

United States Special Operations Command



SOCOM
2020

Forging the Tip of the Spear



As Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), it is my distinct privilege to command our nation's Special Operations Forces (SOF). The selfless dedication and excellence of our forces demonstrates their unwavering commitment to our Nation.

United States Special Operations Command 2020 (SOCOM 2020) provides strategic direction for SOF to prepare and operate in dynamic and diverse environments. It is the first step in a Strategic Planning Process linking strategy to capability development to resourcing. *SOCOM 2020* will guide efforts to Win the Current Fight, Expand the Global SOF Partnership, Preserve our Force and Families, and provide Responsive Resourcing.

It is an undeniable reality the U.S. cannot address the challenges of tomorrow alone. In an era of increasing responsibilities, competing priorities and reduced resources, we must build a Global SOF network of like-minded interagency, allies and partners who proactively anticipate threats and are prepared to operate toward cooperative security solutions in cost-effective ways. We must think differently, seek greater understanding of local, regional, and global contexts, and strengthen trust through interagency and partner cooperation.

It is a SOF truth "People are more important than hardware." USSOCOM cannot accomplish any *SOCOM 2020* objectives without preserving the readiness of our force and families. We have initiated numerous programs to sustain a healthy force and their families to ensure a solid foundation for SOF in the future.

USSOCOM remains committed to providing the GCCs with forces organized, trained, educated and equipped to rapidly or persistently address regional contingencies and threats to stability.

Admiral William H. McRaven
Commander
U.S. Special Operations Command

INTRODUCTION

Since 9/11, our operations, ranging from direct action raids, to irregular warfare, to peacetime engagement and relationship building, have significantly contributed to the accomplishment of U.S. strategic and operational objectives. Our unique contribution to national security emanates from superb SOF warriors, who time and time again demonstrate unhesitating dedication to duty, bravery, tenacity, mature judgment, and judicious use of force.

Given the increasing complexity and uncertainty in the global environment, it is imperative USSOCOM

become more agile, even more flexible, and ready for a broader range of contingencies. We shall achieve this through the development of globally networked, innovative, low-cost, and small footprint approaches to achieve our nation's security objectives. Success in the future demands unprecedented levels of trust, confidence, and understanding – conditions that can't be surged.

Effective networks are best created before a crisis. Building networks requires relationships and relationships require trust. Building trust requires time and commitment. Persistent engagement based on mutual trust and understanding best positions the force to build relationships. SOF must sustain and then

improve capacity to shape the operational environment while building relationships based on trust and sharing experiences, hardships and knowledge with our partners. Earning their trust hinges on retaining our unique mastery of combating violent extremist networks – a skill set mastered during the last ten years of conflict. If we do the fundamental tasks well -

“Success in the future demands unprecedented levels of trust, confidence, and understanding – conditions that can't be surged.”

SOF is best positioned to prevent conflict or, when we have to, fight as an empowered force – fast, unpredictable, relentless, and precise.

Moving forward, we must Win our Current Fights, Expand our Global SOF Network, Preserve our Force and Families, and provide Responsive Resourcing to meet dynamic future challenges - USSOCOM must not only continue to pursue terrorists wherever we may find them, we must rebalance the force and tenaciously embrace indirect operations in the - *“Human Domain,” the totality of the physical, cultural, and social environments that influence human behavior in a population-centric conflict.*





These conflicts require unique capabilities to achieve success. While SOF is designed to contribute to or support efforts in every domain of warfare, the vast majority of SOF expertise lies in the human domain of competition, conflict, and war. The Human Domain is about developing understanding of, and nurturing influence among, critical populations. Operating in the Human Domain is a core competency for SOF and we are uniquely suited for successful operations or campaigns to win population-centric conflicts. While SOF operates today in the Human Domain, the expansion of the global SOF network provides a comparative advantage for our nation and partners. It is critical to maintain robust and frequent collaboration with the Geographic Combatant Commanders, interagency, allies, partner nations, coalitions, and our military services to ensure this comparative advantage is realized and sustained.

