



U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress

Andrew Feickert
Specialist in Military Ground Forces

September 18, 2013

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

RS21048

Summary

Special Operations Forces (SOF) play a significant role in U.S. military operations, and the Administration has given U.S. SOF greater responsibility for planning and conducting worldwide counterterrorism operations. U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has about 67,000 active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel from all four services and Department of Defense (DOD) civilians assigned to its headquarters, its four components, and one sub-unified command.

In February 2013, based on a request from USSOCOM and the concurrence of Geographic and Functional Combatant Commanders and Military Service Chiefs and Secretaries, the Secretary of Defense reassigned the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) to USSOCOM. This means that USSOCOM now has the responsibility to organize, train, and equip TSOCs as it previously had for all assigned SOF units. While USSOCOM is now responsible for the organizing, training, and equipping of TSOCs, the Geographic Combatant Commands will continue to have operational control over the TSOCs.

The current Unified Command Plan (UCP) stipulates USSOCOM is responsible only for synchronizing planning for global operations to combat terrorist networks. This limits its ability to conduct activities designed to deter emerging threats, build relationships with foreign militaries, and potentially develop greater access to foreign militaries. USSOCOM is proposing changes that would, in addition to its current responsibilities, include the responsibility for deploying and, when directed, employing SOF globally with the approval of the Geographic Combatant Command.

In March 2013, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel directed a DOD-wide Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR). SCMR proposals include a possible reduction of USSOCOM and Service Component Headquarters by as much as 20%, a reduction in headquarters intelligence staff and capabilities, and possible reductions to SOF force structure.

USSOCOM's FY2014 budget request was \$7.483 billion for Operations and Maintenance; \$373.693 million for Research, Development, Test, & Evaluation; \$1.614 billion for Procurement; and \$441.528 million for Military Construction funding. These totals reflect both base budget and Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) requests.

The House and Senate versions of the FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act recommended selected cuts in Operations and Maintenance funding, including limitations on spending for selected proposed family support programs, Regional SOF Coordination Centers, and the USSOCOM National Capitol Region. The House and Senate Defense Appropriations bills also recommended cuts to the Operations and Maintenance budget request and had similar limitations on family support programs, Regional SOF Coordination Centers, USSOCOM National Capitol Region as well as expressed concern "regarding the quality of the operation and maintenance budget justification submitted by the Special Operations Command (SOCOM)."

Potential issues for Congress include U.S. SOF, the SCMR, and the upcoming 2014 QDR and the Global SOF Network and related concerns about its necessity and how certain aspects of this network will be developed in a highly resource-constrained budgetary environment. This report will be updated.

Contents

Background.....	1
Overview	1
Command Structures and Components	1
Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs).....	1
Expanded USSOCOM Responsibilities	2
Proposed Changes to the Unified Command Plan (UCP)	3
USSOCOM Service Components.....	3
Army Special Operations Command.....	3
Air Force Special Operations Command.....	4
Naval Special Warfare Command	5
Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC)	6
Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).....	6
Organizational and Budgetary Issues.....	7
2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report SOF-Related Directives	7
USSOCOM and the Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR)	8
Possible Cuts to USSOCOM Headquarters Staff.....	8
Proposed Strategic Approaches to Reducing Force Structure.....	8
FY2014 USSOCOM Budget Request	9
FY2014 USSOCOM Budget Request Breakdown.....	9
FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1960).....	9
Selected FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1960) USSOCOM Legislative Provisions	9
FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1197).....	12
Selected FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1197) USSOCOM Legislative Provisions	12
FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2397).....	14
Selected FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill USSOCOM Legislative Provisions.....	14
FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill (S. 1429)	19
Selected FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill USSOCOM Legislative Provisions.....	19
Potential Issues for Congress.....	20
U.S. Special Operations Forces, the Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR), and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)	20
The Global SOF Network.....	20
Global SOF Network-Related Concerns	22

Tables

Table 1. FY2014 USSOCOM Budget Request, by Funding Category	9
---	---

Contacts

Author Contact Information.....	23
---------------------------------	----

Background

Overview

Special Operations Forces (SOF) are elite military units that are highly trained and specially equipped and have the ability to infiltrate into hostile territory through land, sea, or air to conduct a variety of operations, many of them classified. SOF personnel undergo rigorous selection and lengthy specialized training. The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) oversees the training, doctrine, and equipping of all U.S. SOF units.

Command Structures and Components

In 1986, Congress, concerned about the status of SOF within overall U.S. defense planning, passed legislation (P.L. 99-661) to strengthen special operations' position within the defense community. These actions included the establishment of USSOCOM as a new unified command. USSOCOM is headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL, and consists of approximately 2,500 military and Department of Defense (DOD) civilians (not including government contractors). The commander of USSOCOM is a four-star officer who may be from any military service. Navy Admiral William H. McRaven is the current USSOCOM Commander. The USSOCOM Commander reports directly to the Secretary of Defense, although an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD/SOLIC) provides immediate civilian oversight over many USSOCOM activities.

USSOCOM has about 67,000 active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel from all four services and DOD civilians assigned to its headquarters, its four components, and one sub-unified command.¹ USSOCOM's components are the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC); the Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM); the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC); and the Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC). The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) is a USSOCOM sub-unified command.

Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs)

Additional command and control responsibilities are vested in Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). TSOCs were originally sub-unified commands under their respective Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs). TSOCs are special operational headquarters elements designed to support a GCC's special operations logistics, planning, and operational control requirements, and are normally commanded by a general officer.

In February 2013, based on a request from USSOCOM and the concurrence of every Geographic and Functional Combatant Commander and Military Service Chiefs and Secretaries, the Secretary of Defense reassigned the TSOCs to USSOCOM.² This means that USSOCOM now has the

¹ Information in this section, unless otherwise noted is taken from "Fact Book: United States Special Operations Command," USSOCOM Public Affairs, February 2013, p. 10 and CRS discussions with USSOCOM staff.

² Information in this section is taken from USSOCOM Information Paper, "Special Operations Forces: 2020: Theater Special Operations Commands," April 25, 2013.

responsibility to organize, train, and equip TSOCs as it previously had for all assigned SOF units as specified in U.S. Code Title 10, Section 167. While USSOCOM is now responsible for the organizing, training, and equipping of TSOCs, the GCCs will continue to have operational control over the TSOCs.

Current TSOCs are³

- Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH), Homestead Air Force Base, FL;
- Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA), Stuttgart, Germany;
- Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), Stuttgart, Germany;
- Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT), MacDill Air Force Base, FL;
- Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC), Camp Smith, HI;
- Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR), Yongsang, Korea; and
- Special Operations Division U.S. Northern Command (SODNORTH), Peterson Air Force Base, CO. **Note:** While, at present, SODNORTH is not a TSOC, the U.S. NORTHCOM commander has announced that SOCNORTH is planned to be established in early September 2015.⁴

It should also be noted that in 2013, USSOCOM disestablished a TSOC assigned to U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFC) due to DOD's decision to close USJFC.

