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STATEMENT OF
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COMMANDER
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON THE
POSTURE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
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ADMIRAL ERIC T. OLSON

COMMANDER

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to report on the state of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

USSOCOM's mission is to provide fully capable Special Operations Forces (SOF) to defend the United States and its interests; and to plan and synchronize Department of Defense (DoD) operations against terrorist networks.

America's Special Operations Forces (SOF) are organized, equipped and trained, and then deployed by USSOCOM to meet the high demands of Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) around the world. The range of special operations is wide, the geographic dispersion is great, the quality is exceptional and the results are impressive.

Although most special operation forces deployed from the United States since the attacks of 9/11 have served in and around Iraq and Afghanistan, we clearly understand the enduring value of a global presence. We are proud to be serving in about 60 countries today.

The core capabilities of SOF are in the people who choose to do, qualify for and remain committed to this type of work. Finding, training and sustaining them requires steady focus. Ensuring they have the equipment, sensors, weapons, and mobility platforms of the kind and quality demanded by their peculiar missions requires willingness to invest in the rapid fielding of both existing solutions and cutting edge technologies even when the relatively small purchase quantities do not optimize production costs.

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. While this Nation appreciates the tremendous impact of SOF's day-to-day engagement with global friends, allies and partners, and the powerful impact of SOF on the battlefield is legend, America also expects SOF to be able to appear in places they are not expected to be, with capabilities they are not expected to have.

To accomplish our missions, we are focused on three priorities, each containing nested objectives.

First, we must deter, disrupt and defeat terrorist threats to our Nation. We do this by planning and conducting special operations, emphasizing culturally-attuned international engagement and fostering interagency cooperation. The Command's synchronization of the plans and planning to deter, disrupt, and defeat our enemies has great influence on allocation of the Department's resources.

Second, we must develop and support our people and their families. Our great people are the foundation of mission success, and they are national assets.

We must maintain our quality, train and educate our force as joint warrior-diplomats, and always care for them and their families.

Third, we must sustain and modernize the force by equipping the operator, upgrading our mobility platforms and further developing persistent intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) sensors and systems.

These priorities support USSOCOM's ongoing efforts to ensure SOF are highly trained, properly equipped and deployed to the right places at the right times for the right missions. Our personnel must be capable of planning and leading a wide range of lethal and non-lethal special operations missions in complex, ambiguous environments. This specific requirement underpins expectations that SOF will continue a military culture of initiative and innovation at every level. USSOCOM will continue to work closely with the services to ensure that the conventional force enablers upon which we depend remain a part of our future operations.

DETER, DISRUPT, AND DEFEAT TERRORIST THREATS

The enemy threat is complex and patient. USSOCOM anticipates no relief from our deployed commitments even when U.S. force levels in Iraq and Afghanistan are reduced. SOF's ability to grow relationships and build partner nation capacity is a fundamental part of the Department's campaign plan against terrorist threats.

We pursue two essential, mutually supporting and often intertwined approaches – direct and indirect. These two approaches integrate the requirement to immediately disrupt violent extremist organizations while positively impacting the environment in which they operate.

The direct approach addresses the immediate requirement to pursue terrorists, their infrastructure and their resources. Despite the positive trends in Iraq, operations to capture or kill terrorists and disrupt their networks remain both urgent and necessary. In the dynamic and ambiguous environments that constitute today's battlefields, the ability to rapidly analyze and exploit information is key to fast sequential targeting. This requires unique skills, specialized technologies and flexible mobility. We understand the necessity of prosecuting targets with speed, precision and discipline.

The indirect approach addresses the underlying causes of terrorism and the environments in which terrorism activities occur. The indirect approach requires more time than the direct approach to achieve effects, but ultimately will be the decisive effort.

In a world characterized by protracted struggles, emerging Irregular Warfare (IW) doctrine calls for a suite of capabilities to prevail against those who threaten us. IW is a logical, long-term framework that assists in both analyzing and applying many elements of national and international power to achieve mutual security objectives.

IW often employs indirect operations to gain asymmetric advantage over adversaries. IW is not a new mission area for SOF. Unconventional warfare, counter-terrorism (CT), counter-insurgency (COIN), civil-military operations (CMO), Civil Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and Foreign Internal

Defense (FID) are all traditional IW activities and core tasks for SOF. With IW's emergence as a focus area for broader participation across the Department, it increasingly describes activities that both SOF and general purpose forces will employ in their operational approaches.

