POSTURE STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

BEFORE THE 113th CONGRESS

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to address you, the third in my tenure as the 9th commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

USSOCOM is one of nine Unified Combatant Commands, yet distinct in its numerous Service, military department, and defense agency-like responsibilities. Under Title 10 U.S. Code Sections 164 and 167, it is my legal responsibility, as USSOCOM Commander, to organize, train and equip my force. This includes building a strategy that supports the goals and objectives of the Defense Strategic Guidance and providing combat ready forces to the President and the Secretary of Defense. Our mission remains to provide trained, equipped, ready, and regionally aligned special operations forces (SOF) in support of Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs), and through unified action, conduct sustained special operations to eliminate threats to U.S. interests and protect the American people. I am greatly appreciative of the continued support from Congress and this committee in particular. We welcome the opportunity to update the members of the House with our current posture.

As it stands today, my force is comprised of 66,000 men and women. On any given day, our SOF are deployed in over 75 countries, in many cases working side-by-side with multiple interagency and international partners. Our unique contribution to national security emanates from our superb SOF warriors, who time and time again demonstrate their dedication to duty, tenacity, and unwavering commitment to the security of our Nation. Since 9/11, our operations, ranging from peacetime engagement and building partner capacity, to direct action raids and irregular warfare, have contributed significantly to not only our own National Security, but global stability at large. As their Commander, I will forever be grateful for the contributions of these fine men and women and their families who support them.

Generational Conflict

Our Nation and its allies are engaged in a generational conflict. Our most extreme adversaries largely consist of individuals and organizations that are irreconcilable to a non-violent ideology. Terrorism and extremism are problems that we will have to deal with for some time to come. We face unprecedented challenges from an increasingly complex operating environment filled with agile, rapidly adapting belligerents — adversaries that we expect to be even more innovative and asymmetric in their approach to conflict in the years ahead.

Complicating the global situation are some key trends shaping the strategic security environment: the redistribution and diffusion of global power; the rising role of non-state actors; the easy access to advanced technology — especially information technology; shifting demographics — specifically the rapid growth and expansion of the urban environment; and the improving, yet still fragile economic health of the United States and its partners. Modern interconnectivity ensures that instability and conflict will not often be constrained by geographic boundaries. There is no such thing as a local problem. Local issues quickly become regional, and regional issues inevitably have global influence.

Afghanistan is a prominent example of this. Their security infrastructure is still fragile, and under constant threat from multiple groups. Although the Afghan Army is leading operations there, and the Afghan Local Police have grown in size and capability to foster stability in dispersed villages, there is more work to be done.

In Yemen, al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula continues to find ungoverned spaces from which to operate and from which to stage attacks and promote their violent ideology. In Northwest Africa, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Murabitun, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and other violent extremist groups are fighting to expand their influence, destabilize communities, and discredit weak governments.

In the Levant, the flow of foreign fighters into Syria is unprecedented, even compared to what we saw in Iraq. The experience they gain will threaten future regional stability and feed violent

extremist organizations as they flow back out of that civil war and threaten our allies and partners in the Middle East, Europe, and beyond. In the Pacific, growing tensions between regional powers raise the risk of miscalculation.

In the Western Hemisphere, alliances between transnational criminal organizations, violent extremist organizations, and state leaders create corruption and threaten governments' stability. Growing relationships between terrorist organizations and human smuggling networks present new opportunities to move terrorists and contraband around the world undetected via smuggling routes. The challenges the U.S. and its allies face from transnational violent extremist organizations require a global approach and a global perspective to counter a global threat.

Persistent Engagement

Active, forward engagement is the foundation of this global Special Operations approach, and represents the comprehensive, layered defense required to isolate violent extremist networks and prevent adversaries from conducting successful operations against the homeland, U.S. interests, and our allies. In accordance with Presidential and SECDEF guidance and in coordination with the Department of State, we continue to forge relationships with partner nations, where augmenting the capability of local forces equates to perhaps the most cost-effective way of deterring adversaries worldwide and protecting American citizens abroad. While doing so, we remain committed to human rights vetting and the safeguarding of civil liberties throughout these military and strategic alliances.

