

Advance Questions for General Martin E. Dempsey, USA
Nominee for the Position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Defense Reforms

On previous occasions you have answered the Committee's policy questions on the reforms brought about by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the last time being in connection with your first nomination to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Has your view of the importance, implementation, and practice of these reforms changed since you testified before the Committee at your last confirmation hearing?

No. I continue to believe that the Goldwater-Nichols Act as passed is effective, and I credit this legislation for making us the Joint Force we are today. However, if confirmed, I will continue to examine the lessons of the past ten years of war to determine if there are opportunities to make us an even more effective Joint Force.

In light of your experience as Chairman, do you see any need for modifications to Goldwater-Nichols? If so, what modifications do you believe would be appropriate?

I do not believe modifications to the Goldwater-Nichols Act are required at this time. Today's Joint Force reflects the commitment to integration and jointness across the military services established by Goldwater-Nichols in 1986. If confirmed, I will continue to examine the lessons of the past ten years of war to determine if there are needed legislative modifications or other opportunities to improve jointness.

Duties

Based on your experience as Chairman, what recommendations, if any, do you have for changes in the duties and functions set forth in section 152 through 155 of title 10, United States Code, and in regulations of the Department of Defense, that pertain to the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the organization and operation of the Joint Staff in general?

If confirmed, I do not presently foresee recommending any changes to the law. I will, however, be attuned to potential issues and opportunities for improvement that might suggest consideration for eventual changes in the law.

Relationships

Other sections of law and traditional practice establish important relationships between the Chairman and other officials. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the following officials:

The Secretary of Defense.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff must have a close working relationship with the Secretary of Defense. Under Title 10, the Chairman is assigned several duties that guide the relationship to include serving as the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. The Chairman also performs other duties assigned by the Secretary of Defense.

The National Security Advisor.

The National Security Advisor is a Special Assistant and direct advisor to the President. As the role of the Chairman is to serve as the principal military advisor to the President, National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Defense, if re-confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the National Security Advisor to ensure our efforts are synchronized across the inter-agency and for the purpose of implementing Presidential decisions.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Under existing directives, the Deputy Secretary of Defense has been delegated full power and authority to act for the Secretary of Defense on any matters upon which the Secretary is authorized to act. As such, the relationship of the Chairman with the Deputy Secretary is similar to that with the Secretary.

The Under Secretaries of Defense.

Title 10, United States Code, and current DoD directives establish the Under Secretaries of Defense as the principal staff assistants and advisers to the Secretary regarding matters related to their functional areas. Within their areas, Under Secretaries exercise policy and oversight functions. These instructions and directives are applicable to all DoD components. In carrying out their responsibilities, and when directed by the President and Secretary of Defense, communications from the Under Secretaries to commanders of the unified and specified commands are transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The General Counsel of the Department of Defense.

Under Title 10, United States Code, Section 140, the DoD General Counsel serves as the chief legal officer of the Department of Defense. In general, the DoD General Counsel is responsible for overseeing legal services, establishing policy, and overseeing the DoD Standards of Conduct Program, establishing policy and positions on specific legal issues and advising on significant international law issues raised in major military operations, the DoD Law of War Program, and legality of weapons reviews. The office of the DoD General Counsel works closely with the Office of Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and communications with the combatant commanders by the DoD General Counsel are normally transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Department of Defense Inspector General.

The Department of Defense Inspector General performs the duties, has the responsibilities, and exercises the powers specified in the Inspector General Act of 1978. If confirmed, I will continue to cooperate with and provide support to the Department of Defense Inspector General as required.

The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff performs the duties prescribed for him as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Chairman, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense. When there is a vacancy in the Office of the Chairman or in the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as Chairman and performs the duties of the Chairman until a successor is appointed or the absence or disability ceases.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments.

Title 10, United States Code, Section 165 provides that, subject to the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of Defense, and subject to the authority of the Combatant Commanders, the Secretaries of Military Departments are responsible for administration and support of forces that are assigned to unified and specified commands. The Chairman advises the Secretary of Defense on the extent to which program recommendations and budget proposals of the Military Departments conform to priorities in strategic plans and with the priorities established for requirements of the Combatant Commands.

The Chiefs of Staff of the Services.

Because of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the Service Chiefs are no longer involved in the operational chain of command. However, this does not diminish their importance with respect to Title 10 responsibilities. Among other things, they serve two significant roles. First, they are responsible for the organization, training, and equipping of their respective Services. Without the full support and cooperation of the Service Chiefs, no Combatant Commander can assure the preparedness of his assigned forces for missions directed by the Secretary of Defense and the President. Second, as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chiefs are advisers to the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense as the senior uniformed leaders of their respective Services. In this function, they play a critically important role in shaping military advice and developing our joint capabilities. If re-confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Service Chiefs to fulfill warfighting and operational requirements.

The Combatant Commanders.

The Combatant Commanders fight our wars and conduct military operations around the world. By law, and to the extent directed by the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman serves as spokesman for the Combatant Commanders and is charged with overseeing their activities. He

provides a vital link between the Combatant Commanders and other elements of the Department of Defense, and as directed by the President, may serve as the means of communication between the Combatant Commanders and the President or Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Combatant Commanders to enable their warfighting capability and to provide support.

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

The Chief of the National Guard heads a joint activity of the Department of Defense and is the senior uniformed National Guard officer responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, programs and plans affecting more than half a million Army and Air National Guard personnel. Appointed by the President, he serves as principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard matters. He is also the principal adviser to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force on all National Guard issues. As National Guard Bureau Chief, he serves as the department's official channel of communication with the Governors and Adjutants General. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has the specific responsibility of addressing matters involving non-Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions.

The Commander, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan.

Although the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council, he is not in the chain of command of the Commander, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A). The Commander, USFOR-A reports to the Commander, USCENTCOM, who, in turn, reports directly to the Secretary of Defense. This reporting relationship is prescribed in 10 USC Section 164(d)(1). The Commander, USFOR-A does not have a formal command relationship with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but he coordinates with him through the Commander, USCENTCOM on a regular basis. The Commander, USFOR-A sends his advice and opinions on military operations to the Commander, USCENTCOM, who, in turn, presents them to the Chairman.

Major Challenges

What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you have faced in your first term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

We are experiencing a period of unprecedented uncertainty and multiple transitions that daily test our ability to meet our obligations, both in the security environment and across the Joint Force. We face a difficult fiscal correction to restore the economic foundation of our power. At the same time, we are transitioning from a decade of war to a contingency footing in response to an uncertain and dangerous security landscape. Importantly, we are transitioning a generation of veterans, as many in the Joint Force return to the homefront and their communities. Across the force, the issues of sexual assault, veteran suicide, traumatic brain injury/mental health are among our most challenging. In the security environment, continued operations and transition in

Afghanistan, the crisis in Syria, and deterring global provocation are among the most complex national security priorities we have faced. And, the nation is far from being immune from coercion in cyberspace. This said, I continue to believe that we have it within us to lead through this critical and defining period, and remain a strong global leader and reliable ally.

What new challenges do you expect to face if you are confirmed for a second term?

We face a series of tough choices moving forward, given our fiscal reality and the increasingly unpredictable security environment. These will include, but are certainly not limited to, conducting a responsible transition in Afghanistan, responding to the dynamic and persistent threat from violent extremist organizations, deterring increasingly bold provocation from North Korea and Iran, and detecting and defeating cyber and other asymmetric attacks against the homeland. We are less ready today than we were one year ago, and our readiness continues to degrade. If current trends continue, our military power will become less sustainable, and therefore less credible. In this context, my challenge is to continue to provide our civilian leadership with realistic options and risk assessments that balance current obligations, future contingencies, and the reality of declining resources. Internally, I will face the challenge of restoring the versatility of the Joint Force at an affordable cost. And, I will need to lead the effort to renew commitment to our profession by making sure we value character as much as competence.

Assuming you are confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

We can only address these challenges together – jointly, across the interagency, and in partnership with Congress. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the relationships – and specifically the bonds of trust – that have allowed us to make important progress in my first term. This trust permeates all levels. Our men and women on the front lines must trust that they will be the best trained, led, and equipped force on the battlefield. Our military families must trust that we will keep faith at home. The Services and Combatant Commands must trust their views will be fairly and accurately represented within internal JCS deliberations and at all levels of policy debate. Our allies and partners must trust in our sustained global leadership. And the President, this Congress, and the American people must trust that their military will meet its sacred obligation to keep our nation immune from coercion.

Priorities

Recognizing that challenges, anticipated and unforeseen, will drive your priorities to a substantial degree, if confirmed, what other priorities, beyond those associated with the major challenges you identified in the section above, would you set for your second term as Chairman?

If reconfirmed, I will continue to emphasize the focus areas I established in my *2012 Strategic Direction to the Joint Force* to achieve our national security objectives today, build the Joint Force for 2020, renew commitment in our profession of arms, and keep faith with our military family. To do this, we will need to get four things right. The first is to achieve strategic

solvency – this means establishing security priorities, aligning our aims and abilities, and balancing current and long-term requirements. Second, I will remain focused on keeping the Joint Force ready and balanced. To do so, we must restore readiness lost due to sequester, and ensure that future cuts do not undermine our ability to send our troops to war with the best training, leadership, and equipment. Third, we must prioritize investment in our people. This means valuing and strengthening character as much as competence, reinvesting in learning and leadership, advancing equal and ethical treatment for all of our service members, and allowing no quarter for sexual violence in our ranks. Lastly, I will focus on maintaining the bond of trust between our men and women in uniform and the public they serve.

Chain of Command

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Section 163(a) of title 10 further provides that the President may direct communications to combatant commanders be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and may assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in performing their command function.

Do you believe that these provisions facilitate a clear and effective chain of command?

I believe that the current chain of command provides a clear and effective means for employing our Nation's military.

Are there circumstances in which you believe it is appropriate for U.S. military forces to be under the operational command or control of an authority outside the chain of command established under title 10, United States Code?

Military forces should normally operate under the chain of command established under section 162 of title 10, United States Code. However, an exception to that chain of command may be appropriate for certain sensitive operations. The military units supporting such an operation are still governed by the laws of armed conflict and, as an administrative matter, the military personnel remain accountable to the military chain of command, including for matters of discipline under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Only the President may approve such an exception, as also recognized in section 162. If confirmed, I will provide the President with my best advice regarding any operation where an exception to the established chain of command may be appropriate.

What is your understanding and assessment of the authorities and agreements which are in place to allow U.S. military personnel to carry out missions under the authorities contained in title 50, United States Code? Do you believe any modifications to these authorities are necessary?

As noted above, consistent with Title 50 of the U.S. Code, the President may authorize departments, agencies, or entities of the U.S. government to participate in or support intelligence

activities. While I believe that all military forces should normally operate under a military chain of command, there are authorities and agreements that allow exceptions to this chain of command for title 50 operations. In some cases, the Secretary of Defense may approve this exception and in other cases only the President has approval authority. I believe the current authorities are sufficient to facilitate DoD's providing appropriate support under Title 50 while ensuring necessary oversight.

Advice of the Service Chiefs, Combatant Commanders, and Chief of the National Guard Bureau

Section 163 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the spokesman for the combatant commanders, especially on the operational requirements of their commands. Section 151 of title 10 provides for the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to submit their advice or opinion, in disagreement with or in addition to the advice or opinion of the Chairman, and requires the Chairman to provide that advice at the same time that he presents his own advice to the President, National Security Council, or Secretary of Defense.

Having served as Chairman, what changes to section 151 or 163, if any, do you think may be necessary to ensure that the views of the individual Service Chiefs, Combatant Commanders, Chief of the National Guard Bureau are presented and considered?

I see no benefit in changing section 151 or 163. Section 151 and 163 embody the spirit and letter of Goldwater-Nichols, a foundation of our Joint Force. I have made it a priority to hear from and be representative of the views of the Combatant Commanders and the JCS. I use their insights and collective experience to inform my best military advice. I recognize my responsibility and the value in my representing the views of the JCS and our senior commanders, even when they may vary.

Security Strategies and Guidance

How would you characterize current trends in the range and diversity of threats we face today to national security?

The security environment is more uncertain and dangerous. It can be characterized as complex due to an increasing number of strategically significant actors, dynamic due to rapid rates of change, and uncertain due to shifting nodes of power and influence and an unclear U.S. fiscal and budget environment. Further, the proliferation of advanced technologies is resulting in middleweight militaries and non-state actors with unprecedented destructive and disruptive capabilities, particularly in the areas of cyber, terrorism, and missiles.

In your view, is the Nation's defense strategy appropriate for the threats we face today and could face in the coming decades?

The strategy as articulated in the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, *Sustaining U.S.*

Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, is necessary and appropriate to safeguard the nation against threats to its interests. However I am increasingly concerned about our ability to properly resource the strategy and maintain the readiness of the Joint Force due to continued fiscal uncertainty and constraints. I have documented the specific concerns in my classified Chairman's Risk Assessment submitted in February, 2013.

The Defense Strategic Guidance issued January 2012 took into account a \$487 billion dollar reduction in defense resources.

With the additional \$500 billion in cuts to DoD as a result of sequestration is the Defense Strategic Guidance still valid?

The Department is still in the process of determining what revisions might be necessary to align ends, ways, and means given the additional \$500 billion in cuts. The sequester was not expected or desired. The answer will depend a great deal on how the cuts are taken year by year (slope), the flexibility granted to the Department by Congress, and the Congress' willingness to give the Department more scope for politically unpopular changes to infrastructure, benefits, and compensation.

At the issuance of the Defense Strategic Guidance you said "We will always provide a range of options for our nation...."

What options do you lose or what options are significantly altered and in what way if the \$500 billion in cuts is enacted?

We will continue to provide a range of options. But, they may not be as robust or timely as they might have been, and they will entail a higher level of risk to the nation and to the forces committed. In essence, we will be able to do fewer things simultaneously, and new contingencies may force us to take risk in other regions or for other security threats. The full implications of reduced option are unlikely to be appreciated until an unexpected contingency or strategic surprise occurs.

What changes, if any, should be considered?

The recent Strategic Choices and Management Review affirmed the fundamental soundness of the Defense Strategic Guidance. However, it makes clear that we need to further prioritize missions within the context of a continued rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. It also indicated that we are at risk of strategy insolvency if sequestration is implemented as currently prescribed by law. That is, there is a point at which a steep drawdown makes it difficult for us to meet the current and expected demands being placed on our military.

In your view, is our broad defense strategy and current establishment optimally structured, with the roles and missions of the military departments appropriately distributed, and U.S. forces properly armed, trained, and equipped to meet security challenges the Nation faces today and into the next decade?

These are broad, overarching issues that the Department traditionally examines through its Quadrennial Defense Review. The recent Strategic Choices Management Review did, however, provide insight to changes that will need to be made in terms of capability and capacity to meet future security challenges. As a consequence of fiscal constraints, we are already losing readiness that will cost us more to restore. Therefore, I am concerned that our Joint Force will be increasingly less ready for future challenges unless we get budget certainty and flexibility.

In March you said “Recognizing longer-term uncertainty, I’ve also begun to reassess what our military strategy should be, as well as institutional reforms necessary to remain an effective fighting force.” On the topic of Strategic Choices and Management Review, Secretary Hagel said “There will be no rollout of any grand plan on this.”

Will there be any changes in strategy to account for sequestration?

The Department is still in the process of determining what revisions might be necessary to align ends, ways, and means given the additional \$500 billion in cuts. I concur with what the Secretary has stated. We still have considerable work ahead of us to determine the extent to which we have to change the Defense Strategic Guidance. That said, the Strategic Choices and Management Review indicated that the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific remains sound, but that we may need to further prioritize missions.

Do you feel that we have passed or are approaching the line where military strategy is driven by resources rather than being based on objectives and threats?

Strategy is always informed by the resources available. To best protect the nation, we must achieve the best possible balance of ends, ways, and means while assessing and mitigating risk. I am concerned that sequester in its current form prevents us from being able to achieve proper balance, pushing us closer to the line where our military strategy is out of balance with the resources needed to achieve it. If so, our military strategy will take some additional risk in achieving objectives, in the ways we achieve results, and in the way we apply resources. It is too early to determine if we will achieve the right balance or if we have crossed the line – but we will watch this carefully.

What will the indicators be if we cross that line?

Unready forces, misaligned global posture, inability to keep pace with emerging threats, reduced security cooperation, and failure to maintain a high quality All-Volunteer Force are all becoming increasingly likely the longer sequestration in its current form persists. I am especially concerned about the All-Volunteer Force. We presently have the most seasoned, professional force in history. Budget reductions, inflexibility, and uncertainty will increasingly subject them to lower readiness, less education and fewer training events.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to the structure, roles, and missions of the defense establishment?

The upcoming QDR will enable us to look at these issues in a deliberate way. I will provide my best advice to the Secretary during the review and inform Congress as to my recommendations at the earliest opportunity. The lack of certainty in the budget environment makes it more difficult to make hard decisions about structures, roles, and missions, and more difficult to understand the impacts of those decisions.

Strategic Risk

Do you believe that the current and planned pace and scope of operations in Afghanistan in conjunction with current and planned end-strength and force structure reductions create increased levels of strategic risk for the United States based on the current or potential future lack of available trained and ready forces for other contingencies?

The answer depends somewhat on the President's decision on post-2014 presence in Afghanistan and on whether sequestration takes effect as currently prescribed by law. Generally, end-strength and force structure reductions could entail greater military risk to any mission, during execution of future contingencies, as force reductions occur.

If so, how would you characterize the increase in strategic risk in terms of the military's ability to mobilize, prepare, deploy, and employ a force for a new contingency? In your view, is this level of risk acceptable?

In an unclassified forum, I am reluctant to get into specifics on military risk. In general, a smaller Joint Force would become more reliant on rapid reserve mobilization and on maintaining high readiness levels for its active forces. Implementing sequestration as currently prescribed by law will make it impossible to maintain the levels of readiness we have today for current contingencies, much less to make the investments needed to employ the force for more difficult future contingencies. The concerns expressed in the 32-star letter to the Committee last year about the impacts of sequestration on readiness still stand. If anything, I am more worried today.

What is the impact of the decision to decrease U.S. forces committed to Afghanistan on our ability to meet our security obligations in other parts of the world?

As we draw down the forces in Afghanistan, we intend to reset the force as well as provide for a greater range of options for contingencies in other parts of the world. This approach will become increasingly untenable if sequestration as currently prescribed by law persists.

How and over what periods of time, if at all, will reductions to Army and Marine Corps end strength increase or aggravate this risk?

Reductions to land force end strength will increase risk based on our decreased ability to deter conflicts and to shape conditions overseas through Army and Marine security cooperation activities. Reduced end strength means that we will be able to "turn" the force less frequently, and under certain circumstances we may have to extend forces beyond the optimum and

sustainable BOG-dwell ratio.

What is your understanding and assessment of the Army's recent announcement to inactivate 13 of its 45 brigade combat teams by the end of 2017?

