



PRESS RELEASE

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Statement of the Chairman Jim Saxton
Hearing on Special Operations Command Personnel Issues

The subcommittee meets this morning in its oversight role to review the personnel status of the U. S. Special Operations Command. While the subcommittee does not have jurisdiction over military personnel law, we do have jurisdiction over the Special Operations Command and the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the command are in good order. As my SOF friends are fond of saying, "Special Forces cannot be mass produced." Hence, we must keep a watchful eye on the most precious element of special forces, its people.

As I have said repeatedly and will continue to state, SOCOM is this nation's single best weapon in the Global War on Terror. There are several reasons for my belief. First, we all agree that it is best to deal with terrorism overseas. It's a long standing principle of war that offensive action is better than defensive action. SOCOM, better than any other element of the Department of Defense, takes the counter terror mission overseas.

Because of the command's continued success and because the war on terror has no foreseeable end point, it is appropriate that we review the personnel status of the command. The subcommittee has been told that the command is losing very valuable senior enlisted personnel at a rate that cannot be replaced. We have also been informed that the command established a senior task force, on which some of our witnesses served, to review the matter and formulate recommendations. Our purpose today is to check on the status of that effort—to understand the extent of the problem, the urgency of the issue, and possible recommendations for solution. I understand that the solutions are still under discussion, so we will not press the witnesses on that point.

Because the administration has yet to formulate its official views, I understand the witnesses have no formal, written testimony. Nonetheless, we welcome your frank professional views on the nature of the problem and the general view as to what needs to be done to keep SOCOM professionals in the force. Our national security depends on it.

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