



USSOCOM Approach to COVID-19 Risks

March 16, 2020

To All Members of U.S. Special Operations Command,

As we operate amid the global outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), we acknowledge the uncertainty and concern that many in our great Nation feel. At USSOCOM, we pride ourselves on our strength, perseverance, and resilience, but we are not immune to these natural human responses. This situation is serious, but manageable. We are well-equipped to organize and act to accomplish our mission while protecting the health and welfare of our force and family.

At its core, this is a force protection and readiness issue. We have a threat inside the wire, and there are simple steps that we can and will take to minimize virus exposure and transmission. The recent restriction of travel is one example. Any travel not already underway will require an exception to policy signed by a general or flag officer and should only occur if deemed mission essential, for humanitarian reasons, or if warranted due to extreme hardship.

USSOCOM is taking this threat seriously and actively assessing mitigation measures to safeguard the force. Our top priorities are to preserve our ability to respond to crises, protect our deployed forces, and maintain readiness. Leaders will carefully scrutinize force generation pipelines and take appropriate steps to reduce transmission risks among trainee cohorts while maintaining high-standard, realistic training outcomes.

USSOCOM will continue to disseminate timely and accurate information as the situation develops, and we will provide guidance on prudent risk reduction measures as changes occur. We ask that each member of the command demonstrate patience in the coming months, while actively taking steps to mitigate risk personally, at home, and within your organization. Remain a calming force in your unit and your community. As always, leaders at all levels are empowered to make decisions to protect the force. We must remain committed to meeting our operational requirements while taking action to safeguard our people. Continue to press forward, lead well, and take care of each other.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard D. Clarke".

Richard D. Clarke
General, U.S. Army
Commander
U.S. Special Operations Command

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory A. Smith".

Gregory A. Smith
Chief Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force
Command Senior Enlisted Leader
U.S. Special Operations Command