First, it's important to note that these inactivations have nothing to do with sequestration. The inactivation of the 13 brigade combat teams will reduce that part of the force that the Army actually increased over the last 10 years to fight our wars. With the planned drawdown of these forces, and the conclusion of two long term stability operations, we can manage our strategy with the reductions the Army has planned.

If confirmed, what additional actions would you take, if any, to reduce or mitigate this strategic risk?

Military strategies consist of ends, ways, means, and risk. "Ends" are goals or objectives, "ways" describe how we intend to meet those objectives, and "means" are the resources available. If we cannot accept more risk, and the "means" are reduced, then we can only reduce our "ends", or change the "ways". Possible examples of changes to "ways" include adjusting our operational plans or global posture, modifying our operational concepts, reducing the scope and nature of the missions we take on, requesting new authorities, shifting the burden onto current alliances or undertaking new security cooperation mechanisms with current or new partners. Possible examples of changes to "ends" include lengthening the time it takes to resolve various contingencies and changing expectations about the speed with which we commit forces or the number of casualties we are prepared to accept. We could also reduce the scope of objectives in a particular region or contingency, or change the priorities of objectives and contingencies worldwide. The depth, breadth, inflexibility, and uncertainty of the budget reductions currently associated with sequestration will make any of these changes both more necessary and more difficult.

Upon issuance of the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, you said "We do accept some risks in this strategy as all strategies must."

With the benefit of hindsight, what is your assessment of the areas where we assume the greatest strategic risk under the current Defense Strategic Guidance due to cuts of \$487 billion?

The recently completed Strategic Choices Management Review outlined the magnitude of the challenges we could face and the difficulty of the decisions involved. But we have yet to make those choices or complete the staff level assessments for a fulsome answer. It did, however, indicate that the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific remains fundamentally sound. More directly, my sense is that the Nation will have a military that is increasingly unready, steadily losing technology overmatch to possible challengers, that is smaller but similar in terms of platforms and capabilities, and that will have an eroded global presence and posture. It is a military that will be viewed with increasing concern by our longtime allies and with increasing satisfaction by our potential adversaries. It is a military that will offer our civilian leaders fewer options and

higher opportunity costs when they decide to employ military force. I will provide additional specifics in my next classified Chairman's Risk Assessment related to impacts of sequestration. But the present year to year magnitude of the \$487B cut cannot be found within our existing budget without taking unprecedented action. Many of these actions that are simultaneously prevented by other laws, particularly with respect to excess infrastructure, compensation and pay, and procurement, as well as changing the balance between Guard/Reserve/Active forces, adjusting the scope and scale of ground force reduction and allowing the retirement of unnecessary platforms. And this is only a partial list.

What are the additional risks associated with cutting an additional \$500 billion under sequestration?

Please see previous answers, which outline the addition risks of fewer options and gaps in or security due to a force that will be out of balance and less ready than it should be.

Chairman's Risk Assessment

In your 2013 risk assessment, you identified for the first time six National Security Interests that were derived from four enduring interests contained in the 2010 National Security Strategy.

Please describe your rationale for assessing risk against these new interests that have not been incorporated into an updated national security strategy?

The four enduring interests in the National Security Strategy provided guidance for the entire United States government, including the diplomatic, information, and economic instruments of power. The six national security interests derive from these and are focused explicitly on the military contribution to the four enduring interests. I have found this construct to be useful tool when articulating specific risks and prioritizing our military missions. They help us think through the options for using force and when/where to take risk and expend resources.

Your April 2013 assessment identified several areas of broad and significant risk to national security as a result of current budget issues.

How would you characterize the trends of risk in these areas (whether they are increasing or decreasing)?

In an unclassified forum I am reluctant to go into much detail. Generally, those strategic risk trends have not changed since March.

As I have mentioned elsewhere, I see increasing strategic risk associated with sequestration as currently prescribed by law.

I will make note of any changes in my next risk assessment.

What is your current assessment of the risk to Combatant Commanders in their ability to successfully execute their operational plans?

In my latest Chairman's Risk Assessment (CRA), I identified and characterized the ability of Combatant Commanders to successfully execute their operational plans and their ongoing missions. The CRA also included the Combatant Commanders' assessments of their most pressing challenges. In an unclassified forum I am reluctant to go into detail, however, I will say that all military operations entail risk, but we are committed to providing the President a range of options given any threat to U.S. interests.

Transformation

Military "transformation" has been a broad objective of the Armed Forces since the end of the Cold War.

In your view, what does military "transformation" mean?

Military transformation is really about adapting the Joint Force to meet future security needs. We must be able to adapt to rapid changes in technology, the global security environment, and our adversaries' capabilities. Uncertainty is the only thing certain today. We must be flexible in order to deter and defeat threats at every point along the spectrum of conflict, from asymmetric threats to a near-peer competitor. If confirmed, I will maintain the development of Joint Force 2020 as a focus area of my Chairmanship, in order to ensure that our nation's security is never uncertain.

What is your understanding and assessment of the progress made by the Department, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, toward transforming the Armed Forces?

My *2012 Strategic Direction to the Joint Force* identifies the development of Joint Force 2020 as one of the four focus areas of my Chairmanship, and we've made progress in the past two years. We're working to advance interdependence, integrate new and specialized capabilities, promote versatility, and preserve readiness by valuing quality over quantity. For example, we've introduced the Joint Operational Access Concept to synchronize our efforts across all five domains—land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace. This concept provides a framework to ensure the Joint Force remains survivable and successful despite growth of anti-access and area-denial threats. We're also moving forward with the Joint Information Environment, implementing innovative industry-supported efficiencies across the Department to further enhance mission effectiveness and cyber security. Ultimately, my aim is a versatile, responsive, decisive, and affordable Joint Force. If reconfirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve this.

If confirmed, what goals, if any, would you establish during your next term as Chairman regarding military transformation in the future?

If confirmed, I will maintain as a priority the development of a superior Joint Force in 2020.

Transformation during this period of fiscal constraint poses challenges for us, but also opportunities. We will be selective in the capabilities we reconstitute as we draw down in Afghanistan, and ensure that lessons learned over a decade of war are retained. We may get smaller, but we can be increasingly versatile and interdependent. We will be regionally postured, but globally networked. We will integrate new capabilities and leverage cutting-edge technologies that will provide a decisive advantage as we adapt to new ways of war. The economic situation demands that the future force be affordable, but keeping our military the best led, trained, and equipped force in the world is a non-negotiable imperative.

Do you believe the Joint Staff should play a larger role in transformation? If so, in what ways?

The Joint Staff is contributing significantly to the transformation of the Joint Force in a closely coordinated effort with the Services and Combatant Commands. The Joint Staff's current focus is on concept, strategy, and doctrine development, and establishing joint requirements to address gaps in capability. I believe this is the correct role.

Military Capabilities in Support of Defense Strategy

The 2010 report of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) provided that military forces shall be sized to prevail in ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the war against Al-Qa'ida as well as for conducting foundational activities that prevent and deter attacks or the emergence of other threats. The QDR report particularly emphasizes the requirement for improved capabilities in key mission areas such as counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations, as well as building the security capacity of partner states. In contrast, the Defense Strategic Guidance of January 2012 asserts that the United States will no longer size its forces for long duration stability operations.

Understanding that the Department is currently embarked on a Strategic Choices and Management Review that is intended to inform the 2014 QDR, what is your understanding and assessment of the current ability of each Service to provide capabilities to support these mission requirements and, if confirmed, what changes, if any, would you pursue to improve these capabilities?

The Services are currently able to provide forces to support the missions identified within the Defense Strategic Guidance. Resource constraints, however, are eroding readiness and extending the timeline by which forces can be made available to fulfill Combatant Commanders' requests and respond to emerging requirements. We are reexamining the plans and scenarios that drive the size and capabilities of our force to ensure they are informed by the realities of our fiscal and operating environment. We will continue to closely manage the way we use our forces as they conduct day-to-day operations. Further, new fiscal guidance will ensure that the Department invests in those capabilities most needed to defend the nation against likely future mission requirements.

In your opinion, can the 2014 QDR be conducted without an updated National Security Strategy, which is required by law to be submitted annually?

Existing guidance is sufficient to inform my statutory requirement to contribute to the QDR. The enduring interests articulated in the 2010 National Security Strategy as well as the six national security interests outlined in the Chairman's Risk Assessment provide a consistent framework within which to conduct the next QDR. If national priorities shift in any future NSS, we will adapt our strategic documents and processes such as the QDR.

Are you committed to meet the statutory date for delivery of a 2014 QDR to Congress?

Yes, in accordance with Title 10, United States Code, Section 118, we plan to meet the statutory date to deliver a 2014 QDR to Congress.

Future Army

The Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) of January 2012 articulated the need to shift strategic emphasis toward the Asia-Pacific region while continuing to engage in the Middle East.

Do you agree that future high-end military operations, as envisioned by the DSG, will primarily be naval and air engagements such that the Army will have difficulty justifying the size, structure, and cost of the number and equipment its combat formations?

America needs a capable and decisive Army. The size and structure of the Army will continue to adapt to the evolving security environment. Our most recent experience with war suggests that we cannot predict where or when we will be asked to fight. A global superpower needs to retain sufficient capability, capability, and readiness to win across all domains. As Chairman, my focus is on ensuring that the Joint Force as a whole is capable of executing decisive operations in support of our national interests, regardless of geography or the theater of operations.

In your view, what are the most important considerations or criteria for aligning the Army's size, structure, and cost with strategy and resources?

Our nation needs an Army that can conduct full spectrum operations as part of the Joint Force. It must be appropriately sized, structured, and equipped to in order to defend the nation and defeat our adversaries. The Defense Strategic Guidance deemphasized long duration stability operations and reinforced the importance of defeating and denying the objectives of an adversary. The Army is realigning and resizing consistent with this guidance.

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you propose to properly align the Army's size and structure with the requirements of security strategies and the likely availability of resources?

If confirmed, I will continue to support the ongoing realignment and restructuring of BCTs.

These measures enhance the ability of the Joint Force to provide a full range of options to the President that meets diverse threats in an uncertain environment.

Sequestration

Sequestration requires defense cuts totaling \$37 billion over the last half of the current fiscal year.

What is your assessment of how the Department is managing these cuts in the current fiscal year?

The cuts required by sequestration in FY 2013 are a self-inflicted wound to our national security. We have lost readiness that will take time and money to restore. We are out of balance due to the magnitude, mechanism, and pace of budget cuts. While the Department is shifting funds where possible to minimize the impact on war-fighting capabilities and critical military readiness, sequestration to date has resulted in cuts to training, exercises, and deployments, civilian furloughs and hiring freeze, reduced base maintenance, disruption to modernization, and morale challenges. We are leading through these cuts by doing all we can to protect funding to our deployed forces, our nuclear enterprise, and our warrior and family support programs.

What are your views on the impact these cuts are having on readiness?

We have lost readiness that will take time and money to restore. The impact of sequestration and other budget constraints are beginning to emerge in unit level readiness reports. The effects caused by the cancellation of large force exercises and deferred maintenance are harder to measure, but will also impose significant strain on long-term institutional readiness. The combined effect of reduced training cycles, deferred maintenance, and the pace of current operations is damaging to both readiness and morale. If current trends continue, recovery from several months of sequestration will take years. Eventually, our readiness problem will become a recruitment and retention problem.

The fiscal year 2014 budget request and the fiscal year 2014 budget resolutions passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives all assume that sequestration will be avoided in fiscal year 2014. It appears possible that sequestration will not be avoided in fiscal year 2014 and the Department of Defense will have to cut \$52 billion from its budget request. You have been involved in developing the most workable approach to meeting the \$52 billion savings requirement established by the Budget Control Act.

What is your assessment of the Department's proposals for managing the additional \$52 billion in cuts in fiscal year 2014?

The abrupt, deep cuts caused by the Budget Control Act caps in FY 2014 will force DoD to make non-strategic choices. If sequester continues, the Department will have to make sharp cuts with far reaching consequences, including limiting combat power, reducing readiness, and undermining the national security interests of the United States. To limit adverse consequences,

we need the certainty of a predictable funding stream, time to balance force structure, modernization, compensation, and readiness, and the flexibility to make trade-offs. The Secretary directed a Strategic Choices and Management Review to develop options that would accommodate these large cuts, but none of these options fully avoid an increase in risk to our national security.

What are your views on the impact these cuts will have on readiness?

While DoD would attempt to protect the O&M funding most closely related to training and readiness, full protection will be impossible. Therefore, military training and readiness would remain at the currently degraded levels or, in some cases, would continue to decline in a sequester-level cut of \$52 billion in FY 2014. Ultimately, ongoing cuts will threaten our obligation to send only the best trained, led and equipped forces into harm's way.

What are your views on the impact these cuts will have to military capabilities?

Given the difficulty of cutting FY 2014 military personnel funding, DoD would be forced to disproportionately reduce funding for operations and maintenance, procurement, RDT&E, and military construction. Funding for hundreds of program line items, large and small, will be significantly reduced. We will buy fewer ships, planes, ground vehicles, satellites, and other weapons systems. Cuts in funding for research and development will ultimately slow discovery and advancement, eroding the technological superiority enjoyed by U.S. forces and translating into less desirable military outcomes in future conflicts.

Readiness Funding

Given the reductions in readiness funding, what is your assessment of the current readiness of the Armed Forces to meet national security requirements across the full spectrum of military operations?

Despite a decade of strenuous demands on the force, we remain sufficiently ready to conduct current operations. The Joint Force faced the simultaneous challenge of reconstituting the force and focusing on a broad spectrum of operations prior to sequestration. Now, we must prioritize the readiness of our deployed and next to deploy forces at the expense of reconstituting the majority of the non-deployed force. This approach is unsustainable and cannibalizes longer-term reconstitution. Simply put, sequester hinders our ability to generate forces for contingency operations. If nothing changes, most operational units will have readiness deficiencies by FY 2014. This lost readiness will cost more and take longer to recover.

What is your assessment of the near term trend in the readiness of the Armed Forces?

We have curtailed operations, maintenance, and training across the force because of sequestration cuts. Specific actions by service include:

- **Army** – 80% of ground forces training will be curtailed for the remainder of FY 2013. Units will train to just squad-level proficiency. Half of all third- and fourth-quarter depot maintenance has been cancelled.
- **Air Force** – 12 Active Duty combat aviation squadrons stood down.
- **Navy** – Ship deployments have been reduced. Steaming days and training opportunities for non-deployed ships as well as flying hours for non-deployed air wings have also been reduced, resulting in at least one air wing being at minimum safety levels by the end of FY 2013.
- **Marine Corps** – Efforts remain focused on meeting near-term commitments for deployed and next-to-deploy forces. We are concerned about the availability of amphibious ships.

We are beginning to see the effect of these actions in unit level readiness reports and expect that trend to continue as time reveals the full impacts of sequestration. We are prioritizing the readiness of our deployed and next to deploy forces, but the decreased readiness of the non-deployed force and damage to production and training pipelines make this unsustainable.

Given the impact of sequestration, do you support the additional sourcing of base defense funds to pay for unforeseen requirements in support of overseas contingency operations?

While under sequestration, I would support a source of funding in the base budget to pay for emergent contingency operations. We will inevitably face new contingencies as operations wind down in Afghanistan and associated funding for overseas contingency operations decreases. Without such relief in this or in the form of a supplemental, the Services will mortgage readiness to absorb the costs of these operations.

How critical is it to find a solution to sequestration given the impacts we have already seen to DOD readiness in fiscal year 2013?

It is critical. I am deeply concerned about the loss of readiness across the department. Lost readiness take longer and costs more to recover. It foreclosed options and compounds risk. We are repeating the mistakes of past drawdowns. The impact of sequestration and other budget constraints are beginning to emerge in unit level readiness reports. The longer term effects caused by the cancellation of large force exercises and deferred maintenance are harder to measure, but will impose significant strain on long-term institutional readiness.

What is your understanding and assessment of the methods currently used for estimating the funding needed for the maintenance of military equipment?

Requirements drive equipment maintenance based on factors that include force structure, operations tempo, schedule, nature and use of the equipment, and safety. The Services' detailed maintenance plans balance operational availability with maintenance requirements. Perturbations in the budget process and funding uncertainties have effects across the maintenance plan for months and even years.

Given the backlog in equipment maintenance over the last several years, do you believe that we need an increased investment to reduce this backlog?

The Services have successfully managed their equipment maintenance backlogs in recent years. But funding shortfalls from successive continuing resolutions and sequestration in FY 2013 have culminated in more depot maintenance deferrals across all Services. If sequestration continues, this backlog will grow, causing reduced availability rates, less reliable systems, and platforms not reaching their intended service life. We need budget certainty and flexibility to best equip the Services to achieve force readiness over time.

How important is it to reduce the materiel maintenance backlog in order to improve readiness?

Very. Force readiness includes materiel. The remedy for the accumulating maintenance backlog is the same as the remedy for force readiness – time and money.

How important is it to receive OCO funding two or three years after the end of combat operations in order to ensure all equipment is reset?

Very important. OCO has been a necessary funding source to conduct ongoing operations and reset equipment to prepare for future operations. Equipment consumed in Iraq and Afghanistan remains relevant to unit readiness. OCO beyond the end of combat operations will help restore the readiness required to support the National Security Strategy. Lack of OCO for reset will delay the Services' ability to meet readiness requirements in the out years.

In years past, we have based additional readiness funding decisions on the Service Chief unfunded priorities lists. However, in recent years those lists have either been nonexistent or have arrived too late in our markup process.

Do you agree to provide unfunded priorities lists to Congress in a timely manner beginning with the fiscal year 2015 budget request?

The provision of unfunded requirements lists to Congress is a longstanding practice. Given the budget uncertainty, it is difficult to project whether and when we might submit requirements for 2015. Should the Services have such requirements, the existing statutory framework provides the opportunity for the Joint Chiefs to make recommendations that are responsive to Congress after first informing the Secretary of Defense.

Defense Acquisition Reform

Congress enacted the Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (WSARA), without a dissenting vote in either House. WSARA is designed to ensure that new defense acquisition programs start on a sound footing, to avoid the high cost of fixing problems late in the acquisition process.

Having now served as the Chairman, what are your views regarding WSARA and the need for improvements in the Defense acquisition process?

The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 has been instrumental in ensuring new defense programs start on a sound footing to avoid the high cost of fixing problems late in the acquisition process. It also jump-started a culture within the Department focused on the continuous improvement of our acquisition processes and their associated outcomes, which I strongly endorse.

If confirmed, how would you improve all three aspects of the acquisition process – requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

There is an ongoing effort within the Department to continuously improve all aspects of the acquisition process. As recently as January of 2012 a new revision of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) was published, and we are currently working with the Office of Secretary of Defense to revise DoD 5000.02, “Operation of the Defense Acquisition System.” DoD 5000.02 will incorporate the initiatives outlined in Dr. Carter’s 2010 “Better Buying Power: Guidance for Obtaining Greater Efficiency and Productivity in Defense Spending (BPP 1.0)” memo and Mr. Frank Kendall’s 2012 initiative entitled “Better Buying Power 2.0: Continuing the Pursuit for Greater Efficiency and Productivity in Defense Spending”, all of which I strongly support, along with the improvements instituted in the new JCIDS instruction and manual.

