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STATEMENT OF  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT W. WAGNER, U.S. ARMY  
COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS  
AND CAPABILITIES  
ON CURRENT MANNING, EQUIPPING, AND READINESS CHALLENGES FACING  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES  
JANUARY 31, 2007

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor and privilege to report to you on the state of the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). Today's United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) are the best manned, trained and equipped in our history and are the most capable in the world. They have performed magnificently on the battlefields of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and in support of Geographic Combatant Commanders' and Ambassadors' activities around the world.

As commander of the U.S. Army component of USSOCOM, my two top priorities are supporting GWOT and the readiness of our forces, both today and in the future. These two priorities are inextricably linked. I understand that the purpose of this hearing is to discuss the latter of these two priorities – the manning and equipping readiness challenges of our force; but, before I do, I would like to say a few things about supporting GWOT.

To prosecute GWOT, defeating the terrorist threat requires the full range of Special Operations capabilities. ARSOF's carefully selected, highly trained and well equipped Special Operators continue to be deployed in support of the Geographic Combatant Commanders and our nation's Ambassadors and have been involved in every phase of this global effort. Employing the tactics, techniques and procedures

most appropriate to a given situation, our forces act across the full spectrum of operations from Civil Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PO), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and Unconventional Warfare (UW), to Direct Action (DA). As they have been since September of 2001, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) are decisively engaged in the Long War in both the kinetic aspects of the war by disrupting the terrorist cells of our enemies, and, perhaps more importantly, quietly and persistently working in their non-kinetic role of nation building, and developing the professionalism and capacity of the indigenous Armies of Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines and other countries worldwide, oftentimes shifting from kinetic to non-kinetic activities on the same day. On any given day, approximately 4,500 ARSOF Soldiers are deployed worldwide. The pace and intensity of ARSOF deployments are unmatched in our nation's history. I am continuously amazed, humbled and grateful for the dedication, maturity and judgment of our Soldiers as they conduct repetitive combat rotations. Far more impressive than the amount of time deployed, called the "tempo", is the fast pace and intensity of the Soldiers' daily activities: the incredible manner in which they rapidly integrate all-source intelligence, and rapidly coordinate and immediately execute complex plans and time sensitive operations. This work requires extraordinary professionals operating at peak capacity. We also honor the heroic sacrifices of our 155 soldiers who have lost their lives deployed in the war on terrorism, the 976 who have been wounded and injured, and the patriotism of their families. The word Soldier is a simple word for complex heroes serving our nation.

In addition to combat rotations, ARSOF annually participates in over seventy Joint Combined Exercise Training (JCET) events globally with host-nation forces. In the

PACOM and SOUTHCOM theaters, ARSOF supports these respective Geographic Combatant Commanders and Ambassadors by providing assistance to allied nations seeking to stem terrorists, narcotics trafficking groups, and insurgents and to enhance the professionalism and capability of their forces as well as our own. SOF support includes counter-narcoterrorist training deployments, training assistance to Host Nation SOF, help with establishing special operations command and control (C2) organization, long-standing Civil Affairs and PSYOP activities, and assistance fusing intelligence with operational planning. As we help build partner nation capacity we enable our allies to shoulder the burden of fighting terrorism in places where we are not in combat. These missions are critical and, in the long term, some of the most important work we do. Additionally, ARSOF continues to assist with the search for American citizens held hostage by terrorists in Colombia, working alongside the elements from the Colombian Military who are still engaged in the recovery of those held captive. ARSOF also continues to provide training support in Central and South America, Africa, and to Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P), where, in addition to Special Forces, our Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers continue to advance nation building through effective training and a full range of developmental programs which extend the reach and effectiveness of Philippine programs and forces and garner support of local populations.

