

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, MY NAME IS CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT BOB MARTENS. I JOINED THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE IN 1976, I HAVE CLOSE TO 28 YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY, WITH 24 YEARS OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS EXPERIENCE. FOR THE PAST YEAR, I HAVE BEEN HONORED TO SERVE AS THE SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR TO THE COMMANDER OF THE UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, AND HAVE USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND MOST OF MY TIME WORKING DIRECTLY WITH, AND PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, LISTENING TO, THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMUNITY.

I TOO WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE TODAY TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES SPECIAL

OPERATIONS COMMAND. IT IS A RARE HONOR FOR ENLISTED MEN IN GENERAL, AND FOR ME PERSONALLY.

WHILE MY COLLEAGUES AND I STAND READY TO ADDRESS YOUR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PERSONNEL SITUATION WITHIN THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMUNITY AS OUTLINED BY COLONEL CULL IN HIS REMARKS, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEFLY TOUCH ON ONE ISSUE IN PARTICULAR: THE RETENTION OF OUR HIGHLY QUALIFIED SPECIAL OPERATIONS OPERATOR PERSONNEL.

CONTRARY TO CONVENTIONAL MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE SERVICES, MANY SEGMENTS OF THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMUNITY ARE UNIQUE IN

THAT THEY ARE EXTREMELY DEPENDENT ON A MATURE, OPERATIONALLY EXPERIENCED POPULATION. BECAUSE THE LOSS OF SUCH EXPERIENCE WILL CREATE AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF OPERATIONAL RISK WITHIN THE FORCE, THE COMMAND IS GIVING THIS ISSUE HEIGHTENED EMPHASIS AS WE POSTURE OURSELVES TO WIN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM.

COMPLEMENTING THEIR TACTICAL SKILLS, MORE OFTEN TODAY HONED BY COMBAT EXPERIENCE IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, SPECIAL OPERATORS OFFER A SEASONED, CULTURALLY SENSITIVE, GWOT-FOCUSED BRAND OF LEADERSHIP SECOND TO NONE. THEY ARE INDEPENDENT THINKERS WHO ARE ROUTINELY EXPECTED TO MAKE TACTICAL LEVEL DECISIONS DURING THE EXECUTION OF

SENSITIVE AND DANGEROUS MISSIONS THAT CAN HAVE STRATEGIC IMPACTS... ALL OF WHICH MAKE THEM HIGHLY VALUABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

THESE ATTRIBUTES ALSO MAKE THEM HIGHLY VALUABLE TO THE CIVILIAN WORLD. THE CHALLENGE FACING THE COMMAND IS TO RETAIN THIS IRREPLACEABLE SOLDIER, SAILOR OR AIRMEN IN THE FACE OF A HEAVY OPTEMPO, RISING DEMANDS ON THE HOME FRONT, AND NUMEROUS EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE CIVILIAN SECTOR.

TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE, THE UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND ITS COMPONENT COMMANDS, REPRESENTED BY THE MEN TO MY RIGHT, ARE WORKING

CLOSELY WITH THE SERVICES AND OSD TO ASSIST US IN IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL INCENTIVES THAT WILL HELP US KEEP THESE HIGHLY EXPERIENCED SENIOR OPERATORS. WITH THIS HELP, AND WITH THE CONTINUED INTEREST AND SUPPORT OF CONGRESS, WE BELIEVE WE CAN SUCCESSFULLY AVERT FUTURE PROBLEMS, TAKE CARE OF OUR MEN AND WOMEN WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, AND POSTURE OURSELVES FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY AT THIS TIME TO HAVE MY COLLEAGUES, EACH OF WHOM SERVES AS THE SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR WITHIN HIS RESPECTIVE COMMAND, INTRODUCE HIMSELF TO THE COMMITTEE.

FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTIONS, WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE CHANCE TO ADDRESS YOUR QUESTIONS.

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR THIS HONOR AND OPPORTUNITY.