



DoD INSTRUCTION 3901.01

SPECIAL OPERATIONS POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

Originating Component:	Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict
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Reissues and Cancels:	DoD Directive 3801.01, "Special Operations Policy and Oversight Council (SOPOC)," February 12, 2018
Approved by:	Christopher P. Maier, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

Purpose: This issuance:

- Reissues the 2018 directive as a DoD instruction in accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5111.10, and pursuant to Sections 139b and 138(b)(2)(A)(i) of Title 10, United States Code, to establish policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for operating the Special Operations Policy and Oversight Council (SOPOC), the SOPOC Senior Steering Committee (SSC), and the SOPOC Working Group (WG).
- Establishes the SOPOC Charter.
- Has been renumbered to better align with special operations (SO) organizational issuances.

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SECTION 1: GENERAL ISSUANCE INFORMATION

1.1. APPLICABILITY.

This issuance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD (referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components”).

1.2. POLICY.

The SOPOC serves as a supporting tier governance forum and focal point for developing and improving policy, joint processes, and procedures relating to SO forces and capabilities within DoD, pursuant to DoDD 5105.79.

SECTION 2: RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT (ASD(SO/LIC)).

The ASD(SO/LIC):

- a. Leads the SOPOC in accordance with DoDD 5111.10 and Section 139(b) of Title 10, United States Code.
- b. Convenes SOPOC meetings in accordance with Section 3 and sets the agenda.
- c. Approves and publishes a summary of conclusions for each SOPOC meeting.
- d. Establishes an SSC and a WG to develop and coordinate recommendations for SO-related focus areas and issues for the SOPOC to consider.
- e. Determines the need for additional SOPOC attendees based on agenda topics.
- f. Determines the dispute resolution process for issues that the SOPOC considers.
- g. Provides administrative support to the SOPOC through the secretariat designated in Paragraph 2.2.a.

2.2. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS POLICY AND PROGRAMS (DASD SOPP).

Under the authority, direction, and control of the ASD(SO/LIC), the DASD SOPP:

- a. Serves as secretariat for the SOPOC.
- b. Chairs the SOPOC SSC to support SOPOC deliberations.

2.3. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY (USD(I&S)).

In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 2.6., the USD(I&S) advises the SOPOC on United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) intelligence activities, USD(I&S)-governed special access programs, intelligence and intelligence-related activities that SO forces conduct, and sensitive activities.

2.4. GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

The General Counsel of the Department of Defense:

- a. Appoints a senior representative to the SOPOC.
- b. Provides legal counsel and advice to the SOPOC, as required.

2.5. DIRECTOR OF COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION.

The Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation:

- a. Appoints a senior representative to the SOPOC.
- b. Provides analytic advice to the SOPOC.

2.6. UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE UNDER THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY (USD(P)).

The Under Secretaries of Defense and the Assistant Secretaries of Defense under the USD(P) (as defined in the Glossary) appoint a senior representative to the SOPOC from their respective OSD Component.

2.7. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments appoint a senior representative to the SOPOC from their respective DoD Component.

2.8. CJCS.

The CJCS appoints a senior representative to the SOPOC to present the views of the Combatant Commands with physically designated areas of responsibility as well as the United States Strategic Command, the United States Transportation Command, and the United States Cyber Command.

2.9. COMMANDER, USSOCOM.

The Commander, USSOCOM:

- a. Assists the ASD(SO/LIC) and the CJCS in assembling information and material for the SOPOC.
- b. Appoints a senior representative to the SOPOC.

SECTION 3: SOPOC CHARTER

3.1. FUNCTIONS.

a. The SOPOC:

(1) Integrates the DoD's functional activities to most efficiently and effectively provide for SO forces and capabilities.

(2) Develops and continuously improves policy, joint processes, and procedures that facilitate developing, acquiring, integrating, employing, and sustaining SO forces and capabilities.

(3) Reviews, guides, integrates, and synchronizes DoD's SO efforts to develop, implement, and sustain SO policy and capabilities.

(4) Assists the ASD(SO/LIC) in supervising DoD SO activities as directed in DoDD 5111.10.

