

SOCOM Commander: Navy SEALs to Focus on Strategic Reconnaissance, Working with Partners



A U.S. Navy SEAL throws an M18 colored smoke grenade during a sweep of a training compound during Sentry Rescue IV, a joint command initiative to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for personnel recovery scenarios, Arkansas, Aug. 26, 2021. *U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD / Tech. Sgt. Brigitte Waltermire*

ARLINGTON, Va. — The commander of the nation's special operations forces said the Navy's SEALs will have an important role in the future in enabling commanders to understand the enemy's capabilities and intentions.

The SEALs, along with the special operations forces of the other U.S. military services, have had a super-sized role in

the Southwest Asian wars since 9-11, serving at the forefront of U.S. and coalition forces in the low-intensity conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and other locations.

With U.S. focus on deterring a future conflict with China and shifting the focus to high-end operations, the 70-000-strong special operations forces (SOF) also are shifting focus.

Speaking to the Military Reporters and Editors at a symposium in Arlington, Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, said the SOF are “more integrated than ever before,” including with inter-agency partners.

Clarke said he sees Navy SEALs as ‘working with partners, able to train, and also to conduct another key mission or activity, which is strategic reconnaissance. They can get in places that no one else can get they can be in the littorals – in subsea/subsurface domain – and are critical.”

Clarke said SOF are more than just a direct-action raid force, but the force will still maintain that capability, one which “we have honed to an exquisite degree.”

The commander said the SOF benefits from working closely with the general-purpose forces and that his command will look for every opportunity to leverage high-end training for its forces.