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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

STATEMENT OF
COLONEL JOSEPH E. OSBORNE, U.S. ARMY
DIRECTOR, IRREGULAR WARFARE DIRECTORATE (J10)
UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
BEFORE A JOINT HEARING OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND
CAPABILITIES
ON IRREGULAR WARFARE AND STABILITY OPERATIONS
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Chairman Smith, Chairman Snyder, Representative Akin, Representative Thornberry, and distinguished members of the committees, I am honored to be here today to report to you on the continuing efforts of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to move the Irregular Warfare concept to a full scale capability for our command, the department and our nation. I would like to center my comments on three areas that I believe are of interest to the committee; the establishment of the Irregular Warfare Directorate, or J10, at USSOCOM, our work with the interagency, and the role of Strategic Communications in the broader context of Irregular Warfare.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review identified several initiatives necessary to give the Department greater capability and agility in dealing with the most common threats of the 21st Century. Irregular Warfare was high among those initiatives. For USSOCOM our first significant task was to provide fifty plus years of Irregular Warfare history, experience and culture and fuse it with the development and publication of the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (JOC) signed by the Secretary of Defense in September 2007. The central idea of this concept is that elements of the Defense Department (DOD), in conjunction with other instruments of national and international power and influence, will conduct Irregular Warfare operations in protracted regional and global campaigns designed to subvert, disrupt, attrite, and exhaust an adversary. While this notion does not preclude conventional military confrontation, it does address

that in practice, most wars and campaigns are hybrids of irregular and conventional operations.

In order to maintain the momentum in Irregular Warfare planning and policy development, The Commander of USSOCOM, established an Irregular Warfare Directorate, designated as the J10, in June 2007. We reached our Initial Operating Capability (IOC) in October of last year and we continue to grow and expand our capabilities. The J10 provides continuous focus on Irregular Warfare related issues cutting across all operational and programmatic lines. Our efforts are divided between our own headquarters and the remainder of the department and interagency. Within our headquarters, we provide a unifying voice to monitor and focus the efforts of the command and ensure there is a consistent application of Irregular Warfare theory across all of our components. External to USSOCOM we work closely with and through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capability to support DOD's efforts to develop and integrate the concepts, capabilities and capacity necessary to wage protracted Irregular Warfare on a global scale.

The Commander's intent for my directorate is very straight forward: "Coordinate concept implementation, strategy development, plans integration, and a collaborative network of the DOD and the interagency to facilitate U.S. government (USG) application of Irregular Warfare strategies in support of U.S. national objectives".

In effect, our role is as enablers for both USSOCOM and our partners to be as capable in Irregular Warfare as they are in conventional warfare. We see ourselves as

one of the key conduits for Irregular Warfare collaboration with DOD, and our Interagency partners and Allies.

In a world characterized by protracted struggles where information, influence, and beliefs are all part of the operational environment, Irregular Warfare provides a uniquely suited paradigm. There is no strategist or thinker today who disagrees with the notion that this paradigm must not be considered as purely military in nature. Consistent with this thinking we recognize that Irregular Warfare is a logical, long-term (or even generational) approach to applying all elements of national power in concert with our partner nations to achieve U.S. national objectives and protect our vital interests and the interests of our allies.

While the impetus to bring “all elements” to bear is clear, the mechanism to do this is not yet fully implemented. At USSOCOM we have, under the authorities of the Unified Command Plan and the DOD plan to defeat terrorist networks, established a number of protocols that help us meet the challenge. Within our Center for Special Operations we have established a standing Interagency Task Force (IATF) comprised of military members from our headquarters and representatives from across the inter-agency. The mission of the IATF is to serve as a coordinating activity within DOD and across the Interagency. One of their primary goals is to be a reliable and connected entity that is able to integrate IA efforts while solving discrete problem sets that support the War on Terror. One of the key tasks for the IATF is to link knowledge with decision makers (DOD and USG). Additionally, we have established an Interagency Partnership Program that currently places 40 USSOCOM staff officers into billets at 13

agencies and departments. These officers provide critical situational awareness and connectivity between USSOCOM and their host organizations.

Perhaps our most broad reaching effort has been the development and implementation of the Global Synchronization process. This initiative is best characterized as a continuous, day-to-day systematic program that virtually fuses the efforts of the Geographic Combatant Commands, the Functional Combatant Commands, the agencies within the department and, most importantly, the interagency and our key allies. This process is punctuated every six months by a Global Synchronization Conference held at our headquarters. To give you a flavor of both the depth and cross cutting nature of this process: USSOCOM participates in hundreds of Video Tele-Conferences every month reaching out to literally every DOD entity and the entire Interagency Community, as well as to our key allies. Our last Global Synch Conference, held in October 2007, had 585 attendees with representatives from across DoD, 14 of our interagency partners and 3 of our allies. Most significantly, 20 of the 78 attendees of the final executive session represented non-DOD agencies or departments.

