearing to inform the committee on the current posture of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) as we prepare to begin deliberations on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. Admiral Olson, I want to thank you for appearing before us today and for your many years of dedicated service. I'd also like to take a moment to send my deepest appreciation to the extraordinary soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines under your command who continue to serve our country with the highest level of professionalism and skill, even in the most trying of circumstances. We in Congress take our obligation to these servicemembers seriously and I look forward to working with you to ensure they continue to be the best-equipped and best-trained fighting force in the world.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) are playing an integral role in our struggle against terrorism in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the demands on these forces will only increase in the months and years to come. Despite the planned drawdown of conventional forces from Iraq later this year, SOF will continue to maintain a robust presence in country. Couple this sustained presence with an increase of SOF personnel in Afghanistan, not to mention other commitments around the globe, and you have a force that is under immense pressure and strain. Just last week, Admiral, you stated that "long-term sustainability remains a concern." I'm interested in what steps, if any, your command is taking to mitigate this stress.

Mr. Chairman, I know this budget plans for a SOF increase of 4 percent. Recently, I reviewed the "SOF Truths" in preparation for the hearing. Paraphrasing them, they state: humans are more important than hardware, quality is more important than quantity, SOF cannot be mass produced, and competent SOF cannot be created after the emergency arises.

It seems that there is no quick and easy answer to mitigating the stress on our SOF. I note that you have said SOF cannot grow more than 3 to 5 percent per year. Therefore, I am interested in hearing how the Special Operations community is achieving its growth objectives and how large our SOF can grow without compromising quality.

It is important when discussing the strain placed upon our servicemembers as a result of extended and repeated deployments that we include their families, as well SOCOM has taken the family support role seriously and I appreciate the assistance they are providing through various innovative means, including the SOCOM Care Coalition, a program widely hailed as a remarkable success.

I am also interested in what steps the command is taking to increase and enhance cultural and language proficiency among your personnel. While no one can doubt the importance of the direct action mission SOF performs, our ability to engage foreign populations through nonkinetic means will be the lynchpin of our long-term success in the struggle against terrorism. This will include continuing the training of indigenous security forces and other activities aimed at strengthening civic institutions, as well as taking measurable steps to limit civilian casualties. I am interested in your appraisal of SOCOMs current capacity and level of success in this vital role, particularly with regard to the training of Iraqi and Afghan security forces.

With asymmetric threats and irregular conflict likely to dominate the security environment for the foreseeable future, the role SOF will play in our military strategy will prove invaluable. Striking the correct structural balance for SOCOM to meet this long-term demand will be of the utmost importance and I am interested in your vision for the future composition and role of SOF.

Again, Admiral, thank you for taking the time to be with us today and I look forward to your testimony.

Senator BAYH. Senator Martinez.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, I don't have a statement.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

Admiral Olson? Please.

**STATEMENT OF ADM ERIC T. OLSON, USN, COMMANDER, U.S.
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND**

Admiral OLSON. Good afternoon, Chairman Reed, Senator Wicker, and Senator Martinez. Thank you very much for the invitation to appear before the committee to highlight the current posture of the SOCOM.

I'll say upfront that, thanks to the foresight, advocacy, and strong support of this body, we remain well-positioned to meet the Nation's expectations of its SOF.

SOCOM and SOF are a team of teams. The joint force itself, those assigned by the military Services for most of their careers, comprises Special Forces, Rangers, SEALs, combatant craft crewmen, many submarine operators, Marine Corps special operators, fixed- and rotary-wing aviators, combat controllers, pararescue jumpers, practitioners of civil-military affairs and military information support, and more, all augmented, supported, and enabled by a wide variety of assigned specialists, great men and women, Active Duty and reservists, military and civilian, who generally work within the special operations community for an assignment or two over the course of their military careers, and bring us much value.

SOF is a force that is well-suited to the operating environments in which we are now engaged. Its proven abilities have created an unprecedented demand for its effects in remote, uncertain, and challenging operating areas. Whether the assigned mission is to train, advise, fight, or provide humanitarian assistance, the broad capabilities of SOF make them the force of choice.

Primarily, SOCOM headquarters is responsible for organizing, training, equipping, and providing fully capable SOF to serve under the operational control of geographic combatant commanders. In this role, SOCOM headquarters shares many of the responsibilities, authorities, and characteristics of a military department, including a separate, major force program budget, established by Congress for the purpose of funding equipment, materiel, supplies, services, training, and operational activities that are peculiar to SOF in nature.

SOCOM is also responsible for synchronizing Department of Defense (DOD) planning against terrorists and terrorist networks globally. In this role, we receive, analyze, and prioritize the geographic combatant commanders' regional plans and make recommendations to the Joint Staff on force and resource allocations.

Additionally, we are the DOD proponent for security force assistance globally. In this role, we expect to help foster the long-term partnerships that will shape a more secure global environment in the face of global challenges such as transnational crime and extremism.

While the high demand for SOF in Iraq and Afghanistan—as you noted, Chairman Reed—has caused the large majority of SOF to be deployed to the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR), SOF do maintain a global presence.

So far, in fiscal year 2009, SOF have conducted operations and training in 106 countries, as you noted, with operations in 75 to 80 countries on most days. In most of these operations, SOF have taken a long-term approach to engagement designed to forge enduring partnerships that contribute to regional stability. This balance of effective direct and indirect skills inherent to the force, and an understanding of the operational context of their application, is the core of special operations. From support to major combat operations to the conduct of irregular warfare, SOF are often first in and last out, accomplishing their missions with highly capable, agile, and relatively small units. So, SOF must be properly manned, trained, and equipped to operate globally to the standard the Nation has come to expect. The SOCOM fiscal year 2010 budget request includes the resources necessary to continue providing full-spectrum, multimission, global SOF.

While the SOCOM budget request has historically been robust enough to meet basic special operations mission requirements, the success of SOF depends not only on SOCOM's dedicated budget and acquisition authorities, but also on SOCOM's Service partners. SOF rely on the Services for a broad range of support and required enabling capabilities. With the combination of the SOCOM budget and the support of the Services, SOCOM seeks a balance, first, to have sufficient organic special operations enablers for speed of response to operational crisis, and second, to have enabling capabilities assigned in support of SOF by the Services for sustainment and expansion of operations.

SOCOM headquarters will continue to lead, develop, and sustain the world's most precise and lethal counterterrorism force. We will provide the world's most effective special operations trainers, advisors, and combat partners with the skills, leadership, and mindset necessary to meet today's and tomorrow's unconventional challenges. This Nation's Joint SOF will continue to find, kill, capture, or reconcile our irreconcilable enemies, to train mentor and partner with our global friends and allies, and to pursue the tactics, techniques, procedures, and technologies that will keep us ahead of emerging and dynamic threats.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'll conclude my opening remarks with a simple statement of pride in the SOF that I'm honored to command and provide to other commanders. SOF are contributing, globally, well beyond what their

percentage of the total force numbers would indicate. Every day they are fighting our enemies, training and mentoring our partners, and bringing value to tens of thousands of villagers who are still deciding their allegiances.

I stand ready for your questions, sir.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Olson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY ADM ERIC T. OLSON, USN

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to report on the state of the United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

Created by Congress just over 22 years ago, the Command implemented its original charter and Title 10 authorities primarily as a resourcing headquarters, providing ready and relevant Special Operations Forces (SOF) in episodic engagements against threats to the Nation and its vital interests. Following the attacks of September 11, SOCOM quickly became a proactive, global and strategically focused headquarters while the Joint SOF were employed primarily in decisive direct action missions against terrorists and insurgents. Throughout, we have also taken a long-term approach of engagement in Central Command and other regions, designed to forge enduring partnerships contributing to regional stability. This balance of direct and indirect actions, the combination of high-end tactical skills and an understanding of the operational context of their application, is the core of special operations. Success of Special Operations depends on SOCOM's dedicated budget and acquisition authorities to meet SOF-peculiar mission requirements, heavily supported by general purpose force capabilities.

COMBATANT COMMAND FUNCTIONS

SOCOM is responsible for synchronizing Department of Defense planning against terrorists and terrorist networks globally. In this role, we receive, analyze, and prioritize the Geographic Combatant Commanders' regional plans, and make recommendations to the joint staff on force and resource allocations. We also serve as an extension of the joint staff in the interagency arena. We have established effective collaborative venues to do this, collectively known as the global synchronization process. Because SOCOM does not normally have operational authority over deployed forces, the plans and operations themselves are executed by the Geographic Combatant Commanders.

In October 2008, SOCOM was designated as the Department of Defense proponent for Security Force Assistance (SFA). This designation will cause SOCOM to perform a synchronization role in global training and assistance planning that is similar to our role in synchronizing planning against terrorist networks. This role will be another collaborative effort that is nested within our existing global synchronization process.

Additionally, SOCOM is now the Department's designated lead for countering Threat Financing. In this capacity, we advocate the Department's policies in direct coordination with our interagency partners, primarily within the U.S. Treasury and Justice Departments.

Although synchronization is a robust daily activity, a key element is the semi-annual Global Synchronization Conference, coordinated and hosted by SOCOM, designed to provide a venue for structured determination of roles, missions and priorities among organizations with equities in the outcome.

MILITARY DEPARTMENT-LIKE FUNCTIONS

SOF must be manned, trained, and equipped to operate globally with unmatched speed, precision, and discipline within a culture that promotes innovation, initiative and tactical level diplomacy. To enable this, SOCOM has responsibilities and authorities similar to Service Departments and Defense Agencies. The key element of our ability to assure the readiness of SOF is the Major Force Program (MFP) 11 budget line.

The people of the Special Operations community are its greatest asset, but we refer to MFP-11 as "the pearl of SOCOM" because it is the single greatest contributor to our ability to train, equip and sustain our force. We are grateful for the wisdom of Congress in providing MFP-11, and in its continued strong and knowledgeable support for the peculiar needs of SOF.

A manifestation of this support is the recent expansion of SOCOM's section 1208 authority for fiscal year 2009.

We pride ourselves on our understanding of the needs of our operational force and continually seek ways to accelerate delivery of essential equipment and systems. To this end, SOCOM established a new Directorate for Science and Technology (S&T) in early fiscal year 2009. S&T is responsible for technology discovery, technology developments and demonstrations, and rapid insertions of new capabilities to SOF in concert with our Acquisition Executive.