Do you believe that the current investment budget for major systems is affordable given increasing historic cost growth in major systems, costs of current operations, and asset recapitalization?

I am concerned that costs in acquisition and procurement will continue their historic growth profiles, further exacerbating shortfalls under a sequestered budget. We will continue to scrub our processes, including our warfighter requirements, to ensure they are aligned with strategy and available resources. But, it will likely be necessary to reduce some investments for major systems under full sequestration.

If confirmed, how do you plan to address this issue and guard against the potential impact of weapon systems cost growth?

I will continue to partner with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to improve our inter-related processes, and work closely with our Combatant Commanders and our Title 10 Service providers to mitigate cost growth impacts of and on our highest priority capability investments. I will be an advocate for major systems that provide versatility at an affordable and sustainable cost.

If confirmed, what actions would you propose, if any, to ensure that requirements are realistic, and prioritized?

The improvements put into place in the latest revision of the JCIDS process have been very

effective. The Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) is now more focused on weapon system cost, schedule, and performance, and uses greater analytical rigor to reach recommendations. The JCIDS process and the associated responsibilities of the JROC, Services, and the JROC advisors in support of the JCIDS process will continue to be refined throughout my tenure as Chairman.

Contractors on the Battlefield

According to widely published reports, the number of U. S. contractor employees in Afghanistan often exceeds the number of U. S. military deployed in there. This was also the case during the operations in Iraq.

Do you believe that the Department of Defense has become too dependent on contractor support for military operations?

They have been part of our military force since the Revolutionary War. Contractors function in various roles and are a force multiplier. They provide rapid expansion of manpower when needed to fill critical gaps. The use of local contractors can be an important element of military objectives. With that in mind, I think we need to continuously evaluate the costs and necessity of contractors to make sure contractor support is properly structured for a period of fiscal correction.

What risks do you see in the Department's reliance on such contractor support? What steps do you believe the Department should take to mitigate such risk?

We are in the process of analyzing lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan and updating doctrine to ensure that we can properly target capabilities that are optimum for contracting support. Contracting provides capabilities the military may not have readily available, but it is critical that we maintain effective oversight and introduce better cost controls.

Do you believe the Department is appropriately organized and staffed to effectively manage contractors on the battlefield?

Yes. However, oversight is critical to ensure contracts are properly executed. We are in much better shape today than we were when the wars began over ten years ago. We will continue to apply the lessons learned to improve our processes. We have expanded personnel two fold and have a roadmap to move us to an appropriately staffed and organized contracting capability. I will remain focused on this challenge as we make resource tradeoffs in the sequestration process.

What steps if any do you believe the Department should take to improve its management of contractors on the battlefield?

The Department will continue to mature the contingency capabilities of our contracting agencies and to provide dedicated unit contracting specialists for oversight. We will continue to adjust doctrine based on lessons learned and maintain our focus on training and education for this

critical military capability.

Tactical Fighter Programs

Perhaps the largest modernization effort that we will face over the next several years is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program to modernize our tactical aviation forces with fifth generation tactical aircraft equipped with stealth technology.

Based on current and projected threats, what are your current views on the requirements for and timing of these programs?

Dominance in the air is essential to the success of our Joint Force. Since 1953, our ground forces have not been attacked from the air by our adversaries. We cannot let any other nation achieve parity with the United States in the ability to control the air. The projected threats from our adversaries include programs to build advanced aircraft that will challenge our current capabilities in the coming years. The F-35, which will replace several older generation aircraft across the Joint Force, will continue to ensure our air dominance well into the future.

What is your current assessment of whether the restructuring of the JSF program that we have seen over the past two years will be sufficient to avoid having to make major adjustments in either cost or schedule in the future?

The Department is committed to the Joint Strike Fighter program and the acquisition adjustments we have made over the past two years. But, budget constraints and uncertainty may impact the program. To date, the F-35 has flown more than 3,000 flights totaling more than 5,000 flight hours and is largely tracking to our re-baselined plan. The program's estimate for major milestone events remains aligned to the 2012 acquisition baseline. Flight tests are also progressing close to plan.

Ballistic Missile Defense

Do you agree that the current Ground-based Midcourse Defense system, with interceptors deployed in Alaska and California, provides defense of the entire United States – including the East Coast – against missile threats from both North Korea and Iran, and do you have confidence in that system?

Yes, I am confident that the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system, supported by other deployed and available ballistic missile defense capabilities, can protect the United States from both a limited North Korean and Iranian long-range ballistic missile attack.

On March 15, 2013, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced a series of initiatives to improve our homeland ballistic missile defense capabilities, including the planned deployment of 14 additional Ground-Based Interceptors (GBIs) in Alaska, to help stay ahead of the long-range missile threat from North Korea and Iran.

Do you support the initiatives announced by Secretary Hagel, and do you believe they will help us stay ahead of the threat from North Korea and Iran?

Yes, I support the initiatives announced by Secretary Hagel. The collective results of the initiatives will further improve our ability to counter future missile threats being developed by Iran and North Korea.

As indicated in the 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review, the Administration is pursuing a “fly before you buy” approach to missile defense, and will test systems in an operationally realistic manner to demonstrate they will work as intended before we deploy them. Since a GBI flight test failure with the Capability Enhancement-II kill vehicle in 2010, the Missile Defense Agency has been working to fix the problem and plans to conduct an intercept flight test in the spring of 2014 to demonstrate the fix.

Do you agree with the “fly before you buy” policy, and do you agree with Secretary Hagel that, before we deploy the additional GBIs, we need to test and demonstrate the fix so we demonstrate its capability and have confidence that it will work as intended?

Yes. I agree with the Administration’s approach to test systems in an operationally realistic manner. I also agree with the importance of achieving confidence in a capability before it is deployed.

Section 227 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 requires an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for possible future homeland missile defense sites in the United States, in case the President determines to proceed with such a deployment in the future. That EIS process is expected to be complete in early 2016.

Do you agree that the EIS process should be completed prior to making any decision relative to possible deployment of an additional homeland missile defense site in the United States, including possibly on the East Coast?

I agree that Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) should be completed to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act prior to the actual deployment of an additional missile defense site in the U.S.

Do you agree with the Director of the Missile Defense Agency and the Commander of the Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense that there is currently “no validated military requirement to deploy an East Coast missile defense site”?

Yes. At this time, there is no validated military requirement to deploy an East Coast Missile Defense Site. However, analysis is underway to determine if such a site will be necessary to defend the homeland.

Do you agree with their assessment that “investment in Ballistic Missile Defense System discrimination and sensor capabilities would result in more cost-effective near-term improvements to homeland missile defense” than deploying an East Coast missile defense site?

Given current fiscal constraints, investment in Ballistic Missile Defense Systems discrimination and sensor capabilities has the potential to be a cost-effective near-term approach to improving homeland missile defense. Deploying an East Coast missile defense site would likely be a lengthier process.

Do you agree with the following statements regarding a potential East Coast missile defense site:

General Jacoby (Commander, Northcom): “A third site, wherever the decision is to build a third site, would give me better weapons access, increased GBI inventory and allow us the battle space to more optimize our defense against future threats from Iran and North Korea.”

General Formica (Commander Space and Missile Defense Command): “Certainly, it brings increased capacity and increased capability than we have at Fort Greely.”

National Research Council: “A GBI site located in northeastern United States would be much more effective and reliable and would allow considerably more battle space and firing doctrine options.

Generally yes, but there is no guarantee of an increased GBI inventory or that it would be the most cost-effective option.

Do you agree that Presidents Bush and Obama put in place policies that called for additional missile defense sites in Europe to better defend against threats to the United States from Iran?

Yes. The intention of additional missile defense sites in Europe is to better defend the United States as well as our treaty allies.

Is this presidentially directed requirement still valid and, if not, what has changed to permit the elimination of this requirement for a third interceptor site?

Additional analysis remains to determine whether a third site is the optimum and most effective way of fulfilling that requirement.

Space

China’s test of an anti-satellite weapon in 2007 was a turning point for the United States in its policies and procedure to ensure access to space. As a nation heavily dependent on

space assets for both military and economic advantage, protection of space assets became a national priority.

Do you agree that space situational awareness and protection of space assets should be a national security priority?

Yes. Space situational awareness underpins our ability to operate safely in an increasingly congested space environment. It is vital that the U.S. protect national space assets to maintain the benefits and advantages that are dependent on our access to space.

In your view should China's continued development of space systems inform U.S. space policy and programs?

Yes. The U.S. government ensures its space policy and programs address China's continued development of space systems as well as systems of other space-faring nations. Our National Security Space Strategy reflects this domain's role in U.S. national security. Access to space underpins our ability to understand emerging threats and challenges, project power globally, conduct operations, support diplomatic efforts, and enable the global economy. The Department engages in cooperative opportunities and leads in the formation of rules and behaviors that benefit all nations. I support the development of U.S. space capabilities which preserve the use of space for the U.S. and our allies, while promoting the principles of the 2010 National Space Policy.

If confirmed would you propose any changes to National Security space policy and programs?

I do not recommend any proposed changes at this time. If confirmed, I would continue implementation of the President's 2010 National Space Policy, the supporting 2011 National Security Space Strategy, and the Department's newly updated Space Policy.

What actions would you take to ensure that the Departments continues to have access to radiofrequency spectrum that is necessary to train and to conduct its operations?

It is important that DoD preserve access to the 1755-1850 MHz band and open access to the 2025-2110 MHz bands. The Joint Force is dependent on tactical systems that operate in the 1755-1850 MHz band to operate and train its forces. DoD equities in this band include Satellite Operations, Air Combat Training Systems, Aeronautical Mobile Telemetry, Small Unmanned Aerial Systems, Electronic Warfare, Joint Tactical Radios System, and Tactical Radio Relay systems. Other agencies are seeking DoD to relinquish operations in this band, particularly the lower 25 MHz (1755-1780 MHz). These agencies also seek to have DoD Compress into the upper 70 MHz of this band (1780-1850 MHz). DoD analysis has determined that previously mentioned tactical systems cannot effectively operate in the compressed band. If compression of this band occurs, DoD would require access in the 2025–2110 MHz band and resources to modify systems to operate within this band. Some of the tactical systems could share spectrum

with the commercial wireless industry within the lower 25 MHz without adversely effecting commercial systems, e.g. Satellite Operations.

Strategic Systems

Over the next 5 years DOD will begin to replace or begin studies to replace all of the strategic delivery systems. For the next 15 plus years, DOD will also have to sustain the current strategic nuclear enterprise. This will be a very expensive undertaking.

Do you have any concerns about the ability of the Department to afford the costs of nuclear systems modernization while meeting the rest of the DOD commitments?

The modernization of the strategic delivery systems and sustainment of the strategic nuclear enterprise is important to maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. I support the continued investment in sustainment and modernization as a priority for defense spending. I am, of course, concerned about the impact of sequestration on our ability to meet these requirements. Therefore, I continue to request budget certainty, flexibility, and time to make sure we can modernize and sustain our strategic systems.

If confirmed will you review the modernization and replacement programs to ensure that they are cost effective?

Yes, I will review both to ensure they are cost effective.

The Department will begin to issue guidance from the recent decision to revise the Nuclear Employment Strategy.

Do you support this change in Strategy?

Yes, I do support the change in Strategy. Admiral Winnefeld and I participated in senior leader meetings, where we provided our best military advice to both the Secretary of Defense and the President on our nuclear capabilities.

Will you keep the Congress fully informed of additional guidance issued in response to this changed strategy?

I will work closely with the Secretary and the President to keep Congress fully informed as additional guidance is developed and issued with respect to the changes in our strategy.

Nuclear Weapons Employment Strategy

President Obama recently issued new guidance on nuclear weapons employments strategy, consistent with the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review.

Do you support the President's new nuclear weapons employment guidance, and did you have an opportunity to provide input to the formulation of the new guidance?

Yes, I support the President's new guidance. Both Admiral Winnefeld and I participated in senior leader meetings, where we provided our best military advice to both the Secretary of Defense and the President.

Do you agree with the President's assessment that the United States can ensure its security, and the security of our allies and partners, and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent while safely pursuing up to a one-third reduction in deployed strategic nuclear weapons below the level established in the New START Treaty? Please explain your views.

We can ensure our security and that of our allies and partners and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent while pursuing further reductions beyond the New START Treaty central limits. However, to be very clear on this point, in order to maintain a credible and effective deterrent we must continue to adequately invest in the modernization of our nuclear infrastructure as long as nuclear weapons exist. Also, further reductions in strategic nuclear weapons, beyond the New START Treaty Central Limits, should occur as part of a negotiated position with Russia. Both Admiral Winnefeld and I have made this recommendation to the President and the Secretary of Defense.

Is the current strategic balance between Russia and the United States stable?

I believe we currently have a stable and strategic balance with Russia, but we must be thoughtful to maintain that balance in such a manner that we never sacrifice our ability to credibly provide extended deterrence and assurance to our allies.

What is the military rationale to pursue an additional one-third reduction in deployed U.S. strategic nuclear weapons?

Based on the results of the Post-NPR analysis, the Department concluded that we could further reduce the number of deployed U.S. strategic nuclear weapons, while still meeting the objectives of the revised policy guidance and strategy. From the military perspective, further reductions should occur as part of a negotiated position with Russia, and to ensure the credibility of a smaller deterrent force, our nuclear infrastructure modernization plans must be fully funded and supported. In following this approach, I am confident we can maintain a strategic and stable balance with Russia, while maintaining a viable extended deterrent for our allies and partners.

What are the potential risks and benefits of pursuing additional nuclear force reductions?

I am confident that we can ensure our security and that of our allies and partners, and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent while pursuing further reductions beyond the New START Treaty central limits. In order to maintain an effective and credible deterrent, we must continue to adequately invest in the modernization of our nuclear infrastructure as long as nuclear weapons exist. Also, further reductions in strategic nuclear weapons, beyond the New START

Treaty Central Limits, should occur as part of a negotiated position with Russia to ensure stability. As we negotiate further reductions with Russia, to include their larger number of non-strategic nuclear weapons, I am encouraged by the initiative to expand the scope of those reductions to include both strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons that are both deployed and non-deployed. I believe this is a prudent approach that will maintain strategic stability with Russia.

Do you agree it is necessary to address the disparity between Russia and the United States in tactical nuclear weapons, in a verifiable manner?

It is important for us to work with Russia to establish cooperative measures that will improve mutual confidence regarding the accurate accounting and security of tactical nuclear weapons. I support efforts to engage Russia in accordance with the Senate's Resolution to Ratification of the New START Treaty.

Do you agree that any further nuclear reductions should be done in concert with Russia and that such reductions be part of a formal agreement requiring the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate?

The Senate's Resolution to Ratification of the New START Treaty sets forth principles I agree with. This includes the principle that further arms reduction agreements obligating the United States to reduce or limit the Armed Forces or armaments of the United States in any militarily significant manner may be made only pursuant to the treaty-making power of the President. This power is set forth in Article II, section 2, clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States.

Do you agree it is important to address any potential Russian non-compliance with existing nuclear arms control agreements?

Yes, we should address treaty compliance concerns. Treaty compliance determinations are provided to Congress in the report by the President on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments which is submitted pursuant to Section 403 of the Arms Control and Disarmament Act, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2593a).

DOD's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

The CTR program, which is focused historically on accounting for, securing or eliminating Cold War era weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and materials in the states of the former Soviet Union, has started to expand its focus to other countries. With this expansion the CTR program is widening its focus to biological weapons and capabilities including biological surveillance and early warning; and encouraging development of capabilities to reduce proliferation threats.

Do you think the CTR program is well coordinated among the U.S. government agencies that engage in threat reduction efforts, e.g., the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the State Department?

Yes. In the past year the Department of Defense, Department of Energy and State Department have jointly decided how to use funds from the proliferation prevention program. Cooperation is “built in” because drawing from each Department’s fund requires concurrence by the other Department’s Secretary. Additionally, many agencies are now working closely together to reduce threats in particular regions. This cooperation extends across the Defense and State Departments Cooperative Threat Reduction programs, State’s Non Proliferation Disarmament Fund, and the DOE Proliferation Prevention Program.

The new umbrella agreement with Russia does not include work with the Russian ministry of Defense and recent efforts in the program have moved towards preventing proliferation in the Middle East and North Africa.

Do you support this transition to the Middle East and North?

I think transition to the Middle East and North Africa makes good sense. It builds the capacity for regional partners to improve WMD threat reduction through proliferation prevention. It increases safety and security of materials of concern, and it helps with border security and consequence management. The transition to these regions complements National Strategic objectives and Geographic Combatant Commander priorities to meet those goals.

What actions will you take to continue a proliferation prevention relationship with Russia?

If the agreements with Russia are extended, the project to transport and dismantle nuclear weapons would continue for some additional years. This program securely ships strategic and tactical nuclear warheads to dismantlement locations or to more secure storage sites until they can be dismantled. DoD plans to support approximately four secure shipments of legacy nuclear weapons per month and the associated maintenance for railcars and railcar security systems. While DOE projects to secure nuclear materials continue, direct DoD support to our partnership with Russia is critical to U.S. nonproliferation efforts.

About 60% of CTR resources are proposed for biological programs.

With the very real threat of chemical weapons use and/or proliferation as we saw in Libya and are seeing in Syria, why is there such a large percentage of resources directed toward biological issues?

Dedication of 60% of CTR to biological programs is a necessary balance in order to deal with a pandemic, accidental release of a pathogen of security concern, or deliberate attack using a biological agent. All of these would have consequences in the U.S. and well beyond our borders and the obvious health impacts. There is an increasing availability of biological materials, and many countries are developing laboratory capacity to detect highly dangerous pathogens. This

rapid expansion of poorly controlled infrastructure could lead to accidental exposure or release of highly contagious pathogens. An additional vulnerability at these laboratories is the inherently dual-use nature of biological activity. Legitimate infrastructure, materials, and expertise, therefore, can easily be manipulated or used for nefarious purposes if the appropriate safety and security measures are not in place. As a major hub of international travel, immigration, and commerce, the U.S. is directly threatened by this global danger.

Prompt Global Strike

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review concluded that the United States will continue to experiment with prompt global strike prototypes. There has been no decision to field a prompt global strike capability as the effort is early in the technology and testing phase.

In your view, what is the role for a conventional prompt global strike capability in addressing the key threats to U.S. national security in the near future?

We are exploring a range of ways to counter the threat posed as our adversaries increase the range and lethality of their weapon systems. There are potential future circumstances that may require a capability to address high value, time sensitive and defended targets from ranges outside the current conventional technology. We will continue to capture these evolving capability needs in our joint requirements process. We will also continue to evaluate ongoing analysis of a Conventional Prompt Global Strike capability in order to provide recommendations on its future development.

