

SOF-SPACE-CYBER

USASOC COMMANDING GENERAL TALKS TRIAD, DIVES INTO ARSOF STRATEGY



"We are building a concept referred to as the SOF-Space-Cyber Triad. This is a convergence of trans-regional, multi-domain, and joint capabilities to exponentially increase the holistic strategic effects of each capability across the spectrum of conflict now and in the future. Our increasingly complex strategic landscape requires innovative approaches that fuse and integrate all our expertise to maximize our collective impact." 01

Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga
Letter to The Senate Armed Services Committee: April 27, 2022

SPECIAL WARFARE JOURNAL - What is the SOF-Space-Cyber Triad? Why is this concept important to "How ARSOF Fights?" As one of Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga's USASOC 2030 priorities, the Triad offers a solution:

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It may be helpful to open with what has already been articulated about the Triad by Lt. Gen. Braga and in some publicly available documents from the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC).

These extracted dialogues and excerpts serve as a primer to help orient readers to the original intent and the underlying thinking that supports the SOF-Space-Cyber Triad concept. When wrestling with what the Triad means for the future of U.S. Army Special Operations, and the Joint Force, it is helpful to trace the concept's origins, where it is going, and how it is evolving.

One of Lt. Gen. Braga's first official articulations of what the Triad is and why it is important emerged in a statement he gave to the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2022.

The following year, USASOC began to build on the Triad concept by including it in the ARSOF Strategy 2030 document, integrating the Triad into other ARSOF initiatives. A few months later, Lt. Gen. Braga offered more detail in on the Irregular Warfare Podcast, addressing how the concept does and does not relate to the nuclear triad and a reaffirmation of how the concept continues to be a guiding organizational idea as ARSOF navigates an increasingly complex operating environment.