Expanded USSOCOM Responsibilities

In addition to Title 10 authorities and responsibilities, USSOCOM has been given additional responsibilities. In the 2004 Unified Command Plan (UCP), USSOCOM was given the responsibility for synchronizing DOD plans against global terrorist networks and, as directed, conducting global operations against those networks.⁵ In this regard, USSOCOM "receives reviews, coordinates and prioritizes all DOD plans that support the global campaign against terror, and then makes recommendations to the Joint Staff regarding force and resource allocations to meet global requirements."⁶ In October 2008, USSOCOM was designated the DOD proponent for Security Force Assistance (SFA).⁷ In this role, USSOCOM will perform a synchronizing function in global training and assistance planning similar to the previously described role of planning against terrorist networks.

³ USSOCOM Pamphlet, "United States Special Operations Command, GlobalSOF Network2020," 2013.

⁴ From USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.

⁵ "Fact Book: United States Special Operations Command," USSOCOM Public Affairs, February 2013, p. 10.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Information in this section is from testimony given by Admiral Eric T. Olson, Commander, U.S. SOCOM, to the House Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee on the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for the U.S. Special Operations Command, June 4, 2009. For a more in-depth treatment of Security Force Assistance, see CRS Report R41817, *Building the Capacity of Partner States Through Security Force Assistance*, by Thomas K. Livingston.

Proposed Changes to the Unified Command Plan (UCP)⁸

The Unified Command Plan or UCP is:

A document approved by the President, that sets forth basic guidance to all unified combatant commanders; which establishes their missions, responsibilities, and force structure; delineates the general geographical area of responsibility (AOR) for geographic combatant commanders; and specifies functional responsibilities for functional combatant commanders.⁹

Under the current UCP signed by the President in April 2011, USSOCOM is tasked in accordance with Title 10 U.S.C. 167 to serve as a global SOF provider with the inherent responsibility to coordinate global SOF operations with the Services, Combatant Commanders, the Joint Staff, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The current UCP stipulates that the USSOCOM Commander is only responsible for synchronizing planning for global operations to combat terrorist networks. This limits USSOCOM's ability to conduct activities designed to deter emerging threats, build relationships with foreign militaries, and potentially develop greater access to foreign militaries. USSOCOM is proposing changes which would, in addition to its current responsibilities, include the responsibility for *deploying* and, when directed, *employing* SOF globally with the approval of the GCCs. USSOCOM noted that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) approved USSOCOM's proposed UCP changes and these changes will be included in the next round of formal changes that will be submitted to the President for his approval.¹⁰

USSOCOM Service Components

Army Special Operations Command

U.S. Army SOF (ARSOF) includes approximately 26,000 soldiers from the Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserve organized into Special Forces, Ranger, and special operations aviation units, along with civil affairs units, military information units, and special operations support units. ARSOF Headquarters and other resources, such as the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, are located at Fort Bragg, NC. Five active Special Forces (SF) Groups (Airborne),¹¹ consisting of about 1,400 soldiers each, are stationed at Fort Bragg and at Fort Lewis, WA; Fort Campbell, KY; Fort Carson, CO; and Eglin Air Force Base, FL. Special Forces soldiers—also known as the Green Berets—are trained in various skills, including foreign languages, that allow teams to operate independently throughout the world. In December 2005,

⁸ Information in this section is taken from USSOCOM Information Paper, "Special Operations Forces: 2020: Unified Command Plan," March 14, 2013.

⁹ Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, November 8, 2010 (as amended through May 15, 2011), p. 385.

¹⁰ CRS discussions with USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.

¹¹ Airborne refers to "personnel, troops especially trained to effect, following transport by air, an assault debarkation, either by parachuting or touchdown." Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 April 2001 (As Amended Through 31 July 2010).

the 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne) was activated at Fort Bragg, NC, to provide combat service support and medical support to Army special operations forces.¹²

In FY2008, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) began to increase the total number of Army Special Forces battalions from 15 to 20, with one battalion being allocated to each active Special Forces Group. Two Army National Guard Special Forces groups are headquartered in Utah and Alabama. An elite airborne light infantry unit specializing in direct action operations,¹³ the 75th Ranger Regiment, is headquartered at Fort Benning, GA, and consists of three battalions and a regimental special troops battalion that provides support to the three Ranger battalions. Army special operations aviation units, including the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) (SOAR), headquartered at Fort Campbell, KY, feature pilots trained to fly the most sophisticated Army rotary-wing aircraft in the harshest environments, day or night, and in adverse weather.

Some of the most frequently deployed SOF assets are Civil Affairs (CA) units, which provide experts in every area of civil government to help administer civilian affairs in operational theaters. The 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) is the only active CA unit that exclusively support USSOCOM. In September 2011 the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade was activated to support U.S. Army General Purpose Forces (GPFs). All other CA units reside in the Reserves and are affiliated with Army GPF units. Military Information Support Operations (formerly known as psychological operations) units disseminate information to large foreign audiences through mass media. Two active duty Military Information Support Groups (MISG)—the 4th Military Information Support Group (MISG) (Airborne) and 8th Military Information Support Group (MISG) (Airborne)—are stationed at Fort Bragg, and their subordinate units are aligned with Geographic Combatant Commands.

Air Force Special Operations Command¹⁴

The Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is one of the Air Force's 10 major commands with approximately 17,000 Active Duty, Reserve, and civilian personnel. While administrative control of AFSOC is overseen by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), operational control is managed by the USSOCOM commander. AFSOC units operate out of four major continental United States (CONUS) locations and two overseas locations. The headquarters for AFSOC, the first Special Operations Wing (1st SOW), and the 720th Special Tactics Group are located at Hurlburt Field, FL. The 27th SOW is at Cannon AFB, NM. The 352nd and 353rd Special Operations Groups provide forward presence in Europe (RAF Mildenhall, England) and in the Pacific (Kadena Air Base, Japan) respectively. The Air National Guard's 193rd SOW at Harrisburg, PA, and the Air Force Reserve Command's 919th SOW at Duke Field, FL, complete

¹² "United States Special Operations Command Fact Book 2012," USSOCOM Public Affairs, January 2012, p. 14.

¹³ Direct action operations are short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments, as well as employing specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives.

¹⁴ Information in this section is from "Fact Book: United States Special Operations Command," USSOCOM Public Affairs, February 2013, p. 18 and Lt. Gen. Wurster's presentation to the Air Force Association, September 14 2010, http://www.afa.org/events/conference/2010/scripts/Wurster_9-14.pdf, and "United States Special Operations Command Fact Book 2012," USSOCOM Public Affairs, January 2012, p. 18 and CRS discussions with USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.

AFSOC's major units. A training center, the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School and Training Center (AFSOTC), is located at Hurlburt Field. AFSOC conducts the majority of its specialized flight training through an arrangement with Air Education and Training Command (AETC) via the 550th SOW at Kirtland AFB, NM. AFSOC's four active-duty flying units are composed of more than 100 fixed and rotary-wing aircraft.