What approach (e.g. land-based or sea-based or both) to implementation of this capability would you expect to pursue if confirmed?

If confirmed, I would expect to pursue a sea-based approach as directed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in February 2012. I would, of course, remain open to additional analysis or factors that would suggest another approach.

In your view what, if any, improvements in intelligence capabilities would be needed to support a prompt global strike capability?

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) is an enabling capability for a wide range of important Joint Force capabilities to include global strike. A Conventional Prompt Global Strike weapon would likely require an advance persistent surveillance sensor constellation to enable and enhance its operational performance.

Nuclear Weapons and Stockpile Stewardship

Congress established the Stockpile Stewardship Program with the aim of creating the computational capabilities and experimental tools needed to allow for the continued certification of the nuclear weapons stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable without the need for nuclear weapons testing. The Secretaries of Defense and Energy are statutorily

required to certify annually to the Congress the continued safety, security, and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile.

As the stockpile continues to age, what do you view as the greatest challenges, if any, with respect to assuring the safety, security, and reliability of the stockpile?

To sustain a safe, secure, and effective stockpile today, we must prudently manage our nuclear stockpile and related Life Extension Programs (LEPs). We must also cultivate the nuclear infrastructure, expert workforce, and leadership required to sustain it in the future. If confirmed, I will consider the full range of LEP approaches to include refurbishment of existing warheads, reuse of nuclear components from different warheads, and replacement of nuclear components.

If the technical conclusions and data from the Stockpile Stewardship Program could no longer confidently support the annual certification of the stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable, would you recommend the resumption of underground nuclear testing? What considerations would guide your recommendation in this regard?

Our current nuclear stockpile is assessed as effective. It is certified and does not require further nuclear testing. However, the stockpile is aging. I understand there are, and will always be, challenges in identifying and remedying the effects of aging on the stockpile. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Department of Energy to maintain the critical skills, capabilities, and infrastructure needed to ensure the safety, reliability, and security of the stockpile within a constrained budget environment.

Do you agree that the full funding of the President's plan for modernizing the nuclear weapons complex, commonly referred to as the 1251 report, is a critical national security priority?

I agree that the full funding of the 1043 report, which has replaced the 1251 report, is a critical national security priority. The President's FY14 Budget Request again includes a significant commitment to support the long term plan for extending the life of the weapons in our enduring stockpile and modernizing the nuclear weapon complex. I am committed to continuing the modernization and sustainment of our nuclear weapons delivery systems, stockpile, and infrastructure.

Prior to completing this modernization effort, do you believe it would be prudent to consider reductions below New START Treaty limits in the deployed stockpile of nuclear weapons?

Modernization efforts must be considered in any deliberations over the size of our deployed stockpile. Further analysis will be necessary to determine the extent to which it would be advisable to make further reductions prior to completing modernization efforts. Factors to be considered in such analysis include U.S. policy objectives as well as the need to maintain strategic stability with Russia and China while assuring our Allies and partners.

If confirmed, would you recommend any changes to the non-deployed hedge stockpile of nuclear weapons?

There may be opportunities to change the non-deployed hedge of nuclear weapons while still effectively managing stockpile risk. This would be considered as we complete life-extension programs that improve safety, security and reliability of the stockpile and as we modernize the infrastructure. I am committed to reducing the size of the stockpile consistent with deterrence objectives and warfighter requirements.

Iraq

With the withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces from Iraq at the end of 2011, the United States and Iraq began what the President called a new chapter in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. At the same time, the 2008 Strategic Framework Agreement continues to set forth a number of principles of cooperation governing the U.S.-Iraqi relationship. In December 2012 the Department of Defense and the Iraqi Ministry of Defense concluded a Memorandum of Understanding for Defense Cooperation.

In your view, what are the main areas of mutual strategic interest in the U.S.-Iraqi relationship?

We see areas of mutual strategic interest in partnership with a sovereign, stable and democratic Iraq in several areas to include: countering Iran's aggression and pursuit of nuclear weapons capability; mitigating destabilizing effects on the region from violence in Syria; counterterrorism cooperation to reduce AQI capacity; stable production of petroleum exports; active participation in regional multilateral exercises; and involvement in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

What are the main areas of bilateral defense cooperation between the United States and Iraq?

The main areas of defense cooperation are through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Funding (FMF) programs, and International Military Education and Training (IMET). Iraq has begun to participate in regional exercises, highlighted by their recent activity in the International Mine Countermeasure Exercise and EAGER LION Counterterrorism Exercise. Under the U.S.-Iraq Security Framework Agreement – and given the lack of a Status of Forces Agreement – the Department of Defense is limited to non-operational training with Iraq. However, our Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq has helped facilitate bilateral training between Iraqi Security Forces and other regional militaries. All other defense training is conducted by contractor personnel through FMS cases.

What is your assessment of the current threat posed by al-Qa'ida in Iraq?

AQI continues to pose a significant threat to internal stability in Iraq. Extremist elements responding to the crisis in Syria have bolstered AQI capability and motivation. Sectarian divisions, coupled with a lack of security in the Disputed Internal Boundaries, have allowed AQI

to act as a destabilizing influence. The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) – one of the most professional and disciplined units in Iraq – nevertheless lacks the ability to develop actionable intelligence to effectively suppress the threat.

What is your assessment of the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces to respond to the threat posed by al-Qa’ida and other security challenges?

Due to current sectarian violence and political discord among the ethnic groups in Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are reaching their operational limits. Additionally, the lack of a coherent border security strategy allows the flow of weapons and personnel to and from Syria. The Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq (OSC-I) is limited to non-operational training. However, Iraq’s recent acquisition of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment will improve the ISF’s ability to counter the AQI threat. Meanwhile, Iraq’s external defense capabilities are extremely limited based on the focus on internal stability.

What do you see as the principle role or roles of the Office of Security Cooperation within the U.S. Embassy in Iraq?

The principle role of the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I), under Chief of Mission authority, is to conduct security assistance and security cooperation activities advancing the U.S. strategic goal of a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq. OSC-I trains the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to meet Iraq’s internal security requirements while leveraging Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs, and other security assistance authorities to complement Iraq’s robust Iraqi-funded Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program.

What do you see as the greatest challenges for the U.S.-Iraq strategic relationship over the coming years?

The greatest challenge facing the U.S.-Iraq strategic relationship is the successful transition to a more traditional security cooperation relationship – with a robust bilateral and multilateral training and exercise program – despite persistent sectarian violence throughout the country and rising tensions over Iranian support to Syria.

What are the lessons learned from the drawdown and post-combat operations in Iraq that should be applied to the drawdown and post-combat operations in Afghanistan?

First, we must improve communication and coordination between the Department of Defense and Department of State as we shift from a military-led program to a diplomatic-led program. In Iraq, the lack of a fully integrated civilian-military drawdown significantly complicated an already difficult transition. Second, we must clearly-define the missions and support for U.S. and Coalition forces remaining in Afghanistan, with all authorities and agreements in place prior to completion of full transition. These authorities and agreements – a primary aim of US-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement negotiations – will provide assurance of the U.S. commitment and help preserve hard-fought gains as Afghanistan begins the critical post-2014 period. Finally, we

must maintain an equilibrium among our campaign objectives, retrograde, and the protection of our forces.

Stability and Support Operations

The U.S. experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has underscored the importance of planning and training to prepare for the conduct and support of stability and support operations in post-conflict situations. In contrast, however, the January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance asserts that the Department will avoid becoming involved in long duration stability and support operations.

What steps, if any, would you recommend to ensure that the lessons learned from stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are captured and appropriately institutionalized?

We've captured the lessons we have learned regarding stability operations in our Joint Doctrine. Specifically, we have a complete publication (JP 3-07) dedicated to the topic – the current version is dated September of 2011. Later this year, we will formally assess this publication with the intent to update it as part of our routine doctrine process. Further, we will ensure the lessons and concepts are retained in our training and education.

Afghanistan Campaign

What is your assessment of the progress of the military campaign in Afghanistan?

The military campaign in Afghanistan continues to progress as illustrated by the recent Milestone 13/TRANCHE V announcement. In fact, the campaign has now shifted into a fundamentally new phase. For the past 11 years, the United States and our Coalition allies have been leading combat operations. Now, the Afghans are taking over, and ISAF is stepping back into a supporting role. The progress made by the ISAF-led surge over the past three years has put the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) in control of all Afghanistan's major cities and 34 provincial capitals and driven the insurgency away from the population. ISAF's primary focus is now shifting from directly fighting the insurgency to supporting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in their efforts to hold and expand these gains.

What is your assessment and prioritization of enablers that need to be built and sustained within the Afghan National Security Forces given the cessation of U.S. and NATO combat operations by the end of 2014?

We have invested considerably in developing the ability of the ANSF to sustain itself in the field with logistics and mobility. We will continue to accelerate the development of additional enabling capabilities to include route clearance and casualty evacuation.

Transition of Security Responsibility in Afghanistan and U.S. Troop Reductions

In February of this year President Obama announced that by February 2014 U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan will be reduced to 34,000. In June, the Afghan National Security Forces achieved Transition Milestone 2013, and assuming the lead responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan.

Do you support the President's decision to reduce U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan to 34,000 by February 2014? Why or why not?

Yes. Transition Milestone 2013 represents a significant shift for our mission in Afghanistan. Over the past 11 years, the U.S. and our partners have led combat operations. Now the Afghans are taking the lead for their own security. ISAF's primary focus has shifted from directly fighting the insurgency to supporting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). We match troop levels to the mission and our new mission requires fewer troops on the ground. The decision to drawdown U.S. forces was made based on the real and tangible progress of the ISAF military campaign and an assessment of an increasingly capable ANSF.

What is your understanding regarding the pace of those reductions in U.S. forces?

We are on path to meet our objective of 34,000 troops by February 2014. This objective is based on a transition in our mission to support increasingly capable Afghan National Security Forces. The Commander ISAF will have the flexibility to meet his mission and sustain the right forces through this fighting season. He will also manage the glideslope as we settle into a supporting role.

Do you support the June transition of lead responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan to the Afghan security forces?

I support the transition of responsibility for security to the ANSF. Security progress and the development of the ANSF into a capable and confident fighting force have enabled the security transition process to move forward. The ANSF continues to demonstrate its ability to defeat the Taliban and provide security to the Afghan people.

Do you support the transition to the ANSF of full responsibility for security in Afghanistan by December 2014?

Yes. The ANSF continues to demonstrate significant improvement. We are seeing many encouraging examples where ANSF are gaining capability, confidence, leadership, and will to engage with the enemy. The ANSF is on a path to be capable of assuming full responsibility for security by December 2014.

What is your assessment of the potential impact of withdrawing faster than the announced drawdown and of leaving zero troops in Afghanistan post-2014?

Withdrawing faster and leaving zero troops in Afghanistan would likely compromise the

sustainability of the ANSF. It would also impact on our ability to retrograde all our personnel and equipment while ensuring the protection of the force. Therefore, I continue to support an enduring presence post-2014 to support ANSF development and meet our security interests.

Afghanistan National Security Forces

What is your assessment of the progress in developing a professional and effective Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF)?

The ANSF continues to grow into a confident and capable force. We are focusing on leadership development as fundamental to the professionalization of the ANSF. Leadership ratings continue to improve and the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) and the ANA Officer Academy (ANAOA) will play a pivotal role in professionalizing the ANA. Additionally, the MoD formed an Evaluation Commission that is responsible for identifying poorly performing commanders and removes them when required. This allows the MoD the opportunity to fix the poor/lacking command climate within and address leadership concerns. Further, the Afghan National Police Training Command (ANPTC) focuses on delineating strategic level roles, literacy of the force and rule of law knowledge.

Do you support maintaining the ANSF at the level of 352,000 beyond 2014 based on the security conditions on the ground in Afghanistan?

I recommended to the Secretary of Defense and the President that the 352,000 ANSF force level should continue beyond 2014. The extension of the ANSF “surge” force is crucial to put Afghans at the fore to provide their own security. At this time, it is premature to assess the duration of this surge, but at a minimum, this extension would likely be necessary for at least two years following the end of the ISAF mission to counter the possibility of a Taliban resurgence after the departure of coalition forces.

What do you see as the main challenges to building the capacity of the ANSF and what recommendations, if any, would you make for addressing those challenges?

The main challenges we face in building the capacity of the ANSF are attrition, leadership, and limited literacy. Unfortunately, these issues continue to undermine positive recruiting, training, and professionalization goals. These are not problems that can be solved in the short term, but ISAF is continuing to work with the MoI and the MoD to address them. We must also continue to work on the support functions that will sustain the ANSF in the field such as logistics.

A recent audit report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) raised concerns about Department of Defense plans to purchase PC-12 aircraft and Mi-17 helicopters for the Afghan Special Mission Wing and recommended suspending the contracts for these purchases. The Department of Defense and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission—Afghanistan/ Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan did not concur with the SIGAR’s recommendation on contract suspension.

What is your assessment of current plans to equip the Afghan Special Mission Wing with PC-12 aircraft and Mi-17 helicopters?

Our strategy in Afghanistan includes reducing the number of and reliance on U.S. enablers by building capability in the ANSF. In part, this will rely on developing the Afghan Air Force and the SMW, and thus reducing our requirements for aviation assets.

What is your assessment of the impact to Afghanistan counterterrorism efforts if Mi-17 helicopters are not acquired?

We need to support development of a helicopter capability for the ANSF. This capability allows for transporting combat-ready Afghan troops throughout the remote regions of Afghanistan. The Mi-17 is a proven, familiar, compatible, and is well suited for operating from remote locations with minimal ground support. It possesses superior vertical lift capabilities and is capable of operation in the high-altitude, mountainous terrain of Afghanistan. Previous analysis showed that the Mi-17 stands apart as an all-around helicopter capable of medium and heavy lift.

Do you support the SIGAR recommendation to suspend the contracts to acquire these aircraft and helicopters for the Special Mission Wing? Why or why not?

No. It is important for the Afghans to operate and sustain a familiar platform to support the current war effort. The ANSF has over thirty years of extensive experience with this platform, with the vast majority of the seasoned Afghan helicopters pilots having flown and maintained this platform since the 1980's. The ANSF currently has over 150 trained Mi-17 pilots; to retrain the ANSF workforce (aircrew/maintainers) on an unfamiliar platform would take a minimum of three years and additional funds. Requiring the ANSF to retrain on any other platform than the Mi-17 would significantly impact the long-term success of the ANSF.

Operation Resolute Support

In early June, NATO defense ministers endorsed a concept of operations for the training and advisory mission, known as Operation Resolute Support, which the Alliance will maintain in Afghanistan after the ISAF combat mission ends in December 2014. The size of the mission is yet to be determined, but previously U.S. officials have said that a force of 8,000-12,000 troops was under consideration.

What do you consider to be the primary role or roles of the NATO Operation Resolute Support force in Afghanistan after 2014?

The primary role of the post-2014 NATO mission is to train, advise, and assist the ANSF at the national and institutional level, down to the Corps level. Resolute Support Mission may also contain limited enabler support as we continue to build ANSF capability.

In your view, what factors should be considered in determining the size of the post-2014 NATO mission in Afghanistan?

A number of factors will be considered in determining the size of the post-2014 NATO mission. First, the continued progress of the ANSF and the level of training, advise, and assistance required to further that progress. Secondly, the number of bases required to support a regional approach and to assist other agencies of the United States Government will drive the size of the post-2014 force level. Lastly, any post-2014 mission will depend on completion of the BSA and the sustainment of international commitments.

What is the impact on NATO ally commitments to Operation Resolute Support of the U.S. not announcing a post-2014 force commitment?

Our NATO allies are aware that the President is considering a range of options based on a number of factors to include the performance of the ANSF during this fighting season. At the NATO Defense Ministers meeting in June, allies and partners endorsed a concept of operations for the new mission for Afghanistan after 2014. This will guide NATO's operational planning over the coming months. A decision on our force commitment will be necessary soon in order for NATO members to source the plan in sufficient time to enable the deployment of forces.

Peace Negotiations with the Taliban

In your view, what “redlines” should the United States and Afghanistan establish for any outcome from peace negotiations with the Taliban?

Historically, insurgencies end with some form of a political settlement. We continue to support an Afghan-led reconciliation effort with the goal of a negotiated a political settlement that also protects U.S. security interests. This will likely require elements of the Taliban that wish to reconcile to 1) lay down their weapons and stop violence; 2) denounce al-Qa’ida; and 3) accept the Afghan constitution including the rights afforded women and children.

How effective has the current program for reintegrating insurgent fighters been in removing fighters from the battlefield? What additional steps, if any, should be taken to improve the reintegration program?

The program has had some success in weakening the insurgency in some areas. Fighters that are not ideologically committed to the Taliban can sometime be persuaded to reintegrate. The program, however, is only successful if there is credible and effective governance. Any program can be improved, and this is no exception. We need to maintain oversight of the process of delivering projects and utilizing the allocated funds.

Enduring Strategic Partnership with Afghanistan

Do you support maintaining an enduring strategic partnership between the United States and Afghanistan beyond 2014?

Yes. I remain committed to a long-term strategic partnership with Afghanistan. An enduring strategic partnership is needed to sustain Afghan forces and to counter transnational terrorist threats.

How would you describe the main U.S. strategic interests regarding an enduring relationship with Afghanistan and in that region?

We remain committed to a long-term strategic partnership with the Afghan government and the Afghan people. We have a strategic interest in making sure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates that pose a threat to the homeland. An enduring partnership with a stable Afghanistan also promotes regional stability.

Do you support the conclusion of the Bilateral Security Agreement between the United States and Afghanistan?

I support the conclusion of the Bilateral Security Agreement. We are currently negotiating an agreement that will provide the basis for a continued American military presence post 2014. Such an agreement is necessary for us to maintain a mutually beneficial partnership.

In your view, what redlines, if any, must the United States establish for the negotiation and conclusion of the Bilateral Security Agreement?

In my judgment, the U.S. must have Exclusive Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction over our personnel stationed in Afghanistan. This is fundamental protection we provide our service members overseas. We must also ensure that we have necessary operational authorities to accomplish our mission.

Special Operations in Afghanistan

Special operations forces depend on general purpose forces for many enabling capabilities, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); logistics; and medical evacuation. Admiral McRaven, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, has said “I have no doubt that special operations will be the last to leave Afghanistan” and has predicted that the requirement for special operations forces may increase as general purpose forces continue to be drawn down.

If confirmed, how would you ensure adequate enabling capabilities for special operations forces as general purpose forces continue to draw down in Afghanistan?

If confirmed, I would ensure adequate enabling capabilities needed to support the SOF mission set by working collaboratively with ISAF, CENTCOM and the NATO Special Operations Command-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A) to determine requirements. These enabling capabilities would be tailored to support our post-2014 mission based on force levels that have yet to be decided.

In April 2012, the U.S. and Afghanistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the “Afghanization” of direct action counterterrorism missions in Afghanistan - reflecting the shared intention of having Afghan security forces in the lead in the conduct of such operations with U.S. forces in a support role.