New to the S&T portfolio is a unique 'rapid exploitation' capability comprising a distributed network of SOF operators, technicians, engineers, and managers tasked to identify timely technical solutions to solve operational problems.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL OPERATOR

The complexity of today's and tomorrow's strategic environments requires that our SOF operators maintain not only the highest levels of warfighting expertise but also cultural knowledge and diplomacy skills. We are developing "3-D Operators"—members of a multi-dimensional force prepared to lay the groundwork in the myriad diplomatic, development, and defense activities that contribute to our Government's pursuit of our vital national interests.

Fundamental to this effort is the recognition that humans are more important than hardware and that quality is more important than quantity. Investments in weapons platforms and technologies are sub-optimized if we fail to develop the people upon whom their effective employment depends. Within SOCOM, we strive first to select and nurture the extraordinary operator and then to provide the most operationally relevant equipment.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES RETENTION AND RECRUITING

SOF retention remains one of our highest priorities. The factors that most influence retention of the force are the quality of the mission, the quality of individual and family support, operational tempo and monetary compensation. In 2008, Congress granted a 2-year extension of current SOF incentives designed to keep our senior operators in billets requiring their special skills and experience. Our retention is good, but long-term sustainability remains a concern.

In November 2008, thanks to a very positive response by the Secretary of the Army and the approval of the Secretary of Defense, we made progress in one of SOCOM's high priority initiatives: increasing our level of regional expertise through the recruitment of native heritage speakers. As of today, over 100 legal non-permanent residents with special language skills and abilities have joined the Army under a pilot program. This new program, Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI), is something of a phenomenon within certain foreign populations of the United States and attracts highly qualified candidates. Some of these will serve in Special Operations units.

SOF recruitment and retention programs must be innovative, flexible and open to possibilities previously deemed impractical. We will continue to refine our overall recruitment and retention strategies in coordination with the Department and the Services.

HEALTH OF THE FORCE

SOF remain strong and ready despite an unprecedented operational tempo. They are, for the most part, doing what they joined the military to do and feeling that their impact is positive and meaningful. Still, we are asking a lot of them and their families, and we have every indication that they will be in ever-increasing demand.

We must continue to support our personnel and their families to confront the future fragility of the force. We know well that psychological trauma is often observed in the families before it is manifested in the SOF operators themselves.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES CARE COALITION

SOCOM recognizes the correlation between supporting our wounded personnel and their families and overall mission readiness. As such, we have continued to develop programs within our award-winning (both the 2006 Armed Forces Foundation's Organization of the Year, and the 2008 Navy SEAL Warrior Fund's "Fire in the Gut" Award), nationally-recognized SOCOM Care Coalition that looks after our entire SOF family. The Care Coalition is a responsive, low-cost clearinghouse that matches needs with providers and currently supports 2,300 wounded SOF warriors with every benefit of treatment, recovery, and rehabilitation to improve their opportunity to return to duty or to succeed in post-military service. Working closely with

the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Services, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, the SOCOM Care Coalition has resolved myriad financial, logistical, social, occupational and other support issues for our wounded servicemembers and their families.

SERVICE ENABLING CAPABILITIES

Demand for SOF is on the increase; yet, by their very nature, SOF are limited in size and scope.

I am already on record as stating that SOF cannot grow more than 3 to 5 percent per year in those key units and capabilities that must be developed within our own organizational structures and training pipelines. This growth rate will not meet the already obvious appetite for the effects of SOF in forward operating areas.

The solution, beyond the necessary continued steady and disciplined growth of specific Special Operations capabilities, is to mitigate the demand on SOF by developing and sustaining supporting capabilities within the Services that are beyond their organic needs, and can therefore be used in direct support of Special Operations commanders. This will enhance the impact of forward-deployed SOF without placing additional demand on SOF's own limited enabling units.

The enabling capabilities that must be provided in greater number by the Services include mobility, aerial sensors, field medics, remote logistics, engineering planners, construction, intelligence, regional specialists, interpreters/translators, communications, dog teams, close air support specialists, security forces, and others that permit SOF operators to focus more directly on their missions. Assigned at the unit or detachment level to support Joint SOF commanders away from main bases, the effects of such a combined force can be impressive.

Our goal is balance: first, to have sufficient organic SOF-peculiar enablers to permit rapid response to operational crises; and second, to have enabling capabilities assigned in direct support of SOF for longer term sustainment and expansion of the operation. We are and will be dependent upon our Service partners for key force enablers. The non-availability of these force enablers has become our most vexing issue in the operational environment. Another growing challenge, especially as we begin a responsible general purpose force drawdown in Iraq, is base operating support and personnel security for SOF remaining in dangerous areas after the larger force departs, as SOF cannot provide for itself.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND READINESS ENHANCING AUTHORITIES

Combat readiness depends on personnel readiness. Ready and relevant SOF can only be sustained with the recognition that our people, both our SOF operators and the full range of supporting personnel, are our top priority.

Although title 10 holds the Commander, SOCOM, responsible for the combat readiness of SOF, many of decisions and processes that impact SOF's readiness are held within the Services. To address this situation, section 167 of the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act tasked SOCOM to submit proposals to enhance SOF personnel management. The SOCOM plan submitted to the OSD contains initiatives intended to improve coordination of personnel management, including assignment, promotion, compensation, and retention.

BUDGETARY AND ACQUISITION AUTHORITIES

The Department's fiscal year 2010 base budget submission, along with the Overseas Contingency Operations request, recognizes the increasing role of SOF across the globe. As the administration rebalances toward an Irregular Warfare (IW) portfolio, we anticipate the importance of, and Services support for, IW will continue to increase. SOCOM is actively participating in the Department's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) with the view that the budget request before you this year will adequately serve as the bridge toward the results of the QDR and the fiscal year 2011 budget submission.

In addition to an appropriate baseline budget, SOF readiness requires investment in the rapid fielding of both existing solutions and cutting edge technologies, even when the relatively small purchase quantities do not optimize production costs. SOCOM's aggressive use of our acquisition authority is a key factor in providing wide-ranging, time-sensitive capabilities to our widely dispersed and often isolated forces. Because our budget authority is limited to SOF-peculiar equipment and modifications, SOCOM also depends heavily on Service acquisition programs that develop and procure Service-common mobility platforms, weapons, ammunition, and other equipment that we then modify to meet SOF's mission needs.

We are constantly evaluating our acquisition processes and looking for new opportunities to streamline and accelerate our acquisition procedures. An example of this

is SOCOM's Urgent Deployment Acquisition (UDA) process which provides a rapid acquisition and logistics response to critical combat mission needs statements (CMNS) submitted by deployed SOF. Most UDA capabilities are delivered to operational forces within 6 months after receipt of the requirement. We will continue to sustain and modernize the force by equipping our operators, upgrading our mobility platforms and further developing persistent ISR sensors and systems. Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) platforms and their associated analysis and information distribution systems are now essential to success. Our needs for ISR are still undermet, and we must ensure that our ISR fleet is appropriately balanced for enduring global requirements.

We will continue to rely on service ISR programs as we develop new capabilities to meet the dynamic Special Operations mission needs. We will continue our tactical focus with high-grade sensors on both manned and unmanned platforms. While some capabilities are truly SOF-peculiar and are within SOCOM's processes, most Special Operations capabilities are based upon Service-provided systems. It is therefore important that we immediately and collectively transition from a platform-based acquisition cycle to one that is capabilities-based, wherein capabilities such as ISR collection suites or specific weapons packages can be "rolled on and rolled off" a variety of ground, air, and maritime platforms to increase our tactical and operational reach. Implementation of such a cycle would allow SOCOM to buy, try and modify capabilities without being constrained by Service platform considerations, and also would allow SOCOM to upgrade modular capabilities at the pace of technology advancement.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES MOBILITY

Future SOF will require a robust mobility fleet tailored to global demand and an ever-changing strategic environment. Our intent is to recapitalize our 37 oldest C-130 aircraft with modern C-130J aircraft. The first platforms in this program are already funded. SOCOM continues to evaluate the modernization options for the remaining aircraft to provide the optimum in force capability to the warfighter.

SOCOM's Nonstandard Aviation program answers longstanding operational requirements for small team intra-theater movement in politically sensitive areas.

We continue to evaluate the proper aviation capacity tailored to each Geographic Combatant Commander's prioritized needs in order to provide troop and cargo movement, aerial refueling and surveillance or penetration of denied areas through higher readiness rates and increased aircraft availability. We continue to explore emerging technologies that will enable these missions to be performed in a higher threat environment.

The CV-22 remains one of SOCOM's premier programs. This transformational platform provides sufficient speed for long-range vertical lift missions within a single period of darkness. The CV-22's defensive systems, enhanced situational awareness, and Terrain Following and Terrain Avoidance (TF/TA) capabilities provide greater survivability for SOF aircrews and ground operators. We decommissioned SOCOM's fleet of venerable MH-53 Pave Low helicopters in October 2008, making accelerated delivery of CV-22 a top priority.

The proliferation of inexpensive and advanced surveillance technologies and capabilities threaten SOF's unique access capabilities, particularly in denied or politically sensitive maritime surface and subsurface environments. To meet both the known and projected threats, we continue to seek designs and technologies that permit SOF to go where they are not expected.

In 2007, SOCOM commissioned an analysis of ways that the US military can clandestinely move SOF over strategic distances into and out of littoral, medium-to-high threat environments. This study, combined with several other exhaustive analytical studies, led to the Joint Multi-Mission Submersible (JMMS) program. JMMS will provide longer range transits, through extreme water temperatures, with greater on-station endurance than current SOF undersea mobility platforms; thereby permitting a wider range of options to answer national requirements. Additionally, SOCOM needs to evaluate the potential to conduct long range, clandestine infiltrations by air.

SOCOM also commissioned an Analysis of Alternatives (AOA) to address undersea mobility requirements in the 2015-2030 timeframe. The AOA was completed in February 2008 and confirmed the need for a new mobility system, now referred to as the Shallow Water Combat Submersible (SWCS). The SWCS program, initiated in 2008, will replace the legacy SEAL Delivery Vehicle and provide a significant increase in shallow water, clandestine access.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES PRECISION STRIKE SYSTEMS

SOF require a family of precision strike systems to address current and future static and mobile targets. The current inventory and capabilities of AC-130 “gunships” and smaller manned and unmanned platforms are insufficient to meet our need for guided munitions that minimize unintended deaths and damage. I intend to fill this capacity gap by installing a platform neutral Precision Strike Package on our existing MC-130W aircraft, and to field them as soon as practical. I will accept short-term risk in SOF’s aerial refueling fleet in order to do this quickly, recognizing that a future program will be required to address the resultant shortfall.

SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE

As the designated DOD proponent for SFA, SOCOM leads a collaborative effort to develop and provide DOD elements to enhance the capabilities of our allies and partners. We will assist the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense by recommending overarching priorities for force and resource allocation. Our product will be informed by several non-DOD government agencies, including the Department of State, and will be fully coordinated with the Services and Joint Forces Command. Our work in this very important area will include development of policy and legislative proposals to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of international military assistance programs.

One method by which SOCOM is now able to assist in the development of foreign Special Operations capabilities is through the reallocation of funds under section 1208 authorities.

SOCOM also strongly supports the administration’s requests for section 1206, section 1207, and International Military Education and Training funding.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAM EXPANSION

Last year we called attention to the importance of language and regional knowledge as essential to strengthening relations and facilitating more effective operations with foreign partners. We initiated recruiting, training, and personnel management mechanisms, and partnered with OSD and the Services to expand the pools from which the Services recruit. As mentioned earlier, the MAVNI program is a small and growing success in this regard. Historical models, such as the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army and the Alamo Scouts who operated in the Philippines during World War II, are also being evaluated. To meet more immediate tactical needs, we initiated steps to dedicate in-service translators and interpreters to our Army component for joint use. Individual development aimed at correctly aligning language testing, career management, and incentives remains important to our capability; therefore, we strengthened our institutional programs at the Army, Air Force, and Marine component level and worked closely with the Services and OSD to support our career model. We have a long way to go in recognizing and incentivizing such expertise as an operational necessity before we can truly develop and sustain real experts in specific key regions around the world. I call this “Project Lawrence,” after T. E. Lawrence of Arabia.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES PERSONNEL GROWTH

As stated earlier, our assessments indicate that SOF cannot grow more than 3 to 5 percent per year in those key units and capabilities that must be developed within our own organizational structures and training pipelines. This growth rate will not meet the appetite for the effects of SOF in forward operating areas.

A partial solution is to mitigate the demand on SOF by developing and sustaining supporting capabilities within the Services that are beyond their organic needs and can be assigned in direct support of Special Operations commanders. This solution will enhance the impact of forward-deployed SOF without placing additional demand on SOF’s own enabling units.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Today, SOCOM is a strategic-level organization that addresses global threats to our national interests. SOCOM observes trans-regional dynamics from a uniquely cross-organizational perspective. This perspective provides us with a comprehensive appreciation of the strategic environment that suggests that the type, scope, and scale of the security challenges facing our Nation have changed significantly in recent years. In light of this knowledge, our approach to the security environment must be increasingly agile and adaptive.

The problems we must be prepared to address include the inability of nation states to deal with increasingly complex challenges or to meet the needs and expect-

tations of their populations. These challenges are exacerbated by the growing number of non-state actors who have strategic effect in a networked and interconnected world. In the vacuum created by weak or failed governments, non-state actors have achieved greater influence over benign populations by addressing their basic needs and grievances, and by intimidating and sometimes brutalizing them into submission. When governments fail to address the needs of the population, they become irrelevant and the people will make choices that are shaped by their own immediate needs for survival.

One such choice is to leave their current situation in the hope of finding greater opportunity. As a result, uncontrolled migration is occurring across the world and the challenges associated with this dynamic are manifesting themselves in numerous ways. A few examples are the accelerating urbanization that is overwhelming many under-developed cities; the burgeoning diasporas that are becoming increasingly difficult to assimilate into host nation societies; and the continuing brain drain that hinders growth in the developing world.

Another choice that people make is to turn to non-state organizations, groups, or “super-empowered individuals” that demonstrate state-like capacities. In the best case, people will turn to a benevolent nonstate actor such as a nongovernmental organization, a moderate and tolerant religious group, or a local ethnic or traditional institution. However, we also see populations that must turn to extremist or criminal organizations, many of which are sponsored by rogue nation states. Nonstate groups such as al Qaeda, Taliban, Hamas, Hezbollah, MEND, Jamal Islamiyah, FARC, and MS-13 are growing in influence and shaping the choices of populations as nation states fail to adequately address their needs and grievances. In short, nonstate actors effectively compete for sovereignty with the traditional nation state system.

Taken alone, uncontrolled migration, extremism, or crime are significant problems, but in combination the difficulty and complexity of these problems grow exponentially. We see a dangerous convergence of these problems, producing corrosive effects across the entire nation state system. Our perception of what constitutes a threat to our national security ought to consider these nontraditional and persistent threats, and therefore, we need to strike the proper balance within the Department of Defense and across our Government to address these threats.

SOCOM favors a “populace-centric” approach in lieu of a “threat-centric” approach to national security challenges. More specifically, we believe that SOF must focus on the environmental dynamics and root causes that create today’s and tomorrow’s threats and adversaries. This belief requires an approach that is integrated with the long-term work of civilian agencies, especially the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to foster U.S. credibility and influence among relevant populations.

SOCOM, as a strategic headquarters, applies an Irregular Warfare (IW) mindset towards national security. IW is a logical, long-term framework that focuses on relevant populations and describes the activities that the Department of Defense will perform to support State, USAID and other civilian agencies to address the many complex environmental challenges that are emerging on a global scale. The Irregular Warfare approach seeks a balance between direct and indirect activities that focus on the operational environment within the context of interagency and international collaboration.

It is important to note that IW is not new to SOF. Unconventional Warfare, Counterterrorism, Counterinsurgency, Civil-Affairs, Information Operations, Psychological Operations, and Foreign Internal Defense are traditional IW activities and historic SOF core activities. What is new is that an Irregular Warfare approach requires broader participation on the part of the entire Department of Defense. We must also develop the appropriate mechanisms to effectively mesh DOD IW activities with the diplomatic and development efforts of our interagency partners.

This comprehensive appreciation of the strategic environment is why SOCOM is committed to developing the “3-D Operator.” Understanding the synergy of development, diplomacy and defense, we see the “3-D Operator” as an essential element of a strategy that employs both “hard power” and “soft power” methods.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to update you on SOCOM Headquarters and the SOF community. It remains a profound honor to be associated with this extraordinarily capable and uniquely innovative force and to represent them before this esteemed body.

SOCOM headquarters will continue to lead and to manage the development and sustainment of the worlds most precise and lethal counterterrorism force. We will

provide the world's most effective Special Operations trainers, advisors and combat partners. We will provide advice and comment on issues of national security.

This great Nation's Joint SOF will continue to find and kill or capture our irreconcilable enemies, to partner with our global friends and allies, and to pursue the tactics, techniques, procedures and technologies that will keep us ahead of dynamic threats.

You have much cause for deep pride in your SOF. They, and I, thank you for your continued service and support.

Senator REED. Thank you very much, Admiral. I wish that you will convey to your Special Forces operators our great respect and appreciation for what they're doing.

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, sir, I will.

Senator REED. Thank you very much.

As I suggested in my opening statement, there's an issue of, as we draw down in Iraq, conventional forces redeploying and there's the expectation that SOF elements will help us make that transition and continue our presence there. Do you see any complications, in terms of this withdrawal, in terms of support for your operators and the continued presence of your operators?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, thank you. The short answer is, yes, we see complications, but none that can't be overcome. The reality is that, whether the force presence in an area is small or large, it requires some degree of support for cordon-and-search forces, quick-reaction forces, medical support, air-control support, airfield operations, intelligence analysts, all of that, whether the force is large or small. We are working closely with the Army and the Marine Corps, who are the main force providers, to ensure that, as the major forces draw down—and we've seen no indication that special operations drawdown will be commensurate with that—that there is a dedicated, reliable, available measure of support responsive enough to meet special operations needs.

Senator REED. Thank you, Admiral.

We are moving, significantly, to the Afghanistan theater of operations, with your special operations, as well as conventional brigade combat teams and Marine regiments. As you point out in your testimony, you rely upon the support of other forces and other Services, one of which is airlift. There is some indication that many of the requests from special operations for airlift support in Afghanistan can't be fulfilled because of its limitations. Is that an accurate assessment, and what can we do about that?

Admiral OLSON. That's a true statement, Chairman. The reality is that there is simply insufficient rotary-wing lift, helicopter lift, available in Afghanistan. There is some moving there. The Marines have moved some airlift with their force into southern Afghanistan. There is Army aviation moving in. So, I can't predict precisely what the situation will be after those forces are settled and made available, but I believe that there will be, still, insufficient lift available.

We are doing what we can to satisfy that by continuing to appeal to the Services for support, and to appeal to the operational commanders in the theater, to prioritize where they can and favor special operations support.

Senator REED. By the way, we'll do about 8-minute rounds, so everyone'll have a chance, I think, to ask questions before we have to run over and take a vote.

Something that Senator Wicker pointed out, which I think is an excellent point, and that's just language and cultural skills. I'm old enough to remember when everyone studied Russian and everyone was a Soviet expert, and I never thought in my lifetime that that would all be history, at least the Soviet Union would be history.

Now we find ourselves in areas with Arabic, Farsi, Pashtun, Chinese, et cetera. How well are you doing, given the fact that we're flowing so many people into CENTCOM, which has some of these languages, but then we have the traditional areas that concern across the globe and have other languages. Any comments?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, if the question is, "How well are we doing?" the answer is, we're not doing well enough. My opinion is that we still have a long ways to go to truly understand the operational contexts in the places where we are because we don't understand the people there well enough yet. Language is certainly a key way to gain insight into the people and how they interrelate.

We do have a number of initiatives. One, I euphemistically call it Project Lawrence, is inspired by Lawrence of Arabia, but certainly is not limited to Arabia—Lawrence of Pakistan, Lawrence of Afghanistan, Lawrence of Colombia, Lawrence of wherever it is—because we are operating around the world, or assisting, or working with our partners.

There are a number of initiatives contained within this that are beginning to show some benefit, but you know that language skill is a perishable skill, and it must be sustained, maintained, incentivized so that individuals will dedicate some of their free time to do it.

All of the Services are moving forward in this regard. Our responsibility in special operations, I think, is to seek ways to really steep people in languages and cultures over the course of their careers. We do have some advantages in being able to regionally orient our force in order to do that.

Senator REED. Thank you. This is a good point, I think, to recognize Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much.