In March 2009, Headquarters AFSOC declared initial operational capability (IOC)¹⁵ for the CV-22.¹⁶ USSOCOM plans for all 50 CV-22s to be delivered to AFSOC by 2015.¹⁷ Despite critical reviews of the aircraft, AFSOC considers the CV-22 "central to our future."¹⁸ AFSOC operates a diverse fleet of modified aircraft. Of 12 major design series aircraft, 7 are variants of the C-130, the average age of some of which is over 40 years old, dating from the Vietnam era. Because of the age of the fleet, AFSOC considers recapitalization one of its top priorities.

AFSOC's Special Tactics experts include Combat Controllers, Pararescue Jumpers, Special Operations Weather Teams, and Tactical Air Control Party (TACPs). As a collective group, they are known as Special Tactics and have also been referred to as "Battlefield Airmen." Their basic role is to provide an interface between air and ground forces, and these airmen have highly developed skill sets. Usually embedded with Army, Navy, or Marine SOF units, they provide control of air fire support, medical and rescue expertise, or weather support, depending on the mission requirements.

As directed in the 2010 QDR, AFSOC plans to increase aviation advisory manpower and resources resident in the 6th Special Operations Squadron (SOS). The 6th SOS's mission is to assess, train, and advise partner nation aviation units with the intent to raise their capability and capacity to interdict threats to their nation. The 6th SOS provides aviation expertise to U.S. foreign internal defense (FID) missions.

Naval Special Warfare Command¹⁹

The Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) is composed of approximately 7,000 personnel, including active-duty Special Warfare Operators, known as SEALs; Special Warfare Boat Operators, known as Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (SWCC); reserve personnel; support personnel; and civilians. NSWC is organized around 10 SEAL Teams, 2 SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) Teams, and 3 Special Boat Teams. SEAL Teams consist of six SEAL platoons each, consisting of 2 officers and 16 enlisted personnel. The major operational components of NSWC include Naval Special Warfare Groups One, Three, and Eleven, stationed in Coronado, CA, and Naval Special Warfare Groups Two, Four, and Ten and the Naval Special Warfare Development Group in Little Creek, VA. These components deploy SEAL Teams, SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams, and Special Boat Teams worldwide to meet the training, exercise, contingency,

¹⁵ According to DOD, IOC is attained when some units and/or organizations in the force structure scheduled to receive a system (1) have received it and (2) have the ability to employ and maintain it.

¹⁶ The CV-22 is the special operations version of the V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft used by the Marine Corps.

¹⁷ USSOCOM Acquisitions and Logistics office, <http://www.socom.mil/soal/Pages/FixedWing.aspx>.

¹⁸ For further detailed reporting on the V-22 program, see CRS Report RL31384, *V-22 Osprey Tilt-Rotor Aircraft Program*, by Jeremiah Gertler.

¹⁹ Information in this section is from Naval Special Warfare Command website, <http://www.public.navy.mil/nsw/pages/Mission.aspx>, accessed January 6, 2012, and "Fact Book: United States Special Operations Command," USSOCOM Public Affairs, February 2013, p. 16 and CRS discussions with USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.

and wartime requirements of theater commanders. Because SEALs are considered experts in special reconnaissance and direct action missions—primary counterterrorism skills—NSWC is viewed as well postured to fight a globally dispersed enemy ashore or afloat. NSWC forces can operate in small groups and have the ability to quickly deploy from Navy ships, submarines and aircraft, overseas bases, and forward-based units.

Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC)²⁰

On November 1, 2005, DOD announced the creation of the Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) as a component of USSOCOM. MARSOC consists of three subordinate units: the Marine Special Operations Regiment, which includes 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalions; the Marine Special Operations Support Group; the Marine Special Operations Intelligence Battalion; and the Marine Special Operations School. MARSOC Headquarters, the 2nd and 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalions, the Marine Special Operations School, and the Marine Special Operations Support Group and the Marine Special Operations Intelligence Battalion are stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC. The 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion is stationed at Camp Pendleton, CA. MARSOC forces have been deployed worldwide to conduct a full range of special operations activities. MARSOC missions include direct action, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, counterterrorism, information operations, and unconventional warfare. MARSOC currently has approximately 3,000 personnel assigned. MARSOC reportedly at present consists of 625 critical skills operators, 32 teams, and 9 companies, but plans to expand to 844 critical skills operators, 48 teams, and 12 companies by 2016.²¹

Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC)²²

From JSOC's official website:

The Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) is a subunified command of the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). It is charged to study special operations requirements and techniques, ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct special operations exercises and training, and develop joint special operations tactics.

Despite its innocuous sounding charter, JSOC has made incredible strides in the special operations field and is comprised of an impressive amalgamation of rigorously screened and accessed Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians. These men and women possess unique and specialized skills, and are routinely among the best in their field. Among them are seasoned combat veterans who cut their teeth by participating in joint special operations like the Son Tay Prison Raid in Vietnam War which took place in 1970, long before JSOC was activated. More recent members of the Command include active duty special operations veterans of all services who have successfully completed the toughest training regiments and demonstrated their mettle under the most challenging and difficult circumstances, including

²⁰ Information in this section is from ““Fact Book: United States Special Operations Command,” USSOCOM Public Affairs, February 2013, p. 20 and CRS discussions with USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.

²¹ Amanda Wilcox, “MarSOC Continues Growing Despite Marine Corps Drawdown,” *Jacksonville (NC) Daily News*, November 25, 2012.

²² Taken directly from JSOC Website, <http://www.socom.mil/pages/jointspecialoperationscommand.aspx>, August 8, 2013.

combat. As a result, past and present members of JSOC have participated in all of our Nation's wars and contingency operations since it was activated in 1980. Included among the places that military and civilian members of the Command have previously served our Nation are Desert One in Iran (1980), Grenada (1983), the Mediterranean Sea during the Achille Lauro hijacking (1985), Panama (1989), the Mideast during the Gulf War (1991), Somalia (1993), Haiti (1994), the Balkans (1996-2002), Afghanistan (2001-present), and Iraq (2003-present).

The Command is always decisively engaged in working to fulfill its charter and typically has members located throughout the world at any given time. An incredibly busy Command, JSOC accomplished its assigned missions successfully in the face of expanding commitments largely due to the quality, dedication, and patriotism of its military and civilian members and the family members who support them.

Organizational and Budgetary Issues

2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report SOF-Related Directives²³

USSOCOM is still operating under 2010 QDR guidance until the next QDR, which is planned to be issued in early 2014. The 2010 QDR contained a number of SOF-related directives pertaining to personnel, organizations, and equipment. These include the following:

- To increase key enabling assets²⁴ for special operations forces.
- To maintain approximately 660 special operations teams;²⁵ 3 Ranger battalions; and 165 tilt-rotor/fixed-wing mobility and fire support primary mission aircraft.
- The Army and USSOCOM will add a company of upgraded cargo helicopters (MH-47G) to the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.
- The Navy will dedicate two helicopter squadrons for direct support to naval special warfare units.
- To increase civil affairs capacity organic to USSOCOM.
- Starting in FY2012, purchase light, fixed-wing aircraft to enable the Air Force's 6th Special Operations squadron to engage partner nations for whose air forces such aircraft might be appropriate, as well as acquiring two non-U.S. helicopters to support these efforts.