CYBER TRIAD

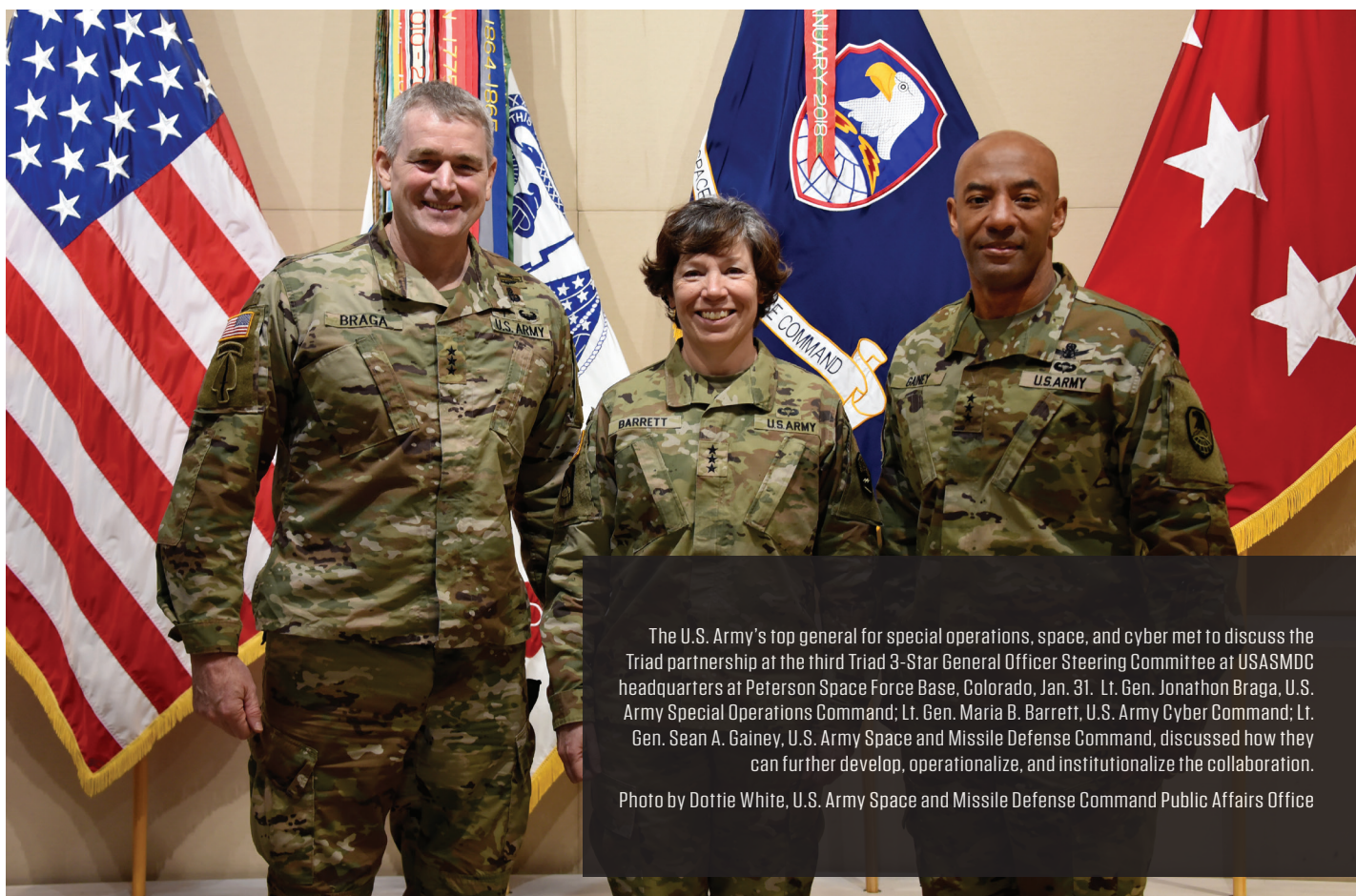
HOW DOES THE SOF-SPACE-CYBER TRIAD INTEGRATE WITH OTHER USASOC INITIATIVES? WHY IS THERE SO LITTLE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRIAD? HOW IS THE TRIAD BEING IMPLEMENTED ACROSS THE ARSOF ENTERPRISE?

Lt. Gen. Braga's testimony to The U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Wednesday, April 27, 2022, on efforts to sustain special operations force readiness and transform the force for future security challenges.

"The seven modernization priorities for USASOC are: Irregular Warfare, Information Advantage, Multi-Domain Operations Interoperability, Next Generation Precision Effects, Unmanned Systems-Robotics-Artificial Intelligence, Next Generation Mobility, and Enhanced ARSOF Soldiers. We synchronize within

these priorities while remaining a bottom-up driven organization. We have men and women on the ground identifying problems and providing requirements. Whether we lead or support, USASOC serves as a catalyst for innovation through our continued experimentation and operational use. We are deliberate with our selective disclosure, knowing our initiatives drive adversary decision cycles.

Last month, 44 organizations participated in a USASOC exercise focused on the intersection of SOF-Space-Cyber Triad capabilities leading to a series of upcoming experiments. Lessons learned allow us to test our assumptions and solutions in Service (Army Project Convergence 2022) and Joint Force exercises (Unified Pacific 2022). Hardware solutions are important, but people remain our primary focus." ⁰²