As stated earlier, to achieve success in GWOT, force readiness is crucial to mission success. USASOC's number one readiness issue is our people, followed closely by our equipment and training. People are our most precious asset. ARSOF operators are high-caliber professionals with intelligence, stamina, problem-solving

skills, mental toughness, flexibility, determination, and the highest integrity. They are of extraordinary strength of character, will, dedication to duty, and belief in selfless service. Additionally, they are experts with their weapons, and many are language trained. Our carefully selected, well-trained, and well-led people are key to our quality force. To accomplish the ARSOF missions, maturity, experience and highly specialized skill sets are required, including cultural and regional awareness and expertise, and skill in employing both low and high-tech equipment and solutions. To achieve the required level of proficiency and guarantee SOF relevance, recruitment, training, accession, promotion, retention, and professional development of the force must be carefully monitored.

***What are the current and projected end-strength requirements as established in the most recent QDR and what plans and timeframe are in place to achieve it? If the current forces are not filled to authorized strengths, why not?***

Up front I must report that that our current fill rates have never been better and, faced with the current deployment tempo and mission requirements, we are most grateful and appreciative of the absolutely required recent year decisions to add ten new battalions, new companies and support capabilities, and over 6,800 active duty Soldiers to our force structure. For the next six to eight years, snap shot views of our manning will not tell a complete story as we will repeatedly (cyclically) build over-strength to form the core of a new battalion, which, upon activation, will be under-strength. This up and down percent change is necessary for growth and should not be

viewed with concern, just as our over-strength now should not be viewed with extreme excitement. What is important to understand is the complete pipeline personnel process, and to see if that process is producing and retaining Army Special Operations Soldiers at a sufficiently faster or higher rate than historical trends. The answer to that important question is, "yes."

It is also important to understand that many Army SOF career fields do not recruit initial entry candidates; rather, we recruit experienced, proven Soldiers from the conventional force. Thus, our recruiting effort is uniquely different than that of a conventional Army recruiter but is uniquely tied to the overall health of the Army. Because of the unique character of each of our commands, command wide averages are of less value and each unit must be studied and appreciated separately.

## **Personnel.**

We are at the beginning of unprecedented ARSOF growth adding over 6,800 additional active duty Soldiers between FY 05 and FY 12. Army Special Operations Force (ARSOF) population in the areas of enlisted inventory, promotion and active duty retention are at a historic high. From FY 05 to the current date, we have added over 2,200 Active duty Soldiers. The officer inventory is also strong, with selected exceptions including Warrant Officers, Civil Affairs Captains, and National Guard Captains. Overall, our strength numbers decreased as a result of the transfer of the United States Army Reserve (USAR) Soldiers of the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) to the United States Army

Reserve Command (USARC). USASOC is currently a very healthy force in terms of manpower strengths. All of the projected manpower growth is planned. We are prepared to implement our PDM and QDR approved force growth in accordance with the established timelines.

### **Current Strengths.**

**Special Forces (Active Component).** Special Forces Command is our largest component with 8,309 Active Duty and 3,373 National Guard Soldiers authorized comprising 62% of our population. Current USASOC Active Duty Special Forces officer strength is 111%, Special Forces Warrant Officer strength is currently 86%, but is expected to climb to 90% by the end of this Fiscal Year, given the successes of our recruiting campaign and change in training venue. Inventory of our Active Duty Special Forces enlisted Soldiers is currently 114%, an historical high. We do have skill areas of concern with our Special Forces medics at 641 assigned vs. 744 authorized for 86%, and other Army-common, low density, military occupational specialties which are addressed later.

**Special Forces (Army National Guard).** National Guard Special Forces officer strength trends are positive with the exception of Captains which are at 34% with 159 authorized and 54 assigned, and Warrant Officers which are at 26% with 137 authorized and 35 assigned. However, changes in the Warrant Officer course will result in an improvement in this area in the near term. The FY 06 inventory of National Guard enlisted Soldiers was 125% of requirements. The high assigned enlisted strength

percentage however distorts the low military skill qualification rate which 74% for enlisted Soldiers. All six of our National Guard Special Forces battalions have been involuntarily mobilized and have voluntarily mobilized to the authorized two-year limit. Beyond that, many Soldiers have deployed in a Contingency Temporary Tour of Active Duty (COTTAD) status. Individually, Soldiers are extraordinarily responsive as individual volunteers. These great Soldiers have rightfully taken their place alongside their active component brothers and performed with distinction. However, policies make it hard to have rapid access to these units even though they are ready volunteers.