Our SOF engagement takes place in the Human Domain — the totality of the physical, cultural, and social environments that influence human behavior in a population-centric conflict. The Human Domain is about developing an understanding of, and nurturing influence among, critical populaces. SOF is uniquely suited for operations that win population-centric conflicts, oftentimes, and preferably, before they start.

Chairman Dempsey has said that successfully confronting tomorrow's national security challenges requires "building a stronger network to defeat the networks that confront us." Networks are rooted in relationships, and building global relationships requires trust. At its

foundation, relationships can only be achieved by persistently engaging with willing partners. Increased understanding, trust, and influence are vital to preventing miscalculations and protracted conflicts. Proactive, relationship-based approaches grow through effective, enduring partnerships and globally-agile, forward-deployed or forward-based SOF. SOF can achieve these strategic ends with a small footprint, while not constituting an irreversible foreign policy decision.

However, no matter how much we engage regionally and globally and seek peaceful paths to stability, we will inevitably find ourselves facing irreconcilables, bent on organizing and executing operations against our homeland, interests, and allies. Defeating organizations like al-Qa'ida, its affiliates and adherents, requires persistent pressure against their critical requirements, capabilities, and resources. It requires the removal of key leaders, denying/disrupting safe havens, severing connectivity between extremist nodes, challenging violent ideology, and offering alternatives to potential recruits. When we remove pressure, we see them metastasize, regionally and globally. To that end, we must maintain the world's premier capability to conduct global, full-spectrum direct action — unilaterally if required. Our ability to proactively apply pressure and, when required, respond quickly with decisive action requires access; and access requires active forward engagement by the interagency team.

Organized for Success

In order to have persistent engagement, we need to be organized for success. Our organization must be prepared to employ the guidance we receive from the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman. In his May, 2013 speech on U.S. Counterterrorism policy, the President said, in part:

> "Beyond Afghanistan, we must define our effort not as a boundless global war on terror, but rather as a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle networks of violent extremists that threaten America."

Our strategy is further informed by the current Defense Strategic Guidance, which directs the Joint Force of the future to be agile, flexible, ready, and use *innovative, low-cost, and small footprint approaches*. The Secretary and the Chairman also issued guidance for USSOCOM to

develop a campaign plan to achieve strategic end states and persistently align SOF capability and provide SOF support to GCC requirements.

Additionally, the "Forces For" Unified Commands Memorandum (which assigns forces to U.S. commands across the globe), signed by SECDEF in 2013, gives USSOCOM Combatant Command authority over the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) — units assigned to each of the seven Combatant Commands (e.g., EUCOM, PACOM). USSOCOM's management of the TSOCs establishes the global agility necessary to support the GCCs with the correct mix of SOF capabilities at the right time and place. It is with this national-level guidance that we have sought to strengthen our global SOF network of allies and partners.

In September, 2013, USSOCOM hosted a Global Synchronization Conference. The GCCs gathered in our headquarters to review and discuss SOCOM's plan to align capability and support their steady-state requirements and national objectives; the visiting commanders' feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Our plan aims to protect the American homeland through an active, layered defense by sustaining special operations forces forward to engage partners and proactively deter, prevent, and when necessary, defeat threats to the United States.

In order to meet these objectives, we are taking several actions. First, as we draw down from Afghanistan, we are redistributing those forces across the Combatant Commands to better meet the needs of the regional military commanders. Second, we are in the process of realigning our CONUS-based forces to focus more closely on regional problem sets, ensuring that our personnel are true experts in the terrain, languages, and cultures in their respective areas of responsibility. Third, we are establishing subordinate task elements who have a high-end counterterrorism capability under each Theater Special Operations Command. Finally, to tie it all together, we've implemented a daily coordination system of enterprise-wide video teleconferences to share information across the global network and synchronize effects. The network is now truly beginning to perform to its potential. As the global synchronizer for the planning of global operations against terrorist networks, USSOCOM can provide a sustained level of effort regionally and link those efforts to create global effects.

None of this can be accomplished without resources, and we are pleased that the recent passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) safeguards both Command readiness levels and SOF's current capabilities; we thank you for this stability. After a rigorous Program Budget Review, USSOCOM's budget is not expected to reach the levels projected in the five year budget plan submitted by the President last year. But, despite current fiscal austerity and force drawdown, the office of the Secretary of Defense has recommended that SOF grow to 69,700 personnel from roughly 66,000 today. These numbers reflect Congress' and DOD's intent to rebalance the Nation's defense, which began with the 2006 Defense Quadrennial Review.