In the end, our success is ultimately rooted in how well we take care of our most precious resource - the SOF

warriors and their families.

Critical to long-term success is responsive resourcing to ensure we maintain readiness, our technological advantages, lethality, and global agility. Without readiness of the force, no other objectives can be accomplished. We emphasize this in all our guidance and actions.

United States Special Operations Command 2020 provides strategic direction for SOF to prepare, posture, and operate in dynamic and diverse environments, often under ambiguous circumstances. We must think differently, seek greater understanding of local, regional, and global contexts, and strengthen trust through interagency and partner cooperation.

Strategic Guidance Addressing the Evolving Operating Environment

Recent Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) and Chairman's Direction to the Joint Force

“Our Vision is a globally networked force of Special Operations Forces, Interagency, Allies and Partners able to rapidly and persistently address regional contingencies and threats to stability

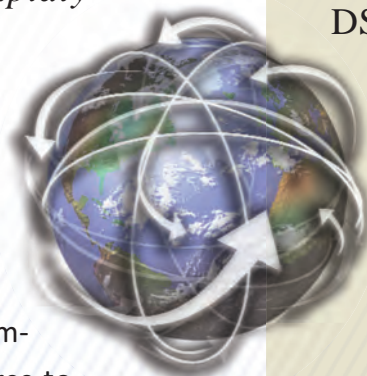
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require changes to the Joint Force in light of a dynamic strategic landscape. The DSG directs the U.S. Military to build a more agile, flexible, ready and technologically advanced force and-

Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.

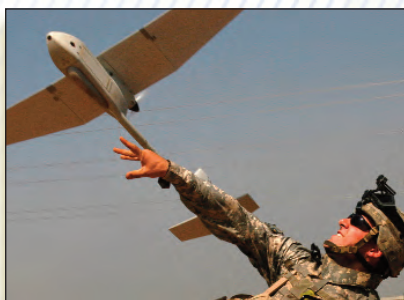
Furthermore, the Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) poses an operational challenge:

How will the joint forces with constrained resources protect U.S. national interests against increasingly capable enemies in an uncertain, complex, rapidly changing, and increasingly transparent world when security challenges simultaneously exhibit both local and global dimensions?



Present global fiscal circumstances are compelling the joint force to prioritize a ready and capable force over retaining force structure as it currently exists. Reducing force structure on a global scale requires increased efficiency, versatility, and interdependence as well as maximizing partnerships to address state and non-state actors' threats to security that no single nation can undertake. USSOCOM remains focused on investment decisions maximizing current and future agility and responsiveness to provide Geographic Combatant Commander intrinsically versatile forces to face an unpredictable strategic environment. We will capitalize on networks and interdependency that maximizes effectiveness in conflict prevention and evolving Irregular Warfare.

The asymmetric capabilities proliferating throughout an increasingly connected global world require SOF to leverage game changing technologies such as cyber, robotics, nanotechnology, and ISR to ensure our comparative advantage and ability to achieve success despite rapidly evolving future challenges.



“ Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG)

In executing the ten primary missions of the armed forces, the DSG directs the joint force to:

- offer versatility across the range of missions
- make investment decisions that maximize agility and responsiveness
- maintain ready and capable forces over retaining existing force structure
- capitalize on networks and interdependency to maximize effectiveness in deterrence and evolving warfare

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In addition to technological challenges, the Chairman's Strategic Guidance to the Joint Force challenges the Joint Force to evolve to meet future strategic challenges, to “think differently,” and to adapt to an environment that exhibits an accelerating rate of change. SOF's strength is its ability to understand the strategic environment and address challenges via networking with partners and allies. Together, we can prevent future conflict or provide a rapid response capability to defeat adversary networks. Increased information transparency is causing host nation leaders





Chairman's Strategic Direction to the Joint Force

The Joint Force of 2020 will:

- be smaller, interdependent, and integrated
- capitalize on emerging joint operations as SOF, Cyber, robotics, and ISR as central to joint operations
- leverage game changing capabilities to enhance smaller well trained and equipped force



to respond to sensitivities of U.S. presence. Guaranteed access across the globe requires smaller, interdependent, innovative, decentralized, networked, adaptive, versatile and affordable SOF units.