**75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment.** The 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment is authorized 2,168 Soldiers and is 12 % of our force. The Ranger Regiment's strength continues to be very well supported by the Army, in both officer and enlisted categories (112% and 121% strengths, respectively).

**160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR).** The 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR is authorized 2,437 Soldiers and is 13% of our force. Shortages of trained aviator officers and warrant officers persist, and result from many factors. Continuing high GWOT requirements compete with training resources and contribute to the shortfalls in MH-47 Chinook aviator qualifications. The availability of pilots and enlisted crew members to be trained is not the issue: it is a training through-put problem. Availability of aircraft, training time, and instructors are a constant challenge. Although we recognize this challenge and have a plan to improve in this area, the fix will not be immediate. Increased authorizations in our growth in MH-47 aircraft and personnel will result in continuing low personnel fill rates in the short term. Overall strength of enlisted Soldiers in the SOAR is 97%, but many of the factors for the MH-47 officers and warrant officers



extend to the MH-47 enlisted flight engineers. MH47 officer pilot strength is 63%, warrant officer pilot strength is 68%, and enlisted flight engineer strength is 79%. These percentages are against an aircraft to crew authorized ratio of 1:1.5. We can crew every flyable aircraft and our fill rate is steadily improving.

**Psychological Operations.** PO and CA officers were formerly managed as an Army Functional Area; however, effective 1 October 2006, they were each designated as a separate officer career branch. Creation of these branches is expected to result in significant improvements for USASOC and the Army as a whole. In the interim, however, we are experiencing expected growing pains of creating new branches, particularly when combined with significant growth in both branches. USASOC's PO officer fill rate is 70% in the aggregate, with a 20% fill rate for Captains, 103% for Majors, 155% for LTC and 100% for Colonels. The Captain's fill rate will increase to 36 of 65 or 54% by July 07. The rate of fill for enlisted PO Soldiers is 88%

**Civil Affairs.** While we increased the branch inventory of CA officers in FY 06 by 60 officers to 249, the authorizations also increased by 115. USASOC is currently at 67% officer fill rate. Our critical shortage is Captains which were at 22% strength in FY 06 and is expected to improve to 43 of 125 or 34% in FY 07. The enlisted MOS 38B (Civil Affairs) was created in FY 06 and, much like the CA and PO officer strengths, is also influenced by the growth in CA authorizations. The USASOC aggregate enlisted fill rate is 102%; however, with approved growth in March 07, the rate will drop to 85%. USASOC recently activated a CA brigade and is in the process of adding three battalions to the structure.

**Special Operations Sustainment Brigade (SOSB).** This unit has undergone a major transformation as its internal support battalion was reassigned; parts to each of the Special Forces Groups to be the core of the 5 newly formed Special Forces Support Battalions, and to provide augmentation to three Ranger Support Companies. This is in line with Army Transformation, similar to the Brigade Combat Teams. We are currently in the process of standing up an additional support battalion for the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment to better support their operational deployments. The Soldiers in the SOSB hold Army common specialties, for which we rely on Department of the Army to support. The aggregate strength of the brigade is 98%.

#### **Projected Personnel Growth.**

Program Decision Memorandum (PDM) approved growth that will add over 6,800 active duty Soldiers between FY 05 and FY 12 and will impact all units and skill sets, including Combat, Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) specialty skills. This growth represents ten additional battalions – five tactical Special Forces battalions, one Special Operations Aviation battalion, one Ranger Special Troops battalion; three Ranger rifle companies, significant growth in Ranger reconnaissance, support, military intelligence and communications capabilities; three Civil Affairs battalions in addition to standing up the Civil Affairs Brigade Headquarters; five Psychological Operations companies; and growth in support and training units.