These efforts represent the major muscle movements in a headquarters that does an enormous amount of outreach. By way of example, in the five short months since my Directorate achieved initial operational capability, we have been invited to participate and brief at Joint Staff Defense Planning Scenario conferences, the Security Force Assistance Symposium, Irregular Warfare Capabilities Based Assessments, the Consortium for Complex Operations and numerous additional conferences and venues. We have also been invited to brief the faculty at West Point, the Naval Academy and the

Air Force Command and Staff College. Admiral Olson was a keynote speaker at the Marine Corps Long War Conference, the NDIA/SOLIC Symposium and is scheduled to speak at the Johns Hopkins Unrestricted Warfare Conference. It is clearly the goal of USSOCOM to promote better understanding of Irregular Warfare and foster collaboration among an ever growing community of interest.

While all of this interagency engagement is promising, many challenges remain. The noteworthy work and realized successes are largely the result of good people at every level of our government trying to do the right thing for our nation. Much of the cooperation is initially based on personal relationships established by USSOCOM that opens doors and encourages aggressive collaboration at every level. In short, our success in interagency integration requires constant monitoring and attention.

Before I discuss the role of strategic communication I'd like to provide the context of the DOD's definition of Irregular Warfare. It is "a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations." Irregular Warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will." One of the unique challenges in planning an Irregular Warfare campaign is developing a fused strategy that recognizes the primacy of strategic communication.

While opportunities to push critical USG messages abound, many challenges make these efforts more difficult than they initially appear. For example, the ability to communicate in the most appropriate medium is not necessarily aligned with the authority to do so. Additionally, the networked, asymmetric enemy we face transcends

geographical boundaries so commonly used by the USG to assign communication responsibilities and deconflict the same. Complicating matters further is the nature of the information age where tactical actions can have strategic implications. It is for these reasons that continued investment in strategic communication plans, processes, and products are vital to the successful prosecution of Irregular Warfare.

Effective strategic communications represents the defining characteristic of the indirect approach that is so critical to effective Irregular Warfare. Deeds, in synchronization with words, are at the core of this approach. This is the mindset that has historically allowed Special Operations Forces to gain access, build relationships, foster influence, and legitimize our partners by being true partners. As partners, we imbue the concept of professional military and security forces which are subject to the rule of law and operating under the broad rubric of respect for their citizens and adherence to the standards of human rights. This is also the same mindset that is taking hold in the rest of DOD. Indirect activities such as foreign counterpart training, civil-military operations, information distribution, infrastructure development, and the establishment of medical, dental, and veterinary clinics are now commonplace to our full spectrum forces operating in Iraq and Afghanistan. Across the services steps are being taken to formalize these skills and attributes and apply them in broader engagement type activities. The effect of these deeds is significantly diminished if not re-enforced with the words from Public Affairs, Military Support to Public Diplomacy and Information Operations. The goal of strategic communication must be to ensure all communications functions reflect the deeds.

The need for a unified USG message which is synchronized across the enterprise is clear. The role of Department of State as the lead for strategic communication with DOD in support is clear. Despite the absence of any compelling structure for integration, there is positive movement in this arena. The Strategic Communication Integration Group (SCIG) structure shows promise to temporarily accomplish this aim within DOD. Greater empowerment of agencies such as the Counter Terrorism Coordination Center (CTCC) and National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) will surely serve to best integrate DOD's supporting communication effort within the overall USG effort.

Irregular Warfare, in its truest form, has the potential to synthesize indirect and direct methods and brings all elements of U.S. national power to bear in a synchronized and coordinated manner. The Department, USSOCOM and the Services are improving their postures to both conduct and combat Irregular Warfare. Much work remains to be done and full implementation of the concepts and strategy will take an enduring commitment. We have no choice but to aggressively pursue this endeavor. Our adversaries, cognizant of our military dominance, will continue to challenge us through irregular means and methods. A reality we should all understand is that Irregular Warfare is the nature of warfare and some would say the state of the globe. We must bring to bear the entire strength of our nation and government to achieve success.

I thank the distinguished members of the subcommittees for your important role in helping us achieve continued success and enabling us to protect our nation, and I very much appreciate the opportunity to be with you here today.

This concludes my prepared remarks, and I am available to answer any questions you may have.