USSOCOM's Support of Defense Strategic Guidance

Execution of the DSG and Chairman's Strategic Direction requires that we achieve our end state of globally networked Special Operations Forces, Interagency, Allies and Partners capable of rapidly or persistently addressing regional contingencies and threats to stability.

We will provide unwavering support to the Global Combatant Commanders' wherever our national interests are at stake. We will remain a pre-eminent Counterterrorism force and we will continually improve our indirect operations in the human domain. Our efforts are aligned along four priority lines of operation:



Win the Current Fight

The imperative to winning the current fight is first and foremost our commitment to Afghanistan, a significant international effort. This effort is linked back through both the Joint Staff and Defense Department objectives to the National Security Strategy (NSS). We have achieved unity of effort in this campaign and gained efficiencies by aligning all U.S. and coalition SOF under a single SOF command. This command is responsible for increasing collaboration among SOF entities and providing the synergy necessary to achieve optimal effects on the battlefield. As conventional forces continue to drawdown in Afghanistan, SOF is posturing to shoulder a heavier operational, command and control role with interagency and partner nations. SOF's expertise as advisors and trainers becomes increasingly more important in developing the capability and capacity of the Afghanistan National Security Force to provide sustainable security, transparency, justice, and opportunity for the Afghan people.



Chairman's Strategic Direction to the Joint Force

- Transition Security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Force
- Sustain persistent action against al-Qa'ida and other violent extremists





We are also pursuing violent extremists across the globe wherever we may find them. For the foreseeable future, the United States will deal with various manifestations of inflamed violent extremism, transnational criminal organizations and other threat networks – especially those pursuing weapons of mass destruction. In order to conduct sustained operations around the globe, our Special Operations Forces must adapt to the ever-changing environment. SOF's missions, conducted daily in approximately eighty countries around the world and across terrestrial and maritime seams, are building enduring relationships through training with partner forces and assisting like-minded nations as they address the underlying causes of extremism. These cumulative sustained efforts, when teamed with our service and interagency partners, keep the pressure on violent extremist organizations, reduce their capacity to conduct attacks, especially WMD, and protect our national interests.

Expand the Global SOF Network

As we transition into a period of potentially constrained resources, it is more critical than ever to prevent or deter hostilities before they turn into major regional conflicts. Maintaining

security and supporting our allies and partners is a vital interest outlined in the NSS and is best realized by conflict prevention. In support of Ambassadors and GCCs, aligned with our interagency partners, SOF will provide small unit, forward-based persistent presence closely integrated with our partners to protect our interests and provide rapid response. We simply cannot surge trust at the time of crisis.

Another key element of our global SOF network requires enhancing the capabilities of our Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). Over a multi-year deliberate process, supported by detailed analysis and war gaming, we will properly empower the TSOCs to increase capacity and capabilities of SOF support to the GCCs. Likewise, we are enhancing our presence in the National Capital Region (NCR) to responsibly support decision making with our interagency partners. Strengthening our TSOCs

“Chairman’s Strategic Direction to the Joint Force”

- Expand interagency and international cooperation
- Promote multilateral security approaches
- Pioneer new ways to combine and employ emergent capabilities such as Special Forces
- Coordinating military power with the diplomacy and development efforts of our government and those of our allies and partners
- It means a regionally postured but globally networked and flexible force that can be scaled and scoped to demand

and interagency interaction facilitates our development of Regional SOF Coordination Centers (RSCCs). These multilateral coordination forums established in key locations around the world are to promote multinational collaboration, education and training opportunities with Partner Nation SOF. RSCCs shall facilitate long-term relationships and burden-sharing to achieve mutual security objectives.