Key to increasing pipe-line production of Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers has been the total transformation of the programs of

instruction at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. These changes focused on an immediate relevance to current operations, increasing Interagency contributions, earlier integration of language training, increased frequency of course offerings, integration of computer assisted training, curriculum modification, focused time management, and concentrating the 18X target population (initial entry Soldiers selected to attend Special Forces training) - as examples.

In order to support the approved growth in Special Forces (5 Active Special Forces battalions), USASOC’s Special Forces student production has increased from an average of 238 per year from FY 95 to FY 97 to an average of 723 per year from FY 04 to FY 06, and now a steady-state of 750 Active Duty Enlisted Soldiers per year. This phenomenal increase employed best business practices to increase production while maintaining or increasing standards, without increasing costs. This will keep our Special Forces force at “P-1”, 90% or better, our highest personnel readiness rating throughout the growth period without sacrificing our standards or quality of training. Additional student training has been factored into the training pipeline to support both Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations growth.

| Authorized Strength by Component and FY | FY 05  | FY 06  | FY 07  | FY 08  | FY 09  | FY 10  | FY 11  | FY 12  | FY 05-12 Increases |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| Special Forces Command                  | 10,541 | 11,781 | 11,468 | 12,451 | 12,872 | 13,293 | 13,715 | 14,137 | 3,596              |
| 75 <sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment        | 2,138  | 2,392  | 2,392  | 3,071  | 3,071  | 3,071  | 3,071  | 3,071  | 933                |
| 160 <sup>th</sup> SOAR                  | 2,342  | 2,519  | 2,519  | 2,603  | 2,736  | 2,693  | 3,039  | 3,075  | 733                |
| 4th PO Group                            | 1,354  | 1,354  | 1,354  | 2,120  | 2,488  | 2,488  | 2,488  | 2,488  | 1,134              |
| 95 <sup>th</sup> CA BDE                 | 409    | 505    | 554    | 687    | 884    | 884    | 884    | 884    | 475                |

On 1 Oct 06, the Department of Defense approved the proper decision to transfer 8,431 United States Army Reserve (USAR) Component Soldiers and Headquarters of the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operation Command (USACAPOC), from USASOC to FORSCOM and the United States Army Reserve Command, USARC. This transfer did reduce the overall personnel numbers within USASOC; however, USASOC retained all active component Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PO) units and will continue to serve as the proponent for both the Active and Reserve CA and PO forces. Concurrently, not only did the forces transfer, but they also grew significantly in numbers. As part of the approved force growth, USASOC is increasing from one AC Civil Affairs battalion with 409 Soldiers to a Civil Affairs brigade comprised of four battalions with a combined strength of 884. There is also an AC force structure increase of five companies in our AC Psychological Operations Group as it grows from 1,354 in FY 05 to 2,488 in FY 09.

On 1 Oct 06, the Department of Army also approved the establishment of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations as career branches. The impact of establishing these branches will greatly benefit the selection, training, assignments and career-long professional development of these officers as a career field instead of just a functional area of interest.

Approval for USASOC to conduct Special Forces Warrant Officer training and commissioning entirely at Fort Bragg provided significant benefit to course content and Active Duty and National Guard throughput. This change dramatically reduced the time to train these officers and adds a critical element as we build force structure. This is critically important in increasing our National Guard Special Forces Warrant Officers as

this change dramatically reduces their time away from home and their civilian jobs.

National Guard Special Forces Warrant Officer recruitment increased from eight in FY 05 to 18 in FY 06.

Another key component of USASOC's overall personnel strength is our professional and dedicated civilian workforce. We work hard to ensure our authorized positions are filled with permanent employees and have leveraged the use of temporary (2-year max) and term (4-year max) employees since the beginning of GWOT. Today our civilian authorizations are 1,233 with a total of 1,337 civilian employees on board for a 108% fill rate. Of this total 201 employees are either temporary or term hires. This represents 15% of our civilian work force which we are steadily decreasing as our authorizations grow. In FY 08 our civilian workforce authorizations will grow by 11% to 1,390.