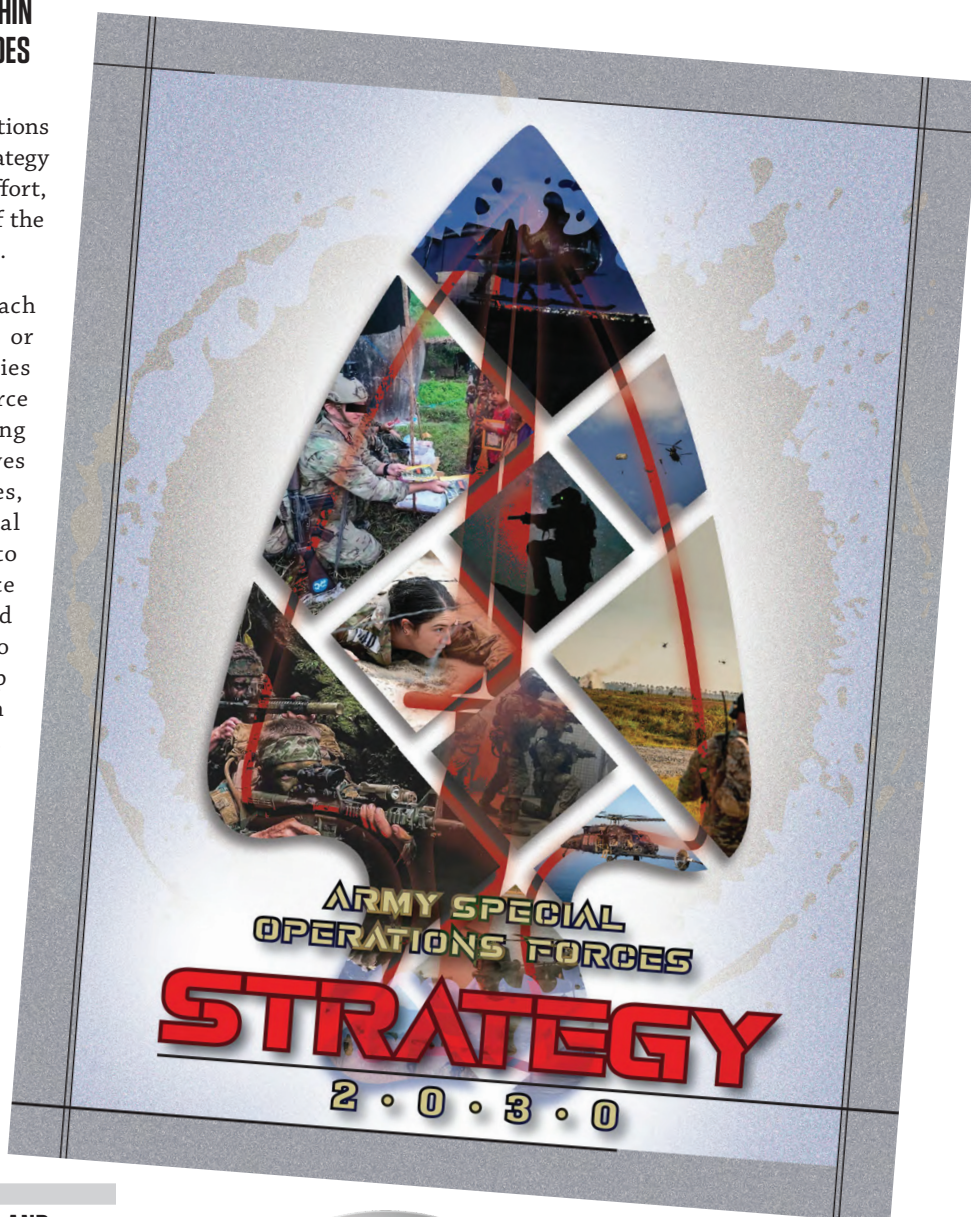
The U.S. Army's top general for special operations, space, and cyber met to discuss the Triad partnership at the third Triad 3-Star General Officer Steering Committee at USASMDC headquarters at Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado, Jan. 31. Lt. Gen. Jonathon Braga, U.S. Army Special Operations Command; Lt. Gen. Maria B. Barrett, U.S. Army Cyber Command; Lt. Gen. Sean A. Gainey, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, discussed how they can further develop, operationalize, and institutionalize the collaboration.

Photo by Dottie White, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command Public Affairs Office

WHERE DOES THE SOF-SPACE-CYBER TRIAD EXIST WITHIN USASOC'S STRATEGIC LINES OF EFFORT (LOE)? HOW DOES THE TRIAD SUPPORT THE WIDER JOINT FORCE?