The significance of these directives is that they serve as definitive goals for USSOCOM growth and systems acquisition as well as directing how the services will support USSOCOM.

²³ Information in this section is from Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 2010.

²⁴ Enabling assets are a variety of conventional military units that are assigned to support special operations forces.

²⁵ These teams include Army Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) teams; Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) platoons; Marine special operations teams, Air Force special tactics teams; and operational aviation detachments.

USSOCOM and the Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR)²⁶

In March 2013, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel directed a DOD-wide Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR) with the stated objectives of (1) helping DOD to prepare for sequestration if it continues into FY2014; (2) informing the fiscal guidance given to the military services for their FY2015 through FY2016 budget plans; and (3) anchoring the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

Possible Cuts to USSOCOM Headquarters Staff

On July 31, 2013, Secretary of Defense Hagel held a news briefing to discuss the findings of the SCMR.²⁷ While this briefing did not discuss specific actions to be taken as a result of this review, the Secretary of Defense stated that DOD would pursue a 20% reduction of U.S. military billets and government civilian positions in major DOD headquarters, suggesting that USSOCOM headquarters could lose up to 500 of its approximately 2,500 military and civilian personnel. Furthermore, it is also possible that USSOCOM Service Component Headquarters, JSOC, and perhaps even TSOCs might also lose up to 20% of their staffs depending on how DOD defines “major DOD headquarters” in the context of the SCMR. The Secretary of Defense also recommended reducing intelligence analysis and production at combatant command intelligence and operations centers, which could also have a significant impact on USSOCOM headquarters, particularly if currently assigned intelligence personnel are treated separately from USSOCOM staff subject to the proposed 20% reduction; this may mean that more than 500 military and government civilian personnel might be cut from USSOCOM headquarters staff.

Proposed Strategic Approaches to Reducing Force Structure

According to Secretary Hagel, the SCMR examined two possible strategic approaches to reducing force structure: (1) maintain a larger force size or (2) place a premium on maintaining a technological edge.

Under the larger force size construct, conventional forces would be reduced significantly while “making cyber capabilities and special operations forces a high priority,”²⁸ suggesting that USSOCOM forces would not be appreciably cut and perhaps even modestly increased. The technological edge construct proposes to have a significantly smaller force but one that would be technologically dominant but less deployable and capable, which would also include reductions in special operations forces.

While both constructs lack detail, they do, in a sense, set the “left and right limits” for USSOCOM force levels under consideration by DOD leadership. Before the merits of either

²⁶ Information in this section is taken from Karen Parrish, “Pentagon Review Reveals Best, Worst Case, Hagel Says,” American Forces Press Service, July 31, 013 and DOD Transcripts, “Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel Holds a Defense Department News Briefing on the Recent Strategic Choices Management Review,” July 31, 2013.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Karen Parrish, “Pentagon Review Reveals Best, Worst Case, Hagel Says,” American Forces Press Review, July 31, 2013.

approach can be evaluated from a policy perspective, DOD will need to provide additional details about these proposed courses of action.

FY2014 USSOCOM Budget Request²⁹

USSOCOM’s FY2014 budget request was \$9.913 billion—a 4% reduction over the \$10.409 billion FY2013 budget request. This includes both the Base Budget and Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) funding.

FY2014 USSOCOM Budget Request Breakdown

Table I. FY2014 USSOCOM Budget Request, by Funding Category

Funding Category	Base Budget	OCO	Total
Operations & Maintenance (O&M)	\$5.261 billion	\$2.222 billion	\$7.483 billion
Procurement	\$1.586 billion	\$27.529 million	\$1.614 billion
Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E)	\$373.693 million	—	\$373.693 million
Military Construction (MILCON)	\$441.528 million	—	\$441.528 million
Totals	\$7.663 billion	\$2.250 billion	\$9.913 billion

Source: Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 President’s Budget Submission, United States Special Operations Command, April 2013.

FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1960)³⁰

The House version of the FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) recommended fully funding USSOCOM’s Procurement, RDT&E, and MILCON budget requests but recommended a \$30.752 million decrease to USSOCOM’s O&M Base Budget request. This decrease included reductions in flying hours programs, the International SOF Information Sharing System, the pilot program for SOF family members, preservation of the force human performance and resiliency programs, Regional SOF Coordination Centers, and the USSOCOM National Capitol Region program.³¹

Selected FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1960) USSOCOM Legislative Provisions

Selected major USSOCOM-specific provisions are highlighted in the following sections:

²⁹ Information in this section is taken from Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 President’s Budget Submission, United States Special Operations Command, April 2013.

³⁰ H.R. 1960, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, July 8, 2013.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 1017.

SECTION 554. FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES ASSIGNED TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES.

(a) **PILOT PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED.**—Consistent with such regulations as the Secretary of Defense may prescribe to carry out this section, the Commander of the United States Special Operations Command may conduct up to three pilot programs to assess the feasibility and benefits of providing family support activities for the immediate family members of members of the Armed Forces assigned to special operations forces.

(b) **SELECTION OF PROGRAMS.**—In selecting the pilot programs to be conducted under subsection (a), the Commander shall—

(1) identify family support activities that have a direct and concrete impact on the readiness of special operations forces, but that are not being provided to the immediate family members of members of the Armed Forces assigned to special operations forces by the Secretary of a military department; and

(2) conduct a cost-benefit analysis of each family support activity proposed to be included in a pilot program.

(c) **EVALUATION.**—The Commander shall develop outcome measurements to evaluate the success of each family support activity included in a pilot program under subsection (a).

(d) **ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY.**—The Commander may expend up to \$5,000,000 during each fiscal year specified in subsection (f) to carry out the pilot programs under subsection (a).

(e) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “Commander” means the Commander of the United States Special Operations Command.

(2) The term “immediate family members” has the meaning given that term in section 1789(c) of Title 10, United States Code.

(3) The term “special operations forces” means those forces of the Armed Forces identified as special operations forces under section 167(i) of such title.

(f) **DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORITY**

The authority provided by subsection (a) is available to the Commander during fiscal years 2014 through 2016.

(g) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after completing a pilot program under subsection (a), the Commander shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report describing the results of the pilot program.

SECTION 1076. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES AND UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Defense shall conduct a review of the United States Special Operations Forces organization, capabilities, and structure.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than the date on which the budget of the President is submitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, for fiscal year 2015, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the review conducted under subsection (a). Such report shall include an analysis of each of the following:

(1) The organizational structure of the United States Special Operations Command and each subordinate component, as in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) The policy and civilian oversight structures for Special Operations Forces within the Department of Defense, as in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act, including the statutory structures and responsibilities of the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict within the Department.

(3) The roles and responsibilities of United States Special Operations Command and Special Operations Forces under section 167 of Title 10, United States Code.

(4) Current and future special operations peculiar requirements of the commanders of the geographic combatant commands, Theater Special Operations Commands, and command relationships between United States Special Operations Command and the geographic combatant commands.

(5) The funding authorities, uses, and oversight mechanisms of Major Force Program–11.

