

Special Forces Forge New Strategic Alliances: A Team Building for National Security

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In an increasingly complex global geopolitical environment, the United States faces a series of national security challenges that require innovative and multifaceted solutions. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), under the leadership of General Bryan P. Fenton, is positioning itself as a central player in fostering collaboration between traditional and non-traditional sectors, including government, industry, and academic institutions, with the aim of building a robust national security strategy to address future threats.

The Changing Nature of Warfare

The modern geopolitical landscape is characterized by volatility, with national defense strategy competitors, such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, rapidly advancing their capabilities. The nature of warfare has changed drastically, with emerging technologies like unmanned systems, artificial intelligence (AI), and hypersonic weapons now defining the battlefield. A possible scenario sees U.S. and allied forces in combat while simultaneously managing terrorist threats and global crises. This future war could unfold in a complex and fast-paced environment, where traditional weapons and systems are rendered obsolete in a matter of days due to cyberattacks or supply chain disruptions.

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The current U.S. stockpiles of advanced weapons, such as hypersonic missiles and drones, could quickly be depleted, highlighting the fragility of traditional supply chains and underscoring the need for more resilient industrial and technological capabilities.

Cross-Sector Team Building

General Fenton emphasizes that the military cannot solve these challenges alone. To address the vulnerabilities highlighted by modern warfare, a concerted collaboration between all sectors is necessary: government, industry, allies, and academic institutions. By creating a unified approach, the United States and its partners can develop innovative strategies to outpace adversaries, particularly those of the Chinese Communist Party, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

These actors are employing an integrated strategy across military, economic, and technological domains, creating strategic dilemmas for the United States and its allies. For example, Russia's involvement in Ukraine, supported by Iran and North Korea, demonstrates how adversaries are coordinating their actions, using military and cyber capabilities to undermine global security.

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Strengthening the U.S. Industrial Base

One of the main challenges identified is the lack of a sustainable industrial base in the United States to produce the technologies needed for modern warfare. Many essential components for autonomous systems, AI, and other next-generation technologies depend on foreign materials and manufacturing facilities, some of which are controlled by potential adversaries.

General Fenton advocates for the need to strengthen domestic manufacturing capabilities and build "friend-shoring" ecosystems to ensure that critical technologies, such as batteries, small robotics, and drones, do not depend on hostile foreign actors. This shift is not only necessary for defense resilience but also has strategic implications for U.S. security.

The Role of USSOCOM in Fostering Partnerships

USSOCOM is leveraging its unique position to bridge the gap between government entities, industry, and academic institutions. This collaboration is crucial to addressing the rise of irregular security challenges. Special Operations Forces (SOF) play a vital role in connecting these diverse sectors and advancing a unified deterrence strategy. By facilitating partnerships across borders, industries, and disciplines, USSOCOM is helping create strategic dilemmas for adversaries that are difficult to overcome.

Special Operations Forces are also working with industry leaders to secure the private capital needed to bring innovations in sensors, unmanned systems, AI, and quantum computing to market, thereby fostering a competitive advantage for the United States and its allies.

Special Operations Forces Week: A Forum for Collaboration

One of the main efforts to pursue this vision is the **Special Operations Forces (SOF) Week**, held annually in Tampa, Florida. The event brings together more than 60 partner nations, hundreds of global industry leaders, and government officials. It serves as a platform to strengthen the collaboration network between SOF and non-traditional defense partners. The goal is to accelerate innovation and the adoption of dual-use technologies that can help maintain the competitive edge of U.S. armed forces.

Conclusions

The future of national security will depend on the ability to adapt to rapidly changing threats, with a particular focus on technological innovations and strategic partnerships. USSOCOM, under the leadership of General Fenton, is taking proactive steps to foster an expanded industrial base, ensuring that the United States remains resilient in the face of both traditional and non-traditional threats. By connecting industry, government, and academia in new ways, the United States is laying the groundwork for a strategic advantage that will help maintain global stability and security.