## **Retention and Recruiting.**

### **Retention.**

As previously mentioned, our population is more senior than most units. For example, of the current 4,537 assigned Active Duty enlisted 18-series Special Forces Soldiers, the authorized numbers include 0 Soldiers in grades E-1 through E-5, 1,419 E-6, 1,974 E-7, and 618 E8/ E9. This inverted senior rank structure is at the heart of ARSOF's unique capabilities and highlights the critical importance of senior grade retention. We cannot afford to see decreasing trends and then try to fix the problem –

which could take years to rest and recover. I view the retention incentives as absolutely critical as we ask ourselves why these extraordinarily skilled professionals separate themselves from their families and place their lives at risk, all the while facing ongoing criticism for a war losing popularity. They don't do it for the money. However, the money and growth of the ARSOF force shows our Soldiers and families that we care, we recognize their sacrifice, and we highly respect and value their selfless service. I am often reminded of the old saying that we recruit individuals but retain families.

Significant numbers of Soldiers are accepting retention pay and compensation incentives to remain within ARSOF. We have specifically targeted our most senior and experienced operators with these pay incentives as a key factor to support our approved growth and help reduce our operational tempo as we continue to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism along with numerous other mission profiles throughout the world. These pay incentives have produced the desired results. They are a critical element to retain and adjust the force as necessary as we grow. Some of these programs are highlighted below:

- Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) for selected Special Forces, Rangers and 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR NCOs.
  - SF: Level 5 = \$375 / month
  - Rangers: Level 4 = \$300 / month
  - 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR Level 2/3/4 = \$150/\$225/\$300 / month

- Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) increased to \$150K for SF NCOs and WOs operators for a six-year commitment. Average increased commitment of five years with 100K payment.
  - Service Remaining Requirements waived making more Soldiers eligible for this incentive.
  - Modifications to contracts permitted allowing maximum flexibility to add to years of commitment.
    - FY 05 = 402 Soldiers = \$28.6 million
    - FY 06 = 260 Soldiers = \$26 million
- Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) implemented for SF Warrant Officers and NCOs operators. This program targets Soldiers at their 25<sup>th</sup> year of service and beyond with a \$750 dollar per month payment. Total results for FY 05 and FY 06 were 136 senior and experienced Soldiers being retained past their eligible retirement date.
- Aviation Continuation Pay (ACP) increased in FY 06 for 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment Flight Qualified Warrant Officers (K4). Results are 200 K4 pilots receiving ACP for a total of \$18.9 million.
  - CW5s added to the program.
  - Annual Payments based on contract commitments of two years for \$12K, three years for \$18K, and four years for \$25K.

***What are the selection standards and challenges facing component recruiting and retention? Is it possible, with the standards implemented today, to expedite recruiting without sacrificing quality. If not, then why not? What issues are involved?***

## **Recruiting.**

The provisional establishment of the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion which recruits Soldiers from within the U.S. Army for Special Operations service is of critical importance to ARSOF in contacting three times the population as five years ago and setting in motion the ability to source our approved growth of ten new battalions. USASOC and U.S. Army Recruiting Command resource this unique Special Operation Recruiting battalion and work very closely in coordinating and targeting the right people and skill sets to meet our needs. In partnership with the Army Recruiting Command, we have increased and will continue to increase our recruiting capability by adding more recruiters. An example of this recruiting effort includes the ARSOF Recruiting Van (tractor trailer), manned by Army recruiters and augmented with ARSOF and has a national level footprint and showcases ARSOF to the American public.

A major effort this year was gaining Army approval for USASOC to add the selection of CA and PO officers, on a yearly basis, to our existing ARSOF selection board. In the past, the ARSOF board only focused on the selection of Special Forces officers. With the activation of CA and PO as branches, USASOC was allowed to establish a special accessions board to select CA and PO officers to help “jump start”



these new career fields. This now combined ARSOF Officer Accession Board selects future Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers, and is directly linked to our ability to fill the force with the highest caliber leaders possible.

