



Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

**ANALYSIS**

## **Future of Special Operations Forces**

June 23, 2013 | *This Week in Defense with Vago Muradian*

Related Experts: Jim Thomas, Christopher Dougherty

Few branches in the U.S. Military have been busier or more important operationally since 9/11 than U.S. Special Operations Forces who have been engaged in combat in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world, while also helping build partnerships globally through training missions.

The insatiable demand for these nimble, flexible and highly capable forces, has driven the dramatic growth of the U.S. Special Operations Command by 68%, from 38,000 troops in 2001 to 63,000 troops last year. The SOCOM's budget also has soared from \$2.3 bln in 2001 to \$10.4 bln this year.

After a dozen of years of war, the Pentagon is looking for savings, and, as operations in Afghanistan wind out, there is debate on how many Special Operations Forces the Nation needs, and how they should be configured for future threats.