(6) Changes to structure, authorities, oversight mechanisms, Major Force Program–11 funding, roles, and responsibilities assumed in the 2014 2 Quadrennial Defense Review.

(7) Any other matters the Secretary of Defense determines are appropriate to ensure a comprehensive review and assessment.

(c) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the report required by subsection (b) is submitted, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the congressional defense committees a review of the report. Such review shall include an assessment of United States Special Operations Forces organization, capabilities, and force structure with respect to conventional force structures and national military strategies.

SECTION 1245. LIMITATION ON ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES COORDINATION CENTERS.

(a) **LIMITATION.**—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended to plan, prepare, establish, or implement any “Regional Special Operations Forces Coordination Center” (RSCC) or similar regional coordination entities.

(b) **EXCLUSION.**—The limitation contained in subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to any RSCC or similar regional coordination entity authorized by statute, including the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization Special Operations Headquarters authorized under section 1244 f the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall submit to the congressional committees specified in subsection (d) a report on the following:

(1) A detailed description of the intent and purpose of the RSCC concept.

(2) Defined and validated requirements justifying the establishment of RSCCs or similar entities within each geographic combatant command, to include how such centers have been coordinated and de-conflicted with existing regional and multilateral frameworks or approaches.

(3) An explanation of why existing regional centers and multilateral frameworks cannot satisfy the requirements and needs of the Department of Defense and geographic combatant commands.

(4) Cost estimates across the Future Years Defense Program for such centers, to include estimates of contributions of nations participating in such centers.

(5) Any other matters that the Secretary of Defense or Secretary of State determines appropriate.

(d) SPECIFIED CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The congressional committees referred to in subsection (c) are—

(1) The congressional defense committees; and

(2) The Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1197)³²

The Senate version of the FY2014 NDAA authorizes \$7.64 billion for USSOCOM in base budget and \$2.5 billion for OCO.

Selected FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1197) USSOCOM Legislative Provisions

Selected major USSOCOM-specific provisions are highlighted in the following sections:

SECTION 341. LIMITATION ON FUNDING FOR UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

³² S. 1197, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, June 20, 2013 and Press Release, U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, “Senate Committee on Armed Services Completes Markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014,” June 14, 2013.

(a) **LIMITATION.**—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Defense may be obligated or expended for the United States Special Operations Command National Capital Region (USSOCOM–NCR) until 30 days after the Secretary of Defense submits to the congressional defense committees a report on the USSOCOM–NCR.

(b) **REPORT ELEMENTS.**—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following elements:

(1) A description of the purpose of the USSOCOM-NCR.

(2) A description of the activities to be performed by the USSOCOM–NCR.

(3) An explanation of the impact of the USSOCOM-NCR on existing activities at United States Special Operations Command headquarters.

(4) A detailed, by fiscal year, breakout of the staffing and other costs associated with the USSOCOM-NCR over the future years defense program.

(5) A description of the relationship between the USSOCOM-NCR and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict.

(6) A description of the role of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict in providing oversight of USSOCOM-NCR activities.

(7) Any other matters the Secretary determines appropriate.

SECTION 342. LIMITATION ON FUNDING FOR REGIONAL SPECIAL OPERATIONS COORDINATION CENTERS.

(a) **LIMITATION.**—None of the funds authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2014 for operation and maintenance, Defense-wide, may be obligated or expended for the establishment of Regional Special Operations Coordination Centers (RSCCs).

(b) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than September 30, 2013, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, in coordination with the Commander of the United States Special Operations Command, shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the establishment of RSCCs.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required under paragraph (1) shall outline, at a minimum—

(A) the requirement and justification for the establishment of RSCCs;

(B) the number and locations of planned RSCCs;

(C) the projected cost to establish and maintain the proposed RSCCs in future years;

(D) the relevance to and coordination with other multilateral engagement activities and academic institutes supported by the geographic combatant commanders and the Department of State; and

(E) any legislative authorities that may be needed to establish RSCCs.

FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2397)³³

The House Appropriations Committee recommended decreasing USSOCOM's base budget O&M request by \$21.387 million and shifting it to the Defense Health Program and transferred \$196.641 million from USSOCOM's OCO budget request to the base budget.

Selected FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill USSOCOM Legislative Provisions³⁴

Selected major USSOCOM-specific provisions are highlighted in the following sections:

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND READINESS (p. 90)

The Committee recommendation provides an increase of \$269,399,000 above the budget request to restore readiness reductions to the Special Operations Command fiscal year 2014 operation and maintenance base funding. The Committee recommendation restores funding for flying hours, training, equipment replacement, depot maintenance, and enduring operational expenses. The Consolidated and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 approved a shift of \$885,000,000 from overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding to base funding to begin to transition these enduring readiness requirements into the base budget from the OCO accounts. The Committee is disappointed that the fiscal year 2014 budget request proposes to shift \$194,641,000 back to the OCO accounts and proposes an additional \$74,698,000 in reductions to these readiness activities. Therefore, the Committee recommendation restores these reductions to ensure Special Operations Forces are fully able to meet their long term readiness requirements.

USE OF MAJOR FORCE PROGRAM—11 FUNDS (pp. 90-91)

In an era of increasing fiscal constraint, the Committee believes it is incumbent on the Department of Defense and the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to ensure that Major Force Program— 11 (MFP—11) funds be reserved for its original purpose, to provide the incremental funding necessary for Special Operations Forces (SOF) unique capabilities and items, rather than to supplement or supplant activities that are or should be provided by the military Services. The Committee is concerned that several funding requests in the fiscal year 2014 budget would establish new precedents for the use of MFP—11 funds. In some cases, funds were requested to establish new programs and activities that duplicated Service-provided or Department of Defense programs. In other cases, SOCOM's request would assume responsibility for activities that previously, and more appropriately, were funded by the Services.

³³ Information in this section is taken from H.Rept. 113-113, Department of Defense Appropriations Bill 2104, June 17, 2013 .

³⁴ Ibid.

The Committee is concerned that MFP–11 funds are now perceived as a mechanism to insulate SOCOM from Service budget reductions or to create separate SOF programs that are the responsibility of the Services. It has come to the Committee’s attention that at least one waiver of the use of MFP–11 operation and maintenance funds was granted in fiscal year 2013 in order to establish a new SOF program, a process that the Committee was unaware of prior to this year. Therefore, the Committee directs the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), working with the Comptroller, Special Operations for Financial Management (SOFM), to clearly identify and justify in the fiscal year 2015 budget request all MFP–11 operation and maintenance funding for programs and activities for which: (1) the military Services or other Department of Defense elements previously had responsibility for funding, including those related to special operations; or (2) funds would be transferred between the MFP–11 budget and other Major Force Program budgets, and the justification for such transfers. Further, the Committee directs the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), working with the Comptroller, SOFM, to submit a report not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act to the congressional defense committees outlining the guidelines for the use of MFP–11 operation and maintenance funds, a description of the waiver process to use MFP–11 funds for non-MFP–11 activities, and a list of all waivers granted in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 and the justification for such waivers.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND HUMAN PSYCHOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE AND FAMILY PROGRAMS (pp. 91-92)

