



3690 West Gandy Blvd #140, Tampa, Florida 33611

April 17, 2020

Re: Ensuring Proper Civilian Oversight of US Special Operations Command

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sirs:

Congress founded both USSOCOM and ASD SO/LIC over thirty years ago. Since the 9-11 attacks, USSOCOM has grown substantially in budget, size, and influence. Today, it vastly overshadows ASD SO/LIC, the office designated by law with responsibility for oversight of special operations resources and activities.

Congress has repeatedly directed the Department of Defense to empower ASD SO/LIC with administrative authorities similar to the Service secretaries, including a direct administrative reporting line to the Secretary of Defense. In spite of Congress' intent, ASD SO/LIC's authorities and influence remain circumscribed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. The Pentagon bureaucracy abhors a split chain-of-command and has routinely excluded ASD SO/LIC from the senior decision-making processes on special operations administration. As a result, SOF lacks senior civilian representation, advocacy within the Department, and oversight capabilities, even as the force is increasingly employed as a main effort overseas.

Our exceptional SOF play an increasingly significant role in our national defense. To reflect this reality and realize the original intent of Congress, the undersigned urge you to support legislative action to elevate ASD SO/LIC to the Under Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Irregular Warfare. This historic action would provide a singular reporting line to the Secretary of Defense and ensure the necessary authority to fulfill the law and provide "the overall supervision (including oversight of policy and resources) of special operations activities."

Sincerely,

HON James R. Locher, III
Former ASD SO/IC

HON Michael Lumpkin
Former ASD SO/LIC

Mr. Mark Mitchell
Former Acting ASD SO/LIC

HON Owen West
Former ASD SO/LIC

CC: Senator Joni Ernst; Senator Gary Peters; Representative Jim Langevin; Representative Elise Stefanik