(5) Identifies emerging SO-related focus areas and issues and prepares recommendations for policy and programmatic changes to the ASD(SO/LIC), DoD Component heads, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Defense.

(6) Advocates for incorporating SO-relevant concepts into DoD strategic guidance documents.

(7) Adjudicates and resolves disagreements between USSOCOM and the Military Departments over designating requirements as either SO-peculiar or Military Service-common.

b. The SOPOC may advance issues and recommendations to the Deputy's Management Action Group or Deputy's Workforce Council for resolution in accordance with DoDD 5105.79.

c. The SOPOC will meet as necessary but no less than twice per year.

d. At least once per year, the SOPOC agenda will include discussion of SO:

(1) Organization and force structure.

(2) Training and readiness.

(3) Professional education and personnel policies.

(4) Acquisition and equipment.

(5) Legislative affairs and authorities.

3.2. ORGANIZATION.

a. Membership.

Members of the SOPOC will include the ASD(SO/LIC), who will lead and chair the SOPOC, and senior representatives designated by:

- (1) The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.
- (2) The Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, Department of Defense.
- (3) The USD(I&S).
- (4) The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.
- (5) The USD(P).
- (6) The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering.
- (7) The General Counsel of the Department of Defense.
- (8) The Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation.
- (9) The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency.
- (10) The Assistant Secretaries of Defense under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P).
- (11) The Secretaries of the Military Departments.
- (12) The CJCS.
- (13) The Commander, USSOCOM.
- (14) Additional DoD officials, potentially including Defense Agency directors or commanders of additional Combatant Commands, on a case-by-case basis as the ASD(SO/LIC) determines based on policy or functional responsibilities for a specific SOPOC agenda item.

b. Responsibilities.

SOPOC representatives will:

- (1) Carry out the functions in Paragraph 3.1.
- (2) Nominate issues or recommend policy and program changes, as appropriate, for SOPOC consideration and deliberation.

(3) Assist the ASD(SO/LIC) to assemble information and material for the SOPOC as requested.

3.3. SUPPORT.

a. SOPOC SSC.

The SOPOC SSC will support the SOPOC by evaluating SO-related focus areas and issues for resolution and making recommendations for SOPOC deliberations.

(1) In accordance with Paragraph 2.2., the DASD SOPP will chair the SOPOC SSC.

(2) The SOPOC SSC basic membership will consist of representatives of the same officials as the SOPOC at the two-star general officer/flag officer or Senior Executive Service level.

(3) The SOPOC SSC chair may name additional attendees, as necessary.

b. SOPOC WG.

The SOPOC WG will support the SOPOC SSC by researching, developing, and preparing SO-related focus areas, issues, and recommendations for SOPOC SSC consideration.

(1) The SOPOC SSC chair will designate a senior action officer to lead the SOPOC WG.

(2) The SOPOC WG basic membership will consist of representatives of the same officials as the SOPOC at the O-6/General Schedule-15 or comparable level.

(3) The SOPOC WG senior action officer may invite additional attendees, as necessary.

GLOSSARY

G.1. ACRONYMS.

ACRONYM	MEANING
ASD(SO/LIC)	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
DASD SOPP	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations Policy and Programs
DoDD	DoD directive
SO	special operations
SOPOC	Special Operations Policy and Oversight Council
SSC	senior steering committee
USD(I&S)	Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security
USD(P)	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
WG	working group

G.2. DEFINITIONS.

These terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

TERM	DEFINITION
sensitive activities	Defined in DoDD 5143.01.
Service-common	Defined in DoDD 5100.03.
SO-peculiar	Defined in DoDD 5100.03.
Assistant Secretaries of Defense under the USD(P)	Assistant Secretaries of Defense under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P), excluding the ASD(SO/LIC).

REFERENCES

- DoD Directive 5100.03, “Support of the Headquarters of Combatant and Subordinate Unified Commands,” February 9, 2011, as amended
- DoD Directive 5105.79, “DoD Senior Governance Framework,” November 8, 2021
- DoD Directive 5111.10, “Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict,” May 5, 2021
- DoD Directive 5143.01, “Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)),” October 24, 2014, as amended
- United States Code, Title 10