In order to maintain a global SOF network compatible with Defense Strategic Guidance, USSOCOM's programmed manpower plan is essential. Preserving our current level of resource flexibility within investment accounts cannot be overstated. USSOCOM relies heavily on Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding today, with the National Mission Force, in particular, funded with 67% of OCO. In addition, we remain reliant on the Services for logistics, installations services, combat service support in forward deployed locations, and institutional training and education. We look forward to working with Congress to maintain a sustainable long-term funding stream.

We are engaging with the conventional forces as they adapt to strategic guidance in their own ways. We are coordinating with the Army's effort to regionally align their forces, the Navy's push to revitalize the maritime proficiency of their SOF after over a decade of land-centric operations, and the Air Force's focus on development of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. We are collaborating with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps to provide special operations forces liaison elements to deploying Marine Expeditionary Units/Amphibious Readiness Groups. These teams will provide enhanced capabilities to the Geographic Combatant Commanders by leveraging our enduring partnership with the United States Marine Corps.

We continue to strengthen our relationships with our interagency partners, whose collective support is absolutely essential to our operations. Special Operations are but one part of a tremendous team of interagency partners, including the Departments of State, Justice, Homeland

Security, Treasury, the FBI, the Intelligence Community, and many others that are keeping our Nation safe. One of our most significant partners is the National Security Agency (NSA). We could not perform our counter-terrorism mission without the NSA — period! The work these incredible professionals do every day in defense of this Nation is inspiring. I could not be more proud to be associated with these great Americans. In order to ensure SOCOM's actions are fully coordinated with this interagency team, we maintain a robust network of special operations support teams with many of our partners, as well as maintaining liaison officers from those agencies at our headquarters in Tampa.

Our ability to organize for success would be impossible without my unique authority, by law, to equip my force with SOF-unique capabilities through my Acquisition Executive and Special Operations Research, Development, and Acquisition Center (SORDAC). USSOCOM is developing several acquisition programs needed to carry out the strategic guidance we have been given. Our priorities in FY 2014 will include equipping SOF operators as a system; recapitalizing and procuring new air, ground, and maritime platforms; and ensuring we have the communications infrastructure and equipment to sustain operations.

USSOCOM will build upon our ability to provide 24/7 ISR throughout the full spectrum of operations. We continue to modify our wide variety of manned aircraft with the latest in sensor technologies. For unmanned systems, to meet current and emerging threats, USSOCOM will rely on longer endurance platforms which include a fleet of extended range MQ-9 Reapers. We will use our rapid acquisition capabilities to ensure they are responsive to the needs on the battlefield.

We are recapitalizing our venerable C-130 fleet. The AC-130J program, which will eventually give the entire fixed-wing gunship fleet the latest in close-air support capabilities, started flight test. In 2013, the multi-mission MC-130J program delivered nineteen aircraft and is on track to replace our aging MC-130H penetrator and MC-130P tanker fleets.

Also, to ensure the SOF operator has the required agility for future security environments, we've initiated the procurement of a new Ground Mobility Vehicle (GMV). This vehicle can negotiate

challenging terrain and, importantly, is internally transportable via our SOF rotary-wing aircraft. We are fielding a new fleet of surface maritime mobility craft, including the continued deliveries of the Combat Craft Assault (CCA) platforms, and the down select to the final Combatant Craft Medium (CCM) platform. Additionally, we continue the development of new subsurface maritime craft through the Shallow Water Combat Submersible (SWCS) and Dry Combat Submersible (DCS) efforts.

Enterprise-wide, we recognize a need to expand communications infrastructure, especially with respect to ISR data. Spurred by conflict over the last 13 years in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, the U.S. has invested heavily in a robust terrestrial network of fiber optic cables and other equipment that transports massive amounts of information to and from Southwest Asia. As we draw down in Afghanistan, SOF Airborne ISR assets will likely shift to areas lacking that robust terrestrial network. In response, we continue to pursue a DOD-wide, joint airborne ISR data transport enterprise that is both cost efficient and capable of supporting any ISR asset, independent of platform or sensor.