What is the status of efforts to put Afghan Special Operations Forces in the lead for such operations and why do you believe such a transition is important?

We continue to see ANSF SOF make significant progress in operational effectiveness, and their independence, capacity, and competence continues to grow. One hundred percent of ANA Special Operation Forces missions are Afghan led, and approximately 60 percent of Provincial Response Company police missions are Afghan led. This transition is important to demonstrate that GIRoA is capable of leading security operations needed to further the growth in governance and Development.

The Village Stability Operations (VSO) and Afghan Local Police (ALP) programs – both U.S. Special Operations missions – have been consistently praised by U.S. military leaders as critical elements of the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan.

What are your views on the value of these programs and do you believe they should be part of the long-term strategy in Afghanistan (i.e. post-2014)?

VSO and ALP represent a very visible expression of local security to many Afghans, particularly those in remote and isolated communities. GIRoA has identified VSO/ALP as a necessary pillar of their own long-term strategy. In November 2012, the MOI proposed that the ALP be designated a component of the Afghan Uniformed Police. Then in March 2013, the ALP was included in the MOI Ten-Year Vision for the Afghan National Police.

U.S. Strategic Relationship with Pakistan

What in your view are the key U.S. strategic interests with regard to Pakistan?

Our strategic interests and national security goals remain to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa’ida and to prevent the return of safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This would not be possible without Pakistani support. We also have an interest in a stable Pakistan and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology. On the security front, we have a more limited relationship than in the past, but I believe it is a pragmatic and constructive approach.

Does the United States have a strategic interest in enhancing military-to-military relations with Pakistan? Why or why not?

Yes. Military-to-military ties with Pakistan are an important aspect of the broader bilateral relationship. Our engagements, and especially our security assistance programs, are essential for effective military cooperation between our two countries. I have engaged productively with

General Kayani many times in the past, and the Office of the Defense Representative in Pakistan plays an important role in building and sustaining military-military ties at lower levels. These relationships allow us to engage Pakistan in clearly defined areas of shared concern such as maintaining regional stability, curbing violent extremism, and countering the threat of improvised explosive devices.

If so, what steps would you recommend, if confirmed, for enhancing the military-to-military relationship between the United States and Pakistan?

If confirmed, I will continue my close engagement with the Pakistan Military. As Pakistan democratic consolidation progresses, we must ensure that we maintain our military-to-military ties. I will continue a frank and respectful dialogue about our shared interests in countering extremist and promoting regional stability. Security cooperation cannot succeed without the buy-in of Pakistani leadership and continued support of the U.S. Congress.

For several years, the United States has provided significant funds to reimburse Pakistan for the costs associated with military support and operations by Pakistan in connection with Operation Enduring Freedom.

What is your assessment of Pakistan's cooperation with the United States in counterterrorism operations against militant extremist groups located in Pakistan?

Pakistan's cooperation on counterterrorism has not always met our expectations. Since 2009, Pakistan has undertaken counterinsurgency operations against extremist organizations in the northwest, including Swat, North and South Waziristan, Mohmand, and Bajaur with mixed results. Security assistance, Coalition Support Fund reimbursements, and cross-border coordination with ISAF and Afghan forces have helped enable these operations. It is in our interest that Pakistan continues this campaign as effectively and comprehensively as possible.

What is your assessment of Pakistan's efforts to maintain transit and provide security along the ground lines of communication (GLOCs) through Pakistan?

The key route to sustain forces has been movement via sealift to Pakistan and then ground movement through Pakistan to Afghanistan. This is the cheapest, fastest, most direct surface route. Since the reopening, the Government of Pakistan has provided security to U.S. and NATO cargo shipments through the PAK GLOC. Pakistan is maintaining security along the Ground Lines of Communication (GLOCs) through Pakistan to Afghanistan for the transshipment of equipment and supplies in support of United States military operations in Afghanistan and the retrograde of United States equipment out of Afghanistan.

What is your assessment of Pakistan's efforts to counter the threat improvised explosive devices, including efforts to attack the network, go after known precursors and explosive materials?

Pakistan recognizes the IED problem is a shared problem. They also suffer significant casualties within Pakistan as a result of extremist attacks using IEDs. We are making progress in the area of C-IED cooperation. Pakistan is taking demonstrable steps to disrupt the IEDs, to include placing new restrictions on the distribution of precursor materials and hosting regional discussions to discuss the IED problem with international partners, including Afghanistan.

Iran

Iran continues to expand its nuclear program and has failed to provide full and open access to all aspects of its current and historic nuclear program to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

What is your assessment of the military and political threat posed by Iran?

Iran poses a significant threat to the United States, our allies and partners, and our regional and global interests. Countering Iran's destabilizing and malign behavior requires a comprehensive approach. Iran is actively investing in the development of a range of conventional capabilities, including air, missile, and naval assets. Iran continues to publicly threaten to use its naval and missile forces to close the Strait of Hormuz or target U. S. interests and regional partners. Iran is also one of the main state-sponsors of terrorism, proxy and surrogate groups. Iran continues to provide arms, funding, and paramilitary training to extremist groups. On the nuclear front, Iran continues to pursue an illicit nuclear program that threatens to provoke a regional arms race and undermine the global non-proliferation regime. Iran also continues to develop ballistic missiles that could be adapted to deliver nuclear weapons. Iran will seek to use its threat capabilities to enable greater influence in the region and threaten our allies.

What is your assessment of U.S. policy with respect to Iran?

I support the U.S. policy of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. To this end, we are prepared with military options to include associated costs and risks. Moreover, we are pursuing a comprehensive strategy to confront Iran's malign behavior that includes diplomatic isolation, economic pressure through sanctions, diplomatic engagement through the P5+1, and military pressure through contingency preparations and exercises. In addition, we are reassuring our partners in the region by deepening our security commitments and building their capabilities.

What more do you believe the United States and the international community can and should do to dissuade Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons?

This policy question is best answered by the State Department. That said, it is clear that continued international unity on sanctions is crucial to bringing Iran to the negotiating table with a serious proposal. Further, we need to sustain a comprehensive strategy that includes diplomatic pressure through UN Security Council Resolutions, economic pressure through sanctions, diplomatic engagement through the P5+1, and military pressure through contingency preparations and exercises.

In your view, what are the risks associated with reducing U. S. presence in the Middle East with respect to the threat posed by Iran?

The reduction of U.S. force presence in the Middle East – due to withdrawal from Iraq (and Afghanistan), rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, and in part from fiscal constraints – could impact our ability to deter aggression and assure our allies. That said, we retain a significant and ready presence in the region with high-end capabilities that should serve to mitigate against such concerns. Furthermore, our global reach and strike capabilities contribute to our ability to deter and assure.

In your view, what has been the effect of sanctions against Iran – how effective have they been and should additional unilateral or multilateral sanctions be levied against Iran?

The U.S. has put in place against Iran tough, smart, and crippling sanctions. As a result of these sanctions, Iran's financial, trade, and economic outlook has deteriorated significantly. International financial institutions estimate that Iran's economy contracted in 2012 for the first time in more than two decades. International sanctions have hindered Iran's weapons procurement efforts and driven up the costs of obtaining necessary components for its military. Sanctions also appear to have slowed Iran's progress on its nuclear program, making it increasingly difficult for Iran to import needed materials or skills. The question of additional sanctions is best answered by the State Department.

In your view, what role should DOD play in countering Iran's support of international terrorism?

Iranian support for proxy groups and terrorist activities constitutes a serious threat to our partners and Allies as well as U.S. interests. In short, Iran's activities are malevolent and intentionally destabilizing. The Department of Defense continues to help counter Iranian malign activities in at least three ways. First, we support diplomatic and intelligence efforts to inhibit the activities of Iranian proxy and terrorist groups. Second, we leverage our military presence in the region to deter and, when directed by the President, disrupt Iranian malign activities. And third, we leverage our extensive security cooperation relationships with countries in the Middle East and around the world to build partner capacity and trust to counter Iranian destabilizing activities.

Do you agree with President Obama that all options, including military options, should remain on the table with respect to Iran?

I do agree that all options must be kept on the table in order to achieve our policy objectives toward Iran. It is our responsibility to conduct prudent planning for all contingencies, and we will ensure that military plans are kept up-to-date. This preparedness will have the effect of reinforcing our overall policy.

Do you assess that sanctions will prevent or dissuade Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons?

Continued international unity on sanctions is crucial to bringing Iran to the negotiating table with a serious proposal. Departments of State and Treasury have put in place the strongest and most comprehensive international sanctions in history, and we believe the sanctions are having a dramatic effect on the Iranian economy. I support continuing sanctions pressure on Iran; however, it is not yet clear if sanctions will ultimately prevent or dissuade Iran.

Syria

What is your assessment of the situation in Syria and its impact on the region?

The crisis in Syria continues to be a tragic, dynamic and complex. The conflict reflects a sectarian fault line that extends across and is destabilizing the region. We are planning and engaging with Syria's neighbors – Israel, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq – to contain the spillover effects that would render our allies and partners less secure. The competition among states with regional interests continues to fuel the violence with negative implications for deepening Sunni-Shia tensions within Syria and beyond.

In your view, what is the most appropriate role for the United States in assisting regional friends and allies respond to the situation in Syria?

The U.S. provides leadership and support to the surrounding countries through multilateral planning efforts and humanitarian assistance. We are continuously engaged with key regional partners such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq to provide assistance, technical knowledge and military contingency planning.

In your view, what – if any – role should the United States military play with respect to the situation in Syria?

We should and are pursuing a regional strategy along four lines of effort. First, we are working with our partners in the region. Second, we are supporting the moderate opposition. We are currently providing non-lethal assistance to increase the capability of the opposition. Third, we are providing humanitarian assistance to help with a massive refugee problem. And fourth, we are planning and posturing our forces for a wide range of military options.

In your view, what role – if any – are Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah playing in the current conflict in Syria?

Iran, Russia and Hezbollah continue to support the Assad regime. Russia continues to supply arms, and Hezbollah supports the regime operationally with personnel and weapons – as does Iran. Their continued support of the Assad regime has led to recent regime momentum and gains on the ground.

In your view, what are the prospects of a negotiated solution in Syria?

A negotiated settlement is a preferred path to achieving our policy objectives. However, its prospects are diminished by the sectarian character of the conflict. Assad is further emboldened by Russia's continued support. The reality of disparate opposition groups, many at odds with US values, also make it difficult to achieve a negotiated settlement.

In your view, is the momentum currently on the side of the Assad regime or the forces fighting to overthrow Syria?

Momentum shifts are characteristic of this form of protracted conflict. The fragmentation of the opposition undermines their momentum. And, the Assad regime is supported by Hezbollah, Iran, and Russia, which has helped the regime regain some areas that they once ceded.

Are there asymmetric options that bypass Syria's integrated air defense system rather than kinetically neutralize it, such as standoff weapons and/or stealth, and what is your assessment of those options from a military perspective?

We have a wide range of options. These details of these options are better discussed in a classified setting.

What are the risks associated with doing nothing to alter the balance of military power in Syria between Assad and the armed opposition?

We have learned from the past ten years that it's not enough to simply alter the balance of military power without careful consideration of what's necessary in order to preserve a functioning state. That said, we are taking actions to support the moderate opposition so that they can alter the balance of military power. If we were to end all our support to our allies and to the opposition, we might expect the suffering to worsen and the region to further destabilize.

The 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force

What is your understanding of the scope and duration of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF)?

The United States is in an armed conflict against Al-Qa'ida and its associated forces. An associated force is defined as a group that (1) is an organized, armed group that has entered the fight alongside Al-Qa'ida and, (2) is a co-belligerent with Al-Qa'ida in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners. These are the same terrorist threats that perpetrated the horrendous acts on U.S. soil on September 11, 2001, and the AUMF still serves as the legal basis under U.S. domestic law to employ military force against these threats.

What factors govern Department of Defense determinations as to where the use of force is authorized, and against whom, pursuant to the AUMF?

In May 2013, the President promulgated Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG) governing direct action against terrorist targets located outside the United States and areas of active hostilities. This document codifies and harmonizes the procedures necessary for the DoD to conduct these types of military operations. The PPG and its derivative operational plans clarify, formalize and strengthen the standards, policies, and determinations of the DoD concerning where, how, and against whom military force may be utilized outside the United States and areas of active hostilities. The DoD meticulously follows the formalized procedures of the PPG to ensure we make well-informed decisions based on the most up-to-date intelligence and the expertise of our national security professionals. Senior commanders and their legal advisors carefully review all operations for compliance with U.S. and international law before a decision is rendered by the Secretary of Defense or the President.

Are you satisfied that current legal authorities, including the AUMF, enable the Department to carry out counterterrorism operations and activities at the level that you believe to be necessary and appropriate?

The AUMF in its current form provides the necessary and sufficient authorities to counter Al-Qa'ida and its associated forces. If a terrorist threat emerges that does not fit within the AUMF, the DoD would consult with Congress and facets of the Executive Branch on the question of authorities.

Al-Qa'ida

What is your assessment of the threat posed by al-Qa'ida affiliates to the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests overseas, and Western interests more broadly? Which affiliates are of most concern?

Years of sustained counterterrorism (CT) pressure have degraded the ability of al-Qa'ida's Pakistan-based leadership to operate freely. Our efforts have made it difficult for al-Qa'ida to replenish its senior ranks with the type of experienced leaders, trainers, and attack planners it promoted in previous years. We have also limited the group's ability to mount sophisticated, complex attacks in the West. Despite these setbacks, al-Qa'ida retains its intent, though not the robust capability, to plan and conduct terrorist attacks against the West. Al-Qa'ida core continues to inspire and guide its regional nodes, allies, and like-minded extremists to engage in terrorism. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula remains committed to attacking our interests in the region and is the most likely group to attempt an attack in the U.S. in the near-term.

Yemen and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula

What is your assessment of the current U.S. strategy in Yemen and what is your understanding of the role of DOD within that strategy?

Our overall engagement strategy with Yemen combines diplomatic, economic, and security initiatives to improve stability and security. DoD fills a critical role in this strategy primarily by supporting the development of the Yemeni armed forces. We are fostering a strong partnership with the Yemeni military to better address critical security threats, including the campaign against AQAP. The security situation in Yemen remains fragile and we must continue our partnership in the fight against AQAP.

Given the continuing political instability and slow progress of reforms to the military in Yemen, what are your views on the U.S. continuing to provide security assistance – most significantly DOD section 1206 funding – to Yemeni counterterrorism forces?

A stable, unified, and economically viable Yemen, free of violent extremists, remains in our best interest. We have just passed the first anniversary of a two year plan to complete the government and military transition from the Saleh regime to a new representative system. While progress has been slow, President Hadi and the military are taking steps to reform and restructure the military as part of the overall political transition process. President Hadi and senior Yemeni military figures actively engage the United States for support and advice on the military reorganization process. The 1206 funds are, and will remain, critical to building the capacity of the Yemeni counter terrorism forces to disrupt and degrade the AQAP operational space, securing their borders, and disrupting maritime and land smuggling routes.

Somalia and Al Shabab

What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al Shabab?

Al-Shabaab remains on the defensive. The coalition among Somali government, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and Ethiopian National Defense Forces maintain pressure on the group. Despite its loss of territory in 2012, al-Shabaab has demonstrated a continued ability to conduct complex attacks against Western interests and Somali government targets in Mogadishu. The group also conducted small and medium scale attacks in Kenya. This trend will likely continue throughout the rest of 2013, despite increasingly public disputes amongst al-Shabaab senior officials.

In your view, does al Shabab pose a threat to the United States and/or western interests outside of its immediate operational area?

Al-Shabaab does not pose a direct threat to the Homeland or Europe at present. Nevertheless, the group poses an ongoing threat to U.S., Western, and other allied interests in East Africa. In February 2012, al-Shabaab and al-Qa'ida leader Ayman Zawahiri announced al-Shabaab's merger with al-Qa'ida. Although the group is aligned with al-Qa'ida's global jihadist objectives, al-Shabaab focuses on defending territory in Somalia against the coalition of Somali government, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and Ethiopian military forces – as well as conducting attacks in East Africa.

What is your understanding of the current U.S. strategy in Somalia and the role of DOD in that strategy?

The current U.S. strategy in Somalia consists of three elements: 1) supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to combat al-Shabaab, increase stability and promote the institutional building of the Somali Federal Government; 2) strengthening the new Somali Federal Government with stabilization and economic recovery assistance in parallel with humanitarian assistance; and 3) building a durable and responsive central Somali government while engaging with other Somali regional actors such as Somaliland and Puntland (the “dual track policy”). The DoD role in support of the State Department is to increase AMISOM capacity to combat al-Shabaab, engage with the new Somali National Army, and develop ways to increase security. These efforts enable Somali government institutions and organizations to mature.

Should the United States establish military-to-military relations and consider providing assistance to the Somali national military forces?

We are prepared to establish military-to-military relations with the new Somali National Army. This supports the State Department in recognizing and strengthening the Somalia Federal Government. We plan to continue assistance to our partner nations in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) while exploring ways to assist the Somali National Army. Short term Somali stability depends on AMISOM, and long term security requires a professional and accountable Somali National Army based on the rule of law.

Al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)?

Al-Qa’ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its allies have proven resilient despite the French-led military intervention in Mali. Although these groups no longer control key strategic towns, they retain the capability to launch sporadic attacks within Mali and neighboring countries, expand their safe haven, and attract recruits in pursuit of a hard-line Islamic state based on al-Qa’ida ideology. Further, AQIM will likely continue to bolster its ties to al-Qa’ida-associated terrorist groups throughout the region, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, to influence and support attack planning. AQIM will continue to pose a local and regional threat into 2014, as North African governments struggle to disrupt AQIM movement across expansive, porous borders.

In your view, does AQIM pose a threat to the United States and/or western interests outside of its immediate operational area? What capacity has AQIM demonstrated to plan and carry out actions threatening U.S. interests?

AQIM does not presently pose a significant threat to the U.S. homeland. We see no indications the group views conducting attacks outside North Africa and the Sahel as a priority in the near term. However, the group remains a credible threat to U.S. and Western interests within North

and West Africa, where it has conducted or attempted attacks in several countries (i.e. Mali, Niger, Algeria, Mauritania). AQIM will likely continue to bolster its ties to al-Qa'ida-associated terrorist groups throughout the region, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, to influence and support attack planning.

In your view, what has been the impact of the recent expansion of AQIM's area of operations in northern Mali on the group's capacities and aims?

The expansion of al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali between early 2012 and January 2013 increased the group's capacity as it collaborated with splinter groups al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad in West Africa (TWJWA), al-Mulathamun battalion, and Tuareg rebel group Ansar al-Din (AAD). This expansion reflects an increase in the group's membership. And, this growth has not changed the group's regionally-focused aim of establishing shari'a throughout North Africa. We continue to work with allies and partners to provide a more permanent security solution to AQIM expansion into the Sahel by supporting several regional efforts, including: The French Operation Serval; the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) African-led Intervention Force in Mali (AFISMA); and the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

What is your assessment of the importance of security assistance to address the growing AQIM presence in southern Libya?