The Committee understands the tremendous toll exacted on all servicemembers and their families, including those in the special operations community, after more than a decade of war. The Committee has always made the care of servicemembers and their families its highest priority, including special operators. The Committee appreciates the focus of the Commander, Special Operations Command on the psychological health and well-being of special operations forces and their families. The Committee also recognizes the success of the Services’ embedded behavioral health programs and fully supports their expansion to the special operations community. However, the Committee believes that the mental health needs of all servicemembers, including special operations servicemembers, are most appropriately addressed within the Defense Health Program to ensure the highest quality continuity of care for all servicemembers. Therefore, the Committee recommendation transfers \$21,300,000 requested within the Special Operations Command operation and maintenance budget to the Defense Health Program to address the needs of the special operations community consistent with Service programs. The Committee directs the Service Surgeons General to work with the Commander, Special Operations Command to implement an embedded behavioral health program for special operations units during fiscal year 2014. The budget request also includes \$8,786,000 to establish special operations forces (SOF) unique family resiliency programs. The Committee does not recommend funding for this unauthorized program. The Committee recognizes that the deployment cycles of special operations forces may in some limited circumstances make it more difficult for SOF families to fully participate in family support programs. However, the need for the establishment of separate family support programs exclusively for SOF families has not been demonstrated nor is it currently authorized. The Committee believes it is important for the morale of all servicemembers that there not be inequities among families exclusively based on a servicemember’s assignment. The Committee understands that the pending fiscal year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act authorizes a limited pilot program to assess the feasibility and benefits of SOF family support activities. Therefore, the Committee recommends \$5,000,000 for the pilot program.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND HUMAN PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAM (pp. 92-93)

The Committee recommendation does not include an increase of \$25,305,000 for the Human Physical Performance Program. This request would fund 331 contractors to provide physical training and sports conditioning, sports psychology, and sports nutrition services for special operations forces (SOF), but would not cover the non-salary operational costs or anticipated new facilities associated with this initiative. While military construction funding was requested for new facilities associated with this initiative, the necessary authorization and funding was denied in the pending fiscal year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, as well as in the pending fiscal year 2014 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act.

The Committee has long supported physical training programs to ensure that special operators are in top condition to achieve their mission and to prevent physical injuries. In the past, there has often been a reliance on training programs designed for collegiate or professional athletes, programs which may or may not meet the needs of the special operator. In addition, the physical training requirements vary between special operators based on their mission set. In an attempt to address this challenge, over the last several years at the request of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the Committee has funded the Tactical Athlete Program within the Department of Navy to provide the necessary baseline research for each individual type of SOF operator in order to design appropriate physical training programs to meet those specialized needs. This approach was previously used by the Department of the Army to successfully develop a training program for the 101st Airborne Division.

The Committee recommendation includes continued funding under the Department of the Navy to complete these assessments. The Committee believes that the investment and corresponding results from this research will enable SOCOM to design physical training programs uniquely tailored to the needs of special operators in the most productive and cost effective manner possible. The Committee is concerned that the new program proposed by SOCOM did not utilize the research investment that has been made in order to develop a program that meets the unique needs of special operators in the most cost effective manner possible. Therefore, the Committee does not provide the requested increase to expand this new program.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND ADVANCED EDUCATION PROGRAM (p. 93)

The fiscal year 2014 budget request includes \$8,466,000 for a new Advanced Education Program for the Special Operations Command. Of this amount, \$3,603,000 was requested to fund a National Defense University (NDU) satellite Masters Degree program at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School established with funding from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict. The remaining \$4,863,000 was requested to establish new programs or expand existing programs.

The Committee supports professional military education opportunities for all servicemembers, including those in the special operations forces (SOF) community. While the Committee appreciates the Commander, Special Operations Command's desire to augment the advanced education opportunities for SOF students, it is unclear to the Committee that the proposed programs represent truly SOF-unique requirements and instead may be duplicative of education opportunities provided by the Services.

The Committee understands that SOCOM is in the process of working with the Service Secretaries to establish a process to formalize SOF-unique education requirements.

The Committee directs the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Commander, Special Operations Command, to provide a report to the congressional defense committees not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act, which outlines all SOF-unique educational requirements, includes recommendations to meet such requirements, and describes how the proposed SOCOM educational initiatives compare to Service-offered educational opportunities.

Therefore, the Committee transfers \$3,603,000 from SOCOM's operation and maintenance budget to NDU's budget to maintain appropriate program and budget oversight of all NDU programs. Additionally, the Committee recommendation includes a reduction of \$3,863,000 for new and expanded programs based on concerns regarding duplication and requirements. The remaining \$1,000,000 provided is for existing programs and SOCOM is directed to provide a report to the congressional defense committees not later than 60 days after the enactment of this Act on the use of these funds.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION (p. 93-94)

The Committee recommendation does not include \$10,000,000 to establish a Special Operations Command National Capital Region (SOCOM-NCR) entity. This funding request was also denied in the pending fiscal year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act. The budget justification materials indicate that SOCOM plans to implement this proposal in phases.

The Committee has requested, but has not received, a detailed plan which lays out the full operating capability and end-state envisioned by this proposal and instead has only received information on the phase-zero and phase-one plans. The Committee remains unclear about the function, purpose, and costs associated with the operations, infrastructure, and facilities for this entity both in the interim phase and the final end-state. Further, the Committee has received conflicting information over the course of the last year as to the purpose of this entity. At times it has been described as an efficiency mechanism to relocate over 300 SOCOM personnel to one consolidated location within the NCR. The Committee is confused by this explanation given that the vast majority of SOCOM personnel assigned to the NCR function as liaison officers and Special Operations Support Teams to other federal agencies and as such should remain resident at such agencies. At other times, some functions of the new SOCOM-NCR appear to duplicate functions already resident at SOCOM headquarters. The Committee is concerned that in a time of declining budget resources, it is incumbent upon SOCOM and the Department to fully delineate the functions, responsibilities, facilities requirements, infrastructure, and operating costs associated with this proposal before moving forward in order to carefully assess whether a statutory waiver of the prohibition on relocations into and within the more expensive National Capital Region area is warranted. Should the Secretary of Defense waive the prohibition in Section 8018 of this Act, the Committee believes such a decision should be based on the full operating capability and final end-state agreed to by the Department of Defense.

Therefore, the Commander, Special Operations Command is directed not to obligate or expend funds for the proposed SOCOM-NCR until 30 days after the congressional defense committees receive a copy of the Secretary of Defense's waiver of Section 8018 of this Act and a report which fully describes the anticipated full operating capability and end-state for this entity as follows: (1) a description of the purpose and specific activities to be performed by the SOCOM-NCR; (2) an explanation of the impact of this proposal on existing activities at SOCOM

headquarters and components, including the cost differential associated with relocating these functions from their existing locations to the NCR; and (3) a detailed, by fiscal year, breakout of all staffing and costs, including a long term facilities plan, associated with its establishment over the future years defense plan (fiscal years 2014–2018) and at the full operating capability and planned final end-state.

