



IMPERATIVES FOR 2017

The start of a new presidential administration and the seating of the 115th Congress present a unique opportunity to adjust national security priorities and related appropriations and authorizations. Given the unprecedented diversity of threats facing our nation and our allies, it is incumbent on our political leaders to examine the posture, organization, and capabilities of the Department of Defense (DoD).

Congress must ensure that the budget matches the nation's priorities, and our military leaders should be encouraged to be innovative and bold. A successful strategy will likely require more from Special Operations Forces (SOF) and their partner forces than ever before.

Against this backdrop, the Global SOF Foundation (GSF) aims to highlight the importance of U.S. and partner SOF as among the most capable and affordable instruments in safeguarding our security in a time when adversaries remain prolific and threats extend past national borders.

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Key issues that require decisive action include the following:

SUPPORT TO OPERATIONS:

- Direct the DoD to conduct a comprehensive review of SOF unit readiness to ensure that appropriate levels of equipment are being provided to SOF units both deployed and in garrison or training for deployment. Ensure clarity in SOF-Peculiar end item allowances and that these allowances address SOF unit actual requirements to improve SOF readiness. Direct increases in procurement and concomitant sustainment funding where shortages are identified.
- Direct the DoD to conduct an assessment to both quantify and qualify security assistance funding that goes to partner nation SOF and the impact of these programs on regional security. The report should cover recommendations on how best to implement these programs to create a program of record, funded over multiple years, to build SOF capacity in key partner nations and promote interoperability among global SOF.
- Direct the DoD to identify best practices in establishing Joint SOF Commands in partner nations to better position our international SOF partners for joint and multinational operations.

CAPABILITIES:

- Grow SOF-peculiar Research, Development, Test, & Evaluation (RDT&E) funding to ensure U.S. SOF maintain a competitive advantage over our enemies. This recognizes that SOF-peculiar capabilities are a significant source of innovation and spin-off technologies and that they often proliferate throughout the conventional force, despite the fact that SOF comprises less than one percent of the DoD RDT&E budget.
- Sustain SOF aviation capabilities as a decisive enabler and vital component of the nation's military superiority, recognizing the great demand for SOF aviation by the geographic commanders. Specifically, Congress should study the need and feasibility for a SOF-specific training center for international instructor pilots to expand SOF aviation capabilities to partners, enabling these willing partners to share more of the operational burden.
- Increase funding for U.S. and partner Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) requirements to improve availability and interoperability, while remaining conscious of cost. UAS are a key enabler for SOF, but given frequent deployments, demand for these capabilities far outstrips their availability, resulting in many disjointed systems across the community.
- Increase funding for the lease of SOF maritime support vessels. SOF are often required to operate for extended durations in the littoral environment where a U.S. Navy vessel is not the optimal platform.



FORCE STRUCTURE AND POSTURE:

- Direct the DoD to address improved access for active duty and retired military personnel to innovative, emerging technologies (such as magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy) that demonstrate effective treatment options for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction.
- Authorize USSOCOM's Human Performance Programs to be made available to SOF support and enabler personnel, as these individuals have also endured a high frequency of deployment and its associated consequences. Establish Human Performance Training Centers/Programs at all Echelon Three SOF command locations.
- Sustain U.S. SOF force levels sufficient to address long standing theater requirements, to ensure the force is poised to meet today's and future threats, and to alleviate stress on the force due to persistently high operations tempo over the last fifteen years. Require a DoD report to Congress no later than end of 2018 as to whether and how much to increase the force size beyond 70,000.
- Given SOF's adeptness at operating in the "gray zone", Congress should provide funding for a more forward footprint of U.S. SOF capabilities to support the Geographic Combatant Commands as they posture to meet hybrid threats in their areas of responsibility. With the drawdown of conventional forces in Europe, the growing assertiveness of Russia and its use of "hybrid" or "new generation" warfare, and the increased terrorist threat in Africa, closing the time and space gap between SOF and the current fight is critical. Congress should provide necessary funding to move special operations forces to Europe to close the time gap between U.S. SOF and the current threats in Africa and Europe as well as provide the opportunity to habitually train with their allied SOF in the region.



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CONCLUSION: The GSF offers these recommendations for action and supports the allocation of the nation's resources to support the prominent role that U.S. SOF plays in the U.S. national security strategy. Additionally, the GSF champions close collaboration among allied nation SOF to expand the capabilities of partner nations committed to mutual security. Sustaining and improving our SOF capabilities must be a national priority, especially in this time of Defense reductions and realignments.

The GSF calls on the U.S. DoD, the Military Services, and our Congressional and Executive Branch leadership to protect hard won gains that SOF have achieved, and that earn U.S. SOF its elite status among the world's military forces. The U.S. must possess unparalleled SOF capabilities that

complement its conventional forces, and a ready SOF that possesses every resource necessary to execute both long-term relationship-building missions as well as time-sensitive operations that produce strategic results.

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 assistance.

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