North African countries struggle to cooperate and coordinate CT operations, creating exploitable security seams across expansive, porous borders. Preserving security assistance is critical to enabling Libya to build the internal capacity to address these challenges. Security assistance is just one piece of a larger effort that includes law enforcement, justice system reform, and border control. However, our ability to provide assistance will require patience. Tripoli currently lacks the institutions to integrate security assistance or the mechanisms to allocate aid. Tripoli primarily relies on armed militias for security, many operating outside of central government control and some which are complicit in AQIM-linked activities including weapons smuggling.

What authorities will most quickly help address the threat in southern Libya?

For counterterrorism and border security efforts we are using 1206 and 1208 authorities, along with the Global Security Contingency Fund. No further authorities are needed at this time in order to address the situation in southern Libya.

Does DoD require any new authorities for this situation?

No, our 1206, 1207 and 1208 authorities give us the appropriate means to provide targeted security assistance to address emerging threats. However, these authorities have not functioned as efficiently as they should. They have been constrained by the bureaucratic sluggishness that has often limited U.S. responsiveness to our partners, and has on occasion prevented us from taking full advantage of opportunities for stronger partnerships against common threats in North Africa and throughout the Middle East since the "Arab Spring" began. For example, the

equipment from a 2009 1206 case for Tunisia was just delivered this past spring – though 1206 cases are meant to address near-term CT threats. Most of these delays are caused by the bureaucratic inefficiencies between DoD and DOS. We continue to pursue changes that will lead to greater responsiveness and bolster our efforts in Libya, and the region in general.

NATO

At the NATO Summit in Chicago in 2012, President Obama called the Alliance the “bedrock of our common security” for over 65 years. At the same time, concerns have been raised about the decline in defense spending by a number of NATO member countries, resulting in the United States accounting for approximately 75 percent of defense spending among NATO member countries.

In your view, how important is the NATO alliance to U.S. national security interests?

The NATO alliance is of critical importance to the national security interests of the United States. The combined military capabilities of the 28 NATO members are second to none. NATO and its Allies possess the capability to deploy and sustain highly trained, interoperable forces that are able to conduct full spectrum military operations anywhere in the world.

In your view, what impact have national defense budget cuts had on the capabilities of the NATO alliance, and what do you believe needs to be done to address any capability shortfalls?

Cuts our allies are making to their defense budgets are reducing the alliance’s ability to confront security challenges and placing at risk NATO’s ability to sustain concurrent operations. NATO has mitigated this underinvestment by a heavy and growing reliance on U.S. capabilities, but this trend poses risks to the future strength of the alliance. Our Allies need to focus their resources on alliance required capabilities. As their economies improve, they need to increase their defense spending.

What are the greatest opportunities and challenges that you foresee for NATO in meeting its strategic objectives over the next five years?

The greatest opportunity for NATO to meet its strategic objectives over the next five years is to maintain the unprecedented level of readiness and interoperability achieved over the last 10 years of combat operations in Afghanistan. The Alliance is working to attain that goal through expanded education and training, increased number of exercises, and better use of technology. The greatest challenge of course lies within the ability of the 28 nations to provide the funding and resources required to implement those initiatives and to continue to develop the capabilities needed to meet future challenges.

In your view, is there a continuing requirement for U.S. nuclear weapons to be deployed in NATO countries?

Yes. NATO's Strategic Concept states NATO's commitment to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons. However, it also made clear that as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance. NATO's 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review confirmed that nuclear weapons are a core component of NATO's overall capabilities for deterrence and defense alongside conventional and missile defense forces. The review showed that the Alliance's nuclear force posture currently meets the criteria for an effective deterrence and defense posture.

What strategy, if any, do you feel should be used to address declining defense budgets, as a percentage of GDP, in Europe?

The long-standing and agreed NATO guideline for each ally is to spend 2% of GDP on defense. This provides a basis for comparing defense spending, but what really matters is how each nation allocates its defense resources. It is important to assess whether alliance members are procuring the appropriate quantity and quality of capabilities to meet identified NATO requirements. During this period of fiscal constraint, Allies need to rigorously prioritize their defense investment with a focus on Alliance capability requirements. When economies improve, they should increase their investment.

U.S. Force Posture in Europe

The Department of Defense continues to review its force posture in Europe to determine what additional consolidations and reductions are necessary and consistent with U.S. strategic interests.

How would you define the U.S. strategic interests in the European area of responsibility (AOR)?

NATO will remain our Nation's preeminent multilateral alliance and continue to drive our defense relations with Europe. Through the new Strategic Concept, we defined a clear role for NATO in the years ahead, including space and cyberspace security, Ballistic Missile Defense, counter-trafficking and nonproliferation.

Do you believe that additional consolidation and reductions of U.S. forces in Europe can be achieved consistent with U.S. strategic interests in that AOR?

I fully support the U.S. Army Europe plans to reduce its footprint from 16 garrisons to 7 garrisons by 2017. Regarding any additional reductions, we must ensure that our posture adapts to changes in the international security environment. Currently, there are several studies reviewing U.S. posture in Europe to include an internal DoD European Infrastructure Consolidation study and a Congressionally-directed independent assessment of the overseas basing presence (FY12 NDAA, Section 347).

U.S. Force Posture in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Department continues the effort to rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific as announced in the January 2012 Strategic Defense Guidance.

Are you satisfied with the rebalance efforts to date?

Yes. Despite the impact of sequestration, we continue to make progress on our key priorities in the Asia-Pacific. We are modernizing and strengthening our alliances and partnerships through multi-lateral and bi-lateral exercises while enhancing our engagement with region-wide institutions. We are enhancing our presence in the region by maintaining a defense posture that is more geographically distributed, politically sustainable, and operationally resilient. And, we are strengthening our military capabilities by sustaining investments critical to our ability to project power in support of security commitments.

What do you see as the U.S. security priorities in the Asia-Pacific region over the next couple of years and what specific capabilities or enhancements are needed in to meet those priorities?

Our security priorities are those inherent in the rebalance: modernizing and strengthening our alliances, enhancing our presence, and pushing more quality forward in terms of capabilities. These efforts will enable us to shape partnerships and deter and respond as necessary to the threats in the region. We will continue to deter North Korea's continued provocative behavior. We will leverage our presence to mitigate tensions and encourage responsible behavior in the land and maritime territorial disputes such as exist in the East and South China Seas. We will need to deter disruptive activities in space and cyber space that have and will continue to become more sophisticated and damaging. Our forward presence and engagements are our overarching ways to address these challenges. Our people are our most valuable asset for building relationships. Special Operations Forces, cyber, and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance are key capabilities I see for the near future.

Do the budget cuts and resource constraints associated with sequestration threaten your ability to execute the rebalance to the Pacific?

To this point, budget reductions have not threatened our ability to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. However, full sequestration may limit or delay the strategic alignment of our engagement and capabilities. Some key relationships may take longer to develop due to constraints on education and exercises. At the same time, fiscal realities afford an opportunity to ensure we are putting the right resources in the right places, at the right times. We will continue our steady, thoughtful, and measured rebalance to the region.

What is your assessment of the strategic consequences, including impact on relationships with partners and allies, if sequestration results in a "rebalance", that is, a net reduction in military assets in the US PACOM AOR?

Rebalance is intended as a net increase in military capability to the Asia-Pacific region. That said, the essence of rebalance is about more than hardware. It is about more or engagement and

attention. With the looming impact of sequestration on readiness and engagement, our ability to expand military to military partnerships and build partner capacity will be reduced, limiting our ability to develop and expand the scope and quality of critical relationships.

Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula

What is your assessment of the current security situation on the Korean peninsula and of the threat posed to the United States and its allies by the current state of North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons capabilities?

The security situation on the Peninsula is stable at the moment. However, I am concerned that we are in a period of prolonged provocation. North Korea military activity is at seasonal normal levels. North Korea has toned down rhetoric since the height of tensions in April of this year and appears to be engaged in diplomatic overtures, perhaps to win concessions. I remain concerned with North Korea's development of ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons and bellicose rhetoric threatening to use these weapons; however, we do not have any indications of imminent use of ballistic missile or nuclear capabilities at this time.

In your view, are there additional steps that DOD could take to ensure that North Korea does not proliferate missile and weapons technology to Syria, Iran and others?

Currently, DOD is taking the appropriate steps to prevent proliferation. We support interagency efforts to prevent NK proliferation through WMD nonproliferation regimes including the Australia Group (CW/BW), Missile Technology Control Regime, Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and Nuclear Suppliers Group. These regimes use customs and law enforcement practices such as export control lists to interrupt proliferation of WMD materials to Syria, Iran and others from North Korea. Additionally, DOD supports interagency counter-proliferation efforts through involvement with the Proliferation Security Initiative and Geographic Combatant Commander support for potential interdictions. I remain open to additional options for improving our contribution to countering proliferation.

Are you satisfied that the U.S.-Republic of Korea combined counter-provocation plan, which was finalized a couple of months ago, strikes the right balance between enabling the South Koreans to respond to and defend against a provocation from North Korea while ensuring that the United States is involved in any decisions that might widen the military action to include U.S. forces?

Yes. The plan allows for the sovereign right of self-defense by the Republic of Korea in a timely and proportional manner without undue escalation and without violating the terms of the Armistice Agreement. Should the circumstances require or justify additional response, a bilateral U.S.-ROK consultative mechanism is in place to reach a suitable decision together. However, the situation on the Peninsula is always rife for miscalculation on all sides. U.S. deterrent forces, and the close relationship USFK enjoys with the RoK government, are our strongest mitigation against escalation.

What is your view regarding the timing of transfer of wartime operational control from the U.S. to the ROK, currently scheduled for December of 2015, and do you support the transfer as scheduled?

I support the transfer as scheduled. From a military perspective, the timing of the transfer of wartime OPCON is appropriate. The conditions for the transfer are based on meeting capability-based milestones, including acquisition of weapon systems, command and control systems, ISR platforms, appropriate and adequate supply of munitions, along with the right certification process to validate the readiness for the transfer. The ROK military is a very capable force, but it has had some setbacks in funding to achieve these milestones. General Thurman and his team at U.S. Forces Korea are working hard with the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff to meet the certification and capability requirements.

China

In the past several months, the United States and China have had several high level engagements, including President Obama's meetings with President Xi last month and your visit to China in April.

In view of these engagements, what is your assessment of the current state of the U.S.-China military relationship and your views regarding China's interest in and commitment to improving military relations with the United States?

Healthy, stable, reliable and continuous military-to-military relations are in both nations' interest and are an essential part of the overall relationship. There are recent examples where we have improved practical cooperation, such as counter-piracy, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and military medicine exchanges. However, a deeper U.S.-China military-to-military dialogue is needed to address many of the sources of insecurity and potential competition that may arise as our two forces come into closer and more frequent contact.

How has China's aggressive assertion of territorial and maritime claims, particularly in the South China Sea and East China Sea, effected security and stability in the region?

The U.S. has a national interest in the maintenance of peace, stability, respect for international law, freedom of navigation and unimpeded lawful commerce. While the United States does not take sides in any territorial disputes, any such disputes must be resolved without coercion or the use of force. We strongly support dispute resolution on the basis of existing international mechanisms and in accordance with established international norms and institutions. At the same time, beginning serious negotiation on a Code of Conduct for interaction in disputed maritime territories will significantly reduce tension and potential for conflict across the region. We have made it clear to China that we have commitments to Allies and partners and will continue our engagement while maintaining our posture across the Asia Pacific.

If re-confirmed, what will be your priorities vis-à-vis China?

Positive and constructive engagement with China is a key part of our strategy in the Asia Pacific. In support of this, my priorities include a healthy, stable, reliable and continuous military-to-military relationship. I will also work towards a model of relations where communications are not cut off when difficulties arise, which is precisely the time that communication and dialogue are the most important. Finally, we need increased cooperation, channels of communication, and interactions between the two militaries to improve our partnership and reduce the risk of miscalculation, miscommunication or accidents. I will give particular emphasis to improving the quality of our strategic dialogue and supporting the establishment of norms for behaviors in cyberspace.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities

Despite the ongoing drawdown in Afghanistan, demand for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of every kind remains very high due to the enhanced situational awareness and targeting capabilities they bring to our commanders. Almost all of the geographic combatant commands still have validated ISR requirements that are not being met.

What is your assessment of the Department's current disposition of ISR assets across the various combatant commands?

I think we have maximized and optimized our ISR capability. We remain focused on our #1 priority, supporting the warfighters in Afghanistan. At the same time, we are supporting the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region while provided necessary capabilities to counter emerging extremist threats in AFRICOM's AOR. Prioritization is key to providing flexible and responsive forces.

As our forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan, will existing ISR assets be re-postured to support combatant command needs in other regions, or will the ISR capacity be reduced?

In short, both. The Fiscal Year 15 Global Force Management Allocation Plan is the first in which we begin to "re-posture" ISR forces. Full Motion Video, Signals Intelligence, and Imagery Intelligence, among others, are valuable in any AOR. But many of the assets are very niche, and it will be difficult to translate their applicability in Afghanistan to other parts of the world. Budgetary pressures further constrain meeting combatant command requirements. Because of this, our total ISR force, quantitatively, will be diminished in FY15 and beyond. But the technologies developed and lessons learned in Afghanistan will build a decidedly more capable, if smaller, global ISR force.

Most of the highest-value ISR assets acquired after 9/11 are aircraft that were not designed to be survivable in high-threat air defense environments, although in some cases unmanned aerial vehicles were designed to be deployed in large numbers in the expectation of substantial combat attrition.

Do you believe that the Department needs a major shift towards ISR platforms that are survivable in high-threat situations, or merely an augmentation of the capabilities we now have, with the assumption that air superiority can be gained rapidly enough to operate today's assets effectively?

The ISR assets we have in the Joint Force today are ready to perform missions across a range of warfighting scenarios. As we move toward the Joint Force of 2020, we will increasingly need ISR platforms that are survivable and can counter sophisticated adversaries defenses.

Special Operations Forces

The previous two Quadrennial Defense Reviews (QDRs) have mandated significant growth in our special operations forces (SOF) and enablers that directly support their operations.

Do you believe that QDR directed growth in the size of SOF should be retained despite current budgetary pressures?

Growth in Special Operations Forces capability has been necessary to meet the demands of the global conflicts in which we have been engaged over the past decade. We will judiciously balance the need for further growth in SOF with our need to address other capability demands in light of increased budgetary pressures. As a consequence, I do not expect additional, significant growth beyond what has already been programmed.

In recent years, special operations forces have taken on an expanded role in a number of areas important to countering violent extremist organizations, including those related to information and military intelligence operations. Some have advocated significant changes to U.S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) Title 10 missions to make them better reflect the activities special operations forces are carrying out around the world.

What current missions, if any, do you believe can and should be divested by SOCOM, and why?

At this time, I do not advocate for significant changes to USSOCOM's Title 10 missions. I use a range of processes – such as the Unified Command Plan, Guidance for the Employment of the Force, and Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan – to review the mission sets and responsibilities assigned to USSOCOM on a continuing basis. Additionally, the language in Section 167 of Title 10, United States Code, includes “such other activities as may be specified by the President or the Secretary of Defense,” which provides the President and the Secretary of Defense the flexibility needed to meet rapidly changing circumstances.

Are there any additional missions that you believe USSOCOM should assume, and, if so, what are they and why do you advocate adding them?

Pending a review of strategic planning documents, I do not advocate for USSOCOM to assume

any additional missions at this time. Special Operations Forces already provide a broad but uniquely specialized range of support to Joint Force Commanders. They are trained to conduct operations including counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, and counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in areas under enemy control or in politically sensitive environments. In such environments, SOF provides unique and essential capabilities, and we will continue to leverage lessons learned in our Decade of War studies to enhance SOF and General Purpose Force integration.

What can be done to ensure that indirect special operations missions with medium- and long-term impact, such as unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense, receive as much emphasis as direct action, and that they receive appropriate funding?

In addition to developing specific Joint Doctrine on Unconventional Warfare, I have placed considerable emphasis on many aspects of foreign internal defense in my Capstone Concept for Joint Operations. I appreciate the significant legislative support for the many security force assistance and training and equipping missions that SOF undertakes. One area that may require enhanced legislative authorities is for greater opportunities to leverage non-SOF units to undertake partner capacity building tasks.

Special Operations Authorities

Reportedly, the Commander of USSOCOM has sought more control over the deployment and utilization of special operations forces. For example, the Secretary of Defense recently modified policy guidance for the combatant commands that gave USSOCOM, for the first time, responsibility for resourcing, organizing, and providing guidance to the Theater Special Operations Commands of the geographic combatant commanders and special operations forces assigned to them. It has been reported that the Commander of USSOCOM is also seeking new authorities that would allow him to more rapidly move special operations forces between geographic combatant commands.

Please provide your assessment of whether such changes are appropriate and can be made without conflicting with civilian control of the military, infringing upon authorities provided to the Geographic Combatant Commanders, or raising concerns with the State Department.

Special Operations Forces do not undertake operations without the approval of the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Geographic Combatant Commanders, and the Chiefs of Mission. The proposed changes enhance the ability of our global Special Operations Forces to network with our U.S. interagency counterparts as well as our foreign allies and partners. I fully support a more efficient and effective ability of our Special Operations Forces to more dynamically respond to global demands in the future.

Combating Terrorism

The Administration recently released its National Strategy for Counterterrorism. This strategy highlights the need to maintain pressure on al-Qa'ida's core while building the capacity of partners to confront mutual threats. The strategy also underscores the need to augment efforts to counter threats from al-Qa'ida-linked threats "that continue to emerge from beyond its core safe haven in South Asia."

How do you view the DOD's role under the new National Strategy for Counterterrorism?

The United States pursues a comprehensive approach to counter terrorist networks that threaten our nation. The military is one element of this effort. DOD works closely with interagency stakeholders and key partners and allies to combat those threats beyond South Asia in support of the strategy. Training, advising, and assisting partnered forces allows us to leverage our unique Defense capabilities outside of the Afghanistan theater of operations. The Department implements rigorous guidelines, standards and accountability for lethal action against terrorist networks who threaten our nation.

What is your understanding of the impact of the Presidential Policy Guidance on Counterterrorism on DOD's role within the U.S. Government's counterterrorism strategy?

The recently signed Presidential Policy Guidance on Counterterrorism is a codification of policies and procedures that have been applied for some time. The guidance clarifies, formalizes, and strengthens the standards and processes we use. Military capabilities are one part of our comprehensive counterterrorism effort. We will continue to enable our allies to develop the capability to counter terrorists within their borders. When necessary and after a robust and accountable review process, we can take direct action against those specific terrorist networks that threaten U.S. persons. Our current authorities are sufficient to defend the nation against existing terrorist threats. The Department implements a rigorous, transparent and accountable review process. We will scrupulously adhere to the rule of law and the highest ethical standards in implementing the strategy and guidance.

Will DOD see its role increase or decrease?