I think we're all agreed it's more than language proficiency that is needed; it's understanding that, in some cultures, and some countries, "I'll think about it," really means, "No way." You mentioned Lawrence of Arabia; Lawrence of Arabia depicted the concept of, "It is written," in that particular culture, where there was nothing you could do about it because it was going to happen anyway, and it was written.

In the Army, at least, there's been the concept of AOR, Admiral, where, over a career, the forces were, as you say, steeped in the people and steeped in the language. Is it true that we've had to get away from that because over 80 percent of our SOF are now deployed in either Iraq or Afghanistan? Do you think we'll ever get back to the concept of AOR, where a military member can stay for a long time, or keep coming back to the same place, and really understand that society?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, that's certainly the goal, Senator. The reality is that, historically, SOF, and Army Special Forces in particular, have been regionally oriented. Of the five Active Duty Special Forces groups, there was one allocated to each geographic com-

batant command region of the world, so we only had 20 percent of our force focused on CENTCOM. As Chairman Reed noted in his remarks, we've had about 85 percent of our force deployed to CENTCOM for the last several years. So, we have taken people regionally oriented to someplace else and assigned them to duty in CENTCOM. Over time they've adjusted to that, they've trained to that, but we have been in fewer places with fewer people, less often, for shorter periods of time, around the rest of the world because of our commitment in CENTCOM.

Senator WICKER. Do you see that we are doing what we need to address that problem? Do you ever see us getting back to a situation where the skills are more widely spread?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, our current program grows actually one battalion in each of our Special Forces groups, giving us a fourth battalion. The intent is to enable us to get back into the region with that battalion, in a dedicated way. Whether or not we're able to do that as planned, time will tell, but that is the rate at which we can grow the force. So, we are doing what we can do, for now.

Senator WICKER. Tell us a little about Project Lawrence. How many service personnel would be involved in this training project at this given time?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, in one way or another, we pump more than 15,000 people a year through some sort of language training. Every Green Beret, for example, has to prove proficiency at the one-one level, that's basic survival level, but it at least indicates some ability to operate in another culture. He has to qualify at the one-one level in order to put on his beret for the very first time.

Senator WICKER. What does a one-one level get you?

Admiral OLSON. What will one-one get you?

Senator WICKER. Yes.

Admiral OLSON. Not much, sir. It will get you the pleasantries, respect from the people you're conducting business with for the fact that you have taken some effort to learn a few words of their language. It won't enable you to have a sophisticated conversation or catch the evening news, typically. It's an introduction.

So, in terms of steeping people in a culture, that doesn't do it. So, we do run advanced training courses. We've given directives across our force to qualify specific numbers of people at the two-two and three-three levels for specific languages, at a pace that is doable.

The Army has leaned forward in initiating a program called Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI), and has recruited, now, I don't know the number this week, but I think it's somewhere around 300 people, who are native linguists, who are in the United States as non-immigrant residents. This is a new program, initiated just in February, so it's already demonstrated a great success, and there's a vibrant blog occurring.

Senator WICKER. Is that MAVNI program just the Army?

Admiral OLSON. At this point, it is executed only by the Army. The Navy has an intent to execute the program, at a much smaller scale. The Air Force has not indicated an intent to do it yet.

Senator WICKER. So, we would be recruiting, essentially, foreign nationals who wish to become American citizens and giving them a fast track because of their service as visa-holders?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. These are visa-holders in the United States for a purpose—student, fiancéé, work, athlete—who meet a set of criteria to become eligible to enlist in the United States Army.

Senator WICKER. But, certainly, they already know the language and the culture, and that's a great advantage there.

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. In fact, the evidence is that we are, so far, pulling in very highly qualified applicants. Most of them are college students or degree-holders. In fact, well over 75 percent have an associates degree or higher, at this point.

Senator WICKER. Where are these advanced training courses that you mentioned being conducted? Are they being done by the Services?

Admiral OLSON. Mostly, we run our own training courses under our U.S. Army SOCOM at Fort Bragg, NC. We do take advantage of service and defense schools, where we can.

Senator WICKER. Have you looked into using our universities and our ROTC programs in this regard, partnering between detachments and language and international studies programs at the various universities?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. We've looked at that. We're taking advantage of a few of those programs. For example, the Olmsted Scholarship program, which permits a student to go to a university in a foreign country—I have some special operations students in it. But, we've found that keeping the student near where he lives, dedicated to language training full time, is the best way to obtain language skills quickly.

Senator WICKER. As an Active Duty member.

Admiral OLSON. As an Active Duty member, yes, sir.

Senator WICKER. Tell us what you need in this regard, Admiral, and Senator Reed, Senator Martinez, and I will try to bring that information to the full committee.

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. It's really a matter of capacity. First of all, we need the capacity to make the students available to go through language training full time, and then we need the school-house capacity to absorb them into its programs. We have a plan in place, not yet fully funded, but we're seeking the funds within our own resources to do that, to expand our program incrementally. Most language training, frankly, takes place in a laboratory environment, utilizing native speakers as instructors. So, a lot of the native speakers are contract hires for that purpose, and that's the way that we can best get about the program.

Senator WICKER. Thank you.

Senator REED. Senator Martinez.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Olson, great to see you.

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir.

Senator MARTINEZ. Always good to remember your home is in Tampa, and we appreciate your having your command there, and we're proud of that, and proud of the role of MacDill and the Tampa community play in hosting so many important missions for our military.

I wanted to ask you a few questions about the joint cargo aircraft, or the "gunship-light," as I guess it's referred to sometimes,

the C-27J. There's been a decision made by the Air Force to reduce the number of airplanes that are going to be purchased to 38, which concerns me greatly, and I know you've expressed your opinion about the importance of this aircraft to some of what you do. I just wondered if you could tell the subcommittee how you view this aircraft and the importance of this aircraft to your mission. We have an aircraft here that's a little smaller, a little lighter, a little cheaper to operate, a little easier to get in and out of places, and perhaps with a smaller footprint. So, could you comment on the importance of this aircraft, to you and the operations that you and your forces conduct?

Admiral OLSON. Thank you, Senator Martinez.

The requirement for an airborne platform to monitor an operational situation, with the capability of providing precise fires, is a very important requirement. I expect that, as the pace scale of operations in Afghanistan increases with the increased force level, it will become a capability that's even more in demand.

We are working to develop, and in fact, we have made great progress in developing a platform-neutral, precision-strike package. The platforms that we are currently looking to install that on, as the most immediately available, are within our own MC-130 fleet. But, our own requirement study showed that, for global application, and regional application within CENTCOM, to a great degree, an airplane that gives us the capability to operate more remotely, with a smaller footprint, at a lower operating cost, off less-improved runways, is very important. An analysis of alternatives conducted by SOCOM identified the C-27J as the preferred alternative to meet that requirement.

Senator MARTINEZ. This was an aircraft that was going to be purchased by the Army, as well as the Air Force. Now it's only going to be the Air Force. I'm not sure it matters exactly which Service purchases it, as long as it's available to you and in sufficient numbers to be able to carry out your mission. My concern is, with 38, that we're not going to be in that position to do that, and I wondered if you shared my concern.

Admiral OLSON. Sir, at the time our analysis of alternatives was done, the C-27 had been selected through a competitive process as the Army joint cargo aircraft. We really do depend on Service commonality, to the extent that we can get it, in the platforms that we have. It becomes, then, the responsibility of the Service to procure the aircraft and provide it to us.

So, to that extent, a Service common aircraft, whether it's in the Air Force or Army, is very helpful to us.

Senator MARTINEZ. I know we've had great success in the SOF in the retention and recruitment efforts. Are those still being maintained at levels that give you comfort, and what do you attribute the success to, as well?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, sir. We're on pace to achieve our programmed growth in almost every element of our force, but we're lagging behind a few percent in a couple of specialties. The largest portion of our growth, frankly, is in the Army Special Forces community, and they've proven that they're able to grow, essentially, a battalion-a-year increase to the force. So, we're actually ahead of pace on that.

So, recruiting is good. Retention is satisfactory. The training pipelines are sufficient to produce the force that we're programmed to grow.

I'm on record, Senators, of saying that, within our own pipelines, our own processes, our own institutions, we really can't absorb more than about 5 percent per year growth, and we're on pace to do that.

Senator MARTINEZ. I understand you were looking to replace the SEAL delivery vehicle with a new shallow-water combat submersible. Tell us where we are on that, and what is the status of that new vessel?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, the SEAL delivery vehicle is simply reaching the end of its service life, and so we're looking for the next-generation capability. We have about \$3.2 million in the fiscal year 2010 budget for research, development, test, and evaluation in order to determine what the best craft will be to meet that need.

Senator MARTINEZ. Finally, let me ask you briefly about the challenge that you've undertaken to train Pakistani forces to assist in defeating the insurgents in Western Afghanistan, in the tribal border regions. How is that role going, and how are you doing in training the Pakistani forces? How are they doing, in terms of beginning to achieve the kind of success that will be necessary for them to have in order to achieve our goals?

Admiral OLSON. Sir, I'm the force provided for that mission, but I don't have operational control over those forces. Of course, once we deploy them, we monitor them very carefully. We're working very closely with the Pakistanis to provide partners to them at the pace and scale that they want and can accept them. That effort is going along in a way that is satisfactory for both countries. If I go deeper than that, sir, I think we'll have to go into closed session.

Senator MARTINEZ. Understood.

In closing, I wanted to say thank you to you and the people who work under your command for the great successes that you've had, not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, now, and the challenges that Pakistan faces, but, I think, also something that doesn't get nearly talked about enough, is the incredible success you've had in Colombia, where we have really made a tremendous difference in one of our most important partners and neighbors in the region. We've really turned around a situation. I don't think we could have dreamed that things would be going as well as they are in that country, and a lot of it is due to the work of the Special Forces that we've had there—the success we've had in training the Colombians, and the joint work that we've done there is remarkable. I think it's also, perhaps, a blueprint to be followed elsewhere, and perhaps that's what you're doing in Pakistan, as well.

Thank you for your service.

Admiral OLSON. Thank you for noting that, sir.

Senator REED. Thank you, Senator Martinez.

We have a vote right now, in fact, they've reached the midway point in the timing. In addition, at the end of the vote, Senator Levin is going to ask us to remain so we can vote on nominations, including General Rodriguez, to assume his position in Afghanistan.

What I would suggest, and I've talked to the ranking member, if there are additional questions, we would submit them to the Admiral for the record, and then we could adjourn at this moment.

Senator REED. I think, Admiral, that there's probably not a need, now, to go into closed session because I don't think there's an issue that we would raise here that would require that closed session.