Preserve the Force and Families

A SOF Universal Truth is that “people are more important than hardware.” To ensure readiness, USSOCOM must ensure our SOF warriors and their families are properly cared for by reducing the stress they face from the lack of predictability and demanding operational tempos exacerbated by significant time spent away from home. Increased difficulty also occurs as forces reconnect and reintegrate into family activities. We will provide responsive counseling, medical, psychological, and rehabilitative care to institutionalize the resiliency of our SOF warriors and their families.

Everyone in the fight has been significantly changed by the fight. Providing the treatment



Chairman’s Strategic Direction to the Joint Force

- Our profession is our people
- Keep faith with our military family
- Strengthen the force and enhance resiliency
- Reduce the stigma and reduce barriers to seeking mental health services

our troops need and eliminating the stigma associated with asking for help is a top priority for all SOCOM leaders. For our families, we are implementing family programs identified as best practices and aggressively institutionalizing education for our Chaplains and Mental Health professionals to emphasize family and life initiatives. In addition to increasing the predictability of service member deployments, SOCOM will redouble our efforts to reach out to families with initiatives like our social media page and more deliberate Command Communications. We all (including loved ones) seek to be healthy in mind and body. We are committed to sustaining our force and families and will not break faith with our SOF family.

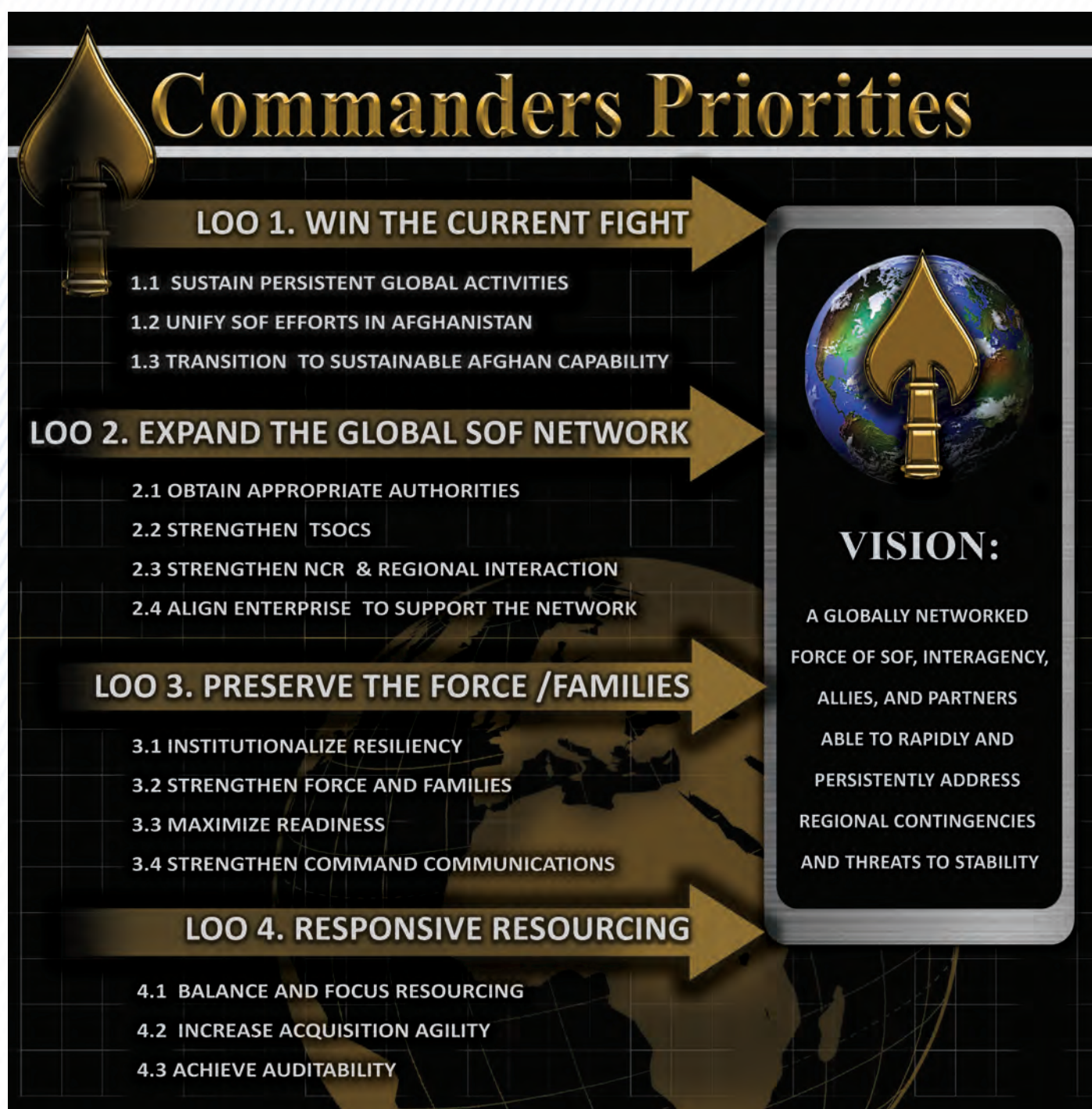
Responsive Resourcing