### **Personnel Recruiting and Retention – Future Challenges.**

Our current high aggregate fill rates are the result of the combined contribution of recruiting, retention incentive programs, redesigning enlisted, warrant and commissioned officer training, and career field changes. In FY 06, ARSOF exceeded the Army average in all retention categories with the exception of reserve component transition. As positive as the current fill and retention rates are, we are at the beginning of five to eight years of hard work to recruit, train, and retain over 6,800 additional active duty Soldiers. To do this, we must:

1) Increase our recruiting capability both in-service and initial entry to ensure the proper numbers of Soldiers enter our training pipeline. We have experienced major success with our 18X program (initial entry Soldiers selected to attend Special Forces training) and must ensure those now trained, qualified, and deploying ARSOF Soldiers are retained past their initial service obligation.

2) Maintain, and, in some cases, initiate new retention incentive programs to attract and retain these highly trained and deployed Soldiers. Like building a bridge, the quickest way is starting at both banks; we have made great efforts to recruit into our ranks and retain our experienced Soldiers and now need to look hard at retaining our middle grades as well.

3) Leverage the ARSOF Officer Accession Board to increase selection of sufficient Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations officers to meet growth requirements. We do have competing demands with the Army as they now are assigning Civil Affairs officers at the Brigade Combat Teams and higher levels of command.

4) Maximize Active and Guard warrant officer through-put to our newly redesigned warrant officer training program.

5) Carefully manage enlisted, warrant and commission officer Aviation transition and growth.

USASOC relies on the Army for many critical, low density enlisted Soldiers, many of whom are in Combat Support or Combat Service Support specialties. Coordination with the Army to provide low density, high demand, Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) is continuous as USASOC does not train these specialties which are also required throughout the Army. Our growth will place additional demands on these critical skills. Some of these include:

- 25B (Information Technology)
- 25R (Visual Information Equipment)
- 25S (Satellite Communication)
- 35M/97E (Human Intelligence)
- 35P/95G (Cryptological Linguist)
- 46R (Public Affairs Broadcast)

We must not allow initial enthusiasm and positive results to dilute our understanding of the difficulty of the task ahead. As a simple example, prior to a battalion's activation date, we may have 250 "excess" Soldiers. A day later we may be 200 to 300 "short". Today CMF 18 enlisted strength in USASOC is 115%, but is projected to drop to the low 90 percentile as we build the five additional Special Forces tactical battalions. This scenario will play itself out repeatedly as we form a total of 10 new battalions and multiple companies all cast against what might arguably become a less supportive recruiting pool and an incredible tempo, which will stress retention. ARSOF is postured to keep pace with the programmed growth through improved targeted recruiting; increased training efficiencies in the Special Warfare Center and School, the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment, and the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment. This will be hard and critically important work as we move forward to fill our ranks.

### **Modification to Standards.**

We have modified our administrative procedures while maintaining and, in some cases, increasing standards. Experience showed us that our highest attrition in the 18X program was with 18 and 19 year old Soldiers: we no longer accept them into the program. Special Forces Soldiers must now attain a passing language rating of 1,1,1 in reading, speaking and understanding to graduate. The Special Forces Qualification Course is taught at the Secret level and requires a security clearance. It places less emphasis on lower end skills (map reading) and more focus on intelligence operations.

The Special Forces Warrant Officer program, although still taught in 15 training weeks. These and many other changes have maintained or increased performance standards. We have seen no need or reason to reduce standards to meet manning requirements.

## **Equipment.**

USASOC is extremely fortunate to be well supported by both the United States Special Operations Command and the United States Army, both of which advance evolving technology to improve the precision, versatility and lethality of our systems, and the survivability of our Soldiers against adaptive adversaries. We are well resourced. Our continuous challenge is validating the capabilities, limitations and necessity of new technologies against anticipated threats; and, if validated, the pace of funding, acquisition and fielding. Oftentimes, industry production is the limiting factor.