SOCOM also continues to pursue game-changing technologies, utilizing a process that allows better synchronization of SOF-related technology initiatives with government agencies and other technology developers. For FY 2014, SOCOM is focusing on strategic, long-term technology development efforts in order to enhance protection and survivability for our operators through advanced materials and methods. This includes hardware that augments human physical and sensory capabilities, improves the precision and lethality of existing weapon systems, and improves situational awareness.

For instance, the Tactical Assault Light Operator Suit (TALOS project — referred to by some as the "Iron Man Suit") represents our Nation's best effort to leverage emerging technology to ensure that our SOF operators are protected to the maximum extent possible. Equally important, the project has the potential to drive improvements in how we do acquisitions by fostering new collaborative development models within industry. By teaming with a wide range of corporations, government agencies, universities and national laboratories, the TALOS project is leveraging the expertise of leading minds throughout the country to redefine the state of the art in

survivability and operator capability. USSOCOM continues to streamline its acquisition processes to achieve maximum outputs at lowest acquisition cost, while maintaining its reputation as the DOD's premier rapid acquisition organization. We appreciate Congress' support for these programs so we can accomplish the strategic goals the President has set for us.

People -- Our Most Important Resource

We will never be able to organize for success if we don't take great care to preserve our force. Perhaps our most enduring and important SOF truth is that "humans are more important than hardware." While the high-tech gear is critical to our success, we are also masters of the low-tech — the operator who can be cold, wet, miserable, and in harm's way, but persevere to accomplish the mission. Everything we do as a command is entirely dependent on those highly-skilled people that make up the Special Operations community, and those highly-skilled people rely on strong family support in order to operate forward in complex environments.

Preservation of the force and families, commonly known as POTFF, is therefore **our number one priority here at home**! The welfare of these brave service members and their families is critical to our command's readiness and our ability to accomplish the mission. It is also a moral imperative. We demand the best from our people and in return have an obligation to provide the best care, education, equipment, and training to them. We are grateful to Congress for passing into law Section 554 of the FY 2014 Defense Authorization Act, which authorizes us to support family programs by finding innovative solutions to meet their unique needs.

Over the past year, USSOCOM has made tremendous strides in developing an integrated series of capabilities to build and preserve the fighting strength of the SOF warrior and assure the well-being of their families. We are approaching this endeavor via multiple lanes, combining mental, physical, social, and spiritual aspects into a holistic approach. Building and preserving the resilience of our warriors and their families ensures SOF mission readiness and functional capability.

Looking to leverage innovative ways to not only care for our warriors, but improve their performance, we have expanded our evidence-based Human Performance Program (HPP) to the

entire force. This is not a separate medical system — far from it. We continue to get outstanding medical support from our Service partners.

The HPP is designed to meet the unique physical needs of SOF operators, who operate in a variety of austere environments with harsh terrain and carry specialized equipment that requires peak physical conditioning. Our SEALs and special boat operators may parachute into the ocean and conduct an over-the-horizon swim in 60 degree water temperatures while dragging heavy equipment one day, then patrol several miles through dense jungle to conduct a reconnaissance mission the next. Our Green Berets may be called on to infiltrate independently into a denied area and traverse rugged terrain at altitudes of over 8,000 feet with over 100 pounds of gear on their backs in order to link up with an indigenous force. Our special mission units often conduct high-altitude low-opening (HALO) parachute jumps from over 18,000 feet, with oxygen, and then assemble and conduct a ground movement to the target area. These unique, varied activities tax the human body in extraordinary ways and require tailored physical conditioning, before, during, and after their operations.

This conditioning is accomplished in part through a comprehensive "pre-habilitative" physical training program, developed and led by certified professionals. It involves focused strength and conditioning, performance nutrition, and physical therapy. The idea is to provide a "tunable" program that can deliver specific, enhanced areas of performance to individual SOF units. Where it previously existed as a conceptual model, it is now available to all SOF operators. We continue to develop best practices and metrics to support the validity and effectiveness of the program. The net result is improved readiness and reduced healthcare costs through early intervention, rapid rehabilitation, and injury reduction. This program is vital to the readiness and resiliency of our force and ensuring mission success in the most demanding environments.

The Command's Psychological Performance Program has also developed substantially over the past year. We have embedded behavioral healthcare professionals throughout the SOF enterprise and this proximate presence has made a tremendous difference to the service members and their families. Commanders have related how the skill and accessibility of these professionals has saved lives and they now view these care providers as integral members of the command's staff.

The constant, embedded presence of the behavioral health staff is also breaking the stigma associated with seeking care.

We need these specialists more than ever because suicides continue to be a challenge. While the Department saw a marked decline in suicides this past year, the SOF community's rate remained tragically steady. Accordingly, we are redoubling our efforts to ensure that our leaders are fully engaged with their personnel. As such, we are working with DOD and academia to provide additional training and resources to arm leadership, providers, and chaplains with the knowledge and understanding they need to help prevent further loss of life. Full application of the POTFF initiative will build within our operators the resilience they require to deal with the stress we put upon our force.

In addition to our focus on psychological, physical, and mental health, we are striving to provide the Geographic Combatant Commanders the most educated SOF operators possible to support their objectives. Our operators require the ability to rapidly think, assess, and respond at the tactical level while always considering strategic implications. In addition, they require advanced cognitive skills that enable them to interpret regional activities in the context of a complex world.

These skills are developed through advanced education, in concert with language training and regional proficiency, providing the SOF operator with comprehension and reasoning abilities that enable true regional expertise. We continue to work with our Service partners to ensure these education efforts are not duplicative, but are "SOF specific." One way in which we achieve this is through Joint Special Operations University, which last year taught over 8,000 students, to include SOF and non-SOF, military and civilian, international partners and U.S. members alike, through both resident and distance learning SOF education programs.

Lastly, we are in the process of implementing the SECDEF's guidance to integrate women in all combat military operational specialties no later than January 2016. We have had women attached to our combat units for several years, serving with Cultural Support Teams, Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Teams, Intel, and a host of other occupational specialties and they have performed magnificently. While we are still assessing the feasibility of including

women in certain combat specialties, we have already begun to fully integrate them into our SOF aviation career field.

We Can't do it Alone

Even as we produce and develop a force that is organized for success, capable of persistent engagement, and prepared for enduring conflict, we can't do it alone. While we must maintain unilateral capabilities, a partnered approach with local civilian and military forces will always be the most effective bulwark against global, borderless threats. To that end, we're working to engage with the right partners, with the right training, connected and enabled in the right way.

We are expanding our network of foreign liaison officers to create a sense of community with the interagency, allies, and partner nations. Currently, ten partner nations are integrated into the USSOCOM headquarters and are working side-by-side with our staff on global SOF network matters. These officers serve as the "connective tissue" to our allied counterparts. Our ability to collaborate with partners must be underpinned by a robust communications infrastructure, and we need to expand tactical intelligence sharing with those partners willing to pursue like-minded objectives.

In 2013, joint exercises with Kenyan and Ugandan forces led to increased counterterrorism capabilities in their fight against al-Shabaab. Similarly, SOF assistance to Jordan and Lebanon lessened the impact of Syrian refugees on host communities. In Latin America, SOF contributed to efforts to counter transnational criminal organizations in Colombia and El Salvador.

Additionally, Section 1208 authority has been absolutely critical to our current and future efforts against al-Qa'ida and organizations of their ilk. It provides us the ability to apply a modest portion of our annual budget to deliver critical enablers to select irregular forces, groups or individuals, directly involved in the terrorism fight. This authority uniquely provides USSOCOM with access and skill sets in locations where the SECDEF has granted specific operational authority. This authority uniquely provides USSOCOM with access and skill sets in locations where we may not otherwise be able to operate, subject to SECDEF granting specific operational authority. The strategic value of enabling and leveraging such forces to carry out

tactical operations alongside, or even in-lieu of, U.S. forces cannot be overstated. We are appreciative of Congress' support for this authority since 2005, and are hopeful for continued support.

In summary, I believe we are involved in a generational conflict, one which requires persistent forward engagement to provide a layered defense and the ability to respond rapidly if a regional crisis occurs. To be successful in our fight against extremism and other threats to the United States, we must be organized for success, we must partner with those allies and friends who have mutual interests, and above all we must take care of our people — now and in the future.

I thank you for your continued support of our entire USSOCOM family — individuals committed to the safety and security of our great Nation. These proud warriors and their families rely on your support to accomplish the great things they do each and every day to ensure our Nation's security and way of life.