So, I thank you for your service, for your attendance here today, and for also being understanding. We are running around, as you are.

So, at this point, with our deep appreciation and thanks to you and members of SOCOM, I will adjourn the hearing.

[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACK REED

BALANCE BETWEEN DIRECT AND INDIRECT ACTION

1. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, in your prepared testimony, you discussed the importance of "balance between direct and indirect activities" in irregular warfare. Recent congressional testimony indicated that while the resources devoted to the indirect capabilities of Special Operations Forces (SOF) have increased since September 11, 2001, the indirect warfare community within Special Operations Command (SOCOM) is still under-represented bureaucratically when compared to the direct action community. This imbalance has reportedly manifested itself in a number of areas including competition for resources, mission support, and promotions. Do you believe the indirect warfare community receives their fair share of funding and mission support within SOCOM?

Admiral OLSON. Overall, SOCOM's fiscal year 2010 baseline budget request is \$5.9 billion. This funding will support SOCOM's continued role in defeating terrorist networks around the globe. Irregular warfare, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, civil affairs (CA) operations, information operations, psychological operations (PSYOP), and foreign internal defense are traditional activities for SOF. This request provides the resources necessary to ensure SOF are properly trained and equipped to successfully execute these core activities.

2. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, some have suggested that the creation of a Joint Irregular Warfare Command, led by a three-star officer, should be created to counterbalance the direct action community within SOCOM. Do you believe this is an option that should be considered? If not, what other ways can SOCOM reorganize itself to adequately address the concerns of the indirect warfare community?

Admiral OLSON. No, I do not believe there is a requirement to create a new three-star Joint Irregular Warfare Command within SOCOM. If created, it would prove redundant and would possibly create a division between the indirect and direct approaches, which we seek to avoid. As such, the concept would not provide any further assistance or enhance the ongoing effort in monitoring the balance between direct or indirect approaches.

Irregular warfare is a form of warfare that encompasses both the direct and indirect approaches. The irregular warfare concept, applied appropriately, strives to synthesize both approaches and bring all elements of U.S. national power to bear in a synchronized and coordinated manner. This means that elements of each approach are employed in an integrated, complementary fashion to address today's threats across the operational environment. As such, a balance must exist between these approaches focused on the operational environment within the context of interagency and international collaboration, a concept that SOF understand well, due to our history and experience in conducting irregular warfare.

3. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, some observers contend that national intelligence agencies focus on special operators engaged in direct action operations against terrorists and insurgents as the agencies assist the Department of Defense (DOD) in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Consequently, it is alleged that general-purpose forces and SOF engaged in foreign internal defense and population protection receive less intelligence support. Do you think that the national intelligence agencies are naturally drawn to support direct action operations?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM receives a tremendous amount of support from the intelligence community and from the larger interagency community. SOCOM shares both

analytical and operational partnerships at all levels from embedded support at SOCOM headquarters down to forward SOCOM supported deployed task forces. As an example, the National Geospatial Agency has embedded support at the headquarters, component, theater, and forward operating levels. The range of this support covers the gambit from direct action missions to humanitarian assistance. Many SOF task forces are engaged in direct action. However, the range of SOCOM's capabilities cannot be defined by this singular mission because it excludes the mutually supporting activities occurring at multiple levels. It is fair to say that direct action receives most of the public attention, but Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan's success is more correctly defined by its foreign internal defense and security force assistance engagement.

SHORTAGES OF EQUIPMENT AND ENABLING SUPPORT

4. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, recent congressional testimony and news reports have indicated that the fielding of equipment, support personnel, and enablers have not kept pace with the growth in SOF. Some have argued that the SOF growth directed by the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was not balanced with appropriate support, enabling personnel, or adequately resourced, resulting in shortages of equipment including weapons and radios. What is being done to ensure the recent and planned increase in SOF is adequately equipped to carry out their mission?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM's QDR 10 Force Structure efforts focus on balancing the force between combat, combat support, and combat service support capabilities. QDR 2006 provided critically short/stressed SOF combat forces to SOCOM. Since QDR 2006, it became apparent based on current Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) operations that the proper balance of combat-to-combat support and combat service support force structure was not achieved. SOF operations are clearly dependent on broader conventional force infrastructure. SOCOM is working with the Services via the QDR to ensure the balance of critical organic, dedicated support and direct support enablers are available to support global SOF operations including Security Force Assistance (SFA) and Foreign Internal Defense (FID). SOCOM is working closely with all of the QDR issue teams and leadership to ensure the critical enablers (such as rotary wing support, Civil Affairs, and recapitalization of gunships) are available to support future SOF operations.

SOCOM continues to address equipping personnel associated with SOF growth from QDR 2006 by increasing the required basis of issue (BOI) of equipment through the SOCOM Requirements Evaluation Board (SOCREB) approval process as required. This process ensures the right types of equipment and the resources necessary to procure it are in place as new personnel come on board and/or enter critical training and deployment. These BOI adjustments are done as individual equipment items or as aggregate equipment items for specific SOF units. For example, in September 2007, the SOCREB approved BOI increases for over 150 equipment items to address QDR 2006 growth to the 75th Ranger Regiment; in 2009 BOI increases for Multi-Band Inter-Team Tactical Radios for Naval Special Warfare Forces were approved as new forces and units were generated. SOF capacity and enabling capability shortfalls that were not adequately addressed in QDR 2006 are a focus of SOCOM's inputs to the Force Structure Phase of QDR 2010. Primary examples include shortfalls in rotary wing airlift capacity, and support from the Services for filling low density, high demand military occupational specialties (MOSs) that provide critical enablers to SOF.

5. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, your prepared testimony indicates that the non-availability of force enablers has become SOCOM's "most vexing issue in the operational environment." You go on to say that general-purpose forces should develop and sustain supporting capabilities "beyond their organic needs" that can be used in "direct support of special operations commanders." What is the largest unmet requirement for support of special operations personnel?

Admiral OLSON. The Services do develop and sustain supporting capabilities beyond their organic needs; however, the current demand exceeds the supply. As a result, there are a limited number of general purpose forces available to optimize SOF especially in austere distributed operations. The largest unmet requirement requested by the geographic combatant commands to support SOF, whether you measure personnel requested or individual capabilities requested, is rotary wing aviation, intelligence support, engineer support, and military working dog teams. These capabilities provide mission essential combat support and combat service support that is currently required.

6. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, how have the Services reacted to your proposal of growing more support personnel for the support of SOF?

Admiral OLSON. For years, SOCOM has advocated four "SOF Truths." This year, the command added a fifth SOF Truth, "Most Special Operations require non-SOF support." To this end, the Services have been cooperative during this period of heavy demand. For example, the command recently completed SOCOM-Army staff talks, followed by a SOF enablers working group, which were both productive. SOCOM does not possess the full amount of organic support personnel and enablers required to conduct operations, which makes the continuation of the dedicated support provided by the Services to SOF critical to the success of current and future SOF operations.

7. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, do you believe there are additional support functions that should be grown within SOF?

Admiral OLSON. Yes, within select support functions, but this growth must continue to be complemented by additional Service enablers. The command is working very hard to achieve the right mix of, and balance between operators and support functions. Over the last 4 years, SOCOM has worked aggressively to increase the number of operators on the ground. Currently, a major focus is to right-size the force by seeking continued growth of organic combat support and combat service support.

ACQUISITION REQUIREMENTS PROCESS

8. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, many have criticized the DOD for the speed with which its acquisition system produces and delivers capability to the warfighter. There is broad consensus that the DOD should not waste unnecessary time when troops are engaged in combat if there is a clear, low-risk path forward with regard to an acquisition program. That goal must be balanced with the knowledge that some major systems acquisition programs are neither low-risk, nor is there a clear path forward.

SOCOM's acquisition authorities are unique within the DOD. You are the only uniformed commander who has a senior acquisition executive reporting to you. That places a special burden on you to ensure that requirements are adequately vetted and balanced against available resources before moving forward with an acquisition program. The Weapon System Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-23) has a number of aims, one of which is to ensure that DOD adequately focuses on the requirements process portion of the acquisition cycle.

What actions have you taken to ensure that the SOCOM requirements process filters out the nice-to-have ideas from the real requirements, or appropriately decides when something should be bought under rapid acquisition procedures versus the normal acquisition process?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM has an established, proven, deliberate, and adaptable requirements process titled Special Operations Forces Capabilities Integration and Development System (SOF-CIDS); this process is documented through SOCOM Directive 71-4. SOF-CIDS parallels, and is fully compatible with, the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process; approved Special Operations-Peculiar (SO-P) documents are entered into the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) process. The command's SOF-CIDS is managed by the Center for SOF Structure, Requirements, Resources, and Strategic Assessments. Within the command, SO-P capabilities documents are presented to a SOCOM Requirements Evaluation Board (SOCREB) for approval, chaired by the SOCOM Deputy Commander.

SOCOM staff responsible for managing the SOF-CIDS/JCIDS processes have completed the mandated requirements management certification (Weapon System Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-23)) program offered through the Defense Acquisition University. Some SOCOM requirements managers are also certified acquisition professionals. Requirements managers are tasked to ensure proper vetting and visibility of all SO-P capabilities documents using the SOF-CIDS process that prescribes both the deliberate and rapid processes. The requirements vetting process that is used throughout includes analysis and verification of the capabilities-based assessments, evaluations of the technical feasibility and risk factors for the proposed materiel solution, validity of Key Performance Parameters, fiscal realities and resourcing strategies. Proposed requirements are staffed throughout SOCOM, and require proper certifications for intelligence supportability, operational mission need, and interoperability determinations prior to approval. Requirements are then prepared for validation by the J8 in preparation for presentation to the SOCREB,

which is comprised of general/flag officer and Senior Executive Servicemembers who provide recommendations for approval/disapproval to the SOCOM Deputy Commander.

For addressing SO-P urgent requirements, SOCOM has developed rapid acquisition procedures to satisfy capability gaps referred to as “equip for the fight, not for the force.” This process, known as SOFCIDS-Urgent, is not used to equip all SOF components with a single item, but only in quantities for those in or going into combat. For those requirements that could lead to unacceptable force protection risk or potential mission failure, the command has developed a formalized Combat Mission Needs Statement (CMNS) process. Through Rapid Response Teams (RRTs), SOCOM subject matter experts work to expeditiously conduct and certify CMNS Need, Solution, and Resourcing and prepare courses of actions for presentation to the approval authority (SOCOM Deputy Commander). The majority of CMNS approved by SOCOM are for non-developmental items and only for necessary equipping (“fight”) quantities. When CMNS capabilities are determined to be enduring requirements for use beyond the duration of the current combat operations, or 1-year from fielding, the user-unit must document the enduring requirement and submit it for approval through the normal SOFCIDS processes.

ADVANCED SEAL DELIVERY SYSTEM AND JOINT MULTI-MISSION SUBMERSIBLE

9. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, the Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) has a difficult history that was further complicated when much of the first submarine was destroyed by a fire on November 9, 2008. With the fiscal year 2010 budget request, SOCOM has announced plans to initiate a follow-on program called the Joint Multi-Mission Submersible (JMMS), based largely on the hull design and lessons learned from ASDS. Has the decision been made whether or not to repair ASDS-1? If the decision has been made, what is the rough schedule and cost of this repair?

Admiral OLSON. The requirement for the ASDS capability still exists. ASDS repair is estimated to cost \$237 million and will be completed by the third quarter of fiscal year 2012, if the repairs are initiated this summer. SOCOM is pursuing various options to obtain funding to repair the vehicle. The program cost estimates have been reviewed by the cost engineers and are considered reasonable for the anticipated repairs. The Naval Sea Systems Command Program Office will continue to refine the cost and schedule estimates as additional information becomes available.

10. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, do you consider ASDS a SOCOM-unique asset?

Admiral OLSON. The ASDS provides SOCOM the capability to conduct clandestine insertion or extraction of SOF and their equipment into denied areas from strategic distances. The ASDS also provides Geographic Combatant Commanders, Joint Force Commanders, and other government agencies the capability to conduct other types of clandestine missions in denied areas. As such, the ASDS provides the United States Government with a strategic national asset that can fulfill a variety of extraordinary requirements.

11. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, how many ASDS and JMMS platforms are needed to fully meet the requirement?

Admiral OLSON. One ASDS and three JMMS, for a total of four undersea clandestine mobility vessels, will meet SOCOM's requirement to conduct two simultaneous deployments.

12. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, what is the total cost of the JMMS program?

Admiral OLSON. The total acquisition cost for the JMMS program is estimated at \$1.2 billion. This will provide three complete operational systems. The fiscal year 2010 President's budget includes \$43.4 million pre-design refinement Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation funds.

13. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, how is the JMMS acquisition strategy different than the one used for ASDS?

Admiral OLSON. The strategy is based upon lessons learned and technology developed from the ASDS program to lower acquisition and performance risk. SOCOM in conjunction with the Naval Sea Systems Command program office is taking the following steps:

(1) The JMMS program will use only high Technical Readiness Level components vice new highly technical subsystems that were used with the ASDS.

(2) Program oversight will be greatly increased over the ASDS by initiating JMMS as an ACAT ID Special Interest program vice ACAT III; significantly increasing government program staff assigned to perform programmatic and contractor oversight; and by increasing the number of Milestone Decision Authority review and decision points to six prior to commencing construction of the first JMMS unit.

(3) Increased effort has been applied to achieving better match between performance desired by the warfighter and the ability to develop and produce the product by industry.

(4) Evaluation of the industrial capability of potential contractors for production of JMMS will be a significant input into selection of the contractor.

(5) Cost estimates from the Cost Analysis Improvement Group will be involved from the beginning of the JMMS acquisition process and at a much higher level than with the ASDS.

(6) Using historical data from ASDS, requested program resources for JMMS will be matched to the requirements based on evaluation of actual returned costs from the ASDS.

(7) Consistent with the level of technical maturity required and intent to limit cost growth, the JMMS program will use a fixed price vice cost contract employed with ASDS.

(8) The design for JMMS will take advantage of lessons learned from the design of the ASDS by: directly or nearly directly using components such as the pressure hull design, mating system, and propulsor; providing significantly greater detail to the contractor to enable compliance with all requirements during the construction process; and aggressively addressing all of the reliability problem recommendations from the ASDS Critical Systems Reviews.

(9) Lastly, the program office will establish earlier and more comprehensive testing and evaluation that will include detailed component level testing in advance of construction through Operational Testing of the first JMMS system.

14. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, do you expect JMMS to deliver capabilities above what ASDS can provide or just to improve reliability?

Admiral OLSON. The ASDS and JMMS fulfill a common requirement. The JMMS is intended to incorporate the reliability improvements derived from the ASDS, not to change the capabilities required from the vessel. At the threshold level, the JMMS provides ASDS-1 level capabilities with improved reliability.

GUNSHIP RECAPITALIZATION

15. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, the AC-130 gunship has been used heavily and with great success in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing critical air support and overwatch for SOF conducting ground operations. However, the heavy use of the aircraft has taken its toll on these airframes and the demand for these aircraft far outweighs their availability. SOCOM currently has 25 AC-130 gunships, and I understand that there are plans to modify 8 MC-130Ws with a roll-on, roll-off precision strike and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance package to meet urgent operational needs. I understand that you have also identified the modification of four additional MC-130Ws as SOCOM's top unfunded requirement for fiscal year 2010. How many total gunships does SOCOM need to fully meet its requirements?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM has a requirement for 33 airborne precision fire support platforms.

16. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, does this number take into account the significant increase in special operations ground forces?

Admiral OLSON. The long-term requirement for airborne precision strike platforms is 33. SOCOM currently has 25 gunships. We seek 16 additional precision strike platforms to meet the immediate requirement in Afghanistan. Over time, we will attrite the 8 oldest in the inventory to achieve a steady state of 33.

17. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, are you aware of missions being cancelled in Iraq or Afghanistan due to a lack of gunship availability?

Admiral OLSON. With respect to AC-130 gunships in both OIF and OEF, there are more potential missions than gunships available. The Combined Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander (CJSOAC CDR), having responsibility of command and control of all AC-130 gunship assets in both OIF and OEF, must conduct real-time prioritization of these high-demand, low-density assets. The CJSOAC CDR maintains the ability to shift gunship allocation to support ground forces and/or prosecute high-value targets based on mission priority.

18. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, what is SOCOM's long-term plan for replacing or modernizing the AC-130 gunship?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM is developing and fielding a scalable, modular, platform-neutral, airborne sensor and weapons package with a common battle management system. This Precision Strike Package (PSP) can be configured to include multiple sensors, precision-guided munitions, gun systems, and other weapons. Using a modular approach allows the command to rapidly integrate proven systems on a variety of aircraft. In addition to the current gunship mission, SOCOM also has a requirement for a small footprint, sensor, and precision-strike capability to support SOF troops in austere and politically sensitive areas. SOCOM's original intent was to fill this capability gap with a SOF-modified, Service-common C-27J aircraft. Although this platform is currently not available, the capability gap remains. The goal is to ultimately recapitalize and expand the fleet of 25 AC-130H/U to 33 PSP-equipped aircraft.

19. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, you indicated in your prepared testimony that the MC-130W modifications will force SOCOM to accept some short-term risk in its aerial refueling fleet and a "future program will be required to address the resultant shortfall." Please elaborate on the risk SOCOM is accepting by modifying these C-130Ws.

Admiral OLSON. The specific PSP modification to the MC-130W still allows limited mobility capability and the short-term risk is within acceptable limits. To meet the immediate demand for airborne sensors and fire support, SOCOM intends to modify the fleet of 12 MC-130W aircraft with a PSP. Integrating PSP on an existing SOF mobility platform is the fastest way to provide SOF warfighters with increased capacity of armed over watch and precision-strike capability. The modular nature of PSP enables the command to add or remove precision-strike capability to this platform as the requirements on the battlefield change.

MILITARY INFORMATION SUPPORT TEAMS

20. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2009 requires the administration to develop a comprehensive interagency strategy for strategic communications and public diplomacy. While your command does not play a large role in strategic communications, SOCOM does have important and growing responsibilities in this area. SOCOM has deployed a number of Military Information Support Teams (MISTs) that work with embassy country teams to develop and implement information operations campaigns to counter support for terrorism and to counter radicalization in certain high priority countries. Are you aware of the reporting requirement in the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2009 and has SOCOM had a role in the development of the strategy the NDAA requires?

Admiral OLSON. We are aware of the strategy development and reporting requirements as codified in the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2009. SOCOM supports both the development of a comprehensive interagency strategic communication and public diplomacy strategy and will support any existing or emergent reporting and analysis requirements. At present, SOCOM is participating in a comprehensive strategy development at both the departmental and national levels.

At the national level, SOCOM is supporting the development of an interagency strategic communication plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Led by the National Security Staff (NSS) through the Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) on Strategic Communication, SOCOM is participating with representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) staff, the Joint Staff and CENTCOM to ensure the capabilities, authorities, and resources of DOD are effectively and efficiently reflected in the strategy. Specifically, SOCOM's collaborative planning processes and tools suite (known as Prospector) have been adopted by the NSS IPC and the National Counterterrorism Center as they lead the strategy development process. Operationally, in addition to the MIST capability mentioned above in the question, SOCOM executes multiple programs which support the ongoing efforts to counter violent ex-

tremism to include programs focused on intelligence analysis and assessment, information operations, psychological operations, and public affairs support both unique to SOCOM and in support of the efforts of the geographic combatant commanders and ambassadors in priority countries.

At the departmental level, SOCOM is supporting OSD development of planning guidance for countering violent extremism. This effort, led by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Joint Communication), connects the Countering Violent Extremism pillar of the 2008 National Implementation Plan for the global war on terror with the DOD plan for global operations against terrorist networks. As the DOD lead for synchronizing this planning, as specified in the Unified Command Plan, SOCOM will continue to assist OSD in the development of this consolidated planning guidance for the Department as it relates to countering violent extremism.

As efforts toward a comprehensive interagency strategic communication and public diplomacy strategy continue to mature, SOCOM, at the direction of the SECDEF, will continue to support interagency planning processes, provide operational capabilities, and employ measurements of effectiveness for these efforts.

21. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, what is your assessment of the value of these MISTs to SOCOM's ongoing operations?