The Committee will consider a prior approval reprogramming in fiscal year 2014 from within available Special Operations Command operation and maintenance funds for the SOCOM–NCR if the Secretary of Defense grants the waiver of Section 8018 and the congressional defense committees have been provided the required comprehensive report.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (pp. 94-95)

The Committee is concerned regarding the quality of the operation and maintenance budget justification submitted by the Special Operations Command (SOCOM). As a result, the Committee is unable to conduct meaningful oversight of SOCOM's budget requirements as the current justification does not include the necessary level of detail. Due to the failure of the budget justification to provide such information, the Committee is unable to analyze changes and trends over time in SOCOM's budget requirements, conduct comparative analysis with similar Department of Defense budget requirements, or have any understanding or visibility into changing requirements in the year of execution. The budget structure required by Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation (FMR) would provide the information needed. However, in fiscal year 2006, the Department of Defense took action to exempt SOCOM from these requirements and thereby limited congressional visibility and oversight. Since that time, the SOCOM base operation and maintenance budget has grown by 143 percent. Additionally, due to this exemption, SOCOM does not provide meaningful information that details the changing requirements among activities for overseas contingency operations requests.

In a time of declining budget resources, the Committee must have the same level of visibility into SOCOM's funding as is provided by the Services in order to facilitate appropriate oversight. Therefore, the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) and the Comptroller, Special Operations for Financial Management (SOFM) are directed to submit the fiscal year 2015 SOCOM base and OCO operation and maintenance budget justification in accordance with Volume 2A, Chapter 3 of the FMR as such requirements apply to the Services. As required by the FMR, the budget justification shall be delineated and detailed by budget activity group, activity group, and sub-activity group with detailed changes within each sub-activity reflected on OP–5 and OP–32 exhibits. The Committee directs the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) and the Comptroller, SOFM to consult with the Committee during development of the fiscal year 2015 budget on actions being taken to make the necessary changes not later than October 1, 2013.

EMBEDDED MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS (p. 276)

The Committee understands the tremendous toll exacted on all servicemembers and their families, including those in the special operations and National Guard and reserve communities, after more than a decade of war. The Committee has always made the care of forces and their families its highest priority. The Committee appreciates the focus that the Commander, Special Operations Command, has put on the psychological health and well-being of special operations forces and their families and recognizes the importance of providing support to this vulnerable population.

Further, the Committee recognizes the success of the embedded behavioral health program and fully supports its expansion to the special operations community. However, the Committee believes that the mental health needs of all servicemembers, including special operators, are most appropriately addressed within the Defense Health Program by the Service Surgeons General to ensure the highest quality continuity of care for the servicemember.

Therefore, the Committee recommendation transfers \$21,300,000 requested within the Special Operations Command operation and maintenance budget to the Defense Health Program to address the needs of the special operations community. The Committee directs the Service Surgeons General to work with the Commander, Special Operations Command to implement an embedded behavioral health program for special operations units during fiscal year 2014.

The Committee also recognizes that National Guard and reserve personnel in states at high risk for suicide and dangerous behavioral health conditions need convenient access to mental health professionals for proper screening and care. Onsite access to embedded mental health specialists during training assemblies has proven successful in overcoming geographical, stigma, and time barriers that might otherwise bar a member from similar services in an underserved community.

The Committee encourages the Secretary of Defense to work with the Chief, National Guard Bureau and Service Surgeons General to implement an embedded behavioral health program for National Guard and reserve component servicemembers in order to provide reserve component personnel with ready access to screening and treatment during unit training assemblies and urges the Secretary of Defense to robustly fund these programs.

FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill (S. 1429)³⁵

The Senate Appropriations Committee recommended a \$130.230 million decrease to USSOCOM's FY2014 O&M base budget request.

Selected FY2014 Defense Appropriations Bill USSOCOM Legislative Provisions³⁶

Selected major USSOCOM-specific provisions are highlighted below:

Special Operations Command Budget Justification Materials (pp. 51-52)

The level of detail provided in budget justification documents is not sufficient for Special Operations Command's [SOCOM] operation and maintenance [O&M] resources. With increased requirements driving larger budget requests, the Committee needs more itemized information in order to conduct proper oversight. Therefore, the Committee directs that budget activities be established for SOCOM's O&M budget. Additionally, SOCOM is directed to submit an OP-5 Operation and Maintenance Detail exhibit and OP-32 52 Summary of Price and Program Changes exhibit for each budget subactivity.

³⁵ Information in this section is taken from S.Rept. 113-85, Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, 2014 (S. 1429), August 1, 2013.

³⁶ Ibid.

Finally, the Committee directs that normal prior approval reprogramming procedures be used to transfer funds between budget activities in excess of \$15 million. The following table assigns the budget activity and budget subactivity structure:

Budget Activity 1 includes Subactivities:

Combat Development Activities; Flight Operations; Other Operations; Ship/Boat Operations; Base Support; Communications; Force Related Training; Intelligence; Maintenance; Management/Operational Headquarters; Operational Support

Budget Activity 3 includes Subactivities:

Professional Development; Specialized Skill Training;

Budget Activity 4 includes Subactivity:

Acquisition/Program Management

Potential Issues for Congress

U.S. Special Operations Forces, the Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR), and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)

As previously noted, DOD's ongoing SCMR will be used to "anchor the upcoming QDR," which is due to Congress in early 2014. Reports suggest the formal internal DOD QDR process will begin in the early fall of 2013.³⁷ The proposed 20% reduction in major headquarters staff and reduction of combatant command intelligence analysis and operations centers, as well as the two proposed strategic approaches for reducing force structure, will likely form the basis of QDR analysis. Because of USSOCOM's unique and demanding global missions and relatively small size and budgetary resources, these proposals could have a far greater impact on USSOCOM as a combatant command as well as U.S. SOF in general. Before QDR analysis gets "too far down the road," Congress might decide to review with DOD and USSOCOM the specifics of the SCMR's headquarters and force structure proposals as they relate to USSOCOM to insure they take into account USSOCOM's uniqueness and its expected role in the future national security environment. One potential issue for both DOD and Congress is, given the myriad of irregular threats facing the United States and USSOCOM's central role in addressing many of these threats, does it make sense to apply the same type of force sizing construct to USSOCOM that is applied to conventional forces?

The Global SOF Network

In testimony before Congress earlier this year, Admiral McRaven described the threat facing the United States:

³⁷ Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN, Commander, United States Special Operations Command Before the 113th Congress House Armed Services Committee, March 6, 2013.

We live in a world in which the threats have become increasingly networked and pose complex and dynamic risks to U.S. interests around the world. These networks are diversifying their activities, resulting in the convergence of threats that were once linear. In today's environment, this convergence can have explosive and destabilizing effects—there is no such thing as a local problem.

In the words of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “Extremist networks squeezed in one country migrate to others. Terrorist propaganda from a cell in Yemen can incite attacks as far away as Detroit or Delhi. A flu virus in Macao can become an epidemic in Miami. Technology and globalization have made our countries and our communities interdependent and interconnected. And today's threats have become so complex, fast-moving, and cross-cutting that no one nation could ever hope to solve them alone.

