

U.S. SOF Vision and Strategy 2022

John Friberg, SOF News

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations / Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC) released its *Special Operations Forces Vision & Strategy* document in April.

Vision Statement: The document leads off with the USSOCOM and ASD SO/LIC vision statement: “Create strategic, asymmetric advantages for the nation in integrated deterrence, crisis and conflict”. It goes on to list ‘core values’, ‘who we are’, ‘what we do’, and ‘where are we going’.

Strategy: Since 9/11, SOF has been primarily focused on countering terrorists. Now, the United States faces adversaries “increasingly capable of counteracting our gains, threatening our Homeland, reducing our influence, and eroding our advantages globally.” The document states that the new SOF strategy will provide a framework to move from a Counter Terrorism (CT) force into one suited to be a part of the nation’s integrated deterrence. SOF will continue to conduct priority CT operations, support integrated deterrence and prepare for potential high-end conflict.

Strategic Environment: China is the biggest concern as it is “capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to rival the U.S. and destabilize the international system that has advanced our interests for 75 years.” Russia continues to demonstrate its “determination to use its considerable resources and capabilities to enhance its global influence, challenge our interests and disrupt globally.” Other nations, like Iran and North Korea, are also threats that challenge regional stability. The Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) remain an active and persistent threat to our homeland and vital national interests worldwide.

Strategic Approach: The SOF Strategy establishes a 10-year framework of strategic aims, strategic efforts and resources to create strategic and asymmetric advantages for the United States. The ‘aims’ include conducting operations to support priority missions, modernize SOF concepts, capabilities and doctrine, broaden readiness for critical missions, enhance relationships with allies, partners and other U.S. government organizations and strengthen the SOF community. The SOF Strategy adopts a comprehensive approach by taking action in five strategic efforts: compete

“Just as our adversaries adapt to and shape the strategic environment, SOF will continue to evolve in order to fulfill the vision of creating strategic, asymmetric advantages for the nation in integrated deterrence, crisis, and conflict. Guided by SOF core values – honor, courage, excellence, creativity, and respect – this strategy establishes the path to achieve that vision.”

and win for the nation, innovate for future threats, preserve and grow readiness, advance partnerships and strengthen the force and family. Each of these ‘strategic efforts’ have several sub-categories.

SOF Resources: The SOF enterprise will leverage several resources and organizations to achieve the strategic aims of the SOF Strategy. Key organizations include ASD SO/LIC, Secretariat for Special Operations (SSO), Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate (IWTSD), USSOCOM, SOF Service Components, JSOC, TSOCS, and other resources. ■

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