The United States Army Special Operations Command's Army Special Operations Forces Strategy 2030, released April 6, 2023, describes the lines of effort, capabilities and resources, and roles and missions of the organization as it looks to modernize and transform.

LINE OF EFFORT 1. Transform ARSOF—This approach allows USASOC to recognize new, or existing, problems that current capabilities cannot adequately address. USASOC's force modernization efforts are mutually supporting the Army, and the Joint Force's objectives in the employment of new technologies, operational methods, and organizational approaches. USASOC will contribute to and at times lead Army and Joint Force experimentation events. Activities associated with this effort include actions designed to identify future requirements and develop solutions to future challenges through concepts, doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and policy. Our triad partnership (SOF, Space, and Cyber) will break down barriers to operating across these new and contested domains to deliver unique options. Development of the triad conceptually, as well as experimentation, nests under this LOE, as do our modernization efforts in next-generation precision strike, unmanned systems-robotics-AI, counter unmanned aerial systems, and contested communications.⁰³



HOW DO THE COMPONENTS RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER AND WHY IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP IMPORTANT TO THE CURRENT STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT?

In the 2030 Strategy, released April 6, 2023, it describes the another line of effort of the organization as it looks to modernize and transform.

The Space-Cyber-SOF Triad describes an interdependent and mutually supporting relationship between cyberspace, space, and SOF. Special operations often rely upon the information advantage provided by cyberspace and space capabilities to see, sense, and stimulate to influence relevant populations or strike deep into the physical nodes of an adversary's system and assess the results. Cyberspace operations may rely on SOF's physical access and placement to deliver effects. Cyberspace, space, and SOF are unique in their global reach, persistence, endurance, and responsiveness. The cross-domain convergence of capabilities enables effects at all levels and can be seamlessly integrated into irregular warfare campaigns.⁰⁴



Army Special Operations Forces Strategy 2030 vision and strategy describes how USASOC will generate, posture, and transform our forces to realize this vision alongside our generational partners and allies.

Images provided by USASOC.

HOW IS THE SOF-SPACE-CYBER TRIAD OPERATIONALIZED AND WHERE DOES IT FIT WITHIN POLICYMAKER RESPONSE OPTIONS TO STRATEGIC PROBLEM SETS? HOW DOES THIS TRIAD COMPARE TO THE TRADITIONAL NUCLEAR TRIAD?

Irregular Warfare Podcast: May 2, 2023 Interview, hosted by Ben Jebb and Kyle Altwell, Modern Warfare Institute at West Point as part of the Irregular Warfare Initiative.

BRAGA: "...everything in space or in cyber all has some type of terrestrial conduit that, in a sense, is networked and, in a sense, is a vulnerability point for both friend and foe and is an opportunity. So, SOF can absolutely be mutually supporting to our cyber and our space partners out there, but I think combined [sic], that's why I talk about the combined SOF-Space-Cyber Triad. It's absolutely critical that we develop this and bring capability both for high-end conflict but, I would argue, steady-state competition as well. This is a modern-day triad; it doesn't replace nuclear triad. It doesn't replace strategic deterrence. But it's absolutely complimentary because it is used throughout the spectrum of conflict, and it provides policymakers flexible deterrence and response options that are below the level of armed conflict."

HOST: "So, something of note that I found especially interesting in the ARSOF strategy was this term that you just used, the Space-Cyber-SOF Triad. I think most people's images of SOF conjures decked out operators, kicking in doors, conducting raids, things like that. But the Space-Cyber-SOF Triad talks a lot more about the interplay being mutually supportive in the space domain, offering cyber capabilities, and it seems like SOF might be well situated to address that. So, can you kind of flesh that concept out a little bit and talk about how you define this concept and explain why SOF is particularly well suited to leverage and, I guess, leverage and enhance cyber and space capabilities? Question for both of you, but I'll direct that one to Jon first."