In response to this threat, Admiral McRaven proposed the following strategy:

Accordingly, with the support of the Global Combatant Commanders (GCC) and Chiefs of Mission (COM), USSOCOM is enhancing its global network of SOF to support our interagency and international partners in order to gain expanded situational awareness of emerging threats and opportunities. The network enables small, persistent presence in critical locations, and facilitates engagement where necessary or appropriate—all under the authority of the GCC and COM.

Through civil-military support elements and support to public diplomacy, SOF directly supports interagency efforts to counter violent extremist ideology and diminish the drivers of violence that al-Qa'ida and other terrorists exploit. These efforts to prevent terrorist radicalization, recruitment, and mobilization are critical to defeating this dangerous ideology in the future; neither we nor our partners can kill our way to victory in this fight. These efforts require continuity and perseverance. Episodic engagement is inefficient and has the potential to create animosity due to unmet expectations by the governments and populations we are trying to support. Over the long-run, these proactive activities reduce strategic risk, protect American lives, and reduce the need for expensive response to terrorist attacks.

To this end, using already programmed force structure, USSOCOM is methodically enhancing the capabilities of the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) based on a multi-year deliberate process supported by detailed analysis and war gaming. The goal is to increase the capacity and capabilities of the TSOC and their assigned forces to the GCCs to conduct full spectrum special operations—ranging from building partner capacity (particularly in austere, high-risk or sensitive environments) to irregular warfare and counterterrorism.

In partnership with the GCCs, COM, TSOCs, other U.S. Government agencies and partner nations, USSOCOM is working to develop opportunities to improve our partnership with regional Special Operations Forces. This approach was very successful in NATO, with the establishment of the NATO SOF Headquarters which allowed U.S. and partner nations to share information, improve interoperability and, when necessary, work together abroad. While the NATO construct is unique in the world, we believe there are other low-key opportunities that may present themselves in other regions of the world.

In addition to the SOF capacity inherent in all GCCs through the TSOCs, USSOCOM also employs Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLOs) in key U.S. embassies around the world. SOLOs are in-country SOF advisors to the U.S. Country Team. They advise and assist partner nation SOF and help to synchronize activities with the host nation. Currently, there are SOLOs in Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Jordan, Poland, Colombia, France, Turkey, Kenya, and Italy.

Similarly, as part of the global SOF network here at home, one-to-three person Special Operations Support Teams (SOSTs) work with our interagency partners in the National Capital Region (NCR). They comprise the SOF liaison network that assists in synchronizing DOD planning for training, exercises and operations. Currently, we have SOSTs working within 19 U.S. Government departments and agencies.

Given the importance of interagency collaboration, USSOCOM is placing greater emphasis on its presence in the National Capital Region (NCR) to better support coordination and decision making with interagency partners. Thus, USSOCOM began to consolidate its presence in the NCR in early 2012. This is not a duplication of effort. We are focused instead on consolidating USSOCOM elements in the Washington D.C. region under the leadership of the USSOCOM Vice-Commander—who resides in Washington.³⁸

USSOCOM describes this strategic approach as the Global SOF Network that envisions

- a robust and flexible global network of SOF, U.S. government partners, and partner nations;
- Geographic Combatant Commands and Chiefs of Mission with improved special operations capacity; and
- structures, processes, and authorities that enable the network.³⁹

In terms of authorities, aside from the previously described proposed changes to the UCP, USSOCOM is seeking legislative authorities primarily directed at Security Force Assistance (SFA), Regional SOF Coordination Centers, and USSOCOM-developed initiatives for the Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF).

Global SOF Network-Related Concerns

An examination of the proposed Global SOF Network suggests that it would be an ambitious undertaking even under “normal” budgetary conditions. In light of the initial findings and recommendations from DOD’s SCMR, it appears that DOD anticipates budgetary “uncertainty” for the foreseeable future and, with it, highly constrained resources. Given DOD’s announcement of a “20 percent reduction of U.S. military billets and government civilian positions in major DOD headquarters”⁴⁰ and a more recent announcement by the Army of a 25% reduction in Army headquarters at the two-star and above levels,⁴¹ there is concern that USSOCOM’s plans for TSOCs, Regional SOF Coordination Centers, and USSOCOM National Capitol Region, for starters, might not be achievable under these recently announced manning and reduced resources constraints. As in the Army’s case, the remaining services might also opt to impose commensurate or greater cuts to their headquarters, which might further complicate USSOCOM’s plans to establish the Global SOF Network.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Special Operations Forces 2020: The Global SOF Network, March 1, 2013 and CRS discussions with USSOCOM Staff, July 24, 2013.

⁴⁰ Information in this section is taken from Karen Parrish, “Pentagon Review Reveals Best, Worst Case, Hagel Says,” American Forces Press Service, July 31, 2013 and DOD Transcripts, “Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel Holds a Defense Department News Briefing on the Recent Strategic Choices Management Review,” July 31, 2013.

⁴¹ Department of the Army Memorandum, “2013 Focus Areas,” August 14, 2013 from *InsideDefense.com*.

According to USSOCOM, an April 2013 JCS Planning Order directed USSOCOM to develop a detailed campaign plan for the Global SOF Network, further directing that the Global SOF Network be “resource neutral,”⁴² suggesting that if Global SOF Network is established, USSOCOM must find funds elsewhere, perhaps by “cutting” other programs or operations. If this is indeed the case, Congress might wish to explore the following two issues with USSOCOM:

1. What new capabilities will USSOCOM require to create, operate, and sustain the Global SOF Network?
2. What must USSOCOM cut or divest in order to create, operate, and sustain the Global SOF Network?

In the context of “structures, processes, and authorities,” congressional defense committees have imposed spending restraints on selected proposed family support programs, Regional SOF Coordination Centers, USSOCOM National Capitol Region, with one committee expressing concern “regarding the quality of the operation and maintenance budget justification submitted by the Special Operations Command (SOCOM).”⁴³ In aggregate, this suggests that Congress has ongoing concerns primarily with the “structures” aspect of the Global SOF Network and also the necessity of such entities as the Regional SOF Coordination Centers and USSOCOM National Capitol Region. Because of the emphasis USSOCOM leadership is placing on the role that the Global SOF Network is expected to play in defeating networked threats to U.S. interests around the world, it can be assumed that USSOCOM would likely undertake additional dialogue with the congressional defense committees to address concerns reflected in the previously cited defense authorizations and appropriations bills reports. USSOCOM notes that enhanced dialogue will help them develop the resource space and trade-offs needed to form and size the Global SOF Network.⁴⁴

Author Contact Information

Andrew Feickert
Specialist in Military Ground Forces
afeickert@crs.loc.gov, 7-7673

⁴² CRS discussion with USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.

⁴³ H.Rept. 113-113, Department of Defense Appropriations Bill 2014, June 17, 2013, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁴ CRS discussion with USSOCOM staff, September 10, 2013.