Today's ARSOF soldiers are better equipped than at any other time in our history. Equipment shortfalls, mainly, fall into the category of improving the quality or performance of an already existing or on-hand capability. For example, this is especially true in the area of vehicle force protection where we seek advanced materials offering increased protection at reduced weight. As an example:

Phase II Armor Kits. Every ARSOF vehicle conducting combat operations is armored. We are currently in the process of upgrading our armor kits through a Phase II version with ballistic aluminum and titanium underbody. Phase II production is on schedule for complete delivery and installation of 245 sets by Feb 07.

Gunner's Protection Kit (Turret). The turret production is on schedule for delivery of 219 turrets by May 07.

Modular Supplemental Armor Protection (MSAP). Every deployed ARSOF Soldier has body armor. Through the United States Special Operations Command Program Management Office, we have procured enough sets to fill the deployed Ranger and Special Forces operator requirements. Through Army common procurement, every other ARSOF Soldier is provided the Interceptor Body Armor (IBA).

We anxiously anticipate fielding of the Army's new Mobile Regional Hub Node (MRHN). The MRHN is a satellite terminal that provides high bandwidth in the Super High Frequency range, significantly enhancing our current capability. The MRHN also serves as a gateway or hub for other satellite terminals. We look for this program to remain on track.

Industry production rates to keep pace with the manufacture of improved or replacement equipment, single source producers, and access to specialized raw materials are a concern. For instance, the production rate for AN/PVS 15 Night Vision Devices is currently 65 per month instead of the 130 it was programmed/contracted for. At this rate, ARSOF fielding will be complete in 2021 or 2022.

## **Facilities**

Between FY 05 and FY 12, USASOC will grow in end-strength by over 6,800 personnel throughout the command. Because most of this growth occurs inside the 5-year MILCON cycle, we are working to ensure we have adequate interim facilities available until permanent construction can be completed. Our intent is to avoid purchasing modular facilities as much as possible, and instead invest in renovating older facilities to bring them up to a minimum standard. These older facilities include: World War II wood, and 1950 and 1960s era barracks and administrative buildings. The majority of these buildings were scheduled for destruction. Our intent is to extend their life for a few more years as we have found that this is more cost effective than buying modular facilities. In addition to this growth, BRAC 2005 directed that we move the 7th SFG(A) (2,240 personnel) from Ft Bragg, NC to Eglin AFB, FL. This move is directly linked to the vacating of Fort Bragg facilities to accommodate QDR directed growth of units at Fort Bragg. Our plan is to utilize existing 7th SFG(A) facilities at Ft Bragg to stand up three new Civil Affairs battalions within the 95 CA Brigade, and a 4th Special Forces Battalion in the 3rd SFG(A). Effectively, we have synchronized the construction of facilities at Eglin AFB with the growth at Fort Bragg. Our synchronization plan is currently at risk due to a one year delay in the environmental impact survey at Eglin AFB, a delay that portends to upset the timely construction of facilities - which would create a domino effect of delaying fielding of our QDR-directed force structure. The 7th SFG(A) is scheduled to move to Eglin AFB during the summer of 2010, but could be in jeopardy of slipping to the summer of 2011. We are very concerned about any delays in that move as it would directly affect our ability to synchronize facilities with growth at

Fort Bragg, and cause increases in the project's construction cost estimates, which will exacerbate already problematic MILCON funding issues..

## **Conclusion.**

Our efforts will remain focused on our mission. Solid plans are in place to meet growth and challenges while maintaining standards. Our success will come from the finest trained and prepared ARSOF warriors in the world. With your persistent support, ARSOF will continue to play a key role in America's and the world's defeat of terrorism. We understand that the fight will take a longtime and that we must continue to implement our transformation efforts, grow and deploy into combat at the same time. We also know that when the nation needs highly trained dedicated men and women, ARSOF will answer the call.