BRAGA: "Sure, and I'll start with the word 'concept'. I think it's important when we coalesced around that term triad, it did have connotations. You know, back in the day if you were my age or older and you took any international relations degree, you knew about George Kennan and Thomas Schelling. And the word 'triad' meant everything from the word capabilities from subs, silos, and bombers to deterrence theory and game theory to international relations to the Cuban missile crisis to tactical nuclear weapons to artillery delivered nuclear weapons, I mean it meant everything. From TTPs up to strategy up to policy. There wasn't an international relations degree-producing university that didn't cover it."

I think that much thought needs to go into this modern-day triad, the SOF-Space-Cyber Triad there, because it is the newest tools out there that can have strategic effect, or it can be a much lower effect depending on what is decided and what is employed there. So, it's important that there is a robust investment, in my opinion, from the academic community to the policy community to the military community of, 'what is the best way to employ these capabilities and techniques,' again, from strategy, theory, policy down to things and widgets and capabilities

and equipment. Ultimately, some of our tasks are the same. Whether it is employing the SOF-Space-Cyber Triad or other elements. It's to help our force, the joint force, see further, strike faster, and hopefully inhibit the adversary to do the same and blind the adversary there a little bit and hopefully impose doubt, cost, and belief [sic] on different ways there."



To listen to the rest of the podcast, and find out more about the SOF Space Cyber Triad and the Future of Army Special Operations, click here.

CONCLUSION:

The SOF-Space-Cyber Triad is a concept that integrates trans-regional, multi-domain, and joint capabilities to achieve strategic effects. This approach advocates for dismantling the artificial barriers between military domains in response to the increasingly complex geopolitical landscape, evolving threats, and advancing technologies. Such innovation is critical to developing capabilities to support military campaigns in competition and conflict. It is important to note that the SOF-Space-Cyber Triad is neither intended to replace nor replicate the historically established U.S. nuclear triad. Drawing from Lt. Gen. Braga's forward-looking perspective, this triad is an evolving model that addresses emerging challenges. It aims to inspire similarly deep strategic thought and complement all US war-making and deterrence methods by introducing pioneering strategies that leverage modern information technology—from the ground to orbital planes. Doing so provides the joint force with enhanced tools and offers policymakers greater flexibility.

01 Jonathan Braga. "Statement of Lieutenant General Jonathan Braga Commanding General United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Before the Senate Armed Services Committee Emerging Threats and Capabilities Sub-Committee." 27 April 2022. pg. 1-2. (Accessed on 8 August 2024 [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2022%20USASOC%20Posture%20-%20LTG%20Braga%20-%20SASC-ETC%20\(27%20April\)%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2022%20USASOC%20Posture%20-%20LTG%20Braga%20-%20SASC-ETC%20(27%20April)%20(Final).pdf))

02 Jonathan Braga. "Statement of Lieutenant General Jonathan Braga Commanding General United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Before the Senate Armed Services Committee Emerging Threats and Capabilities Sub-Committee." 27 April 2022. pg. 4. (Accessed on 8 August 2024 [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2022%20USASOC%20Posture%20-%20LTG%20Braga%20-%20SASC-ETC%20\(27%20April\)%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2022%20USASOC%20Posture%20-%20LTG%20Braga%20-%20SASC-ETC%20(27%20April)%20(Final).pdf))

03 USASOC. "Army Special Operations Forces Strategy 2030." 6 April 2023. Pg. 12. (Accessed on 8 August 2024 at https://www.soc.mil/temp-pages/strategy/ARSOF_STRATEGY_2030.pdf.)

04 USASOC. "Army Special Operations Forces Strategy 2030." 6 April 2023. Pg. 15. (Accessed on 8 August 2024 at https://www.soc.mil/temp-pages/strategy/ARSOF_STRATEGY_2030.pdf.)