USSOCOM has an obligation to appropriately train, educate, and equip the warriors from whom we ask so much. We recognize the Department of Defense’s challenging fiscal environment. We are committed to our disciplined resourcing process to ensure success as USSOCOM’s missions, responsibilities, and capabilities continue to adapt to the current and projected fiscal landscape. We will continue to reduce and divest investments in

underperforming programs and activities, manage cost-growth in acquisition programs, and implement requirements of the combatant command review, Executive Order mandates, and DOD auditability guidance.

As we implement our priority initiatives, we will ensure resourcing processes reflect the priorities of our strategic guidance. The total FY 2013 USSOCOM budget request is 1.7% of the overall proposed DoD budget. When combined

with the Service-provided capabilities necessary to enable our operations, we still represent less than 4% of the DoD total budget. While maintaining cost effectiveness, we will remain within our programmed manpower growth. This growth is essential for maintaining the agile global SOF engagements that underpin the Defense Strategic Guidance. Additionally, USSOCOM's ability to execute rapid acquisition of its materiel and service programs is essential to meet the high demand to deliver and field



Commanders Priorities

LOO 1. WIN THE CURRENT FIGHT

- 1.1 SUSTAIN PERSISTENT GLOBAL ACTIVITIES
- 1.2 UNIFY SOF EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN
- 1.3 TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE AFGHAN CAPABILITY

LOO 2. EXPAND THE GLOBAL SOF NETWORK

- 2.1 OBTAIN APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES
- 2.2 STRENGTHEN TSOCs
- 2.3 STRENGTHEN NCR & REGIONAL INTERACTION
- 2.4 ALIGN ENTERPRISE TO SUPPORT THE NETWORK

LOO 3. PRESERVE THE FORCE /FAMILIES

- 3.1 INSTITUTIONALIZE RESILIENCY
- 3.2 STRENGTHEN FORCE AND FAMILIES
- 3.3 MAXIMIZE READINESS
- 3.4 STRENGTHEN COMMAND COMMUNICATIONS

LOO 4. RESPONSIVE RESOURCING

- 4.1 BALANCE AND FOCUS RESOURCING
- 4.2 INCREASE ACQUISITION AGILITY
- 4.3 ACHIEVE AUDITABILITY

VISION:

A GLOBALLY NETWORKED
FORCE OF SOF, INTERAGENCY,
ALLIES, AND PARTNERS
ABLE TO RAPIDLY AND
PERSISTENTLY ADDRESS
REGIONAL CONTINGENCIES
AND THREATS TO STABILITY

“ Chairman’s Strategic Direction to the Joint Force

- Be affordable in every way possible
- ...we will need to be even more joint - advancing interdependence and integrating new capabilities... to build a Joint Force that preserves options for our Nation

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critical materiel requirements and new technologies. USSOCOM’s ability to maintain the competitive advantage on the battlefield depends on our ability to out-think and out-pace the enemy in speed, technology, equipment, and maneuverability. SOF capabilities are directly related to investments we make through our procurement budget.

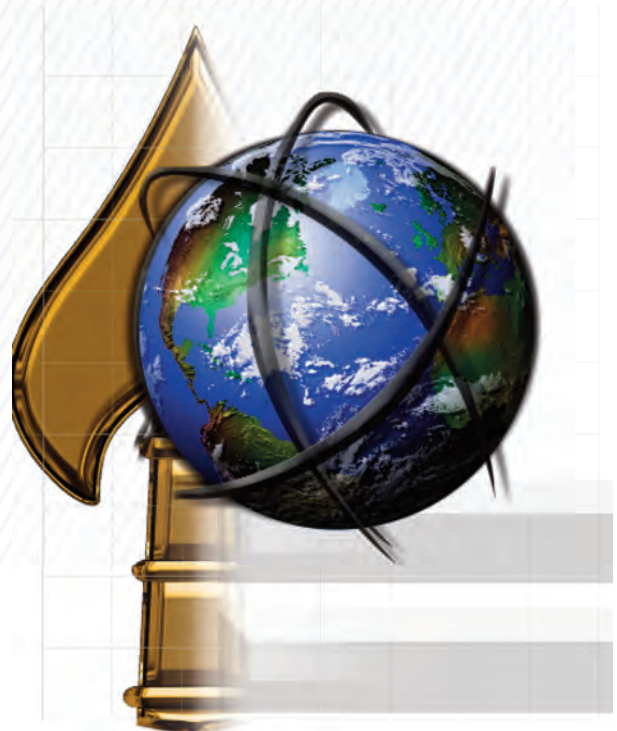
Where We Will Be in 2020

The Global SOF Enterprise will become a globally networked force of Special Operations Forces, Services, Interagency, Allies and Partners able to rapidly and persistently address regional contingencies and threats to stability.

The SOF Operator will remain the strategic cornerstone of the Global SOF Enterprise. This expert warrior is regionally grounded, well-educated, diplomatically astute, and a master of the SOF tradecraft. As the integrating factor at the most fundamental level of operations and activities, the innovative, tenacious, and networked SOF Operator is hand-selected, rigorously trained, and deliberately educated throughout their career to increase their strategic vision - enabling them to better shape the environment and exploit emerging opportunities. The SOF

Operator adapts to new challenges and rapidly responds to global crises leveraging the Global SOF networks created by their excellence in the human domain. The SOF operator understands and practices the principles of Mission Command and decentralized operations. They cultivate a bias for action in their subordinates, develop mutual trust and understanding, and exercise moral nerve and restraint.

Defense Strategic Guidance requires and *SOCOM 2020* directs the SOF Enterprise to renew and strengthen global SOF partnerships to refine the United States’ leadership in the 21st century. In an age of economic constraint and a politically enflamed global landscape, the SOF Enterprise of 2020 employs agile, flexible, low-visibility and highly adaptable capabilities against insurgency, countering WMD, terrorism, and nexus with transnational crime. The SOF Enterprise of 2020 shall project power, promote stability, and prevent conflict.



United States Special Operations Command



SOF TRUTHS



Humans are more important than hardware



Quality is better than quantity



SOF cannot be mass produced



Competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur



Most Special Operations require non-SOF support



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