The best way to defeat terrorism is with a comprehensive approach. DoD will continue to play a significant role in counterterrorism. The Presidential policy framework codifies rigorous guidelines, oversight and accountability for targeted, lethal action against specific terrorist networks that threaten our nation. The military also conducts a range of activities to build partner capacity and support other government agency efforts.

If the role increases, what, if any, are the commensurate increases in capabilities or capacities that are required?

DoD will continue to develop new capabilities, technologies, and tactics as well as streamlined processes and procedures to ensure we stay ahead of our enemies as they also adapt. Joint Force

2020 must include and integrate innovative capabilities such as cyber, special operations forces and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms.

Will DoD require any new authorities?

I believe that existing authorities are adequate. Should a new group threaten the U.S., we can respond as necessary under U.S. domestic and international law. I have not encountered a situation during my tenure as Chairman in which we did not have the necessary and sufficient authorities. If confirmed and this occurred during my tenure, I would consult within the Executive and with Congress to determine whether additional authorities or tools have become necessary or appropriate.

Are there steps DOD should take to better coordinate its efforts to combat terrorism with those of other federal departments and agencies?

Improving interagency coordination was a key finding in our Decade of War study. The Joint Staff regularly and actively participates in both the National Security Staff's Counterterrorism Security Group and the President's Counterterrorism Board of Directors. Our Combatant Commands support our efforts and work closely with U.S. embassies, interagency partners and local actors. Institutionally, the Department is deliberately and carefully integrating lessons learned in our doctrine, training, planning and operations. We seek to support similar efforts where and when they exist in other organizations.

What do you view as the role of the DOD in countering al-Qa'ida and affiliated groups in cyberspace?

Defense of cyberspace requires a public-private effort to provide the best protection possible for our nation. We are making significant progress. Cyber is an essential capability for Joint Force 2020. The DoD works with interagency and commercial partners in order to counter threats from non-state actors in cyberspace and other domains. We will continue to employ a robust defensive posture on our military networks. In the event of a cyber attack, the DoD has processes in place to identify it with interagency partners, defend against the attack, and share information with industry to mitigate effects.

International Peacekeeping Contributions

In testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (July 29, 2009), Ambassador Susan Rice, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, stated that the United States “is willing to consider directly contributing more military observers, military staff officers, civilian police, and other civilian personnel—including more women I should note—to UN peacekeeping operations.”

What is your view on whether the U.S. should contribute more military personnel to both staff positions and military observers in support of UN peacekeeping operations?

In Afghanistan, our military commitment is shifting from combat operations to maintaining a long-term relationship with the people of Afghanistan in concert with our NATO allies. This mission shift allows us to consider other opportunities for U.S. forces and personnel to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions around the world on a very selective basis and under the right conditions. Our experience shows that even a small number of U.S. personnel can play an outsized role in improving the effectiveness of UN operations.

If confirmed, would you support identifying methods through which the DOD personnel system could be more responsive to requests for personnel support from multilateral institutions like the United Nations?

We have been responsive to requests from the UN for personnel support. This year, for the first time in nearly two decades, a U.S. general officer is helping to lead peacekeepers in a UN field mission. By all accounts, this officer has done a terrific job in Liberia. He is even supervising members of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Additionally, when the UN requested U.S. officers for the new mission in South Sudan, U.S. Africa Command provided three of its own staff officers to deploy immediately until the services could provide long-term fills. We are currently working with Africa Command on a similar solution for the mission in Mali. And as I told Secretary General Ban Ki-moon during his visit this spring, we look forward to exploring even more opportunities to offer our leaders in support of the UN and other multilateral institutions.

Interagency Collaboration

The collaboration between U.S. Special Operations Forces, general purpose forces, and other U.S. Government departments and agencies has played a significant role in the success of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in recent years. However, much of this collaboration has been ad hoc in nature.

What do you believe are the most important lessons learned from the collaborative interagency efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere?

Among other lessons, it seems clear to me that we have learned that countering insurgent and terrorist threats demands the integration of all instruments of national power toward a common purpose. Over the past decade, our interagency coordination has been occasionally uneven due to policy gaps, inconsistent resources, and differences in organizational culture. While we struggled early on to harness the full extent of our whole-of-government effort, over time, our military and civilian organizations have learned to better leverage each other's strengths. If confirmed, I am committed to institutionalizing these lessons learned even as we reset and prepare for the future.

How do you believe these efforts can be improved?

It begins with leadership. We've learned that we need to stress the value of interagency coordination at all levels. For DoD, this means exposing our military personnel to a range of

interagency organizations to facilitate understanding of different agency cultures, equities, capabilities, and limitations. We also incorporate interagency partners into our training and education programs, building the kinds of relationships that increase our overall effectiveness. More can be done, and if confirmed, I will work with this Congress to enhance these programs.

How can the lessons learned in recent years be captured in military doctrine and adopted as “best practices” for future contingency operations?

As Chairman, I led a “Decade of War” effort to examine this question and to ensure that we do not lose the lessons of ten years of war. Codifying our work is key. Critical doctrinal publications such as Joint Pub 3-08, “Inter-organizational Coordination during Joint Operations,” capture the best practices of our recent experience. The current version was published in June 2011, and importantly, our interagency partners contributed to writing it. If confirmed, I plan to begin a formal update of this publication in the coming year.

Interagency collaboration on an operational or tactical level tends to address issues on a country-by-country basis rather than on a regional basis (e.g. international terrorists departing Mali for safe havens in Libya).

How do you believe regional strategies that link efforts in individual countries can best be coordinated in the interagency arena?

Our performance in crisis situations rests on how well we collaborate on a routine basis. Therefore, I support a whole-of-government planning, operations and resourcing framework to ensure our country plans are mutually-reinforcing. The military develops Theater Campaign Plans and Functional Campaign Plans that address regional and trans-regional issues. We seek input from interagency partners in the development of these plans to de-conflict, if not complement efforts. State is beginning to develop Joint Regional Strategies to address regional foreign policy priorities and drive country strategies. This new regional perspective will improve our ability to coordinate DoD plans with State plans.

Responsibility to Protect

The U.S. Government has recognized the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) – that is, the responsibility of the international community to use appropriate means to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, by encouraging states to protect their own populations, by helping states build the capacity to do so, and by acting directly should national authorities fail to provide such protection. In its 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Department of Defense names “preventing human suffering due to mass atrocities” as one of a long list of potential contingencies that DOD might be called on to address. DOD has begun to explore some of the implications of R2P, by considering “mass atrocity prevention and response operations” (MAPRO).

In your view, how high a priority should the “responsibility to protect” be for the U.S. Government as a whole?

Preserving the capacity of the United States and its partners to prevent human suffering is a means of promoting our values and strengthening our influence around the world. And although neither the United States nor any other country recognizes the “responsibility to protect” as a legal basis for the use of military force, the U.S. armed forces can carry out these types of missions if called upon to do so. Prioritization is not a decision for the military to make.

In your view, what should be the role of DOD, if any, in fulfilling the responsibility to protect?

The role of DoD will be to support our government’s policy decision. The whole-of-government approach should involve an appropriate mix of diplomatic, economic, and/or military measures. The role of the DoD will be to provide options and assess the risk associated with those options. We will also make a recommendation on the strategy for any specific situation to include those involving atrocities.

In your view, what is the proper application of R2P doctrine with respect to the situation in Syria?

The conflict in Syria is as complex as any I have seen. We have an obligation to think through the efficacy and consequences of any direct U.S. military action in Syria, especially if it could create conditions that would cause more civilian casualties, unleash chemical weapons, or bring the United States into a broader regional conflict. Even as we consider the use of force, we must continue to work with our allies and partners in the region to prevent their destabilization, provide humanitarian aid, and support the Syrian opposition. The United States is providing nearly \$815 million in aid to help the victims of this conflict, including emergency medical care and supplies, food, and shelter.

Operation Observant Compass & the Lord’s Resistance Army

Despite pressure by the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces (UPDF) and efforts by U.S. Special Operations personnel to support them, elements of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) – including Joseph Kony – continue to operate and commit atrocities against civilian populations in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. Some observers have identified operational concerns with this mission, including that: (1) supported forces are trying to find an elusive foe in an area roughly the size of California, much of which is covered in thick jungle; (2) technical support to U.S. forces and their UPDF partners from the defense and intelligence community continues to be inadequate; and (3) limitations continue to be placed on the ability of U.S. Special Operations personnel to accompany UPDF partners outside of main basing locations, thereby limiting the level of direct support they can provide.

In your view, what is the objective of Operation Observant Compass?

The strategy is comprised of 4 elements: (1) protect civilians; (2) promote DD/RRR (disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation, and resettlement); (3) increase

humanitarian access/support; and (4) remove Joseph Kony and senior LRA leaders from the region. DoD plays a role in all 4 pillars but is the primary agent for implementing the fourth element.

Do you support the continuation of DOD's current level of support to this mission?

In the near-term, the current level of military support is appropriate. DoD is currently weighing options to determine the future level of support. DoD must prioritize limited resources among numerous competing priorities, requirements and risks to other missions. Cost is another factor being considered given the current budget constraints.

Human Terrain in Conflict

In 2009, then-Secretary Gates helped launch the Minerva Initiative and the Human Social Culture Behavior Modeling Program to develop deeper social, cultural, and behavioral expertise for policy, strategy and operational purposes in the Middle East and Far East.

How have these programs contributed to our understanding the complex human terrain of these parts of the world?

Yes. The Minerva Initiative examines the social and political dynamics of present and future conflict. Research conducted under its auspices validated the COMISAF policy of "courageous restraint" (e.g. exercise patience before using force); enriched our understanding of the radicalization processes, and produced a method for empirically characterizing tribal cohesiveness, a predictor of the susceptibility to Al-Qa'ida influence. The Human Social Culture Behavior Modeling (HSCB) Program, which forecasts instability globally, has been fielded at USPACOM, USSOUTHCOM, USSTRATCOM, and USSOCOM.

Are we adequately resourcing these programs and how can we improve our capabilities to understand the perceptions, attitudes, ethnic identities, religious beliefs and predispositions of the audiences we seek to reach and interact with in these regions?

Although the HSCB Modeling program concludes its four year program in FY13, we continue to fund many other social science research efforts. As we learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, cultural and regional skills are key to succeeding in Irregular Warfare. Accordingly, I have mandated that they be covered in at all levels of Joint Professional Military Education curricula and in Joint Doctrine publications on Stability Operations, Counterinsurgency Operations, and Special Operations.

National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime

Criminal networks are not only expanding their operations, but they are also diversifying their activities, resulting in a convergence of transnational threats that has evolved to become more complex, volatile, and destabilizing. The Director of National Intelligence recently described transnational organized crime as "an abiding threat to U.S. economic

and national security interests,” and stated that “rising drug violence and corruption are undermining stability and the rule of law in some countries” in the Western Hemisphere. In July 2011, the President released his Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security. One of the priority action areas designated in the strategy is “enhancing Department of Defense support to U.S. law enforcement.”

What is your understanding of the President’s strategy to combat transnational criminal organizations?

The President's Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime integrates all elements of national power to combat transnational organized crime and related threats to national security. Ultimately, the strategy seeks to reduce transnational organized crime to a manageable public safety concern.

What is your understanding of the Department’s role within the President’s strategy?

The Department of Defense is not the lead agency responsible for combatting transnational organized crime. DoD instead plays an appropriate and critically important role supporting law enforcement to counter threats to national security.

In your view, should DOD play a role in providing support to the U.S. law enforcement and the Intelligence Community on matters related to transnational organized crime?

The Department of Defense provides unique supporting capabilities to address the full range of transnational criminal threats, including military intelligence support to law enforcement, military-to-military capability development, and military operational activities against threats to the U.S. DoD supports U.S. law enforcement and the Intelligence Community as part of a whole of government approach, consistent with current authorities.

Mass Atrocities Prevention

President Obama identified the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide as a core U.S. national security interest, as well as a core moral interest, in August 2011 under Presidential Study Directive 10.

Among interagency partners, what is DoD’s role in addressing atrocity threats, and what tools does DoD have for preventing or responding to atrocities?

DoD has developed Joint Doctrine for conducting Mass Atrocity Response Operations. Based on this doctrine, atrocity prevention and response is now incorporated into DoD plans and planning guidance. In addition, DoD has conducted a comprehensive review of training in this area and is working to strengthen the capacity of UN peacekeeping operations to respond to atrocity events.

Has DoD developed planning processes toward this effort so that it will be able to respond quickly in emergency situations?

Yes, DoD has developed planning processes toward this effort. All DoD components have been directed to integrate atrocity prevention and response into their policies and plans. Specific plans are further developed and implemented at the Geographic Combatant Command level, in coordination with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff.

In your view, is the situation in Syria a mass atrocity?

In my view, the situation in Syria is tragic and an atrocity. By some estimates as many as a hundred thousand combatant and non-combatants have been killed, with over five million displaced.

Counter Threat Finance

Identifying and disrupting key individuals, entities, and facilitation routes enabling the flow of money that supports terrorism, production of IEDs, narco-trafficking, proliferation, and other significant national security threats could have an outsized impact on confronting these threats. In August 2010, the Department issued a Counter Threat Finance (CTF) Policy Directive which recognized the CTF discipline as an essential tool in combating criminal networks and terrorist organizations and called for the integration of CTF capabilities into future force planning and the continued support to interagency partners conducting CTF operations.

What is your assessment of the Department's efforts to date to institutionalize and support these capabilities?

Upsetting the financial supply lines of our adversaries is a proven way to disrupt threats to U.S. national security. DoD Threat Finance Cells already have a track record of success in Iraq and Afghanistan. We need this capability in the Department. DoD Directive 5205.14 (CTF), updated in November 2012, institutionalizes counter threat finance within DoD. Ultimately, our success in counter threat finance will depend on our ability to integrate efforts with other U.S. government agencies, multinational organizations, and host nations.

What is your assessment of the current ability of the Department to provide support to other U.S. Government departments and agencies conducting counter threat finance activities?

DoD currently supports the efforts of other government agencies with its unique capabilities, including long-term planning, network analysis, intelligence analysis and tools, and the integration of intelligence into operations. The result is a well-coordinated, capable, and robust counter threat finance posture. If confirmed, I will continue to remain fully engaged in the interagency process to counter threat finance activities.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to DOD's current counter threat finance efforts?

The Department is examining its current counter threat finance efforts. We are focused on incorporating lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan and further strengthening and institutionalizing our counter threat finance capability. We may recommend additional training and education for the force.

Section 1208 Operations

Section 1208 of the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (Public Law 108-375), as amended by subsequent bills, authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations by U.S. Special Operations Forces to combat terrorism.

What is your current assessment of this authority?

Combatant Commanders continue to view Section 1208 as a key tool in the ongoing fight against terrorism. The ability for Special Operations Forces to leverage willing partners who possess access to areas, people, and information denied to our forces is critical to tactical and strategic success. This authority has allowed us to respond quickly to global challenges while maintaining appropriate civilian oversight, including Secretary of Defense approval and Congressional notification. The Department is appreciative of Congress's continued support for this authority. If confirmed, I will continue to keep you informed through our annual report and briefings.

Active-Duty and Reserve Component End Strength

Last year DOD announced its 5-year plan to reduce active-duty end strengths by over 100,000 service members by 2017, and the reserve components by another 21,000 over the same period. These cuts do not include any additional personnel reductions that could result from sequestration or any agreement to avoid sequestration.

What is your view of the role of the reserve components as the active components draw down?

Twelve years of combat operations has transformed our Reserve Component from a strategic reserve to a full-spectrum force critical to our overall military readiness. Recent combat deployments, as well as peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and homeland defense missions, have resulted in our Reserve Component being far more operationally capable and experienced than before. We have yet to determine the final steady-state balance between the Active and Reserve Component, in part because of continuing budget uncertainty. But going forward, the Reserve Component will be an essential part of the total force.

What additional military personnel reductions do you envision if the sequester continues into 2014 and beyond?

Because military personnel cannot be reduced quickly, a continuation of sequester funding levels would require DoD to take disproportionate cuts from the modernization and readiness portions of the FY 2014 budget. To ensure these accounts do not bear an excessive portion of budget reductions, DoD would seek to significantly draw down the size of the military after FY2014.

In your view, what tools do DOD and the Services need to get down to authorized strengths in the future, and which of these require Congressional authorization?

In my view, DoD's existing force management tools provide the necessary flexibility to enable the Services to get down to authorized end strength. At this time, the Services are not requesting additional force management tools.

Religious Guidelines

In your view, do policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs, including individual expressions of belief, without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

Yes. Our official policy states, "The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Military Services to observe the tenets of their respective religions or to observe no religion at all." (DoDI 1300.17, "Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services"). By both policy and practice, commanders are committed to ensuring members of the Joint Force of deep religious faith, as well as those of no religious faith, can serve in a climate of mutual respect and trust.

Under current law and policy, are individual expressions of belief accommodated so long as they do not impact unit cohesion and good order and discipline?

Yes. Commanders consider requests for accommodation of individual expressions of belief, to include apparel, grooming and worship practices. Requests are given equal consideration as long as they do not negatively impact mission accomplishment, military readiness, unit cohesion, good order, discipline, or any other military requirement.

Prevention of and Response to Sexual Assaults

In 2012, for the fourth year in a row, there were more than 3000 reported cases of sexual assault in the military, including 2558 unrestricted reports, and an additional 816 restricted reports (restricted, meaning that, in accordance with the victim's request, they were handled in a confidential manner and not investigated). Moreover, a recent survey conducted by the DOD indicates that the actual number of sexual offenses could be considerably higher, as 6.1 percent of active duty women and 1.2 percent of active duty

men surveyed reported having experienced an incident of unwanted sexual contact in the previous 12 months.

What is your assessment of the current DOD sexual assault prevention and response program?

We have taken swift, deliberate action to change a military culture that had become too complacent of discrimination, harassment, and assault. The Secretary and I, along with the Joint Chiefs, remain personally committed to eradicating sexual assault within our ranks and to improving processes and programs as part of our comprehensive approach. The Services have achieved significant progress in many areas. They have added specialized training for investigation and litigation, provided broader access to victim's advocates and Special Victim's Counsel, and hired Highly Qualified Experts to evaluate our progress. We are focused on taking care of victims, preventing the conditions that make assault possible, and enforcing respectful unit environments.

What is your view of the provision for restricted and unrestricted reporting of sexual assaults?

Our primary concern remains the safety and well-being of the victim. We are taking swift and deliberate action to reinforce a professional work environment, prevent and respond to predatory and precursor behaviors, and better protect victims. Should a sexual assault occur, we prefer the victim come forward with an unrestricted report, to allow for thorough investigation and litigation. However, confidential reporting, or restricted reporting, allows a victim to access services to meet their personal needs without the additional anxiety of a criminal investigation. Moving initial disposition authority to O-6 commanders or higher has increased unrestricted reporting, and access to Special Victim's Counsel has increased victims' willingness to change a restricted report to an unrestricted report. However, both restricted and unrestricted reporting options remain essential to our response to sexual assault.