Admiral OLSON. The MISTs are an invaluable tool to SOCOM's ongoing operations. We provide MISTs to combatant commands (COCOMs) under our Title 10 authorities utilizing personnel primarily from our Army component, the United States Army SOCOM. These are small teams, generally four to six soldiers, comprised of individuals that are hand-selected for their expertise and experience with the country they're needed for, the problem sets they're facing, and their ability to work with interagency partners, allies, and host nations. The MISTs work in close coordination with the local embassy to support the regional COCOM's operational and strategic military objectives by engaging host nation governments and selected segments of the population to advance U.S. interests. MIST operations are tailored also to support and enhance the mission of our theater SOCOMs. MISTs work hand-in-hand with the country team to amplify the U.S. embassy's information efforts and create synergy to achieve greater reach and effect within the area of responsibility (AOR). All actions are approved by the Ambassador and coordinated with the country team before execution. This relationship provides a constant liaison with COCOMs, U.S. embassies, and theater SOCOMs to accomplish information objectives designed to address and combat many of the underlying causes that support violent extremism and terrorism.

22. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, please articulate the value of MISTs to the broader U.S. strategic communications effort.

Admiral OLSON. The MISTs are a key tool in the overall strategic communications effort and provide a vital link between strategic and operational communicators within diplomatic, military, and information pillars of national power. The MISTs work with the embassy country team to execute COCOM CDR and the Ambassador's strategic communications objectives. They work in concert with embassy staffs and host nation organizations. MISTs communicate using all forms of media to build enduring information links and capacities for future use, from the ministerial level within a government down to the face-to-face engagements with the local population. MISTs are a key capability to deliver strategic communication themes and messages as well as providing military support to public diplomacy.

23. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, do you believe MIST operations have been adequately coordinated with the country teams where they are working?

Admiral OLSON. MIST operations are extremely well coordinated. All MIST activities are approved by the Ambassador and coordinated with the country team before execution. This begins with a request from the Ambassador for a MIST. The request defines when and for how long the MIST will operate in the country and the objectives he/she would like achieved. The MIST then develops an information program or plan, based on United States, COCOM, and theater SOCOM information requirements and then ties it to specific objectives outlined in the Ambassador's Mission Strategic Plan for his/her country. As the MIST develops messages and/or products for dissemination, they are reviewed and approved by the Ambassador or his/her designated representative before release. As you can see, from planning through development and dissemination, MIST operations are continuously coordinated with the country team and its efforts.

JOINT COMBINED EXCHANGE TRAINING

24. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, each year, our SOF participate in dozens of Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) sessions with partner nations around the world. These JCET sessions provide host nation units with valuable training in counterterrorism tactics, techniques, and procedures while also enhancing the language and cultural understanding of our own forces. Unfortunately, most of these JCET sessions are only episodic in nature, often only lasting a few weeks at a time. Do you believe more persistent engagement through JCET is desirable? If so, what is the greatest limiting factor in providing for persistent JCET sessions?

Admiral OLSON. Longer persistent engagement is better, but the end-state must be clearly defined. One of the limiting factors to persistent engagement is the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) of the Partner Nation unit being trained. Oftentimes the units we engage with on a persistent basis perform a myriad of tasks for the partner nation. In some cases it is because of operational necessity, but other times it may be because of administrative or logistical issues. Human Rights Vetting (HRV) is always a concern. Even though HRV is good for a year it is something that requires a degree of vigilance to stay current and not become an impediment to engagement.

Availability of SOF is another factor in limiting more quality persistent engagement opportunities. Geographic Combatant Commanders outside the CENTCOM AOR oftentimes are unable to maintain a constant presence with a dedicated unit due to limited availability of SOF.

25. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, roughly what percentage of JCET sessions are cancelled due to a lack of available special operations personnel?

Admiral OLSON. A total of three JCET have been cancelled during fiscal year 2009; one in fiscal year 2008 and three in fiscal year 2007, about 1 percent per year. Most are cancelled due to host nation access or host nation OPTEMPO.

26. Senator REED. Admiral Olson, are there requests for JCET sessions from priority countries that have gone unfilled because of a lack of available special operations personnel? If so, which ones?

Admiral OLSON. Yes. During this fiscal year, one in priority country (PC) Jordan and one in high priority country (HPC) Lebanon, fiscal year 2008 one in PC Oman and for fiscal year 2007 one in HPC Mali and one in HPC Mauritania.

 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROGER WICKER

SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

27. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, are you confident that you will have sufficient enabler forces, specifically logistics, airlift, and linguist support, to sustain SOF in Afghanistan, given the significant increase in general purpose forces and the demands they will place on support personnel and equipment?

Admiral OLSON. I have full confidence that General McChrystal's 60 day assessment will result in both an appropriate weighting of priorities for support and increase enabler support to SOF in Afghanistan.

28. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, more broadly, do you believe there are sufficient SOF in Afghanistan to meet your requirements?

Admiral OLSON. No. SOCOM is a force provider of SOF in response to requirements forwarded by Commander, CENTCOM. There is now insufficient SOF available to meet the demand.

TRAINING OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

29. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, please provide your assessment of SOCOM's current capacity and level of success in training Afghan security forces.

Admiral OLSON. SOF is partnered with the Afghanistan National Security Force (ANSF) throughout the country and together have had great success. SOF train and conduct operations by, with, and through ANSF on a daily basis. Noted deficiencies in Afghanistan is the fact there are not enough ANSF units partnered with SOF, and the inability to deploy ANSF units country-wide to conduct large-scale ANSF-led operations against the insurgency.

DIRECT ACTION VS. NON-KINETIC OPERATIONS

30. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, our long-term success against terrorism will depend on our ability to engage civilian populations through non-kinetic means and to win the war of ideas, rather than relying solely on direct action operations. Striking the correct balance between these is vital to forging a successful strategy. In visiting with General McChrystal, he discussed with me the difference between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. What do you see as the correct balance between direct action operations and non-kinetic operations in Afghanistan?

Admiral OLSON. SOF plan and conduct both kinetic and non-kinetic operations. Direct action is a core task and one of the many kinetic types of operations that SOF conducts through the ANSF. All of our operations are intelligence-based rather than simply kinetic or non-kinetic. SOF commanders plan and conduct kinetic and non-kinetic operations on a daily basis and routinely conduct non-kinetic operations as a follow-up to kinetic operations. This is used to maintain and regain support of the local populous for the legitimacy of the Government of Afghanistan (GOA). These non-kinetic operations are also led by the ANSF with SOF support.

Furthermore, in the event of an unplanned kinetic event such as an enemy strike against our forces, an ambush on one of our convoys, or an IED detonation, SOF commanders have plans for ANSF led operations. This allows SOF and ANSF to go non-kinetic when tactically feasible following enemy strikes against our forces.

Lastly, our strategic communication plan is utilized in addition to our kinetic and non-kinetic operations to help maintain and regain support of the local populous adding legitimacy for SOF and the GOA.

31. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, what steps is SOCOM taking to win the war of ideas? Are we doing enough to ensure tribal leaders and the civilian population are informed when the Taliban or other insurgents kill civilians? What steps are being taken to counter Taliban propaganda?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM synchronizes planning under its Unified Campaign Plan responsibilities and provides forces to COCOMs under title 10 authorities. SOCOM through DOD CONPLAN 7500 establishes specific tasks to the other COCOMs and suggestions for our interagency partners with regards to informing populations and countering adversary propaganda. SOCOM has worked through the Joint Staff and with the other COCOMs to acquire additional authorities to increase our commanders' freedom of movement in the information domain. Two examples include the Expanded Trans-Regional PSYOP Program and the Trans-Regional Web Initiative. These grant authorities to our forces inside the areas of hostilities to engage selected populations to do just what you ask here.

Per General McChrystal: "Our military strategic goal is to defeat the insurgency threatening the stability of Afghanistan. Like any insurgency, there is a struggle for the support and will of the population. Gaining and maintaining that support must be our overriding operational imperative." (USF-A/ISAF Policy Guidance).

To that end, the two biggest tools we have to win the war of ideas are the truth and our actions. Many times, what we do is more important than what we say.

SOCOM personnel are currently assigned to CENTCOM and also assisting U.S. embassies within the AOR. They are working for these organizations in a myriad of capacities to include engaging the population and countering propaganda. I believe that we're competing in the war of ideas better than we have in the past. While we are always seeking ways to improve our methods—to engage more people more frequently and with faster response times—we're proud of the capabilities in personnel and equipment we provide to ensure the truth is heard and understood. Our biggest weapon in countering Taliban propaganda is the truth.

2010 QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW

32. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, given the importance the 2010 QDR will play in the development of the fiscal year 2011 and subsequent years' defense budgets, it is vital the drafting of this document is informed by the candid contributions of its stakeholders. Are you actively involved in the ongoing process to draft the 2010 QDR?

Admiral OLSON. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy established a thorough and inclusive process by which the 2010 QDR is proceeding. SOCOM has been an active participant in this process from the beginning, and will continue to provide timely inputs toward the final report.

33. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, what would be your top recommendations for this document concerning the future role, structure, and requirements of SOCOM?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM's intent in the 2010 QDR is to sustain programmed growth to enhance SOF global presence, while simultaneously recapitalizing the force in accordance with established priorities. SOCOM is committed to an investment strategy which enables true global engagement to allow SOF, through a wider and more collaborative interagency partnership, to continue to bring security and stability to countries at strategic crossroads. Investments must therefore include material and nonmaterial solutions, new authorities in conducting both operations and training, and new policies in resourcing operations and training.

While it is critical to have sufficient organic capabilities to ensure rapid responses to global crises, most SOF operations require non-SOF support. We are, and will continue to be, dependent on our Service partners to provide key force enablers for a broad range of support functions, including mobility, ISR, medical, and logistics. It is crucial to mitigate the demand on SOF by developing and sustaining supporting capabilities within the Services that are dedicated to support SOF. SOCOM is working to clearly define and establish these supporting capabilities and relationships within the framework of the QDR and through direct engagement and discussion with our Service partners.

PERSONNEL GROWTH

34. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, you have stated, "our assessments indicate that SOF cannot grow more than 3 to 5 percent per year . . . and this growth rate will not meet the appetite for the effects of SOF in forward operating areas." To what degree does this shortfall of SOF personnel affect your ability to meet global demands on your forces?

Admiral OLSON. With the unique, inherent capabilities of Special Forces, SOCOM projects the demand for SOF will remain high around the globe, and these capabilities cannot be mass produced. To best meet the global demand with the current and future force, the command is planning for 3 to 5 percent growth per year, based upon the ability to recruit, train, and sustain a quality force.

35. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, are there any steps that can be taken, aside from growing the force, to mitigate this shortfall?

Admiral OLSON. One lesson learned over the last 8 years is that SOF must leverage enablers from the Services, because most special operations require non-SOF support. Aside from growing the force, SOCOM will continue to work with the Services to ensure there is sufficient dedicated support, specifically combat support and combat service support enablers.

36. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, in your opinion, how large can SOF become without compromising on quality and still remain sustainable for the purposes of recruiting and retention?

Admiral OLSON. SOF growth cannot grow more than 3 to 5 percent a year. Because we rely on the Services for overall personnel management of the force, we are inextricably tied to the Service's personnel management infrastructure to include recruiting and basic training. Since September 11, SOF has experienced significant growth, but any growth must be balanced with the production pipeline of SOF and absorption into community force structure. We work closely with the Services to ensure we do not compromise quality.

37. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, are there any current SOF missions that can be fulfilled or augmented by conventional forces?

Admiral OLSON. In an environment of increased security force assistance, many SOF missions require enabler support that can be provided by conventional forces. Additionally, there are a number of tasks that conventional forces could assist with or perform entirely such as: patrolling, traffic control point operations, maintenance, property accountability, noncommissioned officer development courses, et cetera. Many of those tasks are basic soldier skills and would not require specialized training or equipment. In many cases the units being trained lack even the basic soldier skills many conventional forces could be utilized to train.

38. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, are there current missions that conventional forces are filling that should be filled by SOF?

Admiral OLSON. As a general rule there are no missions being conducted by conventional forces that should be filled by SOF. Due to the high demands placed on SOF, and the limited availability of those SOF resources, operational commanders have been exceptionally vigilant in the application of SOF-to-SOF missions. In some

cases commanders are reviewing existing SOF missions, with the intent to transition those missions to conventional forces where appropriate and supportable. The trend has been to ensure conventional forces are executing conventional missions and SOF executing SOF missions. Of the 11 core activities that SOF performs, there exists a degree of overlap with the core capabilities of conventional forces. Direct Action, Security Force Assistance, and Counterinsurgency Operations are three core activities that SOF may share with conventional forces. It is incumbent upon commanders at each level to ensure a proper alignment of forces to meet a given requirement. In some cases the delineation may not be clear, but commanders and their staffs are diligent about matching a force to appropriate mission.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

39. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, you have submitted several policy proposals to increase SOCOM's involvement in the management of personnel, including some that you say require amending Title 10 of the U.S. Code. Several of these proposals have been met by resistance from the Services and even the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Please describe why you view these proposals, specifically the request to "coordinate on Military DOD and Service personnel management policy and plans" as necessary to the readiness of SOCOM forces.

Admiral OLSON. It is not the intent of SOCOM to become another Service. Rather, I seek alignment of readiness responsibilities with existing Title 10 requirements to ensure the combat readiness of Joint SOF. As written, 10 U.S.C. § 167 assigns the responsibility of ensuring combat readiness of SOF to the Commander, SOCOM but only monitor-ship of personnel metrics such as promotions, assignments, retention, training, and professional military education of SOF officers. An amendment to Title 10 would align responsibilities with authority and ensure policy decisions affecting SOF would be appropriately coordinated.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT ON SOCOM CONTRACTING

40. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, on May 28, 2009, the DOD Inspector General released a report on Logistics Support Contracting for SOCOM. This report was critical of your command's management of nearly \$1.7 billion in logistic support contracts spanning 20 locations. Some of the criticism was directed at a lack of adequate oversight, improper authority given to contractors to perform inherently government functions, and that no quality assurance plan was developed for contracting tasks. Please comment on this report and describe what steps, if any, are being taken to correct these deficiencies.

Admiral OLSON. The overall objective of the DOD IG audit was to determine whether the SOF Support Activity (SOFSA) logistics support contracts USZA22-03-C-0056 and USZA22-03-D-0006 were properly managed and administered by SOCOM. SOCOM has taken several steps to address the report's recommendations and improve existing oversight processes and procedures at SOFSA to include the following:

- (1) The Director of SOFSA has reinforced his efforts to ensure contractor personnel are properly identified and perform only non-inherently governmental tasks. For example, SOFSA has reiterated in writing existing DOD and SOCOM Federal Acquisition Regulations, supplement policy, and local procedures that directs all SOFSA support contractors to clearly identify themselves as contractors in all written and electronic correspondence, while attending meetings, in telephone conversations, and while working in other situations where their contractor status is not obvious. All SOFSA government personnel are responsible for daily and ongoing checks of contractor adherence to policies related to the proper use of contractor personnel.
- (2) The Director of SOFSA has reiterated to SOFSA customers in writing that SOFSA will only accept contractual direction and documentation signed by a government employee with authority to issue said direction.
- (3) SOFSA has fully implemented a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan that ensures all work is performed to government specifications. SOFSA also uses customer surveys, monthly government review meetings, and customer generated Quality Deficiency Reports to assess contractor performance.
- (4) SOFSA currently has nine government Contracting Officer Representatives (COR) appointed to oversee active task orders. Ten additional government employees are being trained for COR duties and responsibilities.

In addition, the Defense Contract Management Agency has onsite quality assurance personnel specifically dedicated toward independent oversight of aviation maintenance operations.

ADVANCED SEAL DELIVERY SYSTEM AND JOINT MULTI-MISSION SUBMERSIBLE

41. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, ASDS has been plagued by significant delays and cost overruns since its inception over 15 years ago. Originally planned as a fleet of six submersibles, production has been stopped at one, and this submersible has been hobbled by repeated mechanical problems. What lessons has SOCOM learned during the development and production of ASDS?

Admiral OLSON. Just prior to the fire in November 2008, Northrop Grumman Corporation completed Phase II of the ASDS Improvement Program (AIP). The goal of the AIP was to review the ASDS design and make recommendations to address the known reliability deficiencies with the vehicle and to identify any changes that were required to address other potential reliability issues discovered in the course of completing the design reviews. Phase I of the AIP identified a total of 48 improvements that either had been or were being developed for incorporation into the ASDS design. The AIP Phase II report included additional recommendations that the Naval Sea Systems Command is currently evaluating. The results of the AIP will be provided as part of the JMMS Request for Proposal, so the deficiencies can be addressed in the proposed design of the follow-on vehicle.

42. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, what steps is SOCOM taking to ensure that the development of the follow on to ASDS, JMMS, does not encounter similar design and acquisition problems?

Admiral OLSON. The strategy is based on using lessons learned and technology developed from the ASDS program to lower acquisition and performance risk. SOCOM in conjunction with the Naval Sea Systems Command program office is taking the following steps:

(1) The JMMS program will use only high Technical Readiness Level components vice new highly technical subsystems that were used with the ASDS.

(2) Program oversight will be greatly increased over the ASDS by: initiating JMMS as an ACAT ID Special Interest program vice ACAT III; significantly increasing government program staff assigned to perform programmatic and contractor oversight; and by increasing the number of Milestone Decision Authority review and decision points to six prior to commencing construction of the first JMMS unit.

(3) Increased effort has been applied to achieving better match between performance desired by the warfighter and the ability to develop and produce the product by industry.

(4) Evaluation of the industrial capability of potential contractors for production of JMMS will be a significant input into selection of the contractor.

(5) Cost estimates from the Cost Analysis Improvement Group will be involved from the beginning of the JMMS acquisition process and at a much higher level than with the ASDS.

(6) Using historical data from ASDS, requested program resources for JMMS will be matched to the requirements based on evaluation of actual returned costs from the ASDS.

(7) Consistent with the level of technical maturity required and intent to limit cost growth, the JMMS program will use a fixed price vice cost contract employed with ASDS.

(8) The design for JMMS will take advantage of lessons learned from the design of the ASDS by: directly or nearly directly using components such as the pressure hull design, mating system, and propulsor; providing significantly greater detail to the contractor to enable compliance with all requirements during the construction process; and aggressively addressing all of the reliability problem recommendations from the ASDS Critical Systems Reviews.

(9) Lastly, the program office will establish earlier and more comprehensive testing and evaluation that will include detailed component level testing in advance of construction through operational testing of the first JMMS system.

43. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, do you believe the current development and acquisition capacity of SOCOM is adequate to produce large, exceptionally complex platforms, such as a miniature submarine?

Admiral OLSON. For exceptionally complex platforms, SOCOM leverages acquisition expertise and capacity residing in the appropriate military Service. Regarding the JMMS, the SOCOM Acquisition Executive in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition and his Program Executive Office for Submarines will jointly exercise oversight of this complex project through the execution of a Program Specific Memorandum of Agreement. However, SOCOM will continue to retain control of all SO-P funding.

44. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, do you foresee any reforms necessary to creating this capacity?

Admiral OLSON. The JMMS will be procured in accordance with the requirements of the recently issued DODI 5000.2, including utilizing the new Navy gate review process and a competitive pre-design refinement. No additional reforms are considered necessary to ensure the success of this acquisition program.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

45. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, the necessity of creating sustainable, long-term conditions for stability in foreign countries requires significant coordination between our military and civilian agencies, such as USAID and the intelligence community. What is SOCOM doing to ensure unity of effort among its personnel and those of civilian agencies who can provide useful support abroad?

Admiral OLSON. SOCOM has three main efforts to help ensure unity of effort among its personnel and the broader interagency community. The first is organization structure in which SOCOM has a standing interagency task force within its headquarters that includes representatives from the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the National Security Agency, and several other agencies and departments. SOCOM has also placed over 40 liaison officers in over 18 Federal agencies and departments in the National Capital Region. These networks foster information sharing, coordination, and unity of effort between SOCOM and other agencies.

The second effort is that of utilizing collaborative venues. SOCOM hosts the Global Synchronization Conference twice a year. This venue provides a collaborative platform for over 500 representatives from all of the Federal agencies and departments, as well as partner nations to discuss mutual issues and concerns in the domain of terrorism, insurgency, and irregular warfare.

The third effort is education. SOCOM's Joint Special Operations University regularly provides interagency collaboration courses workshops and seminars that help prepare military and civilian personnel to operate successfully as part of an interagency team.

46. Senator WICKER. Admiral Olson, have you encountered any roadblocks, bureaucratic or otherwise, that inhibit your ability to work in close coordination with these agencies?

Admiral OLSON. Interagency coordination has improved greatly since September 11. To assist in improving collaboration with other Federal agencies, SOCOM has established an interagency task force as an integral part of its headquarters and employs liaison officers throughout the National Capital Region. To take interagency coordination to the next level more still needs to be done in aligning interagency structures and communications and also incentivizing interagency assignments and training.

[Whereupon, at 3:06 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned.]