Theater SOF Efforts – By, With and Through

Deployed SOF are normally under the command of Theater Special Operations Commanders (TSOC) who work directly for the Geographic Combatant Commanders. The Theater SOCs have the regional focus that contributes to a good understanding of the people, the cultures and the issues of their areas of interest.

It is under the Theater Special Operations Commands that permanently deployed and rotational SOF work in other countries to enhance combat skills; establish relationships with counterparts; advise, assist or manage a variety of civil and military projects; contribute to the achievement of U.S. Ambassadors' objectives; or gain the experience that will contribute to future successes.

For example, at the direction of Special Operations Command – Pacific, SOF assist Philippine forces' efforts to identify and defeat indigenous and transnational terrorist organizations in the southern islands. Building on the model that was effective on Basilan Island in 2002, a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force works closely with Philippine Army, Marine and Navy units and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide both humanitarian assistance and military training. SOF also manage information and public affairs plans in coordination with the U.S. country team. The combined effect of these efforts has made central and southern Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago a much more challenging environment for terrorist activity.

Under Special Operations Command – Europe, Army Special Forces conducted an exercise during the summer of 2007 involving several Trans-Saharan (Pan-Sahel) nations and our European partners. SOF provided training in regional synchronization, intelligence sharing, planning and coordination for CT related operations. Last year, SOF also participated in Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercises in this region. These exchanges enhance SOF skills while building person-to-person and unit-to-unit relationships.

Under Special Operations Command – Central Command, SOF have continued programs that are building competent and capable Iraqi and Afghan security forces. Iraqi Special Operations Forces are generally touted as some of the most effective military units in the region.

Under Special Operations Command – South, SOF personnel train, advise, and assist in Colombia's campaign against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) narco-terrorists.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID)

SOF employs its unique abilities to assess, train, advise and assist host nation militaries to build military capability. In so doing we improve our partner nations' confidence and abilities to detect and defeat violent extremist organizations. In 2007, SOF conducted hundreds of FID missions around the world.

Civil Affairs (CA)

Civil affairs projects deter support for violent extremist organizations by legitimizing existing governments and fostering a more favorable opinion of U.S. efforts. Simultaneously, programs that address government corruption, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and basic human needs build confidence in fledgling governments. While CA units are key to success in Afghanistan and Iraq, they remain equally vital to the conduct of myriad other SOF operations throughout the world.

Working closely with Colombian government and military officials, SOF CA personnel carried out more than two dozen medical humanitarian civic action events. These events treated thousands of Columbian patients in remote areas of the country and solidified that government's legitimacy in undergoverned spaces.

The Civil Military Engagement Program employs Civil Military Support Elements which are scalable, modular SOF teams that plan, coordinate, facilitate, manage and lead programs and projects that support U.S. and host nation objectives. Combatant Commanders are increasingly requesting this CA augmentation to enhance their indirect operations.

Psychological Operations (PSYOP)

One of the most important components in defeating terrorism includes countering violent extremist propaganda. These efforts are global in scale and are locally implemented by the geographic Combatant Commands. PSYOP forces disseminate truthful information to shape behavior and erode the attraction of extremist ideologies among foreign audiences.

USSOCOM's Joint Military Information Support Command (JMISC) includes functional, cultural and geographic experts who bring a combined approach to tackling what has become a tough, entrenched war of ideas. JMISC currently orchestrates a 24/7 multi-media campaign formatted to the cultures and languages of relevant audiences. This provides a factual message as an alternative to the extremist ideology for global audiences.

A most important tool in our ability to build the capacity of partner nations to conduct counterterrorism or stability operations is our continued authority to train and equip foreign military forces under language included in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. Sections 1202 (previously known as 1208) and 1206, which expires this year, are authorities that have made a big difference in developing carefully selected counterpart forces. As an authority specific to Special Operations, Section 1202 is especially germane.

Synchronization and Planning

In 2005, USSOCOM was directed by the Unified Command Plan to plan, synchronize and, as directed, conduct global operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other combatant commanders. While this was widely perceived as granting USSOCOM the authority to direct a wide range of operational activities in areas already assigned to the Geographic Combatant Commanders, we have realized in execution that our greatest value is in synchronizing GWOT campaign plans and planning. The operations themselves

are in almost every case conducted by the Geographic Combatant Commander responsible for that region, with USSOCOM in support. Every day at Headquarters USSOCOM, and at numerous outstations and agencies around the world, USSOCOM personnel are collaborating, coordinating and planning with other agencies to achieve desired global effects.

The most comprehensive element of USSOCOM's synchronization effort is the global collaborative planning process. This effort draws on other Combatant Command capabilities and expertise to develop DoD's GWOT campaign plan. This plan, coupled with the Geographic Combatant Commands' regional war on terror campaign plans that support it, are dynamic and under continuous review. USSOCOM and the DoD Global Synchronization Community have developed structured processes to evaluate and prioritize the many capabilities, operations, activities, resources and forces required for DoD's efforts to deter, disrupt and defeat terrorism. USSOCOM provides real and virtual venues for regular meetings, briefings, and conferences with each of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, interagency partners, and friendly and allied nations. The primary forum is the semi-annual Global Synchronization Conference. Because collaboration with our partner nations is so important, several other programs such as the foreign attaché-based SOVEREIGN CHALLENGE and our upcoming International Special Operations Forces Week improve global cooperation.

USSOCOM's Interagency Task Force (IATF) is a catalyst to rapidly facilitate CT collaboration within the U.S. government against trans-regional, functional and strategic level problem sets and opportunities.

USSOCOM's International Engagement Program (IEP) identifies requirements and helps coordinate actions within selected foreign countries to assist, resolve and enhance their CT capabilities and increase overall information sharing.

Future Concepts

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) identified several initiatives to give the Department greater capability and agility in dealing with the most common and enduring threats of the 21st Century. The development of Irregular Warfare capabilities was prominent. USSOCOM plays a lead role in developing IW doctrine.

The IW Joint Operating Concept (JOC), developed by USSOCOM in partnership the Marine Corps, was approved and signed by the Secretary of Defense in September 2007. It is the first step in the promulgation of IW doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leader development and education, personnel and facilities.

In order to maintain the momentum in IW planning and policy, USSOCOM established an IW Directorate (J10) in 2007. The J10 provides continuous focus on IW related issues that cut across operational and programmatic lines.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Commander of USSOCOM is responsible for ensuring the combat readiness of assigned forces. With this requirement comes the need for better defined personnel management authorities and readiness reporting frameworks.

Recruiting and Retention

The ability to identify and recruit the best SOF candidates is a challenge requiring innovation and commitment of resources. Diversity across the force is an operational necessity posing additional challenges to recruiting. Attributes sought by the SOF community include culturally-attuned individuals proficient in foreign languages who physically blend into the operational environment.

Ongoing personnel sustainment and programmed growth efforts directed by the QDR require intense cooperation and support between USSOCOM, the Services and DoD. This concentrated effort has paid dividends--89 percent of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 QDR growth was achieved. With support from the Services, the SOF community leveraged a combination of innovative accession programs, revamped training programs and implemented retention incentives.

SOF personnel have deployed often and suffered many casualties. USSOCOM puts great emphasis on sustainment programs that assist families as well as the uniformed member. The SOF Care Coalition project, implemented by my predecessor, has been extremely successful through patient and family advocacy that extends beyond recovery, rehabilitation and any subsequent transition to civilian life. No issue is too large or too small. Care Coalition successes range from minimizing medical and physical evaluation board bureaucracy, ensuring Traumatic Serviceman Group Life Insurance compensation is appropriate, coordinating home repairs for a family whose father was deployed, making certain a SOF warrior's young daughter received the best TRICARE could provide, and providing personalized support for all families caring for their hospitalized wounded warrior.

Although USSOCOM is specifically responsible for the special operations force defined by Major Force Program (MFP) 11 authorizations, one of the greatest emergent challenges is the health of our service-provided SOF enablers.

Training and Education

The Component assessment and selection programs identify candidates with the potential for entry into the SOF community. The initial SOF qualification training that follows assessment and selection takes up to two years to complete, but skills training is continuous throughout one's career in SOF.

Professional military education remains an essential element to the development, sustainment, and advancement of SOF. One initiative scheduled to begin in 2008 will expand the SOF Interagency Fellow's program to provide post-graduate courses, full degree programs, and independent research opportunities for SOF strategists and long-range planners.

Language and Culture

Language skills and cultural knowledge continue to be key to establishing effective relations with the foreign forces, organizations, and individuals with which SOF will interact. The 1st Special Forces Group (SFG) language training program was recognized by the Army and DoD as the best of its kind in 2007

but, although we have enhanced all of our language training programs in recent years, we remain underqualified in many key languages and dialects. We will continue to expand our programs in 2008, stressing the need for a few individuals to be thoroughly steeped in select languages and cultures. Our initiatives will include exploration of innovative options to permit such specialization without sacrificing promotion opportunity.

Joint Special Operations University (JSOU)

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) is responding to the increased need for strategic and operational level education for our SOF personnel, enablers, and international partners. JSOU will continue to offer a range of academic options that address strategic and operational subject areas. Programs will include traditional courses and seminars; tailored academic electives at the Service professional military education institutions; joint mobile education teams; symposia and academic workshops; individual performance support; and similar activities aimed at the needs of our student base.

SUSTAIN AND MODERNIZE THE FORCE

Budget

The budget and acquisition authorities provided in the original language that created USSOCOM have proven invaluable in enabling SOF to be properly trained and equipped.

The FY 2009 President's Budget request of \$5.727 billion for Major Force Program 11 will permit continued development of capabilities peculiar to special operations. This request will continue our investment in capabilities to improve SOF warrior systems, promote specialized and institutional training, explore and exploit new technologies and refine force structure. Over half of the budget request--\$3.7 billion--is for Operations and Maintenance to sustain SOF operational readiness, to maintain equipment, and to provide for fuel, consumable supplies, civilian salaries, spare parts and repair of weapons and equipment.

Of the remainder, \$1.5 billion is for Procurement, and will be used to fund vital SOF-unique modernization and recapitalization efforts in force protection, mobility, weapons, munitions, communications and intelligence equipment. An additional \$361 million is requested for RDT&E to develop SOF-peculiar equipment, to provide technological advances, and to modernize SOF weapons. Finally, \$255 million is requested for Military Construction to fund 13 projects in seven states and one project at an overseas location.

We expect our optempo will remain high even when conventional forces downsize in Iraq and Afghanistan. Consequently, the funding we have received in supplementals will still be required to support our efforts. In order to sustain our operations long term, we are working with DoD to pursue a shift of essential supplemental funding to the base budget.

Force Structure

Last year, SOF added 6,443 military and civilian positions. These positions provided needed enhancements to both headquarters and operational force structure.

In FY 2009, USSOCOM will add another 1,536 military and civilian billets across the component commands in order to improve readiness and add capacity and capabilities. We will grow to 55,890 civilian and military personnel by the conclusion of FY 2009, of which 43,745 will be active duty military members, 6,870 will be in reserve components (4,310 Guard and 2,560 Reserve) and 5,275 will be government civilians.

Acquisition Efforts

USSOCOM's acquisition organization is a very important factor in resourcing SOF-peculiar requirements. While Federal Acquisition Regulations uniformly apply to the Department, we strive to take advantage of flexibilities that are inherent in these guidelines to quickly provide materiel solutions for the SOF operator. Because our budget authority is limited to SOF-peculiar equipment and modifications, USSOCOM must work closely with the three military departments (MILDEPs), because the MILDEPs fund, develop, acquire and provide the basic Service-common vehicles, aircraft, boats, weapons, ammunition and other equipment to USSOCOM, which we then modify to SOF-specific platforms, systems and/or equipment.

When a SOF requirement cannot be met using a Service-common solution, USSOCOM uses its authority to develop and acquire SOF-peculiar equipment or modify the Service-common equipment to meet SOF needs. USSOCOM's acquisition culture stresses assertive risk management, and process efficiencies to steward a system that is often more tailorable, responsive, and agile than elsewhere in DoD.

USSOCOM's Urgent Deployment Acquisition (UDA) process continues to provide a rapid acquisition and logistics response to combat mission needs statements (CMNS) submitted by deployed SOF. Most capabilities developed under this program are delivered to the forces within six months to a year after the requirement is validated.

Our total requirements, funding and acquisition sub-processes are still slower and more restrictive than we believe is optimal for this specialized force. During the coming year we intend to explore whether we are using the full extent of our legislated authorities as the Congress and President intended when USSOCOM was established.

Science and Technology

USSOCOM's Science and Technology (S&T) strategy is to selectively invest and leverage available resources with the MILDEPs and other agency laboratories, academia, and industry for the purpose of maximizing SOF capabilities. S&T programs identify and assess emerging technologies for potential insertion into current and future SOF concepts, requirements, and acquisition programs of record. As the strategic, tactical, and geopolitical environments in which SOF operates evolve, so too does the S&T investment focus and support.

The USSOCOM Special Operations Technology Development (SOTD), Special Operations Advanced Technology Development (SOST) and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programs work together to synergistically develop, evaluate and eventually transition key technologies. The USSOCOM Locating, Tagging and Tracking efforts are being staffed through the SOTD and SOST programs in collaboration with our program executive officers, the Defense Research and Engineering Directorate, the MILDEPs and interagency partners. Our involvement in several Advanced Concept Technology Demonstrations and Joint Capability Technology Demonstrations allows USSOCOM to leverage the resources of other organizations to create robust opportunities for evaluating and transforming mature technologies in a way that USSOCOM could not otherwise afford on our limited S&T budget.

Equipping the SOF Warrior

The new combat assault rifles, the MK16 and MK17 and their associated enhanced grenade launcher module, completed development and began limited fielding in 2007. We expect these weapons to be fully deployed by the end of 2009. USSOCOM will continue the development of next-generation ammunitions as well as fused-image-capable, clip-on optics for our weapons.

In 2007, USSOCOM fielded more than 11,000 supplemental body armor kits, saving lives and reducing injuries by increasing the area of ballistic protection beyond that of previously issued SOF body armor. More than 4,500 sets of the new protective combat uniform were fielded to provide extreme cold weather protection for SOF operators. The Command implemented a product improvement effort to reduce the weight and/or increase the ballistic performance of the modular integrated communications helmet.

The worldwide proliferation of night vision devices has somewhat diminished the technological advantage that the U.S. military possessed during the conduct of night operations. Although the technology gap has narrowed, USSOCOM continues to identify, test and field many new night vision and visual augmentation systems. In 2007, USSOCOM continued to field advancements in thermal imaging and camera technology by putting into service visual augmentation systems that were smaller and lighter with increased capabilities.

SOF Munitions

Special purpose munitions, such as demolition, breaching, diversionary, and shoulder-fired munitions, are required to accomplish SOF missions. Future developments will upgrade the SOF shoulder-fired systems with the capability to fire within and from enclosed spaces for use in urban environments. We will continue to procure foreign weapons and ammunition to train SOF operators so they will be better prepared to train the forces of our partner nations.

Once munitions are developed and fielded, our logistics personnel assume responsibility for procurement of replenishment munitions to sustain the force. All SOF munitions are intensively managed in order to minimize stock levels while simultaneously providing time-sensitive capabilities required by the Theater Special Operations Commands.

SOF Communications

USSOCOM continues to transform its respective capabilities in the areas of communications, information technology, automation of intelligence data and collaboration tools into a single, integrated SOF information environment. Such an information environment enhances operations by permitting robust command and control capabilities at the strategic, operational and tactical levels and by extending information services to the individual SOF warrior.

As a result, available satellite communications bandwidth is at a premium.

SOF Mobility

USSOCOM continues to sustain and modernize the venerable SOF C-130 fleet. We have engaged with the Department of the Air Force to develop strategies for replacing and modernizing the aging MC-130E Combat Talon I and MC-130P Combat Shadow fleets. As an interim solution, four of twelve planned MC-130W air refueling tankers were delivered to date, with four more scheduled for delivery in 2008. The 8 aircraft will help to partially offset those MC-130Es & MC-130Ps. Four CV-22 trainer aircraft and the first three operational CV-22 Ospreys were delivered in 2006 and 2007. Three additional aircraft will to be delivered in 2008, with Initial Operational Capability projected for February 2009.

USSOCOM rotary wing programs, in partnership with the U.S. Army, are providing the latest technologies and sustainability upgrades to the current SOF rotary wing fleet. Taken together, these programs for the MH-47s, MH-60s, and the MH-6Ms will improve current capabilities and prepare for future modernization while consolidating the fleet into three common standardized airframes. The MH-47G variant has been deployed since February 2007. The MH-60M program was accelerated and will begin deliveries in 2008. The MH-6M Little Bird is nearing completion of its first block modification upgrade. Meanwhile, the MH-53M fleet is being drawn down for total retirement later this year.

The fielding and deployment of the Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) in June 2007 moved USSOCOM Undersea Mobility capabilities significantly forward. ASDS #1 is now available for deployment as a reliable combat capability based on successful testing, exercises and improvements in reliability. This vehicle enables Special Operations Forces to perform myriad missions in water space that was previously unreachable. Our other Undersea Mobility efforts such as the wet submersible Swimmer Delivery Vehicle (SDV) and Dry Deck Shelter (DDS) will continue to provide capabilities that enable SOF to perform a wide range of specialized tasks. There are on going studies to better define future undersea mobility joint efforts in this area.

USSOCOM recently enhanced its surface maritime mobility systems by fielding the advanced forward looking infrared systems for installation throughout its combatant craft fleet. As a result of combat lessons learned, USSOCOM has also fielded other improvements on the special operations craft-riverine. As the current models of rigid-hull inflatable boats and the SEAL Delivery Vehicles age, USSOCOM will begin developing the next generation of these surface and undersea maritime platforms.

This year, two new classes of vehicles were introduced for SOF ground mobility: the RG-31 medium mine protected vehicle and the RG-33 mine resistant ambush protected vehicle. These vehicles enable SOF to deploy forces across the theater of operations with a level of protection previously unavailable. In 2008, USSOCOM will begin fielding a suspension upgrade for our primary ground mobility vehicle (HMMWV variants) in order to return payload and mobility to the platform that was lost with the addition of heavy armor packages. Additionally, the light mobility vehicle, delivering in 2008, will carry 3-5 personnel over all types of terrain and is deployable from multiple aircraft platforms, including the CV-22.

SOF Sensor Systems

Sensor systems that provide persistent ISR are essential elements of USSOCOM's operations and force protection. USSOCOM has been swiftly fielding persistent ISR capabilities within budgetary constraints and respective Service training program limitations. We have modified existing SOF equipment where available, procured additional manned and unmanned ISR platforms, and partnered with the MILDEPs, Defense Research and Engineering Directorate and the Joint IED Defeat Organization to cooperatively field additional sensors.

SOF Locating, Tagging and Tracking capabilities are currently providing valuable information regarding hostile force location, movement, and intent while minimizing risk to US personnel. USSOCOM, in conjunction with other government partners, will continue to invest in leading-edge technologies for sensors and data infiltration and exfiltration.

Improved laser range finders and designators, hand-held thermal imagers, infrared pointers and marking and illuminating devices are a few of the capabilities delivered over the past year. Eye-safe laser range finders and binoculars provided a marked improvement in the determination of enemy target locations. Improved target geo-location accuracy was demonstrated in 2007, providing USSOCOM with the world's most accurate self-contained laser targeting geo-locator.

Additionally, USSOCOM acquired and utilizes a combination of several manned and unmanned airborne ISR assets to provide the necessary flexibility for supporting the dynamic SOF mission set. Unmanned aerial systems continue to be powerful force multipliers for SOF activities and a key component of almost every operation. The micro unmanned aerial systems, the long-endurance Predator class systems, and the potential ultra-long-endurance unmanned aerial systems, such as the Global Observer JCTD, are platforms that provide force protection to small SOF units and aid in the identification and tracking of individual targets and items of interest. USSOCOM also continues to grow our manned airborne ISR capability to complement the unmanned ISR systems. In FY 2007, additional airborne ISR aircraft were procured with supplemental funds, and SOCOM partnered with the National Guard Bureau to rapidly modify and employ Air National Guard aircraft and air crews to augment USSOCOM's organic ISR capability.

CONCLUSION

We continue to improve our capability and capacity to conduct all of our assigned missions, carefully balancing the demands of both preceding and responding to the sound of guns. Over the course of USSOCOM's twenty-one year history, Congress has consistently demonstrated strong interest in the command and its people. The joint Special Operations Force you see around the globe today is a direct product of your vision, your trust and your commitment to build the world's premier Special Operations capability. We will prevail against those who threaten us and assist those who don't. The men and women of the Special Operations Force will meet your highest expectations. Thank you for your continued support.