What is your understanding of the adequacy of DOD oversight of military service implementation of the DOD and service policies for the prevention of and response to sexual assaults?

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office oversees the Department's sexual assault policy and works with the Services' offices to execute the Services' sexual assault prevention and response plans. SAPRO also works with the civilian community to develop and implement innovative prevention and response approaches to the programs. They continue to lead on this issue by informing and advising commanders at all levels. Despite their best efforts, we have not yet turned the tide on this crime in our ranks. Therefore, I will continue to support initiatives for strengthening oversight and accountability.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in changing the military culture in which these sexual assaults have occurred?

The commander is central to our ability to effect institutional change. We must hold commanders accountable at every level for reinforcing the highest standards of respect and trust that all of our men and women in uniform – and the American people – deserve. The sexual assault crisis in the military is a result, in large part, of a climate that had become too complacent. We have already refined our assessments of command climate by updating the surveys that specifically enable service members to evaluate their commanders on unit climate and sexual assault response. Additionally, we have moved initial disposition authority for incidents of sexual assault to the O-6 commanders or higher. We will not let up in our efforts to drive the crime of sexual violence from our ranks.

In your view, what would be the impact of requiring a judge advocate outside the chain of command to determine whether allegations of sexual assault should be prosecuted?

The commander's role in the military justice process is long-standing and essential to the effectiveness of our joint force. Our commanders are responsible for the efficiency of their units first, but more broadly, it is in their hands that the defense of the Nation rests. Because of the tremendous responsibility placed in commanders, they must also have broad authority to enforce discipline and execute their duties. This is a foundational element of the military justice system. The central imperative in commanders' responsibility to accomplish their assigned missions, in peacetime and in war, is the good order and discipline of the men and women they lead. Commanders regularly consult with their judge advocates, including when deciding whether to prosecute alleged offenses. Removing commanders from the military justice process in this way would send the message that there is a lack of faith in the officer corps and that commanders cannot be trusted to mete out discipline. Such a message would surely undermine good order and discipline. Absolving commanders of their role in the military justice system would potentially undermine the military's ability to adequately address this issue. Commanders must be held accountable for maintaining a climate that does not tolerate sexual assault. Responsibility and accountability go hand-in-hand: in order to hold commanders accountable for the good order and discipline of their units, they must hold that responsibility and be empowered by the system. Disempowering commanders will not help the military tackle this problem.

Article 60 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice requires the convening authority to take action on the sentence issued by a court-martial and authorizes a convening authority, in his sole discretion, to take action of the findings of a court-martial, including setting aside a finding of guilty or changing a finding of guilty to a finding of guilty of a lesser included offense.

What is your view about the authority of a convening authority to set aside or modify findings of guilt and authority to reduce a sentence imposed by court-martial?

Article 60 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) currently grants broad authority and discretion to convening authorities to dismiss findings of guilt after trial. That authority, which

dates back well over 200 years, was necessary when the military justice system lacked many of the procedural safeguards inherent in the system today. In the past, the military justice system lacked attorneys serving as trial and defense counsel, independent trial judges, and an appellate process. Article 60 was necessary so that commanders, with the advice of their staff judge advocates, could ensure the proceedings, and in particular the findings, were fair and just. Many changes to the military justice system, which began with the Military Justice Improvement Act of 1968, now provide the necessary due process and safeguards. Licensed military attorneys now serve as prosecutors and defense counsel, independent military judges preside over courts-martial, and convicted service members are entitled to a robust appellate process. Due to these changes, there is little or no need for a convening authority to dismiss the findings after a panel (jury) has found the accused guilty. A convening authority should have the discretion, however, to dismiss minor offenses under appropriate circumstances, such as to prevent an accused from the burden of a felony conviction when found guilty of minor misconduct but acquitted of major offenses. Examples of such minor misconduct include underage drinking and brief absences without leave, which on their own would not normally be adjudicated by courts-martial. Rather, a convening authority should have the flexibility to adjudicate such offenses in an alternate fashion. Convening authorities should also retain the ability to modify sentences, which is an essential component of our plea bargain process.

Assignment Policies for Women in the Military

As you know, the Department in January rescinded the policy restricting the assignment of women to certain units which have the primary mission of engaging in direct ground combat operations, and has given the military services until January 1, 2016, to open all positions currently closed to women, or to request an exception to policy to keep a position closed beyond that date, an exception that must be approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. The services are working now to develop gender-free physical and mental standards for all military occupations, presumably with the goal of allowing individuals, regardless of gender, to serve in those positions if they can meet those standards.

If confirmed, what role will you play in the development of these standards?

Women continue to serve with distinction throughout the armed forces, and the successful integration of women into currently closed positions requires thoughtful planning and deliberate action as we proceed. I am working with the Services to provide quarterly reports to the Secretary of Defense on the progress of requirements review and validation, the timeline for opening closed occupations, limiting factors to executing implementation, positions being considered for an exception to policy, and an assessment of newly integrated positions. All our standards should be reviewed to make sure they are essential to the occupation and task. Full implementation should occur by January 1, 2014. Ultimately, we're acting to strengthen the Joint Force.

Will you ensure that the standards will be realistic and will preserve, or enhance, military readiness and mission capability?

The Service Chiefs and I identified guiding principles to better align our policies with the experiences we have had over the past decade of war. This means setting clear, essential, gender-neutral standards of performance for all occupations based on what it actually takes to do the job. With the Joint Chiefs, I am closely monitoring each of the services as they develop their implementation plans and providing quarterly reports to the Secretary of Defense. Effective planning and implementation requires that we appropriately integrate women into the organizational culture of certain military occupations.

Do you believe that decisions to open positions should be based on bona fide military requirements?

Yes. Performance standards exist to ensure individuals can accomplish the tasks required of the mission. Eligibility for training and development should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation as required by Public Law 103-160 Sec 543 (1993).

If so, what steps will you take, if confirmed, to ensure that such decisions are made on this basis?

I will continue to work with the Joint Chiefs to ensure changes are carefully reviewed and implemented so our service women are set up for long-term success with viable career paths. This deliberate process will anticipate second and third-order effects while guarding against unintended consequences. Our force deserves our full faith and commitment that we get this right.

Some family members have expressed concerns about assigning women to what are currently male-only combat units.

To what extent do you believe that this will be a problem in the implementation of this policy?

I think families recognize the bravery and sacrifice of women in combat, especially over the past decade of war. The successful integration of women into currently closed positions requires we be thoughtful and deliberate in planning. One of my guiding principles is to also ensure a sufficient cadre of midgrade and senior female enlisted and officers are assigned to commands, to become established members of the command and to act as mentors to younger women as they integrate into the unit. These mentors will help establish a climate of trust and support.

If it is a problem, what steps would you take if confirmed to address it?

I will continue to hold the Services accountable to open all specialties, as the Secretary of Defense and I must personally approve any request for exceptions to policy. If members of our military can meet the qualifications for a job, then they should have the right to serve, regardless

of creed, color, gender or sexual orientation.

Rising Costs of Medical Care

In testimony presented to Congress in February, 2009, the Assistant Director of the Congressional Budget Office asserted that “medical funding accounts for more than one-third of the growth projected for operations and support funding between 2009 and 2026.” In April, 2009, then Secretary of Defense Gates told an audience at Maxwell Air Force Base that “health care is eating the Department alive.” In recent years, the Department has attempted to address the growth in overall health care costs by identifying efficiencies as well as by proposing increased cost shares for military retirees.

What reforms in infrastructure, benefits, or benefit management, if any, do you think should be examined in order to control the costs of military health care?

Quality health care is a critical component to having a fit and ready force. We are examining FY14 options to slow the growth of health care costs while preserving the quality and enhancing the range of health care services available to the Military Family. Reform to control costs is essential to making healthcare more sustainable. If confirmed, I will continue to assist the Secretary of Defense in this comprehensive review of benefit payment structures, organizational structure, systems, and policies to improve affordability.

What is your assessment of the long-term impact of rising medical costs on future Department of Defense plans?

Health care costs consume 10% of the department’s budget. In real terms, costs have tripled since 2001 and are forecasted to nearly double again by 2030. Increasing health care costs will inhibit future force readiness as competing requirements confront a decreasing top line. Health care is key to retaining high quality service members and to keeping faith with our entire military family. I will continue to work closely with DoD leadership and Congress to find reasonable and responsible ways to slow this growth.

If confirmed, what actions would you initiate or recommend to mitigate the effect of such costs on the DOD top-line?

Over the last several budget cycles, Congress has permitted small, necessary increases in the TRICARE Prime enrollment fees. These adjustments were an important step to managing costs, but they are not enough to sustain the benefit in the long term. Given today’s budget environment, we must find a mutually acceptable compromise to reduce health costs while still maintaining the quality of care our force and our veterans deserve. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Secretary of Defense and this Congress to do so.

Systems and Support for Wounded Warriors

Service members who are or have been wounded and injured in combat operations deserve the highest priority from their Service for support services, healing and recuperation,

rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty when appropriate, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge. Yet, as the revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in 2007 illustrated, the Services were not prepared to meet the needs of significant numbers of returning wounded service members. Despite the enactment of legislation and continuing emphasis, many challenges remain, including a growing population of service members awaiting disability evaluation.

What is your assessment of the progress made to date by the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Services to improve the care, management, and transition of seriously ill and injured service members and their families?

We have made substantial progress in medical care over the last 12 years of war. From first responder care to joint battlefield surgical care, from the Air Force's enroute care to advanced rehabilitation provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the medical advances we've made are, quite literally, lifesaving and world changing. In other arenas, particularly those surrounding family and transition, we have been slower to make progress. We are structured to fight and win wars, but are not as well prepared to manage a large population of transitioning service members. We are making progress within the boundaries of law, but I am committed to improving our efforts and results.

What are the strengths upon which continued progress should be based?

We can make further progress by leveraging the collaboration on research and treatment between the private medical research and healthcare sectors and our Centers of Excellence. These partnerships have made significant strides in the care of our Wounded Warriors and on the health of our Total Force. We have successfully returned many of our Wounded Warriors to service. We have also established robust, day-to-day collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is not uncommon for VA providers to speak directly to battlefield providers, and such end-to-end feedback directly benefits veterans' care. We also have uniformed Service members working in VA facilities and VA benefits personnel working in our medical facilities, to better serve the large population of service members transitioning to civilian life.

What are the weaknesses that need to be corrected?

Individual case management needs further improvement. This involves a service member transitioning from the active force to DoD retiree or eligible veteran status. The key components of this process remain the implementation of a single electronic health record, which follows the Service Member through transition, and a single tracking tool for case management. Our ability to communicate across our individual bureaucracies continues to be an area requiring our full attention and effort.

If confirmed, are there additional strategies and resources that you would pursue to increase support for wounded service members and their families, and to monitor their progress in returning to duty or to civilian life?

As the conflict in Afghanistan winds down, I recognize the importance of preserving the knowledge, skills, and advances made in caring for our wounded service members over the past decade. Last month, I asked the Defense Health Board to make a high priority the ability to sustain current practices and continuing advancements in treat and rehabilitation for our seriously wounded service members and their families.

Studies conducted as a result of the revelations at WRAMC pointed to the need to reform the disability evaluation system (DES). The Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) was established to integrate the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs disability systems to improve and expedite processing of service members through the disability evaluation system.

What is your assessment of the need to further streamline and improve the DES?

In addition to the changes we have already made, Senator Dole's and Secretary Shalala's commission recommended further statutory changes to limit DoD to the "ability" business and of the VA to the "disability" business in keeping with each department's core competencies. I support their commission's recommendations. Barring legislative change to establish a single system, we have gone about as far and as fast as we can with separate processes and systems.

If confirmed, how will you address any need for change?

I will continue to do my very best to expedite transition and disability processing within the bounds of law and my authorities. I will advocate for governance process improvements and other system upgrade to streamline and simplify the process.

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resources

The numbers of suicides in each of the Services continues to concern the Committee.

In your view, what role should the Joint Chiefs of Staff play in shaping policies to help prevent suicides both in garrison and in theater and to increase the resiliency of all service members and their families, including members of the reserve components?

The Joint Chiefs have a shared responsibility to address military suicides with the same devotion we have shown to protecting the lives of our forces in combat. I am working closely with the Chiefs, our interagency partners, and the White House to increase our understanding of the factors leading to suicide and how to best leverage care networks to keep our service members and Veterans alive.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure that sufficient mental health resources are available to service members in theater, and to the service members and their families upon return to home station?

If confirmed, I will continue to champion the fielding of effective treatments for mental health issues, traumatic brain injury, and combat stress. This includes the robust system of behavioral health care resources that are already available in the Afghanistan Theater of Operations. I will also continue my support of the Services to reduce the stigma and remove barriers to seeking mental health services for both Service members and their family members. This effort must include steps to ensure subordinate commands praise help-seeking behavior and promote reaching out by providing examples of Service members who have benefitted from mental health assistance or counseling.

Military Quality of Life

The Committee is concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family support, child care, education, employment support, health care, and morale, welfare and recreation services, especially as DOD faces budget challenges.

If confirmed, what further enhancements, if any, to military quality of life programs would you consider a priority in an era of intense downward pressure on budgets, and how do you envision working with the Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to achieve them?

As you know, the entire enterprise is under scrutiny, and we are seeking a way to balance the needs of providing security to the nation and ensure the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force. Part of our evaluation has focused on providing a quality of life for Service members and their families that fosters successful recruitment, retention, and career progression. We are also looking to modernize and achieve fiscal sustainability for the compensation and retirement systems. The mental health of our Service members is also a priority. We will work to ensure that the downward pressure of budgets does not adversely impact this vital area. I have my Joint Staff positioned on working groups, task forces and other venues to work together with the Services and other concerned parties to ensure we keep faith with our military family in these areas.

Family Readiness and Support

Military members and their families in both the active and reserve components have made, and continue to make, tremendous sacrifices in support of operational deployments. Senior military leaders have warned of growing concerns among military families as a result of the stress of frequent deployments and the long separations that go with them.

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?

According to recent Family Readiness surveys, military families are most concerned about pay and benefits and retirement. DoD is fully engaged through the Pay and Retirement Working Group, which feeds recommendations to the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Executive Committee to address these concerns. In my judgment, families are also attuned to the need for our compensation system to be sustainable.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced?

If confirmed, I will continue to support the Services as they assess military family needs and program effectiveness. Unsustainable costs and smaller budgets mean we must examine every warrior and family support program to make sure we are getting the best return on our investment. We must promote the most effective programs across the force and carefully reduce duplicative efforts. This ongoing effort includes current studies – via DODEA, DECA, and a number of university partnerships – to identify best practices and evaluate the value of existing programs. This effort also includes: the restructuring of medical facilities [included in the FY 2014 budget] to make them more efficient, without sacrificing quality or continuity of care as well as fee adjustments that exempt disabled retirees, survivors of service members who died on active duty, and their family members.

How would you address these family readiness needs in light of global rebasing, deployments, and future reductions in end strength?

As stated above, if confirmed I will continue to work with the Services to meet the changing needs of our military families. Part of this effort involves working with the White House and the Services to support community-based partnerships to improve education, employment, and wellness support for current and transitioning members. The Services have also adjusted force size and rotation, redoubled transition support, and invested in world-class health care for our wounded. This includes the fielding of effective treatments for mental health issues, traumatic brain injury, and combat stress. It also entails the push to reduce the stigma and remove barriers to seeking mental health services for both Service members and their family members.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support is provided to reserve component families related to mobilization, deployment and family readiness, as well as to active duty families who do not reside near a military installation?

We have a duty to ensure every family has access to quality resources, regardless of component or location. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Services' effort to leverage public-private partnerships within the communities. We will also continue to leverage the State Joint Force Headquarters of the National Guard to help members access child care, mental health services, employment opportunities and many other services that bolster family readiness.

If confirmed, what additional steps will you take to enhance family support?

In my *2012 Strategic Direction to the Joint Force*, I identified “Keeping Faith with our Military Family” as one of my four focus areas during my tenure as Chairman. Keeping faith with our military family recognizes the military family’s extraordinary contributions, preserves trust, and supports them in the ways they need most. If confirmed, I will continue this focus with the Services. Today, we are actively involved in Family Support Working Groups, Resource Management Decision Working Groups and other venues to ensure program effectiveness, share best practices, and reduce duplication of efforts. America’s citizens have also stepped forward. From the local to the national level, thousands of organizations, higher learning institutions, and businesses have partnered to support our Military Family.

Operational Energy Budgeting

Since Congress created the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs, much progress has been made in a few short years in these programs.

In what specific areas, if any, do you believe the Department needs to improve the incorporation of energy considerations into the strategic planning and force development processes?

We have a comprehensive Department strategy which addresses energy challenges and leverages opportunities for the current and future force. For all new weapon systems, there is now an Energy Key Performance Parameter (KPP) that must be considered during the system requirements process. Operationally, we are making strides to improve electrical generation efficiency in Afghanistan through the use of micro-grids, reducing the individual soldier battery requirements through solar power technology, and testing advanced renewable energy technologies in the battlefield environments. We have made much progress and will continue to focus on incorporating energy considerations in wargames and Joint exercises in order to improve our strategic planning and force development.

In what specific areas, if any, do you believe the Department should increase funding for operational energy requirements, energy efficiency, alternative energy, and renewable energy opportunities?

Each Service has invested significant resources to address operational energy requirements. My primary emphasis remains on reducing operational energy dependence to provide increased operational flexibility, combat effectiveness, force protection, and mobility options for Joint Commanders. I am focused on fully understanding the energy requirements of our Joint Force and will continue to support the Service initiatives to reduce our energy demands across the force.

Law of the Sea Convention

You have previously expressed your support for U.S. accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Do you still believe that the United States should join the Law of the Sea Convention, and, if so, why?

Yes, I testified in support of the United States becoming a party to the Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in May 2012. Being a party to LOSC enhances the United States' security posture by reinforcing freedom of navigation and over flight rights vital to ensuring our global force posture and demonstrating our commitment to the rule of law. It strengthens our credibility and brings the full force of our influence in challenging excessive maritime claims.

Detainee Treatment Policy

Do you support the policy set forth in the July 7, 2006, memorandum issued by the Deputy Secretary of Defense stating that all relevant DOD directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures must fully comply with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes.

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated September 5, 2006?

Yes.

If confirmed, will you ensure that all DOD policies promulgated and plans implemented related to intelligence interrogations, detainee debriefings, and tactical questioning comply with the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Army Field Manual on Interrogations?

Yes.

Do you share the view that standards for detainee treatment must be based on the principle of reciprocity, that is, that we must always keep in mind the risk that the manner in which we treat our own detainees may have a direct impact on the manner in which U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen or Marines are treated, should they be captured in future conflicts?

I continue to share the view that the way in which we treat detainees may have a direct impact on the manner in which U.S. forces are treated should they be captured in future conflicts.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

Yes.

Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the Administration in power?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes.